

Mid-Term Review of project “Adapting coastal zone management to climate change considering ecosystem and livelihoods in Madagascar”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) has mandated an independent mid-term review of the project funded by the Global Environment Fund (GEF), titled “Adapting coastal zone management to climate change considering ecosystem and livelihoods in Madagascar”. This is a five-year project launched in November 2014, with the overall objective of reducing the vulnerability of coastal areas to climate change through strengthened institutional capacity, concrete adaptation interventions, and the integration of climate change adaptation into policy and planning.

The main problem identified in the project document is the high vulnerability to climate change in Madagascar's coastal areas, as well as the limited capacity to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change. Non-climate factors which exacerbate this problem include poverty, high population densities and rapid urbanization, over-reliance on rainfed agriculture and natural resources, mismanagement of these resources, limited use of technologies and approaches adapted to climate change, and an inadequate legislative framework to deal with climate threats.

In response to these problems, the solution proposed by the project is to develop an integrated coastal management strategy that is sustainable, climate-resilient and tailored to the specific context of each intervention region, i.e. i) Menabe; (ii) Boeny; (iii) Vatovavy Fitovinany; and iv) Atsinanana. The project's intervention strategy is delivered through three complementary components:

- **Component 1: Institutional Capacity Development in Four Project Regions.** Outputs under this component include climate change vulnerability studies, the establishment or strengthening of regional coordination mechanisms for adaptation to climate change, and its integration into Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) through the development of ICZM strategies for the four target regions.
- **Component 2: Coastal Rehabilitation and Management for Long-Term Resilience.** The outputs under this component include restored ecosystems to strengthen resilience to climate change (mangroves and forests), livelihoods improvement and the introduction of sustainable alternative livelihoods, and the demonstration of technologies protection and rehabilitation of coastal productive assets adjacent to restored ecosystems.
- **Component 3: Mainstreaming Adaptation Measures into National ICZM Policies and Development Strategies.** The outputs under this component include training to increase institutional capacity of government officials to identify climate risks and integrate these risks into frameworks, strategies and legislative instruments, training to non-state stakeholders to participate in adaptation planning and adaptation actions, and recommendations provided to integrate climate change into regional

development frameworks, strategies and laws related to ICZM (including regional development plans).

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) evaluates the project and its implementation over the period from November 2014 to July 2019 based on nine criteria: (i) Strategic Relevance; (ii) Quality of Project Design; (iii) Nature of External Context; iv) Effectiveness; v) Financial Management; vi) Efficiency; (vii) Monitoring and Reporting; (viii) Sustainability; and ix) Factors Affecting Project Performance.

Following document review, interviews, as well as two field missions, the overall performance of the project is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**. The main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations are summarized below, and are further developed in Sections V and VI of the MTR report.

Conclusions

Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

The project contributes to the strategic priorities of Madagascar, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UN Environment in the area of climate change adaptation in coastal areas. In particular, the project is helping to establish favourable conditions for Madagascar's future National Adaptation Plan (NAP) to take into account the vulnerability of coastal ecosystems to climate change and the importance of ecosystem services provided by these ecosystems for adaptation.

Despite the lack of formal coordination mechanisms with other relevant initiatives implemented at national and regional levels, the project shows satisfactory complementarity with a number of them, including ones implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

Quality of Project Design: Satisfactory

The project Results Framework, revised as a result of the recommendations made in the baseline study, is clear, consistent and realistic. The original implementation timetable was realistic, and was not met for some activities because of the political context in which the project operates – an element beyond the control of the project developers and identified in the project document as a possible risk.

Despite a number of budget revisions undertaken due to an initial over- or underestimation of the budget for certain activities, the initial budget was generally realistic vis-à-vis the achievement of the project outcomes and outputs. For the construction of coastal protection infrastructure (Activities 18 and 19), however, the initial budget was underestimated relative to the actual likely cost. This is due in part to inflation, which has resulted in the significantly increased cost of building materials over the past few years. This may necessitate a reduction in the scope (e.g. length or other dimensions) of the infrastructure, unless co-financing to cover the funding gap can be mobilized.

The main shortcoming in the design of the project is the excessive dispersion of activities, both geographically and in terms of the number of targeted sectors. This dispersion complicates project implementation and tends to decrease the scale and therefore the impacts of each of the activities.

Nature of External Context: Unfavourable

Since the launch of the project, the Malagasy context has been marked by great political instability until the presidential election in January 2019. This instability was manifested, in particular, by a succession of officials in the positions of Minister of the Environment (project Executing Agency), Director of the BN-CCCREDD (National Project Director) and Regional Directors for the Environment in the four regions of intervention. An indirect consequence of political instability has been a context of insecurity across the country, particularly in the Menabe region. The continuity of the project's interventions despite the instability of the political context is largely due to the adaptive management of the Project Management Unit (PMU), supported by the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and UN Environment.

Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory

A number of the end-of-project indicator targets have already been achieved at the time of the mid-term review, which was in part facilitated by the delay with which the review was launched. The targets that still remain to be achieved by the end of the project are those under Outputs 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1 and 3.3. In terms of Outcomes, the targets for Outcomes 1 and 2 still remain to be reached. Both targets at the Objective level remain to be met, although it should be noted that the first indicator (decrease in vulnerability) will only be assessed at the end of the project.

