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**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project  
“Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous  
ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective”**

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**Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme  
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Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective)

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The evaluation team gratefully acknowledges the time and effort provided by all interviewees, especially members of the project management team and governance coordinators with UNEP's regional offices. As always, the author greatly appreciates the advice and counsel of Dr. Michael Spilsbury, Director of UNEP's Evaluation Office. The author also acknowledges the invaluable contributions of her interns: Brontë Creighton-Shaw, Francesca Brosnahan, Reuben Puddephatt, and Daphne Rocke.

The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of the next phase and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

## BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Johannah Bernstein is an international environmental lawyer with over 25 years of professional experience advising national governments, UN organisations and international environmental NGOs on a wide range of environmental law and policy challenges. She has conducted many evaluations for UNEP's Evaluation Office on topics related to environmental governance and environmental law, including most recently, the final assessment of the UNEP project 'Environmental Rule of Law: Advancing Justice, Governance, and Law for Sustainability'.

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## ABOUT THE EVALUATION

**Joint Evaluation:** No

**Report Language(s):** English.

**Evaluation Type:** Terminal Evaluation

UNEP's inter-regional project "Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective" responds to the various mandates provided and actively promotes concrete climate change and adaptation action, building on past milestones and results achieved. The project formed part of UNEP's Programmes of Work 2014/15 and 16/17 as well as 18/19, subprogramme: climate change, directly contributing to Output 113. (Donor Report)

The main aim of the project was to support the integration of mountain specific Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and other supporting adaptation approaches into key sectoral, national and sub-regional development strategies and policies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts.

The terminal evaluation has been undertaken after the project's completion to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency). The evaluation will also determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation is being conducted in accordance with UN Environment's Evaluation Policy, the UN Environment Evaluation Manual and Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations.

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AF	Adaptation Fund
AMCEN	African Ministerial Conference on Environment
AMI	Andean Mountain Initiative
ARCOS	Albertine Rift Conservation Society
BMUB	Bundesministeriums für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit (Germany)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Climate Change
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCAU	Climate Change Adaptation Unit of the Ecosystem Division
CONDESAN	Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Andean Ecoregions
COP	Conference of the Parties
CTCN	Climate Technology Centre and Network
EAC	East African Community
EACCCMP	East African Community Climate Change Master Plan
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EBVs	Essential Biodiversity Variables
ECVs	Essential Climate Variables
EF	Environment Fund
ESVs	Essential Societal Variables
EVs	Essential variables
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
GCF	Green Climate Fund

GEO	Group on Earth Observations
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GLORIA	Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments
GNOME	Global Network for Observations and Information on Mountain Environments
GPCCE	Global Programme Climate Change and Environment
HIMAP	Himalayan Monitoring and Assessment Programme
HLPD	High Level Policy Dialogue
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
HKH	Hindu Kush Himalayas
IAM	Andean Mountain Initiative
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IFIs	International Finance Institutions
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature i
LAC	Latin American Countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MRI	Mountain Research Initiative
MO	Mountain Observatories
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NAPA	National Programme of Action
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
POW	Programme of Work
PSC	Programme Support Costs
RB	Regular Budget
RMC	Regional Member Countries



RPD	Regional Policy Dialogues
SCAC	Strengthening Adaptive Capacity in the Caucasus: Enhancing Regional Cooperative Action for the Benefit of the Caucasus Mountain Region
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM	Sustainable land management
SNC-mt	Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region
SSC	South-South cooperation
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TEU	Terrestrial Ecosystem Unit
UHOP	Unified High Elevation Observing Platform
UNDRR (formerly UNISDR)	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WP	Work Package
XB	Extra Budgetary Funding

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**Table 1: Project Identification Table**

UNEP PIMS ID:	01655		
Implementing Partners	NALAG, ARCOS, GRID-Arendal, CONDESAN, EIA, ICIMOD, RMCCA etc.		
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	15.4. (15.4.1.), 13.2. (13.2.1), 13.3. (13.3.1 & 2)		
Sub-programme:	Climate change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	EA (a)
UNEP approval date:	19 December 2013	Programme of Work Output(s):	Output 3
<i>Expected</i> start date:	December 2013	Actual start date:	01 January 2014
<i>Planned</i> completion date:	December 2017	Actual operational completion date:	21 December 2018
<i>Planned</i> project budget at approval:	2,269,150 USD	Actual total expenditures reported as of [June 2019]:	2,045,173 USD
<i>Planned</i> Environment Fund allocation:	50,000 USD	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of [Jun 2019]:	50,000 USD
<i>Planned</i> Extra-Budgetary Financing:	2,219,150 USD	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	2,219,150 USD
		Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported as of [Jun 2019]:	1,995,173 USD
First disbursement:	550,000 EUR according to signed Donor Agreement	Planned date of financial closure:	30 July 2021
No. of formal project revisions:	1	Date of last approved project revision:	18 January 2018
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	Several (exact number cannot be identified) meetings with respective donor (Austria = host country)	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	NA
			Next:
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation ( <i>planned date</i> ):	06/2015	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	NA - was not carried out in end
Terminal Evaluation ( <i>planned date</i> ):	06/2017	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	2020
Coverage - Country(ies):	Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, South Sudan, Uganda, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, Albania, BiH, Serbia, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,	Coverage - Region(s):	South Caucasus, Balkan, East Africa, Andes, Central Asia, indirectly: Hindu Kush Himalayan

	Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia		
<b>Dates of previous project phases:</b>		<b>Status of future project phases:</b>	Follow up project Adaptation at Altitude (112.9)

### A. Project background

The main aim of UNEP's inter-regional project, '*Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective*', was to support the integration of mountain specific Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and other supporting adaptation approaches into key sectoral, national and sub-regional development strategies and policies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts.

The rationale for the project stems from the ecological, social and economic importance of fragile mountain regions, which also function as early indicators of climate change. Mountain regions span borders, making transboundary cooperation especially important. In response, the project was designed to deepen understanding of the common issues related to climate change and adaptation in mountain ecosystems. It also created platforms for countries to cooperate and share experiences in the integration of climate change in national policy frameworks.

### B. Project Phases

The project was divided into three key phases:

#### *Phase 1: The Scientific Phase (Mountain Outlooks)*

This phase focused on collection and consolidation of existing information related to climate change and mountain adaptation best practices to inform UNEP's 'Mountain Outlook Adaptation Series'. The Outlooks were developed through a participatory process, regional stakeholders (e.g. ministers, scientific experts, governmental advisors, members of civil society) convened to share ideas and identify policy gaps and vulnerabilities. The Outlook series was influential in informing dialogues and policies throughout the rest of the project.

#### *Phase 2: The Policy Phase (Regional Policy Dialogues)*

UNEP, assisted by regional and international convening bodies, organised workshops and meetings in each targeted region with the goal of furthering discourse on mountainous climate change adaptation. More specifically, the gathering of knowledgeable experts and policy makers was vital in clarifying regional priorities, promoting collaborative cooperation and formulating future action. Many of the dialogues were anchored within existing political institutes, such as the East African Community (EAC) in East Africa or CONDESAN in the Andes, which not only improved financial efficiency, but increased national ownership and ensured a permanent body oversaw the process throughout.

#### *Phase 3: Follow Up Action (Regional Policy Roadmaps)*

The policy dialogue processes and consultations carried out following the Mountain Outlook series helped to identify concrete follow-up actions at the national and regional levels to address mountain and climate adaptation needs of the countries. The aim of this phase was to synthesise all the findings produced by the project in prior stages into a concrete adaptation plan that was tailored specifically not only to the region, but the individual countries within the region. Ultimately, it is hoped that the roadmaps formulated at this stage will be mainstreamed into national policy frameworks to solidify their validity and ensure their longevity.

### C. Project Outputs

Each phase of the project was conducted in the 5 targeted regions, consisting of the following project Outputs:

**Output A:** Technical and policy support provided to Andes mountain countries in a sub-regional context

**Output B:** Technical and policy support provided to Andes mountain countries in a sub-regional context

**Output C:** Technical and policy support provided to Dinaric Arc and Balkan mountain countries in a sub-regional context

**Output D:** Technical and policy support provided to Caucasus mountain countries in a sub-regional context

**Output E:** Technical and policy support provided to Central Asian mountain countries in a sub-regional context

In addition, an additional output for inter-regional exchange was characterised as:

**Output F:** Support to strengthened inter-regional exchange of experiences and best practices in the context of mountain specific ecosystem-based adaptation and supporting approaches

## **D. Institutional Context**

The institutional context for the project is characterised as following:

- UNEP's Vienna Programme Office (Europe Office) on behalf of the Ecosystems Division was responsible for project management.
- Other regional offices (Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa) provide support to the project management team in these three particular regions.
- UNEP's Ecosystems Division was accountable for the project implementation.
- Experts from the GRID network, such as GRID Arendal, provided technical support and expertise.

Regional mountain partnering institutions provide support for the facilitation of the sub-regional platform meetings and the dissemination of meeting results. These institutions included:

*East Africa* - Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS), East African Community (EAC)

*Andes* - Consorcio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecorregión Andina (CONDESAN)

*Dinaric Arc and Balkan* - Environmental Information Association (EIA)

*Caucasus*- National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG), Sustainable Caucasus for the South Caucasus

*Central Asia* - Regional Mountain Centre of Central Asia (RMCCA, subsidiary body under ICSD), Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD)

## **E. Key findings**

The key findings of the evaluation are summarised below in accordance with the strategic questions that were raised with all of the interviewees.

### **What was the overall effect of the project?**

Overall, the project has drawn attention to the importance of mountain issues and improved the capacity of ministries to influence other areas. This has been achieved by initially enhancing the quality and availability of not only rigorous climate science for mountainous ecosystems, but localised knowledge of policy and progress responses, during the Outlook stage. Subsequently, this science has been used to underpin discussion convened by UNEP, catalysing policy proposals for adaptive action. These participatory processes solidified a collaborative network of stakeholders within and between regions. UNEP has collaborated with regional convening bodies and policy makers to support them in integrating science and policy knowledge into regional and subsequently national frameworks. Generally, UNEP has increased capacity through the sharing of knowledge and support in identifying priorities and policy gaps.

Generally, the project should be regarded as a success, ultimately UNEP successfully elevated the importance of mountainous ecosystems, in turn stimulating exchange between the regions which catalysed action. The findings from the Outlooks, and subsequent dialogues and roadmap drafting, identified and highlighted linkages between

mountainous climate change adaptation, and the potential cascading impacts on food security, biodiversity, water quality and availability, tourism and a range of other diverse sectors. Recognition of the cross-sectoral importance of mountains as a result of this knowledge has helped to elevate the importance of ecological resilience of mountains. This has been manifested in the creation and strengthening of regional bodies, processes, platforms and dialogue fora created with the purpose of preserving ecosystems, such as the African Regional Mountainous Forum (ARMF) and Sustainable Caucasus NGO. Another way the knowledge has been actioned is through follow up projects in mountainous regions, such as UNEP's vanishing treasures programme.

### **What were the overall effects of the Mountain Outlook series?**

The first phase of the project consisted of the formation and eventual publication of the Mountain Outlook series, this stage is generally considered successful as an Outlook document was published and subsequently used, to varying degrees, in every targeted region. The Mountain Outlooks took stock of current knowledge and built on the identified priorities through gap analysis. Stocktaking was important in many output regions as there were numerous organisations and actors involved and many projects running in parallel which lacked coordination. For example, in the Balkans scientific resources were scarce and disparate as there was not a coherent governmental scientific publishing system due to lack of technical skills and human resources dedicated to climate science in the region. This made collating of the outlook difficult and time consuming, but ultimately created a vital resource in the region that had not been realised on the same scale before the project.

A concise synthesis of the current climate data provided focus for subsequent dialogues which ultimately formed the basis of a roadmap. For example, the Andean Mountain Outlook was pivotal to the eventual uptake of the Strategic Agenda for Climate Change in the Andes. Albeit, in many regions this roadmap has not left the proposal stage, despite this, the Outlook has still formed the basis of valuable dialogue that will hopefully result in an eventual roadmap in the future. Based on the findings of our review, the Mountain Outlook series made progress in closing the science-policy gap in many regions.

Despite some concerns raised about lack of supporting data in some cases, the Mountain Outlooks were indeed well received, and were regarded as professional and engaging. Outlooks were written and presented in an accessible and appealing manner that meant the information could be understood by non-experts. The Outlooks are regarded as invaluable sources of information that cannot be found elsewhere, stimulating dialogues that had not yet been seen in the region for lack of accessible information. This meant that policy dialogue could be fluid and productive as the scientific basis for discussion was universally understood. Experts working in the Alpine region who had reviewed Outlooks for other regions confirmed the high quality of the product, especially in terms of giving an overview of the situation in each region.

Cooperation with GRID Arendal and partnering regional centres was helpful as UNEP did not have all the necessary data to provide a comprehensive overview of the regions. The outlooks provide a clear picture of the ongoing action in adaptation, and on the status of each country's policies. They also provide ideas to countries regarding overcoming barriers to institutional/financial adaptation.

### **What were the overall effects of the regional or sub-regional policy dialogues?**

The policy dialogues were mostly successful in strengthening cooperation with stakeholders in the region. For example, the establishment of the Andean Mountain Initiative in the Andes region was evidence of a regional desire for strong and robust permanent organisations to continue dialogue frameworks and further develop the relationships formed during this project. Conversely, in the Balkan and Caucasus regions the historic and ongoing political tensions hindered the capacity to form meaningful and productive relationships, however it could be argued that the fact that delegates from Armenia and Azerbaijan engaged in discussion, regardless of the outcome, is evidence to support an improvement of regional relations. Political tensions and varying national priorities were a barrier to achieving some of the goals of the regional policy dialogues across all outputs/regions to varying degrees.

Many of the dialogues and meetings were organised back-to-back with existing fora, such as the UNFCCC COPs and other larger fora, to maximise time and cost efficiency by reducing the need to organise stand-alone regional events. For example, the Mountain Pavilion Forum was added to the existing agenda at COP20 in Lima in 2014, as the relevant stakeholders were all already present and available. In addition, UNEP recruited logistical expertise from existing regional convening bodies, such as the EAC and ARCOS in East Africa and CONDESAN in the Andes, which proved beneficial in drawing more established key stakeholders within the region and contributing to UNEP's goal of national ownership. Although anchoring to existing bodies had benefits, their structures were often cumbersome and bureaucratic (notably, EAC) and their timetables were often overcrowded, this significantly slowed down the process and created an additional institutional hurdle that had to be maneuvered tactfully.

Performance indicators are always an issue, and especially important for donors to see the project impact. The current indicators make it challenging to measure the real impact of a policy dialogue beyond numbers. Currently dialogue workshop attendance is currently utilised as a yardstick to track progress uptake, however this can be seen as a rather arbitrary box-ticking measurement that does not indicate genuine engagement. Therefore, to further understand the reach of the project, a better indicator for engagement at the Regional Policy Dialogues (RPDs) ought to be formulated.

### **What has been the overall impact of the policy road map?**

The policy roadmap phase of the project exhibited the greatest variation in success rate compared to the other project phases. Generally speaking, the countries that exhibited the best cooperation and engagement in the earlier project stages created the most useful roadmaps. Notably, only the Andean countries unanimously agreed upon and adopted a regional roadmap, titled; the Strategic Agenda for Climate Change in the Andes at the Colombian Mountain Congress in Bogota in July 2017. East African countries also displayed a reasonably high level of cooperation, resulting in the high level discussion of the East African Agenda, albeit this is yet to be adopted across the region. However East African states (Rwanda, Uganda) have taken a strong leadership role, promoting mountain laws and policies at national level.

Conversely, regions that did not cooperate as effectively throughout the project had the least effective policy roadmaps, or in some cases they did not produce a road map at all. For example, the Balkan countries could not collectively agree on a shared intergovernmental tool for climate adaptation, and hence a roadmap did not come to fruition. It is important to note that the lack of roadmap can be largely attributed to geo-political factors external to the UNEP project, rather than a failure on behalf of the convening power of UNEP. The ongoing frozen conflicts between Serbia and Kosovo meant that climate dialogue had to be approached with tact, and hence a broader climate adaptation policy was pursued in which mountains were a sub-element, thus watering down the intended impact. Similarly, external socio-political factors in the Balkans and Caucasus resulted in less useful roadmaps when compared to the Andes and East Africa.

For future projects, policy roadmaps ought to be better tailored to the natural and political context as well as the economic, social and environmental priorities of the nations within the region. For example, some regions (notably Andes and Central Asia), perceived the outlooks as less useful as they did not focus on their regional priority of water management. UNEP has attempted to better understand regional perspectives by anchoring the roadmaps within existing regional policy bodies, such as the EAC or ICSD. In addition, one of the main goals of the project was for participating countries to take national ownership of the project to direct and drive the process themselves. However, there is still more work required to improve uptake at the national level, as currently the roadmaps have been commonly endorsed at a regional level but have rarely been mainstreamed into national policy. This diminishes their effectiveness as policy at the national level yields the most tangible impact.

### **How has knowledge about the sub-regional/regional experience been shared with other regions at the global level?**

As well as building institutional capacity for climate adaptation within the output regions, another key aim of the UNEP project was to strengthen “inter-regional exchange of experiences and best practices” between output regions (project output F).

A key activity throughout the project is the bringing together of knowledgeable experts to share ideas and formulate policy. This was mostly carried out within target regions, however these regional stakeholders also gathered collectively at larger scale global dialogues. It was at these events where inter-regional dialogue was facilitated to share best practices within regions. An example of a successful inter-regional dialogue was at COP21 in Paris, France in December 2015. UNEP jointly organised various events that facilitated experience-sharing between mountainous countries, within the context of relevant global mountain fora.

In addition to international policy dialogues, the open access nature of the Outlooks, Roadmaps and other relevant publications meant that the best practices developed in the more successful regions were available for other regions to learn from and adapt to their own region.

### **How have lessons learned from sub-regional processes in mountain areas such as the Carpathians, Alps and Hindu Kush Himalayas been incorporated in the region?**

The successes of this project created a positive momentum globally, inspiring other mountainous eco-regions not included in this project to develop their own climate change adaptation roadmaps. Policymakers from the Carpathian, Alps and Hindu-Kush Himalayan regions are following a similar methodology to develop and launch their own regional Outlooks, with ambitions to subsequently draft Roadmaps. The Carpathian Outlook Report was developed after it was determined that the Outlook Reports in the five target regions were valuable for providing a clear outline on what needs to be done to improve climate change adaptation in the respective regions. A Himalayan Outlook was launched for the same reason at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, supported under the HICAP programme.

## **F. Conclusions**

Overall, this project successfully completed all planned activities at the output level. The Mountain Outlook series, created in partnership with GRID-Arendal, published a region-specific report in all output regions, containing accurate and updated climate science.

The project also convened Regional Policy Dialogues in all regions, albeit to varying degrees of engagement and success. UNEP provided each region with the expertise and tools required to form a policy dialogue.

In all regions the process of forming a roadmap was initiated. The roadmaps were successful in both Africa and the Andes, being used to stimulate meaningful discourse and in some cases were mainstreamed into national policy (e.g. Uganda). However, in the Caucasus, the roadmap was not adopted due to regional conflict. In Central Asia the roadmaps were deemed to not focus sufficiently on regional priorities such as water management nor contain sufficient detail to be adopted at the national level. Finally, regional conflict in the Balkans hindered the roadmap progress, though a roadmap was eventually created in combination with another project, and endorsed.

There is evidence of the fulfilment of the project outcomes to varying degrees dependent on region. In all cases, knowledge developed while producing the Outlooks and throughout the policy dialogues played a role in elevating the importance of climate adaptive action in mountainous ecosystems. The most successful regions at the output level were East Africa and the Andes. Both regions were successful in engaging with the knowledge from the Outlook and forming productive, collaborative relationships, during a sequence of successful RPDs. The Caucasus showed evidence of success at the national level in Georgia and Azerbaijan, although regional cooperation was impaired by political tensions.

At least some of the Intermediate states have been fulfilled in all regions. All the intermediate states were fulfilled in the Andes, Caucasus and East Africa, while some intermediate states were yet to be reached in the other regions. This



is evidence that all regions are progressing towards achieving the intended impact of the project, albeit some regions have made more progress than others.

Overall, there is limited evidence for medium term effects across the regions. Different regions displayed different strengths; for example, the Andean countries displayed a high level of regional cooperation, whereas the East African region had the most concrete evidence of mainstreaming knowledge at the national level. Specifically, Uganda’s 2016 ‘National Sustainable Mountain Development Strategy’ was influenced in part by this project, in addition to other initiatives. We have found very limited evidence of direct national uptake from this project, however, we recognise that this type of evidence is in part limited because the national policy life cycle is longer than the project lifespan. An additional issue is lack of clear monitoring.

The other regions have provided less evidence of mountain policy mainstreaming, however the Caucasus, Balkans and Central Asian mountain regions were held back by certain political, economic, social and natural hurdles external to the project. Nevertheless, Georgia has developed a GCF NAP proposal that includes mountains and the need for adaptation.

The ToC was reconstructed to ensure the project’s intentionality was properly captured, taking into account the inherent time limitations of large international policy projects like this. As such, the evaluation team did not evaluate the project critically against the long term intended impacts. The LTI remains in the ToC to indicate a long term goal in order to signpost future projects. The fulfillment of the medium term intended impact in some regions lays a solid foundation which is hoped will eventually result in the obtainment of the long term impact, beyond the four year timeframe given for this project.

## G. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Table 1: Table summarising lessons learned and recommendations

#	Lesson Learned	Recommendations and suggestions
1	The typical policy life cycle timeframe does not align with the timeframe dedicated to this project.	When producing the PRODOC, UNEP should ensure that due consideration is given to the timeframe of the project so that it better corresponds to the national policy cycles that are the object of the project.
2	The influence of the Outlook is currently unclear in lack of a robust monitoring system to track where and when the Outlook has been specifically referenced. GRID ARENDAL could play a useful role in this regard.	UNEP should create more robust methodologies for tracking how the Outlooks are integrated into national frameworks to determine its effectiveness. To this end, UNEP should engage GRID ARENDAL and other project partners more systematically to assist with outcome-level monitoring
3	On occasions, UNEP has failed to align the project with existing political, environmental and economic priorities in the region. Political barriers in some regions significantly slowed, or even halted, the progress of the project as UNEP had failed to adapt the project approach to these political contexts accordingly.	In the PRODOC, UNEP should provide a more fulsome accounting of the regional socio-political, institutional, environmental and economic context. Risk analysis in the PRODOC should be more comprehensive, especially in terms of socio-political risk.
4	Anchoring with existing regional bodies (E.g. EAC, CONDESAN, ICSD) helped to streamline the process into existing frameworks. Convening meetings through these bodies was also a more cost-effective approach for UNEP and promoted	UNEP should create synergies with national processes and anchor within existing local institutions. This will ensure that pre-existing regional issues are not overlooked, failure to incorporate important regional issues could hinder uptake of final policy documents.

national uptake. This could be utilised further in certain regions.

- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| <b>5</b> | National ownership of the project is important to ensure the longevity and follow through of goals once the UNEP project has terminated.  | In the project design phase, UNEP should develop a suite of approaches which will deepen national ownership. Furthermore, UNEP should work with governments to develop approaches that ensure greater national ownership.   |
| <b>6</b> | Regular changes in personnel, both within UNEP and focal points in the regions, disrupted the flow of information dissemination for the project.  | UNEP should create a risk mitigation strategy that addresses the potential for change in personnel and in regional focal points, a common problem in projects such as this one.   |
| <b>7</b> | NAPs are currently being under-utilised as a tool for concrete implementation.  | UNEP should engage with NAPs as a tool to integrate project outputs and extend the reach of the project beyond individuals, depending on the lifecycle of the NAP process. This will result in greater uptake of the project beyond the relatively brief political cycle.                         |
| <b>8</b> | The political commitment to mountains is gaining momentum, UNEP ought to maintain and build on this. As well, the topic of mountains should be elevated among UNEP's top priorities, especially glaciers and also significant changes in regions without permafrost). | UNEP should consider choosing mountains and climate as the theme for UNEA-6 in order to build on and sustain this political momentum. As well, elevate the importance of mountains within UNEP, in particular at senior management level, and recognition of UNEP's strong delivery on mountains. |
| <b>9</b> | The broad geographic scope of this project has generated a wealth of knowledge of best practices in terms of mountains and climate adaption.  | UNEP should scale up best practices sharing. For example, UNEP could create a portal that would enable the sharing of best practices. As well, UNEP could introduce a compilation of best practices.  |

## I. INTRODUCTION

The terminal evaluation of UNEP's "Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective" project is being undertaken to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency). The evaluation will determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation is being conducted in accordance with UNEP's Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Programme Manual and Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations.

The terminal evaluation primary purposes are: (a) To provide evidence of results to UNEP ROE/Vienna Office to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, governments, regional mountain partnering institutions, national climate and mountain experts. The evaluation will provide recommendations to support UNEP ROE/Vienna Office in continuing its work in this field.

The goal of the project was to "*support mountainous developing countries to integrate climate change adaptation into development policies/plans/strategies through a sub-regional approach*"<sup>1</sup>. The fragility and climatic importance of mountain ecosystems provided a compelling rationale for this project. The transboundary physical nature of mountainous regions requires equally transboundary political tools, and hence intra-regional cooperation and experience sharing must be robust to manage the commons. In addition, these best practices must be subsequently integrated into national policy frameworks. Another important aim of the project was to create opportunities for the replication of lessons learned in regions such as the Carpathians, the Alps and the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. DEPI/DTIE. Project Document, "Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective". Approval of the project submitted by UNEP Deputy Director, 2014.

Table 2 Budget Summary at project completion



TF Ctrpart Ctrs Supp Envrmt Activities  
SI-32CPL-000213 - CP40101403 - Inter-regional Mountain and

Consolidated Interim Financial Statement for the period 01 January 2014 to 30 June 2019<sup>1</sup>  
(Expressed in US dollars)

<b>Income</b>			
Voluntary contributions pledged <sup>2</sup>			2,145,694
Transfers from/(to) Grant			
Voluntary contributions in kind			2,145,694
<b>Total Voluntary Contributions</b>			<b>2,145,694</b>
Investment income			-
Miscellaneous income			-
<b>Total Income</b>			<b>2,145,694</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
	Expenditures	Outstanding Commitments	Total Expenditures & Commitments
Staff and other personnel cost	576,431	1,886	578,316
Supplies, Commodities and Materials	6,210	-	6,210
Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture	-	-	0
Contractual Services	39,531	100	39,631
Travel	164,870	(5,944)	158,926
Transfers and Grants <sup>3</sup>	895,372	178,387	1,073,759
General Operating and Other Direct Costs	19,217	-	19,217
<b>Total direct expenditures</b>	<b>1,701,631</b>	<b>174,428</b>	<b>1,876,059</b>
Indirect Support Costs (United Nations)	119,114	-	119,114
Indirect Support Costs (Implementing Partners)	-	-	0
<b>Total indirect support costs</b>	<b>119,114</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>119,114</b>
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>1,820,745</b>	<b>174,428</b>	<b>1,995,173</b>
<b>Net excess/(shortfall) income over expenditure</b>			<b>150,521</b>
Exchange rate (loss)/gain			44,389
Refunds			-
<b>Unspent contribution balance, beginning</b>			<b>194,910</b>
<b>Unspent contribution balance, ending</b>			<b>194,910</b>
<b>Outstanding Contributions Receiv. at To Date<sup>4</sup></b>			<b>37,439</b>
<b>Available Balance</b>			<b>194,910</b>

Certified by:

  
FMO, UN Environment -Europe Office

Date:

27/8/19

**Notes:**

1. The reporting period is to account for all the contribution expenses and from 2014 to 30th June 2019
2. Less USD 63,808 contribution from Austria (Austrian Development Cooperation) for Africa MI Forum deducted on this FS
3. Less Expenditure of USD 60,000 as per SSFA/2014/Vie13 deducted under the IP line
4. This is the EUR 30,000 outstanding converted to the nearest exchange rate: 1USD = Euro 0.80 has not been received

According to the Project Document, the total budget for the project was USD 2,424,491. However, the Consolidated Interim Financial Statement for the period 1 January 2014 to 20 June 2019 indicated total income in the amount of USD 2,145,694 (all of which came from the Government of Austria in the form of a voluntary contribution).

The reason for the different amounts in income stem from the fact that out of the Austrian Government's total contribution, USD 63,808 (earmarked for the African Mountain Forum) was deducted from this financial statement. As well, an additional expenditure of USD 60,000 as per SSFA/2014/Vie 13 was deducted under the IP budget line.

Total direct expenditures amounted to USD 1,876,059, leaving an available balance by project close in the amount of USD 194,910.

## II. EVALUATION METHODS

### A. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation has been conducted by an independent consultant, under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office. The evaluation used a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders were kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods were used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. Throughout this evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report, efforts were made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect to ethics and human rights issues. All information was gathered after prior informed consent from the people concerned and all discussions remained anonymous. All information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

The evaluation team prepared the following deliverables during the course of this Terminal Evaluation:

- Inception report
- Preliminary findings of interviews
- Draft and Final Evaluation Report
- Evaluation Brief

#### A.1. Desk review

The consultant reviewed key project documents at the design and implementation stage and relevant sources of information were extracted for report writing and as references to validate during key stakeholder interviews. These included:

- Relevant background documentation, strategy and policy documents, websites, etc.
- Project design documents and project revision documents.
- Project logical framework.
- (Annual) work plans and budgets or equivalent.
- Project budgets/financing documents.
- Project reports.
- All other relevant documentation on PIMS.

