



United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

**UNDA Terminal Evaluation on project
Building National Capacities for
Biodiversity Indicators and Reporting
in Southern and Eastern Africa**



Evaluation Office

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Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1 Background and introduction to the project.....	6
2 Evaluation scope, objectives and methods	10
3 Project performance and impact	12
3(A) Attainment of objectives and planned results.....	12
3(B) Sustainability	24
3(C) Catalytic role and replication.....	27
3(D) Preparation and readiness	28
3(E) Implementation approach and adaptive management.....	29
3(F) Stakeholder participation and public awareness	32
3(G) Country ownership and drivenness	33
3(H) Financial planning and management.....	34
3(I) UNEP supervision and backstopping.....	36
3(J) Monitoring and evaluation.....	37
3(K) Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes.....	39
5 Lessons learned.....	43
6 Recommendations.....	44
Annex 1 Evaluation Terms of Reference.....	45
Annex 2 Evaluation framework	66
Annex 3 Consultations undertaken	73
Annex 4 List of documents	77
Annex 5 Finance information	80
Annex 6 Review of Outcomes to Impacts analysis	85
Annex 7 Review of project design.....	99
Annex 8 Evaluator CV.....	114

Executive Summary

S.1 Policies on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development need indicators to verify whether results occur as intended, and to help design improvements and further policies. In most countries of Southern and Eastern Africa, although much relevant data is already collected, financial, technical and institutional capacity for the selection, calculation and reporting of such indicators is generally very limited, while demand from governments is growing. The “Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa” (BICSA) project had the **overall objective** of strengthening capacity in these two sub-regions to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national policies, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and international reporting for Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (on environmental sustainability) and the global “2010” biodiversity loss reduction target.

S.2 The initial framing of this could probably have better foreseen the further relevance it would also have to development of indicators for the post-2010 targets regime and the updating of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), but this was built in later. National policy end-uses in any event generally came to be more prominent than the international ones, and project priorities were shaped to fit needs stated by each country.

S.3 It would have been useful for the project’s design to refer to generic wisdom on trends in the capacity-building field; but its indicator development pedigree was second to none, and efficiency was maximised by **synergies with other work** by the same executing body (UNEP-WCMC), notably the two GEF-funded projects “Biodiversity Indicators for National Use” (BINU) and the “2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership” (2010 BIP).

S.4 BICSA was the first UNEP-WCMC project to be funded by the UN Development Account. Implementation was by UNEP through DEWA, WCMC and the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, with support from the 2010 BIP project and assistance from other partners. Four **main activities** were specified, centring on three training workshops in each sub-region plus other peer-to-peer support and backup from WCMC.

S.5 The modest scale of the project meant that its initial capacity impact would occur among a highly selective sample of relevant people, and reliance would be put on their being catalytic among a wider pool of stakeholders thereafter. Choosing the right participants was therefore critical. No user needs survey was undertaken, and it would have been useful to give consideration to succession planning; but participants and end-users were well targeted. Some engaged less than expected (e.g. development interests) and others more (statisticians).

S.6 The project has served as a re-validation of the workshop model it used, confirming it as an effective format for regionally-organised country capacity support. Stakeholder-determined priorities, a common framework of good practice guidance, use of “neutral” worked examples (fictional or from elsewhere) and space for peer-sharing of experience were all ingredients in its success. The workshops, guidance materials and support were all commended for their quality and appropriateness, and participants praised the professionalism of the project team. Levels of motivation were very high, and there was a strong participatory spirit of shared ownership throughout. Overall a suitable balance was struck in the potentially tricky division of effort between sub-regional and national levels of support.

S.7 **Management** arrangements were “light touch” and flexible in accommodating change, though this relied on high levels of trust. Sub-contracts for workshop coordination were clear and had adequate safeguards. Leadership and accountability in some other respects were too vague, and the project’s lack of a steering group or similar oversight structure would have posed a risk if there had been crises to solve. Since BICSA was executed by UNEP entities, UNEP supervision was more of an “in house” process than it is with some projects. This had efficiencies but it made for little proactivity, a thin audit-trail

and some risk management weaknesses. Risk issues in general (identification, ownership and management) were insufficiently explicit.

S.8 Over the project's life, its basic plan and budgets were relatively little modified. One exception was an "exchange visits" element, which was re-thought and then abandoned. Disbursement of seed-funding in some countries posed difficulties, a budget for UNEP travel was largely unspent, and support in kind from BIP was greater than expected. Expenditures were proportionate and **finances** were efficiently managed; although despite some reallocations the project underspent overall (including its cash co-financing) by a large 11.5%. Bureaucratic delays, some turnover of key individuals, differential development rates and outreach needs in late 2010 led to the granting of a four-month no-cost project extension: it is possible that some of this was foreseeable earlier, but ultimately no harm resulted.

S.9 The project's fairly basic formal monitoring and evaluation system, while rational and workable, had weaknesses in terms of its baseline-setting, indicators and adaptive feedback processes, and it was unclear whether capacity increase was meant to be seen mainly in terms of countries, or institutions, or individuals. Project experiences and **achievements** however have been quite richly documented.

S.10 Fifty-eight participants from 13 countries took part in the workshops, which were conducted to very high professional standards, and were pitched a way that seems to have managed to help novices and stretch experts at the same time. Participants appreciated the focus on practical real-life applications, and the creation of an empowering environment which successfully cultivated confidence and enthusiasm. Their feedback reflects some excellent levels of self-assessed benefits in terms of increased insight, practical utility of products, growth in confidence and competence in putting indicator techniques into practice.

S.11 The project bequeathed useful "social capital" by catalysing **new collaborations** within and between countries, among government agencies, NGOs and academics. Modest numbers of people were involved and levels of impact varied, but some beneficiaries cascaded their new learning to colleagues, and every country had national meetings and/or formed national teams to take the work forward. At least some of these continue in being, and some networking has also continued at bilateral and sub-regional levels.

S.12 Six of the 13 countries developed **new indicators**, and most of the others are reported to be in the process of doing so. Five countries have either produced **publications** using their indicator findings or are expecting to do so in the near future. (Biodiversity storylines are proving more tractable so far than those for ecosystem services). Given the policy imperatives mentioned above it is likely that some of this would have occurred with or without BICSA's help: it is not easy objectively to test the incremental difference made by the project in this respect, but the evidence suggests that it can be credited with much of what has emerged. **National reports** to the CBD and one example of a national MDG report are known to have been influenced. These are all significant achievements.

S.13 The PRSP-related objective appears not to have been achieved, and evidence of the intended regional-level indicator harmonisation is lacking; but although the picture varied a lot between countries, there are some commendable examples of the project having had an **influence on policy**, including feedback from indicator experiences to the improvement of conservation targets. The project's aspirations went only as far as improving *capacity to generate information* which would *support* improved environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation; but forward linkages to these ultimate outcomes are evident.

S.14 A particular success in institutionally embedding indicator outputs lay with the ground-breaking and enthusiastic engagement of national statistical offices in all of the project countries. They found that the project helped their need to address biodiversity issues in processes such as MDG reporting, and their adoption in several cases of relevant indicators showed how they in turn can help to secure cross-sectoral uptake of biodiversity information, giving it higher status and greater policy impact.

S.15 Continued **sustainability** of BICSA’s results will require critical minimum levels of data, commitment, and transmission of expertise as people move on. The project was only able to involve a few individuals from each country as direct participants, and funding support was necessarily small. The prospects for sustainability nonetheless are good, in view of the inherent links to regularly-repeating policy drivers. The project worked to create capacity that would be feasible for each country to maintain with the resources it could (in theory) be expected to provide or secure for itself. Some of the governments will face difficulties in finding the resources they need, but it is valid to expect them to try, since they have policy imperatives to fund indicator production on an on-going basis. In any case some support for follow-up is already happening. Most project participants have job responsibilities related to indicators, and although career trajectories and the capacity-cascade in organisations could have been more systemically considered, the fact that indicator topics were chosen according to national priorities has strengthened ownership and the likelihood of sustained user demand in future. Motivation remains high one year after project-end.

S.16 UNEP-WCMC, in conjunction as necessary with UNEP-DEWA and UNEP-ROA, should now explore the scope for offering some residual on-going (“non-project”) encouragement and support to the stakeholder networking connections created by (or otherwise consequent on) BICSA in Africa, including facilitation of communications, and provision of advice on international best practice and sources of knowledge. Opportunities should also be taken to augment this through synergies with relevant projects, such as the expected regional capacity building and “training of trainers” elements of the now rolled-forward Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.

S.17 The present evaluation has scored the BICSA project very highly for its **replicability**. At the end of this report a recommendation is made for UNEP-WCMC to draw up an outline plan of options and priorities for proposing, supporting or directly delivering (as appropriate) capacity-strengthening activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services indicators in other parts of Africa, and in other regions of the world, following methods that make best use of the accumulated experience in operating the “BICSA model”.

S.18 **Overall**, the project is commended for its astute approach and for having produced a lot with modest resourcing. Good capacity-strengthening results have been evidenced by assessed potentialities, useable outputs and examples of influence on policy. A full ratings table appears in section 4, and a summary of the final ratings is given below.

Ratings summary (see section 4)	
(a) Attainment of project objectives and results	Satisfactory
(b) Sustainability of project outcomes	Likely
(c) Catalytic role and replication	Highly satisfactory
(d) Stakeholder participation	Satisfactory
(e) Country ownership and drivenness	Satisfactory
(f) Achievement of outputs and activities	Highly satisfactory
(g) Preparation and readiness	Satisfactory
(h) Implementation approach and adaptive management	Satisfactory
(i) Financial planning and management	Satisfactory
(j) Monitoring and Evaluation	Moderately satisfactory
(k) UNEP supervision and backstopping	Moderately unsatisfactory

1 Background and introduction to the project

National and international requirements agreed by governments

1.1 Monitoring the implementation of policies on biodiversity and sustainable development is essential to verify whether performance and results occur as intended, and to provide a basis in evidence for the design of improvements and further policies. Indicators are a key component of this; defined for the purposes of the “Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa” (BICSA) project as “information tools to help summarise and simplify information on the status and threats to biodiversity, and to evaluate progress towards its conservation and sustainable use”.

1.2 At the global level, governments have adopted the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which include Goal 7, “to ensure environmental sustainability”. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) committed in Decision VI/26 (2002) “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth”; a target which was subsequently endorsed by Heads of State and Government at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, and was then incorporated as a new target (7b) under the MDGs. At the very end of the BICSA project the “2010 target” was replaced by globally-adopted targets revised for 2020, known as the “Aichi targets”.

1.3 These biodiversity targets and MDG-7 all rely on the establishment of sub-targets, policies and strategies at subsidiary levels, and the overall regime requires appropriate indicators for measuring and reporting on progress. Many such indicators have been defined at the global level. As well as addressing the status of species and habitats, they include measurable aspects of sustainable use and the services delivered by ecosystems for human well-being; thus linking to the reduction of poverty.

The particular needs of Southern and Eastern Africa

1.4 It has been recognised that the availability of operable indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services is very limited in most countries of the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community. Financial, technical and institutional capacity for the selection, calculation and reporting of such indicators has also been limited, along with mechanisms for network leadership, mutual support and synergistic approaches to the subject at sub-regional levels. In addition, the policy drivers referred to above required some new concepts and methods to be employed, creating additional needs for country support.

1.5 Some important ingredients have been in place. Much relevant data is already collected, and there are institutions and initiatives addressing the issue. Demand from governments for indicator-based information (which previously had not been strong, and thus had not provided much impetus for the development of requisite tools) is growing, in light of greater environmental degradation, greater awareness of its impact, and in response to international reporting requirements of the kind mentioned above. The key need however was seen to be the capacity to develop sustained indicator programmes which can interpret and communicate relevant data, in a policy-relevant form and to a variety of stakeholders.

The opportunity; and a basis to work from

1.6 Despite the many challenges of capacity and data gaps, it has been shown that countries can produce valuable biodiversity indicators with a moderate amount of technical support and peer-to-peer learning. Many established global biodiversity indicators, such as the Living Planet Index and the coverage of protected areas, can be produced at the national scale. Training, on-going technical support, and provision of examples and guidelines can greatly aid national adaptation and use of such indicators.

1.7 One source of experience in this was the GEF Medium-Sized Project “Biodiversity Indicators for National Use” (BINU), which ran from 2002-2005 and provided guidance on indicator development in four countries. The BINU project was coordinated by UNEP-WCMC, with support from the National Institute for Public Health and Environment in the Netherlands (RIVM).

1.8 BINU demonstrated ways of transforming various data sets into biodiversity indicators, and explored different uses of the findings in analysing change, monitoring progress towards targets, raising awareness and stimulating policy development; showing the real-life influence of these things on national targets and policies in fields such as management of wetlands and fisheries. This created a demand for indicator information, and strengthened mandates for the monitoring work to produce the necessary data. Many of the indicators produced in the BINU project were also found to be suitable for reporting against the global 2010 biodiversity target.

1.9 UNEP-WCMC also played a central role in another source of experience and transferable guidance products, namely the GEF Full-Sized Project “2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership” (2010 BIP), which ran from 2007-2010, and while primarily geared to developing indicators at global level, included a component that looked at global-national linkages. Given that its execution overlapped with the timeframe of BICSA, and that the same organisation was coordinating both projects (as with BINU), cross-fertilisation between the two was included as a feature of the BICSA project’s design.

1.10 The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and its post-2005 follow-up were also relevant, in particular to the development of indicators concerning ecosystem services. Again UNEP-WCMC was able to draw on its direct involvement in this. The MA had given specific attention to the sub-regional scale of assessment, and initiatives using MA methods which offered relevant experience for BICSA to draw upon included the Southern Africa sub-global assessment (SAfMA 2004) and an “Atlas of ecosystems and human well-being in Kenya” coordinated by the World Resources Institute (WRI 2007).

Project objectives

1.11 The BICSA project was designed to build on the opportunities and perspectives described above, and to assist in tackling the limitations on biodiversity and ecosystem services indicator development and use in Southern and Eastern Africa by strengthening capacity among key stakeholders. These stakeholders included both (i) the experts in government agencies, NGOs and academia who manage data and calculate indicator findings and (ii) policymakers and decisionmakers who interpret and use the findings in their work, including particularly the appointed focal points in each country with responsibility for implementation of the CBD. All were seen to need ways of producing information that would be scientifically credible, relevant to national priorities, suitable for reporting on international obligations and communicable in an accessible manner. Specific priorities were to be determined by each country according to their own practical needs.

1.12 The project’s overall objective and its two “expected accomplishments” were formally stated in the Project Document as follows:

Objective: To strengthen capacity in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national policies, including PRSPs¹ and international reporting for the MDG-7 on environmental sustainability and the 2010 biodiversity target.

Expected Accomplishments:

¹ = Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

1. Increased technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.
2. Improved capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting, to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.

1.13 Project documents refer to additional allied objectives, including production of new information resources, helping countries to learn about international developments in assessment of ecosystem services, identification of “champion” organisations, and facilitation of new links to the development community. It was considered that ongoing efforts to harmonise aspects of biodiversity indicators and reporting at international level in Africa would benefit from the project. Strengthening of UNEP-WCMC’s own capacity in relevant subject areas was also an aim.

1.14 The project particularly sought to involve national statistical offices, who have responsibilities both for national production of statistics and the use of these statistics in international reporting, including on progress with the MDGs. Environmental statistics and indicators were rapidly beginning to become part of the work of these offices where they had not been previously, and the project aimed to secure the inclusion of one or two appropriate biodiversity indicators in the reports they would produce in future. This was intended, through the involvement of the UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA) in particular, to support the implementation of the African Environmental Information Network (AEIN), the UN Statistical Division programme on training and capacity building in environment statistics, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa’s strategic and business plan for the Africa Centre of Statistics.

1.15 Annual government reports on MDG-7 were seen as an important policy-relevant driver and destination for indicator findings, as were the national reports to the CBD, one relevant round of which fell due in March 2009 and thus provided a useful specific focus for effort during the project.

Funding, organisation and activities

1.16 This was the first UNEP-WCMC project to be undertaken with funding from the UN Development Account (UNDA). A first concept was submitted to UNEP in September 2006 in response to a call for proposals, followed by an invitation to submit a full proposal in 2008 and approval later that year. Implementation was by UNEP through DEWA, WCMC and the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, with support from the 2010 BIP project (see above) and assistance from various partner organisations in the region (see section 3E). Although seen in some quarters as a sub-component of BIP and known in others as the “UNDA project”, it was commonly known among the African partners as “Biodiversity Indicators Capacity Strengthening in Africa” (BICSA), and this shorthand has been adopted in the present report.

1.17 Four **main activities** were specified, as follows:

1. Six training and lesson-learning workshops (three in southern and three in eastern Africa) on the selection and use of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators.
2. Provision of on-line and in-country technical support to national indicator agencies in the calculation and interpretation of indicators and ecosystem services assessment, according to specific needs.
3. Peer-to-peer communication and support between professionals in the calculation and use of indicators, through access to web-based contact information, technical guidance papers and the production of case studies.
4. Exchange visits by technical staff in Africa working on biodiversity and ecosystem services indicator production and use.

1.18 Over the project's life, its basic plan and budgets were relatively little modified. The main exceptions were the dropping of activity 4 and redirecting of the funding for it into country support; better than expected support in kind from BIP; and the granting of a four-month no-cost extension (to December 2010) to offset start-up delays (see section 3D).

2 Evaluation scope, objectives and methods

2.1 This Terminal Evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation and Oversight Unit (EOU) of UNEP, in order to examine the impacts of the BICSA project, including the likelihood of future impacts. It also assesses project performance and the implementation of planned activities and outputs. The process is designed to assist UNEP in establishing (a) whether the project accomplished what it set out to do, and deployed the resources provided appropriately, and (b) whether it has attributably made the intended net difference to relevant environmental conditions beyond what would have happened in its absence. It is also designed to provide feedback to project managers, participants and other stakeholders: lessons learned and recommendations are given in sections 5 and 6 of this report respectively.

2.2 The report sits in a chain of processes for auditing and giving assurance at different levels. Supervision by UNEP as well as project implementation is covered (see section 3I); the evaluation report is itself reviewed in turn, and then evaluations are used by UNEP's governance to assess the Programme's own effectiveness. Although the project was funded by the UN Development Account, the UNDA has not stipulated any evaluation requirements of its own; but it too requires assurance in a similar way and it will rely for this on UNEP's process - this avoids duplication and allows for comparability with other UNEP projects.

2.3 The approach taken was framed by Terms of Reference (ToR) provided by the Evaluation Office and reproduced in annex 1 of this report. Explanations of the derivation of rating scores and other methodological issues are given there. The method for the "Review of Outcomes to Impacts" analysis (ROtI) which has helped to inform sections 3A, 3B and 3C is given in annex 6.

2.4 The ToR specified three principal questions as the focus of the evaluation, viz: How successful was the project in:

- strengthening the capacity of governments in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem indicators in support of national policies, including Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and international reporting for the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 and the 2010 biodiversity target;
- increasing technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring;
- improving the capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.

These correspond respectively to the overall objective and two expected accomplishments of the project. The findings are discussed in section 3A.

2.5 This Terminal Evaluation (TE) constitutes the only formal external review of the BICSA project. Larger projects or those which run into difficulties would normally be subject to a Mid-Term Evaluation as well, but that has not been necessary in this case.

2.6 The TE was undertaken by a single independent international consultant. It was commissioned to run over approximately 23 days spread between 2 January 2012 and 10 April 2012. The formal end of the BICSA project was December 2010, so this timing for the evaluation allowed a reasonable period of potential post-project impact to be assessed. The disadvantage was that consultees' memories of project experiences were not as fresh or complete as they would have been with an earlier evaluation, and a number of the individuals concerned had moved on and could not be contacted.

2.7 In a more recent addition to the EOU methodology, a separate 30-page TE "Inception Report" was produced as a precursor to the evaluation proper. Its structure followed

additional terms of reference prescribed by the EOU, and it was designed to serve three purposes:

- to give a preliminary exposition of the project’s conceptual “theory of change”;
- to review the quality of the project design; and
- to outline a framework of questions to be addressed by the TE.

Elements of this are reproduced in annexes 2 (framework of questions), 6 (theory of change) and 7 (review of project design), updated as necessary in light of the evaluation fieldwork.

2.8 The multiple methods used for gathering input to the evaluation proper included the following (for details see the annexes referred to):

- Desk review of project documents, web materials, reports and other published materials, internal records and correspondence, as well as external contextual material (see annex 4).
- Consulting over 80 project stakeholders by personal email, including UNEP-WCMC and UNEP-DEWA staff, all the project’s workshop participants, other partners, collaborators, advisers and wider beneficiaries. The list aimed to include individuals who would be able to be challenging critics of the project, not only its most loyal champions; and some with only scant acquaintance with the project, in order to test its impact at that level too. Free comments were invited, but to assist further, a standard set of five key open questions was also provided, plus a longer list of 87 questions for those who wished to have more, and 11 others to guide discussions with relevant individuals on the project’s financial management. Fourteen substantive responses were received, from consultees in seven countries. Details of the questions are given in annex 2, and details of the respondents are given in annex 3.
- Telephone and skype interviews with the organisations (SANBI and KWS) who had been sub-contracted to assist with workshop coordination in Southern and Eastern Africa respectively.
- Two days of meetings and individual interviews at UNEP-WCMC’s offices in Cambridge, with senior managers, project staff and others who had played some role in the project or could otherwise offer a perspective. A separate question framework was provided in advance of these meetings, to assist those involved to prepare. (To keep the dimensions of the evaluation within proportionate bounds, no budget or time allocation was provided for field visits to project implementation locations or face-to-face meetings with stakeholders in Africa; reliance for their input being placed instead on the other methods listed here).
- In various cases, further questions of clarification and amplification were followed up by email or telephone.

3 Project performance and impact

3.1 The evaluation criteria set by UNEP for project performance and impact (see annex 1) are divided into four categories, which are covered in the present report in the following way:

- Attainment of objectives and planned results Section 3A
- Sustainability and catalytic role Sections 3B, 3C
- Processes affecting attainment of project results Sections 3D, 3E, 3F, 3G, 3H, 3I, 3J
- Complementarity with UNEP programmes and strategies Section 3K.

Ratings for those aspects requiring them are given in section 4.

3(A) Attainment of objectives and planned results

3A.1 In line with the evaluation Terms of Reference, this section first discusses the *outputs* and activities of the project, before separately considering its *outcomes*, i.e. its effectiveness in achieving ultimate objectives, supported by the results of the *Review of Outcomes to Impacts* analysis in annex 6. The *relevance* of the objectives is also covered, and finally, reference is made to the *efficiency* with which this was all delivered.

Achievement of outputs and activities

3A.2 The BICSA Project Document defined four activities in its logical framework (logframe), as follows:

1. Six training and lesson-learning workshops (three in southern and three in eastern Africa) on the selection and use of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators.
2. Provision of on-line and in-country technical support to national indicator agencies in the calculation and interpretation of indicators and ecosystem services assessment, according to specific needs.
3. Peer-to-peer communication and support between professionals in the calculation and use of indicators, through access to web-based contact information, technical guidance papers and the production of case studies.
4. Exchange visits by technical staff in Africa working on biodiversity and ecosystem services indicator production and use.

3A.3 No “outputs” were defined as such. The logframe expresses one overall objective and two “expected accomplishments”. All three of these are couched in terms of “increased capacity”, so they all really constitute outcomes, and are therefore discussed in the “effectiveness” sub-section below. If outputs had been described they would probably have included workshops completed, methods documented/lessons learned, indicators developed and reports produced. The four activities were all linked to one another: all were described as contributing to both of the expected accomplishments and were intended to run concurrently.

Delivering the workshops

3A.4 In each sub-region the workshops were spread over roughly a 12-month period. Each was of 3 days’ duration and was structured as follows:

- First (inception) workshop: national and international needs for indicators; CBD and MDG indicator frameworks, good practice in biodiversity indicator development; identification of national priorities on which to focus during the project (1-3 indicators per country), definition of expectations and support needs; development of country plans for action and engagement.
- Second workshop: review of data and stakeholder inputs, review of experiences; approaches to assessment of ecosystems and their services;
- Final workshop: review of outputs; lessons learned and recommendations.

Full reports of each workshop (between 29 and 100 pages each) are posted on the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership website at <http://www.bipnational.net/> (see also annex 4).

3A.5 Fifty-eight participants from 13 countries took part, with between 20 and 40 attending each workshop, and mostly good levels of continuity of representation from one occasion to the next. Substantive discussion took place each time about national action steps, on-going networking activities and follow-up support, so that as far as possible the workshops were made part of an integrated and continuing programme of work, rather than being disconnected “one-off” events. The detail of each one was planned in light of the outcomes of previous ones where applicable and in light of ongoing communications, rather than being completely pre-figured at the start of the project. This appropriately allowed adaptation to evolving needs and experiences. Indeed prior to the inception workshops there was no certainty that development of new indicators with each country’s own resources (since the project had no budget for it) would be feasible, so this question had to be tested before proceeding further.

3A.6 Logistical arrangements were coordinated by two sub-contracted partner organisations: the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) for Southern Africa and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) for Eastern Africa (see section 3E for further details). In addition, the Tropical Biology Association and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research supported the ecosystem services component of the second workshops in Eastern and Southern Africa respectively. Largely linked to the proximity of SANBI and KWS, the workshops were held in South Africa, Namibia and Kenya. One or two consultees would have preferred more venue-rotation; but on any plan it would have been impossible to satisfy every country in this respect, and the choices made proved to be practical and successful.

3A.7 UNEP-WCMC’s depth of experience and skill in training and workshop management was a strength of the project. All the evidence is that the BICSA workshops were conducted to very high professional standards indeed; being thoroughly prepared, structurally balanced and of an appropriate length for their purpose. The technical substance was sound and well-judged, and supporting materials were sufficient and of consistent high quality. The mix of participants represented a potentially challenging heterogeneity of starting capabilities, but the content was pitched in a varied and balanced way such that the whole process seems to have managed to help novices and stretch experts at the same time. The pacing was generally geared to the needs of participants rather than forcing an over-planned agenda. Participants also appreciated the way the workshops focused on highly practical real-life applications, rather than being overly generic or purely theoretical.

3A.8 One consultee referred to frustrations associated with the propensity of some participants to be unpunctual, to change travel plans at the last minute and to give undue priority to side-attractions (such as shopping) in novel locations. Such things have bedevilled international workshop organisers since the form was invented, and it is hard to see what BICSA could have done to eliminate their impact, beyond what it already did to provide an overall timeframe that could accommodate contingencies without being profligate.

3A.9 Lessons have been learned from other indicator programmes to the effect that the most effective strategy is to define likely ultimate “storylines” at the outset and work “backwards” from those, rather than focusing initially too much on analysis, thinking only later about how to communicate findings. BICSA took this on board by giving good emphasis to the subject of reporting at the outset, with a session at the inception workshops that invited critiques of various examples of indicator products. The second workshops then gave good attention to ways of ensuring that key messages are directed towards specified behaviour change on the part of specified target audiences, and defending challenges to scientific authority and from the question “so what?”.

3A.10 Consultees warmly commended the very participatory character of the workshops, and their creation of an empowering environment which successfully cultivated confidence and enthusiasm. The bedrock of this was a climate of *trust* (a safe environment in which to share vulnerabilities so they can be worked on; a shared interest in making collective progress, etc). This climate then contributed to a constructive sense of peer pressure to “perform” well at the next workshop, and to give a good account of advances made in the

interim. The facilitators worked skilfully to create these fertile conditions, and this is a strong point of the project overall.

3A.11 Workshop participants were requested as part of the project to give feedback on their experience of each event by means of standard evaluation forms, and the (anonymised) summary results are appended to the workshop reports. These reflect a good level of self-assessed benefits in terms of step-shifts in understanding, practical utility of products and growth in confidence.

3A.12 The workshops provided a platform and a catalyst for new links and collaborations in almost all project countries between government agencies, statistical offices and NGOs, and did likewise in many cases also between similar interests in different (normally adjacent) countries. Opportunities for peer-to-peer learning between workshops were said to be an additional source of benefit beyond the structured training of the workshops themselves, as indeed the project had intended (see further under “effectiveness” below). In response to the evaluation’s speculative question to consultees about whether bilateral support given by UNEP-WCMC to individual countries would have been as effective as the collective workshop model, this “multiple cross-fertilisation of expertise” factor was cited as a reason why bilateral support would not have worked so well; along with the associated feeling of being joined in a unified sub-regional agenda.

3A.13 The workshops were helped by their creative design and varied ingredients, which included presentations, group exercises, role-playing, plenary discussions and time for informal social interaction. The dynamics were further broadened on the occasion of the second meetings, when field visits to several relevant sites were used for exploring ecosystem services indicator issues.

3A.14 A crucial element was the invitation at the inception workshops for participants to spend time specifying the priority issues and relevant policy targets for which improved biodiversity indicators would be valuable in each of their countries. Their main capacity challenges and indicator development needs were also explored. This made a major contribution to establishing relevance (see below) and creating a baseline expression of needs against which project achievements could (in theory) be judged (although in practice this latter purpose could have been better served by more systematic documenting and referring-back - see section 3J). Its key significance however was in enshrining an ethos of ownership, and thereby a strong motivation to commit the time and energy required to progress.

3A.15 Bringing in examples from other parts of the world (e.g. to critique different ways of presenting information) was a useful element, helping to broaden the frame of reference and to make the critiquing more neutral. Both of these aspects helped participants to “open out” more than they otherwise might have done. The same was also achieved by a role-play exercise introduced in the final Southern Africa workshop, where participants were invited to form teams to design and develop indicators for fictional countries, according to the recommended framework (see below). This moved the thinking beyond the limitations of each person’s own country specifics: it was successful in promoting understanding of the framework and building confidence in the approach, and was very well received.

3A.16 Based on plans devised during the workshops, most participants took steps on returning home to set up a national biodiversity indicators committee, task force or indicator development team, and national stakeholder meetings or workshops were held in nearly all of the countries. These built a basis for cascading the sub-regional capacity-building into national delivery processes. It was a basis however that depended on the self-motivation of those concerned, on a degree of voluntary effort and on the resources that each country was itself able to devote to it. Making progress and maintaining momentum under these circumstances was a challenge in some cases.

3A.17 The project as such did not offer resourcing for this operational dimension, so as to avoid creating any external funding dependency for it. A small seed funding contribution was

however made available to assist with national activities such as stakeholder meetings and publication of reports, and the initial allocation was supplemented later from savings in other areas (see section 3E). While the amounts were small compared to actual needs, this was an important demonstration of good faith and a useful incentive for sustained involvement. It was challenging in some cases however to find a cost-effective mechanism for channelling the small sums concerned to their intended recipients (see section 3H).

3A.18 Project documents hinted that the workshops might cover issues of ecosystem assessment, as well as indicators. This could have added an unmanageably large area of interest and diluted the impact of the work; but in practice it referred only to the discussion of potential indicators for ecosystem services, which was covered in field visits during the second workshops. Services indicators can pose some particularly complex challenges compared to the measurement of status and trends of species and habitats. In the event, some cogent thinking developed on metrics for issues such as forest cover, water flow and wildlife tourism, which could in principle be related to biodiversity conservation interventions for game management or proxies such as protected area coverage: but care will always be required in substantiating storylines based on hypotheses about the relationships between drivers and impacts in such cases.