Generally, the effectiveness with which the project is implemented is highly satisfactory, especially given the context of political instability and insecurity described above. It should also be noted that progress towards the targets that have not yet been achieved is satisfactory, and that it is therefore likely that these targets will be achieved by the end of the project.

Financial Management: Satisfactory

Four budget revisions have been carried out since the project was launched: in May 2015, January 2016, February 2017 and February 2019, all of which have been duly justified and recorded. The budget revisions have not led to significant shifts in funds between the different project components.

The actual project disbursement schedule differs significantly from the planned schedule. This is due to delays in the recruitment of consultants at the beginning of the project, as well as the decision to suspend the launch of the procurement process for the construction of the two coastal protection infrastructures during a period socio-political instability in the country.

Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory

The project management structure is very streamlined, in particular considering the high diversity of activities to be implemented and the geographical dispersion of the intervention sites. Compared to other projects in the Malagasy context, the management of the project is therefore particularly economical. The efficiency of the project is due to several factors. In particular, it can be noted that: (i) the members of the Project Management Unit have the skills described in the Project Document and the regional project teams have a high degree of autonomy; and (ii) for the implementation of reforestation activities, the choice was made to rely on local NGOs rather than on internationally or even nationally

recognized organizations, thus enabling substantial savings and a better anchoring of interventions in the local contexts.

One of the factors limiting the efficiency of project management and monitoring is the geographic dispersion of the intervention sites. Although this has not been detrimental to the implementation of the project, it can be noted: (i) that some of the time and resources invested in travel could have been allocated to project activities; and (ii) that should significant difficulties be encountered in project implementation, their resolution would be complicated by the remoteness and dispersion of the intervention sites.

Monitoring and Reporting: Highly Satisfactory

The monitoring and reporting of the project are undertaken satisfactorily. The monitoring and reporting activities build, in particular, on the baseline study and the project monitoring and evaluation strategy produced in the second year of the project.

Sustainability: Moderately Likely

A project exit strategy is currently being developed. The following aspects related to the project sustainability can already be identified:

Integrating adaptation to climate change into development strategies and policies is the main guarantee for the sustainability of the project's results. However, the capacity of regional institutions to implement the identified priority actions remains limited. Some policy documents do not include estimates of the costs associated with adaptation actions. The roles of different stakeholders also remain unclear in these documents, or are described in terms that are too vague to form a starting point for effective institutional action. Finally, the Regional ICZM Committees and the Regional Directorates for Environment and Sustainable Development show a high level of dependence on the project for implementing actions related to climate change adaptation.

The main positive aspect in terms of the sustainability of the project results lies in the empowerment of the communities benefiting from the market gardening and beekeeping support provided.

A national strategy to upscale and mobilize funding for adaptation actions in coastal areas, including through public-private partnerships, is currently being developed by the project (activity 29).

Factors Affecting Project Performance: Satisfactory

Overall, UN Environment's support for the implementation of the project has been satisfactory. The operation of the Project Management Unit (PMU) is generally highly satisfactory, with a good definition of individual roles, adequate capacity of all PMU members and a remarkable level of coordination among them, and effective support provided by the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). Throughout the project, a participatory approach has been employed to optimize the relevance of the project's actions and to maximize stakeholder engagement.

The revised Results Framework includes two indicators with a gender-specific target. In addition, several project activities aim to improve women's incomes, such as the development of the rambo value chain and the implementation of workshops for the processing and storage of fish. Women are also involved in the agricultural activities supported by the project, which works extensively with women's groups, in particular for market gardening activities. However, some project activities might benefit from enhanced participation of women.

Lessons Learned

Some lessons learned identified in the course of the mid-term review should be considered by present and future initiatives. These lessons learned include the importance of:

1. A project management team that is fully dedicated to the implementation of the project and not composed of Executing Agency staff;
2. Technical and specialized regional project outposts to support and monitor implementation;
3. Project areas and types of interventions that are identified and defined in a coherent manner;
4. A resilient and adaptive project implementation strategy;
5. Sufficient resources for technical support (Chief Technical Advisor);
6. An ambitious communication strategy to ensure the visibility of the project; and
7. An informed choice of local implementing partners, with a strong presence in project sites.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are further elaborated in Section VI of the MTR report:

- Recommendation 1. Strengthen the financial and operational sustainability of the Regional ICZM Committees.
- Recommendation 2. Re-direct resources from Activity 4 (development of a production systems outlook for 2050 for selected agricultural value-chains) to focus efforts on the dissemination and ownership of already-developed tools and studies (e.g. studies of climate change impacts and vulnerability, and mapping of flood-prone zones), and modify the Output 1.1. indicator and its target as well as the project budget accordingly.
- Recommendation 3. Organize the transfer of responsibility for the monitoring of rehabilitated mangroves from NGOs to local communities.
- Recommendation 4. Conduct an analysis of market opportunities for vegetable gardening products, and if necessary provide support in identifying and accessing further opportunities.

- Recommendation 5. Seek to mobilize co-financing for the construction of the planned coastal protection infrastructure.
- Recommendation 6. Re-direct resources from activities 24 and 25 (revision of fisheries and protected areas laws and EIA legislation), revise the Output 3.3 indicator and its target accordingly, and reformulate Outcome 3 and Output 3.3.
- Recommendation 7. Continue efforts to promote gender equality in the implementation of the project interventions on the ground.