#### A.2. Semi-structured interviews of stakeholders

Following the desk review, phone interviews were conducted with the following individuals:

- The project manager
- The fund manager
- All members of the project team;
- The project manager supervisor
- Other UNEP officials
- Regional mountain partnering institutions
- National focal points
- Local stakeholders
- Scientific experts

A complete list of people interviewed is attached as Annex II.

Particular emphasis was placed on triangulation (cross-validation) of data sources (monitoring data, interview results, surveys, etc.) and an assessment of plausibility of the attribution of the results obtained. To validate observations, findings, and areas of recommendation, the Evaluator also reviewed UN, government, and other research publications, in addition to related news articles and documentation of related initiatives. A complete list of consulted references is provided in Annex I and Annex V.

A reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC) was prepared as part of the initial evaluation process, drawing heavily on the results framework and ProDoc. The reconstructed TOC was refined with general interview responses, but also discussed in detail during a selection of interviews. The full approach to the use of ToC in UNEP evaluations, as described in a formal guidance document was applied. The full process guidance for UNEP Terminal Evaluations was followed closely.

## **B. Evaluation Limitations**

The following limitations constrained the evaluation:

- The possibility of selection bias in the conducting of interviews based on availability and participation.
- Low sample size of interview participants due to low response rate.
- Time between project execution and conducting of evaluation (Staff turnover and change of responsibilities affects the accessibility of respondents).
- Language barriers especially with colleagues in Central Asia, Caucasus and Balkan regions.
- Lack of performance indicators at outcome level and beyond.

### III. THE PROJECT

#### A. Context

UNEP's international project "Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective" responds to the UNEP's mandate to promote climate adaptation and sustainable mountain development while simultaneously strengthening regional cooperation. The project formed part of UNEP's Programs of Work 2014/15, 16/17 and 18/19, sub-programme on climate change, directly contributing to Output 113.

The main aim of the project was to support the integration of mountain climate adaptation, notably Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA), into key sectoral, national and sub-regional development strategies with the goal of strengthening climate resilience.

The rationale for the project is characterized by the following:

- Gaps in understanding of mountain-specific climate change challenges (notably the speed and magnitude of climate change in mountain regions), impeding evidence-based decision-making and adaptation planning.
- Knowledge gaps translate into reduced political recognition of the social, economic and ecological importance of mountain adaptation.
- Few countries have yet to sufficiently integrate sustainable mountain development and climate change adaptation in national policy frameworks.
- Weak institutional and governance structures continue to impede the mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in all relevant areas of policy making.
- Weak or missing coordination mechanisms at the national level frustrates efforts to integrate climate change across all policy areas/sectors.
- At the sub-regional or regional levels, there are few platforms for the generation and sharing of knowledge of the complex challenges and practical solutions and policies among mountain countries. This gap has also contributed to the limitations of regional cooperation in the area of climate adaptation.

#### B. Results framework

The main aim of the project was to support the integration of mountain specific Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and other supporting adaptation approaches into key sectoral, national and sub-regional development strategies and policies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts.<sup>2</sup> There were six outputs:

Table 3: Table showing the Output Objectives.

<b>Output A</b>	Technical and policy support provided to African mountain countries in a sub-regional context
<b>Output B</b>	Technical and policy support provided to Andes Mountain countries in a sub-regional countries
<b>Output C</b>	Technical and policy support provided to Dinaric Arc and Balkan Mountain countries in a sub-regional countries
<b>Output D</b>	Technical and policy support provided to Caucasus Mountain countries in a sub-regional countries
<b>Output E</b>	Technical and policy support provided to Central Asia Mountain countries in a sub-regional countries
<b>Output F</b>	Support to strengthened inter-regional exchange of experiences and best practices in the context of mountain specific ecosystem based adaptation and supporting approaches

<sup>2</sup> UNEP Project Document, 2014.



For each of the regions, the project interventions were delivered through the following three phases, which provide a further organizing principle for each of the regional sections:

Table 4: Table Detailing the three project phases.

<p><b>Phase 1 - Scientific Phase</b></p>	<p>Phase 1 focused on collection and consolidation of existing information related to climate change and mountain adaptation best practices, this knowledge was subsequently examined using gap-analysis to identify priorities.</p> <p>This information was used for the sub regional climate change outlooks "Mountain Adaptation Outlooks". The Outlook assessment report provides a stock-take of the current science-policy dialogue, identifying priorities, risks and policy gaps, subsequently prescribing recommendations in the region for climate adaptation in mountainous ecosystems.</p>
<p><b>Phase 2 - Policy Phase</b></p>	<p>A series of policy dialogues, in the form of review-based meetings and workshops was undertaken in the project's sub-regions. The goal of these policy dialogues was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify national and regional priorities shared by participating countries</li> <li>• Promote sub-regional dialogue and cooperation on adaptation to climate change in mountain regions within the context of appropriate frameworks (such as the East African Community, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development in Central Asia, or the High Andean Initiative).</li> </ul> <p>These sub-regional policy dialogues involved key designated governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and experts on climate change and sustainable mountain development from the various countries.</p> <p>At each policy dialogue, a series of guidance documents were prepared based on the Outlooks, stakeholder consultations and other sources. The guidance documents varied from region to region, but usually included a proposed list of policies, institutional measures and programmatic actions to promote adaptation to climate change in mountain regions.</p>
<p><b>Phase 3 - Policy Roadmap Phase</b></p>	<p>Phase 3 involved the sharing of experiences from the first two phases in order to formulate a regional policy roadmap to mainstream new knowledge into existing policy frameworks. Both the Outlook and sub-regional consultation meeting processes were designed to ensure optimal exchange of feedback and ideas for concrete follow-up actions at the national and regional levels.</p> <p>This phase also involved the communication of mountain trends to formulate policy action on global level through global processes and mechanisms (in particular UNFCCC and related COP in Peru, Global Adaptation Network, IPCC and its Secretariat). This contributed to dialogue between Output regions as well as mountainous regions not directly involved in the project, such as the Alps, Himalayas and Carpathians.</p> <p>The components of potential Roadmaps include: developing and strengthening policy and institutional arrangements for enhanced governance in mountain ecosystems; increasing investment in mountain development and conservation; increasing the participation of mountain communities; and implementing adaptation measures to address the impacts of climate change in mountain areas.</p>

### C. Stakeholders

The project’s key stakeholders included individuals who are involved in the promotion of sustainable mountain development and climate change solutions in each of the targeted mountain regions. There were three categories of stakeholders: the scientific level, policy level as well as local level. Their respective level of influence in the project outcomes and role in the evaluation are captured in the table below.

Regional offices and the external regional mountain partnering institutions helped to identify appropriate stakeholders, establish communication and facilitate contacts and establish partnerships.

Table 5 - Table showing Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Influence over project outcome	Role in evaluation
<b>Scientific stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project implementation structure in the Terms of Reference identified the following categories of scientific experts: experts from GRID networks, ie GRID Arendal; national experts in climate and mountain research.</li> <li>Other scientific stakeholders included representatives from Universities, Academies of Sciences, research institutes, NGOs.</li> <li>The scientific stakeholders were involved in the conducting of the sub-regional climate change outlooks. They also provided access to data and information, relevant case studies and other scientific results. They also shared information about other relevant initiatives and activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide insights into the overall accuracy and contribution of the regional mountain outlooks in framing key trends and developments.</li> <li>Key insights into phase 1 of the project will be gained from the scientific stakeholders.</li> <li>Help to assess the adequacy of the sub-regional and national policy responses. Notably if the science-policy gap has been sufficiently bridged.</li> <li>Key insights into the extent to which lessons learned from the Alpine Conventions and Carpathian Convention have been implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Policy stakeholders</b> National climate focal points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy stakeholders were particularly involved and targeted in the work of the Sub-regional cooperation platforms (phase 2).</li> <li>Policy stakeholders are the main stakeholders to be addressed throughout the project.</li> <li>Their behaviour (involvement and review of participatory assessments and participation and contribution to regional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insights into the usefulness of the project overall in supporting governments to integrate mountain ecosystem and climate adaptation approaches into national policy frameworks.</li> <li>Insights regarding the value of the regional policy dialogues.</li> <li>Feedback regarding the role of the Vienna Office.</li> </ul>

	<p>cooperation platforms) will be crucial for the success of the project.</p>	
<p><b>Regional stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional stakeholders are Regional partnering mountain institutions (regional centres of excellence) disposing of much knowledge and expertise and experiences in the context of sustainable mountain development and climate change adaptation. A list of regional stakeholders is included in chapter “use of legal instruments”. As they already deal with governmental experts (responsible for sustainable mountain development), their involvement is crucial, in particular, to ensure adequate participation of governmental experts throughout the implementation.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Local stakeholders</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local stakeholders (civil society representatives etc.) were, in particular, involved in the undertaking of the climate change impacts and vulnerability outlooks by providing local experience and inputs (stories, e.g. climate change adaptation options).</li> </ul>	

## D. Project implementation structure and partners

### Project Implementation Structure

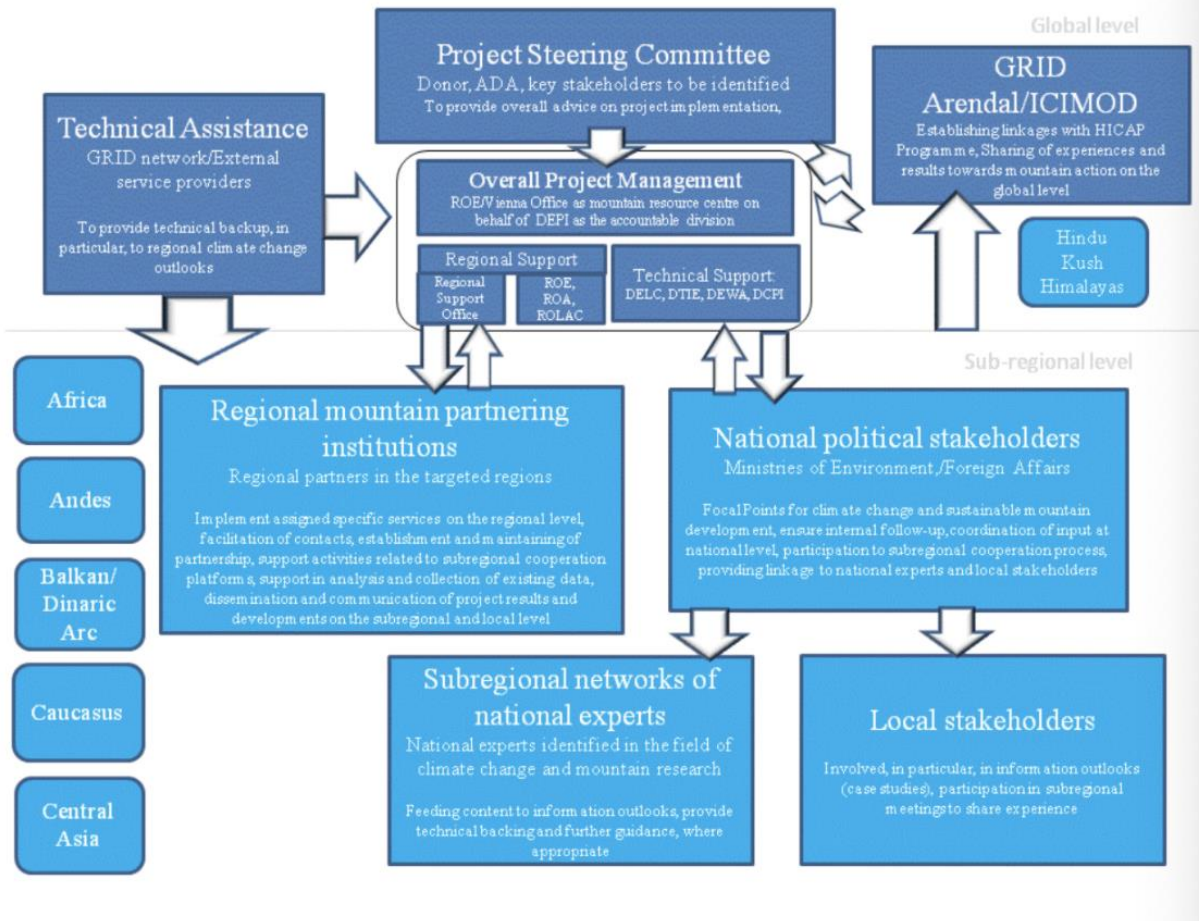


Figure 2: Figure showing an overview of the project's implementation structure

According to the Project Document, the following elements constituted the project implementation structure:

- Ecosystems Division, (Climate Change Adaptation Unit) is the accountable division for the project.
- The project management is vested in the Regional Office for UNEP / Vienna Programme Office as a mountain resource center on behalf of DEPI.
- ROE/UNEP Vienna and the other project management will be further supported by the Regional Support Office.
- At the regional level, the Regional Offices concerned; Europe, Africa and latin America and the Caribbean (ROE, ROA, and ROLAC respectively), in cooperation with the project manager, lead the delivery in line with the project delivery plan .
- Technical support was further provided the Ecosystems, Law, Science and Economy Divisions at the global and sub-regional levels.
- Regional mountain partnering institutions were key regional partners in the targeted regions dealing with sustainable mountain development. They helped to backstop the project and implement specific tasks assigned to them including facilitation of contacts and communication with relevant stakeholders in the region.

- Regional Offices concerned and regional partnering institutions had a strong and important role in helping to identify relevant stakeholders in the respective regions, to establish linkages with other relevant initiatives in the region (to define synergies) to ensure the project's success.
- Technical assistance with regards to the climate change outlooks was provided by GRID ARENDAL
- External partners to the project included the Alpine and Carpathian Convention as a crucial element of cooperation and experience exchange.

## E. Changes in design during implementation

According to the final donor report, "following the exchange of letters between UNEP and the donor in 2017, a respective non-cost extension of the project was requested until December 2018, the respective project change has been made within the project management system (PIMS)".

## F. Project financing

Table 6: Table showing Budget Summary

Type of Funding	Source of Funding	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	US\$ Total	
Cash Budget	Environment Fund Activity Budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Regular Budget Activity	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Extra Budgetary Funding	Donor Funding from Austria	47,175	795,420	674,474	532,932	324,490	2,374,491
		Program Support Cost	-325	-53,367	-40,666	-50,698	-10,285	155,341
		Secured Funding	XB46,850	742,053	633,808	482,234	314,205	2,219,150
	Total Project Cash Budget		46,850	742,053	633,808	482,234	314,205	2,219,150
In-Kind Contribution		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000	
TOTAL UNEP managed Project budget (=project cash budget +UNEP in-kind contribution)		56,850	752,053	643,808	492,234	324,205	2,269,150	
Co-financing based on partners in-kind contribution		-	-	-	-	-	-	

GRAND TOTAL	56,850	752,053	643,808	492,234	324,205	2,269,150
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## IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

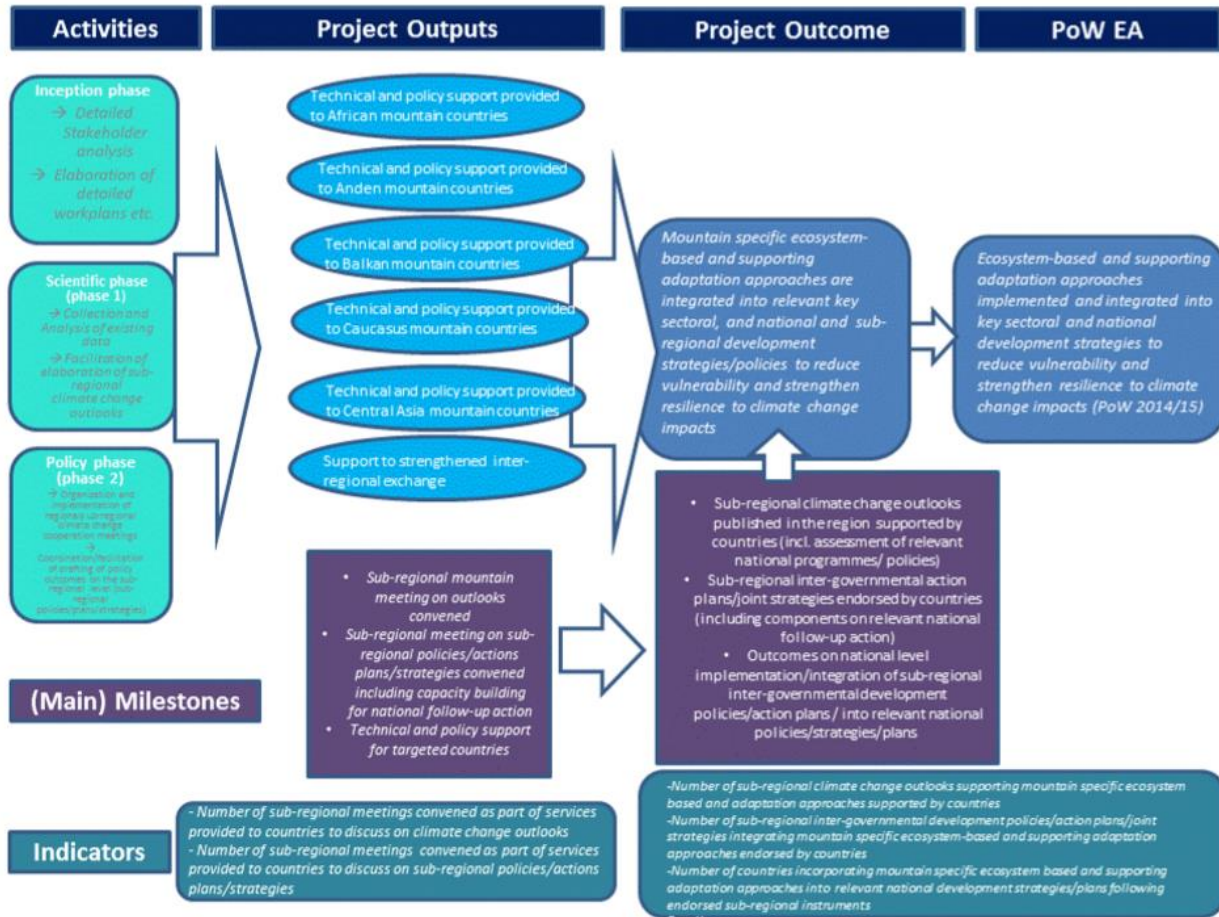


Figure 3: Figure showing the Original Theory of Change in the Project Document

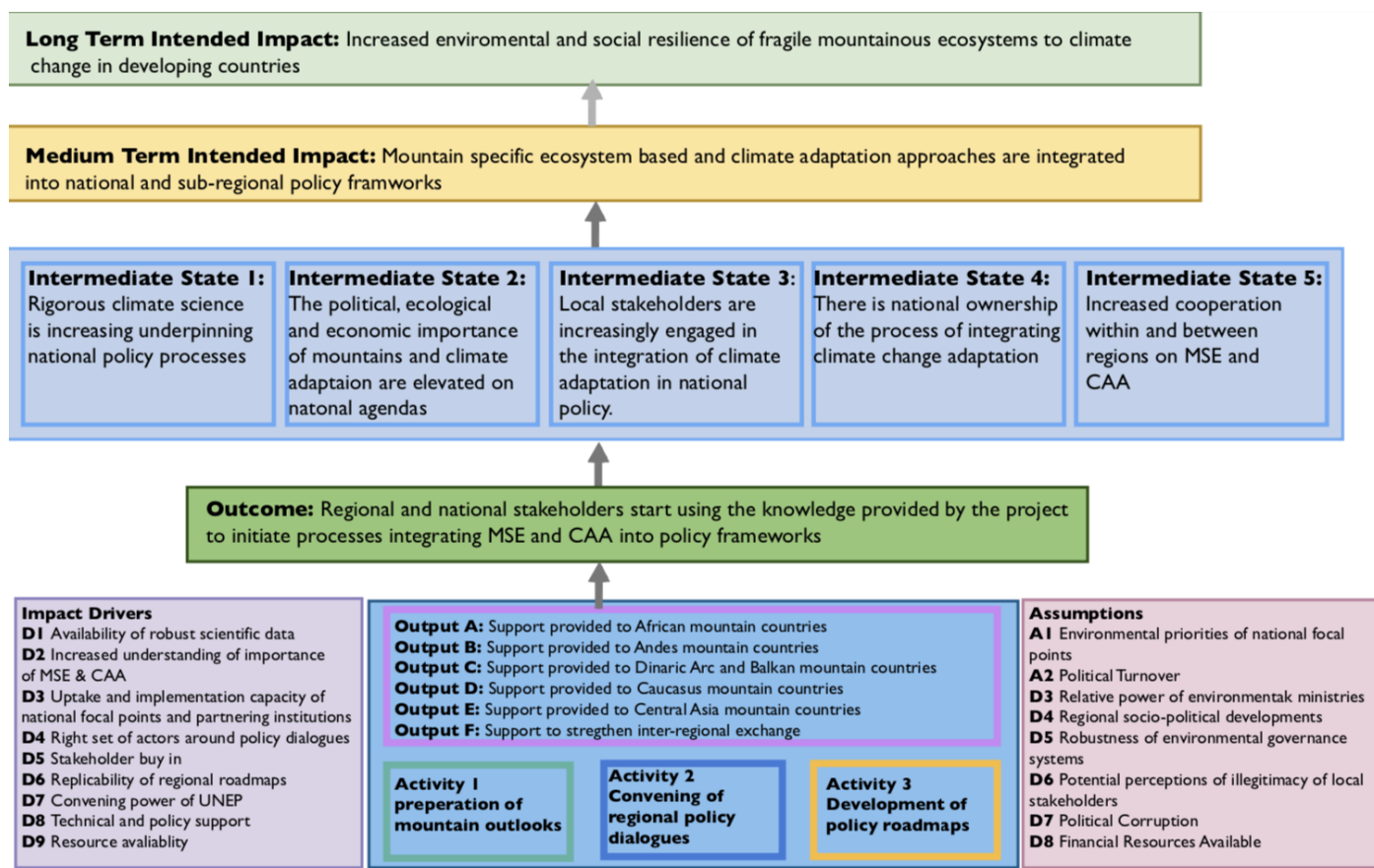


Figure 4: Reconstructed Theory of Change

Drivers from the TOC, are referenced where relevant throughout the report as D1 – D9, similarly Assumptions are referenced as A1 – A8.

## Explanation of the reconstructed Theory of Change

### Outcome changed

The original ToC framed the outcome as “Mountain specific ecosystem-based and supporting adaptation approaches are integrated into relevant key sectoral, and national and sub-regional development strategies/policies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts”.

The evaluation team assert that this was an overly ambitious outcome, which would have been very difficult to fully realise during the life of the project across multiple regions. The process of integrating mountain-specific ecosystem-based climate adaptation approaches into policy frameworks may extend over 1 to 2 policy cycles, which extend well beyond a 4-year project. The evaluation team decided it was important to frame a more realistic project outcome. The original language was adjusted and the standard to be met was restated as “regional and national stakeholders start using the knowledge provided by the project to initiate processes integrating MSE and CAA into regional and national policy frameworks”. The evaluation team regarded this as a more realistic outcome for achievement within the timeframe defined by the project and which supporting evidence could more likely be found to demonstrate a change in agency, uptake of new knowledge and a change in behaviour.

Because this project has catalysed a second phase, the evaluation team believes that the original outcome will have a greater chance of being fulfilled over the life of the phase 2 project that will cover the period 2020-2023.

### Addition of intermediate states

The original Theory of Change did not include intermediate states. The evaluation team added five intermediate states that reflect the important pre-conditions that must be fulfilled in order for the intended impact to be fulfilled. Essentially these five intermediate states reflect an improved state that directly flows from the outcome and which are essential to the achievement of the intended impact.



## **The following intermediate states were added to the reconstructed Theory of Change:**

**Intermediate State 1:** Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning national policy processes.

**Intermediate State 2:** The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas.

**Intermediate State 3:** Local stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy.

**Intermediate State 4:** National ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation.

**Intermediate State 5:** Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA.

## **Intermediate and long-term intended impact**

In the original Theory of Change, there was no intended impact per se. Rather it was captured in the PoW (2014-2015) EA “Ecosystem based and supporting adaptation approaches are implemented and integrated into key sectoral and national development strategies to reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to climate change impacts”. In the reconstructed Theory of Change, the evaluation team decided to split the expected accomplishment with the first part (related to integration of climate adaptation in national strategies) reframed as our intermediate intended impact. The second part (related to reduction of vulnerabilities and strengthened resilience) has now been reframed as a long-term intended impact, one that no doubt will require several years of interventions and rigorous monitoring to ensure its full realisation.

The reconstructed Theory of Change defines the new intermediate intended impact as: “Mountain specific ecosystem based and climate adaptation approaches are integrated into national and sub-regional policy frameworks” and the long-term intended impact as “Increased environmental and social resilience of fragile mountainous ecosystems to climate change in developing countries.”

## **Addition of impact drivers and assumptions**

The original Theory of Change did not include impact drivers and assumptions, which are essential elements of a ToC. The evaluation team added the following impact drivers and assumptions and used them in the analysis of effectiveness for each of the project outputs. The complete list of impact drivers and assumptions can be found on the bottom tier of the TOC diagram (Figure 4).

## **Application of the reconstructed Theory of Change to project outputs A to E**

The determination of the achievement of the outcome is based on an analysis of how the project addressed the key drivers that influence the progression from the output, i.e. “Support provided to developing mountain countries”, to the outcome, i.e. “Regional and national stakeholders start using the knowledge provided by the project to initiate processes integrating MSE and CAA into policy frameworks”.

The determination of the achievement of the intermediate state (IS) was based on an analysis of how the project influenced the key drivers and the extent to which necessary conditions (assumptions) to allow the progression from the outcome, i.e. “Regional and national stakeholders start using the knowledge provided by the project to initiate processes integrating MSE and CAA into policy frameworks”, to the five intermediate states.

The assessment of the likelihood of the achievement of impact was based on an analysis of how the project influenced or has the potential to influence the key drivers and the extent to which necessary conditions (assumptions) to allow the progression are likely to hold along the causal pathway leading to impact., i.e. “Mountain specific ecosystem based and climate adaptation approaches are integrated into national and sub-regional policy frameworks”

## **V. EVALUATION FINDINGS**

## **A. Strategic Relevance**

### **A.1. Alignment to Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work**

The project is aligned to make a contribution to the PoW 2014/15, climate change, (a) output 3 by backstopping – through strong focus on sub-regional action – national efforts to integrate climate change adaptation (ecosystem based and other approaches) into relevant policies/strategies.

### **A.2. Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic Priorities**

- This project relates to UNEP's mandate for national capacity building, promotion of regional dialogue and cooperative action in the area of sustainable mountain development. Indeed, sustainable mountain development and climate change adaptation builds one of the core areas of the work of UNEP and its collaborating centres (incl. GRID-Arendal).
- This project is also aligned with UNEP's various sub-programmes, including those pertaining to ecosystem management and climate change. It supports a number of activities mainly run by the Vienna Office as well as by the Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU) as well as other regional offices focusing in particular on climate change adaptation in mountain regions strongly promoting EbA approaches.
- Since the adoption of the Agenda 21 Mountain Agenda, UNEP, in particular through its Vienna Office – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (SCC) and Terrestrial Ecosystem Unit (TEU), has demonstrated strong leadership in the field of sustainable mountain development and has actively contributed to activities on the global and regional level, notably in the context of the international Mountain Partnership.
- It should be added that the Rio+20 Outcome provided UNEP with a strong mandate with regard to sustainable mountain development as well as regional governance.

### **A.3. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities**

This project was highly relevant to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities. First, the Mountain Outlooks that were prepared in each region identified region-specific climate change trends, key risks and impacts. Each Mountain Outlook identified the existence of regional, national and sectoral policies, as well as policy gaps in the region, and made region-specific recommendations.

Second, the regional policy dialogues, also organised in each region, convened governments, stakeholders and scientific experts from the region to clarify national and regional priorities and to promote dialogue and cooperation on issues related to climate adaptation in mountain regions. Third, in some regions, policy road maps were developed that identify concrete follow up actions, which in some countries are now being used.

### **A.4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions**

The complementarity of the project with other interventions is characterized by the following:

- UNEP Vienna's role as interim secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (ISCC) supports ongoing work in capacity building of sub-regional cooperation in other mountainous regions such as the Carpathians, Caucasus and Balkans.
- UNEP has built many partnerships and networks that have been essential to this project, notably its strategic partnership with GIZ in Central Asia promoting climate resilience in mountain regions.
- The combined convening power of UNEP and the project's collaboration with regional centres of excellence and institutions such as East African Community Secretariat, Sustainable Caucasus, ICIMOD, CONDESAN as well as their close relationship with countries were critical to the overall success of the project.
- Ongoing cooperation between UNEP Vienna and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention.
- DEPI's Mountain Flagship project in Peru, Nepal and Uganda as well as initiatives and activities led by other Regional Offices and Divisions such as the REGATTA project (ROLAC), African Mountain Atlas (ROA).