Involving the right people

3A.19 Choosing the right participants was critical. The scale of the project meant that its initial capacity impact would occur among a highly selective sample of relevant people, and significant reliance would be put on their success in being catalytic among a wider pool of stakeholders thereafter (see section 3C). UNEP regional offices, the African Centre of Statistics and the two sub-contracted coordination organisations (see above) all helped to identify workshop invitees. The process for this was well thought-through (see section 3E). Individuals, institutions and functions were targeted according to their pivotal role *at operationally engaged levels* in the development and use of relevant indicators; and invitations were pitched accordingly. The project particularly sought to involve national statistical offices, who have responsibilities both for national production of statistics and the use of these statistics in international reporting, including on progress with the MDGs. Another important link was to implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2010 biodiversity target, so CBD national focal points were also approached.

3A.20 Invitations were sent out by the UNEP Regional Office for Africa on behalf of UNEP, and the “convening power” of UNEP which was brought to bear in this way was considered to have been a significant factor in attracting a good response. The resulting makeup of participants broadly met expectations, and included government agencies, intergovernmental bodies in the region, NGOs and academics. The gender balance averaged 75% male and 25% female, which is probably no worse than the proportions in the professional contexts from which participants were drawn. It might have been useful at the start to identify alternative or substitute invitees for key institutions in each country in the event of availability problems, or particularly in the event of job moves or other staff turnover (which did affect the project in a number of cases). One or two evaluation consultees took differing views on the relative importance of the NGO representatives in being able to secure institutional “embedding” of project benefits “back home”; but for most countries the mix seemed appropriate. Efforts to involve UNDP unfortunately did not succeed. Only one CBD focal point participated, but it was later concluded that more operational levels below the formal named focal points were more relevant.

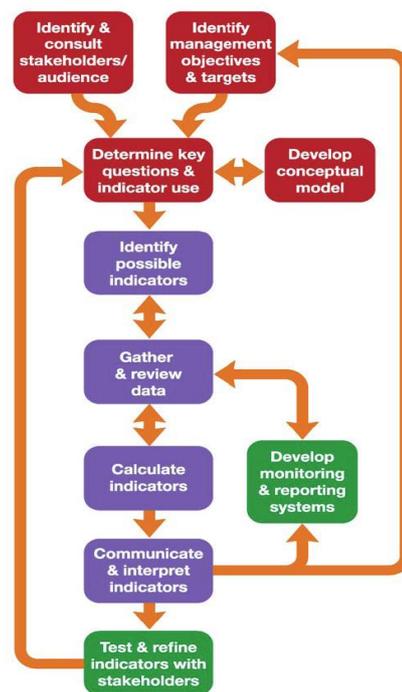
3A.21 The countries and organisations in each sub-region represented a very broad span of circumstances (indeed some opposite extremes, in the African context), in relation to the scale of their domestic policy and resource management challenges, levels of previous engagement with biodiversity indicators, funding availability and likely future capacity to implement indicator regimes. As a project within the UNEP framework it would not have been politic to exclude any particular country or countries; and the diversity was willingly embraced. The

project also did not try to stratify the workshop programme on this basis to any great degree. This created some risk of the process being too “multi-speed” and difficult to manage, but in the event this was handled well and did not become a major obstacle.

Guidance materials, and technical support

3A.22 Guidance on global indicator systems and on methods for designing and operating appropriate indicators at national level was a highly commended core part of the project. It was led by the document “Guidance for national biodiversity indicator development and use” produced in the framework of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) and based on the approach tested in the earlier “Biodiversity Indicators for National Use” GEF project. Central to this is an organising framework for indicator development, shown in Figure 3A-1 below.

Figure 3A-1. BIP Biodiversity Indicator Development Framework



3A.23 Having a framework of this kind proved extremely useful for allowing the different countries to address common issues in the project. It does not need to be rigidly applied, and there can be different starting-points depending on a given user’s circumstances. The discipline however of (for example) clearly demarcating steps for defining purposes and steps for indicator production was of crucial benefit to all. The guidance further elaborates very sound principles concerning e.g. progressing by step-wise questions, making contexts explicit, understanding data limitations while making the most of what exists, not trying to consolidate too many variables, not over-interpreting indicator signals, and thinking ahead to expected “storylines” and the use of results in decision-making. The workshops also made good use of the “indicator fact sheet template” included in the document, and this was supplemented by case studies and worked examples from other countries.

3A.24 In addition to its main global website, the BIP has a linked site dedicated to national applications, and this was used as a platform for making the guidance above and other relevant material readily available to stakeholders in BICSA. All workshop participants had some level of internet access: bandwidth and connection quality varied so use of web-based materials was not assumed, but it seems that the project initially had bigger ambitions for this (e.g. creating its own website) than were eventually realised (or needed). Participants were subscribed to UNEP-WCMC’s web-based document-sharing and forum facility, but in the event this was hardly used: it is not clear whether more active facilitation of this or more user-

friendliness (eg more descriptive titling of items, simpler messaging options) would have made a difference, and it may simply have been superfluous.

3A.25 Informed by some identification of priorities at the first two workshops, UNEP-WCMC offered guidance and technical support between workshops by email and telephone. In most cases this concerned help with selection, calculation and presentation of indicators. One consultee has since suggested that demonstration videos on DVD might have been another way of providing guidance. In one case (Mozambique) the Project Coordinator was able to make a three-day visit in person to facilitate work towards a national State of the Environment report. It appears from the original project plan that initially it might have been expected to make more use of occasional consultants and BIP partner connections in the region for this kind of purpose. The third activity listed in the logframe (“peer-to-peer communication and support”) also suggests a larger initial intention than the eventual reported delivery of this as mostly by means of the BIP website; but in both cases there is no evidence of users being dissatisfied with the levels of service they received.

Indicators developed and reports produced

3A.26 The objective of the project was to build the skills, confidence and collaborations necessary for relevant indicators to be produced and used; so it should not be judged by whatever actual assessments and reports may or may not have been produced. Nonetheless it helps to give a more complete picture of outputs and activities if some information on these “downstream” consequences is also included here.

3A.27 As an attributable consequence of the project, six of the 13 participating countries developed new indicators, and most of the other countries are reported to be in the process of doing so. Five countries have either produced publications using their indicator findings or are expecting to do so in the near future. The information available to the evaluation on which these statements are based is not necessarily fully up to date; but a summary of the picture as reported is as follows:

Botswana	10 indicators selected and development begun Content to be added to existing national Environmental Information System
Burundi	3 indicators developed
Ethiopia	7 indicators developed National biodiversity indicators overview report produced in 2010, extensively reflecting BICSA content
Kenya	7 indicators developed Draft national biodiversity report/booklet expected early 2012
Lesotho	10 indicators identified for development
Mozambique	National State of the Environment report in preparation
Namibia	18 indicators developed National web-based Environmental Information System/database being developed (GEF project) National State of Biodiversity report expected
Rwanda	Input made to separate project for developing a national Biodiversity Indicators System
South Africa	3 new indicators identified for development; and national partnership formed
Swaziland	5 new indicators identified for development; and national partnership formed
Tanzania	3 indicators developed
Uganda	9 indicators developed Draft national biodiversity report expected early 2012
Zimbabwe	3 new indicators identified for development; and national partnership formed

3A.28 Lack of suitable/accessible data was a problem in most countries (and sometimes was underestimated, with some relevant institutions being assumed to hold more than they did):

but during the workshops all countries were able to identify at least one relevant indicator on which they could make useful progress. Delays in progress were otherwise mainly due to challenges in developing the new collaborations desired (and in one case to a general election and government reorganisation), rather than to technical indicator production issues. Most of the indicators developed so far relate to species, habitats and conservation responses, with only one or two addressing delivery of ecosystem services. In many cases the progress achieved has involved the establishment of new collaborations between (for example) government authorities, national statistics offices, NGOs and academics.

Activity 4: exchange visits

3A.29 Over the project's life, its basic activity plan was relatively little modified. One exception was the "exchange visits" element (activity 4): this was originally to consist of group study tours, which proved too expensive and became peer-to-peer exchange visits, which in turn were judged to be less valuable than national stakeholder meetings in between workshops; and so no exchange visits took place. Some provision of technical support from South Africa to Zimbabwe on the use of Geographic Information Systems was discussed, but eventually could not be progressed due to difficulties in making contractual arrangements. The budget-line for activity 4 was redirected into country support. Whether or not this indicates any lack of foresight, it demonstrates some degree of adaptive management, and ultimately no real harm resulted.

Relevance

3A.30 "Relevance" in this context is defined as consistency of the project with relevant needs, policies and mandates. The project's outcomes and impacts were designed from the outset to be tied to governmentally mandated reporting processes, notably those relating to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as well as other biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements. The regularly-repeating nature of these provides a strong basis for sustained relevance in future (see section 3B). No cross-reference appeared to be made however to capacity-building programmes adopted by the MEAs. Links were also recognised with a UNEP regional cooperation subprogramme on statistics, including UNEP-DEWA's promotion of the development of environment statistics in eastern and southern Africa as part of its co-ordinating role in the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN), which is co-ordinated with the UN Statistics Division and the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Relevance to UNEP strategies is discussed further in section 3K.

3A.31 Some strong focus on the global "2010" biodiversity target and the 4th CBD national reports due in 2009 initially drew attention away from the potential for developing indicators for post-2010 CBD targets and a new generation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), but these aspects received more attention later. The emerging importance of indicators related to ecosystem services was well recognised, albeit more challenging to progress. In the countries concerned, at least to begin with, there were few measurable biodiversity targets adopted at national level to which indicators could relate, but sufficient inferences could generally be drawn about the priority questions that needed to be answered. In fact domestic reporting purposes took precedence over international ones throughout the project (in the context of links to BIP's "global-national linkages" component this was not quite the intention; but it better satisfied immediate in-country needs).

Effectiveness (achievement of objectives)

3A.32 The objectives of BICSA were formally stated in the following way:

Objective: To strengthen capacity in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national

policies, including PRSPs² and international reporting for the MDG-7 on environmental sustainability and the 2010 biodiversity target.

Expected Accomplishments:

1. Increased technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.
2. Improved capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting, to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.

3A.33 The measures given in the project's logical framework for assessing the achievement of these aims focused on improved availability of indicator analyses to support policy, and improved content of relevant reports. While these measures could be criticised for being only at the output level, "capacity" by its nature is at least partly a means to an end; so an assessment based purely on outcomes might be an unfair way of judging the effectiveness of a project that is all about capacity strengthening. The present evaluation considers that capacity can be thought of as embodying both a component of demonstrable performance and a component of *potentiality* for delivering performance, and so BICSA's capacity-strengthening achievements are examined below in terms of "potential", "outputs", and "influence".

Capacity as potential

3A.34 Without anything different being manifest tangibly on the surface, *latent* capabilities to respond correctly *if and when required to do so* can be increased, and *resilience* to problems *if and when they arise* can be strengthened. There is an obvious difficulty in framing any baseline against which to judge this kind of progress, and in specifying measurable aspirations for growth. Enough anecdotal information and deduction was available however to make it plain that starting capacities in many of the BICSA countries were very low, and also that there was considerable variation between countries (as mentioned earlier in this section). Baselines and assumed "without-project" trajectories were not very systematically set out for the project as a whole, and it was unclear whether capacity increase was meant to be seen mainly in terms of countries, or institutions, or individuals. Nonetheless, participants at the first workshops gave time to defining their own measures of success for their involvement in the project.

3A.35 Project reports, evaluation consultations and other sources have subsequently reported some excellent levels of self-assessed impact in terms of increased insight, personal familiarity with the issues, competence in putting indicator techniques into practice and confidence in managing relevant agendas. This is attributed to the workshops process and also to the written guidance materials, which have continued to be drawn upon afterwards. Consultee comments included "the workshops have been the backbone of my training", "I constantly refer to the guidance", "had it not been for BICSA I would still be in the dark" and even "the project has changed my life"!

3A.36 Another cause of growth was the variety of new connections that were built through the project, referred to elsewhere in this report as the "social capital" dimension, with benefits going beyond the technical. Bringing stakeholders together, sharing experience and mutual support produced new levels of motivation and a degree of sub-regional coherence, which constitutes an additional capacity benefit that would not have existed otherwise. At least some individuals also grew their skills in collaboration and leadership (not excluding UNEP-WCMC's own staff, some of whom were said to have made great strides in professional development over the course of the project).

3A.37 Similar impacts occurred in respect of links between institutions, both within and between countries. New government-NGO data-sharing arrangements were forged in Kenya

² = Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

and Zimbabwe, and transboundary collaborations resulted in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Most countries saw some improved inter-agency understanding and links at national level, and stakeholder involvement in biodiversity monitoring was expanded in South Africa reportedly as a result of the project.

Capacity judged by outputs

3A.38 Normal “theory of change” models see activities and outputs as precursors to outcomes, or as “means to the ends”, and they have been discussed in that sense above. In the present case however, since capacity to generate outputs is itself an outcome or end-objective of the project, outputs provide a relevant indicator of achievement in this sense too. The list of indicators and reports developed by project beneficiaries given earlier in this section above, therefore, is considered to demonstrate that good progress was made in equipping appropriate individuals and institutions with the capacities intended, and that they managed to put this to relevant use. Given the policy imperatives also discussed above, it is of course possible that some of this would have been embarked upon with or without BICSA’s help: it is not easy objectively to test the incremental difference made by the project in this respect, but all the qualitative evidence collected by the present evaluation at least suggests that it can be credited with much of what has emerged. This is a significant achievement.

3A.39 A difference was also made to reports which were not themselves attributable to BICSA but whose content was influenced by the project, such as national reports to the CBD (e.g Tanzania recorded that decisive input to theirs from the national Bureau of Statistics was a consequence of the project) and one example of a national MDG report (that for South Africa, where an indicator developed through the project - and drawing on departmental collaborations which the project stimulated - featured prominently, and where its inclusion was clinched by the BICSA-inspired involvement of the country’s national statistical office).

3A.40 The Project Document made reference to an expectation that efforts to harmonise aspects of indicators and reporting internationally in Africa would benefit from the project. The Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARC) participated in the project and were keen on this aspect, and there is a tradition among several neighbouring countries of working together on shared concerns. BICSA workshop reports from Eastern Africa make brief reference to “common indicators across countries” and to “harmonised indicators for the region”; but it is not clear what if anything transpired on this front.

Capacity judged by influence

3A.41 BICSA’s objectives include a reference to “support of policies”, describing the “support” in terms of being able to report on progress. The project did not set itself up to contribute directly to the achievement of policy in terms of the resulting environmental benefits (biodiversity conservation outcomes); but in contributing to the conditions that enable others to do so, it logically had the prospect of such benefits in view. Plausible forward linkages to them are explored in the ROTI analysis (see below and annex 6). An underlying general assumption in applying this thinking to the field of indicators is that better information leads to better decisions. Testing this requires evidence not only of decision-makers becoming better informed (taking up information provided and assimilating it), but as a consequence *decisions themselves* being better informed (more fully or logically reflecting knowledge, being implementable in more effective and verifiable ways, etc).

3A.42 One good documented example of this in BICSA’s case was in South Africa, where the NBSAP in 2005 had set a protected area coverage target of 12% of the country’s area by 2010, only half of which had been achieved. Sub-targets had been set for coverage of 437 different vegetation types, and indicator work supported by BICSA showed that over one third of these had little or no protection. Good presentation of these findings then led to the Department of Environmental Affairs increasing its funding support to provincial departments to help them increase the rate at which nature reserves were gazetted under the relevant national legislation. Expansion of reserves does not of itself necessarily improve biodiversity

status, but this is at least an example of good indicator information leading to a positive policy decision. According to the National Biodiversity Institute something of this kind might have occurred without BICSA having taken place, but the project is credited with having provided an impetus and particularly the requisite methodology.

3A.43 Some other selected examples of influence include the following:

- **Botswana:** Capacity and approaches developed by the project for biodiversity indicators to be used for revising other types of indicators in the national Environmental Information System.
- **Burundi:** Evidence of fish declines led to increased use of mesh-size controls in fisheries regulation. Indicators of wetland and forest conservation area coverage used by the two relevant state management authorities to plan reforestation and protection activities.
- **Ethiopia:** Major advances in capacity from the project brought previously very separate institutional activities into a solid joint effort. New indicators incorporated into 4th national report to CBD, country report to FAO on animal genetic resources and revision of national wolf conservation strategy.
- **Kenya:** Project experience used in development of national biodiversity and ecological data collection and monitoring protocols, designed for use with indicators and specified reporting processes, including assessments against the “Aichi targets” of the global Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. Intended production every year of a national indicators handbook/report on the state of wildlife and conservation.
- **Mozambique:** Project results integrated into the production of the country’s first State of the Environment report.
- **Swaziland:** Capacity and approaches developed by the project to be used in development of a national environmental data and information inventory, including added indicators. Influencing proposals by the national Environment Authority to revise the national Environment Action Plan to incorporate appropriate baselines and outcome effectiveness indicators; and to revise NBSAP objectives into quantified targets.
- **Tanzania:** Indicators developed through the project used in national reports on State of the Environment and on elephant status and trends, including for reporting internationally to the African Elephant Database, on the CITES Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme, and on coastal forests of East Africa. Understanding of elephant populations in national parks improved.
- **Uganda:** Indicators to be formally adopted by national committee on biodiversity conservation and used as the basis for government and stakeholder training. The project also helped to improve thinking on targets for the country’s revised NBSAP.
- **Zimbabwe:** Wet grassland indicators developed through a BICSA-stimulated government-NGO partnership were incorporated into development and monitoring of a conservation action plan for Wattled Cranes and Grey Crowned Cranes in central Zimbabwe, as well as in baseline-setting and ground-truthing for a vegetation mapping exercise. Indicators developed through the project also used in compiling 4th national report to CBD.

3A.44 Not every country or project participant was able to report progress in terms of attributable policy initiatives or behaviour change, and interpreting both the change itself and the attribution are fraught with complex challenges. The project examined key examples of *available policy purposes* to which indicators can be directed, but it possibly could have done more in the workshops to cover ways of *actively seeking to secure* official adoption of indicators, policy mandates for their development and use, etc.

3A.45 One important way in which the prospects for this were helped nevertheless was through the very positive engagement of national statistical offices in all of the countries. These provided a key avenue for cross-sectoral uptake of the project’s results beyond the biodiversity community, in a more promising way perhaps than encouraging that community itself to perform better at reaching out to other sectors. The statistical offices are responsible *inter alia* for MDG reporting, which provides a regularly-repeating opportunity for indicator use (and in which coverage of environmental issues is increasingly being sought). More important perhaps is these agencies’ ability to report biodiversity information in such contexts

on a par with other types of information, giving it a stronger status than it might have in biodiversity-specific reports, and therefore allowing wider impact across government. This should for example make it more likely that governments would have regard to such information in making major investment decisions (although some biodiversity indicators, such as those relating to tourism, water, timber, game or other resources, present more scope for this than others, such as protected area coverage).

3A.46 As mentioned above, the project’s objectives included strengthening capacity for production of indicators that would support national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, which are prepared by relevant countries in the context of World Bank and other international poverty reduction support. The evaluation has seen no evidence of any progress having been made in relation to this aspect.

3A.47 The Swaziland and Uganda examples above flag another interesting facet of influence. Normally indicators would be devised to illuminate progress in achieving targets, with the definition of targets coming first. Iterative design feedback however can take place between the two things, and it seems that through improved experience with indicators the project has also influenced the framing of appropriate biodiversity conservation targets.

3A.48 The need for an appropriately matching regime of indicators and targets was included in the key messages developed by the project participants for delivery to the CBD’s Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice at its 14th meeting in 2010. Another of these key messages concerned the coherence of links between global and national indicator systems: this influenced SBSTTA’s own recommendations concerning the Terms of Reference for the CBD’s expert group on indicators, and the point was duly agreed by the CBD Conference of Parties following strong support from African delegations.

Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)

3A.49 Evaluation Terms of Reference ask about the likelihood of the project leading to changes of behaviour and policy which will result in improved environmental sustainability and conservation of biodiversity in Southern and Eastern Africa. The project’s aims and aspirations went only as far as improving capacity to generate information which would support this result; but logical inferences can be attempted concerning the onward pathways of change that can plausibly be imagined towards it, and this is the purpose of the ROtI analysis presented in annex 6. Explicit forward linkages to impact are evident from this, and positive ratings have been given; summarised in Table 3A-1.

Table 3A-1. Summary of ratings for overall likelihood of project impact achievement - from Review of Outcomes to Impacts analysis (see annex 6). (Likelihood of achievement is rated on a 6-point scale from “highly unlikely” to “highly likely”, using a combination of scores between A and D for outcomes and intermediate states, with “AA” being the highest score possible).

Outcomes	Rating	Intermediate states rating	Impact Rating	Overall rating
1. Increased technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.	A	A	-	AA = “highly likely”
2. Improved capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.	A	A		

Efficiency

3A.50 The BICSA project linked with a “family” of projects and on-going programmes in UNEP-WCMC, and the opportunities this gave for efficient planning and synergies (including

continuity of staff involvement) were well used. Experience from the Biodiversity Indicators for National Use (BINU) project (see section 1) gave BICSA many lessons-learned and ready-made design elements which did not need to be reinvented, including the core of the project's technical guidance framework. One country (Kenya) was covered by both projects, although efficiencies arising from that fact were reduced by staff turnover in Kenya.

3A.51 The timing of the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010BIP) project overlapped with BICSA, and there was good fertilisation of BICSA from BIP (not least through co-financing and support in kind, including staff time, as well as harmonisation of indicator science); although less exchange occurred in the opposite direction. There was probably more of a disconnect between the two projects than there might have been in relation to priorities and approaches to the development and use of indicators for globally-determined purposes (principally the 2010 biodiversity target): BICSA validly let national priorities speak for themselves (see section 3G), and any "inefficiency" probably lies at the level of the two projects viewed together, rather than with BICSA on its own terms.

3A.52 2010BIP was also identified as a source of guidance materials for BICSA. This accepted a certain risk of delay or non-delivery from a process which was not directly under the project's control, but given that both projects were being administered from within the same institutional environment, the non-delivery risk was acceptably low, and capitalising on BIP in this way was a helpful efficiency. The BIP has succeeded in finding resources to continue its Partnership activities beyond 2010, and in Africa this has assisted with some of BICSA's post-project follow-through needs.

3A.53 The Project Document stated that the project aimed to draw on UNEP-WCMC involvement in activities to follow up the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), but little comment has been offered on what if anything this might have meant in practice.

3A.54 The project had a clear philosophy of not embarking on the development of overly-ambitious indicators that would be dependent on external funding, and it did well at urging the best use of existing datasets and existing data-collection processes for this purpose. This is noteworthy given that under-use of existing data, and reinvention of data-gathering, is a common weakness in other projects.

3A.55 In principle there was a potentially difficult and uncertain balance to strike between the time and energy deployed at a "collective" level through the sub-regional workshops, and that made available for country-by-country support of one kind or another. A number of participants would have liked more of the latter (and perhaps they would say this whatever level of it were delivered), but there is obviously a tradeoff between targeting/individual attention on the one hand, and the cost-effectiveness, synergy and motivational benefits of the "group process" on the other. The risks of a small project being spread too thinly in this respect were high, and the evaluation considers that a correct (efficient) balance was struck. Moreover, adaptive management decisions to scale back the original peer-to-peer support etc intentions probably show that the project managers were actively working throughout to get this balance right.

3A.56 The project found itself needing to apply for (and being granted) a four-month no-cost extension, due to a combination of bureaucratic delays, some turnover of key individuals, differential development rates and outreach needs in late 2010, rather than any deep-seated inability to deliver efficiently to the original timeframe. Although the project needed more time, it needed less money than planned, and ended up coming in under budget. This is partly an "inefficiency" in the sense of having been unable, despite trying, to spend some of what was allocated on the activities intended; but in pure budget-balancing terms there was no inefficiency in the sense of profligacy. In fact overall the project may be regarded as having achieved a proportionally high level of return for the modest amount of funding invested.

3(B) Sustainability

3B.1 Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued project-derived results and impacts (not activities) after project funding and assistance has ceased. Given that BICSA ended in December 2010 there is already some evidence on which to base a short-term view about this; but for the longer term (evaluation guidance does not specify any particular time-horizon), the Review of Outcomes to Impacts technique (ROtI) is relevant, and a ROtI analysis for the project is discussed in annex 6 of this report. Evaluations are asked to address four areas of risk or support for the persistence of benefits: financial, socio-political, institutional and (if applicable) environmental.

3B.2 Given that any capacity-strengthening project should by definition produce sustainable benefits, it is perhaps surprising that there was no specific section in the BICSA project design document addressing sustainability. It may have been seen as too obvious to need attention in this way, and sensible thinking about the issue to an extent pervaded the document, “between the lines”; but it would have been good to have some explicit treatment of (for example) what post-project reinforcement needs were perceived at the start. There was also some vagueness about impact timeframes (see annex 7).

3B.3 While there was an emphasis on building understanding of contexts, concepts, indicator development methods and applications, so what was learned could be replicable in a variety of circumstances (see section 3C), BICSA in fact did more than just develop capabilities for subsequent delivery, since it also included the generation of actual indicators and analyses that were then used in “real-life”. Sustained results in this context can be expected to take the form of regular production and official use of competent indicator information for policy-relevant purposes. The intermediate stages between outcomes and impacts therefore revolve around policy drivers, statutory recognition, technical utility and institutional embedding. Continued durable achievement of the impacts will require critical minimum levels of data, commitment, and transmission of expertise as people move on.

Socio-political factors

3B.4 Socio-political risks to sustainability are small, in view of the project’s intended outcomes and impacts having been tied from the outset to well-enshrined governmentally mandated processes, notably national reporting in respect of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Reporting requirements under other biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements add further relevant policy drivers of a regularly-repeating nature indefinitely into the future, and one country also cited reporting on animal genetic resources to the UN Food & Agriculture Organisation.

3B.5 Some strong focus on the global “2010” biodiversity target, and the 4th CBD national reports due in 2009, initially drew attention away from the potential for “regularly repeating” report uses thereafter and the development of indicators for post-2010 CBD targets, including the opportunities for political and financial support through the updating of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to reflect the globally-adopted Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. The way that the project was “marketed” appears not to have made much of the potential for embedding its outcomes in this longer-term context. Later however these aspects received more attention, and BICSA’s capacity legacy (and the related indicators) have ended up being satisfactorily relevant to this post-2010 agenda.

3B.6 A central tenet of the approach was that indicator topics were chosen by the project participants according to their own perception of national priorities. This has considerably increased a durable sense of ownership, and the likelihood that there will be sufficient user demand to secure sustained production and use of the indicators concerned over time.

3B.7 The project was only able to involve a few individuals from each country as direct participants, and funding support was necessarily small, so the basis for sustainability in this respect was rather fragile. The project compensated for this however by targeting appropriate

key participants, creating high levels of motivation to sustain the capacity built, using replicable models and having good catalytic effects (see section 3C). Some evaluation consultees testified fulsomely to the personal motivation they still retained one year after the project's end, for continuing to use what they had learned and to keep self-developing. (One went so far as to report that he was "making this my lifetime achievement for conservation"). The wearing-off of "novelty value" is always an eventual possibility, but several factors appear to be resisting this so far, including high relevance and utility of the work, and increased peer-recognition for personal and departmental achievements. The project also helped to show the routes for using indicator results as feedback to adaptive management, and this is also likely to provide an enduring incentive for maintaining effort.

Financial factors

3B.8 During the project, in addition to funding for attendance at the sub-regional workshops, a very modest financial contribution was made to each country to assist with national activities such as stakeholder meetings and publication of reports. It was emphasised that this was not for supporting staff time, the collection and analysis of data, indicator development work or the dissemination of reports. The countries would have liked more, but the project's deliberate policy was (wisely) to avoid creating an external funding dependency for these core aspects that ought to be sustained post-project. The aim was to create indicators and associated processes that would be feasible to maintain with the resources that each country could (in theory) be expected to provide or secure for itself, and thus to maximise the chances of long-term sustainability in that sense.

3B.9 This is a valid assumption model, given that government departments will need to find resources from somewhere for indicator production on an on-going basis to meet the policy-mandated imperatives described above. That is not however to minimise the difficulty that many will face in doing so: several consultees pointed to elements in this mix which will not be as well-resourced as they should be, particularly at the data-collection level, but also in terms of advocacy and outreach. Already at the end of the project, hopes were being voiced about the possibility of GEF support for such things (which would of course require co-financing to be identified). One consultee suggested that investment in a common data-management and analysis platform might have cost-efficient sustainability advantages; but the evaluation considers that the motivational benefits of nationally-determined priorities (as described above) probably outweigh this.

Institutional factors

3B.10 Most of the stakeholders involved in the BICSA project in some way have job responsibilities related to indicators, so the capacity-building results of the project should feed directly in to, and be sustained by, their on-going day-to-day roles. Often this will include transfer of skills and knowledge to others. Project reports and evaluation responses list numerous instances of national policy and data initiatives, departmental programmes, strategy documents, monitoring frameworks, "state of the environment" reviews, cooperation agreements and other vehicles (several of them stimulated by the project itself) which are expected to establish and operate self-sustaining indicator processes. A particular success in consolidating sustained future institutional demand for indicator outputs lay with the ground-breaking and spirited engagement of national statistical offices in all 13 of the project countries. Their adoption in several cases of relevant indicators counts as great progress in embedding measures of biodiversity and ecosystem services into a wider policy perspective.

3B.11 Another institutional sustainability strength is the considerable "social capital" bequeathed by BICSA through the new collaborations and (seemingly sustained) delegated empowerment and network connections it generated. Participants in every project country held national meetings and/or formed national teams or task forces to take forward the work, and at least some of these continue in being, as fora for exchange of experience and mutual

support. In some cases (e.g. Kenya, Zimbabwe), enduring new confidence in government-NGO partnerships also resulted.

3B.12 Good exchange of experience occurred between countries too, and workshop participants have continued to network at sub-regional or bilateral level on the indicators agenda, in new ways that were facilitated by the project but are not dependent on it, including new transboundary monitoring initiatives. One or two consultees cited this as quite a challenging area, and there is likely to be a mixed future for it, with some instances continuing for specific reasons and others likely to taper away unless reinforced by some centrally-refreshed information services, troubleshooting or encouragement. One consultee commented that more attention should have been given to institutional end-points at the start, and to the likely role of institutions in general as opposed to pivotal individuals, making “embedding for sustainability” a more explicit aim. The evaluation considers that this was probably sufficiently considered, but may have been insufficiently articulated. In the end, overall, the prospects for institutional sustainability appear reasonably strong.

3B.13 It is inevitable that trained people will move on as careers develop and organisations evolve (in fact some instances occurred during the project itself), and some attention might usefully have been given to systemic aspects of this (see section 3C). In practice however there are good prospects for institutional embedding and skills transfer to soften the impact when people retire or leave for other fields of work, and in other cases (e.g. promotion) the effect may even be to multiply project benefits. Other factors that should help to support this include the printed and on-line guidance and information that was produced, and the documented experiences pooled during the project. Each participating country also produced a short final progress report, which was a good way of rounding things off and capturing a basic factual record of relevant information. Materials like these will help to preserve some audit-trail of reasoning and to reduce the post-project loss of “institutional memory”.