- Synergies with other similar meetings (i.e. Meeting towards a Scientific Network in the Caucasus Mountain Region (Tbilisi, May 2013), Regional Meeting on Sustainable Development in African Mountain Regions (Mbale, November 2011), the VIA study on the Andes of Peru, Ecuador and Colombia currently developed in the frame of the REGATTA project, study on climate change in the Western Balkans, South Caucasus (UNEP Vienna ISCC).

### Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

## B. Quality of Project Design

This section summarises the overall quality of the project design. It is based on a review of the project document and follows the sequence of evaluation criteria set out in the project design template. The completed template is contained in Annex 1 of the inception report. Overall, the project design is rated as Satisfactory.

### Strengths of the Project Design:

- There is clarity in the Strategic Relevance section, especially on the points of sub-regional relevance as well as complementarity with other interventions.
- There is mention of how the gender aspects will be taken into account when dealing with the sub-region stakeholders, collecting stories, expertise and specific knowledge.
- The Governance and Supervision Arrangements section is clear and appropriate. Roles and responsibilities within the UNEP have been clearly defined. The project manager reports directly to Harald Egerer with whom he works closely at all phases.;
- The Project Document does provide a thorough problem analysis. It emphasises the fundamentally important role that mountains play, the risks they face and the lack of adequate political attention, especially in terms of the transboundary dimensions.
- The Project Document includes a moderately adequate situation analysis. However a detailed accounting of the political and socio-economic risks is missing, as detailed above.
- The Project Document identifies concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to gender and indigenous peoples.
- Although not labeled/titled as such, there is a Theory of Change, albeit with some limitations as noted below.
- The Project Document does include SMART indicators, baselines and specific targets for all output and outcomes, along with appropriate milestones. However these pertain to very narrow targets such as the number of people attending meetings.
- In terms of efficiency, a notable strength was the fact that all funding was secured from the Austrian Government by the start of the project. Pre-existing initiatives, projects and programmes were made use of and built on. Value for money strategies were highlighted.
- The resource mobilisation strategy was more than adequate at design stage because all funding had been secured from the Austrian Government.

### Weaknesses of the Project Design:

- There is minimal mention of the possible challenging operational factors in terms of the Nature of the External Context e.g. disputes/conflicts in certain regions.
- Although sufficient risks are outlined in the Risk Table, these could have been elaborated upon.
- The Project Document is limited in terms of partnerships, due to the fact that partnerships were to be finalised in the early stages of the project. For this reason the rating is low, however, appropriate steps were likely taken to adequately assess partners capacities as well as sufficiently specify roles and responsibilities of partners.

- There are no negative impacts of the project mentioned, whether environmental, economic, or social. There are no mechanisms to reduce, or any consideration of, the environmental foot-print caused by the project.
- As regards the section for Learning, Communication and Outreach there was no mention of a knowledge management approach. Similar to the Partnerships section, a plan for dissemination of results was stated to be elaborated at a future point in time. Methods for communication had not been identified in much detail but it is noted that many of the experts identified already had interactions with UNEP, thus some channels of communication had already been laid out.
- More could have been done to build gender aspects into other elements of the project. For example, in the logframe, implementation and budget.
- For Intended Results and Causality, the causal pathways could have been more explicit. There were no impact drivers and assumptions in the Theory of Change. Roles of key actors and stakeholders were noted elsewhere in the report. The outcomes were overambitious considering policy processes can take many years, the multi-regional scope and the sometimes unstable political context of some regions that would be likely to delay progress further.
- Although the Project Document does show an end date of the project in the work plan, it does not specify an Exit Strategy.

### Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

#### C. Nature of the External Context

The rating for the nature of the external context is “Moderately Favourable”, although this rating is not included in the calculation of the overall rating of the project.

The Project Review Committee asserted the socio-political factors and risks in each of the regions had not been addressed in the Project Document. These risks could have been elaborated earlier on in the project design process. This would have provided the project team with the opportunity to develop effective mitigation strategies especially in terms of adapting regional dialogue processes and mobilising greater political will for the adoption and integration of regional policy road maps. Key risks for 3 out of the 5 regions include:

Increasing competition for water in Central Asia is adding tension to what is already an uneasy region marked by rising nationalism and competition among the five Central Asia states.

Decades after the end of the Balkans war, tensions continue to rise between Serbia and Kosovo, with the Balkans regions increasingly exacerbated by unchecked executive power, erosion of the rule of law, rising nationalism and xenophobia. The move away from democracy has important repercussions for the promotion of climate awareness and the integration of climate adaptation in national policy frameworks.

In the South Caucasus, since the dissolution of the USSR, there has been little evidence of the countries demonstrating willingness to promote regional cooperation. Indeed, the ethno-political conflicts in recent years in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabagh (NK) have ushered in a new period of uncertainty and confrontation.

The volatile political dynamics in each of the regions should have been captured early in the design process. Though we appreciate that these are very delicate matters for UNEP to discuss, nevertheless, they are factors that affect the ability of the project to mobilise political support for climate adaptation.

### Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Favourable

#### D. Effectiveness

Table 8: Table showing Evaluation Breakdown for Effectiveness

Criterion	Assessment Method	Rating	Comments
Delivery of outputs	The executed activities were assessed on their ability to deal with the drivers and assumptions, as seen in the ToC, determining how the project progressed from activity to output.	S	In all regions, Mountain Outlooks were published, RPDs were convened and Strategic Agendas were either developed in draft or final form.
Achievement of direct outcomes	The achievement of outcomes was assessed on the basis of the actual uptake of the knowledge, skills and resources that were generated through the outputs. The evaluation also considers whether the project succeeded in promoting the impact drivers and whether the assumptions that held the progression from output to outcome.	MS	The Project outcome, as per the reconstructed ToC, was fully achieved in two out of the five project regions (Andes and East Africa) and partially achieved to varying degrees in the other three regions (Caucasus, Central Asia, Balkans).
Likelihood of impact	The likelihood of impact was assessed on the basis of the likelihood of the project outcomes to progress through intermediate states (as seen in the ToC) and onward to the intended impact.	ML to L	The likelihood of impact varied widely from region to region. Intermediate states were achieved in each of the regions to varying degrees. In the Andes, Caucasus and East Africa there was concrete evidence for the achievement of all intermediate states. Whereas there was less robust evidence in other regions.

## D.1. Output A: Technical and policy support to East African mountain countries in a subregional context

Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania



Figure 5 Graphic Summarising Output A (East Africa)

## A. 1. Description of activities under Output A

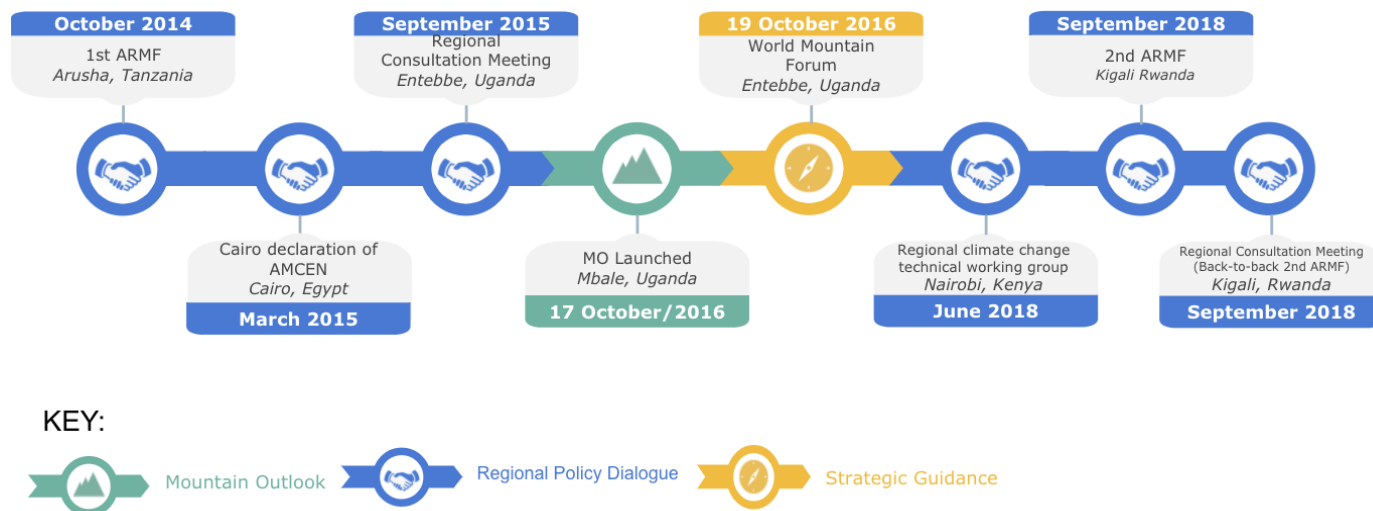


Figure 6: Timeline indicating the significant events for Output A (East Africa)

### Phase 1. Mountain Outlook

The first activity was the development of the “Outlook on sustainable mountain development in East Africa in a changing climate” report, published on the 19th of October, 2016 in Mbale (Uganda). This report was produced by UNEP in collaboration with the East African Community (EAC), ARCOS, GRID-Arendal, Makerere University of Uganda and national experts. ARCOS background studies contributed to the Outlook through their involvement in the EAC’s climate change technical working group.

### Phase 2: Regional Policy Dialogues

This phase commenced at the official launch of the Outlook in Mbale, Uganda on the 17th of October 2016. Following this, dialogues discussing the Outlook and potential Mountain Agenda commenced at the Regional stakeholder workshop in Kigali (Rwanda) on the 11th September 2018 which was held back to back with the second Africa Regional Mountains Forum on 12-14 September 2018.

A number of regional policy dialogues were held in the lead up to the publication of the Outlook, such as: the ARCOS organised ‘First African Mountains Regional Forum’ in Arusha (Tanzania) on the 22nd-24th October 2014. This dialogue built on the UNEP African Mountains Atlas publication to form the Arusha Outcomes to draw further attention to EbA in East Africa. Other examples include: Regional Stakeholder Workshop in Entebbe (Uganda) 25-26 September 2015 and the Cairo Declaration of AMCEN in Cairo (Egypt) 4-6 March 2015.

### Phase 3: Regional Policy Roadmaps

The third activity was development of the policy roadmap entitled “East African Mountain Agenda”. The regional roadmap has been formally adopted and countries have demonstrated the political will to ensure for this to be implemented at some point in the future. The policy roadmap is now anchored within the East African Mountain Agenda and is now included in the Outlook which is an official EAC approved publication. The Agenda went through the sectorial council/ working group which endorsed it.

## A.2. Achievement of Outcome

### A.2.1. Mountain Outlook

The Outlook process brought together diverse regional stakeholders (ARCOS, EAC, regional environment ministers, scientific experts), creating a platform to share and consolidate existing knowledge, identify policy gaps and formulate recommendations (D3, D4, D7).

The drafting stage of the Outlook, which was adopted at the high-level forum in 2016, catalysed a positive shift among countries in grasping the importance of mountains and climate adaptation. (D7)<sup>3</sup>. This was the first time that EbA in mountainous regions had received such high-level interest and political attention at a national and regional scale (D2).

The process and eventual Outlook report were well received by actors across a range of scales, for example, the vice-president of Uganda attended the official launch (D4). Despite the attention drawn to mountainous regions in the Outlook, it must be noted that currently, mountains continue to be dealt with as a subsection of broader climate policy within the EACs climate change technical working group and do not receive specific attention independently (D1, D2, A1, A5)<sup>4</sup>. This is a contrast to other ecosystems, such as lakes, which are managed by a specific independent EAC branch of specialised experts, for example the Lake Victoria Basin Commission.<sup>5</sup>

The increased interest during the production of the Outlook facilitated the formation of important regional fora, for example the first African Regional Mountain Forum (ARMF) was convened by ARCOS in Arusha in 2014 as a direct result of increased interest in the Outlook (D5)<sup>6</sup>. The key output of this meeting was the adoption of the Arusha Outlook, which decided that the ARMF would be held every 2 years, and that the ARMF would be the principal authority policy making body for MSD in the region.<sup>7</sup> True to the Arusha outcomes, there has since been a second ARMF in Kigali in 2018<sup>8</sup>, which has reinforced the importance of the Outlook after its publication (D7). The formation of this body as a result of interest in the Outlook, is evidence of the uptake of the Outlook at the regional level.

The Outlook also stimulated follow up initiatives after its publication, mobilising further attention to mountainous EbA in East Africa. For example, UNEP (with the financial support of the Government of Luxembourg) launched the 'Vanishing Treasures' program in Uganda and Rwanda in direct response to vulnerabilities and policy gaps highlighted in the Outlook (D1, D2 D3, D5, D7, D8, D9)<sup>9</sup>.

Additionally, the Outlook document was frequently referenced during the second phase of the project, indicating genuine engagement with external stakeholders.<sup>10</sup>

It was decided at the UNEP, ARCOS, SDC and EAC-convened 2018 second ARMF workshop in Kigali that the findings of the Outlook were to be mainstreamed into the EAC framework (D3). Mainstreaming helped to secure greater political support and establish project development plans for the East African mountain agenda. The process was endorsed by regional convening powers which provide beneficial in drawing more established key stakeholders within the region. This contributed to UNEP's goal of national ownership of the project (80% of delegates were from Africa<sup>11</sup>). Embedding the Outlook into a regional political body such as the EAC helped to ensure the longevity of the institutional memory, with knowledge having been embedded into the institution as opposed to ever-changing personnel. This is a key factor that will help to improve the likelihood of long-term continuity and success.<sup>12</sup>

### A.2.2. Regional Policy Dialogue (RPD)

The post-Outlook dialogues further built on the collaborative transboundary relationships already formed, catalysing an informal alliance of state and non-state actors committed mountainous EbA in East Africa (D7).

The African Regional Mountain Forum, based in Uganda, was attended by a diverse range of stakeholders from the region (D4, D1, D7, D8). This put mountains visibly on the agenda at the Pan-African level, reaching people and

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<sup>3</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20

<sup>4</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.lvbcom.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Respondent Interview 04/08/20

<sup>7</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/first-african-mountains-regional-forum-adopts-arusha-outcomes/>

<sup>8</sup>

[https://www.google.com/search?q=second+regional+african+mountain+forum&rlz=1C5CHFA\\_enAU865AU865&oq=second+regional+african+mountain+forum&aqs=chrome..69i57j33.5571j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=second+regional+african+mountain+forum&rlz=1C5CHFA_enAU865AU865&oq=second+regional+african+mountain+forum&aqs=chrome..69i57j33.5571j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

<sup>9</sup> <https://vanishingtreasures.org/portfolio/mountain-gorilla/>

<sup>10</sup> Respondent Interview 04/08/20.

<sup>11</sup> Respondent Interview 04/08/20

<sup>12</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20



organisations that were previously not involved in this discourse. The interactive meetings resulted in the formation of a mountain specific taskforce to further the cooperative policy goals in the region(D7)<sup>13</sup>.

The RPDs also provided the bases for important future documents such as the African Mountain Atlas. The evidence shows that regional meetings have been generally effective at catalysing dialogue and policy, however the region lacks the funding to implement and follow through with what has been discussed, hence follow up action is impeded (A8).

The 2018 second ARMF Kigali workshop also produced the Kigali Outcomes document.<sup>14 15</sup>This is a mutual agreement to strengthen the ARMF through enhanced governance mechanisms. It was also acknowledged that a shared agenda for sustainable mountain development in Africa would be a valuable tool for present and future generations. This message resonates with what was said three years prior at the Cairo Declaration of AMCEN (15th ordinary session) in March 2015<sup>16</sup>. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of the Shared Agenda having been adopted.

Anchoring the process within the often bureaucratic and cumbersome heavy framework of the EAC's Climate Change Technical Working Group slowed down the mainstreaming the process (D3, A5)<sup>17</sup>. It was noted by a respondent this was not so much a shortcoming of the UNEP project, but of the EAC and other institutions, which are not as influential and strong as they once were (A3, A5)<sup>18</sup>. This was mitigated by UNEP in its choice of ARCOS as the second regional partner. They provided technical and logistical support, which helped streamline the process. In June 2018, unassisted by UNEP, the EAC and GIZ convened a regional climate change technical working group meeting in Nairobi<sup>19</sup>.

### A.2.3. Regional Roadmap

As noted above, the East African Mountain Agenda has been adopted at the regional level. The policy roadmap is now anchored within the East African Mountain Agenda and is now included in the Outlook which is an official EAC approved publication.

At this point, Rwanda and Uganda are currently developing National Mountain Strategies.<sup>20</sup> It is hoped that these leading countries, with the support of UNEP, will inspire neighboring countries to adopt similar strategies. In neighbouring countries, national priorities are primarily focused on economic and social issues, impeding the adoption of environmental policy.

The socio-political context of the region is also another impediment to the implementation of the regional road map. For example, recent turmoil in Burundi has lowered the importance of climate change adaptation on their political agenda. As a result, they have allocated fewer resources to environmental priorities than other countries in the region.<sup>21</sup> (A3, A7, A8, IP2, IP3).

Another factor that may be impeding the implementation of the road map is the lack of sound and reliable climate projection data in the region. The capacity of the East Africa Hydrological Observation Network infrastructure is 1/8th of the required robustness under WMO standards (D1, A1, A8).

It is expected that the East African Mountain Agenda will be implemented further under the SDC funded UNEP project on mountains and climate change adaptation (Adaptation at Altitude). (D5, D8). This project is expected to be rolled out from 2020 to 2023 in East Africa, South Caucasus, Andes, the Himalayas, and other regions. The objective of the project is to increase the resilience of mountain communities and ecosystems to climate change by improving mountain observation data availability and integrating this data into regional and global policies. The findings of the inception report for this project have been considered for the new project.

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<sup>13</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>14</sup> Donor Report

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.arcosnetwork.org/uploads/2018/09/ARMF\\_2018\\_Outcomes\\_Final.pdf](http://www.arcosnetwork.org/uploads/2018/09/ARMF_2018_Outcomes_Final.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>17</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20

<sup>18</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20

<sup>19</sup> <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/RCC%20newsletter%20article-EAC%20CCTWG%20meeting%20%28002%29.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Respondent Interview 05/08/20

<sup>21</sup> ProDoc (closing the gap)

### **A.3. Achievement of Intermediate State**

#### **A.3.1. Intermediate State 1: Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning regional and national policy processes.**

The UNEP project has been successful in establishing research bodies and scientific projects to close the science-policy gap. Influential dialogues and publications have brought high-ranking political officials closer to climate science, leading to greater appreciation for the need for reliable and independent science. UNEP has made progress in the region through the funding of information sharing platforms, overcoming previous barriers of poor communication. However, the region is still fundamentally held back by the lack of funding for the physical and technological infrastructure.

The rigorous science in the Outlook underpins regional and national processes. For example, the science applied at the ARMF meetings produced the Arusha Outcomes, which mandated that the ARMF would become the principal policy making body for MSD in the region.<sup>22</sup>

#### **A.3.2. Intermediate State 2: The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas.**

The establishment of the AMRF and the publication of the African Mountain Atlas is important concrete evidence of the genuine political interest in mountains and climate adaptation.

The political uptake has not been consistent throughout the region however, Uganda and Rwanda have been most active in their engagement while Burundi lags behind. This highlights the fact more work is required to fulfil **IS2**.

Similarly, influential publications like the 'Vanishing Treasures' report and the Outlook have proven there is a significant ecological appreciation of mountainous regions.

#### **A.3.3. Intermediate State 3: Multiple stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy.**

Established regional bodies such as the EAC, ARCOS and AMCEN have been vocally supportive throughout, demonstrating the recognition of the importance of mountains within the region. Buy-in from regional bodies may encourage increased national uptake.

However greater consultation is required with NGO and local education institutes. A more participatory process strengthens transparency and accountability, can utilise more diverse local knowledge, increases equity and strengthens ownership.

It is not clear to what extent local stakeholders, such as landowners and indigenous communities, have been engaged with the process. This demographic could offer valuable traditional ecological knowledge and possess increased awareness of local challenges and how to overcome them.

#### **A.3.4. Intermediate State 4: There is national ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation.**

UNEP has taken significant steps to ensure that the project is driven by the countries themselves. 80% of participants from the ARMF dialogues were representatives from East African governments and civil society<sup>23</sup>. By engaging directly with African stakeholders, regional concerns, priorities and realities on the ground will be better reflected in policy outcomes.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/first-african-mountains-regional-forum-adopts-arusha-outcomes/>

<sup>23</sup> Respondent Interview 04/08/20.

Uganda and Rwanda have integrated the knowledge from the project into their own national frameworks, i.e. NAPS, therefore exhibiting national ownership. Other countries in the region have also displayed strong engagement and political will with the UNEP knowledge, but are currently under-utilising NAPs in cementing climate change adaptation policies into mainstream national development policy. Currently, Tanzania is engaging 185 local councils in their development process for their first planned NAP which is hoped to be released 2019-2021<sup>24</sup>.

### **A.3.5. Intermediate State 5: Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA**

All the evidence reviewed thus far suggests that the project stimulated the formation of productive and valuable relationships within the region, united by the common goal of enhancing EbA in mountainous regions. The UNEP project made significant progress in initiating these relationships that had not previously been formed in this context. It is hoped that the progress made by Rwanda and Uganda will be replicated by the rest of the region during ongoing dialogue and collaboration in the coming phase of the East African Mountain Agenda. The future convening of the ARMF will provide the opportunity to achieve this sharing of ideas and best practices.

### **A.4. Achievement of Intended Impact**

Uganda has been at the forefront of this process and has been one of the most proactive countries in implementing the knowledge generated by this project into national policy frameworks. For example, Uganda released a comprehensive strategy titled: 'Uganda National Sustainable Mountain Development Strategy' in 2016 in association with ARCOS. This is concrete evidence of a mountain specific Sustainable Development strategy in the region during the lifespan of the project. It is important to note that Uganda had the motivation to advance with their mountain policy, not only because of this project but also due to contributions from other initiatives; these effects cannot solely be attributed to this project.

Evidence of the impact in Rwanda is reflected in the publication of the 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan' in December 2016. This plan aims to mainstream the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) into national policy. The plan specifically focuses on EbA in Target 14: "By 2020, the ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced through increase of forest cover up to 30 percent of the country and restoration of other ecosystems thereby contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation". This action plan dedicates resources specifically to the mountain gorilla, however, beyond this, mountainous ecosystems more broadly are not referenced. Therefore, the link to this project is tenuous.

These cases are evidence of this UNEP project achieving some medium term intended impact, notably in Uganda.

There is no evidence of achieving long term intended impact, as the four year lifespan of the project is not long enough to realise this degree of change given the significant institutional, political and scientific barriers which need to be overcome. The positive momentum and follow up projects within the region can be seen as hopeful indicators of the long term intended impact being realised in the future. UNEP ought to harness the current wave of optimism and engagement to see long term impact met in the future.

### **A.5. Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

#### **A.5.1. General**

To ensure countries drive their own climate adaptation policy processes, UNEP should continue with their current efforts to empower current climate policy champion states, Uganda and Rwanda, in the hopes they will encourage

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<sup>24</sup> Pro Doc (closing the gap).

neighbouring countries to follow their lead. This would help to overcome some of the initial scepticism surrounding large international organisations such as UNEP.

A robust framework or structure for the continuation of knowledge within local institutions should be formed early on, before the process begins. It would have been beneficial to have a greater organisation of communication between UNEP and the EAC, this would prevent loss of knowledge when staff turnover at the EAC.

It is important to diversify the governmental stakeholders involved in a project beyond environmental ministers. Ministers of Finance and Planning are key decision makers and are generally more influential in East Africa and have greater power in driving change compared to environmental ministers. In many of the East African countries, developmental and economic projects tend to be prioritised, hence framing this project through the lens of those priorities could increase uptake. For example, highlighting the economic and developmental risks and opportunities associated with climate change adaptation in a way that Finance ministers will resonate with will increase the likelihood of incorporation of climate change adaptation within NAPs and other national policy.

Private sector funding is currently under utilised in East Africa, hence the project is not capitalising on extra financial and logistical support. Engaging with the private sector offers a viable pathway to funding, relieving the financial pressure from already underfunded public services. There is potential to frame effective climate adaptation in East Africa as a win-win business endeavor. For example, tourism offers opportunities for successful private sector integration by providing economic incentives to protect local ecosystems in a way that is relatively low-impact compared to other sectors. Revenue generated from ecotourism is often used to invest in environmental management and climate adaptation, creating a win-win for the mountainous ecosystems and the local communities that reside within them. Another important opportunity to collaborate climate adaptation with the private sector is through hydropower generation from mountainous rivers, which are currently underutilised resources that provide potential for environmental protection through commodification. Including the private sector in these opportunities would offer greater potential resource mobilisation opportunities for the sustainable management of mountain ecosystems.

### **A.5.2. Regional policy dialogues**

Workshop attendance has previously been utilised as a yardstick to track project uptake and usefulness of new knowledge, however this is a weak indicator in East Africa. A respondent noted that if ministers are given an expenses-paid flight and accommodation for a regional dialogue, they are unlikely to turn it down regardless of their engagement with the project. This is perhaps true in relation to the regional mountain fora. And in this case, attendance is not a robust measure for tracking the success of the project as there is no guarantee that attendees genuinely engaged with the processes or used the findings meaningfully. A stronger indicator would be reference by policy makers to key policy documents (e.g. the Outlook) in their discussions and records of the meetings, for example at UNFCCC COPs or AMCEN meetings, instead of just being present to validate the documents.<sup>25</sup> According to the Project Manager, attendance with regards to technical meetings and workshops that were organized by UNEP are a more reliable indicator of uptake.

Anchoring dialogues within the EAC has been effective. However the EAC has a busy and infrequent meeting schedule which means items on the agenda can be rushed or overlooked.

### **A.5.3. Roadmap**

Currently NAPs (e.g. Rwanda and Uganda) are under utilised in East Africa, reducing the likelihood of concrete follow through of the UNEP knowledge. A respondent noted that East African policy makers engaged with the knowledge and recognised the benefit it could reap in their country, however have consistently failed to incorporate the knowledge into their NAPs.

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<sup>25</sup> Respondent Interview 04/09/20

Furthermore, embedding dialogue within institutions and in processes, such as NAPs, is more effective than anchoring onto individual ministers as there is frequent personnel turnover which can result in progress being lost. When individual ministers or staff leave their role, their successors can continue progressing the work as it is embedded within the NAP, not the individual.

It was noted that within the new SDC-funded mountains project UNEP is aiming to engage in particular with the two countries, Rwanda and Uganda, to mainstream mountains into the NAP process.