3B.14 In addition to the prospects of things sustaining themselves, inevitably there were also aspirations for possible further external support. Countries varied in the extent to which they saw this as a pre-requisite for desired levels of future delivery, but it is not surprising that some expressed a hope that UNEP-WCMC might make capacity-strengthening support on these issues a permanent area of its work. In a few instances, some unclear or unrealistic expectations about post-project support or further projects might have been developing; but in practice, any dangers of this kind have probably been overtaken by confirmation that the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) is to continue in being.

3B.15 After the conclusion of the GEF-funded phase of BIP in early 2011, significant additional funding has been secured for an expansion of the Partnership’s activities, coordinated by UNEP-WCMC. BIP will therefore continue as the leading world authority on biodiversity indicator development and production, and the aim now is to have a particularly strong focus on regional capacity building and “training of trainers”. By ensuring the maintenance of support infrastructures such as workshops, guidance, web-based resources and in other ways, this should help with efforts for consolidating and building upon the results of BICSA. Work of this kind linked to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the new generation of NBSAPs (see above) has already begun, using BICSA-compatible methods. A workshop for Eastern African countries was held in Uganda in September 2011, linked to a previous one organised by the CBD Secretariat in Rwanda in June.

Environmental factors

3B.16 Environmental factors in this context refers to risk factors in the physical environment which could jeopardise future flows of benefits from the project. This is mainly relevant to projects that may for example involve on-ground habitat management: in the case of BICSA the project’s results concern information and human capacity rather than direct interventions in the physical environment, and there are considered to be no risks of this kind.

3(C) Catalytic role and replication

3C.1 UNEP seeks to support activities which show how new approaches can work and/or which contribute to the creation of enabling conditions, leading to take-up by others beyond a given project and thus broadening ultimate impacts. The criteria by which this is evaluated are given in annex 1, and the analysis in annex 6 helps with anticipating what further effects may occur in the longer term. BICSA was necessarily designed to be catalytic and enabling, by its very nature as a capacity-strengthening project. It also went beyond the development of capabilities, by including actual generation of indicators that were then used in “real-life”.

3C.2 A first area of emphasis was on individual understanding of generic indicator principles which could be applied to a variety of real-life needs. Guidance materials and much of the early workshop content were highly catalytic and replicable in this sense. Project reports and participant feedback give evidence of the successful growth of individual expertise (and insight) that resulted (although strategic-level definition of baselines for this could have been better - see section 3D). Consultees have also indicated that participants used their new knowledge (and their increased leadership confidence), and the guidance materials, to cascade the training to colleagues and other stakeholders “back home”, thus widening the circle of benefit. It would have been good for the project to give some attention to evolving wisdom in the capacity-building field in general, on issues such as career-development and positioning of individuals who might emerge as particular catalytic champions, tradeoffs between training and delivery, “brain drain” risks of the best people moving on from the roles they have been trained for, and systemic incentive issues.

3C.3 Institutional change, as such, was not critical to the project’s outcomes; but uptake and improved capabilities at institutional level are relevant. Efforts were astutely targeted in this respect; although opportunities for curriculum-level impacts in academia could perhaps have been explored, and penetration of influential non-biodiversity sectors (apart from statistical offices) was mostly beyond the project’s reach. In addition to increased capacity within existing arrangements, BICSA aimed to bring about strengthened and new synergies between organisations (government and NGO) within countries, and between countries. Directly attributable successes in this respect include collaboration between the wildlife authorities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; and between the BirdLife Partner in Zimbabwe and the Environment Ministry there. Although these links initially concerned initiatives in the realm of assessment and indicators, in these example cases they have also expanded to cover wider conservation issues; thus being truly catalytic.

3C.4 The project’s philosophy was that enabling the development of just two or three example indicators in each country would act as a “proof of concept” and “proof of feasibility” which would help to catalyse investment in the development and use of further and more comprehensive indicators. This was expected to dovetail with the demand created by policy drivers, principally the CBD and MDG reporting requirements. (Policy change, as such, was not critical to the project’s outcomes; but it is plausible to consider that indicators themselves are catalytic, in the sense that making status and trends more intelligible is a stimulus for action responses). Although the picture is patchy, some effects of this kind are evident, including forward links (planned or otherwise) to the Aichi targets regime and the new generation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (see also section 3A).

3C.5 “Replication” concerns lessons and experiences that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects or initiatives. By their nature, indicators need to be replicable in order to standardise comparisons and reliably reveal patterns: the project assured this through its use of documented guidance and peer-reviewed methods. Good “lateral” replication of experience has occurred among different countries (and regions), and some strong interest has been expressed by both providers (including UNEP) and potential users (in different parts of the world) to spread this further in future, with a “training of trainers” dimension potentially being added too. The “modular” workshop approach adopted by the project lends itself well to these possibilities, and is not Africa-specific.

3(D) Preparation and readiness

3D.1 The recently-added requirement in UNEP evaluations for an “inception report” has, among other things, led to the inclusion in the present report of annex 7 which reviews project design, and thus provides an expanded treatment of several aspects of preparation and readiness which need not be repeated here.

3D.2 BICSA’s execution by UNEP-WCMC meant that the project slotted in to a good existing institutional management infrastructure, with formal financial and human resources safeguards already in place. WCMC also already had a well-developed technical and political familiarity with the field of work. In particular, experience and lessons from the “Biodiversity Indicators for National Use” (BINU) GEF project in 2002-2005 underpinned the design of BICSA, including its “three workshops” model (see section 1), and gave a sensible basis for confidence in relevant project assumptions. One of the four countries covered by BINU was also included in BICSA (Kenya), but in practice this fact offered only a minor start-up advantage owing to turnover (and in one case the sad demise) of the personnel involved. The Biodiversity Indicator Development Framework and accompanying “state of the art” guidance materials developed by BINU and refined by the global 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) GEF project (2007-2010) were also used in BICSA, thus avoiding the need for reinvention and benefiting from extensive previous testing. Experience also fed in from WCMC’s involvement in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

3D.3 At the time of the project’s inception (and still today) some indicators were more ready to use/more technically feasible than others, with those in the sustainable use and ecosystem services areas being particularly challenging. Mixed experiences on this arising from BIP in the same period were of limited help to BICSA, and judgements in the latter as to the relative feasibility or ease/difficulty of different indicators were largely made by project participants themselves during the first workshops. This strategy carried some risks, but these were counterbalanced by the empowerment it gave to participants; and WCMC experience on feasibility issues was brought to bear in any event.

3D.4 No user needs survey or systematic gap analysis was undertaken as a basis for targeting the project. Given WCMC’s familiarity with the scene as described above (and in sections 1 and 3F) this was not unreasonable, but it might have been helpful to have a more objective and visible strategic baseline against which to assess outcomes. Once implementation began, individual needs were defined by workshop participants. The choice of sub-regions and countries was largely pragmatic, but took some account of UNEP priorities. Timing was reasonably opportune in relation to external events such as CBD reporting, though gearing to these was secondary to national priorities. The project rationale reflected sound knowledge of indicator development opportunities, but it would have been useful also to include some reference to generic wisdom on prevailing trends in the capacity-building field, in particular on the role of incentives and career-paths in sustaining capacity.

3D.5 More generally, risks, risk ownership and risk management were insufficiently explicit, both in the governance arrangements and in the project documents (where for example the logframe section on “risks/assumptions” referred only to assumptions).

3D.6 A two-year timeframe was generally appropriate; but with multiple partners, the organisation of multiple workshop events in different countries and considerable delegation of distributed logistical responsibilities, the project was vulnerable to bureaucratic delays and the inevitability of at least some turnover of key individuals. Both of these factors duly led to commencement delays of 4-6 months in the two sub-regions. In addition, some partners started from a lower base and progressed more slowly, and International Year of Biodiversity and the CBD COP suggested a need for dissemination activity throughout 2010. In due

course a four-month no-cost extension was approved. It is possible that some of this was foreseeable earlier, outreach might have been planned more strategically and an end-of-2010 completion date might have been set from the start; but ultimately no real harm resulted.

3(E) Implementation approach and adaptive management

3E.1 This section focuses on the management of the project and its responsiveness to events. Some relevant aspects are also covered in sections 3H (financial management), 3I (UNEP supervision) and 3J (monitoring and evaluation).

Organisational structure and execution arrangements

3E.2 This was not a huge project and it did not require an elaborate management structure, although wisdom in organising diverse stakeholder dynamics was important. The project was implemented by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (based in Cambridge) and the UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment (based in Nairobi), in conjunction with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa. Design input was also made by the African Environmental Information Network, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and its African Centre of Statistics. Coordination of workshops was sub-contracted to a partner organisation in each of the two sub-regions (see below).

3E.3 Project design descriptions left some ambiguity as to the respective leadership roles of UNEP-WCMC and UNEP-DEWA, but things worked clearly enough in practice, with DEWA exercising general oversight and formally accounting to the principal funder (UNDA), while WCMC handled all day-to-day contract management and project execution. Communication between the two offices appears to have been basic but adequate. Project staffing levels were generally appropriate, though relied on high work-rates and dedication.

3E.4 Project branding was deliberately restrained. Given the project's mutuality with (and co-financing by) the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership GEF project, UNEP-WCMC (who also ran the latter) were wary of BICSA being perceived as having an unduly separate identity (published reports carried a BIP logo, and BICSA itself had no logo). This approach was also chosen so as to strengthen country ownership of the project (see section 3G). These sensibilities are understood, although a side-effect was some ambiguous profile for the work and potentially weakened recognition. The acronym "BICSA" has been adopted as a label of convenience in this evaluation report, but different names were used in other places.

3E.5 The "three workshops" approach followed the model which had been found to be effective in the earlier Biodiversity Indicators for National Use (BINU) project (see section 1), with intervals of several months between workshops to allow for indicator development work and networking. Such phasing is important in capacity-building, allowing a given level of capacity to become well established, problems to be solved and slowly-developing parts of the picture to catch up with the rest before moving on to the next level. This worked well, though it was felt that if it were done again, individual country follow-up visits would help further to consolidate the benefits.

3E.6 Evaluation consultees consistently praised the professionalism of the project team, and clearly had strong confidence in its solidly-backed competence in the subject-matter. There was also high regard for the spirit of participation and shared ownership that was cultivated in the workshops. These were thoughtfully facilitated, and were both flexibly constructed and not over-programmed, so that participants had the space in which to shape priorities (indeed the process began by each being asked to do this), to express ideas and to feel that they had "self-developed". Peer-to-peer support among participants and the coordination by in-region organisations (see below) helped to soften the concept of capacity-building being delivered mostly by Europeans (though one of the UK-based team was also a national of a participating African country). Participants from French- and Portuguese-speaking countries appear not to have been unduly disadvantaged by the process having been conducted in English.

Supervision and governance

3E.7 As noted in annex 7 below, the Project Document was weak in its coverage of project accountability and risk management. While roles and inputs were described for several agencies, the document said nothing about supervision, line-management, financial control or governance of the project. Evaluation comments on supervision arrangements within UNEP are given in section 3I below. Oversight of WCMC by DEWA appears generally to have been “light touch” and not very proactive, apart from some occasional advice for example from the UNEP finance group. Sufficient flexibility was given for the few project modifications and adaptations required, without cumbersome approval processes. This seemed to be a comfortable state of affairs on both sides; but it relies on high levels of *trust* in the equation. No written evidence of feedback or course-corrections based on progress reports etc has been seen by the evaluation, and it would have been better practice to document a proper audit-trail of such things.

3E.8 The project had no formally constituted oversight structure, steering or reference group. It can be argued that BICSA was too small to require anything very elaborate of this kind; but in principle this constitutes an inherent risk in the management structure if things go wrong: the chain of authority and the locus for arbitration on “big decisions” was not particularly clear, and if there had been major crises to resolve, this could have been problematic. Risk issues in general (identification, ownership and management) were insufficiently explicit, both in the project documents and in the governance arrangements. A steering or reference group could also have been a source of constructive challenge to test assurance on management controls, and perhaps to contribute creatively to bolstering the project’s conceptual and technical rigour.

Choosing participants, and securing their involvement

3E.9 The scale of the project meant that its initial capacity impact would occur among a highly selective sample of relevant people, and significant reliance would be put on their success in being catalytic among a wider pool of stakeholders thereafter (see section 3C). Choosing the right individuals in each country was therefore critical. The process for this was well thought-through, and began with a good appreciation of relative existing capacities in the target region, based on the BINU project and on other liaison/experiences in the region. It was BINU experience also that prompted the successful idea of inviting representatives of national statistical offices, with particular regard to national reporting on the Millennium Development Goals. Given the important link to implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 2010 biodiversity target, CBD national focal points were also approached. Other individuals, institutions and functions were targeted according to their pivotal role *at operationally engaged levels* in the development and use of relevant indicators; and invitations were pitched accordingly.

3E.10 UNEP regional offices, the African Centre of Statistics (see above) and the two sub-contracted coordination organisations in each sub-region (see below) all helped to identify invitees. Invitations were sent out by the UNEP Regional Office for Africa on behalf of UNEP, and the “convening power” of UNEP which was brought to bear in this way was considered to have been a significant factor in attracting a good response. Only one CBD national focal point participated, but it was later concluded that more operational levels below the formal named focal points were more relevant. One or two evaluation consultees took differing views on the relative importance of the NGO representatives in being able to secure institutional “embedding” of the benefits of the project “back home”. Otherwise the resulting makeup of workshop participants broadly met expectations.

3E.11 It might have been useful at the start to identify alternative or substitute invitees for key institutions in each country in the event of availability problems, or particularly in the event of job moves or other staff turnover (which did affect the project in a number of cases).

3E.12 The project offered a small seed funding contribution for each country to assist with national implementation costs, and this supported activities such as stakeholder meetings and publication of reports (but not indicator operation, so as not to create an external funding dependency for that aspect). The initial allocation was supplemented later from savings in other areas. While the amounts were small compared to actual needs, this was an important demonstration of good faith and a useful incentive for sustained involvement. It was challenging in some cases however to find a cost-effective mechanism for channelling small sums of this kind to their intended recipients (see section 3H). NGO channels were used to assist; although the full allocation could not be taken up in every case. These arrangements showed adaptive capability. They minimised bureaucracy by relying on a measure of good faith rather than heavy controls: this was justified in the circumstances but carried a degree of risk, and in one case, delivery of what was agreed (use of a database in Namibia for generating indicator information) has still not been evidenced.

Partnerships and sub-contracts

3E.13 Workshop organisation was sub-contracted to a partner organisation in each of the two sub-regions. Several potential partners were considered in each case, and ultimately good choices were made in favour of the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) for Southern Africa and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) for Eastern Africa. Both were incentivised among other things by the regional profile this role would bring, while being appropriately aware of within-region political sensitivities that were relevant. The contracts were rationally constructed, clear and with sufficient detail (including timeframes), and contained safeguards such as phased payments linked to delivery, expenses stipulations, provisions for liability, intellectual property rights, dispute resolution, avoidance of conflicts of interest, determination of exchange rates and susceptibility to audit (see also section 3H). Delegating work in this way had strengths and weaknesses but overall is likely to have achieved some cost-efficiencies; and it meant that a majority of the project funds were spent in Africa, which is a healthy approach. KWS also handled the disbursement of seed funding support in their sub-region (in Southern Africa this was administered direct by UNEP-WCMC). SANBI and KWS did not confer bilaterally to share experiences of their coordination role, which was perhaps a missed opportunity.

3E.14 Other partners also provided assistance: national BirdLife organisations helped with the seed funding arrangements (see above); while the Tropical Biology Association and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) particularly supported ecosystem services indicator development in Eastern and Southern Africa respectively. The evaluation has not been able to examine formal managerial or contractual understandings about the operation of these roles, but they appear to have been delivered satisfactorily.

Changes and adaptations

3E.15 While risk assessment and contingency planning did not appear to be built in to project management systematically, responsiveness was satisfactory and a generally adaptive climate prevailed. Over the project's life, its basic plan and budgets were relatively little modified. One exception was the "exchange visits" element (activity 4): this was originally to consist of group study tours, which proved too expensive and became peer-to-peer exchange visits, which in turn were judged to be less valuable than national stakeholder meetings between workshops; so the relevant budget-line was redirected into country support. Another alteration was the underspend of the UNEP staff travel budget line; and a third was the better than expected support in kind from BIP (see section 3H and annex 5). Despite some reallocations, the project underspent its cash income by 11.5%, so in this respect its adaptive responsiveness might have been better. Bureaucratic delays, some turnover of key individuals, differential development rates and outreach needs in late 2010 led to the request for and granting of a four-month no-cost project extension. It is possible that some of this was foreseeable earlier, outreach might have been planned more strategically and an end-of-2010 completion date might have been set from the start; but ultimately no real harm resulted.

3(F) Stakeholder participation and public awareness

3F.1 As a capacity-building project, BICSA had to be stakeholder-focused by definition, and there was a culture of mutual support and adaptive learning from the start. Good attention was given at design stage to defining target participants and end-users, emphasising direct users of biodiversity information rather than having any great ambitions in respect of other sectors (which remains a key challenge) or the wider public. While ultimate *targets* included government ministers and high-level policymakers, *participants* had to be involved in hands-on implementation and able to catalyse broader action at operational levels; and this included NGOs and academics where they were influential in this regard. Some consultees would have liked to see more grassroots engagement of site managers and community groups, but the evaluation of the preceding BINU project (see section 1) noted that embracing this level had diluted that project's stakeholder targeting, and the approach in BICSA appears to have been better judged in this respect. A key success was the enthusiastic involvement of representatives from national statistical offices, who have responsibilities both for national production of statistics and their use in international reporting, including on the MDGs. This was timely, as demand was growing for better inclusion of environmental information in these processes but the statistics offices needed help in devising mechanisms for doing so.

3F.2 Existing knowledge from other UNEP-WCMC involvements was generally the basis for the choices made about stakeholder participation, in terms of whom to target, the contribution they would make and the benefits they would gain. No user needs survey or systematic gap analysis was undertaken for this at design stage: given the extent of WCMC's existing familiarity this was not unreasonable, but it might have been helpful to have a more objective and visible "strategic" baseline against which to assess outcomes. Once implementation began, "individual" baselines (needs defined by workshop participants) were well explored. WCMC familiarity also played a useful part in knowing where particular historical relationship dynamics would be most conducive to cooperation.

3F.3 The same approach informed an assessment of the relevance of various regional bodies, seeing for example EAC and SADC as more likely to engage than NEPAD or the AU; and this shaped the approaches that were made. Global bodies such as the CBD Secretariat were made aware but were not directly involved. Response levels were generally as expected, but one disappointment was UNDP, who were invited to participate given their own relevant capacity-building role (including on MDG reporting), but who did not do so.

3F.4 The workshops were praised for their highly participatory character. Participants jointly shaped priorities (and the portrayal of the project at external events), had space and encouragement to make suggestions which were acted upon, and a team spirit continued into post-workshop interactions. Those from French- or Portuguese-speaking countries appear not to have been unduly disadvantaged by the process having been conducted in English.

3F.5 Workshop participants from at least six countries cascaded their project engagement through a variety of stakeholder meetings back home, thus broadening the network of beneficiaries. South Africa decided to improve stakeholder involvement in indicators in general as a result of the project. There are also several reported instances of new institutional collaborations occurring as a direct consequence of the project. Whether or not this is likely to persist is an issue discussed in section 3B. One consultee noted that stakeholders with political influence or funding needed to be better engaged.

3F.6 Awareness in a wider public sense was not a primary project aim; but featured for example in promotion of national "State of the Environment" reports, and in Tanzania a documentary film and brochures were produced. An "experiences" report (see below) was widely disseminated by UNEP-WCMC, and the project's workshop reports were posted on the WCMC website. A newsletter article was published in the African Statistical Newsletter

in 2009, and project participants took part in presentations of their work at side events at the CBD SBSTTA14 and COP10 meetings in 2010.

3F.7 Reference above to the “experiences” report relates to the publication “Biodiversity Indicators Capacity Strengthening: experiences from Africa: progress, lessons learnt and needs for future indicator development” (Bubb et al., 2010). This report presents many of the results and recommendations arising from the project, and without it there would have been an absence of a substantive, high production-value outreach vehicle. It was made possible through the co-financing from the 2010 BIP GEF project, and it complements the BIP document “Guidance for National Biodiversity Indicator Development and Use”. The two together constitute important resources for indicator capacity-building more widely: the evaluation does not have data on how, where and to whom they may have been actively promoted; but both are available on the “BIP national” website.

3F.8 The “experiences” report very effectively structures “examples of progress” for each country according to different steps in the Indicator Development Framework (see Figure 3A-1), and the presentation of the examples of indicators is a good model of presentation of indicator report information itself (e.g the use of a headline, a key graphic, some imagery, naming the source, and giving a few sentences of explanation, all in an easy-to-read colourful text box). The report is equally relevant here to the issue of stakeholder participation, since the process of its development acted as a major component of the third workshops. Its content came directly from the individual country participants, and their synthesis of this provided a principal means of consolidating their own articulation of what had been learned. It also presents the fruits of the exercise by which they collectively developed key messages for others (notably the CBD) about national biodiversity indicator development.

3(G) Country ownership and drivenness

3G.1 UNEP seeks to undertake projects that are relevant to national development and environmental agendas, while having regard to international agreements between countries on these agendas. The evaluation is therefore asked to assess the level of country ownership and commitment in the project, and specifically the performance of the governments of the countries involved in terms of the level of responsibility they adopted for project execution, institutional cooperation, political backing and stakeholder involvement.

3G.2 The BICSA project can be considered as “sub-regional” in scope (i.e. Eastern and Southern Africa). As discussed in section 1 however, it built on UNEP-WCMC’s previous Biodiversity Indicators for National Use (BINU) project, and was thus grounded in perspectives designed to be meaningful at the national scale. It also ran alongside UNEP-WCMC’s 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010 BIP) project which was primarily global in scope: a certain complementarity between BICSA and BIP therefore helped to minimise the risk of BICSA being tempted to stray unduly into global concerns, since BIP offered a separate channel for those.

3G.3 An international dimension was of course also relevant to BICSA itself, in that it sought to respond to the global 2010 biodiversity target and the Millennium Development Goals. This too however is a form of country ownership and drivenness, since the target and the Goals came into being not as the mission of an individual international institution, but as a consensus expression of shared priorities among a majority of countries in the world.

3G.4 Participants from thirteen African countries took part in the project. From the outset it was made clear that the specific indicators and products to be developed in each case would be chosen by these representatives themselves according to national priorities, and not determined by the project organisers. This prioritisation process formed an integral part of the workshops programme, as did the identification of relevant national policy and reporting needs and the development of country-specific indicator development plans. The level of country-drivenness in this respect therefore was high.

3G.5 In the context of indicators and reports for the Convention on Biological Diversity, the project was said to have improved the perception by some participants of the national benefits that could be gained from these CBD processes. In some cases also national priorities were favoured over indicators which would directly serve the CBD framework - this might represent an incomplete matching to 2010 target purposes, but on the other hand it represents a greater level of country ownership.

3G.6 Project presentations made at meetings of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 14) and the Conference of Parties (COP10) were commendably at pains to emphasise that they represented the countries speaking in their own voice and according to their own choice of priority messages, rather than (for example) UNEP-WCMC speaking as “the project”.

3G.7 The project engaged national stakeholders from NGOs, academia and specialised statutory agencies. This obviously does not automatically equate to ownership by “countries” in the sense of governments. Some evaluation consultees would have preferred the mix to include a stronger level of engagement by government representatives, who presumably would have been able to speak for their country’s interests across all relevant public policy fields, and to mandate the necessary official support for project follow-through. Nonetheless, in most cases key government agencies were represented, and it is reasonable to count their engagement (to some extent at least) as good ownership of the project by “countries” in this sense.

3(H) Financial planning and management

3H.1 Annex 5 presents a summary of relevant financial information for the BICSA project, including data on co-financing and on overall expenditure broken down by project activity type. The total project budget was US \$545,200, including cash co-financing.

3H.2 Cash co-financing of \$41,200 came from the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) GEF project, referred to elsewhere in this report and also managed by UNEP-WCMC. The 2010 BIP also provided significant support in kind, estimated at an additional \$158,800 (likely to be an upper limit, if not an overestimate). A proportion of this was reportedly always anticipated, although it did not feature in project budgets and cannot be quantified here. Another proportion of it however represents better-than-expected support, counting therefore as successful leverage (also necessarily unquantified). At the same time, since the UNDA funding for BICSA is considered to have been secured at least partly on the basis of the linked merits of the BIP, BICSA itself has been regarded as a leveraged contribution to BIP. There is a fine line between “mutual leverage” and errors of double-counting, but the present case appears to be a genuine case of the former. Numerous other BICSA participants and institutions contributed staff time which in many cases might also legitimately be considered as in-kind co-financing (unquantified).

3H.3 The budget earmarked a small seed funding contribution for each country to assist with national implementation costs, supporting activities such as stakeholder meetings and publication of reports. The initial allocation was \$6,000 per country. Although this is a small amount (and many consultees commented on how much greater their real needs were in this area), it was an important demonstration of good faith and a useful catalyst for in-country action. Later in the project, savings made in two other areas were re-directed to supplement this area of support. The first was the sub-regional workshops themselves, where actual costs came in under budget, due mainly to some favourable hosting arrangements. The second was the “peer-to-peer exchange visits” (project activity 4) for which \$67,500 had been budgeted, but which did not take place as they came to be viewed as being of less value than holding national stakeholder meetings in between the sub-regional workshops. Taken together, these two sources of savings allowed a second tranche of \$6,000 to be offered to the eastern African countries (in southern Africa the needs were more variable).

3H.4 There was however a challenge in some cases in finding a cost-effective mechanism for channelling small sums of this kind to their intended recipients, since governmental processing overheads could easily become prohibitively disproportionate and suitable partners could not always be arranged. NGO channels were used effectively in many cases (commonly BirdLife International partner organisations), though a solution was not found in every case, and some countries were thus unable to take up their full allocation.

3H.5 The project underspent its overall budget (including cash co-financing) by \$62,794 (11.5% of cash income), across several areas. A principal one was the national project support seed-funding mentioned above. Another underspent (in fact seemingly unspent) budget line was the \$9,000 allocated for attendance by UNEP staff (based in Nairobi) at the various project workshops. Although some UNEP participation did occur, it was less than had been provided for. Apparently UNEP decided to fund this in other ways, and hence the allocated amount was ultimately not drawn upon. It seems unfortunate that UNEP could not have predicted more accurately at the outset their likely level of engagement and its (lack of) cost to the project.

3H.6 All other budget lines (except one) came in slightly under the budget as set, exclusive of 2010BIP co-financing. The surplus is greater than the whole of this co-financing, although the co-financing allocation itself was well used for specific activities linked to BIP. In fact the BICSA budgets appear not to reflect the cost of the CBD SBSTTA and COP side-events as project outgoings - if they did (both were funded from the BIP co-financing) then the final account would appear more balanced - in other words the actual underspend is considerably smaller than the apparent (reported) underspend. It should be noted that UNEP-WCMC submitted invoices to UNEP-DEWA (acting for UNDA) only for the actual expenditure incurred, so no cash surplus accrued.

3H.6 Just under 40% of the UNDA-provided funds (or 36% of the budget including co-financing) was allocated to UNEP-WCMC's own costs in operating the project. The division of this across reported account-heads is somewhat opaque and varies between documents, and on the face of it there are theoretical risks of double-counting; but the categories are understood to be imposed by existing accounting conventions and budget-line headings in UNDA, UNEP-DEWA and UNEP-WCMC, and hence the way this was arranged was beyond the control of the project itself. Although it has for these reasons not been fully easy to judge, it seems that the allocations and the basis for costings are broadly proportionate. UNEP-WCMC benchmarks the cost-effectiveness of its procurement by accumulation of general experience, and in the past it has changed providers (e.g. for travel) where necessary in light of this.

3H.7 UNEP-WCMC has centralised administration functions and a dedicated finance unit with integrated common accounting conventions and processes across a portfolio of projects. Organisation-level safeguards (e.g. against fraud and error) were therefore automatically built in to the financial management and control of BICSA, and day-to-day accounting appears to have been well handled. Project accounts were internally updated on a monthly basis and summary expenditure reports were submitted quarterly to DEWA (acting for UNDA). UNDA and 2010BIP (for its co-financing) imposed very "light touch" controls, which in theory carries some risk, but in practice this was counterbalanced by the existing system-wide controls and WCMC's solid track record. It would however have been prudent to have had at least a minimal project governance mechanism (e.g. a steering group) which could have provided an element of more independent oversight.

3H.8 The organisation of workshops was sub-contracted to two partner organisations, SANBI and KWS. The sub-contracts were rationally constructed, including safeguards such as phased payments linked to delivery, expenses stipulations, determination of exchange rates and susceptibility to audit. They included funding for the acquisition of some items of capital equipment which would be expected to have continuing value post-project; but it appears that these were limited and arguably essential; and the amounts probably not disproportionate

overall. Workshop budgets appropriately included a 10% contingency line. Delegating work in this way had strengths and weaknesses but overall is likely to have achieved some cost-efficiencies; and it is a healthy sign for a majority of the project funds to have been spent accordingly in Africa. Controls on the country seed-funding support were not onerous: approval by the Project Manager of written proposals in each case for use and administration of the funds provided an appropriate safeguard, though again a general governance oversight mechanism (as mentioned above) might have given useful extra assurance.

3H.9 The UNDA funding for the project was paid in US dollars, and UNEP-WCMC pays for staff and procurement in GB pounds. WCMC assesses the sterling value of its dollar budgets at monthly intervals to gain a general appreciation of whether expenditure remains on track. No specific line in BICSA project accounts was compiled to show whether exchange rate losses or gains were being made, although the data do exist. Losses are normally not charged to a project budget, being instead absorbed by the Centre into its general accounting. For transparency to funders it might be desirable to show the figures in cases where exchange rates produce a *gain* over the life of a project; but in the case of BICSA it is unlikely that dollar-sterling differentials over the period 2008-2010 will have done so.

3(I) UNEP supervision and backstopping

3I.1 The primary project executing bodies for BICSA were UNEP entities (WCMC, the Division of Early Warning and Assessment and the Regional Office for Africa), so UNEP supervision in this case was more of an “in house” process than it is with some projects, and thus it benefited from pre-existing communication channels and at least some consistency of management systems. By the same token however, since some “supervisory” interactions took place in the course of broader routine inter-and intra-agency processes, there was not the same kind of documentary audit-trail of progress assessment and related decisions for the evaluation to examine as there would have been in the case of an “external” executing agency.

3I.2 Other aspects of project management are covered in sections 3E and 3H of this report, monitoring is discussed further in section 3J, and complementarity with UNEP programmes is covered in section 3K. Oversight by WCMC of subcontracted organisations is covered in 3E.

3I.3 Oversight of WCMC by DEWA, and guardianship through DEWA of UNDA’s interests, appears generally to have been “light touch” and not very proactive, apart from some occasional advice for example from the UNEP finance group. Sufficient flexibility was given for the few project modifications and adaptations required, without cumbersome approval processes. This seemed to be a comfortable state of affairs on both sides; but it relies on high levels of *trust* in the equation.