## D.2 Output B: Technical and policy support provided to Andes mountain countries in a sub-regional context

Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela

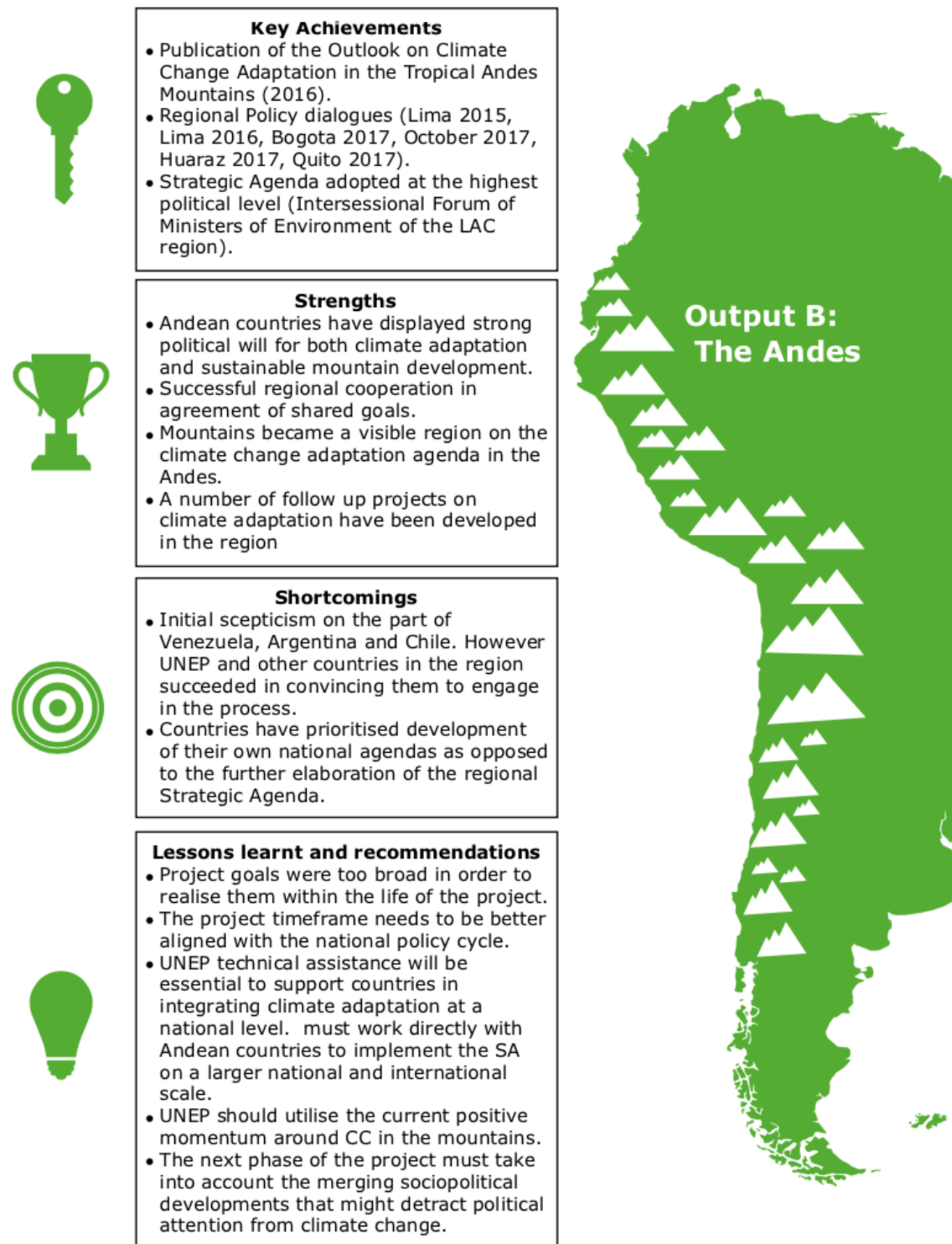


Figure 7: Figure showing the summary data for Output B (The Andes)

## B.1. Description of activities under Output B

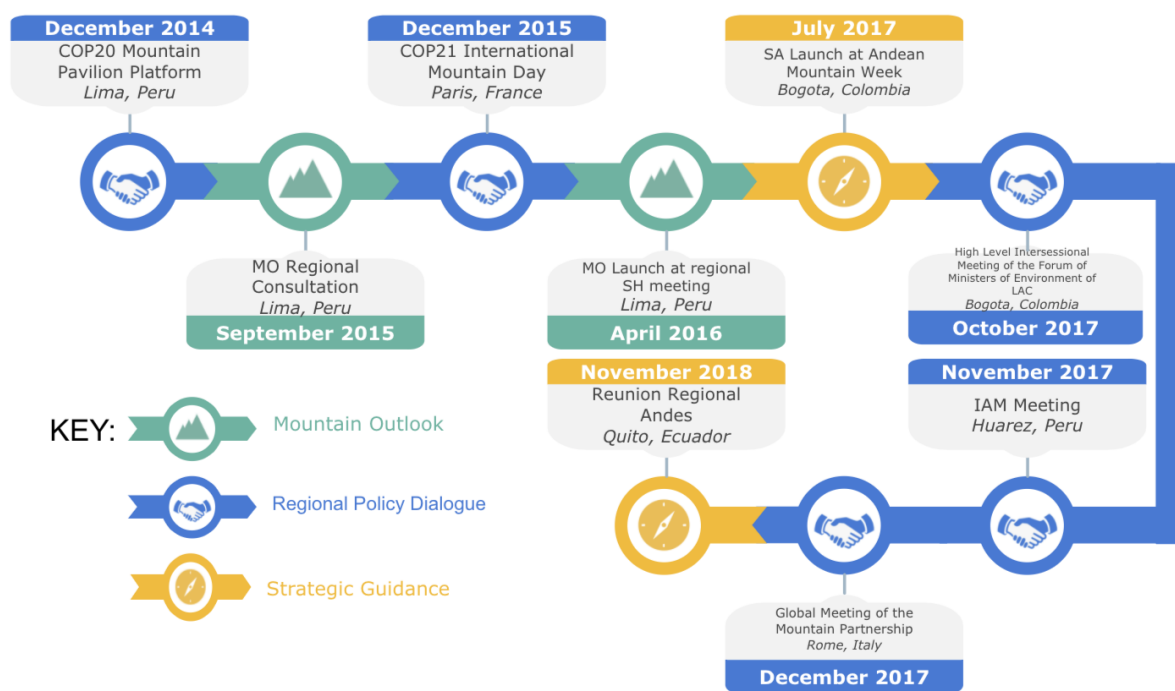


Figure 8: Chronological Timeline of Key Events for Output B (Andes)

### Phase 1. Mountain Outlook

The first phase of this project output was the development of the ‘Outlook on climate change adaptation in Tropical Andes mountains’, as part of the larger Mountain Adaptation Outlook Series, launched in Lima Peru in April 2016. This phase was convened by UNEP, GRID-Arendel and CONDESAN. The Outlook was formed through consultation with scientific experts and convening of various regional stakeholder meetings. For example, the regional consultation in Lima Peru in September 2015 played a key role in informing important background information that formed the basis of the Outlook. In addition, a meeting convened by the government of Peru, UNEP and GRID-Arendel at COP21 in Paris in December 2015 strengthened and sped up the efforts to release the Outlook.

### Phase 2. Regional Policy Dialogues

The regional policy dialogues were largely based on the findings of the Outlook, and were convened with the goal of producing a Strategic Agenda for Climate Change in the Andes. These dialogues were organised by UNEP with the assistance of the Andean Mountain Initiative (IAM). The organisation of this phase took inspiration from the previously successful Alpine Carpathian Convention project. Key dialogues include: The IAM meeting in Peru (November 2017) and the Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership Mountains Under Pressure in Rome (December 2017).

### Phase 3. Roadmap

The third phase of this output was the publication and subsequent adoption of the policy roadmap for the Andes (Strategic Agenda). The Agenda was published at the Andean Mountains week in Bogota in July 2017. The agenda was the result of several years of engagement with climate science, considerable efforts in closing the science-policy gap and the formation of cohesive intergovernmental relationships.

Following the release, multiple dialogues were held to streamline the implementation of the Agenda, for example at the “Reunion Regional Andes” in Quito (Ecuador) in November 2018.

## B.2. Achievement of outcome

### B.2.1. Mountain Outlook

The Mountain Outlook, entitled ‘Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in Tropical Andes Mountains’, contributed to the project outcome during both the collaborative drafting process and in terms of its uptake as a published resource. The Outlook process brought together stakeholders and experts on climate change with policy makers from different levels that had not previously collaborated<sup>26</sup>. External stakeholders showed genuine engagement with the project and each other during the Outlook phase<sup>27</sup>.

Initially, only the tropical Andean nations (Colombia, Peru and Ecuador) engaged in the Outlook consultative process. Subsequently UNEP, CONDESAN and the tropical Andean states were successful in convincing Chile and Argentina to join the regional process, despite their initial skepticism of the merits of the UNEP project. This is important evidence of UNEP’s convening power (D7) in galvanizing momentum in the region to a common goal.

The Outlook was regarded as engaging and accessible, ensuring the issue of climate change in the Andes could reach a wider audience by creating a clear synthesis of the latest science (D1, D2, D4, D5). Interviewees stressed the value of the Mountain Outlook in terms of its comprehensiveness, scientific rigour, and usefulness of the findings. This was noted at the regional stakeholder meeting in Lima (2016).

The governments recognised the high-quality research and findings in the Outlook, and as a result were willing to trust the document to guide meaningful discourse at subsequent policy dialogues<sup>28</sup>. For example, the Outlook was the primary focus and shaped the discourse of the regional consultation in Lima in 2015.

Relationships formed between colleagues at this stage continued to develop throughout the project, which resulted in a collective commitment not seen in other regions. The Outlook stage was therefore integral to stakeholder engagement, regional uptake, and the success of the project as a whole in this region (D4, D5, D7). This phase contributed to initiating collective momentum in the region for MSD and CAA in the Andes (D2).

It is important to note that the Mountain Outlook has also laid the groundwork for stimulating discussion by governments on the potential merit of an Andean Convention on Adaptation.<sup>29</sup> Whilst this Outlook has not been discussed further at this point, it is important evidence of the buy-in of national governments of the regional merits.

However, it is equally important to highlight that at this point there is no evidence of how governments may have used the Outlook at the national level<sup>30</sup>. The uncertainty throughout the process can partially be attributed to the fact that the process was slower than anticipated and frequent change in personnel significantly reduced institutional efficiency<sup>31</sup> (A3, A5). As a result, it was noted that the process was rushed in order to have a draft presented on time<sup>32</sup> (A5).

### B.2.2. Regional policy dialogues

The dialogues further developed relationships built during the Outlook process, it was at this stage that bilateral relationships were formed between Andean nations<sup>33</sup> (D4).

The regional policy dialogues created a platform that enabled the sharing of relevant scientific information, the standardisation of indicators and monitoring tools to be applied in the region, and the coordination of participating

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<sup>26</sup> Respondent interview 30/07/20

<sup>27</sup> Respondent Interview 28/07/20

<sup>28</sup> Respondent Interview 30/07/20

<sup>29</sup> Respondent interview 30/07/20

<sup>30</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>31</sup> Respondent Interview 10/08/20

<sup>32</sup> Respondent Interview 10/08/20

<sup>33</sup> Respondent Interview 30/07/20



states' adaptation policies <sup>34</sup>(**D1, D7, D8**). The Andean countries were very engaged in the regional dialogue process, thereby laying the groundwork for policy stakeholder buy-in (**D5**). It was noted at the IAM Meeting in Huaraz Peru in November 2017 that progress was made in regional cooperation that ultimately contributed to the creation of the Agenda (**D7**) <sup>35</sup>.

However, it was noted that the format of meeting-based discussions did become repetitive and perhaps a broader and more varied exchange of information could have yielded more information and helped to build a more dynamic collaboration <sup>36</sup>(**D5**). It was noted that this repetitiveness could have been a result of the lack of funding, and time, and this may have put pressure on governments to feel that they had a limited opportunity within which to conclude their work<sup>37</sup>(**A8**).

A regional agenda on climate change and adaptation benefitting all Andean countries was endorsed at the highest political level <sup>38</sup> (**D7, D5**). The dialogue in the Andes was “by far the most fruitful” according to the Donor report <sup>39</sup>(**D4, D5, D7**). Despite strong collaboration between focal points, a weakness of this activity was that there was not significant involvement from civil society apart from one main university who offered knowledge and insights (**D6**).

Important evidence of the uptake by a national stakeholders is the fact that the Government of Peru hosted (in collaboration with UNEP and GRID-Arendal) a side event at UNFCCC COP-21 in Paris, the aim of strengthening and speeding up efforts to implement the Outlook. This event was attended by leaders from mountainous regions from all over the globe, including the Caucasus, East Africa and the Balkans. They expressed their collective commitment to raise the profile of mountains and climate change adaptation at the inter-regional, regional and national level <sup>40</sup> (**D1**). This provided a diverse platform for idea sharing and information dissemination (**D4, D5, D7**).

The UNEP project was key in reinvigorating the Andean Mountain Initiative (IAM), which was formed by the Tucuman Declaration in 2007<sup>41</sup>. The IAM is a permanent, voluntary organisation that acts as a communication platform for climate adaptation in the Andes at regional, national, and local levels <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> (**D7**). A respondent noted that the UNEP project galvanized significantly more attention to the IAM <sup>44</sup>. This is important because the dialogues were subsequently convened through the IAM. Anchoring the dialogues within existing institutional arrangements and mechanisms helped to achieve UNEPs goal of national ownership.

Additionally, organising the Regional Policy Dialogues alongside pre-planned meetings of the IAM helped to save resources, since many of the governmental actors participating in the IAM were also engaged in the project's Regional Policy Dialogues (**D7, D8**). The IAM has been well received, with high uptake despite its voluntary nature. This suggests that Andean countries recognize its value in supporting them to unite against climate change (**D2**). The IAM is evolving into a fully established institution that has helped to catalyse transboundary cooperation<sup>45</sup>.

Further funding from EUROCLIMA+ and the IKI was secured during the policy dialogues from the UNEP supported AMI <sup>46</sup> (**A8**). This funding will be used to build an institutional platform of experience sharing with the Alpine and Carpathian

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<sup>34</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>35</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>36</sup> Respondent Interview 30/07/20

<sup>37</sup> Respondent interview 30/07/20

<sup>38</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>39</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/ru/node/20401>

<sup>41</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/mountain\\_partnership/doc/MP\\_Global\\_Meeting\\_2017/Agenda\\_Andean\\_Mountain\\_Initiative.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/mountain_partnership/doc/MP_Global_Meeting_2017/Agenda_Andean_Mountain_Initiative.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Respondent Interview 30/07/20

<sup>44</sup>

<sup>45</sup> [http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna\\_fef%5Buid%5D=1023642](http://www.fao.org/mountain-partnership/news/news-detail/en/?dyna_fef%5Buid%5D=1023642)

<sup>46</sup> Final Donor Report

Conventions as well as the development of a finance strategy for the medium and long-term implementation of the Strategic Agenda.

Although engagement with local stakeholders will help to overcome local barriers to uptake, UNEP still ought to be aware of important socio-political developments in the region that may divert attention away from the climate agenda. For example, the return of the centre right government following Chile's 2017 election and the Colombian government's peace deal signed with far-left group FARC that put an end to 52 years of guerilla warfare in Colombia<sup>47</sup>(A4). These events will undoubtedly have a significant impact on all sectors, of which the environmental sector is not excluded (A2, A4). Similarly, Venezuela's political unrest and border issues with Colombia were and continue to be barriers to the operationalisation of the project in these countries (A2, A4). The political unrest and economic turmoil from hyper-inflation has unsurprisingly pushed environmental issues off the agenda. The political tension in the country has not made it an easy environment for UNEP to operate in (A3, A5).

### **B.3. Achievement of Intermediate States**

#### **B.3.1. Intermediate State 1: Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning national policy processes.**

The Outlook detailed trends analysis and synthesised the most recent climate science in the region. The report made a strong scientific case for adaptation and outlined the ways in which global warming will impact the livelihoods of those living in the region. For example, through disruption of glacial water supply, migration of predators and degradation of landslide protection<sup>48</sup>. It was important to have a firm scientific basis to support political conversations regarding climate change. Accurate and reliable climate data is important to contextualise future climate policy.

The regional policy dialogues created a platform which allowed for the collection and dissemination of relevant scientific information, the standardisation of indicators and monitoring tools applied in the region, and the coordination of participant states' adaptation policies<sup>49</sup>. As a result, the Strategic Agenda and other influential documents are informed by robust science-based information. The IAM is currently the main platform to strengthen the science-policy dialogue.<sup>50</sup>

#### **B.3.2. Intermediate State 2: The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas.**

The roadmap has elevated the importance of MSD in CAA, as evidenced by the successful formation and continued participation in the IAM, the cross-sectoral engagement in the policy dialogues and the adoption of the Strategic Agenda at the regional level. There is currently strong political will and determination from Andean countries to continue to build on the work of this project<sup>51</sup>.

The Strategic Agenda will continue to be supported by UNEP's second phase of this project, which is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency ( 'Adaptation at Altitude : Mountains at the frontline of climate change').<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/16/colombias-uneasy-peace/>

<sup>48</sup> Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Tropical Andes Mountains

<sup>49</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>50</sup> Pro DOC (close the gap)

<sup>51</sup> Respondent Interview 28/07/20

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/regions/europe/our-projects/adaptation-altitude-mountains-frontline-climate-change>

### **B.3.3. Intermediate State 3: Multiple stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy.**

UNEP and the IAM have been successful in engaging with national focal points across the region, with their input to the Outlook and dialogues having been reflected in the Strategic Agenda. However, a shortcoming of the project is that there is less evidence that UNEP engaged and consulted with civil society.

### **B.3.4. Intermediate State 4: There is national ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation.**

Some countries in the region tend to be skeptical of large international organisations such as UNEP. UNEP made considerable effort to overcome this by handing over significant decision making to the Andean countries and anchoring the project within existing institutional arrangements (e.g. CONDESAN), however UNEP could further integrate local decision makers into the process.

UNEP worked hard to ensure that the Andean countries and regional convening power assumed ownership of the project by anchoring the project within local CONDESAN frameworks. This was facilitated by the fact that Andean countries demonstrated genuine commitment to the project. UNEP's prior experience working with other mountainous regions helped to ensure an effective distribution of roles and responsibilities.

### **B.3.5. Intermediate State 5: Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA.**

The ten key features of the Strategic Agenda are inherently dependent on sharing and collaboration. According to a UNEP report, the nature of the Agenda is centered on an agreement where participating states will: "share data and develop joint regional programmes" based on "awareness and capacity building, as well as regional cooperation"<sup>53</sup>.

The common aim of strengthening EbA in the Andes strengthened intergovernmental relationships within the region. Strong relationships between the regions will increase the likelihood of the implementation of more robust policy. According to UNEP, the success of collaboration in the Andes that lead to the implementation of the Strategic Agenda is hoped to 'inspire other ecoregions to improve cooperation for effective adaptation'<sup>54</sup>

The synergies between the Strategic Agenda and the IAM have helped to create a more robust and collaborative institutional arrangement, which in turn has supported countries across the region in adapting to climate change in the Andes. This level of cooperation within and between regions has not been seen in other outputs for the project.

Carlos Alberto Botero López, Colombian Vice-Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development remarked: "For the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development it is exceedingly important to work with our neighbouring countries to confront and solve climate change. The conclusions and decisions made in this meeting will ensure the wellbeing of our Andean communities". It is hoped that these stakeholder relationships will continue to flourish as the project matures.

## **B.4. Achievement of Intended Impact**

Among the five regions, the Andes exhibited the highest degree of evidence of intended impact. Andean governments exhibited genuine engagement with the project and intergovernmental cooperation<sup>55</sup>, which according to one interviewee, resulted in steps being taken to incorporate the Mountain Outlook findings into national policy frameworks.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/news/andean-countries-strike-regional-approach-climate-adaptation>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/news/andean-countries-strike-regional-approach-climate-adaptation>

<sup>55</sup> Respondent Interview 28/07/20

Even though not all countries in the region have adopted national climate adaptation strategies or mountain policies, the fact that the Strategic Agenda was formally recognised by the Intersessional Forum of Ministers of Environment of the Latin America and Caribbean Region, and endorsed at the highest political level in Bogota October 2017 is evidence of uptake at the regional level.

The next step for Andean countries is to integrate the strategic agenda into their NAPs in order to fully solidify the intended impact of the project, and to form concrete adaptation plans to improve the lives of mountainous communities as well as flora and fauna in mountainous ecosystems. This would require the formation of bilateral relationships between UNEP and national governments. For that reason, it is important that UNEP give ownership to the Andean region by handing over a significant decision-making role to national governments. This would help to avoid some of the stigma and institutional friction that may be associated with large international organisations which can result in animosity and stagnation in progress for climate policy.

Unfortunately, as is often the case with international projects, many Andean countries acknowledge the usefulness of the Strategic Agenda, but will tend to prioritise pursuing their own national agendas. This is a significant barrier to the achievement of the medium term intended impact. However, it is hoped that the positive momentum in the region, particularly from Peru, will encourage states to mainstream the Agenda into concrete NAPs. The same is true for the proposed Andean Convention, though the idea has been well received, there has not currently been sufficient dedication of resources to follow this through to fruition. Follow up on the project outputs will be essential to achieving the intended impact.

## **B.5. Lessons learned and Recommendations**

### **B.5.1. General**

UNEP should work to gain a more holistic understanding of national politics and priorities in the region, and a better understanding in the national policy making process, in the early stages of the project. For example, UNEP should aim to create more linkages with local priorities, specifically water management in the case of the Andes. As is common in international environmental projects, the data and recommendations are sound and generally accepted, but they are in a form that is not compatible with national policy processes.

More generally, UNEP and the partner organisations should attempt to maintain the current window of positive momentum built between Andean countries from the Regional Policy Dialogues and creation of the Strategic Agenda to continue to progress collaborative action in the region. Institutional momentum is seldom long lasting, and once it has diminished it is often difficult to reinvigorate.

A more participatory process would help to strengthen transparency, legitimacy and accountability, and would benefit from a more diverse basis of local knowledge, which in turn would strengthen ownership.

### **B.5.2. Mountain Outlook**

The report could outline more tangible examples of the impacts of climate change in the region directly impacting the livelihoods of its residents, as these examples were noted to be more engaging for local stakeholders. For example, the Outlook stated that: “Farmers in the high mountains are already forced to adapt by for example moving their crops to higher altitudes to escape the heat. In the tropical Andes, farmers have had to move their potatoes up by about 150 metres in the last 30 years”<sup>56</sup>. This finding was widely cited at regional policy dialogues and played a role in guiding discourse in the meetings.<sup>57</sup>

### **B.5.3. Regional policy dialogues**

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<sup>56</sup> Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Tropical Andes Mountains

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/ru/node/20401>

The format of meetings based on discussion and review did become repetitive and perhaps a broader and more varied exchange of information could have yielded more information and helped to build a more dynamic collaboration<sup>58</sup>.

#### **B.5.4. Road maps**

Venezuela's political unrest and border issues with Colombia were, and continue to be, barriers to the operationalisation of the project in these countries. The political unrest and economic turmoil from hyperinflation has unsurprisingly pushed environmental issues off the agenda. Furthermore, the political tension in the country has not made it an easy environment for UNEP to operate in.

The water sector is a key priority when addressing ecosystem-based adaptation for many Andean countries. It is an important sector for climate change, as well as habitat restoration and enhancement of hydrological processes. Water is an extremely important resource in the Andes that requires thoughtful management. The mountainous Andes contain 9.5% of the world's freshwater and is central to providing freshwater to the majority of South America<sup>59</sup>. This issue could have been highlighted further in the project, which would have increased relevance at the national level of the policy documents produced.

Further to the above, it was noted at the Andean Mountains Week in Bogota, Colombia between 10-14th July 2017 that the project ought to focus more specifically on hydrological management as a key focus of the EbA. The water sector is important for climate change, as well as habitat restoration and enhancement of hydrological processes. Focal points noted the roadmap could be improved if the importance of water resource management was further emphasised.

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<sup>58</sup> Respondent Interview 30/07/20

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.fao.org/climatechange/25590-0492a6ff08080fcd1169fcfdcc057237.pdf>

## D1. Output C: Technical and policy support provided to Dinaric Arc and Balkan mountain countries in a sub-regional context

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo

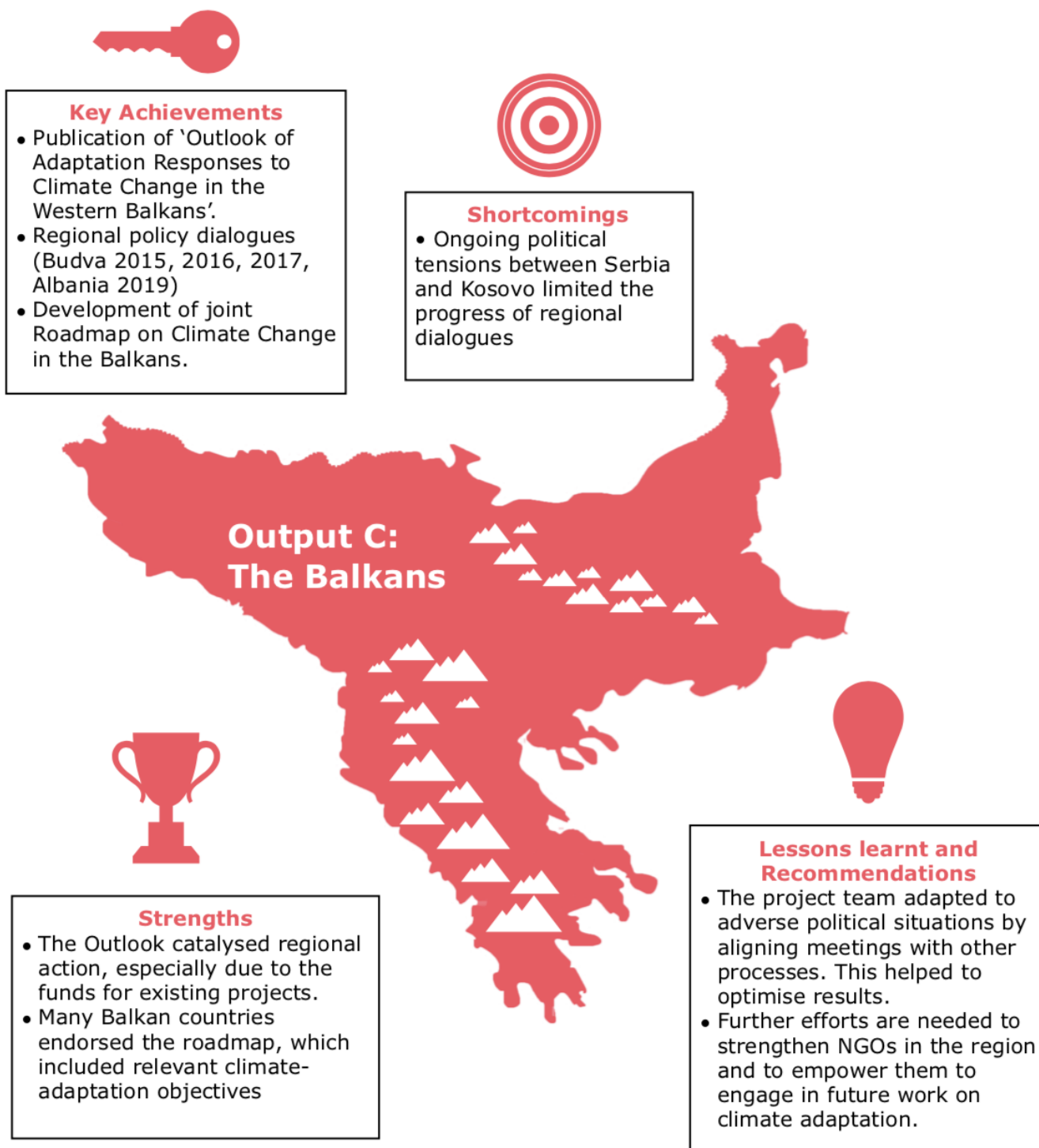


Figure 9: Graphic Summarising Output C (Balkans)

## C.1. Description of activities under Output C

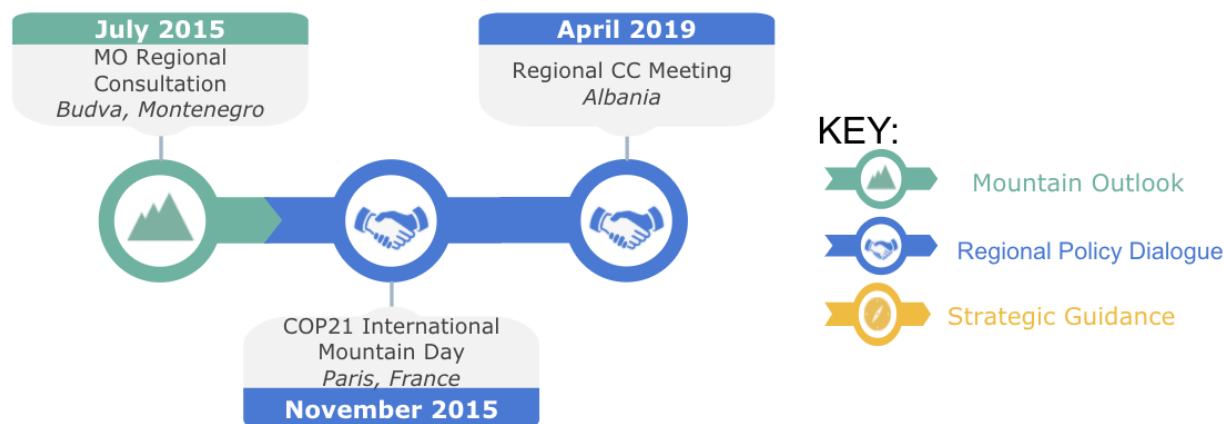


Figure 10: Timeline of Events in the Balkans

### Phase 1. Mountain Outlook

The regional assessment on climate change and adaptation in the Western Balkan mountain region was undertaken by UNEP, its collaborating center GRID-Arendal and the regional partner EIA. This assessment study compiled and analysed already existing data and information on climate change and adaptation in mountain regions, to determine key vulnerabilities and risks as well as to identify existing policy gaps and recommendations for concrete future action on adaptation to climate change. To further improve the quality of data and information compiled, international and designated governmental mountain or/and climate change experts were involved in the assessment study (e.g. through tailored questionnaires, collection of case studies and consultations).<sup>60</sup> (D8)

### Phase 2. Regional Policy Dialogues

The assessment process of the outlook was finalized with the regional consultation workshop convened in Budva, Montenegro, 6-8 July 2015. The workshop involved participation of governmental and international experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (now Northern Macedonia), Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, as well as a project team consisting of UNEP, GRID-Arendal and EIA.<sup>61</sup>

The regional consultation workshop convened in Montenegro provided a platform for analyzing past and current interventions in the Western Balkan mountain region for climate change adaptation. The meeting discussions had a particular focus on relevant policymaking institutions and frameworks, including at the regional/transboundary level to promote climate change adaptation.<sup>62</sup>

The consultations identified key trends and scenarios, risks and vulnerabilities in the mountain areas of the Western Balkan countries as well as recommendations/priority areas for future policy development in identified key sectors. The results of the workshop were integrated into the regional assessment report prepared and launched at COP21 UNFCCC in Paris.<sup>63</sup>

### Phase 3. Roadmap

Due to the political situation in the region at the time (various elections and governmental changes and restructuring in most of the countries) the sub-regional meetings to discuss on a possible agenda were postponed, and decided to

<sup>60</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>61</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>62</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>63</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

be held within the context of the Regional Cooperation Council, in close synchronisation with the ongoing climate-resilient transport-related project to maximise results and outcomes at the political level.