3I.4 The project manager submitted progress reports to DEWA (see below) and was accountable internally to a line manager in WCMC. There was no formally constituted oversight structure, steering or reference group for the project: while it can be argued that BICSA was too small to require anything very elaborate of this kind, in principle this constitutes an inherent risk in the management structure if things go wrong. The main weakness was that risks, risk ownership and risk management were insufficiently explicit, both in the governance arrangements and in the project documents (where for example the logframe section on “risks/assumptions” referred only to assumptions).

3I.5 No “Supervision Plan”, “Project Implementation Reports” or PIR ratings were compiled. Instead, brief half-year and full-year progress reports were submitted to DEWA, containing a simple table of comments on progress according to the activities and expected accomplishments in the project logframe, with one or two further remarks for example on start-up delays. The reports were provided more or less on time and as required (see list in annex 4), if one assumes that the published “experiences” document (Bubb, Chenery and Stanwell-Smith, October 2010) substituted for the mid-year report in that year. Some feedback was provided by DEWA, though this was not systematically recorded. The evaluation is unaware of any minutes of project management meetings.

3I.6 The project accounted to UNDA through UNEP's Division of Regional Cooperation and its Programme Coordination and Management Unit. Because of turnover of the staff involved there too, the evaluation has not been able to obtain much information on the operation of this link, beyond the general view that it was most active during the project design stage and thereafter rather minimal. There is no suggestion that UNDA wished it to be otherwise, but more visibly documented assurance as to the way in which the principal funder's interests were safeguarded would have been good practice.

3I.7 Some turnover of staff responsible for supervision in DEWA also occurred. The project budget provided for attendance by UNEP staff (based in Nairobi) at the various workshops, and while some participation occurred, this was less than expected. Staff turnover was said to be one reason for this.

3(J) Monitoring and evaluation

3J.1 The Terms of Reference for evaluating the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) regime are given in annex 1. Evaluations are asked to assess the quality, application and effectiveness of this regime, against a background of any risks and assumptions identified in the project documents. Ratings are required for M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and budgeting for M&E activities.

M&E design

3J.2 As a project of relatively modest scale, BICSA did not have a standalone "monitoring and evaluation plan", and the design of its M&E regime is contained within four paragraphs in the principal Project Document and two performance indicators in its logical framework. In addition to the two outcome indicators in the logframe, four other process/activity indicators are mentioned in the Project Document narrative. Four sources of verification for the expected accomplishments of the project are specified, all of which seem reasonable in principle, although the one relating to national "state of the environment reports" is more speculative, as there was presumably no certainty that such things would exist for all the countries concerned.

3J.3 None of the six indicators is expressed in terms that are explicitly time-bound, although one is linked to workshops and thus is *de facto* tied to the workshops timeframe. Information to verify the indicator on "improved availability of indicators" was expected "initially at the project's third workshop in each region, and then in the last two months of the project by direct requests to the relevant sources". The timing of information to verify the second indicator, "additional and more comprehensive indicators ... in reports by government agencies", was tied to events beyond the project's control, namely production of the 4th round of government reports to the CBD and the annual MDG implementation reports submitted to UNDP. Some of the indicators are not very specific (e.g. "analysis of information") or measurable (e.g. "improved availability", "more comprehensive indicators"). All are more or less relevant and achievable; but overall, the extent or magnitude of achievement being sought is rather vague, and by the normal "SMART" yardsticks (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), the indicators are weak.

3J.4 "Capacity" could be thought of as embodying a component of demonstrable performance and a component of *potentiality* for delivering performance. The evaluation acknowledges that it is difficult to cater for this second component in attempting to measure (strengthened) capacity. This therefore poses a challenge in defining baselines for monitoring and evaluation; but much can be done for example by means of self-assessment techniques, and the project could have done more to describe the baseline states or assumed "without-project" trajectories against which progress could be assessed. The capacity baseline was described as varying between countries, but no metric for this was offered; and in relation to the "demonstrable performance" component, the Project Document was inconsistent in its references to "lack of indicators" and "limited production and use of indicators" as the implied baseline. No user needs survey or systematic gap analysis was undertaken to offer an

objective and visible strategic basis against which to assess outcomes. Once implementation began however, workshop participants defined their individual/national needs, expectations and personal (unquantified) intended measures of success.

3J.5 Organisational arrangements for monitoring, allocation of responsibilities and pathways for acting on the results in adaptive management decisions were not explicitly set out; but within the relatively straightforward project structure it would have been reasonable to assume that the Project Manager would handle all this as necessary. Making assumptions explicit however can only help M&E run smoothly, and is good practice. Risks affecting the achievement of outcomes should also be specified. The logframe states three assumptions, which are well chosen as probably the most important; though a small number of additional ones might have been worth stating too. It is unfortunately silent on the subject of risks.

3J.6 Provision was made for an evaluation of “accomplishments and lessons learned” to be conducted by UNEP-DEWA in the final weeks of the project’s two year duration. No mid-term evaluation was provided for, and would not be expected for a project of this size.

M&E plan implementation

3J.7 Implementation was formally verified by brief half-year and full-year reports to DEWA, containing a simple table of comments on progress, and one or two other remarks (see annex 4 for a list, and section 3H for additional comments on financial monitoring). The reports were provided more or less on time and as required, if one assumes that the published “experiences” document (Bubb, Chenery and Stanwell-Smith, October 2010) substituted for the mid-year report in that year. The reports helpfully relate their content consistently to the specific activities and expected accomplishments in the project logframe. No UNEP “Project Implementation Reports” or PIR ratings were compiled, and the project had no formally constituted oversight structure, steering or reference group (see section 3E). Some feedback was provided by DEWA, though this was not systematically recorded; and the evaluation has no written evidence of any course-corrections that may have been based on progress reports.

3J.8 A very full report of every capacity-strengthening workshop was produced by UNEP-WCMC, and these provide further information. Each participating country was also asked to write a report on the results of their indicator development work in the framework of the project. One or two failed to do so, and completeness varied; but the standard format included very pertinent questions for the purposes of monitoring and evaluation, for example requesting evidence of improved availability of indicators, evidence of improved capacity to produce and use indicators, and comments on continued use of the project results.

3J.9 At the end of each of the six workshops, participants were given evaluation forms, and a majority completed and returned them. The format included a numerical scoring system which enabled rough but rational comparisons to be made and results to be aggregated. It also included free-text sections which allowed respondents’ strongest thoughts to be registered in their own terms. Scores clustered tightly between 8 and 9 on a scale of 0-10 (10 being most positive), and text comments testified relevantly to step-shifts in understanding, practical utility of products and growth in confidence. Anonymised summaries of this feedback were written up in the workshop reports.

3J.10 It is assumed that the present formal UNEP evaluation is a rolled-forward realisation of what was originally anticipated in the Project Document. On the original timing this would have taken place in 2010, but although it is therefore happening later than planned, this potentially allows a reasonable period of post-project impact to be included in the assessment. The disadvantage is that consultees’ memories of project experiences may not be as fresh or complete as they would have been with an earlier evaluation, and some relevant individuals have moved on and could not be contacted. On the other hand an evaluation undertaken before the project-end might have been too soon to take stock of all of the project’s results. The optimum timing might therefore have been between these two dates.

Budgeting and funding for M&E activities

3J.11 Costs for monitoring and reporting were not separately identified in project budgets. The summary budget in the Project Document shows a single line for evaluation, in the amount of US\$10,000, which is 1.8% of the total budget including cash co-financing, or 1.4% of a total that would include the estimated support in kind. The actual evaluation costs have been nearer US\$14,500, which is 2.7% of the total budget including cash co-financing, or 2.1% of the total including support in kind. This final amount is considered to be sufficient for completing an evaluation to UNEP standards of thoroughness and comparability; and since the project as a whole underspent its budget, the higher final figure has not threatened the balancing of the books.

3(K) Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes

3K.1 UNEP aims to undertake projects that are aligned with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and its Programmes of Work (POW), and with the 2004 Strategic Plan for technology support and capacity-building (known as the Bali Strategic Plan). Since the MTS is for 2010-13, projects such as BICSA which were developed earlier would not necessarily be expected to align with it, though may do so nonetheless. Evaluations are therefore asked to comment on complementarity but not to include this aspect in the formal evaluation ratings. (Comments on “relevance” however, including links with other UNEP strands of work, are made in the rated section 3A of this report).

3K.2 As a project delivered through three UNEP entities (WCMC, DEWA and ROA), BICSA should be expected to be highly consistent with UN and UNEP strategies. The Project Document records the intention to support elements of the UN Secretary-General’s programme budget for 2008-2009 covering “more coherent and collaborative efforts in building national institutional and technical capacity in developing countries for keeping the state of environment under review, through [...] assessment, networking and data management”, as well as its elements on development in Africa and on statistics.

3K.3 The UNEP MTS for 2010-13 specifies 16 desired results (termed “expected accomplishments”) in six cross-cutting thematic priority areas. The BICSA project has contributed clearly to three of these, and partly to two others. In the “ecosystem management” priority area, the project has been of relevance to all three of the expected accomplishments listed, particularly (a) “countries and regions increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes” and (b) “countries and regions have capacity to utilise ecosystem management tools”. This relates mainly to the support provided through guidance on indicator methodologies and in generation of indicator results. The target countries have been helped to be better equipped with the tools needed to make sense of monitoring and assessment intelligence, as an integral part of ecosystem management strategies. The capacity of key individuals and institutions to use these tools has been enhanced, and there is some evidence of this enhanced capability being sustained. The inclusion of indicators on ecosystem services and the engagement of stakeholders such as national statistics agencies has provided support for future improved integration of ecosystem management into cross-sectoral planning processes.

3K.4 In the “environmental governance” priority area, the project has been of relevance to two of the four expected accomplishments listed, and particularly (d) “national and international stakeholders have access to sound science and policy advice for decision-making”. The “sound science” from the project (including concepts, analysis and methodological guidance) has been bequeathed as a legacy with on-going utility for national and international stakeholders. (The MTS also notes that “keeping the environment under review through scientifically credible monitoring and assessments is a foundation upon which UNEP will build to deliver on the Medium-Term Strategy’s six cross-cutting thematic priorities”; so BICSA has also played a broader underpinning role in this respect).

3K.5 As a project centred on capacity-building, BICSA was inherently strongly aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan, and made particular contributions to its objectives for capacity on monitoring and analysis (*a.vi*), capacity related to international agreements (*b*), and enhancing delivery of capacity through UNEP, including promotion of best practices (*h*).

3K.6 The Evaluation Terms of Reference in this section draw attention also to “south-south” cooperation, and to gender issues. BICSA took an exemplary approach to sensitive balancing of central coordination with delegated responsibilities and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning (although the planned “exchange visits” component of the latter was dropped in favour of other priorities). Participants in the six workshops were on average 75% male and 25% female, which is probably no worse than the proportions in the professional contexts from which they were drawn.

4 Conclusions and rating

4.1 Project ratings in the table below are compiled according to the system prescribed by the UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit and explained in the Terms of Reference given in annex 1 of this report. According to EOU guidance, the overall rating for “attainment of objectives and results” may not be higher than the lower of the ratings for the “relevance” and “effectiveness” components of that criterion; the overall rating for “sustainability” may not be higher than the lowest of the ratings among all four components of that criterion; and the overall rating for “monitoring and evaluation” may not be higher than that for “M&E implementation”. The rating for “effectiveness” is informed by the ratings generated by the Review of Outcomes to Impacts analysis (see annex 6). Complementarity with UNEP strategies (report section 3K) is not included as it does not require a rating.

4.2 Other sections of this report discuss the evidence and conclusions on which the ratings for the BICSA project are based, and brief head-points are re-summarised in the “summary assessment” column below. Note that the sequence and letter codes for the criteria in the table are slightly different from the corresponding sections in the report: this is to facilitate comparison and aggregation of ratings across UNEP project evaluation reports.

Key:

Sustainability		Other criteria	
HL	Highly likely	HS	Highly satisfactory
L	Likely	S	Satisfactory
ML	Moderately likely	MS	Moderately satisfactory
MU	Moderately unlikely	MU	Moderately unsatisfactory
U	Unlikely	U	Unsatisfactory
HU	Highly unlikely	HU	Highly unsatisfactory

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
(a) Attainment of project objectives and results	The project overall produced a lot with modest resourcing. Good capacity-strengthening results have been evidenced by assessed potentialities, useable outputs and examples of influence on policy. BICSA only ever aimed to provide the enabling means for changes in environmental conditions, but forward links to environmental impact are evident.	S
Effectiveness	Excellent levels of self-assessed impact are reported in terms of increased insight, confidence and competence in putting indicator techniques into practice, corroborated by the new indicators that were developed and reports produced. Modest numbers of people were involved and levels of resulting impact varied, but they include examples of influence on government reporting, target-setting and programme investment. A PRSP-related objective appears not to have been achieved, and evidence of the intended regional-level indicator harmonisation is lacking; but new collaborations arose within and between countries, and successful involvement of national statistical offices bore good fruit.	S
Relevance	The project was appropriately designed to support governmentally mandated reporting processes. No link seems to have been made to the MEAs’ own capacity-building programmes, though that would probably have added little. Relevance to the Aichi targets and new NBSAPs could probably have been better foreseen, though this was built in later. National policy end-uses (no less relevant) generally came to be more prominent than the international ones, and project priorities were shaped to fit needs stated by each country.	HS
Efficiency	BICSA linked with other projects in UNEP-WCMC, and the opportunities this gave for efficient planning and synergies were well used. It also stuck to a principle of urging best use of existing data. A suitable balance was struck in the division of effort between sub-regional and national levels. Although the project needed more time than planned (and was extended), it needed less money: the underspend was however mostly not due to efficiency measures.	HS
(b) Sustainability of project outcomes	The prospects for sustainability are good, in view of the project’s outcomes and impacts having been tied to regularly-repeating policy drivers. The project worked to create capacity that would be feasible for each country to maintain with the resources it could (in theory) be expected to provide or secure for itself, so as to maximise the chances of long-term sustainability.	L
Financial	Financial support for the country partners was wisely designed so as to avoid	L

	creating a future external funding dependency. Some of the governments will face difficulties in finding the resources they need, but it is valid to expect them to try, since they have policy imperatives to fund indicator production on an on-going basis. In any case some support for follow-up is already happening.	
Socio-political	Socio-political risks to sustainability are small. Project participants chose indicator topics according to their own national priorities, which strengthened ownership and the likelihood of sustained user demand in future. Participant motivation remains high one year after project-end.	HL
Institutional framework	Most project participants have job responsibilities related to indicators, and although career trajectories and the capacity-cascade in organisations could have been more systemically considered, the prospects for institutional sustainability appear reasonably strong, and some collaborative connections created by the project are persisting.	L
Environmental	Environmental risks to sustainability are not considered applicable.	n/a
(c) Catalytic role and replication	Some BICSA beneficiaries are cascading their new learning to colleagues. The project's guidance materials and modular workshop model are highly replicable, and their content focused on transferable principles. A few extra indicators and reports have been catalysed, and institutional synergies in some cases are spreading the benefit beyond the biodiversity sphere.	HS
(d) Stakeholder participation	No user needs survey was undertaken, but participants and end-users were well targeted. Some intended stakeholders engaged less than expected (e.g. development interests) and others more (statisticians). "Back home" follow-up was variable and numbers limited. The workshops were highly participatory.	S
(e) Country ownership and drivenness	Work was prioritised according to participants' expression of national needs, which prevailed over international ones where necessary. Stakeholders were varied, but included sufficient government agency representatives to consider that there was at least some degree of ownership by "countries" as such.	S
(f) Achievement of outputs and activities	Workshops, guidance and support were highly commended for their quality, spirit and appropriateness. In most of the 13 countries draft indicators were developed, and several published reports. An intended strand of peer support activity was abandoned when it was deemed unlikely to be worthwhile.	HS
(g) Preparation and readiness	The project slotted in to a good existing infrastructure (WCMC); but it might have been helpful to have more of a strategic baseline against which to assess outcomes, and risk preparedness was insufficiently explicit. The project rationale reflected sound knowledge of indicator development opportunities, but it would have been useful also to include some reference to generic wisdom on prevailing trends in the capacity-building field. Commencement delays in the two sub-regions led to the project having to be extended.	S
(h) Implementation approach and adaptive management	Project staff were extremely professional. Management arrangements were "light touch" and flexible in accommodating change, though this relied on high levels of trust. Sub-contracts for workshop coordination were clear and had adequate safeguards. Leadership and accountability in some other respects were too vague, and the project's lack of a steering group or similar oversight structure would have posed a risk if there had been crises to solve.	S
(i) Financial planning and management	Finances were efficiently managed and expenditures were proportionate. Disbursement of seed-funding in some countries posed difficulties. The project underspent overall (including its cash co-financing) by a large 11.5%.	S
(j) Monitoring and Evaluation	Project experiences and achievements have been quite richly documented, but the formal M&E system had weaknesses in terms of accountability and adaptive feedback processes. Evaluation was adequately provided for.	MS
M&E Design	The fairly basic provisions (in the project document) were rational and workable, but the indicators fell short of being SMART, and baseline-setting was weak.	U
M&E Plan implementation	Brief six-monthly reports were delivered, cogently linked to the project logframe; but feedback and actions arising were not systematically recorded. Reports from each workshop and from each country provide a good lesson-learning resource.	MS
Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Costs for monitoring and reporting were not separately identified in budgets. Evaluation was slightly under-budgeted, but was ultimately adequately funded.	S
(k) UNEP supervision and backstopping	Since BICSA was executed by UNEP entities, supervision was more of an "in house" process than it is with some projects. This had efficiencies, and allowed quite loose arrangements; but it made for little proactivity, a thin audit-trail and some risk management weaknesses, compounded by staff turnover in Nairobi.	MU

5 Lessons learned

5.1 This section of the evaluation is designed to highlight a limited number of key lessons emerging from the project's practical experiences which could have wider application. A core purpose of the capacity-strengthening of course was to cultivate lesson-learning about indicators among the intended beneficiaries: this section is not concerned with the content of that, but instead with lessons learned in relation to *the project*. Those on matters of detail have been addressed elsewhere in the text: the ones below are the more strategic issues.

- (i) **The BINU/BICSA model of three workshops spread over a year has been re-validated** as an effective format for regionally-organised country capacity support. Stakeholder-determined priorities, a common framework of good practice guidance, use of “neutral” worked examples (fictional or from elsewhere) and space for peer-sharing of experience are among the ingredients which have helped it succeed. Selection of participants who will commit and who will be in pivotal positions to make a sustained difference “back home” is crucial, and on future occasions it would be worth giving some consideration to succession-planning in this context. Where possible, individual country follow-up also helps to consolidate the gains made.
- (ii) **Systematic measurement of growth in capacity is possible.** Capacity consists partly of latent potential, which poses measurement challenges. Nonetheless much can be done with self-assessment/gap analysis techniques. BICSA indicated the feasibility of this, but it would have been useful for it to invest a little more in establishing and documenting baselines of this kind, and then being able to undertake evaluation (and demonstration) of progress in a fuller and more systematic way.
- (iii) **Simple seed-funding incentives can be effective, but should not be relied upon as a main support mechanism.** Small funding top-ups can be a worthwhile demonstration of good faith and a motivating catalyst for in-country action. Delivery of this in some African contexts can be very challenging however; and aspects such as accountability, disbursement overheads, fairness, transparency of decision-making, avoiding the creation of undue funding-dependency etc may need as much careful thought and planning as any grant scheme would require.
- (iv) **National statistical agencies are key partners in institutionalising the use of biodiversity indicators.** Demand is growing for inclusion of environmental data in processes such as MDG reporting, where statistics offices are key, and they need help in addressing biodiversity issues. Their enthusiastic and ground-breaking involvement in BICSA showed how they in turn can help to secure cross-sectoral uptake of biodiversity information, giving it higher status and greater policy impact.
- (v) **Don't let a lack of targets hold up development of indicators - better indicators can stimulate better target-setting.** In theory, indicators illuminate progress in achieving targets, with the definition of targets coming first. In practice, targets and indicators in the biodiversity sphere have rarely evolved in coherently matching sets, and policies often lack measurable targets at all. BICSA has shown (as have others) that iterative design feedback can take place between the two things, and progress with development of good indicators can, if necessary, influence the framing of appropriate conservation targets.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Especially in the case of projects which have concluded some time earlier, Terminal Evaluations are expected to have few recommendations. The Terms of Reference (annex 1) define recommendations as feasible proposals on “how to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results”. Two are offered here.

- (i) **Maintaining the legacy of network connections.** Although BICSA beneficiaries have maintained some sub-regional and bilateral contacts for mutual support and coordination of indicators work, there is likely to be a mixed future for this, with some instances continuing for specific reasons and others likely to taper away unless reinforced. UNEP-WCMC, in conjunction as necessary with UNEP-DEWA and UNEP-ROA, should explore the scope for offering some residual on-going (“non-project”) encouragement and support to the stakeholder networking connections created by (or otherwise consequent on) BICSA in Africa, including facilitation of communications, and provision of advice on international best practice and sources of knowledge. Obviously also opportunities should be taken to augment this through synergies with relevant projects, such as the expected regional capacity building and “training of trainers” elements of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership.
- (ii) **Making the most of BICSA’s replicability.** The present evaluation has scored the BICSA project very highly for its replicability. UNEP-WCMC should conduct a short review of needs and opportunities and then draw up an outline plan of options and priorities for proposing, supporting or directly delivering (as appropriate) capacity-strengthening activities on biodiversity and ecosystem services indicators in other parts of Africa, and in other regions of the world, following methods that make best use of the accumulated experience in operating the workshop-based “BICSA model”. Options for including a “training of trainers” element and linking to education curricula should also be considered; and the review and plan should be completed before the third quarter of 2012, in order to maximise the scope for integrating with the roll-forward of work by the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. (More in-depth needs assessments/gap analyses should be undertaken before embarking on any actual delivery of workshops, in order to focus them to best effect).

Annex 1 Evaluation Terms of Reference

Note: A factual summary of the project, included in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, has been excluded from this Annex since the relevant details appear in the body of the report. The section of the original ToRs which describes the methodology used for Reviews of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) also does not appear here, but has been included instead in its context in Annex 6, which presents the ROtI analysis for the evaluated project.

1. Objective and scope of the evaluation

1. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy³ and the UNEP Evaluation Manual⁴ the terminal evaluation of the Project “Building National Capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa.” is undertaken at the end of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP DEWA and WCMC. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. It will focus on the following sets of key questions, based on the project’s intended outcomes, which may be expanded by the consultants as deemed appropriate:
 - a) How successful was the project in strengthening the capacity of Governments in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem indicators in support of national policies, including PRSPs and international reporting for the MDG-7 and the 2010 Biodiversity Target.
 - b) How successful was the project in increasing technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.
 - c) How successful was the project in improving the capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.

2. Overall approach and methods

2. The terminal evaluation of the Project “Building National Capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa.” will be conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi).
3. It will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.

³ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

4. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:
 - (a) A desk review of project documents⁵ including, but not limited to:
 - Relevant background documentation.
 - Project design documents; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the logical framework and project financing;
 - Project reports such as progress and financial reports; Steering; annual Project Implementation Reviews and relevant correspondence;
 - Reports produced by participating countries: report to CBD in March 2009, annual MDG implementation reports, policy reports in relevant sectors, state of environment reports by government and NGOs.
 - Other documentation related to project
 - Project website www.bipnational.net
 - (b) Email based questionnaire and phone interviews⁶ with:
 - Project management and execution support;
 - UNEP project Manager and Fund Management Officer (Nairobi);
 - Country lead execution partners and other relevant partners;
 - Representatives of other multilateral agencies (e.g. NEPAD-AEO, UNDP, CBD) and other relevant organisations.
 - Participants in workshops, peer to peer activities e.g exchange visits.
 - Recipients of on-line and in country technical support
 - Users of website.

3. Key evaluation principles

5. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned⁷. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.
6. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to a minimum set of evaluation criteria grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The lead consultant can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.
7. Ratings. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 3 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

⁵ Documents to be provided by the UNEP are listed in Annex 7.

⁶ Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communication.

⁷ Individuals should not be mentioned by name if anonymity needs to be preserved.

8. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with and what would have happened without the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.
9. As this is a terminal evaluation, particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category 3). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “why things happened” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere assessment of “where things stand” today.

4. Evaluation criteria

Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

10. The evaluation should assess the relevance of the project’s objectives and the extent to which these were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved.
 - a) Achievement of Outputs and Activities: Assess, for each component, the project’s success in producing the programmed outputs as presented in Table A1.1 (Annex 1), both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain the degree of success of the project in achieving its different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3 (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives). The achievements under the regional and national demonstration projects will receive particular attention.
 - b) Relevance: Assess, in retrospect, whether the project’s objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with: i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs; ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation.
 - c) Effectiveness: Assess to what extent the project has achieved its main objective to strengthen capacity in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national policies, including PRSPs and international reporting for the MDG-7 on environmental sustainability and the 2010 biodiversity target and its component objectives as presented in section C above. To measure achievement, use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework Matrix (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project’s success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section 3.
 - d) Efficiency: Assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and (extended) time. Analyse how delays, if any, have affected project execution, costs and

effectiveness. Wherever possible, compare the cost and time over results ratios of the project with that of other similar projects. Give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

11. *Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)*: Reconstruct the logical pathways from project outputs over achieved objectives towards impacts, taking into account performance and impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders, using the methodology presented in the GEF Evaluation Office's ROtI Practitioner's Handbook⁸ (summarized in Annex 8 of the TORs). Examine to what extent the project has contributed to date, and is likely to contribute in the future to further changes in stakeholder behaviour as regards: i) producing, interpreting and using indicators of biodiversity to influence policy and practice and the likelihood of those leading to increased environmental sustainability and conservation of biodiversity in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Sustainability, catalytic role and replication

12. *Sustainability* is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. Application of the ROtI method will assist in the evaluation of sustainability.
13. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:
 - a) Socio-political sustainability. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?
 - b) Financial resources. To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources⁹ will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?
 - c) Institutional framework. To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources?

⁸ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/Impact_Eval-Review_of_Outcomes_to_Impacts-RotI_handbook.pdf

⁹ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

- d) Environmental sustainability. Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?
14. The catalytic role of UNEP interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP also aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:
- a) catalyzed behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level;
 - b) provided incentives (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
 - c) contributed to institutional changes. An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in the regional and national demonstration projects;
 - d) contributed to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy);
 - e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments or other donors;
 - f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (“champions”) to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).
15. Replication, in the context of UNEP projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and determine to what extent actual replication has already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

Processes affecting attainment of project results

16. *Preparation and Readiness.* Were the project’s objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were lessons learned and recommendations from Steering Committee meetings adequately integrated in the project approach? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?
17. *Implementation Approach and Adaptive Management.* This includes an analysis of approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project’s adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation

arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- b) Assess the role and performance of the units and committees established and the project execution arrangements at all levels;
- c) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management UNEP-DEWA and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project;
- d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance e.g provided by the Steering Committee and IA supervision recommendations;
- e) Identify administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project partners tried to overcome these problems.

18. *Stakeholder¹⁰ Participation and Public Awareness*. The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions, private interest groups, local communities etc. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination between stakeholders, (2) consultation between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- a) the approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders in project design and implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities? What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during the course of implementation of the project?
- b) the degree and effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project; or that are built into the assessment methods so that public awareness can be raised at the time the assessments will be conducted;
- c) how the results of the project (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) engaged key stakeholders in the development and use of biodiversity indicators.

19. The ROTI analysis should assist the consultants in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and objectives to impact.

20. *Country Ownership and Driven-ness*. The evaluation will assess the performance of the Governments of the countries involved in the project, namely:

- a) in how the Governments have assumed responsibility for the project and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various contact institutions in the countries involved in the project and the timeliness of provision of counter-part funding to project activities;

¹⁰ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

- b) to what extent the political and institutional framework of the participating countries has been conducive to project performance. Look, in particular, at the extent of the political commitment to enforce (sub-) regional agreements promoted under the project;
 - c) to what extent the Governments have promoted the participation of communities and their non-governmental organisations in the project.
21. *Financial Planning and Management*. Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:
- a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
 - b) Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
 - c) Present to what extent co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).
 - d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.
22. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken by UNEP and the executing partner (s) to prevent such irregularities in the future. Examine whether the measures taken were adequate.
23. *UNEP Supervision and Backstopping*. The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:
- a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
 - b) The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
 - c) The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
 - d) The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
 - e) Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

24. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will examine how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- a) *M&E Design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
 - Quality of the project logframe as a planning and monitoring instrument
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?
 - Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were project users involved in monitoring?
 - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
- b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:
 - the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
 - annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
 - the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
 - projects had an M&E system in place with proper training, instruments and resources for parties responsible for M&E.
- c) *Budgeting and funding for M&E activities:* The evaluation will determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes

25. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:
- a) Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and POW 2010-2011. The UNEP MTS specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ROtI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described.
 - b) Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)¹¹. The outcomes and achievements of the project should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.
 - c) Gender. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?
 - d) South-South Cooperation. This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

5. The consultant

26. For this evaluation, an independent consultant will be hired. The following expertise and experience is required:
- a) Evaluation of environmental projects
 - b) Masters qualification in conservation/environmental management or similar
 - c) Expertise in biodiversity or environmental indicators or statistics at the national level
 - d) Knowledge and experience of international environmental policy and law.
 - e) At least 10 years experience in this sector.
 - f) Experience in institutional capacity building.
 - g) Experience of working in this sector in Africa.
27. The Consultant will be responsible for data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, and preparing the main report. (S)He will ensure that all evaluation criteria are adequately covered.
28. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any

¹¹ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

future interests (within six months after completion of their contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

6. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

29. The Consultant will prepare an inception report containing a thorough review of the project design quality and the evaluation framework. The review of design quality will cover the following aspects:
 - Project relevance (see paragraph 20 (b));
 - A desk-based Theory of Change of the project (see Annex 8 - ROtI analysis);
 - Sustainability consideration (see paragraphs 21-22) and measures planned to promote replication and upscaling (see paragraph 23);
 - Preparation and readiness (see paragraph 25);
 - Financial planning (see paragraph 30);
 - M&E design (see paragraph 33(a));
 - Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes (see paragraph 34);
 - Using the above, complete and assessment of the overall quality of the project design (see Annex 9)
30. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the evaluation questions under each criterion with their respective indicators and data sources. The inception report will be submitted for review by the Evaluation Office before the evaluation team conducts any field visits.
31. The main evaluation report should be brief (no longer than 35 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 2. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate.
32. Review of the draft evaluation report. The Team Leader will submit the zero draft report latest by March 9th to the UNEP EO and revise the draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. The EO will then share the first draft report with WCMC. They will forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular UNEP DEWA and UN Development Accounts for review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the Consultant for consideration in preparing the final draft report. The Consultant will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The Consultant will prepare a response to comments that contradict the findings of the evaluation team and could therefore not be accommodated in the final report. This response will be shared by the EO with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.
33. Consultations will be held between the consultant, EO staff, UNEP/DEWA, WCMC and key members of the project execution team. These consultations will seek feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons.

34. Submission of the final Terminal Evaluation report. The final report shall be submitted by Email to:

Segbedzi Norgbey, Head
UNEP Evaluation Office
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (+254-20) 762 3387
Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

35. The Head of Evaluation will share the report with the following persons:

Peter Gilruth, Director
UNEP/DEWA
P.O. Box 30552-00100
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel:
Email: peter.gilruth@unep.org

Jon Hutton
Director
UNEP-WCMC
219 Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK
Email: jon.hutton@unep-wcmc.org
Tel. +44 1223 277314

36. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site (www.unep.org/eou) and may be printed in hard copy.
37. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a quality assessment of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultant. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 5.
38. The UNEP Evaluation Office will also prepare a commentary on the final evaluation report, which presents the EO ratings of the project based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the consultant and the internal consistency of the report. Resources and Schedule of the Evaluation.

7. Execution and schedule of payment

39. This Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultants contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and they will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, obtain documentary evidence, meetings with stakeholders, field visits, and any other logistical matters related to their assignment. The UNEP Project Manager and regional and national project staff will provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, transport, lodging etc.) for the country visits where necessary, allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.
40. The Consultant will be hired for 23 days between January 2nd 2012 and April 10th 2012
41. The consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) and is inclusive of all expenses such incidental expenses.

42. The Consultant will receive 40% of the honorarium portion of his/her fee upon acceptance of a draft report deemed complete and of acceptable quality by the EO. The remainder will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the work.
43. In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these TORs, in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.
44. If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. within one month after the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 1. Logical Framework (see now in Section 1 and Annex 6)

Annex 2. Annotated Table of Contents of the Main Report

Project Identification Table	An updated version of the table in Section I.A. of these TORs
Executive Summary	Overview of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. It should encapsulate the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons. The main points for each evaluation parameter should be presented here (with a summary ratings table), as well as the most important lessons and recommendations. Maximum 4 pages.
I. Evaluation Background	
A. Context	A. Overview of the broader institutional and country context, in relation to the project's objectives.
B. The Project	B. Presentation of the project: rationale, objectives, components, intervention areas and target groups, milestones in design, implementation and completion, implementation arrangements and main partners, financing (amounts and sources), modifications to design before or during implementation.
C. Evaluation objectives, scope and methodology	C. Presentation of the evaluation's purpose, evaluation criteria and key questions, evaluation timeframe, data collection and analysis instruments used, places visited, types of stakeholders interviewed, and limitations of the evaluation.
II. Project Performance and Impact	This section is organized according to the 4 categories of evaluation criteria (see section D of these TORs) and provides factual evidence relevant to the questions asked and sound analysis and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. Ratings are provided at the end of the assessment of each evaluation criterion.
A. Attainment of objectives and planned results	
B. Sustainability and catalytic role	
C. Processes affecting attainment of project results	
D. Complementarity with UNEP programmes and strategies	
III. Conclusions and Recommendations	

A. Conclusions	This section should summarize the main findings of the evaluation, told in a logical sequence from cause to effect. It is suggested to start with the positive achievements and a short explanation why these could be achieved, and, then, to present the less successful aspects of the project with a short explanation why. The conclusions section should end with the overall assessment of the project. Findings should be cross-referenced to the main text of the report (using the paragraph numbering). The overall ratings table should be inserted here (see Annex 2).
B. Lessons Learned	Lessons learned should be anchored in the main findings of the evaluation. In fact, no lessons should appear which are not based upon a conclusion of the evaluation. The number of lessons learned should be limited. Lessons learned are rooted in real project experiences, i.e. based on good practices and successes which could be replicated or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made which should be avoided in the future. Lessons learned must have the potential for wider application and use. Lessons should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and specify the contexts in which they may be useful.
C. Recommendations	As for the lessons learned, all recommendations should be anchored in the conclusions of the report, with proper cross-referencing, and their number should be limited to 3 or 4. Recommendations are actionable proposals on how to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities), specific in terms of who would do what and when, and set a measurable performance target. In some cases, it might be useful to propose options, and briefly analyze the pros and cons of each option.
Annexes	<p>These may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation TORs 2. The evaluation framework (second part of the inception report) 3. Evaluation program, containing the names of locations visited and the names (or functions) of people met 4. Bibliography 5. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity (See annex of these TORs) 6. The review of project design (first part of the inception report) 7. Technical working paper 8. Brief CVs of the consultants <p>TE reports will also include any formal response/ comments from the project management team and/ or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report, however, such will be appended to the report by UNEP Evaluation Office.</p>

Examples of UNEP Terminal Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou.

Annex 3. Evaluation ratings

The evaluation will provide individual ratings for the evaluation criteria described in section II.D. of these TORs. Some criteria contain sub-criteria which require separate ratings (i.e. sustainability and M&E). Furthermore, an aggregated rating will be provided for Relevance, effectiveness and efficiency under the category “Attainment of project objectives and results”.

Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

In the conclusions section of the report, ratings will be presented together in a table, with a brief justification cross-referenced to the findings in the main body of the report. Please note that the order of the evaluation criteria in the table will be slightly different from the order these are treated in the main report; this is to facilitate comparison and aggregation of ratings across UNEP project evaluation reports.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Attainment of project objectives and results		HS → HU
1. Effectiveness		HS → HU
2. Relevance		HS → HU
3. Efficiency		HS → HU
B. Sustainability of project outcomes		HL → HU
1. Financial		HL → HU
2. Socio-political		HL → HU
3. Institutional framework		HL → HU
4. Environmental		HL → HU
C. Catalytic role		HS → HU
D. Stakeholders involvement		HS → HU
E. Country ownership / driven-ness		HS → HU
F. Achievement of outputs and activities		HS → HU
G. Preparation and readiness		HS → HU
H. Implementation approach		HS → HU
I. Financial planning and management		HS → HU
J. Monitoring and Evaluation		HS → HU
1. M&E Design		HS → HU
2. M&E Plan Implementation		HS → HU
3. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities		HS → HU
K. UNEP Supervision and backstopping		HS → HU

Rating of Attainment of project objectives and results. A compound rating is given to the category based on the assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. This aggregated rating is not a simple average of the separate ratings given to the evaluation criteria, but an overall judgement by the consultants. Relevance and effectiveness, however, will be considered as critical criteria. This means that the aggregated rating for Attainment of objectives and results may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria.

Ratings on sustainability. According to the UNEP Office of Evaluation, all the dimensions of sustainability are deemed critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability will not be higher than the lowest rating on the separate dimensions.

Ratings of monitoring and evaluation. The M&E system will be rated on M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and budgeting and funding for M&E activities (the latter sub-criterion is covered in the main report under M&E design) as follows:

- Highly Satisfactory (HS): There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Satisfactory(S): There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The Project had no M&E system.

M&E plan implementation will be considered critical for the overall assessment of the M&E system. Thus, the overall rating for M&E will not be higher than the rating on M&E plan implementation.

Annex 4. Result-based budget (see now in Annex 5)

Annex 5. Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

All UNEP evaluation reports are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the draft evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP EO Assessment	Rating
A. Did the report present an assessment of relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators if applicable?		
B. Was the report consistent and the evidence complete and convincing and were the ratings substantiated when used?		
C. Did the report present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes?		
D. Were the lessons and recommendations supported by the evidence presented?		
E. Did the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?		
F. Did the report include an assessment of the quality of the project M&E system and its use for project management?		
UNEP additional Report Quality Criteria		
G. Quality of the lessons: Were lessons readily applicable in other contexts? Did they suggest prescriptive action?		
H. Quality of the recommendations: Did recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented? Did the recommendations specify a goal and an associated performance indicator?		
I. Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)		
J. Did the report structure follow EOU guidelines, were all requested Annexes included?		

K. Were all evaluation aspects specified in the TORs adequately addressed?		
L. Was the report delivered in a timely manner		

$$\text{Quality} = (2*(0.3*(A + B) + 0.1*(C+D+E+F)) + 0.3*(G + H) + 0.1*(I+J+K+L))/3$$

The Totals are rounded and converted to the scale of HS to HU

Rating system for quality of Terminal Evaluation reports: A number rating between 1 and 6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1.

Annex 6. Documentation list for the evaluation to be provided by the UNEP

Project Manager

- Project design documents
- Project supervision plan, with associated budget
- Correspondence related to project
- Supervision mission reports
- Steering Committee meeting documents, including agendas, meeting minutes, and any summary reports
- Project progress reports, including financial reports submitted
- Cash advance requests documenting disbursements
- Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)
- Management memos related to project
- Other documentation of supervision feedback on project outputs and processes (e.g. comments on draft progress reports, etc.).
- Extension documentation. Has a project extension occurred?
- Project revision documentation.
- Budget revision documentation.
- Project Terminal Report (draft if final version not available)

Annex 7. Introduction to Theory of Change/impact pathways, the ROTI method and the ROTI results score sheet (See now in Annex 6)

Annex 8. Template for the assessment of the quality of project design

		Evaluation Comments	Reference to report section.
Relevance			
Are the intended results likely to contribute to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and programmatic objectives?			
Does the project form a coherent part of a UNEP-approved programme framework?			
Is there complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing?			
Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with:	i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs?		
	ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation?		
	iv) Stakeholder priorities and		

	needs?		
<i>Overall rating for relevance</i>			
Intended results and causality			
Are the objectives realistic?			
Are the causal pathways from project outputs [goods and services] through outcomes [changes in stakeholder behaviour] towards impacts clearly and convincingly described? Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change or intervention logic for the project?			
Is the timeframe realistic? What is the likelihood that the anticipated project outcomes can be achieved within the stated duration of the project?			
Are the activities designed within the project likely to produce their intended results			
Are activities appropriate to produce outputs?			
Are activities appropriate to drive change along the intended causal pathway(s)			
Are impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?			
<i>Overall rating for intended results and causality</i>			
Efficiency			
Are any cost- or time-saving measures proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and timeframe?			
Does the project intend to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?			
<i>Overall rating for Efficiency</i>			
Sustainability/replication and catalytic effects			
Does the project design present a strategy / approach to sustaining outcomes / benefits?			
Does the design identify the social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Does the design foresee sufficient activities to promote government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?			
If funding is required to sustain project outcomes and benefits, does the design propose adequate measures / mechanisms to secure this funding?			
Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?			
Does the project design adequately describe the institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project results?			
Does the project design identify environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?			
Does the project design foresee	i) technologies and		

adequate measures to catalyze behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of (e.g.):	approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects;		
	ii) strategic programmes and plans developed		
	iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level		
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to institutional changes? [An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in any regional or national demonstration projects]			
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy)?			
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to sustain follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments or other donors?			
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to create opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (“champions”) to catalyze change (without which the project would not achieve all of its results)?			
Are the planned activities likely to generate the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders necessary to allow for the project results to be sustained?			
<i>Overall rating for sustainability/replication and catalytic effects</i>			
Risk identification and Social Safeguards			
Are critical risks appropriately addressed?			
Are assumptions properly specified as factors affecting achievement of project results that are beyond the control of the project?			
Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified			
<i>Overall rating for Risk identification and Social Safeguards</i>			
Governance and supervision arrangements			
Is the project governance model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?			
Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?			
Are supervision / oversight arrangements clear and appropriate?			
<i>Overall rating for Governance and Supervision Arrangements</i>			
Management, execution and partnership arrangements			
Have the capacities of partner been adequately assessed?			
Are the execution arrangements clear?			
Are the roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners properly specified?			
<i>Overall rating for management, execution and partnership arrangements</i>			
Financial planning/budgeting			
Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning			
Cost effectiveness of proposed resource utilization as described in project budgets and viability in respect of resource mobilization potential			
Financial and administrative arrangements including flows of			

funds are clearly described		
<i>Overall rating for financial planning/budgeting</i>		
Monitoring		
Does the logical framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capture the key elements in the Theory of Change for the project? • have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes and objectives? • have appropriate 'means of verification'? • adequately identify assumptions? 		
Are the milestones and performance indicators appropriate and sufficient to foster management towards outcomes and higher level objectives?		
Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?		
Has the method for the baseline data collection been explained?		
Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of Outcomes and are targets based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?		
Has the time frame for monitoring activities been specified?		
Are the organisational arrangements for project level progress monitoring clearly specified		
Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes?		
Overall, is the approach to monitoring progress and performance within the project adequate?		
<i>Overall rating for monitoring</i>		
Evaluation		
Is there an adequate plan for evaluation?		
Has the time frame for Evaluation activities been specified?		
Is there an explicit budget provision for mid term review and terminal evaluation?		
Is the budget sufficient?		
<i>Overall rating for evaluation</i>		

Annex 9. List of intended additional recipients of the final evaluation

Name	Affiliation	Email
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Annex 2 Evaluation framework

Section 2 describes the scope, objectives and methods used for this evaluation as a whole. As mentioned there, the framework of inquiry relied to a large extent on a systematic set of questions, some designed to be more open, others designed to be more closed and specific.

A starting-point was the three “key questions” provided in the evaluation terms of reference, namely:

- (i) How successful was the project in strengthening the capacity of governments in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem indicators in support of national policies, including PRSPs and international reporting for the MDG-7 and the 2010 Biodiversity Target?
- (ii) How successful was the project in increasing technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring?
- (iii) How successful was the project in improving the capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets?

All of the consultees approached (see annex 3) were invited to make free comments, but to assist further, a standard set of five key open questions was also provided. The brevity of this list was designed to be more appealing to consultees than something appearing to be “yet another questionnaire”, and thereby hopefully to produce a better response, based on a standard core of the lines of inquiry. It was also designed to encourage recipients to provide quick instinctive responses, which sometimes better crystallise what people really think. The five “key questions” were as follows:

From your personal experience or awareness of the *Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa* project:

1. What evidence can you point to, if any, that shows how the capacity of governments to produce and interpret biodiversity indicators has increased as a result of the project?
2. Do you have evidence or experience of the project being the cause of a useful change in the way governments and national institutions use indicators (in demonstrating progress towards targets, improving policy, etc)? Please describe.
3. If you are able to, please name at least (a) one strength and (b) one weakness in the way the project was organised and managed. (Elaborate as much as you wish).
4. Can you suggest any ways in which the project’s activities to encourage partnerships between governments, NGOs and academic researchers could have been more effective?
5. What (if anything) has kept people’s motivation and capacity high after the end of the project in 2010? (Comment also, if necessary, on whether you think it is all still relevant).

In addition to the five universal questions, the consultation also offered the option of a more in-depth response according to a separately-provided structured “long list” of further questions, in cases where respondents were interested in doing so.

The “long list” was a framework of over 80 further questions based on the evaluation terms of reference. This may not necessarily appear to be ordered in the most logical way for the flow of a train of thought or a conversation; but it was compiled in this way to mirror key sections in the required structure of the evaluation report (corresponding to the headings below).

This list was formulated primarily as an aide mémoire for the evaluator to assist in the consultation process. Those consultees who expressed an interest in responding in more depth, and with whom it was also shared, were invited to use it merely as a “menu” from which to select any particular issues on which they wished to make further comment, for

example in telephone interviews; and were reassured that that they were not being asked to work through the whole of it like a questionnaire - unless they wanted to!

The “long list” questions was as follows:

1. Achievement of outputs and activities

- Were the right people selected to attend the project workshops?
- Could other types of stakeholder have been involved? If so, who would have been the priority types, in your view?
- How successful was the project in attracting attendance at workshops from the people who had been identified as key target beneficiaries?
- Do you have any views on the age and gender balance of the people who became involved in the project and were its beneficiaries? If you think it should have been different, how could that have been achieved?
- Do you have any views on strengths/weaknesses in the materials supplied for use in the workshops?
- Specific comments on the quality and utility of the *Guidance for National Biodiversity Indicator Development and Use* publication.
- Comment on the use that was made of conceptual models, in indicator development.
- Comment on any difficulties/limitations relating to internet access conditions in the countries concerned.
- All comments on the project’s web-based content, including its maintenance and updating.
- Could the project have done more with interactive components and social media? How would this have helped?
- Has the project done enough to publish relevant materials that it generated or helped to generate?
- How much consensus was there among participants/between countries on the indicator methodologies that were used? If the methods had to be varied to suit different circumstances, how effectively was that achieved? Give examples.
- Views on the tradeoff between securing best delivery of the already most well-developed indicators *versus* helping to get more poorly-developed ones closer to being implementable.
- In relation to any of the indicators the project worked on, would it always have been easy for you to say in a clear “headline sentence” what that indicator was demonstrating? How could understanding of these “ultimate key messages” have been made even clearer, throughout the process?
- Are you aware of where specifically your country’s national reports to international processes (CBD, MDGs etc) have drawn directly on information generated as a result of this project, which would not have been generated otherwise? Give examples.
- What links, if any, have been made to work (in the countries concerned) on National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans?
- Alongside the attention given to indicators, was too much or too little emphasis given to ecosystem assessment issues? Comment on how well or otherwise these two things sat together in the project.

2. Effectiveness

- What does “capacity building” mean to you?
- To what extent has the project been successful in building new partnership and links between sectors and/or between countries? How has this helped biodiversity conservation outcomes? Can you give examples?
- Comment on the role played by statistics agencies, and what new achievements on that front can be attributed to the project.
- Were the indicators that were developed the right ones, in the sense of addressing appropriate priorities for the country and being feasible to implement?
- What level of traction did the project achieve with government departments and other organisations in sectors beyond the biodiversity sector? What is the evidence for this?
- Which of the outputs was the biggest step forward/the biggest new contribution?
- Which country achieved the most through the project? On what is that judgement based?
- Which country advanced the most, as a result of the project, from the position it was in at the start? On what is that judgement based?
- Comment on the assumption that better information leads to better decisions (in the biodiversity indicators context).
- What efforts were made to track how people at different levels were using the increased capacity the project gave them, in policy development, national monitoring and international reporting?
- What evidence is there of changes in decision making behaviour as a result of the project’s outputs?
- Have you personally seen the influence of the project on the adoption of new policies or legislation? (Specify).
- On what basis can you compare your answer to the preceding three questions with the way you think things would have been without the project? Were better indicators not already going to be developed and reported anyway?
- How successful was the work on indicators of ecosystem services? How well has it been able for example to attribute cause and effect (ie between status of biodiversity and status of services delivered)?

3. Relevance

- What is your view of the extent which the project’s objectives were backed by existing policy or legislative requirements? Was it mainly leading and advocating new/stronger approaches, or was it mainly meeting a need that governments had already expressed?
- To what extent did the needs and priorities for indicators at national level match the way indicators had been defined at international level (eg under the CBD and for the MDGs)?
- What proportion of workshop participants already had the subject of indicator development and/or use in their existing job responsibilities?
- How much discussion was there about aligning the project with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building? Describe the content of any such discussion, and comment on the points of connection with the Plan.
- How much discussion was there about aligning the project with adopted capacity-building programmes and strategies of the biodiversity-related MEAs? Describe the

content of any such discussion, and comment on the points of connection with these programmes and strategies.

- How relevant are the indicators developed for reporting against the 2010 biodiversity target continuing to be now for reporting against the 2020 (Aichi) biodiversity targets?
- Any other points on consistency with existing relevant policies and mandates?

4. Efficiency

- Do you have any comments on the best and worst of the project's governance and management, in respect of its cost-efficiency?
- What specifically were the efficiencies achieved by linkages between the project and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership GEF project? What would the project have had to do differently without those links, and what would the cost implications have been? What more could have been done to optimise those links?

5. Sustainability

- "Sustainability" in this context means the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after all project funding and assistance ends. What assessment do you make about the success or otherwise of this since December 2010?
- What assessment do you make about the prospects for future sustainability, in these terms, from now on?
- Have the "peer-to-peer support" arrangements continued after the project? Comment on how well this has worked.
- What else does "sustainability" mean to you, in relation to this project?

6. Catalytic role and replication

- What evidence is there of people whose capacity has been enhanced through the project passing on what they have learned to colleagues, and thereby spreading the capacity benefits to a wider number of people?
- Have any of the workshop participants moved into more responsible job roles that concern indicator development/use after the project, as a direct result of the skills and knowledge they acquired from their involvement in it?
- "Replication" in this context refers to lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated in other projects in a different geographic area or scaled up and funded by other sources within the same geographic area. Comment on uptake at different levels, and on actual or potential replication of the project's work beyond its own activities.
- Has the project's workshop model been copied in other places? Give details.
- Have the project's indicator selection and development templates been copied in other places? Give details.

7. Preparation and readiness

- What kinds of user needs assessments were done, for any part of the project?
- What generic wisdom on capacity-building in general, and trends in this field, was researched and used in planning the project?
- Why was southern and eastern Africa the best place to undertake this project? What other options were considered but rejected, and why?

- Comment on the extent to which assumptions made in the course of the project's planning and evolution have been clear.
- Comment on strategic choices that had to be made: what dilemmas were faced? what balances had to be struck? what choices were made?
- Could the need to run the project until the end of 2010 (which required an extension to the original timeframe) have been better foreseen at the outset? If not, why not?
- What discussions took place during project design about the extent to which the project would need to engage in communication and dissemination of its results during its later stages?
- Was the project optimally timed in relation to the timeframe for the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the CBD 4th national reports, CBD COP10 and other relevant external events? How could its timing have been made even more optimal in this respect?

8. Implementation approach and adaptive management

- Any views on the quality/effectiveness of the management of the process.
- What was the best and worst of the project's governance and management, in respect of adaptation to unforeseen contingencies, and appreciation of risk factors?
- Were you satisfied with the frequency, speed and quality of communications from the project's managers?
- Views on effectiveness of meetings.
- Comment on the quality and the handling of the sub-contracts for workshop organisation in each sub-region.
- Comment on cohesions/tensions/relationships within the distributed team (ie UNEP-WCMC, UNEP-DEWA and the contracted organisations in the region) - the nature and handling of them, and what was best/worst. What would you do differently if the project was starting again?

9. Stakeholder participation and public awareness

- Did you receive a good supply of project updates, news, reports etc, and did you feel sufficiently well informed about how things were going?
- Were the reasons for the choices of methods and priorities etc well explained to you, and did you have sufficient opportunity to question and clarify things? In what ways could that dialogue have been made even better?
- Did you make suggestions about things to include in the workshops and the way the workshops might be run? Were your suggestions listened to and acted upon?
- How well known is the project/how well used are its products among your colleagues? (Specify the context you work in).
- How well do you think the project was known and understood by wider audiences beyond the people who directly participated? What evidence do you have?
- What have been the best examples of external publicity about the project? What else would you have liked to see?
- Either as a respondent or as an interpreter of their results, comment on whatever stakeholder needs assessments were made.
- Comment on the extent to which the project has built new networks, partnerships, or a new community of practitioners in any other sense.
- Comment on any issues concerning the working language(s) in which the project was conducted, and aspects of this that you would have liked to be different.

10. Financial planning and management

- Any comments on the best and worst of the project's financial planning, management and controls.

11. UNEP supervision and backstopping

- Views on the role of relevant parts of UNEP; its input to the project as a partner, and the quality of supervision, feedback, guidance and support.

12. Monitoring & evaluation design

- How well were baseline assumed trajectories described at the outset of the project?
- Did the logframe/monitoring & evaluation plan indicators provide a good basis for performance assessment in practice? Was use made of other yardsticks as well/instead? How could the logframe/M&E plan have been improved in this respect?

13. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan implementation

- Comment on quality, timeliness, completeness and usefulness of progress-reporting during the project.
- Were adjustments made in response to feedback received on progress reports? Give details.
- What peer-review processes, if any, were employed during the project to secure progressive refinement of its technical content?
- Views on other quality control mechanisms employed.

14. Complementarity with UNEP programmes and strategies

- How coherent was the relationship between the project and UNEP's other involvements in indicator and assessment-related programmes?

15. Lessons learned

- What key "lessons learned" from or about the project (either positive or negative) do you think should be captured in the evaluation report? (The project final report includes good specific lessons learned about indicator development; but the question here relates more to the use of this project as a way of achieving the overall outcomes).
- How should these lessons be applied?
- What are the particular problems and rewards of a project done in this way? (programme of workshops to build capacity; mixture of guidance and self-help; mixture of theory and practice etc).
- What would you do differently if you were starting again?

16. Recommendations

- What main recommendations would you want the evaluation report to make? (arising specifically from your view about the strengths and weaknesses of the project). Be as specific as possible; and say to whom each recommendation is addressed.

A few additional issues were defined specifically for discussions on financial aspects of the evaluation with relevant individuals, as follows:

- The quality and adequacy of financial monitoring and reporting;
- Experiences from the financial oversight process;
- How well were central financial guidance, advice and requests responded to;
- How well were financial controls built in to the project's subcontracting process;
- Was the project covered by any specific UNEP financial audits carried out during the relevant period (2008-2010);
- How well the construction of budget information complied with requirements/good practice;
- How budget variances (underspends, overspends, virements) were handled;
- How exchange rate issues (losses, gains, timing of reconciliations, choice of currencies for different transactions) were handled;
- The overall cost-effectiveness of the size of the budget for the project;
- The appropriateness of the proportional split of funds between budget-lines, including administrative overheads;
- Anything else!

Finally, the series of meetings held at UNEP-WCMC in January 2012 was conducted with reference to further specific questions, grouped according to headings which constituted a discussion agenda, as follows:

- The evaluation itself
- Project planning
- Management
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Financial aspects
- Subcontracts
- Delivery - workshop content, national activity etc
- Wider outreach
- Sustainability/replication

Annex 3 Consultations undertaken

An overview of the methods used for the evaluation is given in section 2 of this report. The present annex gives further details of the consultation approach, consultees and respondents. Annex 2 provides the Evaluation Framework, which contains the lists of questions used in the consultations and comments on their use.

Main email consultation

Over 80 project stakeholders were contacted by personal email, including UNEP-WCMC and UNEP-DEWA staff, all the project's workshop participants, other partners, collaborators, advisers and wider beneficiaries. The list aimed to include individuals who would be able to be challenging critics of the project, not only its most loyal champions; and some with only scant acquaintance with the project, in order to test its impact at that level too. Some consultees suggested further names and these were also contacted. The resulting list is as follows:

Botswana	
Ingrid Mpundu Otukile	Botswana Department of Environmental Affairs
Justin Soopu	Birdlife Botswana
Cyril Taolo	Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks
Burundi	
Geoffrey Citegetse	Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux
Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux	Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux
Dieudonne Bizimana	Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux
Alphonse Fofo	Institut National pour l'Environnement et la Conservation de la Nature, Burundi
Benoit Nzigidahera	Institut National pour l'Environnement et la Conservation de la Nature, Burundi
Juvent Baramburiye	Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Burundi
Gaspard Ntakimazi	Burundi
Séverin Karabagega	Institut de Statistiques et D'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, Burundi
Aloys Rurantije	Institut Géographique du Burundi
Capitoline Nsabyunva	Direction de l'Environnement au Ministère de l'Eau, de l'Environnement, de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Urbanisme, Burundi
Ethiopia	
Mengistu Wondafrash	Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society
Tesfaye Awas Feye	Institute of Biodiversity Conservation, Ethiopia
Kahsay G Asgedom	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
Dawit Dinku Kalu	Central Statistical Agency, Ethiopia
Kenya	
PW Wargute	Kenya Department of Resource Surveys & Remote Sensing
Paul Nderitu	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
Fred Barasa Munyekenya	Nature Kenya
Samuel Andanje	Kenya Wildlife Service
James Mwangombe	Kenya Forestry Service
Moses Maloba	Kenya Wildlife Service
James G Njogu	Kenya Wildlife Service
Veronica Kimutai	Kenya National Environment Management Authority
Jenipher Olang	Kenya Wildlife Service
Lesotho	
Thabo Thobei	Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho
Refiloe Ntshohi	Lesotho National Environment Secretariat
Mozambique	

Anselmina Luis Abrao	Ministry of Coordination Environmental Affairs, Mozambique
Nantakota Liphola	
Natercia Macuacua	National Institute of Statistics, Mozambique
Namibia	
Christopher Brown	Namibia Nature Foundation
Julian Fennessy	Namibia Nature Foundation
Ngaingonekue Uamburu	Namibia Central Bureau of Statistics
Kenneth Uiseb	Directorate of Scientific Services, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Namibia
Rwanda	
Patrick Buda Kukiye	Rwanda Wildlife Agency/Rwanda Development Board
Serge Joram Nsengemana	Association pour la Conservation de la Nature au Rwanda
Claude Mwizerwa,	Rwanda National Institute of Statistics
Fabrice Mugabo	Rwanda Management Environment Authority
South Africa	
Leanne Hart	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Heather Terrapon	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Smiso Bhengu	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Selwyn Willoughby	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Belinda Reyers	Council for Science and Industrial Research, South Africa
Robert Parry	South African Department of Water and Environment Affairs
Patrick O'Farrell	Statistics South Africa
Swaziland	
Sandile Thululwemphi Gumedze	Swaziland Trust Commission
Calisile Mhlanga	Swaziland Environment Authority
Simon Bhutana Tsela	Central Statistical Office, Swaziland
Tanzania	
Anna Maembe	National Environment Management Council, Tanzania
Stephen N Maganda	National Bureau of Statistics, Tanzania
Jerome Kimaro	Tanzania Wild Research Institute
Samwel Bakari	Tanzania Wild Research Institute
Revocatus Petro	Moshi Timber Utilisation Research Centre, Tanzania Forestry
Mushumbuzi	Research Institute
Uganda	
GW Kawase	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
Achilles Byaruhanga	Nature Uganda
Francis Meri Sabino	Uganda National Environment Management Authority
Ogwal	
Herbert Tushabe	Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources
Aggrey Rwetsiba	Uganda Wildlife Authority
Zimbabwe	
Yvonne Tafadzwa	Zimbabwe Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
Chingarande	
Chipangura Chirara	Birdlife Zimbabwe
Member Mushongahande	Zimbabwe Forestry Commission
Perfect Makumbe	Central Statistics Office, Zimbabwe
UNEP	
Philip Bubb	UNEP-WCMC
Damon Stanwell-Smith	UNEP-WCMC
Anna Chenery	UNEP-WCMC
Jon Hutton	UNEP-WCMC
Maxwell Gomera	UNEP-WCMC
Tim Johnson	UNEP-WCMC
Alex Gee	UNEP-WCMC
Abisha Mapendembe	UNEP-WCMC
David Isabirye	Financial Management Officer, UNEP Nairobi

Sergei Khromov	UNEP Nairobi
Gemma Shepherd	Programme Officer, UNEP DEWA
Kamar Yousuf	UNEP Regional Office for Africa and UNEP Division of Environmental Law and Conventions
Jochem Zoetelief	UNEP Programme Coordination and Management Unit
Stephen Twomlow	(Former) UNEP GEF BIP Project Manager
Others	
Julius Arinaitwe	BirdLife International Africa Partnership
Thandiwe Chikomo	BirdLife International Africa Partnership
Fabiana Issler	UNDP Africa
Jessie Mee	UNDP Africa
Eddy Russell	UNDP Africa
Robert Höft	Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat
Egline Tawuya	Southern African Research and Documentation Centre/India Musokotwane Environment Resource Centre for Southern Africa
Anthony Kuria	Tropical Biology Association

Approaches involved a mixture of generic messages and individually tailored ones, but in every case, in addition to explaining the basic scope and purpose of the evaluation and inviting free comments, an identical set of five core open questions was also offered. A longer list of 87 questions was made available to those who wished to have more, and 11 others were used to guide discussions with relevant individuals concerning the project's financial management (for the questions themselves, see annex 2). A response deadline of one month was given, and some selected reminders were sent.