Following the release and the recommendations of the governmentally endorsed “Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Western Balkan Mountains”, the project team elaborated elements to strengthen climate change adaptation in the Western Balkans mountain regions. This was presented and discussed at the regional climate change meeting in Albania in April 2019, organised in collaboration with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and Government of Albania.

One of the main goals of the meeting was to review, validate and to collect further comments and inputs to a final roadmap on climate change developed under the leadership of UNEP and FAO. The meeting was attended by several representatives of Western Balkan countries.<sup>64</sup>

## **C.2. Achievement of outcome**

### **C.2.1. Mountain outlook**

According to the Donor Report, the Outlook provided a clear picture of what is happening in the region, policy gaps and recommendations for overcoming them. Its comprehensive coverage provided countries with an important resource for them to use in national policy making (**D8, D7**).<sup>65</sup> The Mountain Outlook provided a new perspective and a tool to integrate other issues such as water, agriculture, tourism, transport, and disaster risk reduction into climate adaptation.<sup>66</sup> The governments acquired a deeper understanding of challenges and approaches in neighbouring countries, which in turn helped to provide a deeper understanding of how best to address transboundary adaptation issues (**D8, D7**).<sup>67</sup>

Additionally, the Outlook paved the way for initial cooperation on issues which previously had not been prioritised by countries in the region.<sup>68</sup> As well, the Balkans Outlook helped to catalyse regional action through mobilisation of funds (by Austrian Development Cooperation) for a regional project on climate-resilient transport development & planning.<sup>69</sup>

Despite GRID-Arendal’s involvement in the preparation of the Outlook, the scientific reliability of the Outlook was called into question by the expert who drafted the Outlook because of some persistent challenges that were beyond the control of the project. (**A5, A6, A8**). They asserted that gathering data and information was challenging due to the lack of coordination in certain countries, and the limited skills and ability of local governments to provide information. Local governments in the region do not have the right instruments in place for certain environmental data-gathering aspects, and this factor constrained the drafting of the Outlook.<sup>70</sup>

Additionally, a lack of human resources and technical skills has prevented governments from organising the information in a way that is accessible. They do not provide reports for internal purposes, and therefore international experts have to collect information from the source, which makes it difficult and time consuming, or even impossible due to language barriers. The UNEP expert had to rely on local experts to gather info in the local language. UNEP did the best they could with the available information (or lack thereof), a focal point noting that the available resources

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<sup>64</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>65</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>66</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>67</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>68</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>69</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>70</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20



were maximised to produce the best work possible. (D1, D8, A5, A6, A8) However, the lack of local scientific and human capital capacity was a key barrier in this region.<sup>71</sup>

The linguistic barriers in the region further affect the effectiveness of the Outlook post-publication. The Outlook was not translated into local languages, which presents a barrier to uptake in the region. In order to raise awareness in this region, UNEP ought to translate the Outlook into local languages. UNEP should also work more with local experts, as well as international experts, and provide capacity building for national focal points to equip them with the knowledge and tools to engage in the project.

### C.2.2. Regional policy dialogues

The policy dialogues contributed to a shift in priorities of certain governments who in turn, elevated climate adaptation more prominently.<sup>72</sup>

It was noted that the dialogues could be run in a more creative manner, but the need to save resources meant that efficiency was prioritised.<sup>73</sup> Lack of follow-up between colleagues was also identified as a shortcoming.<sup>74</sup>

Environmental peacebuilding can be seen as a positive side effect of the project in this region. By promoting dialogue on a technical aspect, the project also supported countries in enhancing dialogue on broader issues, i.e. political turmoil. In the Balkans, some critical situations were overcome during the project. Creating opportunities for governments to sit down and discuss common, neutral issues, prompted cooperation and better understanding of political issues.<sup>75</sup> (D7)

Despite UNEP's best efforts to monitor the political situation in the region, there is always more that can be done to enhance preparedness when engaging in a region marked by years of political conflict. There was a certain degree of disruption in political dialogues in the Balkans because of re-emergence of conflict between countries.<sup>76</sup> More contact with government focal points from the region would have better prepared UNEP for the socio-political environment on the ground.<sup>77</sup>

### C.2.3. Road map

Mountain and climate change adaptation-specific elements were included in the draft roadmap on climate change. These elements include normative common objectives, targets (etc. ideally in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and indicators) and programmatic priorities (also linking with relevant climate change financing instruments such as GCF) to further promote a more coherent regional approach towards climate change adaptation and sustainable development in the Western Balkan mountainous regions.<sup>78</sup>

The ongoing political tensions between several Balkan countries (in particular Serbia and Kosovo) as well as overall regional political instability, have negated the possibility of the Balkan countries collectively agreeing to and adopting an intergovernmental instrument (A4). In response to this set-back, the project team diverted its efforts into facilitating regional dialogue on climate change adaptation and supporting the development of a broader joint

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<sup>71</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>72</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>73</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>74</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>75</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>76</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>77</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>78</sup> Final Donor Report

roadmap on climate change containing mountain-related elements.<sup>79</sup> It is hoped that the roadmap will pave the way towards strengthened adaptation action in support of mountain ecosystems.

Eventually, progress within the context of the Regional Cooperation Council, in close synchronization with the ongoing climate-resilient transport-related project, resulted in a joint Roadmap on climate change in the Balkans, endorsed by the Balkan countries, that contains mountain-related elements as well.<sup>80</sup>

The Balkans region provided significant challenges for the project. There were coordination issues regionally as well as internally.<sup>81</sup> Regional cooperation proved to be difficult due to political and technical sensitivities (A4).

### **C.3. Achievement of Intermediate States**

#### **C.3.1. Intermediate State 1: Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning national policy processes.**

The Balkans region currently lacks both technical and human scientific resources. Existing data is scarce, which means that national experts have to collect primary data which is time consuming and costly.<sup>82</sup> With that in mind, the importance of science has been emphasised by UNEP throughout the process, though it is unclear if this will be acted upon by Balkan states.

#### **C.3.2. Intermediate State 2: The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas.**

The Mountain Outlook identified numerous cross-sectoral links with mountain ecosystems. For example, through research and discussion, the link between mountainous ecosystem health and the resilience of water, transport, agriculture, disaster management and other key sectors became apparent.<sup>83</sup> This injected a renewed sense of importance of mountains in the institutional and political landscape, helping to elevate mountains on national agendas.

#### **C.3.3. Intermediate State 3: Multiple stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy.**

There is no evidence of this intermediate state being met.

#### **C.3.4. Intermediate State 4: There is national ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation.**

The project catalysed a follow up initiative entitled: 'Enhancing Environmental Performance and Climate Proofing of Infrastructure Investments in the Western Balkan Region from an EU integration perspective'. This project has been initiated by the governments of the Western Balkans, with support from the ADC. This is evidence that the countries are engaging with climate issues in the region unaided by UNEP, displaying a degree of agency and engagement with the project goals.

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<sup>79</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>80</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>81</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>82</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

<sup>83</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

### **C.3.5. Intermediate State 5: Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA.**

Political tensions in the Balkan region hindered international cooperation, however it was noted that the dialogue activities provided some mutual ground for peacekeeping. Countries convened to initially discuss CAA in MSE, helping to build trust and rapport. This has the potential to lead to more broad dialogue to improve regional relations.

The issues highlighted in the project were elevated on political agendas of neighbouring non-Balkan states. The Outlook made information available internationally that was otherwise unknown to those that do not reside in the region.<sup>84</sup>

### **C.4. Achievement of Intended Impact**

The Outlook for the Balkans helped to catalyse regional action through provision of funds (by ADC) for a regional project on climate-resilient transport development and planning, and in general resulted in a recognized need by countries to strengthen adaptation action in mountains, focusing more on key economic sectors.

As UNEP is in charge of several GCF readiness activities in the Balkans, the potential for upscaling interventions is significant.

Overall, there is no evidence of medium or long impact being met in the Balkans. However, considering the challenging environment of the region, it is evident that positive progress has been made.

### **C.5. Lessons learned and Recommendations**

The project was notably less successful in the Balkans region, due largely to existing political tensions and weaker institutional capacity. Despite best efforts on the part of UNEP to monitor and work within the existing challenges of the region, this region did not provide sufficient enabling conditions for UNEP to achieve a high degree of success in the region.

In the future, UNEP should adapt the project's policy efforts to conditions on the ground. In the case of highly conflicted regions, it may be more productive to focus efforts entirely at the national level.

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<sup>84</sup> Respondent interview 03/08/20

## D.4. Output D: Technical and policy support provided to Caucasus mountain countries in a sub-regional context

Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia

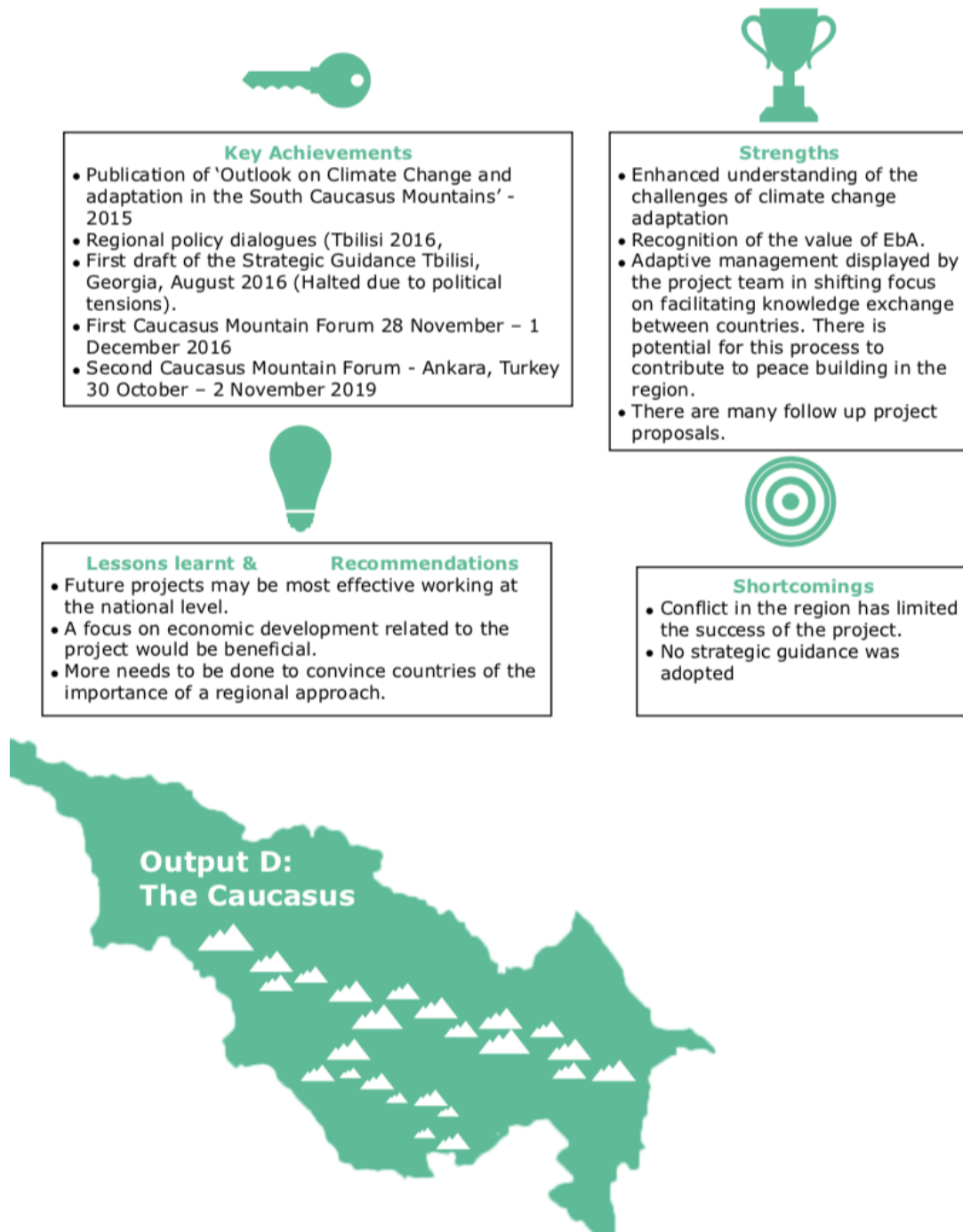


Figure 11: Graphic summarising Output D (Caucasus)

## D.1. Achievements of outputs under Output D



Figure 12: Figure showing the timeline for Output D (Caucasus)

### Phase 1: Mountain Outlook

UNEP developed the Mountain Outlook, entitled 'Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the South Caucasus Mountains', in a collaboration between UNEP and GRID-Arendal, Caucasus Network for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions (Sustainable Caucasus) and the National Association of Local Authorities in Georgia (NALAG). This involved desk research and consultation with government representatives and experts from the target countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia). Following consultations and revisions, the Outlook was launched at COP21 in Paris, France in 2015.

### Phase 2 Regional Policy Dialogues

The most notable RPD in the Caucasus was the first Caucasus Mountain Forum, held by the Scientific Network for the Caucasus Mountain Region in Tbilisi, Georgia in August 2016. This featured a workshop titled 'Towards a Strategic Agenda on Climate Change and Adaptation in the South Caucasus Mountains'. An online networking platform called the Caucasus SDI was established at the Summer School for mid-career scientists, conducted in September 2016. This tool was designed to strengthen the science-policy-practice interface.

### Phase 3. Roadmap

A Strategic Guidance policy roadmap for the Caucasus region was discussed at the Strategic Agenda Workshop, however the ongoing political tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia made this not currently feasible and work has since halted. Rather, efforts are being concentrated on fostering experience exchanges and knowledge transfers between the South Caucasus countries with respect to climate change adaptation. This process continued at the second Caucasus Mountain Forum.

## D.2 Achievement of Outcome

### D.2.1 Mountain Outlook

The Outlook provided concise and accessible climate data for the region, improving upon the previous system of often disjointed and incomplete national assessments. The Outlook was the one of the first times that inter-regional sharing of data had succeeded in the Caucasus due to ongoing political tensions impeding regional communication. In addition,

the weak capacity of environment ministries in Caucasus countries means that there are very few regional policy processes in the environmental arena before the publication of the Outlook (**A4, A5**). This indicates the success of the Outlook in paving the way for future regional discourse, environmental or otherwise.

Interviews with national focal points confirmed that environmental ministries appreciated the Outlook, however uptake was not specifically monitored so evidence of the Outlook being used by governments is limited (**D3, D5**).

Interviews indicated that the use of the Outlook in informing mountain specific policy has been limited, however the Outlook has played a role in informing climate policy more broadly in which mountainous regions are sometimes a sub-sector (**D3, D5**). For example, in 2019 the Government of Azerbaijan's low carbon strategy was used to inform their low carbon strategy, which referenced adaptation measures in agriculture and water management in areas which cover mountainous regions. In addition, a respondent indicated that the Outlook provided important scientific context for their NDCs.

Climate adaptation has been elevated on Georgia's political agenda, as evidenced by several new policy initiatives for climate adaptation in agriculture in their NAPs, in which mountains are referenced. However, a direct causal link between the Outlook and these developments was not identified. It is important to note that it is difficult to determine the extent of the Outlook's influence on national policy due to the lack of monitoring mechanisms at this level, particularly in Armenia<sup>85</sup>.

### **D.2.2 Regional Policy Dialogues**

Interviews confirmed that the regional policy dialogues were valuable, having catalysed regional coordination and genuine discussion between regional partners in the face of political tensions (**D7**). The dialogues have helped to shift attitudes regarding the willingness of countries to mobilise domestic resources for climate adaptation, countries that were previously unwilling are now prepared to dedicate donor support to environmental policy processes, notably Georgia<sup>86</sup> (**D3, D4**). This is evidence of the influence of UNEP in not only mobilising countries to join the dialogue process, but to shift their own attitudes about domestic resource mobilisation for climate adaptation (**A4**).

Despite some initial successes, the regional policy dialogues processes were complicated by existing political tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which flowed down to the level of exchange between experts (**A4**)<sup>87</sup>. Further efforts to promote regional cooperation for climate adaptation will continue to face significant challenges until political conflicts are resolved<sup>88</sup>. As a result, there has been a lack of concrete follow up results from the RPDs, such as meetings or publications. The Final Donor Report affirmed that political tensions did indeed prevent further work on the Strategic Guidance. UNEP decided to instead focus on promoting exchange and experience between the South Caucasus countries<sup>89</sup> (**D8**).

### **D.3.3 Policy Roadmaps**

In 2016, South Caucasus governments convened to initiate the development of the 'Strategic Guidance on Climate Change Adaptation', however regional agreement was not reached due to the Azerbaijani/Armenian political tension

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<sup>85</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>86</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>87</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>88</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>89</sup> Final Donor Report

(A4)<sup>90</sup>. These geopolitical tensions have undermined the regional cooperation necessary for coordinated climate adaptation action<sup>91</sup>.

Despite the Strategic Guidance not being adopted, interviewees confirmed increasing recognition of the importance of climate change among some decision-makers. Interviewees emphasised that efforts would be better directed towards supporting national level climate adaptation instead of regional coordination, which will continue to be frustrated so long as the political conflict remains unresolved(D3). Currently, there are few specific climate change adaptation activities at the national level, however, this project has stimulated some interest in climate adaptation at the national level. Georgia and Azerbaijan have requested technical support from UNEP in developing a unified set of indicators to use as a baseline for national adaptation policy<sup>92</sup>. It is hoped that these indicators will be incorporated into Georgia's upcoming NAP, in turn mainstreaming CAA and MSD into national policy (D2, D3).

Georgia has emerged as a regional leader, having integrated climate adaptation and mountain specific ecosystems in several national policy spheres:

- The Socio-economic Development Strategy of Georgia highlights climate change issues as a national priority. In the adaptation section of the documents, mountains are recognised as playing a role in Georgia's vulnerability. Georgia plans to introduce modern early warning systems, implement various measures and develop relevant infrastructure.<sup>93</sup>
- In the 'Climate Change National Adaptation Plan for Georgia's Agriculture Sector', mountain ecosystem adaptation is not discussed specifically, but the plan does highlight climate adaptation in the context of agricultural production, with mountainous regions mentioned several times as key areas of agricultural production.<sup>94</sup>
- Georgia's NDC (supported by UNDP) stipulates that the country will develop its first NAP to be more prepared for the adverse effects of climate change. The NDC does reference mountain adaptation, which is evidence of a first step towards recognition of the importance of mountains (D3).<sup>95</sup>

It should be noted that although reference to Mountains in these policies is relatively brief, it constitutes an important first step.

Whilst the Strategic Guidance was not formally adopted, as per the Final Donor Report, the project did succeed in catalysing a number of follow-up project proposals:

- *'Strengthening Capacities to Assess Climate Change Vulnerability and Impacts to Shape Investments in Adaptation Technology for Azerbaijan's Mountain Regions'*.
- *'Safeguarding climate-resilient local tourism and related infrastructure in mountain regions through ecosystem-based adaptation' in Georgia. 'Strengthening climate adaptation capacities in the South Caucasus (SCAC)' with an inter-regional focus, which ideally will reduce the vulnerability of communities to climate-induced natural hazards through strengthened regional cooperation.*
- *A proposal for 'Disaster Waste Management in Mountain Regions of Georgia'*.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Outlook on climate change adaptation in the South Caucasus mountains, 2015

<sup>91</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>92</sup> Respondent interview 28/07/20

<sup>93</sup> Social-economic Development Strategy of Georgia "GEORGIA 2020"

<sup>94</sup> Climate Change National Adaptation Plan for Georgia's Agriculture Sector

<sup>95</sup> Georgia's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution Submission to the UNFCCC

<sup>96</sup> Final Donor Report

## **D.3. Achievement of Intermediate States**

### **D.3.1. Intermediate State 1: Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning national policy processes**

The Outlook was perceived to be mostly accurate since it was based on national communications with the UNFCCC and available national data. The scientific experts involved in the preparation of the Outlook were well qualified and highly regarded.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the publication was peer-reviewed by focal points for the countries.

### **D.3.2. Intermediate State 2: The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas**

Uptake of the project has varied greatly by country. The process of developing a NAP for Georgia has begun for next year, and there are direct references to mountainous ecosystems. Georgia's engagement with mountains in their NAP process is evidence of the achievement of IS2.

However, while some south Caucasus countries are starting to enact such commitments, other countries are taking a more cautious approach towards political engagement (**A1, A3, A5, A8**). Climate change is mentioned, albeit insufficiently, in several national policies, especially high-profile instruments such as development strategies. It is hoped that Georgia's biodiversity strategy and Armenia's climate adaptation vision will lead to concrete EbA measures.<sup>97</sup>

### **D.3.3. Intermediate State 3: Multiple stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy**

The project helped UNEP to establish and support the regional NGO 'Sustainable Caucasus'.<sup>98</sup> This has been an important source of capacity building for the region and will hopefully encourage regional cooperation beyond the lifespan of the project. However, the 'Sustainable Caucasus' is a scientific network, not a political one, and this might limit its efficacy in helping countries to overcome political tensions.<sup>99</sup>

### **D.3.4. Intermediate State 4: There is national ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation**

The adoption of climate adaptation policies by Georgia and Azerbaijan indicate national ownership of the process, as detailed above.

### **D.3.5. Intermediate State 5: Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA.**

The project facilitated genuine dialogue between the countries, providing them with a genuine reason to interact, thereby creating new opportunities for peacebuilding and regional cooperation. There is still considerable progress to be made, but the policy dialogues were an important step in this process.<sup>100</sup> The resulting cooperation between the countries is regarded as a very significant achievement of this project. Interaction between governments was stimulated with increased exchange of knowledge and experience.<sup>101</sup> Interviewees emphasised the need for more incentives for regional cooperation and it is hoped that Phase 2 of this project will play an important role in catalysing a greater degree of regional cooperation.<sup>102</sup> It should also be noted that Azerbaijan and Georgia have expressed interest to work bilaterally on mountain policy issues.

Moreover, there is interest from Turkish colleagues and other governments to replicate the dialogue process in the context of climate adaptation. The Outlook stimulated interest in climate adaptation in countries beyond the Caucasus e.g. there is interest from Turkish colleagues.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Outlook on climate change adaptation in the South Caucasus mountains, 2015

<sup>98</sup> Respondent interview 19/06/20

<sup>99</sup> Respondent interview 03/07/20

<sup>100</sup> Respondent interview 28/07/20

<sup>101</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>102</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>103</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20



## D.4. Achievement of Intended Impact

Mountain ecosystem issues are increasingly being integrated in key productive sectors, evidencing medium term intended impact.<sup>104</sup> Particularly by the regional leader, Georgia, where mountains are beginning to be referred to in national policy documents (eg NAPs).

Importantly, as already discussed, conflict and tension in the region has significantly hindered further collective regional progress. As a result, it is likely that national policy will have to come from within individual nations, rather than from regional policy initiatives.

Proposed follow-up projects in the Caucasus region are evidence of the commitment of countries to work towards that long-term impact may occur. This project had laid an important foundation for future efforts and eventual long-term impact in the region.

## D.5. Lessons learned and Recommendations

### D.5.1. General

Future interventions will be more successful if designed at the national level. Thus far, there has been limited uptake at the regional level with positive impacts only observed at the national level. A lack of appetite in the Caucasus to continue work at a regional level appears to currently prevail<sup>105</sup>.

The countries could benefit from capacity building in future projects (with help from UNEP) to enhance effectiveness. For example, there is currently a lack of institutional capacity regarding scenario planning, with few if any universities equipped with climate change programmes or faculties.

Another problem relates to institutional arrangements. In Azerbaijan, there was a climate change centre in the Ministry of Ecology but it has since been abolished. Azerbaijan also does not have data management systems. Even the data from the previous reporting period was not available and this data is critical for policy making. There is a need for technical assistance to support governments in redressing these gaps and for further substantive knowledge to support national policy processes, both of which UNEP is well equipped to provide.

An important issue in the region is that whilst some mechanisms exist for communication and cooperation between each countries' scientific bodies, finances are always limited and constrain further uptake of the project (**A8**).

### D.5.2. Mountain Outlook

Significant analysis was carried out in the preparation of the Outlook, but this will need to be updated in light of the rapid changes in climate change trends.<sup>106</sup> Governments should update their NDCs and include Outlook assessment results in their NDCs.<sup>107</sup> Without an effective implementation and monitoring system, it is difficult to accurately evaluate the uptake by national governments.

An Azerbaijani focal point explained that to overcome national institutional limitations, government officials in the region are forced to make do with limited data and to go beyond the call of duty to exchange limited resources with their colleagues. (**D1, D3, D8, D9, A3, A5**). This contextualises the difficulties for UNEP's work in Caucasus region, and emphasises the importance of continued support for local capacity-building. This will in turn support the efficacy of future projects in the region due to increased uptake capacity (**D3, D5, D8, D9, A3, A5, A8**).

### D.5.3. Regional Policy Dialogues

Dialogues should be more focussed on a single goal from the beginning, e.g. a project, or cooperation framework, to ensure that the discussions are not the end point. The dialogues should be structured with more tangible objectives. Resource mobilisation for follow up is essential.

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<sup>104</sup> Respondent interview 02/07/20

<sup>105</sup> Respondent interview 02/07/20

<sup>106</sup> Respondent interview 02/07/20

<sup>107</sup> Respondent interview 02/07/20

There is a need for engagement at the highest political levels. There is also a need for permanent focal points dealing with the issue of climate adaptation in mountain regions, perhaps in the form of a mountain focal point.

More efforts are needed to convince countries of the importance of regional approaches to climate adaptation. The value of cooperation and exchange of data to get better results, calculations and modelling for climate change needs to be better understood by countries (for example, it is not clear that they may need information from the other countries to make their forecasts more reliable).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

## D.5. Output E: Technical and policy support provided to Central Asia mountain countries in a sub-regional context

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

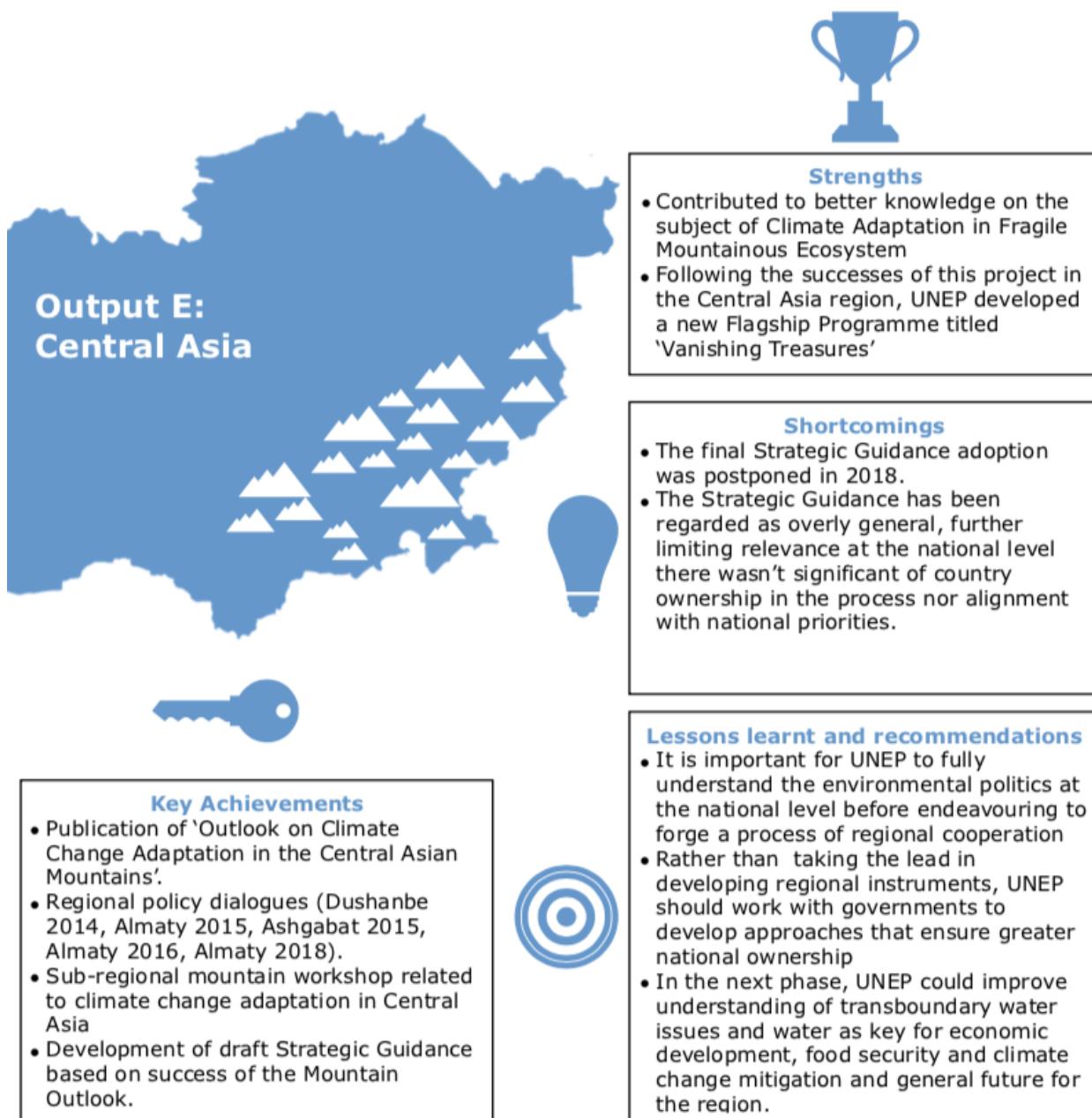


Figure 13: Graphic Summarising Output E (Central Asia)

## E.1. Description of activities under Output E

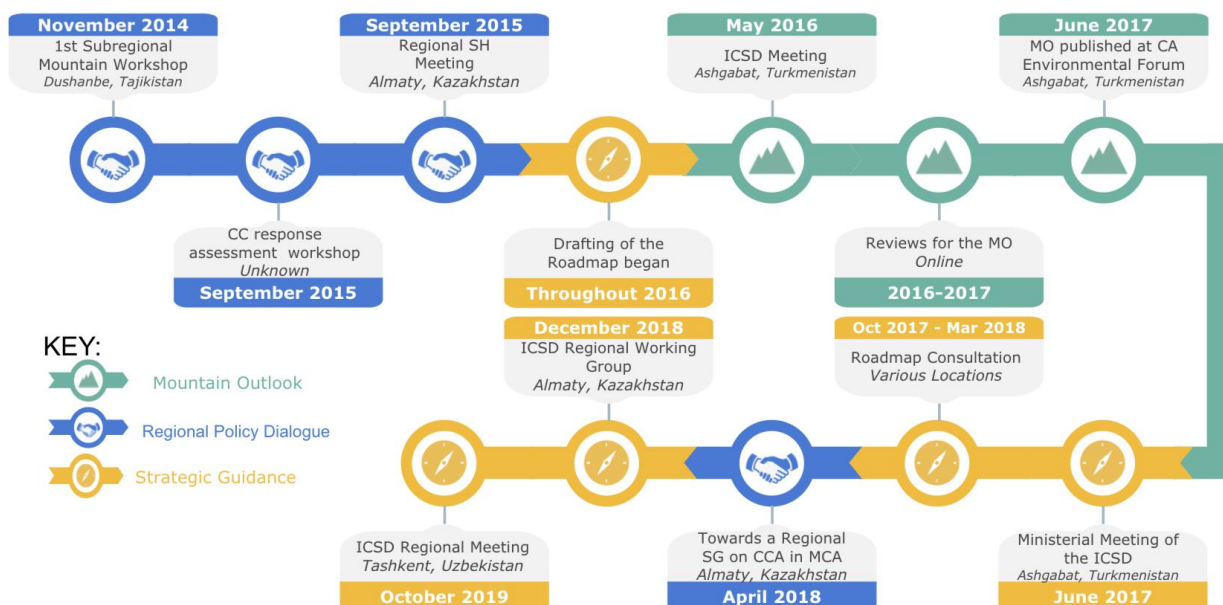


Figure 14: Timeline showing key events for Output E (Central Asia)

### Phase 1 Mountain Outlook

The development of the Outlook Report was carried out cooperatively by UNEP, GRID-Arendal and Regional Mountain Centre in Central Asia (RMCCA), which is institutionally linked to the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD). The goal of the ICSD is to promote regional dialogue and cooperative environmental action between its members; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The creation of the Outlook was participatory, involving iterative consultations with experts from government and civil society from Central Asia and beyond. At a regional stakeholder meeting held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 2nd-3rd September 2015, key experts and participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan came together to review a draft version of the 'Central Asian Outlook Report'. Participants identified further key vulnerabilities and risks specific to the Central Asian mountain region, as well as existing policy gaps on climate change adaptation. These contributions, alongside the background paper jointly prepared by UNEP, GRID-Arendal and RMCCA, were used to form the base of the Outlook Report. Government representatives further performed e-reviews of the Outlook Report in 2016 and 2017 as the document was revised. The final version of the report was launched at a high-level side event on the 7th of June 2017 at the Central Asian Environmental Forum, held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. On 8 June 2017, the following day, at the Ministerial Meeting of the ICSD, the ICSD acknowledged the final Outlook<sup>109</sup> and extended UNEP's mandate to further elaborate the Strategic Guidance document on climate change and adaptation (including EbA) for the Central Asian mountains in cooperation with RMCCA and GIZ.<sup>110</sup>

### Phase 2 Regional Policy Dialogues

RPDs were key in informing both the Outlook and the Roadmap. Following initial dialogues to synthesise current science from the Outlook, UNEP co-organised the first sub-regional mountain workshop related to climate change adaptation in Central Asia on 24th of November 2014 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, back-to-back with the meeting of the ICSD.

### Phase 3 Roadmap

<sup>109</sup> Decision 3 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

<sup>110</sup> Final Donor Report

The first consultation meeting dedicated to the Strategic Guidance was held in December 2016 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, at which policy makers, non-governmental stakeholders and government designated experts came together to review a draft version of the Strategic Guidance and provide further inputs.

From 24th to 25th of April 2018, UNEP, GIZ and RMCCA hosted a regional consultation workshop titled 'Towards a Regional Strategic Guidance on Climate Change and Adaptation in Mountainous Regions of Central Asia' in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This workshop featured discussion on the advanced draft of the Strategic Guidance. A revised version of the draft Strategic Guidance document was briefly presented at the workshop of the regional working group of ICSD for the elaboration of the REP4SD of Central Asia from 10 – 11 December 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Although the strategic guidance is not directly represented in the REP4SD, UNEP's support was highlighted during the discussion of the working group and their meetings with the ICSD.

The purpose of the Strategic Guidance is to outline an approach for regional cooperation on adaptation to climate change in the Central Asian mountainous areas, thus enabling the Central Asian countries to overcome adaptation gaps and improve upon existing adaptation initiatives. The Strategic Guidance was developed in accordance with the formal national processes for climate change action (NDCs to UNFCCC, IPCC reports, SDGs).

## **E.2. Achievement of outcome**

### **E.2.1. Mountain Outlook**

The Outlook provides an improved understanding of the relationship between climate change and mountains<sup>111</sup>. A logical, accessible and up-to-date scientific synthesis allowed for the discussion of a more science-based and well informed climate policy (**D1, D2**). UNEP has elevated understanding and with the use of simple graphics, the Central Asian Outlook Report has become accessible to a larger audience.<sup>112</sup> One respondent described the Outlook as very useful and noted that it was presented at many regional meetings and meetings between the state and non-governmental organisations.<sup>113</sup>

Currently, there is no evidence of its uptake by governments in the region. Many participants indicated that there is incomplete data and additional research is needed<sup>114</sup>. There also does not appear to be any evidence of follow up with this project specifically on the ground in the past 3 years.<sup>115</sup> (**A8**)

The realisations of the importance of knowledge resulted in the formation of follow up projects such as UNEP's Vanishing Treasures program, which specifically targets central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan<sup>116</sup>. In addition, the IKI of Germany's BMU launched 'Enhancing the conservation of flagship migratory mammal species of Central Asia through climate-informed management and decision making'. This employs an Ecosystem-based adaptation approach and focuses on contributing to an overall adaptation strategy for the protection of Central Asian ecosystems and species against the threat of climate change.<sup>117</sup> (**D2, D5**).

The Central Asian Outlook Report has received continuous support by the Central Asian countries through the ICSD (part of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)) and its Decisions<sup>118</sup>. (**D5**)

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<sup>111</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

<sup>112</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

<sup>113</sup> Respondent interview 03/07/2020

<sup>114</sup> Respondent interview 03/07/2020

<sup>115</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

<sup>116</sup> [www.vanishingtreasures.org](http://www.vanishingtreasures.org)

<sup>117</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>118</sup> Decision No 6 – 3 April 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Decision No 5 – 28 November 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan; Decision No 8 – 18 June 2015 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; Decision No 2 – 26 May 2016 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan; Decision No 3 – 8 June 2017 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

The project team experienced some difficulties in 2016 related to limited input to the report by government experts nominated by the Central Asian states. In accordance with project risk management measures put into place, an additional regional expert was brought on board to support the project team with finalising the report<sup>119</sup> (D4). The project team further encountered the challenge of the Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan governments failing to nominate experts to participate in the consultation process for the development of the Central Asian Outlook Report. This could be attributed to these nations' limited-information sharing capacity. This led to difficulties accessing information on current adaptation policies and measures already implemented in the region. The team attempted to overcome this challenge by relying on available open source channels on the internet.<sup>120</sup> (D4)

In general, the Central Asian Outlook Report accurately reflects mountain trends in the sub-region, however much of the Outlook is considered too general to be useful for implementation at the national level. Some government experts noted that it would have been far more useful if the Outlook could have provided more detailed figures and recommendations along with an overall detailed assessment.<sup>121</sup> (D1, D6, A1).

### **E.2.2. Regional policy dialogues**

The RPD's contributed to the further refining of the political and strategic focus of the proposed Strategic Guidance document, as well as the identification of possible synergies with other ongoing processes, such as the review process of the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development (REP4SD). The REP4SD is currently being finalised by the Central Asian countries (D3, D5, D6).

A draft methodology for the assessment of the climate change adaptation was submitted for feedback to the governmental experts of the five Central Asian countries and other key partners (e.g. University of Central Asia/ MP Hub for Central Asia, CAREC). All countries endorsed the further work associated with carrying out the assessment, which included UNEP's proposal to organize an assessment review workshop in 2015<sup>122</sup>, which instructed the Regional Mountain Centre for Central Asia (RMCCA) to ensure the participation of relevant national experts and stakeholders from Central Asia in the forthcoming Mountain Workshop scheduled for 2-3 September 2015. This workshop was dedicated to the assessment of climate change responses in the Central Asian mountain regions. This indicates appreciation for the project at the regional and national level (D5).

All the five countries endorsed the further work associated with carrying out the assessment, which included UNEP's proposal to organize an assessment review workshop in 2015 in Central Asia (as evidenced by Decision No 6 - April 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Decision No 5 - November 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan)<sup>123</sup> (D5).

### **E.2.3. Regional Policy Roadmap**

The Central Asian Strategic Guidance was developed with the intention of serving as the basis for the development of more concrete detailed action plans on climate change adaptation. However, due to the overly general nature of the Strategic Guidance, countries have had difficulties integrating it into their own national policy frameworks. Respondents felt the generalisation of findings failed to detail important regional priorities, particularly freshwater management (D8).

Political conflict regarding water also impacted the effectiveness of the project. Due to conflicts concerning the distribution of water resources between the energy and the agriculture sector of both downstream and upstream countries in the region, Kyrgyzstan froze their membership status to the IFAS and subsequently to the ICSD. The

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<sup>119</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>120</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>121</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

<sup>122</sup> Decision № 6 - April 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Decision № 5 - November 2014 Dushanbe, Tajikistan). This work was again pledged support at the meeting of the ICSD on 18 June 2015 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan<sup>45</sup> (through ICSD Decision № 8 – June 2015

<sup>123</sup> Final Donor Report

consequence was the postponement of the forthcoming meeting of the ICSD to summer/autumn 2019. Hence, the final version of the strategic guidance has been postponed.<sup>124</sup> (A4)

The project's aims were not always tailored to the existing political and institutional realities in the countries where the project operated. For example, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan lack NDCs under the Paris agreement, however, they do have sustainable mountain strategies. This project may have been more effective in integrating new knowledge into this existing strategy than attempting to build an NDC from scratch. This project demonstrated a common failure of international projects; which is to extensively draft plans to integrate policy, guidance, methodology or strategy, but ultimately the document is not used by the nations it was drafted for.<sup>125</sup> (D5, A1, A3, A5)

### **E.3. Achievement of Intermediate States**

#### **E.3.1. Intermediate State 1: Rigorous climate science is increasingly underpinning national policy processes.**

The evaluation team did not find evidence to support IS1. One point that should be emphasised here is the lack of national ownership of the project in the region, due in part to what was perceived as an overly broad scope for the Strategic Agenda.

#### **E.3.2. Intermediate State 2: The political, ecological and economic importance of mountains and climate adaptation are elevated on national agendas.**

In Central Asia, governments at all levels have acquired a better understanding of climate change and mountains. Nevertheless, ongoing regional conflict detracted attention from the mountain agenda.

#### **E.3.3. Intermediate State 3: Multiple stakeholders are increasingly engaged in the integration of climate adaptation in national policy.**

The evaluation team did not find evidence to support IS3.

#### **E.3.4. Intermediate State 4: There is national ownership of the process of integrating climate change adaptation.**

The involvement of intergovernmental bodies such as RMCCA and ICSD is evidence of the interest of national governments, to the extent that they determine the priorities of these bodies.

However, lack of national ownership was identified as a key criticism of the project in this region.

#### **E.3.5. Intermediate State 5: Increased cooperation within and between regions on MSE and CAA.**

The value of the project in promoting regional dialogue and information-sharing was emphasised by interviewees. However, the project had limited success in promoting cooperation due to existing political tensions.

### **E.4. Achievement of Intended Impact**

There is currently no evidence of this intended impact being achieved in the Central Asia region. However, in follow up projects such as the Vanishing Treasures, the project aims will continue to be elaborated. It was indicated by regional experts that the project faces a problem common among international projects, in that there is a good idea for policy/strategy and extensive efforts are used to draft methodologies to improve policies, however, the final document is not used because governments have their own national documents and priorities that they prefer to follow. (D5).

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<sup>124</sup> Final Donor Report

<sup>125</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

## **E.5. Lessons learned and Recommendations**

### **E.5.1. General lessons learned and recommendations**

It was emphasised that water security issues could have been elevated in the Mountains project for this region. Regional transboundary water is a very strategically important and highly sensitive political issue. It is also key for economic development as well as for climate change, food security and many other issues. Many international organisations have weighed in on water security in Central Asia, with in-depth analysis on the impact of climate change on glaciers and the impacts on agriculture, economic development and industry. Yet the recommendations have not always been coherent or aligned with national priorities, which in turn has made it difficult for national governments to implement them. UNEP should present a clear, integrated assessment of the key challenges, which should lie at the core of the regional dialogue process.

In the next phase, UNEP could improve understanding of transboundary water issues and water as key for economic development, food security and climate change mitigation and general future for the region. UNEP should build on its expertise and experience in the water sector and help countries in Central Asia to develop a regional strategy on water. This would incentivize the five countries to come together and to embark on a process of environmental cooperation. Furthermore, elevating the priority of regional water issues should be taken as an opportunity to mainstream climate adaptation into a key strategic issue for sustainable development, food security, and climate change in the region.

The value of the project in promoting regional dialogue and information-sharing was emphasised. However, as per the aforementioned recommendations, a higher level of detail, greater government ownership at the national level, and synergies with local issues is essential for uptake of the final policy documents.

### **E.5.2. Outlook lessons learned recommendations**

A more detailed assessment and recommendations would be helpful. Specifically, more data, and more trends analysis especially in relation to water. Water is a very important priority since the region is landlocked with a very arid climate. The water issue is also very politically sensitive, with insufficient understanding in the region on the linkage between water and mountains.<sup>126</sup>

### **E.5.3. Regional policy dialogues lessons learned and recommendations**

First and foremost, international actors need to acquire a more fulsome understanding of national level priorities and concerns. UNEP needs to first understand national level policy processes and from there, work with countries to develop mountain policies and strategies.

Secondly, UNEP should ensure that there is a deeper level of national ownership of the process. Lack of national ownership of the process was raised by actors in this region. UNEP support in the region would be more effective by working with national governments to strengthen their own institutions and integrate climate change adaptation with energy, water and agriculture sectors.

In this region, political and resource-driven conflict created significant barriers to the process.

### **E.5.4. Regional road map lessons learned and recommendations**

Currently, there are mixed perceptions of the risk of climate change among the countries in the region. Against this backdrop, UNEP should clearly present the current state of scientific understanding and predictions for the next 5 to 10 years. A clear and simple assessment of the necessary policy change will be more likely to catalyse action at the national level. There has been expensive research work completed in this area, and so an analysis of all previous assessments, which were very thorough, with a presented summary would be effective. Final results should be presented on behalf of UNEP, but at the national level.<sup>127</sup>

The Strategic Guidance was written more broadly in this region than in others, with the intention of serving as the basis for the development of more concrete detailed action plans on climate change adaptation. There is limited evidence of uptake or follow-up on this project, with comments by regional stakeholders that the Strategic Guidance

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<sup>126</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020

<sup>127</sup> Respondent interview 27/08/2020



was too broad to be useful at the local level. Follow-up projects should take the opportunity to use the Strategic Guidance as a framework to develop more detailed policy.

## **D.6. Output F: Support to strengthened inter-regional exchange of experience and best practices in the context of mountain specific ecosystem-based adaptation and supporting approaches**

### **F.1. Delivery of output**

UNEP shared information and experiences gathered in the targeted mountain regions with other mountain regions that were not targeted directly in this project, notably, the Alps, Carpathians and the HKH.

The following list of events highlight the extent to which UNEP supported the exchange of regional experience and best practices at global processes. In many cases, the communication of mountain trends and information from the regions to the global level helped to facilitate global policy recommendations.

- UNEP assisted in the organisation of the ‘climate change’ theme for the World Mountain Forum, which took place in Cusco, Peru from 23 - 24 May 2014. The Forum showcased local, regional and global experiences in sustainable development of mountain regions.
- At COP21 in Paris, France in December 2015, UNEP jointly organised various events that facilitated experience-sharing between mountainous countries.
- In October 2016, the World Mountain Forum took place in Mbale, Uganda. UNEP participated in a panel discussion on knowledge and policy gaps related to climate change impacts on mountain ecosystems.
- UNEP co-organized with CICERO, ICIMOD, GIZ and GRID-Arendal, a session at the Adaptation Futures Conference from 18 - 21 June 2018 in Cape Town, South Africa.
- At the World Mountain Forum in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on 24 October 2018, UNEP, GIZ and the Mountain Institute organised a parallel session titled ‘Partnerships and Alliances for Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation’. This meeting provided insight into the inner workings of established successful EbA partnerships at the local, national, regional and inter-regional level in Central Asia, East Africa and the Tropical Andes mountain.
- At the COP 24 UNFCCC in Katowice, Poland, UNEP convened a high-level side event entitled ‘Mountain adaptation: Vulnerable peaks and people’ in recognition of International Mountain Day on 11 December 2018. The event also featured the launch of the “Synthesis of the Mountain Adaptation Outlooks” that was developed within the context of this project.
- Other examples of inter-regional exchange included the development of a Mountain Outlook for the Carpathian region, which was inspired by the Mountain Outlooks that were prepared for the other project’s five regions. UNEP also collaborated with GRID-Arendal and ICIMOD to develop a similar Outlook Report on climate change adaptation policies in the Hindu Kush Himalaya region.

### **F.2. Achievement of outcomes**

As well as building institutional capacity for climate adaptation within the output regions, another key aim of the UNEP project was to strengthen “inter-regional exchange of experiences and best practices” between output regions (project output F).

A key activity throughout the project is the bringing together of knowledgeable experts to share ideas and formulate policy. This was mostly carried out within target regions, however, these regional stakeholders also gathered collectively at larger scale global dialogues. It was at these events where inter-regional dialogue was facilitated to share best practices within regions. An example of a successful inter-regional dialogue was at COP21 in Paris, France in December 2015. UNEP jointly organised various events that facilitated experience-sharing between mountainous countries<sup>128</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup> Donor Report

In addition to international policy dialogues, the open access nature of the Outlooks, Roadmaps and other relevant publications meant that the best practices developed in the more successful regions were available for other regions to learn from and adapt to their own region.

The successes of this project created a positive momentum globally, inspiring other mountainous eco-regions not included in this project to develop their own climate change adaptation roadmaps. Policymakers from the Carpathian, Alpes and Hindu-Kush Himalayan regions are following a similar methodology to develop and launch their own regional Outlooks, with ambitions to subsequently draft Roadmaps<sup>129</sup>. The Carpathian Outlook Report was developed after it was determined that the Outlook Reports in the five target regions were valuable in providing a clear outline on what needs to be done to improve climate change adaptation in the respective regions.<sup>130</sup>

A Himalayan Outlook was launched for the same reason at COP24 in Katowice, Poland.<sup>131</sup>

The successful reinvigoration of the IAM resulted in further EUROCLIMA+ funding to support knowledge sharing from the IAM to the potential Alpine and Carpathian Conventions to create a roadmap like that in the Andes in their own respective regions.

UNEP's Vienna office has played a key role in further progressing the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention. The convening of the Alpine Climate Board has been established as a vehicle for knowledge dissemination between the Alps and Carpathians. a joint meeting between representatives of the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions in Vienna from 12-13 March 2014 on the topic of climate change adaptation led to the development of a joint declaration.<sup>132</sup>

One important example of uptake of the knowledge that was generated through inter-regional exchange is reflected in the March 2014 joint meeting on climate adaptation between representatives from the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions. The meeting generated a joint declaration, which in turn was endorsed at the highest level at Ministerial meetings of both the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions.

Another example of uptake was the fact that parties to the Carpathian Convention agreed at COP5 in October 2017 to formally introduce a legally binding commitment to pursue climate mitigation and adaptation policies in the text of the Convention. It could be argued that this new language enshrining a legal commitment for adaptation is a direct example of uptake of the Carpathian Mountain Outlook (which in turn was developed in response to the project's other five outlooks).

## Rating for Effectiveness:

## E. Financial Management

### E.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

The project finances were managed in adherence to UN Financial Regulation and Rules. The project finances were handled by the Vienna office in close collaboration with UNEP Europe Regional Office in Geneva for the certification of financial transactions and HQ in Nairobi for the approval of financial transactions.

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<sup>129</sup> Donor Report

<sup>130</sup> Donor Report

<sup>131</sup> Donor Report

<sup>132</sup> Donor Report

Communication between the Project manager and Fund manager were complicated by the fact that until recently, the project did not have an assigned Fund manager. The original UNEP colleague responsible for fund management only had 10% of his time allocated to this project/ very limited capacity for overall projects dealt with by the Vienna Office.

## **E.2 Adequacy of financial resources**

At the time of project launch, the project was fully funded by the Austrian Government. That said, the project manager took great care to optimize resources by aligning with other existing initiatives, working with experienced partner organisations, scheduling project's regional policy dialogues wherever possible in the margins of other regional meetings. This project also helped catalyse subsequent projects which have attracted funding from bilateral and multilateral sources.

Forging synergies with other UNEP projects contributed to the overall cost effectiveness. One notable UNEP-UNDP project "Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EbA) for Mountain Ecosystems" which was implemented in Nepal, Peru and Uganda between 2010 to 2016. Funding from the Government of Germany supported a number of important case studies which were used as important inputs for the Andes Mountain Outlook and its regional dialogues.

As noted above, the project was fully funded at launch. Because there were in-kind contributions, there was no need for co-financing from other bilateral or multilateral sources. One important source of co-financing was GRID-Arendal, whose scientific expertise was central to the preparation of the Mountain Outlooks in each of the regions. UNEP Vienna Office has had a long-standing partnership with GRID Arendal and their involvement enabled UNEP to tap into the co-financing agreement that they have with the Government of Norway. GRID-Arendal was able to match 100% of the co-financing that was provided in-kind (??). It is also important to highlight that in order to deal with the inevitable financial delays, UNEP requested GRID-Arendal to commence Outlook work with the regional partners to ensure strong ownership within the regional centers before the actual partnership agreements could be finalised.

## **E.3. Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff**

Communication between the Project manager and Fund manager were complicated by the fact that until recently, the project did not have an assigned Fund manager. The original UNEP colleague responsible for fund management only had 10% of his time allocated to this project/ very limited capacity for overall projects dealt with by the Vienna Office.

## **E.4 Completeness of Financial Information**

UNEP Fund Manager sent the six invoices that were submitted by the Austrian Government in relation to the contribution of EUR EUR 1,750,00. UNEP does not normally receive funds transfer documents from Donors. Instead they create billing documents and issue invoices and when the funds are received they are matched to the billing documents.

In addition, the Consolidated Interim Financial Statement for the period 1 January 2014 to 30 June 2019 was reviewed and considered complete. As well, the Fund Manager provided the detailed project budget by year for each output/outcome for secured funding. Table 9 below provides the breakdown of costs by funding source. And Table 10 below provides a detailed overview of the financial documentation that has been provided to the evaluator and which confirms the completeness thereof.

## E.5. Breakdown of final costs and co-financing

Table 9 : Cost Breakdown Financial Table

<b>Funding by source (Life of project)</b> <i>All figures as USD</i>	<b>Planned funding</b>	<b>Secured funding</b>	<b>Expended</b>
<b>Funds from the Environment Fund</b>			
<b>Funds from the Regular Budget</b>			
<b>Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):</b>			
<b>Austria</b>	<b>2,374,491</b>	<b>2,374,491</b>	<b>2,367,659</b>
<b>Norway</b>			
<b>Sweden</b>			
<b>China</b>			
<b>Other</b>			
<b>Counterpart</b>			
<b>Unsecured</b>			
<b>Sub-total: Project Funding</b>	<b>2,374,491</b>	<b>2,374,491</b>	<b>2,367,659</b>
<b>Co-financing<sup>[1]</sup> (Cash and in-kind contributions)</b> <i>All figures as USD</i>	<b>Planned contributions</b>	<b>Secured contributions</b>	<b>Verified contributions</b>
<b>Co-financing cash contribution (listed by source):</b>			
<b>Sub-total: co-financing contributions</b>			
<b>Co-financing in-kind contribution (listed by source):</b>			

UNEP Environment Fund	50,000	50,000	50,000
Regular Budget			
<i>The subtotal for the co-financing refers to the calculation of staff time that is invested into the project for implementation.</i>			
<b>Sub-total: in kind contributions</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Staffing (Total throughout the project)</b> <i>All figures as Full Time Equivalents</i>	<b>Planned posts</b>	<b>Filled posts</b>	-
<b>Environment Fund staff-post costs</b>			
<b>Regular Budget staff-post costs</b>			
<b>Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)</b>			

Table 10 : Table of Financial management<sup>133</sup>

Financial Management Table		
Financial management components:	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Completeness of project financial information <sup>[2]</sup> :	YES	Project financial information contains all the relevant information and was prepared in adherence to UNEP guidelines
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-G below)		

<sup>133</sup> [1] Co-financing is understood as funding from a donor to a partner which is not received into UN Environment accounts, but is used by a UN Environment partner or collaborating centre to deliver the results in a UN Environment – approved project.

[2] See also document ‘Criterion Rating Description’ for reference

[3] Compliance with financial systems is not assessed specifically in the evaluation. Nevertheless, if the evaluation identifies gaps in the financial data, or raises other concerns of a compliance nature, a recommendation should be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

A.	Co-financing and Project Costs tables at design (by budget lines)	YES	This was provided
B.	Revisions to the budget	YES	There was a revision in Jan 2018
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	YES	All project legal agreements were provided
D.	Proof of fund transfers	YES	Fund transfers were documented
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	YES	There is in-kind contribution from the EF
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	YES	Interim financial reports and statements of expenditure were created at various period during the life of the project
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses ( <i>where applicable</i> )		
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):		
Any gaps in terms of financial information that could be indicative of shortcomings in the project's compliance <sup>[3]</sup> with the UNEP or donor rules		NO	The project financial information complies with UNEP and Donor rules
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		YES	The responses to financial requests was timely and adequate

Rating for Financial Management: Highly Satisfactory

## **F. Efficiency**

### **F.1 Time Efficiency**

The project has had one 'no cost extension' of one year and was justified by external factors that were entirely beyond the control of the project. Following the exchange of letters between UNEP and the donor in 2017, a respective non-cost extension of the project was requested until December 2018, the respective project change has been made within the project management system (PIMS).

External factors such as political developments in certain regions had delayed regional policy dialogues. Therefore, to meet commitments and pending milestones as per the project document, UNEP requested with the donor an extension of the project that had been undertaken. According to the Project Revision #1, most of the project activities were expected to be completed in the first half of 2018 with the second half of 2018 devoted to the closure of the project. There were no negative impacts caused by this extension, indeed quite the reverse as it enabled activities to be duly completed and the orderly closure of the project.

Planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. According to the final Donor Report, all the project indicators and milestones were achieved for each of the five regions.

### **F.2. Cost efficiency**

There is ample evidence that cost effective approaches strongly supported the achievement of project targets with the project having:

- Drawn heavily on UNEP Vienna Office's longstanding and widespread experience working in mountain regions, notably its work in the Alps and Carpathian regions. UNEP Vienna as a mountain resource centre for UNEP, its work implementing activities in the mountain regions, covered in this project (Balkans and Dinaric Arc, Caucasus, Central Asia,) enabled it to bring a wealth of technical and policy experience to the regions and key countries.
- Drawn heavily on GRID Arendal' scientific expertise and strong assessments-related experience.
- Benefitted from the important role played by the regional mountain partnering institutions in project design and execution of activities in each of the project's five regions. Regional partnering institutions brought substantive expertise and extensive networks to all phases of the project. They provided important institutional anchors and helped to secure authoritative mandates for regional dialogue and cooperative action. One important example is the endorsement of the Andean Strategic Agenda on Climate Change Adaptation (which resulted from the project's regional policy dialogues in that region) at the highest political level, i.e. the inter-sessional meeting of the Environmental Ministerial Forum (which is supported by UNEP)
- Drawn on the ecosystem-based adaptation experiences built throughout the DEPI/EBA Flagship project.