As well as inviting responses by email, the message also encouraged respondents to discuss their views by telephone or skype, and provided contact details for doing so. The email circulation was reinforced by word-of-mouth encouragement from UNEP-WCMC and others to relevant contacts, inviting their input.

For the main consultation list, recipients saw only their own name in the address line of the email, and were generally not made aware of who else was being contacted, apart from the workshop participants having earlier been made aware by the UNEP-EOU that they would all be included in the consultation. A different approach was taken in the case of the UNEP-WCMC Cambridge staff, where recipients were made aware of the other names being approached in the same building, so as to assist in coordination of the practical planning of meetings.

Details of a number of email addresses which had become inoperative and "bounced back" were fed back to the project manager. Other status changes, personnel replacements and email address updates which became apparent were logged and passed on as necessary.

All replies were individually and promptly responded to. In some cases additional emails were exchanged on particular issues. Wherever dialogue was entered into, assurances were given as to respect of confidences and anonymity of attribution.

The list includes a number of consultees who are French-speaking (Burundi, Rwanda) or Portuguese-speaking (Mozambique). The possibility of translating the consultation emails in these cases was considered, and a willingness to receive responses in French was made known. In the event, while translation may have been helpful to some, this was not given priority: some responses from the countries concerned were received in English, and the project itself (including all workshops and written material) had been conducted in English; so it is hoped that the use of English for the evaluation consultations too did not hinder the quantity or quality of the response.

Responses

Substantive responses were provided by the following 14 consultees in 7 countries:

Dieudonne Bizimana	Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux
Fred Barasa Munyekenya	Nature Kenya
James G Njogu	Kenya Wildlife Service
Samuel Andanje	Kenya Wildlife Service
Smiso Bhengu	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Heather Terrapon	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Selwyn Willoughby	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Sandile Thululwemphi	Swaziland Trust Commission
Gumedze	
Calisile Mhlanga	Swaziland Environment Authority
Anna Maembe	National Environment Management Council, Tanzania
Philip Bubb	UNEP-WCMC
David Isabirye	Financial Management Officer, UNEP Nairobi
Gemma Shepherd	Programme Officer, UNEP DEWA
Robert Höft	Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat

Ideally a higher response rate would have been hoped for. Given the advance priming by the EOU, the fact that some consultees were already known to the evaluator, the reasonable response time and alternative response methods allowed, and the issuing of reminders in some cases, this is a moderately disappointing total. More time spent on intensive chasing-up and encouraging individuals might have improved the position; but this trades off against time spent on other things and a line always has to be drawn somewhere. As noted in section 2, in the year which elapsed between the end of the project and the start of the evaluation, a number of relevant individuals had moved on and could not be contacted, and among the rest, memories of project experiences were perhaps not as fresh or complete as they would have been at an earlier stage.

Notwithstanding this, the responses received were very helpful: they covered a variety of countries and types of involvement with the project, and included a sufficient volume of evidence and thoughtful comment for the evaluation's purposes.

Telephone interviews

Telephone and skype interviews were conducted with the South African National Biodiversity Institute and the Kenya Wildlife Service to discuss the project from their particular perspective as the organisations who had been sub-contracted to assist with workshop coordination in Southern and Eastern Africa respectively.

Cambridge meetings

Meetings were held with project staff and others at UNEP-WCMC's offices in Cambridge, UK, on 19-20 January 2012. In addition to the other frameworks of evaluation questions mentioned above, in advance of these meetings a further specific list of 38 questions was provided, grouped according to nine headings which constituted a rough agenda for discussions (see annex 2). Liaison with some of the individuals concerned continued by email or telephone after the meetings. Those principally involved were as follows:

Philip Bubb	Senior Programme Officer , Ecosystem Assessment (and BICSA Project Manager)
Damon Stanwell-Smith	Senior Programme Officer , Ecosystem Assessment
Anna Chenery	Programme Officer , Ecosystem Assessment
Alex Gee	Head of Project Co-ordination Unit , Finance and Administration
Maxwell Gomera	Deputy Director
Tim Johnson	Chief Operating Officer

Annex 4 List of documents

The following documents were consulted for this evaluation.

Principal project documents

- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. 6th Tranche of the UN Development Account. UNEP-WCMC/UNEP-DEWA Project Document, ref ROA-2648-1571-2611 (DA/9999-08-02). April 2008.
- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. No-cost extension request for project ROA-2648-1571-2611, from UNEP-DEWA to UNEP Division of Regional Cooperation. 8 July 2010.

Sub-contracts

- Agreement for supply of services, between UNEP-WCMC and Kenya Wildlife Service. Reference 252/KWS/09. March 2009. 8pp.
- Schedule to Agreement 252/KWS/09 between UNEP-WCMC and Kenya Wildlife Service. Reference 702/09. March 2009. 7pp.
- Agreement for supply of services, between UNEP-WCMC and South African National Biodiversity Institute. Reference 258/SANBI/09. June 2009. 8pp.
- Schedule to Agreement 258/SANBI/09 between UNEP-WCMC and South African National Biodiversity Institute. Reference 711/SANBI/09. June 2009. 5pp.

Project reports

- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. Project Annual Progress Report for UN Development Account, September 2008 – December 2008. Submitted January 2009. 5pp.
- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. Project Annual Progress Report for UN Development Account, January 2009 – June 2009. Submitted August 2009. 6pp.
- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. Project Annual Progress Report for UN Development Account, January 2009 – December 2009. Submitted January 2010. 10pp.
- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. Project Terminal Report for UN Development Account. Submitted March 2011. 22pp.
- Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. Quarterly expenditure report for Project ROA-1571, for the quarter ending 31 December 2010. UNEP-WCMC.
- Bubb, P, Chenery, A and Stanwell-Smith, D (2010). Biodiversity Indicators Capacity Strengthening: experiences from Africa. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. 10pp.

Project workshop reports

- Eastern Africa: report of first workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 30 March - 3 April 2009. 33pp.
- Eastern Africa: report of second workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 22-24 September 2009. 29pp.
- Eastern Africa: report of third workshop, Nairobi, Kenya, 13-15 April 2010. 100pp.
- Southern Africa: report of first workshop, Cape Town, South Africa, 21-23 July 2009. 44pp.

- Southern Africa: report of second workshop, Pretoria, South Africa, 9-11 February 2010. 56pp.
- Southern Africa: report of third workshop, Windhoek, Namibia, 17-19 August 2010. 76pp.
- Minutes of BICSA national workshop, Botswana, 7-8 December 2010. 17pp.

National reports

- BICSA project final national report - Burundi. March 2011. 4pp.
- BICSA project final national report - Ethiopia. March 2011. 3pp.
- Wondafrash, M (Ed) (2010). Ethiopia: Overview of selected biodiversity indicators.. Ethiopian Biodiversity Indicators Development National Task Force, Addis Ababa. 48 pp.
- BICSA project final progress report: indicator development based on wildlife numbers and distribution in Namibia. February 2011. 2pp.
- Indicator development based on wildlife numbers and distribution in Namibia - final report. February 2012. 5pp
- BICSA project final national report - South Africa. February 2011. 4pp.
- BICSA project final national report - Swaziland. February 2011. 9pp.
- Bakari, S, Kimaro, J and Maembe, A (2001). Biodiversity Indicators Capacity Strengthening in Africa Project - experiences from Tanzania: progress, lessons learnt and needs for future indicator development. February 2011. 18pp.
- BICSA project final national report - Uganda. February 2011. 4pp.
- Uganda National Environment Management Authority (2011). Developing biodiversity monitoring indicators for Uganda. 42pp.
- BICSA project final national report - Zimbabwe. February 2011. 3pp.

Others

- Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010). Biodiversity indicators and the 2010 Target: experiences and lessons learnt from the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. Published by Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, Canada. CBD Technical Series No. 53.
- Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2011). Guidance for national biodiversity indicator development and use. UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK. 40pp.
- Bubb, P, Jenkins, M, and Kapos, V (2005). Biodiversity Indicators for National Use: experience and guidance. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK.
- Brann, J (2007). Biodiversity Indicators for National Use - GEF Project 1384. Terminal Evaluation report for UNEP.
- CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (2010). Experiences in the development of national biodiversity indicators. Information document INF/12 for 14th meeting of SBSTTA, 10-21 May 2010, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Chenery, A and Bubb, P (Eds) (2011). Eastern Africa capacity building workshop on information use and indicators in updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Report of workshop at Entebbe, Uganda, September 2011. Biodiversity Indicators Partnership/UNEP-WCMC.
- Pritchard, D E (2011). Building the partnership to track progress at the global level in achieving the 2010 biodiversity target. Terminal Evaluation of Full-Sized UNEP-GEF project 2796. Report for UNEP Evaluation Office, Nairobi.
- Pritchard, D E (2012). Building national capacities for biodiversity indicators and reporting in Southern and Eastern Africa. UNEP Terminal Evaluation Inception Report. Internal report to UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit. 30pp.

- SafMA Consortium (2004). Southern Africa sub-global assessment. Published as part of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2011). Report of regional workshop for East Africa on updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, Kigali, Rwanda, June 2011. UNEP/CBD/CBW-NBSAP/EA/2/2.
- UNEP (2005) Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. UNEP, Nairobi.
- UNEP (2008). UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-13. UNEP, Nairobi.
- UNEP-WCMC and RIVM (2003). Biodiversity Indicators for National Use: preliminary lessons from the GEF project. Progress report to the 9th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, November 2003. UNEP-WCMC and National Institute for Public Health and Environment in The Netherlands. UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/9/INF/19.
- World Resources Institute (2007). Nature's benefits in Kenya: an atlas of ecosystems and human well-being. Published by WRI in association with the International Livestock Research Institute, the Kenyan Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Annex 5 Finance information

This annex presents a summary of relevant financial information for the BICSA project, as specified in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation. The ToRs ask for data on co-financing, and on overall expenditure broken down by project activity type. Descriptive notes on key aspects are given below, but evaluative comments on financial planning and control are not given here but in report section 3H instead.

Total budget, co-financing and outturn

The total project budget figures (in US\$) are as follows:

UNDA:	504,000
Co-financing:	41,200
Total:	545,200
Actual expenditure:	482,406
Underspend:	62,794

UNEP-WCMC costs

Just under 40% of the UNDA-provided funds (or 36% of the budget including co-financing) was allocated to UNEP-WCMC's own costs in operating the project, consisting of staff time (the budget line "604 consultants fees" in the tables below, costed at \$6,000 per work month), travel (\$18,000), production of workshop and guidance materials plus technical support (\$132,000, costed at \$11,000 per work month), communication (\$5,000) and workshop "supplies" (\$1,000).

The division of specifics between these different categories is somewhat opaque and varies between documents, and on the face of it there are theoretical risks of double-counting; but the categories are understood to be imposed by existing accounting conventions and budget-line headings in UNDA, UNEP-DEWA and UNEP-WCMC, and hence the way this was arranged was beyond the control of the project itself. Although it has for these reasons not been fully easy to judge, it seems that the allocations and the basis for costings are broadly proportionate.

Reference to "consultants" in line 604 (for both fees and travel) is potentially misleading as it covers both staff on the Centre's established payroll and one or two individuals who work regularly for the Centre but in a self-employed capacity.

SANBI and KWS sub-contracts

Organisation of workshops, including participants' travel and hire of venues, was sub-contracted to two partner organisations: the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI, for Southern Africa) and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS, for Eastern Africa). The workshops were budgeted at \$41,166 each (three workshops in each of the two sub-regions making a total of \$246,996). Each subcontract also included an amount for the services provided by SANBI and KWS respectively, calculated as \$3,375 per workshop plus \$3,375 for peer-to-peer exchange support (activity 4) per region (ie \$27,000 in total).

The two sub-contracts were not identical. Average workshop costs were quoted at a lower rate in the Southern African case, and the KWS sub-contract included an amount of \$21,000 for the "exchange visits" part of activity 4 which did not feature in the SANBI sub-contract. KWS also agreed to administer the project support seed-funding given to each country team (6 x \$6,000) in their sub-region, whereas in Southern Africa this was done direct from UNEP-WCMC. The SANBI sub-contract therefore totalled \$131,725 while the KWS one totalled \$172,500.

The support provided by these funds included the acquisition of some items of capital equipment which would be expected to have continuing value post-project; but it appears that these were limited and arguably essential; and the amounts probably not disproportionate overall (\$5,000 in the case of KWS; details for SANBI unknown but assumed to be less).

The sub-contract amounts were allocated mostly to budget line 621 “fellowships and grants”, with the remainder being allocated to the same “consultancy” budget-lines used for WCMC staff time. This includes an amount of \$17,000 originally identified in the budget as “national consultants” (costed at \$3,000 per work month).

The budgeted combination of all the sub-contracted elements adds up to some 60% of the UNDA-provided funds, and to 56% of the budget including co-financing. Delegating work in this way had strengths and weaknesses but overall is likely to have achieved some cost-efficiencies; and it is a healthy sign for a respectable portion of the project funds to have been spent accordingly in Africa rather than in Europe. (In fact the actual proportion spent in Africa is greater still, since the figures above exclude the “country support” amounts paid direct from UNEP-WCMC in Southern Africa).

Project support funds for each country team

The budget for workshop participation covered travel, accommodation and subsistence for an average of three participants per country, in addition to technical support and separate exchange visits. It was not intended to provide funding for the main national costs of data collection, indicator development or assessment work, since the aim of the project was to provide a basis for the development of indicators that could be produced over time without depending on external funds.

A small seed funding contribution was however earmarked for each country to assist with national implementation costs, supporting activities such as stakeholder meetings and publication of reports, according to national priorities. The initial allocation was \$6,000 per country. Although this is a small amount (and many consultees commented on how much greater their real needs were in this area), it was an important demonstration of good faith and a useful catalyst for in-country action. There was however a challenge in some cases in finding a cost-effective mechanism for channelling small sums of this kind to their intended recipients, since governmental processing overheads could easily become prohibitively disproportionate and suitable partners could not always be arranged. NGO channels were used effectively in many cases, though a solution was not found in every case, and some countries were thus unable to take up their full allocation.

Later in the project, savings made in two other areas were re-directed to supplement this area of support. The first was the sub-regional workshops themselves, where actual costs came in under budget, due mainly to some favourable hosting arrangements. The second was the “peer-to-peer exchange visits” (project activity 4) for which \$67,500 had been budgeted, but which did not take place as they came to be viewed as being of less value than holding national stakeholder meetings between the sub-regional workshops. Taken together, these two sources of savings allowed a second tranche of \$6,000 to be offered to each country for seed-funding support of the kind described above.

Funding for UNEP staff to attend workshops

The original project budget included an allocation of \$9,000 to provide for attendance by UNEP staff (based in Nairobi) at the various project workshops. In the event, although some UNEP participation occurred, it was less than had been provided for. It seems also that this was funded in other ways, and hence the allocated amount was ultimately not drawn upon. UNEP participation was a valuable part of the plan, but it seems unfortunate that the actual level of engagement (and its cost) could not have been more accurately established at the outset, given that although different Divisions etc were involved, this was essentially an “internal” question within one organisation.

Programme support costs

UNEP project budgets would typically show an allocation for administrative overheads, or “Programme Support Costs”, usually between 7% and 13% of eligible budget-lines. No such allocations feature in the BICSA project’s accounts, for the simple and happy reason that as a matter of policy, no Programme Support Costs are levied on UNDA-funded projects.

Co-financing

Although not shown in the budget tables in the principal BICSA Project Document, significant co-financing was provided from one source, namely the “2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership” project (2010BIP) funded by the GEF (UNEP GF/1010-07-01 - 4977), which ran from June 2007 to December 2010 and was conveniently also administered by UNEP-WCMC. The 2010BIP provided indicator guidance materials, funded the attendance at the BICSA workshops of some of the UNEP-WCMC staff who led sessions or assisted with facilitation and report-writing, and funded the attendance of selected project participants at meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2010 (SBSTTA14 and COP10) to participate in side-events on BICSA, as well as covering the costs of those side events. The 2010BIP website was also utilised by the BICSA project.

The value of cash co-financing from 2010BIP has been estimated at US \$41,200 - see the tables below for a notional breakdown of this across budget codes. Support in kind from the same source is estimated at an additional \$158,800 (to include for example staff time and development of web resources; but this is likely to be an upper limit, if not an overestimate), making a total of \$200,000. A proportion of this was reportedly always anticipated, although it did not feature in project budgets and cannot be quantified here. Another proportion of it however represents better-than-expected support, counting therefore as successful leverage (also necessarily unquantified).

No further co-financing has been reported, though it is noted that numerous participants and institutions contributed staff time which in many cases might legitimately be considered as such support (not quantified).

Currency exchange rates

The UNDA funding for the project was paid in US dollars, and UNEP-WCMC (based in the UK) pays its staff and effects its procurement (travel, printing, communications etc) in GB pounds sterling. Dollar-sterling exchange rates therefore can become an issue in project budgeting.

UNEP-WCMC assesses the sterling value of its dollar budgets at monthly intervals to gain a general appreciation of whether expenditure remains on track. No specific line in BICSA project accounts was compiled to show whether exchange rate losses or gains were being made, although the evaluation was given to understand that these calculations could be made if required. Losses are in practice not charged to a project budget, being instead conventionally absorbed by the Centre into its general accounting. For accounting transparency to funders it might be desirable to show the figures in cases where exchange rates produce a *gain* over the life of a project; but in the case of BICSA it is unlikely that dollar-sterling differentials over the period 2008-2010 will have done so.

Summary of project expenditure by activity

Table A5-1 below shows the project budget divided according to the four activity areas around which it was structured, and by reference to the budget line account codes referred to in the text above (NB these changed over the life of the project: early versions of the Project Document coded the “contractual services” line as 300 and later changed this to 612, while “fellowships and grants” was initially coded as 800 then was later changed to 621).

Consistent with the account given above, for the purposes of the present evaluation report the finance data available has been reorganised to show separately the amounts which were (a) expended directly by UNEP-WCMC, (b) expended through sub-contracts to SANBI and KWS, and (c) expended directly through UNEP-DEWA in Nairobi (the latter to minimise exchange rate, bank charge and other processing costs where UNEP-DEWA itself was to incur the direct costs, i.e. for UNEP staff travel and for commissioning the project evaluation).

Table A5-1. Project expenditure by activity, as budgeted.

Activity	Budget line	Through UNEP-WCMC budgets		Through UNEP-DEWA budgets	*BIP co-financing
		UNEP-WCMC direct expenditure	Sub-contracts to SANBI and KWS		
Activity 1. Six workshops.	604 Consultants	15,000	5,000		24,720
	604 Consultants travel	6,000	12,000		
	612 Contractual services	48,000	20,250		
	608 UNEP staff travel			9,000	
	616 General operating expenses	1,750			
	621 Fellowships and grants Evaluation	40,775	206,225	2,500	
Activity 2. On-line and in-country technical support.	604 Consultants	6,000	6,000		0
	612 Contractual services	24,000			
	616 General operating expenses	1,250			
	Evaluation			2,500	
Activity 3. Peer-to-peer communication and support.	604 Consultants	2,000	6,000		8,920
	612 Contractual services	16,000			
	616 General operating expenses	1,250			
	Evaluation			2,500	
Activity 4. Peer-to-peer exchange visits.	612 Contractual services	17,000	6,750		7,560
	621 Fellowships and grants		42,000		
	616 General operating expenses	1,750			
	Evaluation			2,500	
Sub- totals:		180,775	304,255	19,000	41,200
		485,000			
Total:		504,000			41,200

*BIP support in kind is estimated at an additional \$158,800

Outturn

The project underspent its budget in several areas. A principal one was the national project support seed-funding, where (as mentioned above) not every country was able to take up its full allocation, due to difficulties in arranging banking and disbursement channels willing to handle the small sums involved. The solution in many cases was to use NGO channels (commonly BirdLife International partner organisations), but in Lesotho, for example, the search for a mechanism proved unsuccessful despite diligent efforts, and none of the \$12,000 available there could ultimately be transferred. Some other Southern Africa partners were unable to take up the whole of the amount they had been allocated.

Another underspent (in fact seemingly unspent) budget line was the \$9,000 allocated for UNEP staff travel - see comments above.

All other budget lines (except one) came in slightly under the budget as set, exclusive of 2010BIP co-financing. The surplus is greater than the whole of this co-financing, and although the co-financing allocation itself was well used for specific activities linked to BIP,

on the budgets as presented, the appearance is created that the project could have met all its targets without this additional support being provided. This perhaps raises a question for the managers of the 2010BIP project; but since the aims of BICSA overlapped with the aims of 2010BIP, the evaluation believes that that the expenditure is seen as worthwhile delivery of BIP's own objectives, rather than fruitless support of another project that in the event did not need it. In fact the BICSA budgets appear not to reflect the cost of the CBD SBSTTA and COP side-events as project outgoings - if they did (both were funded from the BIP co-financing) then the final account would appear more balanced - in other words the actual underspend is considerably smaller than the apparent (reported) underspend.

The one overspent budget line (based on anticipated figures for April 2012) is that for evaluation - see table A5-2 below. The effect of this is merely to reduce slightly the final overall surplus.

It should be noted that UNEP-WCMC submitted invoices only for the actual expenditure incurred through UNEP-WCMC's accounts, so no cash surplus accrued to UNEP-WCMC. The invoices were submitted to UNEP-DEWA, who had processed the income from UNDA: the evaluation has been unable to establish whether UNEP-DEWA in turn has only invoiced UNDA for the actual amount expended, or whether any cash surplus has accrued in Nairobi.

Table A5-2. Actual expenditure outturn, compared to budget.

Item	Planned budget	Additional co-finance from BIP	Actual expenditure*	Balance remaining (compared to budget without co-financing)	Balance remaining (compared to budget with co-financing)
<i>UNEP-WCMC</i>					
604 Consultants fees	40,000	0	39,476.48	523.52	523.52
604 Consultants travel	18,000	0	16,560.51	1,439.49	1,439.49
612 Contractual services	132,000	24,720	131,655.75	344.25	25,064.25
616 General operating expenses	6,000	10,080	5,981.70	18.30	10,098.3
621 Fellowships and grants	289,000	6,400	274,180.28	14,819.72	21,219.72
Sub-total:	485,000	41,200	467,854.72	17,145.28	58,345.28
<i>UNEP-DEWA</i>					
608 Staff travel	9,000	0	0	9,000.00	9,000.00
Evaluation	10,000	0	14,551.70**	-4,551.70**	-4,551.70**
Sub-total:	19,000	0	14,551.70	4,448.30	4,448.30
Total:	504,000	41,200	482,406.42	21,593.58	62,793.58

*Exchange rate differences (dollar vs sterling) absorbed into wider UNEP-WCMC accounts.

**Anticipated amount: final payments due April 2012. Includes associated travel and other costs.

Annex 6 Review of Outcomes to Impacts analysis

This Annex reviews the project’s “impact pathways” and its “theory of change” or “intervention logic”, according to the methodology known as the “Review of Outcomes to Impacts” or ROTI analysis, as devised by the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility and used in UNEP evaluations. The methodology, designed to evaluate “the overall likelihood of impact achievement”, is given as an annex in the present evaluation’s Terms of Reference, but instead of including it with the body of the ToRs in annex 1 of the present report, it is reproduced below (adapted very slightly for the context). The application of this analysis to the BICSA project is then described.

Extract from evaluation ToRs: Introduction to the theory of change/impact pathways, the ROTI method and the ROTI results scoresheet

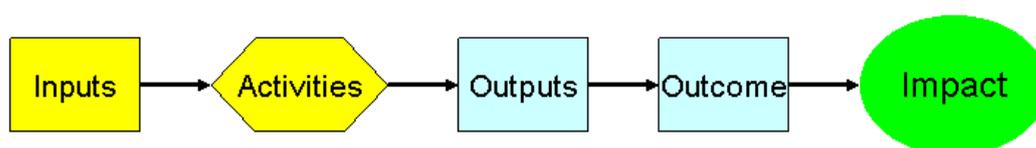
Terminal evaluations of projects are conducted at, or shortly after, project completion. At this stage it is normally possible to assess the achievement of the project’s outputs. However, the possibilities for evaluation of the project’s outcomes are often more limited and the feasibility of assessing project **impacts** at this time is usually severely constrained. Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, and it is common for there to be a lack of long-term baseline and monitoring information to aid their evaluation. Consequently, substantial resources are often needed to support the extensive primary field data collection required for assessing impact and there are concomitant practical difficulties because project resources are seldom available to support the assessment of such impacts when they have accrued – often several years after completion of activities and closure of the project.

Despite these difficulties, it is possible to enhance the scope and depth of information available from Terminal Evaluations on the achievement of results **through rigorous review of project progress along the pathways from outcome to impact**. Such reviews identify the sequence of conditions and factors deemed necessary for project outcomes to yield impact and assess the current status of and future prospects for results. In evaluation literature these relationships can be variously described as ‘Theories of Change’, Impact ‘Pathways’, ‘Results Chains’, ‘Intervention logic’, and ‘Causal Pathways’ (to name only some!).

Theory of Change (ToC)/impact pathways

Figure A6-1 shows a generic impact pathway which links the standard elements of project logical frameworks in a graphical representation of causal linkages. When specified with more detail, for example including the key users of outputs, the processes (the arrows) that lead to outcomes and with details of performance indicators, analysis of impact pathways can be invaluable as a tool for both project planning and evaluation.

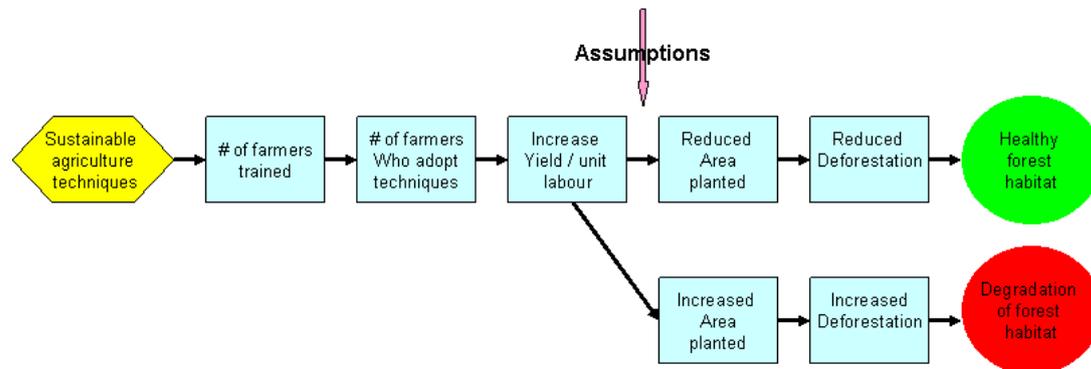
Figure A6-1. A generic results chain, which can also be termed an ‘Impact Pathway’ or Theory of Change.



The pathways summarise casual relationships and help identify or clarify the assumptions in the intervention logic of the project. For example, in the Figure A6-2 below the eventual impact depends upon the behaviour of the farmers in using the new agricultural techniques they have learnt from the training. The project design for the intervention might be based on the upper pathway assuming that the farmers can now meet their needs from more efficient management of a given area therefore reducing the need for an expansion of cultivated area and ultimately reducing pressure on nearby forest habitat, whereas the evidence gathered in the evaluation may in some locations follow the lower of the two pathways; the improved

farming methods offer the possibility for increased profits and create an incentive for farmers to cultivate more land resulting in clearance or degradation of the nearby forest habitat.

Figure A6-2. An impact pathway/TOC for a training intervention intended to aid forest conservation.



The GEF Evaluation Office has recently developed an approach that builds on the concepts of theory of change / causal chains / impact pathways. The method is known as Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI)¹² and has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project’s intended impacts
- b. Review of the project’s logical framework
- c. Analysis and modelling of the project’s outcomes-impact pathways.

The **identification of the projects intended impacts** should be possible from the ‘objectives’ statements specified in the official project document. The next stage is to **review the project’s logical framework** to assess whether the design of the project is consistent with, and appropriate for, the delivery of the intended impact. The method requires verification of the causal logic between the different hierarchical levels of the logical framework moving ‘backwards’ from impacts through outcomes to the outputs; the activities level is not formally considered in the ROtI method¹³. The aim of this stage is to develop an understanding of the causal logic of the project intervention and to identify the key ‘impact pathways’. In reality such process are often complex; they often involve multiple actors and decision-processes and are subject to time-lags, meaning that project impact often accrue long after the completion of project activities.

The third stage involves analysis of the ‘impact pathways’ that link project outcomes to impacts. The pathways are analysed in terms of the ‘**assumptions**’ and ‘**impact drivers**’ that underpin the processes involved in the transformation of outcomes to impacts via **intermediate states** (see Figure A6-3). Project outcomes are the direct intended results stemming from the outputs, and they are likely to occur either towards the end of the project or in the short term following project completion. **Intermediate states** are the transitional conditions between the project’s immediate outcomes and the intended impact. They are necessary conditions for the achievement of the intended impacts and there may be more than one intermediate state between the immediate project outcome and the eventual impact.

Impact drivers are defined as the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and **can be influenced** by the project / project partners & stakeholders. **Assumptions** are the significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts but are largely **beyond the control of**

¹² GEF Evaluation Office (2009). ROtI: Review of Outcomes to Impacts Practitioners Handbook. http://www.gefweb.org/uploadedFiles/Evaluation_Office/OPS4/Roti%20Practitioners%20Handbook%2015%20June%202009.pdf

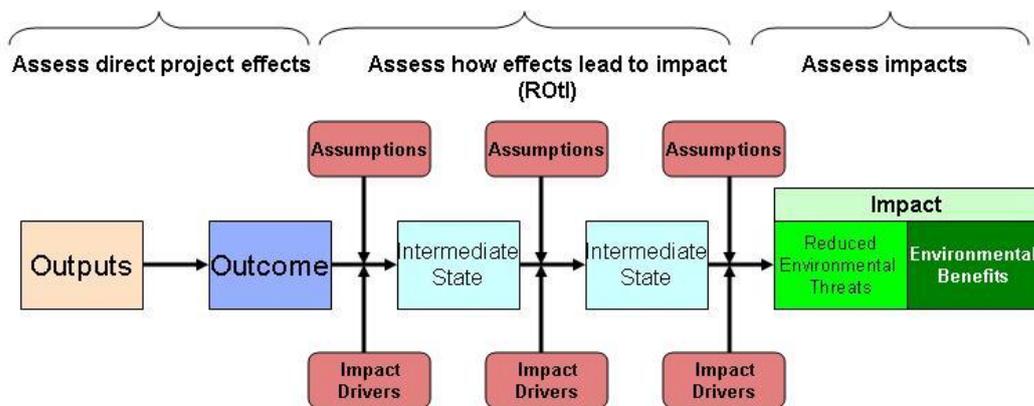
¹³ Evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to generate outputs is already a major focus within UNEP Terminal Evaluations.

the project/project partners & stakeholders. The impact drivers and assumptions are ordinarily considered in Terminal Evaluations when assessing the sustainability of the project.

Since project logical frameworks do not often provide comprehensive information on the **processes** by which project outputs yield outcomes and eventually lead, via ‘intermediate states’ to impacts, the impact pathways need to be carefully examined and the following questions addressed:

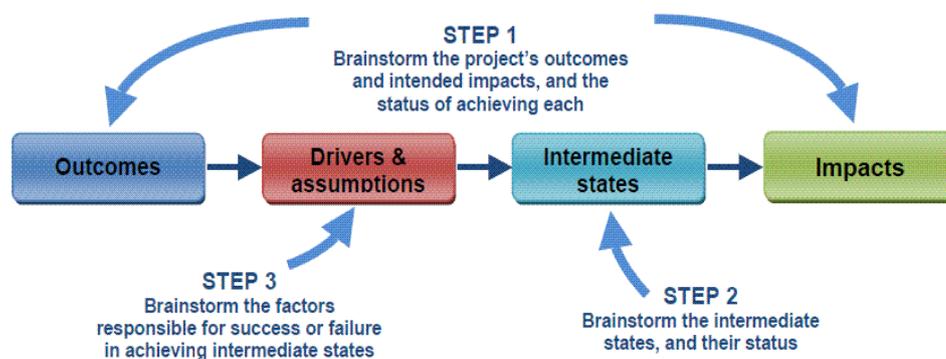
- Are there other causal pathways that would stem from the use of project outputs by other potential user groups?
- Is (each) impact pathway complete? Are there any missing intermediate states between project outcomes and impacts?
- Have the key impact drivers and assumptions been identified for each ‘step’ in the impact pathway.

Figure A6-3. A schematic ‘impact pathway’ showing intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers (adapted from GEF EO 2009).



The process of identifying the impact pathways and specifying the impact drivers and assumptions can be done as a desk exercise by the evaluator or, preferably, as a group exercise, led by the evaluator with a cross-section of project stakeholders as part of an evaluation field mission or both. Ideally, the evaluator would have done a desk-based assessment of the project’s theory of change and then use this understanding to facilitate a group exercise. The group exercise is best done through collective discussions to develop a visual model of the impact pathways using a card exercise. The component elements (outputs, outcomes, impact drivers, assumptions intended impacts etc.) of the impact pathways are written on individual cards and arranged and discussed as a group activity. Figure A6-4 below shows the suggested sequence of the group discussions needed to develop the ToC for the project.

Figure A6-4. Suggested sequencing of group discussions (from GEF EO 2009).



Once the theory of change model for the project is complete the evaluator can assess the design of the project intervention and collate evidence that will inform judgments on the extent and effectiveness of implementation, through the evaluation process. Performance judgments are made always noting that project contexts can change and that adaptive management is required during project implementation.

The ROTI method requires ratings for outcomes achieved by the project and the progress made towards the ‘intermediate states’ at the time of the evaluation. According the GEF guidance on the method; *“The rating system is intended to recognize project preparation and conceptualization that considers its own assumptions, and that seeks to remove barriers to future scaling up and out. Projects that are a part of a long-term process need not at all be “penalized” for not achieving impacts in the lifetime of the project: the system recognizes projects’ forward thinking to eventual impacts, even if those impacts are eventually achieved by other partners and stakeholders, albeit with achievements based on present day, present project building blocks.”* For example, a project receiving an “AA” rating appears likely to deliver impacts, while for a project receiving a “DD” this would seem unlikely, due to low achievement in outcomes and the limited likelihood of achieving the intermediate states needed for eventual impact (see Table A6-1).

Table A6-1. Rating scale for outcomes and progress towards ‘intermediate states’.

Outcome Rating	Rating on progress toward Intermediate States
D: The project’s intended outcomes were not delivered	D: No measures taken to move towards intermediate states.
C: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, but were not designed to feed into a continuing process after project funding	C: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced results.
B: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, but with no prior allocation of responsibilities after project funding	B: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which give no indication that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.
A: The project’s intended outcomes were delivered, and were designed to feed into a continuing process, with specific allocation of responsibilities after project funding.	A: The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started and have produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended long term impact.

Thus a project will end up with a two letter rating e.g. AB, CD, BB etc. In addition the rating is given a ‘+’ notation if there is evidence of impacts accruing within the life of the project. The possible rating permutations are then translated onto the usual six point rating scale used in all UNEP project evaluations in the following way.

Table A6-2. The way in which ratings for ‘achievement of outcomes’ and ‘progress towards intermediate states’ translate to ratings for the ‘Overall likelihood of impact achievement’ on a six point scale.

Highly Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Moderately Unlikely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
AA AB BA CA BB+ CB+ DA+ DB+	BB CB DA DB AC+ BC+	AC BC CC+ DC+	CC DC AD+ BD+	AD BD CD+ DD+	CD DD

In addition, projects that achieve documented changes in environmental status during the project’s lifetime receive a positive impact rating, indicated by a “+”. The overall likelihood of achieving impacts is assessed as shown in Table A6-3 below (a + score above moves the double letter rating up one space in the 6-point scale).

Table A6-3. Assessment of overall likelihood of achieving impacts.

Results rating of project entitled:							
		Rating (D–A)		Rating (D–A)		Rating (+)	Overall
Outputs	Outcomes		Intermediary		Impact (GEBs)		
1.	1.		1.		1.		
2.	2.		2.		2.		
3.	3.		3.		3.		
	Rating justification:		Rating justification:		Rating justification:		

The ROTI method provides a basis for comparisons across projects through application of a rating system that can indicate the expected impact. However it should be noted that whilst this will provide a relative scoring for all projects assessed, it does not imply that the results from projects can necessarily be aggregated. Nevertheless, since the approach yields greater clarity in the ‘results metrics’ for a project, opportunities where aggregation of project results might be possible can more readily be identified.

Scoring Guidelines

The achievement of **Outputs** is largely assumed. Outputs are such concrete things as training courses held, numbers of persons trained, studies conducted, networks established, websites developed, and many others. Outputs reflect where and for what project funds were used. These were not rated: projects generally succeed in spending their funding.

Outcomes, on the other hand, are the first level of intended results stemming from the outputs. Not so much the number of persons trained; but how many persons who then demonstrated that they have gained the intended knowledge or skills. Not a study conducted; but one that could change the evolution or development of the project. Not so much a network of NGOs established; but that the network showed potential for functioning as intended. A sound outcome might be genuinely improved strategic planning in SLM stemming from workshops, training courses, and networking.

Examples:

Funds were spent, outputs were produced, but nothing in terms of outcomes was achieved. People attended training courses but there is no evidence of increased capacity. A website was developed, but no one used it. (Score – D)

Outcomes achieved but are dead ends; no forward linkages to intermediary stages in the future. People attended training courses, increased their capacities, but all left for other jobs shortly after; or were not given opportunities to apply their new skills. A website was developed and was used, but achieved little or nothing of what was intended because users had no resources or incentives to apply the tools and methods proposed on the website in their job. (Score – C)

Outcomes plus implicit linkages forward. Outcomes achieved and have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and decisions made among a loose network is documented that should lead to

better planning. Improved capacity is in place and should lead to desired intermediate outcomes. Providing implicit linkages to intermediary stages is probably the most common case when outcomes have been achieved. (Score - B)

Outcomes plus explicit linkages forward. Outcomes have *definite and explicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts. An alternative energy project may result in solar panels installed that reduced reliance on local wood fuels, with the outcome quantified in terms of reduced C emissions. Explicit forward linkages are easy to recognize in being concrete, but are relatively uncommon. (Score A)

Intermediate stages:

The **intermediate stage** indicates achievements that lead to Global Environmental Benefits, especially if the potential for scaling up is established.

“Outcomes” scored C or D. If the outcomes above scored C or D, there is no need to continue forward to score intermediate stages given that achievement of such is then not possible.

In spite of outcomes and implicit linkages, and follow-up actions, the project dead-ends. Although outcomes achieved have *implicit forward linkages* to intermediary stages and impacts, the project dead-ends. Outcomes turn out to be insufficient to move the project towards intermediate stages and to the eventual achievement of GEBs. Collaboration as evidenced by meetings and among participants in a network never progresses further. The implicit linkage based on follow-up never materializes. Although outcomes involve, for example, further participation and discussion, such actions do not take the project forward towards intended intermediate impacts. People have fun getting together and talking more, but nothing, based on the implicit forwards linkages, actually eventuates. (Score = D)

The measures designed to move towards intermediate states have started, but have not produced result, barriers and/or unmet assumptions may still exist. In spite of sound outputs and in spite of explicit forward linkages, there is limited possibility of intermediary stage achievement due to barriers not removed or unmet assumptions. This may be the fate of several policy related, capacity building, and networking projects: people work together, but fail to develop a way forward towards concrete results, or fail to successfully address inherent barriers. The project may increase ground cover and or carbon stocks, may reduce grazing or GHG emissions; and may have project level recommendations regarding scaling up; but barrier removal or the addressing of fatal assumptions means that scaling up remains limited and unlikely to be achieved at larger scales. Barriers can be policy and institutional limitations; (mis-) assumptions may have to do with markets or public – private sector relationships. (Score = C)

Barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. Intermediary stage(s) planned or conceived have feasible direct and explicit forward linkages to impact achievement; barriers and assumptions are successfully addressed. The project achieves measurable intermediate impacts, and works to scale up and out, but falls well short of scaling up to global levels such that achievement of GEBs still lies in doubt. (Score = B)

Scaling up and out over time is possible. Measurable intermediary stage impacts achieved, scaling up to global levels and the achievement of GEBs appears to be well in reach over time. (Score = A)

Impact: Actual changes in environmental status

“Intermediary stages” scored B to A.

Measurable impacts achieved at a globally significant level within the project life-span. . (Score = ‘+’)

ROtI analysis for the BICSA project

The genesis of the project was an appreciation of a lack of indicators for policy support and reporting on biodiversity and ecosystem services in southern and eastern Africa. This was attributed to a lack of sufficient capacity among governments in the region to produce and interpret such indicators. Whilst limited availability of appropriate data was a significant problem, it was not the case that no data existed. The “Biodiversity Indicators for National Use” project in 2002-2005 had found that the principal limitation was a lack of awareness and technical skills for interpretation of relevant data and its communication in the policy-relevant forms required, including for purposes such as the 2010 biodiversity target and assessment of ecosystem services, which involve some new concepts and methods.

One of the causes of initially limited production and use of biodiversity indicators in eastern and southern Africa was said to have been a lack of demand for such information from governments. At the time the BICSA project was formulated however this demand was growing, due partly to greater awareness of the impacts of environmental degradation, and partly to the need to meet international implementation and reporting requirements, in relation for example to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals. Another significant limitation was said to have been a lack of awareness of the indicators that were being developed internationally, and ways in which they could be produced at the national scale.

The ultimate objective of the project was stated in the principal Project Document as “to strengthen the capacity of Governments in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national policies, including PRSPs [= Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers] and international reporting for the MDG-7 [= Millennium Development Goal 7] on Environmental Sustainability and the 2010 Biodiversity Target”. It was thus predominantly concerned with developing better capacity, rather than the origination of new research or new theories. It was also concerned with facilitating the production of better assessments and reporting, which had to be directed towards policy relevance; but was not expecting in itself to generate changed outcomes in the physical environment.

By its very nature, capacity building is a means to an end: the project’s positive impacts on the physical environment therefore need to be seen as indirect, with real impacts coming later as a result of expected actions by governments. Again the BINU project showed the ways in which many data sets can be transformed into biodiversity indicators, and that these subsequently influenced national targets and policies on issues such as management of wetlands and fisheries. This created a demand for such information and an increased mandate for the monitoring work to produce the necessary data.

The logic of the BICSA project design was that promoting examples of biodiversity and ecosystem use indicators, providing technical support for national adaptation, and peer-to-peer learning, would enable at least a few indicators to be produced in each country. The production of just two or three biodiversity indicators for reporting and policy development by a country, after none had previously been available, was expected to create demand and further investment to maintain this capacity. The demand for indicators and technical capacity was also expected to be stimulated by the need for national reports to the CBD for a deadline of March 2009, and the need for annual reports on MDG-7. Additional and more comprehensive indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in these reports was therefore an objective of the project.

As is now standard practice, the Project Document schematically expresses the project’s objectives in a logical framework (logframe). The BICSA logframe presents the project’s ultimate objective and two “expected accomplishments” which support the objective. Two indicators of achievement and several relevant operating assumptions are also stated, along with the titles of the four main categories of activity which were to be pursued. “Outputs” in

this instance were not listed. The logframe is supplemented by a short narrative in the body of the Project Document.

Table A6-4. BICSA logical framework, adapted from version in Project Document.

	Indicators	Source of verification	Risks/Assumptions
<p>Objective</p> <p>To strengthen the capacity of Governments in southern and eastern Africa to produce and interpret indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in support of national policies, including PRSPs and international reporting for the MDG-7 on Environmental Sustainability and the 2010 Biodiversity Target.</p>			
<p>Expected accomplishment 1</p> <p>Increased technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.</p>	<p>Improved availability at the national level of indicators on the status, use and protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and analysis of this information to support national policy making and implementation.</p>	<p>Countries' 4th national report to the CBD, in March 2009.</p> <p>Countries annual reports on MDG implementation.</p> <p>National policy documents in relevant sectors.</p> <p>State of the environment reports by government & NGOs.</p>	<p>Existing data is suitable & available for production of at least some relevant indicators.</p> <p>National statistical offices and ministries responsible for implementation of the CBD and MDG-7 can co-ordinate and stimulate production and reporting of a few relevant indicators.</p>
<p>Expected accomplishment 2</p> <p>Improved capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.</p>	<p>National reports to government agencies, the CBD and UN on MDG-7 contain additional and more comprehensive indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, with policy-relevant interpretation of the results.</p>	<p>Countries' 4th national report to the CBD, in March 2009.</p> <p>Countries annual reports on MDG implementation.</p>	<p>Government departments responsible for CBD & MDG reports allocate sufficient time and resources to include production of biodiversity indicators.</p>
<p><i>(All four activities below will run concurrently and contribute to both of the expected accomplishments)</i></p>			
<p>Main activity 1</p> <p>Three training and lesson-learning workshops in each of southern and eastern Africa regions on the selection and use of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators.</p>			
<p>Main activity 2</p> <p>Provision of on-line and in-country technical support to national indicator agencies in the calculation and interpretation of indicators and ecosystem service assessment, according to specific needs.</p>			

Main activity 3

Peer-to-peer communication and support between professionals in the calculation and use of indicators, through access to web-based contact information, technical guidance papers, and the production of case studies.

Main activity 4

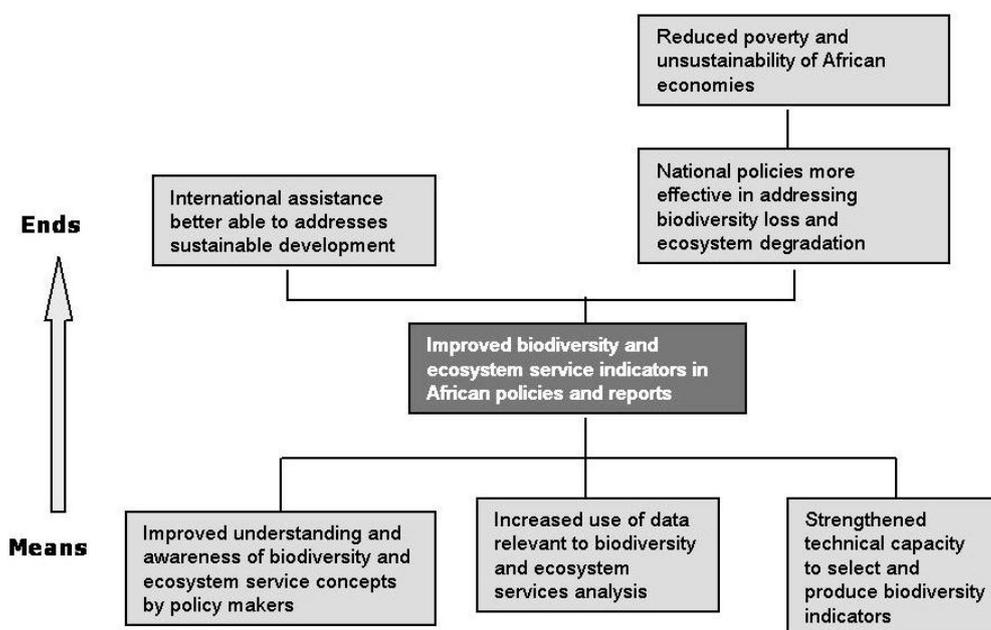
Exchange visits by technical staff in Africa working on biodiversity and ecosystem service indicator production and use.

A separate document labelled “Africa Biodiversity Indicators Capacity Building Project - overall timeline” listed some additional “intended outcomes”, but did not discuss their relationship to the logframe components. In addition to the overall objective as given above, these were as follows:

- New partnerships and information resources in southern and eastern Africa to produce and use biodiversity and ecosystem services information;
- New national biodiversity and ecosystem services indicators established, with ‘champion’ organisations and data collection;
- New information for conservation and ecosystem management made available, including links to the MDGs and the development community;
- Strengthened UNEP-WCMC & UNEP capacity and materials for capacity building in biodiversity indicators and ecosystem assessment and management.

The Project Document in broad terms linked these various results to wider outcomes in terms of reduced biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, sustainable development and poverty reduction, as illustrated in Figure A6-5 below. The causal pathways for this were however not elaborated.

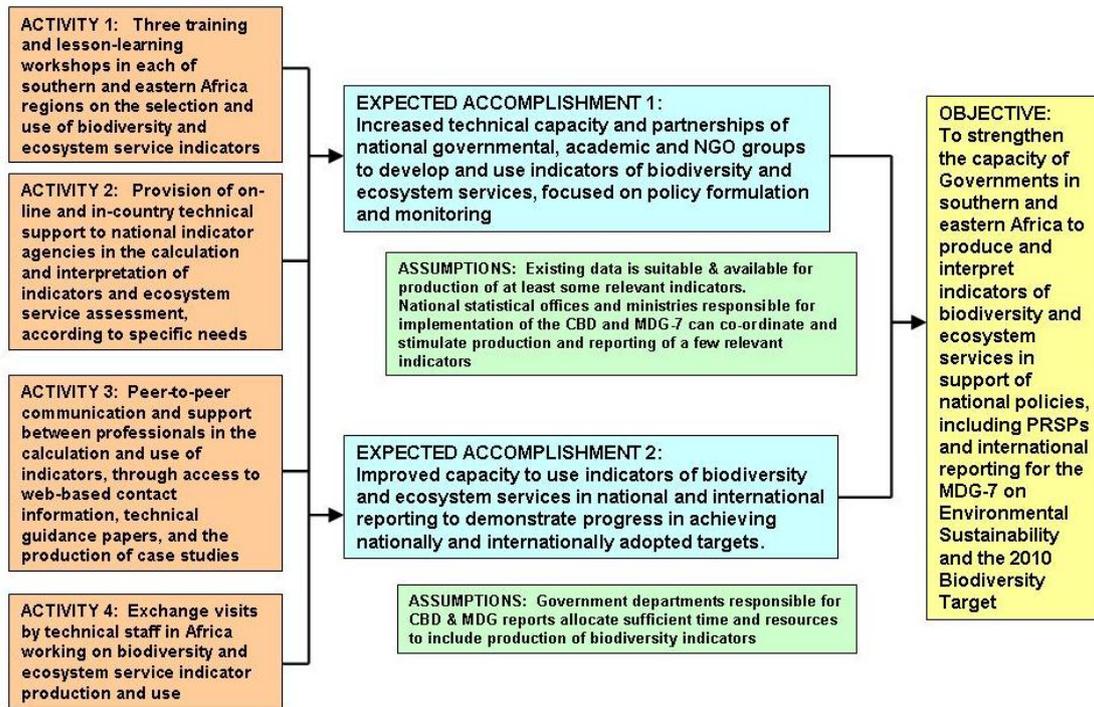
Figure A6-5. “Objective tree” for improvement of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators in African policies and reports - from Project Document.



The evaluation offers an opportunity for a graphical re-working of this thinking. Figure A6-6 below represents the project’s theory of change as expressed in the Project Document. As shown above, the Project Document states that all four “activities” will run concurrently, and will all contribute to both of the “expected accomplishments”. It is implied also that the expected accomplishments will occur in parallel, although it may in fact make sense to view

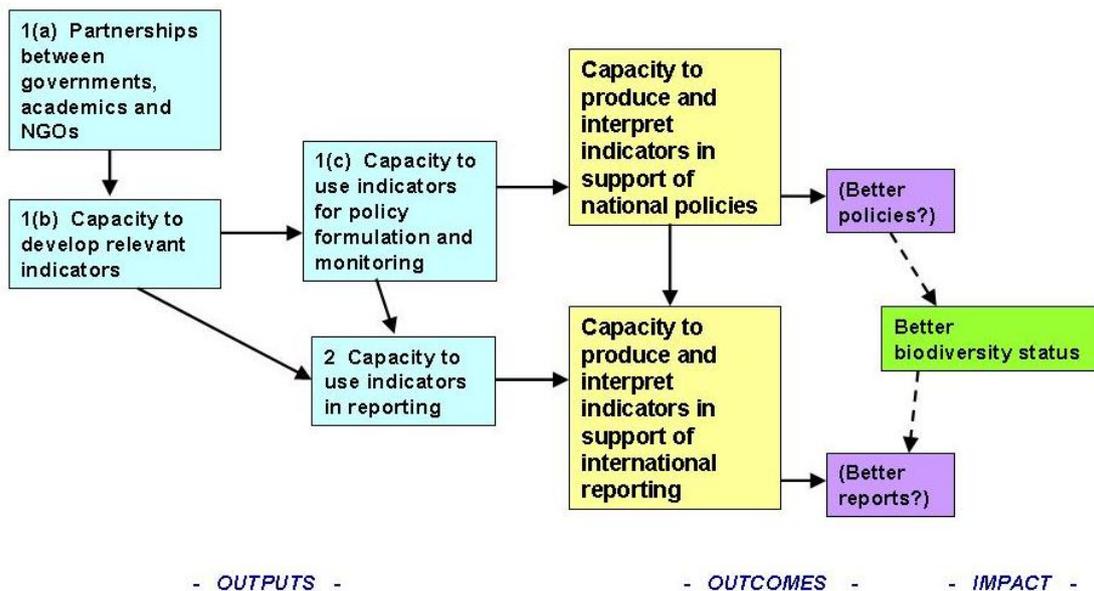
the first as at least partly feeding in/leading sequentially to the second (ie monitoring being a precursor to reporting).

Figure A6-6. Actual theory of change, as derived from the Project Document.



The expected accomplishments and objectives in Figure A6-6, following the logframe, combine several elements into each statement. For clarity of understanding of the likely logic in practice, it may be instructive to separate these, to some degree. An illustration of how this might be conceptualised (focusing on the key words in each component, rather than reproducing the full statements) is given in Figure A6-7 below.

Figure A6-7. A clarification of the theory of change, as suggested by the evaluator.



The logframe presents improved reports as an indicator of improved capacity, and the ultimate objective of the project is better capacity rather than better reports. In principle it would have been possible to conceive this the other way round; in other words for the ultimate objective to be better reporting (as an end-point of successful biodiversity conservation endeavours), and for better capacity to be the means to this end. Both views are logical, but while reports obviously do function as an indicator, viewing them (rather than capacity) also as a proxy for biodiversity outcomes perhaps takes the thinking further towards desired ultimate impacts.

According to the ROI methodology as described above, “significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realisation of the intended impacts but are largely beyond the control of the project/project partners and stakeholders” constitute the operating **assumptions** of the project’s intervention logic. Three assumptions were stated in the logframe, as described above. Based on the evaluation, a slightly fuller expression of relevant assumptions can be offered here, as follows:

- (From Project Document): Existing data is suitable and available for production of at least some relevant indicators. (The extent and nature of this will vary between countries).
- (From Project Document): National statistical offices and ministries responsible for implementation of the CBD and MDG-7 can co-ordinate and stimulate production and reporting of a few relevant indicators. (The extent and nature of this will vary between countries).
- (From Project Document): Government departments responsible for CBD and MDG reports allocate sufficient time and resources to include production of biodiversity indicators.
- Suitable partners, agencies and individuals are identified in each country to participate in the project and to develop and implement indicators over a reasonably sustained timeframe.
- Partners, agencies and individuals identified as above participate adequately in the project in practice.
- Participants who move on to other positions during the project are able to hand responsibility to alternates/successors to continue with the work.
- The selected participants from French and Portuguese-speaking countries will be able to participate in workshops and operate with documents in English.
- Issues, needs, mandates and methods are manifest in a sufficiently common way across all the countries concerned such that dialogue, mutual exchange and mutual support are meaningful at sub-regional level.
- Indicator reports will show an intelligible audit-trail back to the real data on which their findings are based.
- Governments have regard to biodiversity and ecosystem services indicator information in wider contexts of sustainable development and other relevant policy fields, at least to some extent.

According to the ROI methodology as described above, “significant factors that if present are expected to contribute to the realization of the intended impacts and can be influenced by the project/project partners and stakeholders” constitute the project’s **impact drivers**. Based on the evaluation, a number of these drivers can be identified, as follows:

- Strong collaboration between key partners/stakeholders in each country, including between government and non-government actors.
- Creation of a process for selecting appropriate priorities for attention.
- Willingness to share information, knowledge and experience.
- Willingness to attempt new activities in a spirit of learning and growth.

- Creation of a protected and supportive enabling environment in which it is safe to experiment and make mistakes, in order to learn and grow.
- Provision of sufficient intellectual, social and timetable “space” in which self-development can be nurtured, without “over-programming”.
- Creation of collaborative climate of trust and common understanding.
- Creation of confidence, assurance and peer-endorsement.
- Creation of a platform for learning lessons from experience.
- Provision of feedback in all directions on what works and what doesn’t, to facilitate learning.
- Maintaining a sensitive balance between top-down/peer-to-peer and north-south/south-south processes for developing capacity.
- Involvement of each country in ways that are tailored to its own capacity constraints, while also joining all together equitably in a common cause.
- Shared understanding as to needs and opportunities for indicator use.
- Well-informed awareness by facilitators of the relevant international policy context.
- Raised profile of the needs and uses for indicators and reports.
- Information tailored and matched to specific identified policy choices and decision-points.
- Clear identification of processes for production of national reports.
- Clear identification of destinations/audiences for national reports.

Central to the ROtI approach is the concept of mapping the causal pathways from outcomes to eventual desired impacts, via **intermediate states**. In the present case therefore this concerns the steps that are expected to follow the building of capacity to produce and interpret indicators, and to lead ultimately to better national policies, better international reporting, and better biodiversity status (as in the right-hand portion of Figure A6-7 above). The first consequence of generating indicator information might be *awareness* of an issue. Of itself that does not necessarily embody *understanding*, so that would be a separately-identified state. Understanding and *analysed data findings* feed through to *changed behaviour* via a similarly-characterised sequence of steps which may necessarily require, for example, adequate *dissemination*, *uptake* of what is disseminated, *adaptation of policy* in light of what is taken up, *synthesis* of the picture of change for *accountability* to wider imperatives, and so on.

Although not part of the stated expectations of this project in its own right, it is then assumed that, through the actions of others that are made possible by the project, its outcomes will in turn have an indirect beneficial *impact* on the state of the environment in the region and on the achievement of goals for sustainable development. At its simplest, well-constructed and well-used indicators enable progressive verification, reinforcement and course-correction of policy implementation to ensure that desired impacts are achieved.

An illustration of the types of “intermediate states” that are likely to play a part in this chain of causality is given in Figure A6-8 below. (Wordings represent paraphrased key terms suggested by the evaluator only, and are not intended to reflect anything formally derived from the Project Document).

Figure A6-8, Examples of “intermediate states” that plausibly form part of the BICSA project’s theory of change

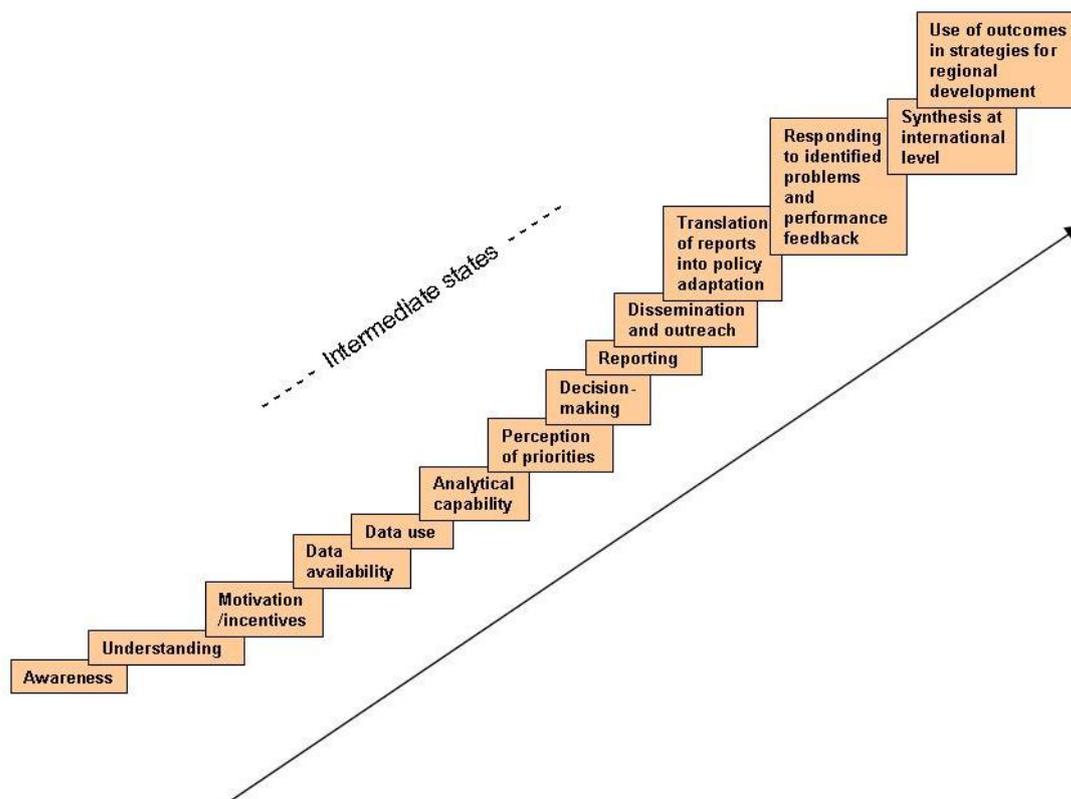


Table A6-5. Ratings for outcomes and progress towards intermediate states.