**Rating for Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory**

## **G. Monitoring and Reporting**

### **G.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting**

The Project Document served as the monitoring plan as it provided for detailed indicators and means for verification for each output, and for the project's overall outcome in the Project logical framework. The five progress reports that



were prepared during the life of the project along with the final Donor Report described progress in relation to these indicators as well as the project output milestones.

Data collection and analysis methods were outlined in the Project Document workplan. The monitoring plan's budget was incorporated into the budget line for staff time. Overall monitoring was undertaken by the Project Manager.

The Logical Framework does capture the key elements of the Theory of Change by elaborating on the project activities together with milestones, indicators, and means of verification. Output indicators are SMART. The Logical Framework is more ambitious with its indicators for the Outcome. These include:

- The number of sub-regional climate change outlooks, with the baseline set at 0 and the target of 5. Indeed, all five regions did produce Mountain Outlooks.
- The number of national/sub-regional policies/strategies that integrate mountain specific ecosystem-based and climate adaptation approaches. In this case the baseline was 0 and the target was 3.
- The number of countries incorporating mountain specific ecosystem based and adaptation approaches in national policies. The baseline was set at 0 and the target was 5.

## **G.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation**

The M&E system (set out in the Project Logframe) was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards the project objectives. This is evidenced in the regular progress and financial reports that were prepared in a timely and thorough manner. Equally, the information provided by the M&E system was used systematically to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs. The Final Donor Report provides a very thorough description of overall project performance with regard to each of the five project regions. The project team and management supervision oversaw the execution of the project activities. The milestones that were met provide evidence of success of delivery.

Performance indicators are always an issue, and especially important for donors to see the project impact. The current indicators make it challenging to measure the real effects of a policy dialogue beyond numbers. There is data on how many attended, how many answers to online surveys etc., but intended effects are not captured.

It is important to highlight that all the project outcome indicators were in fact met. However, limited resources meant that UNEP was not able to systematically monitor the extent to which countries were able to uptake the substance of the Mountain Outlooks and regional road maps and integrate climate adaptation into national policy frameworks.<sup>134</sup> Many interviewees stressed the need for a stronger and more robust national-level monitoring. The Project Document for the SDC-funded second phase of this project has included indicators at the output levels such as:

- Number of regional bodies/ frameworks/ platforms in which climate change adaptation in mountains has been institutionalized at policy and planning.
- Number of national policy processes (e.g. NAP, NDC, GCF) related documents per country and target region (East Africa, South Caucasus) that refer to mountain climate change adaptation.
- Number of mountain solutions collected and disseminated for policy makers
- Number of region-specific dialogues platforms on mountain-specific climate adaptation that are established, strengthened and operationalised.
- Number of national policy makers that support the inclusion of mountain adaptation approaches in national policy frameworks.

Whilst these are helpful output level indicators, it is important to develop indicators that capture outcome level results and track uptake. The lack of outcome-level indicators is an ongoing challenge in evaluating UNEP projects. In future, it is important that projects have some sort of quality control monitoring impact tracking tool during the project - for GRID-Arendal input ended in 2017 so it would have been beneficial to have some sort of evaluation at the time. It is

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<sup>134</sup> Respondent interview 24/06/20

definitely important during the project's lifetime and later on to have more qualitative indicators that can be followed.<sup>135</sup> And more generally, UNEP needs to allocate a higher proportion of the overall budget to monitoring progress and performance. It is recognised that this could be a challenge to convince donors of the importance of allocating more budget to monitoring.<sup>136</sup>

### **G.3 Project Reporting**

As noted in Section G.1, regular progress and financial reports were prepared in a timely and extremely thorough manner. The Final Donor Report provides a very comprehensive accounting of overall project performance with regard to each of the five project regions. In general, the donor reports matched available evidence, and reflected the project's scope of work with very detailed reporting for each of the five regions. Despite the difficulty of tracking outcome results, the Final Donor Report did support outcome level results as thoroughly as possible. The satisfactory rating would have been higher if project reporting and monitoring focussed on outcome level results.

**Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Satisfactory**

## **H. Sustainability**

### **H.1. Socio-political Sustainability**

#### **Social or political factors that may influence the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts**

The PRC asserted the socio-political factors and risks in each of the regions had not been addressed in the Project Document. These risks, some of which are outlined below, could have been elaborated earlier on in the project design process. This would have provided the project team with the opportunity to develop effective mitigation strategies, especially in terms of adapting regional dialogue processes and mobilising greater political will for the adoption and integration of regional policy road maps. Political factors certainly influenced the sustainability/durability of project results and progress towards impacts in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Some of the key political risks in the above noted three regions include:

- Increasing competition for water in Central Asia is adding tension to what is already an uneasy region marked by rising nationalism and competition among the five Central Asia states.
- Decades after the end of the Balkans war, tensions continue to rise between Serbia and Kosovo, with the Balkans regions increasingly exacerbated by unchecked executive power, erosion of the rule of law, rising nationalism and xenophobia. The move away from democracy has important repercussions for the promotion of climate awareness and the integration of climate adaptation in national policy frameworks.
- Since the dissolution of the USSR, there has been little evidence of the countries demonstrating willingness to promote regional cooperation. Indeed, the ethno-political conflicts in recent years in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabagh (NK) have ushered in a new period of uncertainty and confrontation in the South Caucasus.

It could have been helpful to capture the ever-changing dynamics in each of the regions, even though we appreciate that these are very delicate matters for UNEP to discuss. Nevertheless, they are factors that most certainly affect the ability of the project to mobilise political support for climate adaptation.

#### **Environmental factors that have influenced the future flow of project benefits**

The main aim of the project was to support the integration of mountain specific Ecosystem-based climate adaptation (EbA) into national and regional policy frameworks and to support countries in reducing their vulnerability and in strengthening their resilience to climate change impacts. With this focus, it follows that worsening climate change in

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<sup>135</sup> Respondent interview 25/06/20

<sup>136</sup> Respondent interview 24/06/20

mountain regions would influence the future flow of project benefits. It would on the one hand, elevate the importance of UNEP's technical and policy support to countries, but ultimately render it more difficult. One of the most important insights generated from the Mountain Outlooks is the increasing pressure that mountains face from key drivers of global change, especially climate change as well as the increased consequences for mountain ecosystems in biodiversity, water availability, agriculture, and hazards, and ultimately human well-being.<sup>137</sup>

### **Level of ownership by the national stakeholders**

In general, the level of ownership by the main national stakeholders, i.e. national focal points was sufficient to allow the project results to be sustained. The following key points provide evidence of national ownership:

In East Africa, ownership is reflected in the establishment of the African Regional Mountain Forum, which is now a permanent intergovernmental body that addresses sustainable mountain development in the region. Ownership is also reflected in the fact that countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya have actually adopted national mountain strategies. And as well, the knowledge from the East African Mountain Outlook has been integrated into the East African Community, reflecting the willingness of East African member states to empower the EAC to address climate adaptation. The role of the EAC as a regional partnering institution was critical for the anchoring of the regional policy dialogues in the region. And finally, the involvement of the African Ministerial Council of Environment (AMCEN) another important regional political body, has played an important role in boosting political support for climate adaptation among national governments.

In the Andes, national ownership is reflected in the fact that the regional road map (ie Strategic Agenda) was adopted at the highest political level, notably the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Ownership is also reflected by the success of the Andean Mountain Initiative, re-invigorated as a result of the project and which is now the principal body that is now promoting regional cooperation for adaptation. The AMI has also been an important institutional anchor for the project.

In the Caucasus, Georgia has emerged as a regional leader and has referenced climate adaptation in the context of mountains in several national instruments such as the Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia and the Climate Change National Adaptation Plan for Georgia's agriculture sector. As well, in its pledges to the Paris Agreement (ratified in May 2017), its nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) submitted to the UNFCCC stipulates that Georgia will develop its first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to be more prepared for the adverse effects of climate change. Additionally, the Government of Azerbaijan started work on developing a low-carbon strategy, using the Mountain Outlook as a substantive basis.

In Central Asia, concerns were raised by the regional expert that the project did not provide for sufficient national ownership. Rather it was felt that national priorities were not considered.

**Rating for Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely**

## **H.2. Financial Sustainability**

At evaluation, project outcomes have a high dependency on future funding/financial flows in order to persist, e.g. to continue to support regional policy dialogue. The project period was not sufficiently long enough for outcomes to be fully realized, which is why a second phase was launched. Fortunately, 100% of the required funding for the second phase have been secured from the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency in the amount of CHF 1,203,45. With this funding secured, there are no immediate financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward

<sup>137</sup> [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/14744\\_climatechangevulnerabilityofmountai.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/14744_climatechangevulnerabilityofmountai.pdf)

progress towards impact in the second phase of the project. It should also be emphasised that the resource mobilisation strategy was adequate at design stage since, as noted in the project budget, the project team had managed to secure all the project funding from the Government of Austria.

#### Rating for Financial Sustainability: Highly Likely

### H.4. Sustainability of the Institutional Framework

At evaluation, evidence suggests that the sustainability of project outcomes (i.e. integration of climate adaptation in national policy frameworks) has a high dependency on institutional support. During the life of the project, UNEP Vienna Office played a central role in initiating the process of developing the regional road maps along with government representatives and of course the regional mountain partnering institutions. In a growing number of cases, along the targeted project activities, UNEP has been working with many countries in the different regions to develop follow up projects. This has been an important result of the regional cooperation and collaboration that was achieved as a result of the project.

Additionally, there is a very strong mechanism in place to sustain the institutionalisation of the direct outcomes, as reflected in the scope of the Project Document for phase 2. It highlights how UNEP has continued to work with mountain countries to enhance adaptation at both sub-regional and national levels. UNEP also intended to work with other partners to mobilise climate financing to help these countries to mainstream mountain and adaptation considerations into relevant national sector-related processes. At the sub-regional level, UNEP and its partners continue to support policy processes within relevant frameworks and foster inter-regional exchange of knowledge and best practices.

#### Replicability and catalytic effect

- The project design contained a very good replicability strategy, which focused on the Project Team working closely with the Regional Offices and together with selected regional mountain partnering institutions as well as technical expertise provided through the various divisions of UNEP.
- The regional mountain partnering institutions were well chosen, based on long-standing collaboration with UNEP in particular its Vienna Office. Their substantive expertise and networks in-region were highly praised by national focal points. This is one of the important reasons cited for the high possibility that approaches undertaken would be replicated and upscaled by these partners.
- Very importantly, some of the project activities led to closer cooperation with Austrian Development agency (East Africa and Balkans). New donors are being connected with target countries e.g. Germany and Luxembourg and there is emerging cooperation with the private sector.<sup>138</sup>
- The project also catalysed new initiatives in other sub-regions. For the Carpathian Convention, a new provision on climate change was added to the convention along with new climate working groups. This allowed UNEP to produce (with Carpathian resources) a Carpathian Outlook on climate change adaptation which has the same format as the other outlooks that had been produced as a result of the project.
- At the time of project design, many countries had projects in the pipeline but had not signed them yet. As a result of the project, many new activities were launched as reflected in the following figure.

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<sup>138</sup> Respondent interview 03/07/20

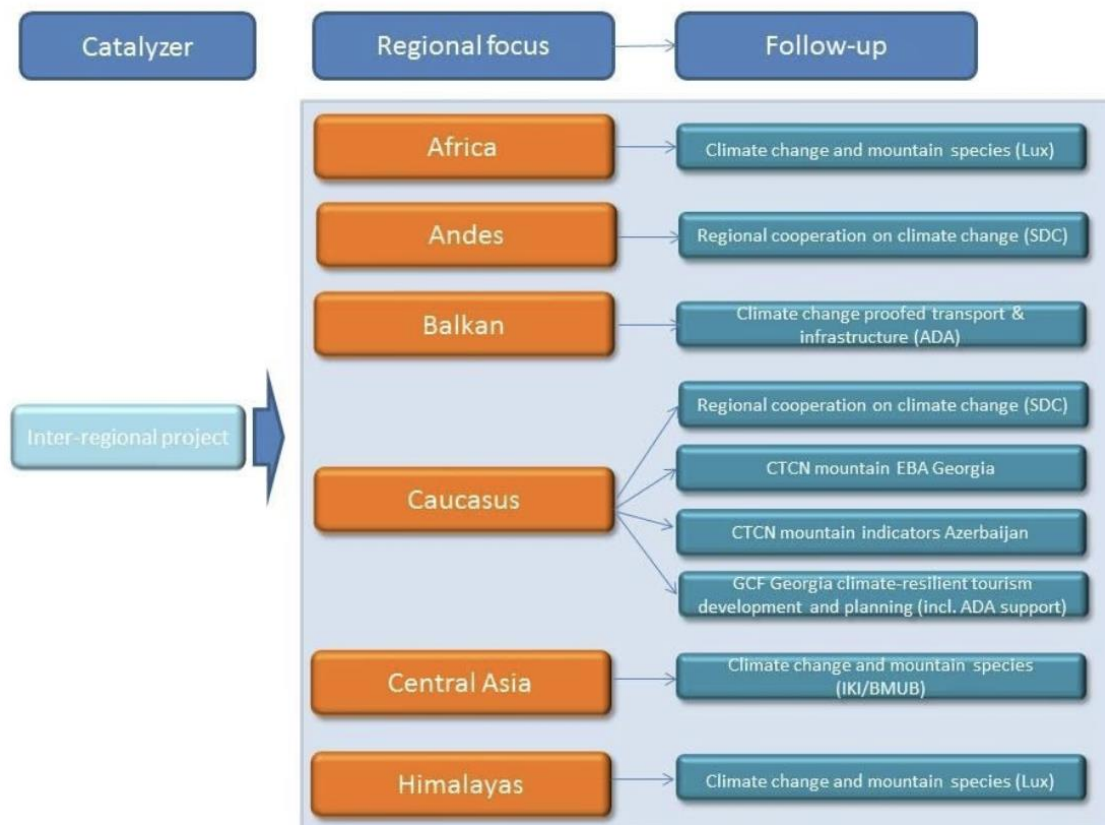


Figure 15: Examples of catalysed follow up activities at both regional and national

**Rating for Sustainability of the Institutional Framework: Moderately Likely**

**Rating for Sustainability:**

## I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

### I.1. Preparation and Readiness

The rating of Satisfactory for Preparation and Readiness is supported by the following evidence:

- There were no weaknesses in project design that needed responding to.
- Project financing had been totally secured during this period.
- The capacity of the regional partnering organisations had been fully established and their roles and responsibilities had been identified.

## I.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

The rating of Highly Satisfactory for Project Management and Supervision is supported by the following evidence:

### Project management

- Whilst there was no Steering Committee, there was an equivalent oversight / guidance mechanism in the form of close collaboration between the project manager and his direct supervisors all as well as donor (Government of Austria)
- The teams involved in the implementation performed at a high level. All of the regional mountain partnering institutions are long-standing partners with UNEP Vienna Office and are well known to the project management team. Their role was also highly praised by interviewees because of the depth of their regional knowledge, convening power and capacity to backstop the implementation of the project.
- Project implementation mechanisms outlined in the Project Document were closely followed and were highly effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. As mentioned throughout this report, the Project Manager (Matthias Jurek) and regional partnering institutions were highly praised by interviewees. Project management was also enhanced by the close working relationship that UNEP Vienna Office has with all the other UNEP Regional Offices that were engaged in the project. Whilst there was no formal Steering Committee as outlined in the Project Document, project management oversight was carried out by the Head of the UNEP Vienna Office (also serving as the focal point for mountains in UNEP), the Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Europe, along with the Chief of UNEP's Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (.)
- The working relationship between the Project Manager and other members of the project team (notably the regional partnering institutions) was constructive and effective to a very large extent.
- The majority of project staff have capacity that is aligned with project requirements.
- Staff were located appropriately for efficient project implementation.
- There was regular and constructive information exchange between the project manager, regional partners, and UNEP colleagues.
- In terms of adaptive management, this was evidenced in the important decision that was taken by the Project Manager to apply for a no-cost extension to ensure sufficient time for the project to factor in new indicators, and to ensure that existing indicators and milestones were achieved. Adaptive management was also reflected in ongoing efforts to monitor political situations in the regions and to adjust interventions accordingly, notably in the Andes and Caucasus.
- One of the most important strengths of the project management arrangement was the collaboration with the regional mountain partnering institutions. They also worked very closely with UNEP Regional Offices and brought extensive knowledge and networks to the project, without which the project might have been far less successful than it was. The fact that the same regional partnering institutions have been chosen for the second phase of this project (Adaptation at Altitude project) is important evidence of the quality of their respective contributions to the overall management and execution of the project.
- Overall supervision for the project was undertaken by the Head of the UNEP Vienna Office with whom the Project Manager has worked closely for many years. Together they bring considerable expertise and experience to the project and have a proven track record in terms of their respective achievements working with the Vienna Office.

### Supervision

- All of the progress reports were meticulous in their adherence to output monitoring.
- The assessment of the realism of the project reporting and ratings will have to be discussed further with UNEP colleagues, along with these additional questions.
- Were financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision adequate? How adequate were project supervision plans, inputs and processes? The project was provided with adequate

financial and administrative supervision every step of the way. This includes administrative and financial support, supervision and monitoring of various aspects of the project.

- Was project reporting and ratings realistic and candid (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks)? The ratings are commensurate with the project realities and risks.
- Was the document of project supervision activities of good quality? The documentation of project supervision activities were of good quality
- Were financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision adequate? The financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision was quite adequate.

### **I.3. Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation**

The overall rating for Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation is 'Highly Satisfactory'.

This rating is reinforced by the following evidence:

- At the time of implementation, an excellent analysis of stakeholder key groups had been mapped out in the Project Document, notably: scientific stakeholders who were involved in the Mountain Outlooks; policy stakeholders (i.e. governmental representatives) who were involved in the work of the regional policy dialogues; regional stakeholders were the regional partnering mountain institutions, with whom UNEP Vienna Office has had long standing collaboration. All of these stakeholders were supported throughout the project by the UNEP Regional Offices.
- There have been strong and effective efforts made by Project Team to promote stakeholder ownership (of process or outcome) and this is reflected by the extent to which regional partners took the lead in the organisation of the regional policy dialogues. The existing institutional anchors such as the ICSD in Central Asia, EAC in East Africa and the Andean Initiative were central to mobilizing the mandate for regional dialogue and cooperative action. As well, they were instrumental in mobilising high level support for the project to ensure strong governmental ownership, reflected for example in the Andes with the Outlook having been endorsed at the highest political level at the Environmental Ministerial Forum in LAC.
- All of the interviews with scientific, policy and regional stakeholders affirmed the high quality of UNEP Vienna Office's effective and timely consultation and communication as well as collaboration with all of the stakeholder groups during the life of the project.
- This entire project was focused on supporting countries in building their ecological, economic and social resilience to rapidly accelerating climate change. The impact of climate change on economic livelihoods is an important challenge that has been addressed in the Mountain Outlooks, the regional policy dialogues and in the resulting regional policy road maps. Indeed, one of the countries in East Africa that successfully replicated the regional policy road into the national context was Uganda. Its Sustainable Mountain Development Strategy highlights the importance of ensuring that mountain ecosystems are protected to continue supplying ecosystem goods and services for livelihoods of mountain communities and national development.

### **I.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity**

The Gender Scoring for this project is "Satisfactory".

The Project Document does include reference to gender considerations in the section on "Gender Analysis", in which the project team commits to ensuring that gender aspects are taken into account, in particular, when addressing issues of sustainable mountain development. This is especially important in light of the special role played by women in mountain communities and in the context of climate adaptation. In the section on 'Other Socio-Economic Issues and Environmental Safeguards', there is substantial mention of how

gender aspects will be taken into account, in particular, when addressing issues of sustainable mountain development. The Project Document asserts that it is important to explore the specific knowledge, expertise, and experience of women. (e.g. through the inclusion as local stories in climate change outlooks). The Project Manager did confirm that all efforts were taken to ensure gender balance in the regional policy dialogues. Gender factors were incorporated for meetings and events. Furthermore, the outlooks and included case studies were in particular drawing on the role of women with regards to adaptation action.

The Project Document did not make explicit reference to an "integrated approach to human and natural systems". However it did refer to the impact that when fragile mountain ecosystems are affected by climate change, there can be "profound implications on their ecology and economically-important nature-based services and the communities that depend on them and their resources."

## **1.5. Environmental and Social Safeguards**

The Environmental and Social Safeguard score is "Satisfactory".

The project document addresses only a handful of risks with a notable gap in terms of socio-political risks. Nevertheless, the project team did monitor socio-political risks in each of the project regions on a regular basis, and their required project reporting did address safeguard issues. Moreover, the project team engaged in adaptive management throughout the life of the project to avoid, minimise, mitigate or offset risks.

## **1.6. Country Ownership and Driven-ness**

The overall rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness is "Moderately Satisfactory"

The evaluation team saw evidence of progression from output to outcome as a result of government engagement in each of the regions. We do not know if this was the case in every government since we did not interview every national focal point. However, based on the interviews that we did conduct, we are confident that all relevant stakeholders took leadership in the following:

- Strategic guidance of project delivery
- Driving and/or advocating for change to achieve higher levels
- Endorsing project results
- Initiating non-cost complementary activities.

The level of ownership by the main national stakeholders, i.e. national focal points was certainly sufficient to allow the project results to be sustained. The following key points provide evidence of national ownership:

- In East Africa, ownership is reflected in the establishment of the African Regional Mountain Forum, which is now a permanent intergovernmental body that addresses sustainable mountain development in the region. Ownership is also reflected in the fact that some countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya have actually adopted national mountain strategies. And as well, the knowledge from the East African Mountain Outlook has been integrated into the East African Community, reflecting the willingness of East African member states to empower the EAC to address climate adaptation. The role of the EAC as a regional partnering institution was critical for the anchoring of the regional policy dialogues in the region. And finally, the involvement of the AMCEN, another important regional political body, has played an important role in boosting political support



for climate adaptation among national governments.

- In the Andes, national ownership is reflected in the fact that the regional road map (i.e. Strategic Agenda) was adopted at the highest political level, notably the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Ownership is also reflected by the success of the Andean Mountain Initiative, re-invigorated as a result of the project and which is now the principal body that is now promoting regional cooperation for adaptation. The AMI has also been an important institutional anchor for the project
- In the Caucasus, Georgia has emerged as a regional leader and has referenced climate adaptation in the context of mountains in several national instruments such as the Socio-Economic Development Strategy of Georgia and the Climate Change National Adaptation Plan for Georgia's agriculture sector. As well, in its pledges to the Paris Agreement (ratified in May 2017), its nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) submitted to the UNFCCC stipulates that Georgia will develop its first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to be more prepared for the adverse effects of climate change. Additionally, the Government of Azerbaijan started work on developing a low-carbon strategy and development of vulnerability indicators, using the Mountain Outlook as a substantive basis.
- In Central Asia, concerns were raised by the regional expert that the project did not provide for sufficient national ownership. Rather it was felt that national priorities were not considered.

## **I.7 Communication and Public Awareness**

The overall rating for Communication and Public Awareness is 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'

As highlighted in the Donor Report, UNEP and its partners have been increasing awareness on mountains and climate change adaptation through the use of its social media channels and through the dissemination of project results at key global meetings such as UNFCCC COPs. UNEP has just recently started using a tracking tool to track social media posts.

UNEP Vienna Office has also undertaken work with goodwill ambassadors and prominent personalities to highlight climate adaptation stories. UNEP's 'Mountain Heroes' campaign is steadily growing, with a total of six heroes: Will Gadd – a famous Canadian ice climber, Michael Strasser – a multiple World Record Holder and Austrian cyclist, Sabrina Simader – the Kenyan/Austrian skier, Ben Fogle – an ethical mountain climber, Malcolm Wood – an adventurer and paraglider in Asia and Kelly Sildaru – a freestyle skier from Estonia.

UNEP is also exploring opportunities to partner with the private sector and sports associations (such as International Olympic Committee, European Outdoor Group, European Outdoor Conservation Association). Related outreach events were held and media impact achieved for example at the COP24 UNFCCC in Katowice including joint events with the Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism of Austria, Elisabeth Köstinger.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

Overall, this project successfully completed all planned activities at the output level. The Mountain Outlook series, created in partnership with GRID-Arendal, published a region-specific report in all output regions, containing accurate and updated climate science.

The project also convened RPDs in all regions, albeit to varying degrees of engagement and success. UNEP provided each region with the expertise and tools required to form a policy dialogue.

In all regions the process of forming a roadmap was initiated. The roadmaps were successful in both Africa and the Andes, being used to stimulate meaningful discourse and in some cases were mainstreamed into national policy (eg Uganda). However, in the Caucasus, the roadmap was not able to be adopted due to regional conflict. In Central Asia the roadmaps were deemed to not focus sufficiently on regional priorities such as water management nor contain sufficient detail to be taken up at the national level. Finally, regional conflict in the Balkans hindered the roadmap progress, though a roadmap was eventually created in combination with another project, and endorsed.

There is evidence of the fulfilment of the project outcomes to varying degrees dependent on region. In all cases, knowledge developed while producing the outlooks and throughout the policy dialogues played a role in elevating the importance of climate adaptive action in mountainous ecosystems. The most successful regions at the output level were East Africa and the Andes. Both regions were successful in engaging with the knowledge from the Outlook and forming productive, collaborative relationships, during a sequence of successful RPDs. The Caucasus showed evidence of success at the national level in Georgia and Azerbaijan, although regional cooperation was impaired by political tensions.

At least some of the Intermediate states have been fulfilled in all regions. All the intermediate states were fulfilled in the Andes, Caucasus and East Africa, while some intermediate states were lacking in the other regions. This is evidence that all regions are progressing towards achieving the intended impact of the project, albeit some regions have made more progress than others.

Overall, there is limited evidence for medium term impact across the regions. Different regions displayed different strengths; for example the Andean countries displayed a high level of regional cooperation, whereas the East African region had the most concrete evidence of mainstreaming knowledge at the national level. For example, Uganda's 2016 'National Sustainable Mountain Development Strategy' was arguably the most concrete evidence for the medium-term impact from this project. The other regions have provided less evidence of policy mainstreaming, however the Caucasus, Balkans and Central Asian mountain regions were held back by certain political, economic, social and natural hurdles external to the project.

The ToC was reconstructed to ensure the project has been evaluated fairly, taking into account the inherent time limitations of large international policy projects like this. As such, the evaluation team did not evaluate the project

critically against the long term intended impacts. The LTI remains in the ToC to indicate a long-term goal used to signpost future projects. The fulfillment of the medium term intended impact in some regions lays a solid foundation which is hoped will eventually result in the obtainment of the long-term impact, beyond the four-year timeframe given for this project.

## B. Summary of project findings and ratings

53. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of Satisfactory.

Table 11: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
<b>Strategic Relevance</b>		<b>HS</b>
1. Alignment to MTS and POW	The project forms a strong contribution to the implementation of the PoW 2014/15, climate change, (a) output 3.	<b>HS</b>
2. Alignment to UNEP / Donor strategic priorities	This project relates to UNEP's mandate for national capacity building, promotion of regional dialogue and cooperative action in the area of sustainable mountain development. Sustainable mountain development and climate change adaptation builds one of the core areas of the work of UNEP.	<b>HS</b>
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	This project was highly relevant to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities.	<b>HS</b>
4. Complementarity with existing interventions	The project has complementarity with a number of existing interventions, such as Carpathian Convention, UNEP Vienna and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, and DEPI's Mountain Flagship project, the REGATTA project (ROLAC), and African Mountain Atlas (ROA).	<b>HS</b>
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>	The project design is satisfactory, with strengths including: providing a thorough problem analysis a clear Theory of Change, SMART indicators, and highly adequate resource mobilisation strategy; and some weaknesses such as: minimal mention of the possible challenging operational factors, and limited in terms of partnerships.	<b>HS</b>
<b>Nature of External Context</b>	The PRC asserted the socio-political factors and risks in each of the regions had not been addressed in the Project Document. These risks could have been elaborated earlier on in the project design process. This would have provided the project team with the opportunity to develop effective mitigation strategies.	<b>MF</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>		<b>MS</b>
1. Deliverability of outputs	In all regions, Mountain Outlooks were published, RPDs were convened and Strategic Agendas were either developed in draft or final form.	<b>S</b>
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The Project outcome, as per the ToC, was fully achieved in two out of the five project regions (Andes and East Africa) and partially achieved to varying degrees in the other three regions (Caucasus, Balkans and Central Asia)	<b>MS</b>

3. Likelihood of impact	The likelihood of impact varied between regions, as with the achievement of outcomes; intermediate states were achieved each of the regions to varying degrees. In the Andes, Caucasus and East Africa, there was concrete evidence for achievement of all Intermediate States, whereas there was less robust evidence in other regions.	<b>ML</b>
<b>Financial Management</b>		
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures <sup>139</sup>	At the time of project launch, the project was fully funded by the Austrian Government. The project manager took great care to optimise resources. This project also helped catalyse subsequent projects which have attracted funding from bilateral and multilateral sources.	<b>HS</b>
2. Completeness of project financial information	Project financial information was complete as compared with the criterion ratings table.	<b>HS</b>
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	In the beginning there was infrequent communication between finance and project management staff for the reason that the fund manager that was assigned to this project was only available to the project for 10% out of his total time.	<b>MS</b>
<b>Efficiency</b>		<b>HS</b>
	The project has had one 'no cost extension' of one year and was justified by external factors that were entirely beyond the control of the project. Planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. There is ample evidence that cost effective approaches strongly supported the achievement of project targets under cost efficiency.	
<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>		<b>HS</b>
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The Project Document served as the monitoring plan. The five progress reports that were prepared during the life of the project along with the final Donor Report described progress in relation to these indicators as well as the project output milestones. Data collection and analysis methods were outlined in the Project Document workplan. The monitoring plan's budget was incorporated into the budget line for staff time.	<b>HS</b>
2. Monitoring of project implementation	The M&E system (set out in the Project Logframe) was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards the project objectives. However, limited resources meant that UNEP was not able to systematically monitor the extent to which countries were able to uptake the project outputs. Many interviewees stressed the need for a stronger and more robust national-level monitoring.	<b>MS</b>
3. Project reporting	Regular progress and financial reports were prepared in a timely and extremely thorough manner. The Final Donor Report provides a very comprehensive accounting of overall project performance with regard to each of the five project regions.	<b>HS</b>
<b>Sustainability</b>		<b>ML</b>
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project design contained a very good replicability strategy, which focused on the Project Team working closely with the	<b>ML</b>

<sup>139</sup> This rating was not included in the weighted spreadsheet as it was not included within the framework.