Outcomes	Rating	Intermediate states	Rating	Impact	Rating	Overall rating
<p>I: Increased technical capacity and partnerships of national governmental, academic and NGO groups to develop and use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services, focused on policy formulation and monitoring.</p> <p>Comments: Capacity increased. Small numbers of participating individuals in each country, along with financial limitations, make the position perpetually fragile, but the project targeted appropriate key participants and created</p>	A	<p>Comments: Data were generally marshalled from appropriate sources, and a discipline of focusing on meaningful storylines was well instilled from the outset. Targeting for need-assessed uses was diligently approached, and indicator reports in at least some cases were applied for policy change, i.e. went beyond mere proof of concept or archival value. The evidence-base on which to judge whether or not this occurred in other cases is however incomplete. Expected levels of sustainability are suggestive of good forward links to realisation of actual impact, at least within the biodiversity sphere. Purchase in other sectors has been assisted by the</p>	A	<p>Comments: ("Impact" would be given a rating of "+" if there had been measurable changes in actual environmental status at global level as a result of the project and</p>		A A

<p>high levels of motivation to sustain the capacity built. The indicators themselves generally had appropriate policy relevance.</p>		<p>involvement of national statistical agencies, but remains a challenge.</p>		<p>during its life-span. It is inherent in the nature of the BICSA project that it should enable other processes to achieve such impacts, and over a longer timescale, rather than directly producing them itself within the life of the project).</p>		
<p>2: Improved capacity to use indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services in national and international reporting to demonstrate progress in achieving nationally and internationally adopted targets.</p>		<p>Comments: The project's good coherence with more or less regular external mandates and imperatives for reporting will help to support sustainability of project results and thereby forward linkages to ultimate impact. Intelligence generated directly by the project will need to be supplemented by other inputs in order to report fully against many of the key targets concerned.</p>				
<p>Comments: Capacity increased and some new reporting stimulated. See also comments under (1) above. Reports based on the developed indicators generally touched on samples of the issues required to report against the identified targets rather than being a full gauge of target achievement; but the project made no claim to do more than this.</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Reporting processes for biodiversity storylines are more tractable at present than those for ecosystem services. Beyond statutorily-mandated reporting, use of reports for wider awareness and changed behaviour among other audiences will depend on a range of dissemination efforts: this is quite resource dependent, varies greatly among the countries concerned, and the evidence-base for judging its impact at present is patchy at best.</p>	<p>A</p>			

Annex 7 Review of project design

The process recently added to UNEP evaluations for compiling an “Inception Report”, prior to embarking on evaluation fieldwork, has several constituent parts (see annex 1). The 30-page report compiled for the present evaluation has been submitted separately as an internal working document for the Evaluation Office. One of its constituent parts is a review of the design of the project, based on a set template of 59 questions which were provided in separate terms of reference for the Inception Report itself.

This review is based purely on a desk review of the principal Project Document and one or two other background source materials. It addresses only project design quality, without considering implementation. Hence a project which at the outset had a poor Project Document will receive a critical Inception Report, even if it was superbly successful in practice and its design flaws were corrected later; while a project with superbly-documented design features will receive a glowing Inception Report even if its eventual execution was deficient.

Clearly also, judgements made on this basis are highly likely to become revised as the evaluation proper proceeds; so what follows below should be read with caution in that light, as some of it may have been contradicted by later evidence.

With these caveats, the “review of project design” section of the Inception Report is reproduced in this annex for completeness, below. It is organised according to the headings and (in italic text) the questions stipulated in the *Template for the assessment of the Quality of Project Design – UNEP Evaluation Office September 2011* and provided as part of the terms of reference for this Inception Report. Some of these have proved more relevant to the present case than others. Ratings for each of the criteria categories are given on the standard UNEP scale in a table at the end of the commentary.

Relevance

1. *Are the intended results likely to contribute to UNEP’s Expected Accomplishments and programmatic objectives?*
 - The project plan is strongly linked to the UNEP international cooperation subprogramme on environmental assessment and early warning, with its “particular focus” for 2008-09 on “more coherent and collaborative efforts in building national institutional and technical capacity in developing countries for keeping the state of environment under review”. This is explicitly linked also to (and consistent with) the Bali Strategic Plan.
 - The plan also refers to a UNEP regional cooperation subprogramme on statistics, and identifies an interesting link with UNEP-DEWA’s promotion of the development of environment statistics in eastern and southern Africa as part of its co-ordinating role in the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN), which is co-ordinated with the UN Statistics Division and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, involving its African Centre of Statistics. Part of this programme of work is the selection and harmonisation of biodiversity indicators within the regions, supporting the development of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics.
2. *Does the project form a coherent part of a UNEP-approved programme framework?*
 - The project contributes to UNEP programmes and projects as described under Q1 above and Q3 below.

3. *Is there complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing?*
 - See Q17 and Q32 below.
4. *Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with sub-regional environmental issues and needs?*
 - The Project Document defines the problem fairly explicitly as the lack of biodiversity and ecosystem service indicators in African policies and reports.
 - No rationale appears to be given for the choice of southern and eastern Africa as the geographical focus for the project. It is not clear therefore whether this results from aiming to capitalise opportunistically on a history of other involvements in the region, or whether it is the result of any kind of prioritisation assessment either at regional or global level.
 - The project is contextualised by reference to Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability), and the global intergovernmental "2010 target" on reducing rate of biodiversity loss; so it has high policy relevance, and is aiming to work to established mandates.
5. *Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation?*
 - Yes it seems so; and coherence/consistency is assured through delivery by UNEP-DEWA and UNEP-WCMC.
6. *Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with stakeholder priorities and needs?*
 - Learning from the field-leaders was seemingly identified as a project component on the basis of a user needs analysis. It is good to see that such an analysis was carried out; although no information is given in the Project Document on what it consisted of.
 - National participants in the project were to be selected in consultation with the UNEP Regional Office for Africa, UNDP national offices, UN Economic Commission for Africa and various other relevant institutional networks; so it appears that there was careful targeting of beneficiaries.
 - The project plan left flexibility for delivery detail in each country to be "according to specific needs", which seems good.

Intended results and causality

7. *Are the objectives realistic?*
 - The project is described as aiming to help with both indicators and (national) ecosystem assessments (eg the "aim of the second workshops is to stimulate further interest in southern and eastern Africa on the results and uses of ecosystem assessments, to encourage further assessments"). The "assessments" part is a potentially large extension of the project's ambition, with some risks of spreading the effort rather thinly; although the Document does also say that the project "will provide guidance materials and some technical support for such assessments, but will not fund assessment work".

- Concerning indicators, the Project Document astutely comments that “the production of just two or three biodiversity indicators for reporting and policy development by a country, when none were previously available, is expected to create demand and further investment to maintain this capacity”. This is a good way of avoiding an overly-comprehensive project ambition. There may be an apparent inconsistency with the later statement that “additional and more comprehensive indicators of biodiversity and ecosystem services [...] is [...] an objective of the project”; but then again this is tempered by saying “For many countries of eastern and southern Africa this may only be one or two biodiversity indicators within the time-frame of the project”. Overall therefore it appears to “have its feet on the ground” in terms of realism.
 - See also comments under Q32-33 below.
8. *Are the causal pathways from project outputs [goods and services] through outcomes [changes in stakeholder behaviour] towards impacts clearly and convincingly described?*
- The project is directed towards support of national policy-based activity, including national reporting on the global 2010 biodiversity target (with specific reference also to the 4th national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2009), reporting on the MDGs and support for national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, all of which is good. The link to regular reporting requirements is important for sustainability (see below). The Project Document however does not map out very explicitly how its outcomes were to feed into those processes.
 - The project plan talks in terms of adapting global indicators to local needs so they can be nationally implemented, in the context of then being able to report national outcomes to the global processes which are referred to and which provide the international mandates. There is however also a whole potential area of usefulness in reporting indicator results for national purposes that are not necessarily driven by or linked to the global ones. This dimension is not acknowledged, and it (or the differences between the two levels, in terms of motivations, priorities etc) may have been overlooked (or perhaps even downplayed to meet UNDA funding requirements), unless it was picked up later. The related Biodiversity Indicators Partnership GEF project found more of a disconnect than expected between the processes at these two scales.
 - The Project Document states that “primary beneficiaries of the project will be the national government agencies who use indicators of biodiversity ... [including] ministries for forests, fisheries, water or environmental protection”. Many (if not most) other projects in this kind of thematic area agonise considerably over the challenge of reaching beyond the environmental/biodiversity sector to achieve good purchase in/uptake by other policy sectors (which are usually the sectors that have a bigger effect as drivers of macro-policy and environmental change). Here, all potential user sectors appear to have been homogenised into one category, without comment being made on this cross-sectoral challenge (apart from the specific treatment of statistics agencies - see below). It is true that the project is mostly concerned with helping the environment sector “internally” to organise itself to report to others; but at least some comment on how to get the resulting reports read and acted upon in other sectors would have been warranted, as an important aspect of ultimate impact.
 - The project’s aims include development of the capacity to communicate, as well as technical indicator development and analysis. This is good; but it is normally quite a high-risk area and has been known to be weakly treated in some other projects. Some

indication might have been expected here of what special different approaches/expertise the project was bringing to this aspect, and how relevant risks were to be managed. In addition, given that the communications aspect is not directed by the policy mandates in the same way as the technical content of indicators is, one might have expected more “first principles” specific thinking about what approach was to be adopted, and an audit-trail for how the chosen strategy on communications issues was decided (including what to avoid).

- There is no real reference to generic wisdom in the capacity-building field, and how the field may be evolving. Also, systemic issues in Africa (such as the most able people tending to be frequently out of circulation and having reduced time to deliver results because of constant attendance at training workshops, or the incentives to undertake training being greater than the incentives to deliver primary job functions, or the “brain drain” which can afflict agencies whose best-trained people find career advancement elsewhere) are not discussed. The incentives question in particular might have been addressed in a more general/strategic sense.

9. *Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change or intervention logic for the project?*

- A straightforward, understandable and well-balanced logical framework is provided.
- The logframe is somewhat vague about impact timeframes and therefore about sustainability expectations - ie whether these related mainly to the relatively short term (the 4th national CBD reports, 2010 target reporting and the immediate next round of MDG reporting), or were intended more as a basis from which to expect different levels of impact in perpetuity thereafter.
- The Project Document provides two “problem tree” diagrams - these offer a welcome visualisation, but (as is frequently the risk with such things) they perhaps give a spurious appearance of definitive authority, since there might be other equally plausible ways of arranging the flow-logic. Better weight perhaps can be put on the narrative about the real limiting factors on effectiveness.
- The intervention thinking is well informed by evidence, including user perspectives and experience from the Biodiversity Indicators for National Use (BINU) project.

10. *Is the timeframe realistic?*

- The two-year overall timeframe seems generally appropriate. As a project involving multiple partners and the organisation of multiple workshop events in different countries, with considerable delegation of distributed logistical responsibilities, this timeframe was however vulnerable to the high risk of bureaucratic delays and the inevitability of at least some turnover of key individuals; and in due course a 4-month no-cost extension had to be sought (and was approved).
- Part of the rationale for the no-cost extension was to provide more time for dissemination of results. Linked to the comment on communication under Q8 above, it is possible that the communications and outreach aspect of the project was under-prepared.
- There is a sensibly thought-out rationale for the sequencing and spacing of the three workshops in each sub-region.
- The work plan in the Project Document is rather skeletal and not very informative; but it seems that this was fleshed out later elsewhere.
- See also Q9 above.

11. *What is the likelihood that the anticipated project outcomes can be achieved within the stated duration of the project?*
- In respect of indicators of biodiversity status & trends this seems likely, but in respect of the (at that time, and still) less-tested area of indicators of ecosystem services there is perhaps more of a question-mark.
 - See also comments about communications and outreach under Q10 above.
12. *Are the activities designed within the project likely to produce their intended results?*
- The Project Document describes four “main activities”: these appear appropriately conceived and likely to produce their intended results (subject obviously to the discussion of risks and assumptions).
13. *Are activities appropriate to produce outputs?*
- The information on outputs is embedded in a narrative about activities, and it might have been helpful to itemise the outputs distinctly. The information may also be incomplete: reference is made to workshops, guidance materials and exchange visits; but outreach materials, ingredients for eventual indicator-based reports and ingredients for eventual mutual support networks might also have been relevant. (Indicator-based reports are cited as a means of verification of the project’s expected accomplishments).
 - For the outputs that are described/implied, the activities are appropriate to produce them.
 - It was a good idea to identify national statistical offices as a target group, and the project has correctly picked up on their increasing involvement in environmental reporting.
14. *Are activities appropriate to drive change along the intended causal pathway(s)?*
- The plan includes the selection, development and use of indicators, so appropriately covers both theory and practice.
 - The plan covers not only increased capacity within existing arrangements, but also new/strengthened partnerships between eg government bodies and NGOs. This is likely to be an important factor in driving the desired direction of change.
15. *Are impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?*
- The Project Document cites the BINU project as having provided evidence that despite the many challenges of capacity and data supply, countries can produce valuable biodiversity indicators with a moderate amount of technical support and peer-to-peer learning (and that the resulting indicators subsequently influence national policies). This provides a sensible basis for confidence in relevant project assumptions, and the fact that it was not starting from scratch or making assumptions in a vacuum. See also the comment on user needs analysis under Q6 above.
 - The Project Document gives the impression of intending to secure even-handed engagement of government, NGO and academic stakeholders. This is appropriate, since in the countries concerned, much is heavily dependent on whoever happens in a

given instance to have the motivation and the wherewithal to set the pace or to be historically positioned for doing so, and imaginative partnerships are key: so although the “statutory mandates” dimension is very important, putting all the project’s eggs in that basket would have been a mistake. At the same time the ultimate objective is correctly described in terms of official government reporting.

- In many African contexts, care is needed to avoid placing too much reliance on web-based tools and mechanisms, given the internet access/reliability challenges that exist. Some other external assistance initiatives in Africa have assumed too much in this regard. Web-based ingredients form part of the present project, but they appear proportionate and not unduly relied upon, and there are various other ingredients too (though there is no discussion of this issue as such in the Project Document).

Efficiency

16. *Are any cost- or time-saving measures proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and timeframe?*

- Cross-fertilisation with the BIP project, and between the national workshops, are elements which should help with this.

17. *Does the project intend to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?*

- The project is designed to build on the Biodiversity Indicators for National Use (BINU) project (2002-2005). This found that a range of useful biodiversity indicators can be produced from existing data in developing countries, often involving the re-interpretation of existing data and requiring some technical support in the selection and use of appropriate methodologies and forms of presentation. BINU produced a recommended series of steps and guidance materials for countries to produce biodiversity indicators. It also demonstrated the value of peer-to-peer exchanges in supporting this work, in both a technical and a motivational sense. The experience that “one (in-country) institutional model will not fit all” has also been taken to heart. The present project also benefited from continuity of key project management personnel from BINU.
- The project is also designed to capitalise on synergy with the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (BIP) project, which offers significant cost-effectiveness benefits for the present project as well as (at least in theory) good mutual reinforcement of both projects.
- The project was designed to be implemented in coordination with a range of relevant UN and other bodies. Some additional ones could have been specified in the Project Document, but the links with the main “umbrella” ones, and with BIP, will most likely have covered them in practice to some degree.
- The emphasis on use of existing datasets is sensible; and in fact under-use of existing data, and reinvention of data-gathering, is a common weakness in other projects.
- The Project Document states that the project aimed to draw on UNEP-WCMC involvement in activities to follow up the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), but says little on how this would be done and what it might really mean in practice. There is reference to the need for capacity to translate concepts into understandable practical analysis methods in national contexts, and reference to the coming on stream of MA national implementation guidance, but it is not clear exactly how UNEP-

WCMC's involvement was to be used. One question might be for example whether adaptations were made in the light of some hard lessons learned about communications and outreach in the MA follow-up process.

Sustainability/replication and catalytic effects

18. *Does the project design present a strategy/approach to sustaining outcomes/benefits?*

- There is no specific section in the Project Document addressing this, and it would have been good to have one. It is possible that it was seen as obvious that a capacity-building project is inherently all about sustainability, by its very nature, and that no separate discussion of this point was required. Sensible thinking about the issue to an extent can be regarded as pervading the document, "between the lines". It would however have been good to have some treatment of what post-project reinforcement needs were perceived; and as noted under Q9 above, a question arises about what sustainability timeframe was in view.
- The "modular" workshop approach adopted by the project should in principle offer good scope for replicability, but perhaps surprisingly this is not discussed in the Project Document. This aspect will be examined further in the evaluation proper.

19. *Does the design identify the social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts?*

- Three basic assumptions are stated in the logframe. These appear in a column labelled "risks/assumptions" but nothing specific is included about risks.
- The emphasis on assisting countries to report against the 2010 biodiversity target (and the emphasis on the 4th CBD national reports in 2009) may have squeezed out thinking about regular future reporting in the CBD context (and in the wider context of the biodiversity-related MEAs in general) post-2010, for which the project should also be important. There may thus have been inadequate thinking about sustainability beyond 2010. The eventually-adopted 2020 targets have revised aspects of the 2010 target, but even without changing any content of the project, its indicator capacity legacy is still relevant to this post-2010 agenda. The project appears however not to have been "marketed" in a way that makes clear this potential longer-term benefit. While on the one hand it is right for the project to have kept its ambition within sensible bounds, on the other hand the idea of providing a new and enhanced stable platform for reporting regularly into the future should perhaps have featured in the design in some way.

20. *Does the design foresee sufficient activities to promote government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?*

- As well as provision of training, the project provides for follow-through technical support, which is good to see.
- The project appears also to be aiming to facilitate "peer-to-peer communication and support", thereby providing potential also for a more self-sustaining way of pursuing the project's legacy.

21. *If funding is required to sustain project outcomes and benefits, does the design propose adequate measures/mechanisms to secure this funding?*
- The Project Document does not specifically refer to a need for this.
22. *Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?*
- None specifically identified, apart from the general assumption (framed more in relation to the project's own lifetime) that relevant Government departments will allocate sufficient resources to indicator production.
23. *Does the project design adequately describe the institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project results?*
- The existence of processes for national reporting within the CBD and MDG frameworks is the main source of assurance on this. It might have been interesting to have some reflections on the relevance of any regional and sub-regional dimensions of this.
 - A significant potential source of support post-2010 has been the launch of "second-generation" National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, with renewed political and financial-assistance impetus for these as part of the enabling environment for biodiversity indicators and reporting. This issue is not flagged in the Project Document (which anyway is light on "horizon-scanning" in general), and it would be interesting to consider whether or not it (or something like it) could have been foreseen at the time the Project Document was compiled.
 - The plan for the project workshops was that they should be led by subcontracted national agencies - this represents good delegation/embedding, and a way of avoiding the project being overly "top-down" in character.
24. *Does the project design identify environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits?*
- None specifically identified; and none likely to be relevant.
25. *Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?*
- No, the project's results concern information and human capacity, rather than direct interventions in the physical environment.
26. *Does the project design foresee adequate measures to catalyze behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of (e.g.):*
(i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects;
(ii) strategic programmes and plans developed;
(iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level?
- Yes, the thrust of the project concerns (iii) above, and for its size, the measures foreseen should be adequate to catalyse relevant stakeholder behavioural change.

- It would have been good however to see some comment on the behavioural baseline conditions, and on (specifically behavioural) obstacles to the desired direction of change (see also comment on incentives under Q8 above).
27. *Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to institutional changes? [An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in any regional or national demonstration projects]*
- Institutional change, as such, is not critical to this project's outcomes. Broadly within existing institutional landscapes, the project design foresees generally adequate measures to contribute to the uptake sought. See however the comments on penetrating non-biodiversity sectors under Q8 above, on new/strengthened partnerships between eg government bodies and NGOs under Q14 above, and on workshop replicability under Q18 above.
28. *Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy)?*
- Policy change, as such, is not critical to this project's outcomes, although policy implementation is. Within the boundaries it sets, the project design generally foresees adequate measures to contribute to the policy implementation sought. See however the comments on penetrating non-biodiversity sectors under Q8 above.
29. *Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to sustained follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments or other donors?*
- The only reference is the one which reads "It is assumed that the project will be able to identify [...] existing initiatives and agencies involved in biodiversity and natural resource management, and to identify with them sustainable means to enhance and develop their work for reporting and policy development". This question should therefore be addressed during the evaluation proper.
30. *Does the project design foresee adequate measures to create opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("champions") to catalyze change (without which the project would not achieve all of its results)?*
- Yes, "peer-to-peer" support and "in-region" exchange visits between stakeholders satisfactorily embody this idea.
 - It might have been good to give some thought to the career-development and positioning of those individual beneficiaries who (it might be assumed there would be at least one or two) would emerge from the project as particularly gifted or enthusiastic for the subject, and who would be self-motivated after the end of the project to carry its torch onward. See also comments on career-progression etc under Q8 above.
 - Academic institutions are involved as an important category of stakeholder; but the Project Document makes no reference to the possibilities that might exist for influencing change (over the longer term) in their teaching curricula (which could add another dimension to the "capacity-building" model).

31. *Are the planned activities likely to generate the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders necessary to allow for the project results to be sustained?*

- Yes, it seems so: good levels of delegation, empowerment and “horizontal” mutual support are built in, and will help with this.

Risk identification and social safeguards

32. *Are critical risks appropriately addressed?*

- The project focuses on the fact that certain global objectives need a national-level manifestation. There are some key issues, risks and limits associated with transposing/“translating” biodiversity and ecosystem services indicators from one of these levels to the other. At its most basic, for one thing, some of the 2010 indicators work better/are more meaningful at national level than others. Apart from a reference to the Southern African Sub-Global Assessment for the MA as evidence of the translatability of relevant global concepts and methods to other scales, it is not clear from the Project Document what assumptions and safeguards were in mind on this (though doubtless attention was given to it somewhere in the process).
- The project is designed to make use of guidance materials being produced through the BIP project. This accepts risks of delay or non-delivery from a process on which the project is relying but which is not directly under the project’s control. This situation is not described in the Project Document in these “risk management” terms. Nonetheless it was the right thing to do: BIP was being administered from within the same institutional environment (UNEP-WCMC); it would have been valid to rate its non-delivery risk as acceptably low; and capitalising on BIP in this way was a commendably efficient option for the project.

33. *Are assumptions properly specified as factors affecting achievement of project results that are beyond the control of the project?*

- The Project Document includes some statements of assumptions about “external factors”.
- At the time of the project’s inception (and still today) some indicators were more ready to use/more technically feasible than others, with those in the sustainable use and ecosystem services areas being particularly challenging. The BIP project accumulated some rich learning experiences on this. It is not clear what assessment of relative feasibility or ease/difficulty across the indicators landscape may have been made at the outset of the project. It is similarly not clear whether the indicators “menu” was stratified in some way, or alternatively whether the project was launched on the assumption that the full set of 2010 indicators would all be “on the table” for use in an equivalent way. The Project Document does not comment on what prioritisation process or philosophy may have been in view on this. It appears that in the main such questions may have been left to BIP to tackle, with the present project simply being prepared (in terms of methodological guidance, at least) to work with whatever BIP was ready to deliver. This question can be explored further during the evaluation proper.

34. *Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified?*

- None specifically identified in the Project Document. This question can be explored further during the evaluation proper. It may be interesting for example to test propositions concerning “opportunity costs” occasioned by the project (eg what might the stakeholders have done with their time had they not been participating in the project), and “unintended consequences” of capacity building (eg career distortions within institutions, “brain drains” of the best qualified people away from the field of operation, etc).
- Apart from the carbon footprint of travel, negative environmental consequences of the project are unlikely.

Governance and supervision arrangements

35. *Is the project governance model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?*

- Roles and inputs are described for several agencies; but nothing is said in the Project Document about supervision, line-management, financial control or governance of the project. This is a weakness of the document.

36. *Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?*

- See Q35 above.

37. *Are supervision/oversight arrangements clear and appropriate?*

- See Q35 above.

Management, execution and partnership arrangements

38. *Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed?*

- There seems to have been a good appreciation of relative existing capacities in the target region, based on the BINU project and on other liaison/experiences in the region.
- The Project Document includes some comments on which countries were further advanced than others.

39. *Are the execution arrangements clear?*

- A very broad-brush outline is given in a single paragraph, indicating the basic roles of the principal organisations involved. The execution structure is not especially complicated, but slightly more detail on the arrangements might have been expected. Host organisations in the region for workshops etc were only “potential” at the time of the Project Document, so it is not definitive on this.

40. *Are the roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners properly specified?*

- Properly yes, but not very fully - see Q35 and Q39 above.

Financial planning/budgeting

41. *Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets/financial planning?*

- The summary budget in the Project Document is reasonably transparent, readably presented and seemingly well enough thought-through.
- The demarcation between UNEP-WCMC staff time and other administrative overheads is not as clear as it might be, and the presentation of this can be read in more than one way. This and related issues can be explored during the evaluation proper.

42. *Cost effectiveness of proposed resource utilization as described in project budgets and viability in respect of resource mobilization potential.*

- It is difficult to judge this simply by reading the summary budget in the Project Document. There is no way of telling for example how cost effective the figure assigned to “fellowships, grants & contributions” was (covering various elements of getting workshops to happen), without more detail on its ingredients and their costing rationale.
- Resource mobilisation, in the sense apparently implied by this question, appears not to be relevant here.

43. *Are the financial and administrative arrangements including flows of funds clearly described?*

- Short supporting descriptions of each summary budget line are given.
- Financial and administrative arrangements are not described as such; and apart from a few headlines, flows (in terms of what passes to whom, and who spends what) are not really described either.

Monitoring

44. *Does the logical framework capture the key elements in the Theory of Change for the project?*

- The logframe is cogently set out. One thing it does not reflect from the (implied) theory of change is any indication of sequencing and conditionality between the four activities and between the two expected accomplishments, ie “what is dependent on what”. Awareness, understanding, motivation/incentives, data availability, data use, analytical capability, perception of priorities, decision-making, reporting, dissemination and outreach, translation of reports into policy adaptation, responding to identified problems and performance feedback, synthesis at international level, use of outcomes in strategies for regional development etc (or similar characterisations of different steps) could all have been related to one another in sequential/conditional terms.
- The logframe should probably have said more about risks affecting the achievement of outcomes.

45. *Does the logical framework have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes and objectives?*
- The entire logframe contains only two indicators; although four other process/activity indicators are mentioned in the Project Document narrative under Monitoring & Evaluation. None of the six is time-bound, although one is linked to workshops and thus is *de facto* tied to the workshops timeframe. Some are not very specific (e.g. “analysis of information”) or measurable (e.g. “improved availability”, “more comprehensive indicators”). All are more or less relevant and achievable; but overall, by the normal yardsticks, the indicators are a weakness of the logframe.
46. *Does the logical framework have appropriate 'means of verification'?*
- Four sources (rather than “means”) of verification for the expected accomplishments of the project are specified, all of which seem reasonable in principle, although the one relating to national “state of the environment reports” is more speculative, as there was presumably no certainty that such things will exist for all the countries concerned.
47. *Does the logical framework adequately identify assumptions?*
- Three assumptions are stated, which are well chosen as probably the most important; though a small number of additional relevant assumptions might have been worth stating too.
48. *Are the milestones and performance indicators appropriate and sufficient to foster management towards outcomes and higher level objectives?*
- The milestones are too vague and generic to be very informative.
 - Regarding indicators, see Q45 above.
49. *Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?*
- Regrettably not. There is even internal inconsistency, in references to “lack of indicators” and “limited production and use of indicators” as the implied baseline; and as already mentioned above, the capacity baseline is acknowledged as varying between countries, without a metric for this being offered.
50. *Has the method for the baseline data collection been explained?*
- No, there does not appear to be one.
51. *Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outcomes and are targets based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?*
- See Qs 45, 49 and 50 above.
52. *Has the timeframe for monitoring activities been specified?*
- Information to verify the indicator on “improved availability of indicators” was expected “initially at the project’s third workshop in each region, and then in the last two months of the project by direct requests to the relevant sources”.

- The timing of information to verify the second indicator, “additional and more comprehensive indicators ... in reports by government agencies”, was tied to production of the 4th round of government reports to the CBD, and the annual MDG implementation reports submitted to UNDP.
53. *Are the organisational arrangements for project level progress monitoring clearly specified?*
- These are not specified.
54. *Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes?*
- Other than the evaluation budget (see Q58 below), apparently not.
55. *Overall, is the approach to monitoring progress and performance within the project adequate?*
- Based purely on the Project Document (which of course may not tell the full story), there are deficiencies.

Evaluation

56. *Is there an adequate plan for evaluation?*
- There is reference to planned evaluation, but it is not clear whether what was planned is what is now (with revised timing etc) taking place - see Q57 below. The information is too sketchy to judge whether the plan was adequate or not.
57. *Has the time frame for evaluation activities been specified?*
- The M&E section of the Project Document states “An evaluation of the project’s accomplishments and lessons learned in building capacity for biodiversity indicator production and use will be conducted by UNEP-DEWA in the last two months of the project”, and “The project’s final evaluation will be conducted in the 23rd month of the [2 year] project, using questionnaires and telephone interviews with the participants of the workshops and participants in peer-to-peer exchanges”. It is not clear what happened to this. It may that the evaluation taking place now is a rolled-forward version of that original plan, occurring nearly two years later than planned. The optimum timing might in fact have been between these two dates.
58. *Is there an explicit budget provision for mid term review and terminal evaluation?*
- No mid-term evaluation was provided for, and would not be expected for a project of this size. The summary budget in the Project Document shows a single line for evaluation, in the amount of US\$10,000 (just under 2% of the stated project budget). This may not be for the process that is now underway, but for the (different?) evaluation process envisaged as happening in the final two months of the project - see Q57 above. The present evaluation is costing more (total \$14.5 K) than the amount in the summary budget. (Although beyond the scope of this Inception Report, it is noted that the project’s final financial report shows a different total project budget from that in the Project Document; so this whole subject will receive attention during the evaluation proper).

59. *Is the budget sufficient?*

- Assuming this question relates only to the budget for evaluation, see Q58 above.

Ratings

The following are the evaluator's ratings for each of the criteria categories above, according to the standard UNEP scale. Equivalent categories have been rated again for the overall evaluation report, based on the evidence gathered in the full evaluation. (The ratings below relate only to project design quality based on the Project Document, and will therefore not necessarily be the same as those given under the same or similar headings in the main report).

Criteria categories	Comments (= reference to paragraphs in section 3)	Rating
Relevance	1-6	HS
Intended results and causality	7-15	S
Efficiency	16-17	HS
Sustainability/replication and catalytic effects	18-31	L/S
Risk identification and social safeguards	32-34	MS
Governance and supervision arrangements	35-37	U
Management, execution and partnership arrangements	38-40	MS
Financial planning/budgeting	41-43	S
Monitoring	44-55	MU
Evaluation	56-59	S
Overall rating for project design quality (based on Project Document)		S

Annex 8 Evaluator CV

Dave Pritchard is an independent consultant in both the environment and culture sectors. He has worked for almost 30 years in national and international policy and law with bodies including UNESCO, the UN Environment Programme, the Foundation for International Environmental Law & Development, the Ramsar Convention, Convention on Migratory Species and BirdLife International, and has been a non-executive Director of both Wetlands International and the UK Government's Joint Nature Conservation Committee, in which he has chaired Programme & Science and Audit & Risk Management Committees respectively. As one of the longest-serving members of the Ramsar Convention's Scientific & Technical Review Panel, he currently chairs its working group on assessment, monitoring and reporting, and has originated much of the Convention's technical guidance on these subjects, as well as editing the Convention's 4th edition guidance Handbooks. Dave has authored or edited several books. In 2008 he was awarded the Wetland Conservation Award, and in 2011 was elected an Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.

Dave also serves on the Ramsar Convention's Culture Working Group and the IUCN Specialist Group on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas. In the UK he chairs the Arts & Environment Network, is a Trustee of the Centre for Contemporary Art & the Natural World, an arts adviser to the Forestry Commission, an Arts Council England Assessor, formerly Vice-Chair of Bedford Creative Arts, and a collaborator with the Research in Art, Nature & Environment Group at University College Falmouth.