	Regional Offices and together with selected regional mountain partnering institutions. The project also catalysed new initiatives in other sub-regions. However, it would have been desirable to elaborate on project risks earlier in the project to devise mitigation strategies.	
2. Financial sustainability	The resource mobilisation strategy was adequate at design stage since the project team had managed to secure all the project funding from the Government of Austria. The project also helped to catalyse resource mobilisation, notably further support from the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency for the second phase of the project.	<b>HL</b>
3. Institutional sustainability	At evaluation, evidence suggests that the sustainability of project outcomes has a high dependency on institutional support. In a growing number of cases, along the targeted project activities, UNEP has been working with many countries in the different regions to develop follow up projects. Additionally, there is a very strong mechanism in place to sustain the institutionalisation of the direct outcomes, as reflected in the scope of the Project Document for phase 2.	<b>ML</b>
<b>Factors Affecting Performance</b>		<b>S</b>
1. Preparation and readiness	The project objectives and components were clear, practical and feasible. All of the regional mountain partnering institutions were known UNEP partners and were praised by interviewees. The project document was clear and realistic with very thorough project outputs, and provided a thorough problem analysis and adequate situation analysis. The Project Document provided a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis, and identified the involvement of stakeholders in the preparation and inception phase.	<b>S</b>
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Very strong project management, based on effective oversight / guidance mechanism, team performing at a high level, strong working relationship between project manager and partner institutions, and excellent adaptive management.	<b>S</b>
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	There have been strong and effective efforts made by Project Team to promote stakeholder ownership (of process or outcome) and this is reflected by the extent to which regional partners took the lead in the organisation of the regional policy dialogues. The existing institutional anchors such as the ICSD in Central Asia, EAC in East Africa and the Andean Initiative were central to mobilizing high level support for the project to ensure strong governmental ownership, reflected for example in the Andes with the Outlook having been endorsed at the highest political level at the Environmental Ministerial Forum in LAC.	<b>S</b>
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	The regional policy dialogues were convened with the aim of an equal gender balance, however there was less evidence of gender being central to the project goals. There were no specific budget lines for gender.	<b>MS</b>
5. Environmental, social and economic safeguards <sup>140</sup>	The project document addresses only a handful of risks with a notable gap in terms of socio-political risks. Nevertheless, the	<b>S</b>

<sup>140</sup> This rating was not included in the weighted spreadsheet as it was not included within the framework.

	project team did monitor socio-political risks in each of the project regions on a regular basis, and their required project reporting did address safeguard issues. Moreover, the project team engaged in adaptive management throughout the life of the project to avoid, minimise, mitigate or offset risks.	
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	The level of ownership by the main national stakeholders, i.e. national focal points was sufficient to allow the project results to be sustained. The evaluation team is confident that the relevant focal points played key roles in: Strategic guidance of project delivery · Driving or advocating for change to achieve higher level results, Endorsing project results, Initiating non-cost complementary activities, Provision co-financing contributions and securing additional external resources.	<b>MS</b>
7. Communication and public awareness	UNEP attempted to raise awareness of the project through the Mountain Heroes program, however it is unclear if this improved public awareness.	<b>MU</b>
<b>Overall Project Performance Rating</b>		<b>S</b>

## C. Overview of Lessons learned and Recommendations

Table 12: Table showing lessons learned and an overview of the corresponding recommendations (more detailed recommendations below)

#	Lesson Learned	Recommendations and suggestions
1	The typical policy life cycle timeframe does not align with the timeframe dedicated to this project.	When producing the PRODOC, UNEP should ensure that due consideration is given to the timeframe of the project so that it better corresponds to the national policy cycles that are the object of the project.
2	The influence of the Outlook is currently unclear in lack of a robust monitoring system to track where and when the Outlook has been specifically referenced. GRID ARENDAL could play a useful role in this regard.	UNEP should create more robust methodologies for tracking how the Outlooks are integrated into national frameworks to determine its effectiveness. To this end, UNEP should engage GRID ARENDAL and other project partners more systematically to assist with outcome-level monitoring
3	On occasions, UNEP has failed to align the project with existing political, environmental and economic priorities in the region. Political barriers in some regions significantly slowed, or even halted, the progress of the project as UNEP had failed to adapt the project approach to these political contexts accordingly.	In the PRODOC, UNEP should provide a more fulsome accounting of the regional socio-political, institutional, environmental and economic context. Risk analysis in the PRODOC should be more comprehensive, especially in terms of socio-political risk.
4	Anchoring with existing regional bodies (E.g. EAC, CONDESAN, ICSD) helped to streamline the process into existing frameworks. Convening meetings through these bodies was also a more cost-effective approach for UNEP and promoted national uptake. This could be utilised further in certain regions.	UNEP should create synergies with national processes and anchor within existing local institutions. This will ensure that pre-existing regional issues are not overlooked, failure to incorporate important regional issues could hinder uptake of final policy documents.
5	National ownership of the project is important to ensure the longevity and follow through of goals once the UNEP project has terminated.	In the project design phase, UNEP should develop a suite of approaches which will deepen national ownership. Furthermore, UNEP should work with governments to develop approaches that ensure greater national ownership.
6	Regular changes in personnel, both within UNEP and focal points in the regions, disrupted the flow of information dissemination for the project.	UNEP should create a risk mitigation strategy that addresses the potential for change in personnel and in regional focal points, a common problem in projects such as this one.
7	NAPs are currently being under-utilised as a tool for concrete implementation.	UNEP should engage with NAPs as a tool to integrate project outputs and extend the reach of the project beyond individuals, depending on the lifecycle of the NAP process. This will result in greater uptake of the project beyond the relatively brief political cycle.
8	The political commitment to mountains is gaining momentum, UNEP ought to maintain and build on this. As well, the topic of mountains should be elevated among UNEP's top priorities, especially	UNEP should consider choosing mountains and climate as the theme for UNEA-6 in order to build on and sustain this political momentum. As well, elevate the importance of mountains within UNEP, in particular at senior management level, and recognition of UNEP's strong delivery on mountains.

glaciers and also significant changes in regions without permafrost).

- 9** The broad geographic scope of this project has generated a wealth of knowledge of best practices in terms of mountains and climate adaption. UNEP should scale up best practices sharing. For example, UNEP could create a portal that would enable the sharing of best practices. As well, UNEP could introduce a compilation of best practices.



## D. Detailed Recommendations

<b>Recommendation #1:</b>	Any follow on project should try to ensure the time frame of their projects align with existing national policy processes.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a UNEP project aims to reform policy at the national level in a limited time period, the project timeframe should be longer to reflect the time realities of national policy processes.</li> <li>• UNEP should ensure that future project documents reflect the reality that national policy cycles do not always align with project timeframes and that timeframes should be extended because outputs and outcomes often materialise after the project has been completed.</li> <li>• This is particularly important due to the political, institutional and legal context of the Outputs for this project, frequent turn-over of personnel and institutional friction in national bureaucracies significantly slow the process.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Opportunity for improvement
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project Manager and PMs of future UNEP projects focused on supporting national policy efforts

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section D (throughout, recurring issue)

<b>Recommendation #2:</b>	UNEP should create more robust methodologies for tracking how the Outlooks are integrated into national frameworks to determine effectiveness. To this end, UNEP should engage GRID ARENDAL and other project partners more systematically to assist with outcome-level monitoring
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is currently no system to track where and how governments actually refer to the Outlook or its findings. The lack of formal methods to track the usage of the Outlook leads to a lack of robust evidence for outcome achievement.</li> <li>• A stronger approach would be to collect comprehensive information on how policy makers reference key policy documents (e.g. the Outlook) in their discussions, for example at UNFCCC COPs or AMSEN meetings, (and any preparatory documents).</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Critical
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP Project Manager for the second phase of this project

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section D (throughout, recurring issue)

<b>Recommendation #3:</b>	When preparing project documents, UNEP should provide a more fulsome accounting of the regional socio-political, institutional, environmental and economic context. UNEP projects should allocate a higher proportion of project budgets to monitoring progress and risks.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth understanding of the environmental politics at the national level need to be clearly articulated before endeavouring to forge a process of regional cooperation. This will require more bilateral cooperation with national governments.</li> <li>• Economic turmoil, political unrest, language barriers, election cycles and problematic international relations will all impact the project in a non-trivial manner. Failure to adapt to these developments could slow down, or even terminate, the project before the outcomes have been achieved.</li> <li>• Examining the political context in advance can result in a more context appropriate course of action. For example, had UNEP identified the frozen conflicts present in the Caucasus and Balkans regions in advance, these could have been more tactfully maneuvered which could have prevented the rejection of the strategic roadmap on the grounds of political relations.</li> <li>• The project should identify such barriers in the early stages, with a clear framework in place to mitigate them. For example, in regions with frozen conflicts, bilateral or sub-regional approaches could be considered in the case that pan-regional approaches prove to be dysfunctional.</li> <li>• More generally, UNEP needs to allocate a higher proportion of the overall budget to monitoring progress and risks.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project Manager for the second phase of this project

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: B. Quality of Project Design.

<b>Recommendation #4:</b>	In future project phases, UNEP should continue to create synergies with national processes and anchor activities within existing national and/or regional institutions. UNEP should replicate the success with the EAC in other regions by collaborating with economic bodies, especially the regional UN Economic Commissions
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anchoring project activities within existing regional bodies (E.g. EAC, CONDESAN, ICSD) helped to streamline costs and improve efficiencies. This approach also helped to ensure that pre-existing regional issues are addressed in a timely manner.</li> <li>• Convening meetings through these bodies also helped to promote national uptake. This approach should be replicated in other regions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needs to be further anchoring the strategic agendas and fostering of the intergovernmental process, with the exception of Andes and East Africa, where this occurred. In some cases this could lead to a possible mountain convention in which UNEP will continue to work closely with the regional centres.</li> <li>• The project needs to be better anchored into the regions. And it is important to look to the SDGs (especially in developing countries) for overarching policy frameworks within which to ground the mountain work.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project Manager

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness: D.2. Output B

<b>Recommendation #5:</b>	In the project design phase, UNEP should develop a suite of approaches which will deepen national ownership.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National ownership is important to ensure the sustainability, longevity and uptake of project outputs.</li> <li>• Ownership will be affected by the extent to which UNEP engages with national focal points to understand national context and priorities.</li> <li>• Ownership is also reflected by the extent to which project activities actually respond to the national priorities and concerns that will have been raised by national focal points and key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Understanding the political context of environmental issues in the region is key to drafting regional policy road maps that will have a high uptake rate. In a number of regions, there were concerns that the roadmaps did not reflect priority issues in the region. This ultimately reduced relevance and therefore the government buy-in that was essential for uptake of the final policy roadmaps. Greater consultation with regional bodies is essential.</li> <li>• For example, water resources emerged a key issue in both Central Asia and Andes regions. If the Outlook would have prioritised these issues in more detail, there would have been higher uptake by national governments in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project manager of second phase of this project

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness: D.1 Output A and D.5. Output E

<b>Recommendation #6:</b>	UNEP should create risk mitigation strategies that addresses the potential for change in personnel and in regional focal points, a common problem in projects such as this one.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular changes in personnel, both within UNEP and focal points in the regions, disrupted information dissemination and project implementation.</li> <li>● The best way to deal with this reality is simply to be prepared for it and to ensure the institutional memory is not dependent on one individual. This can be rectified by clear hand-over plans.</li> <li>● It would be beneficial to have specific committees with stakeholders from different sectors, assigning them designated positions and well-structured responsibilities, that would be unaffected by governmental transitions and staff changes.</li> <li>● Anchoring the project within frameworks and institutions, not individuals, will help to overcome the loss of institutional memory during turnover of personnel.</li> <li>● This would help improve project continuity, and resolve the issue of interruptions of the knowledge flow during staff turnover.</li> <li>● Changeover of staff often resulted in expertise and insight being lost, reducing the effectiveness of the project.</li> <li>● UNEP could engage permanent focal points, such as a regional office, when dealing with the issue of climate adaptation in mountain regions.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project manager of second phase of this project

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness: D.2. Output B

<b>Recommendation #7:</b>	UNEP should engage with NAPs as a tool to integrate project outputs and extend the reach of the project beyond individuals, depending on the lifecycle of the NAP process. This will result in greater uptake of the project beyond the relatively brief political cycle.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NAPs provide a firm institutional vehicle to mainstream the knowledge from the policy roadmap into concrete national policy. Currently, governments acknowledge the usefulness of the UNEP knowledge, but are failing to mainstream this knowledge into concrete NAPs.</li> <li>● Highlighting the linkages between ecosystem health and ecosystem services, and the potential for climate change maladaptation to disrupt these vital services also ought to be emphasised to nations in the hope that it will be included in NAPs.</li> <li>● NAPs are currently underutilised in cementing climate change adaptation policies into mainstream national development policy.</li> <li>● Embedding dialogue within institutions and processes, like NAPs, is more effective than anchoring onto individual ministers as there is frequent personnel turnover which can result in progress being lost. When individual ministers or staff leave their role, their successors can continue progressing the work as it is embedded within the NAP, not the individual.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important

<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project manager of second phase of this project
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Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness: D.2. Output A

<b>Recommendation #8:</b>	UNEP should consider choosing mountains and climate as the theme for UNEA-6 in order to build on and sustain the political momentum that has been generated by this project. As well, UNEP should elevate the importance of mountains within UNEP, in particular at senior management level, and in recognition of UNEP's strong delivery on mountains.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The political commitment to mountains is gaining momentum, UNEP ought to maintain and build on this. As well, the topic of mountains should be elevated among UNEP's top priorities, especially glaciers and also significant changes in regions without permafrost).</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Critical
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP colleagues responsible for planning of UNEA-6

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness

<b>Recommendation #9</b>	UNEP should scale up the sharing of best practices as regards the integration of mountains in climate adaptation. For example, UNEP could create a portal that would enable the sharing of best practices. As well, UNEP could introduce a compilation of best practices.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNEP should scale up efforts to highlight and share best practices of adaptation in other regions and in disseminating information.</li> <li>• UNEP should demonstrate mutual benefits of NbS, combining adaptation and mitigation and show examples of where it works.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority:</b>	Important
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Project manager of second phase of this project

Cross-reference(s) to rationale and supporting discussions:

- Section V. Evaluation Findings: D. Effectiveness

### ANNEX I- List of documents and individuals consulted during the main evaluation phase

#### General:

- Donor Agreement Between the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management of Austria and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Methodology for sub-Regional Mountain Response Assessments (outlooks)
- Record of Social Media Posts (highlights)
- Progress Report No 1
- Progress Report No 2
- Progress Report No 3
- Progress Report No 4
- Progress Report No 5

#### Output A) Technical and policy support provided to African mountain countries in a sub-regional context

- Development of Outlook Report:
  - AMRF14 Arusha Outcomes
  - AMRF14 1st Announcement
  - AMRF14 Participants
  - IISD AMRF Highlights
  - Cairo Declaration 15th ordinary session of AMCEN, Cairo, 2-6 March 2015 and East African concept note
  - Meeting Programme regional consultation meeting in Entebbe Uganda
  - Meeting report East African Community meeting of regional climate change technical working group Entebbe Uganda
  - World Mountain Forum Uganda Side event\_List of participants\_18 Oct 2016
  - Mountain Adaptation Outlook Series - Outlook on Sustainable mountain development in East Africa in a changing climate
- Development of Agenda for Eastern African Mountains:
  - Programme Regional consultation meeting September 2018 Kigali
  - Outcome document September 2018 Kigali
  - Chapter Outline East Africa Draft
  - Background document Agenda for Eastern African Mountains
- Overall Impact:
  - Vanishing treasures leaflet

## Output B) Technical and policy support provided to Andes mountain countries in a sub-regional context

- Development of Outlook Report:
  - COP20 Mountains and Water Pavilion Side Event - Climate change and adaptation in the Andes mountain region
  - Meeting Programme Regional Consultation Meeting in Lima Peru
  - List of attendees' signatures for Regional Consultation Meeting in Lima Peru
  - Background paper Tropical Andes Component
  - Programme Regional Stakeholder Meeting Lima, Peru 27-28 April 2016 (Spanish version)
  - List of attendees' signatures for Regional Stakeholder Meeting Lima, Peru 2016
  - Mountain Adaptation Outlook Series - Outlook on climate change adaptation in Tropical Andes mountains
  - GRID-Arendal News article - Climate change in the Tropical Andes ...
  - UNEP Newsletter Entry - [http://unepineurope.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=517:mountainoutlook-for-andes-launched&catid=115](http://unepineurope.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=517:mountainoutlook-for-andes-launched&catid=115)
  
- Development of Strategic Guidance:
  - Tucuman Declaration (Declaracion de Tucuman)
  - Programme Regional Stakeholder Meeting Lima, Peru 27-28 April 2016 (Spanish version)
  - List of attendees' signatures for Regional Stakeholder Meeting Lima, Peru 2016
  - UNEP Press Release – Climate Change in the Andes Needs Regional Action
  - Background Document for Regional Consultation Meeting July 2017
  - Minutes of Regional Consultation Meeting July 2017, inc. participants list
  - Programme for Regional Stakeholder Meeting Bogota Colombia 10-11 July 2017 (Spanish version)
  - Memorias 2017 - Agenda Estratégica para la Adaptación al Cambio Climático
  - Final Version Strategic Agenda Spanish version
  - UNEP Press Release – Andean Countries Strike Regional Approach to Climate Adaptation
  - Mountain Partnership Event Details – International Congress of Highlands and Mountain Ecosystems
  - Mountain Partnership News - Towards a regional vision of the Andes
  - CONDESAN news story - Spanish\_En Congreso Internacional de P...os y Ecosistemas de Montaña
  - Report of the High Level Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and Regional Consultation for Third United Nations Environment Assembly
  - Outcomes of the Intersessional Meeting of the Ministers of Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean UNEPLAC-IC.2017
  - IAM Meeting Huaraz article\_ (Spanish) - Huaraz en Perú será sede de la cumbre I...va Andina de Montañas o Agenda - Reunion Regional Andes 18.11.16 o Listado participantes reuniones Montañas noviem 06.11.2018

- CONDESAN Story - Ecuador fue anfitrión de la Reunión Anual del Consejo de países miembros de la Iniciativa Andina de Montañas'
- Meeting Programme Agenda for IAM Reunion 14\_11\_18
- Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Movilidad Humana Story - Ecuador presents advances on environmental matters at the annual meeting of the Andean Mountain Initiative'
- Overall Impact:
  - Project Concept Note Urban EbA Andes
  - Project concept Andean bears and livelihoods in a changing climate\_concept

### **Output C) Technical and policy support provided to Dinaric Arc and Balkan mountain countries in a subregional context**

- Development of Outlook Report:
  - Meeting Programme regional consultation meeting in Budva Montenegro
  - List of signatures regional consultation meeting in Budva, Montenegro
  - Outlook Balkan Mountains
- Development of Strategic Guidance:
  - Draft concept note agenda
  - Venturini WB mountain outlook (ppt)
  - Balkan Roadmap for climate change adaptation (Albania meeting)

### **Output D) Technical and policy support provided to Caucasus mountain countries in a sub-regional context**

- Development of Outlook Report:
  - Programme for Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Tbilisi\_Georgia 28-30 September 2015
  - Background Paper discussed at Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Tbilisi\_Georgia 28-30 September 2015
- Outlook on climate change adaptation in the South Caucasus mountains Development of Strategic Guidance:
  - Draft Strategic Guidance on Climate Change Adaptation in the South Caucasus Mountains
  - Programme regional stakeholder meeting Tbilisi 4-5 August 2016
  - List of signatures regional stakeholder meeting Tbilisi 4-5 August 2016 Overall Impact/Misc:
  - CTCN\_technical assistance request\_Azerbaijan
  - CTCN\_Response\_Plan\_technical assistance Azerbaijan
  - CTCN\_technical assistance request\_Georgia
  - GCF Georgia Project Proposal Concept\_Note
  - ADA project proposal related to climate change and tourism in mt regions
  - Copy of AF Adaptation Project Proposal
  - Sida Project Proposal - Disaster Waste Management in Mountain Regions of Georgia
  - Project proposal SDC



## Output E) Technical and policy support provided to Central Asia mountain countries in a sub-regional context

- Development of Outlook Report
  - Concept Note for Draft Methodology from Mountain Workshop\_Dunshanbe\_Tajikistan 24 November 2014
  - UNEP Press Release ICSD Meeting Ashgabat Turkmenistan 19 June 2015
  - Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Central Asian Mountains (Russian Version)
  - Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Central Asian Mountains (English Summary)
  - ICSD Decision 6 – 3 April 2014 Dunshanbe\_Tajikistan
  - ICSD Decision 5 - 28 November 2014 Dunshanbe\_Tajikistan
  - ICSD Decisions 8 - 18 June 2015 Ashgabat\_Turkmenistan
  - ICSD Decision 2 - 26 May 2016 Ashgabat\_Turkmenistan
  - ICSD Decision 3 - 8 June 2017 Ashgabat\_Turkmenistan
  - Programme for Regional Consultation Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 2 - 3 September 2015
  - List of Signatures for Regional Consultation Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 2-3 September 2015
  - Background paper for Central Asia Assessment 2015\_russian
  - Background paper for Central Asia Assessment 2015\_english
  - Concept note for Side Event at Central Asian Environmental Forum\_Ashgabat\_Turkmenistan 7 June 2017
  - UNEP News Story – Climate change is threatening access to water and farming in Central Asia – but solutions are at hand
- Development of a Strategic Guidance:
  - Programme for Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 2-3 September 2015
  - List of Signatures for Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 2-3 September 2015
  - Programme for Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 19-21 December 2016
  - Minutes of Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 19-21 December 2016
  - List of Signatures for Regional Stakeholder Meeting\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan 19-21 December 2016
  - Answers from Interviews with Development Partners 24-11-2017
  - Programme for Regional Consultation Workshop Almaty\_24-25\_April\_2018
  - List of Signatures of Attendees at Regional Consultation Meeting Almaty 2018
  - Mission report Matthias Jurek\_23-25\_April\_2018\_Almaty\_Kazakhstan
  - Final Strategic Guidance on Climate Change Adaptation in the Mountainous Regions of Central Asia\_english
  - Final Strategic Guidance on Climate Change Adaptation in the Mountainous Regions of Central Asia\_russian
- Overall Impact:
  - Vanishing treasures leaflet
  - IKI Project Proposal Enhancing the conservation of flagship migratory mammal species of Central Asia through climate change-informed management and decision making
  - Support letter from GIZ to IKI re. project proposal
  - Support letter from Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan to UNEP re. project proposal

- Save the Snow Leopard Proposal 22May2018
- Climate Refugia for the Snow Leopard Project Proposal (Russian ODA)

**Output F) Support to strengthened inter-regional exchange of experiences and best practices in the context of mountain specific ecosystem-based adaptation and supporting approaches**

Inter-regional exchanges of experience and ‘best-practice’ between Mountain Countries – targeting in particular relevant fora and platforms

- WMF Preliminary Program May 2014
- Draft Programme high level event COP21 UNFCCC Paris
- Exhibition panels UNESCO at COP21
- UNEP Web Story New Mountain Adaptation Outlooks launched at COP21
- UN General Assembly Report of the Secretary General on Sustainable Mountain Development 2016 and 2019 and UNGA Resolution on sustainable mountain development
- World Mountain Forum 2016 bulletin
- AdaptationFutures\_2018\_Session Details
- Concept Note – World Mountain Forum, Partnerships and Alliances for Mountain Ecosystem-based Adaptation
- Mission Report Bishkek 22-26 OCT2018 World Mountain Forum
- Leaflet Mountain Adaptation Climate Change
- UNFCCC COP24 Side Event Programme
- Carpathian Convention News Story - Adaptation of Carpathian Eco-systems and Communities Discussions at COP24
- Flyer for Vanishing Treasures\_26 Nov 2018

Inter-regional exchanges of experience and ‘best-practice’ between Mountain Countries through additional assessments and contributions

- Future Imperfect – Climate Change and Adaptation in the Carpathians
- Mountains and Climate Change - A Global Concern Report
- Outlook on climate change adaptation in the Carpathian mountains
- ICIMOD Flyer - Himalayan Climate Change Adaptation Programme (HICAP)
- Flyer for Side Event – Healthy Mountains, Healthy Planet \_A Hindu Kush Himalayan Partnership for Sustainable Mountain Development
- Adoption of Declaration – Healthy Mountains, Healthy Planet A Hindu Kush Himalayan Partnership for Sustainable Mountain Development’
- Event Brief - Implementing the SDGs in the Hindu Kush Himalayas
- Proceedings of the Regional Policy Workshop on Adaptation Outlook for the Hindu Kush Himalaya
- Workshop Programme for Regional Stakeholder Meeting Kathmandu Nepal 2–3 February 2017
- UNEP News Story - Adaptation Outlook for the Hindu Kush Himalaya in the Making

- Press Release HKH Outlook Meeting
- Outlook on climate change adaptation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya
- Synthesis Report (launched at COP24 UNFCCC)
- Concept Note for Project Proposal – Mountain Adaptation knowledge and solutions for change’
- Overall impact
  - GlacierHub News Story - UNEP Prepares Mountain Communities for Climate Change
  - UNEP News Story - Lofty peaks\_ why glaciers matter
  - UNEP News Story - UNEP Mountain Hero Michael Strasser breaks world record’
  - Grippped Article Will Gadd is UNEP Mountain Hero
  - Press\_Kenya's first Olympic alpine skier beco...ronment Mountain Hero\_Simader
  - Press\_UNEP Patron Ben Fogle reaches Everest summit
  - Press\_UNEP Meet new Mountain Hero Malcolm Wood

## ANNEX II. INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender (M,F, or D)
Azerbaijan Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources	Bariz Mehdiyev	Former Expert	M
Independent Expert	Bulat Yessekin	Senior Expert for Central Asia	M
Austrian Federal Ministry for climate protection, environment, energy, mobility, innovation and technology.	Elfriede-Anna More	Director for International Environmental Affairs	F
UNEP	Esse Daniel	Project Staff	M
UNEP- Regional Office, Vienna	Harald Egerer	Director	M
GRID-Arendal	Ieva Rucevska	Senior Expert	F
Kyrgyzstan Regional Mountain Centre of Central Asia, ICSD.	Ismail Dairov	Head	M
UNEP	Magnus Andresen	Associate Expert	M
CONDESAN	Maria Arguello	Executive Director	F
UNEP	Matthias Jurek	Project Manager	M

UNEP	Musonda Mumba (In writing)	Chief of the Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit	F
ICIMOD	Nand Kishor Agrawa	Programme Coordinator	M
Sustainable Caucasus	Nina Shatberashvili	Executive Director	F
ICIMOD	Philippus Wester	Regional Programme Manager	M
ARCOS	Sam Kanyamibwa	Executive Director	M
International Expert	Sara Venturini	Climate Coordinator	F
UNEP Regional Office, Panama	Silvia Giada	Senior Expert	F
GRID-Arendel	Tina Schoolmester	Head of Programme, Polar and Climate	F

[1] This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UNEP Website

[2] Select priority level from the three categories below:

*Critical recommendation: address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of programme objectives.*

*Important recommendation: address reportable deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance might be at risk regarding the achievement of programme objectives. Important recommendations are followed up on an annual basis.*

*Opportunity for improvement: comprise suggestions that do not meet the criteria of either critical or important recommendations, and are only followed up as appropriate during subsequent oversight activities.*