

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia

Adaptation Fund Project ID: KHM/MIE/Food/2011/1
(2013-2021)



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Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia

(Adaptation Fund Project ID: KHM/MIE/Food/2011/1)

(Date 05/22)

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The evaluators would like to express their gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex II.

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

BRIEF CONSULTANT BIOGRAPHY

Evaluation team

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Short CVs of the consultants are provided in Annex IV.

Evaluation Office of UNEP

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ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English

Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation

Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of a UNEP/Adaptation Fund project implemented between 2013 and 2021. The project's overall development goal was to: *increase food supply and reduce soil erosion in communities surrounding five Community Protected Areas (CPAs) in Cambodia.* The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Cambodia; Ecosystem based Adaptation; Climate Change Adaptation; Sustainable Forest Management; Forest management; Forest financing; Governance; Climate Change; Ecosystem Management;¹

Primary data collection period: November 2021 – January 2022

Field mission dates: 16/01/2022 – 26/01/2022

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

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AF	Adaptation Fund
CCD	Climate Change Department
CF	Community Forest
CPA	Community Protected Area
DCL	Department of Community Livelihoods
DRCPAD	Department of Research and Community Protected Area Development
ELC	Economic Land Concession
GDANCP	General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection
GDLC	General Department of Local Community
GIS	Geographic Information System
HG	Home Garden
hh	Household
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of Environment (Cambodia)
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy (of UNEP)
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NP	National Park
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
PA	Protected Area
PB	Project Board
PCMR	Project Completion Monitoring Report
PDAFF	Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
PDoE	Provincial Department of Environment
PMU	Project Management Unit
POW	Programme of Work (of UNEP)
PPR	Project Progress Report

REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WS	Wildlife Sanctuary



Figure 0-1: Location of Community Protected Area (CPA) Intervention Sites

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Table 1: Project Identification Table

Implementing Partners	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology; Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction		
AF Project ID	KHM/MIE/Food/2011/1		
Implementing Entity:	UNEP, Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Ecosystems Division	Executing Entity:	Cambodia, Ministry of Environment
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 13		
Sub-programme:	Climate Change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	Expected Accomplishment (a): Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation
UNEP approval date:	08 March 2013	Programme of Work Output(s):	PoW 2018-2019: Output 2: Technical support provided to countries to implement ecosystem-based adaptation demonstrations and integrate them into national development plans
AFB approval date:	29 June 2012	Project Type	Regular Project
Expected start date:	2012	Actual start date:	21 May 2013
Planned completion date:	2018	Actual operational completion date:	December 2021
Planned project budget at approval:	\$4,566,150	Actual total expenditures reported as of 31 December 2021:	\$4,411,869
AF grant allocation:	\$4,566,150	AF grant expenditures reported as of 31 December 2021:	\$4,411,869
Project Preparation Grant - AF financing:	n/a	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	n/a
Expected Project co-financing:	n/a	Secured Project co-financing:	n/a
First disbursement:	May 2013	Planned date of financial closure:	June 2022

No. of formal project revisions:	3 ²	Date of last approved project revision:		
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8 ³	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: December 2021	Next: N/A
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (<i>planned date</i>):	2016	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	2018	
Terminal Evaluation (<i>planned date</i>):	2018	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	2022	
Coverage - Country(ies):	Kingdom of Cambodia	Coverage - Region(s):	Asia and the Pacific	
Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	The project has been identified as one of the eligible projects with a potential to be scaled up with GCF resources during a second phase	

² To Confirm with Task Manager

³ There were 8 PSC meetings, including an “additional 5th meeting” in January 2018 and a final meeting in December 2021

Project background

1. The Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia project (“the project”) was financed by a grant of \$US 4.6 million from Adaptation Fund (AF) and implemented by UNEP as Implementing Entity and Ministry of Environment (MoE) of the Kingdom of Cambodia as Executing Entity. The project commenced in 2013. The planned completion date of 2018 was extended to 2021 by a No Cost Extension.
2. The project objective was to enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around five Community Protected Area (CPA) intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall.
3. The objective was to be achieved through three components as follows: (1) protocols for agriculture interventions; (2) concrete eco-agriculture adaptation interventions; and (3) institutional capacity, awareness-raising and upscaling of eco-agriculture interventions.
4. Therefore, the implied Theory of Change of the project was that the project objective would be achieved through intermediate impacts in two areas: i) *ecosystem benefits* including healthier forests, reduced soil erosion, increased carbon sequestration and improved water quality and flow in watercourses; and ii) *human welfare benefits* including increased productivity of forest-based livelihoods, increased household income, reduced climate vulnerability and increased adaptive capacity. These impact areas would be mutually reinforcing as improved forest-linked livelihoods increased the commitment of local communities to protect and conserve forest resources.
5. The project was designed to achieve a broader impact (beyond the five target CPAs) through generation of technical knowledge, application of knowledge to demonstrate effectiveness of the eco-agriculture approach, and scaling up through capacity development, awareness raising and strategy development including through mainstreaming eco-agriculture in national climate change policy and planning.

This evaluation

6. In line with UNEP’s Evaluation Policy, the Terminal Evaluation was conducted with two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, AF and MoE. Consultants engaged by UNEP’s Evaluation Office conducted the evaluation from December 2021 to March 2022 through document studies, stakeholder interviews, site visits and focus group discussions with differentiated groups within the beneficiary communities. The evaluation was primarily qualitative and focused on assessing achievement of outcomes and impacts; data on quantities of outputs achieved, numbers of beneficiaries etc. are based on project reporting.

Key findings

7. The project has succeeded in delivering most of the physical outputs planned in the revised Results Framework adopted after the project baseline study (2014). Quality of project outputs is good overall. Key achievements and some limitations are described below.
 - a) The design intention was to restore 1,875ha of degraded forest through re-planting with appropriate tree species. The baseline study found that previously cleared forest land within the CPAs was largely in private agricultural use and could not be reclaimed for restoration. Therefore, the project adopted a revised strategy for tree-planting based on limited forest restoration plus creation of agro-forestry plots on cropland (“chamkar”) and in home-gardens. In total, the project supported planting of 947,690 indigenous trees which is estimated as equivalent to around 2,370ha of forest planting. The project also provided 518,542 fruit trees for planting in chamkar and home-garden plots. These were highly appreciated by farmers.
 - b) Restoration of degraded forest was implemented on 72.3ha. Results were good in some areas but there are also plots with poor tree growth due to planting species inappropriate to the soil type and / or because of poor subsequent care and maintenance. The evaluation team also saw evidence that some re-planted land on one site had later been converted to chamkar.
 - c) Three community nurseries were established to provide seedlings; unfortunately these are currently inactive.
 - d) The project supported intensified and diversified home gardens through training and distribution of equipment and planting materials to 1,193 households. Most of these households have continued home gardening and this has resulted in an increase in quantity and variety of food available as well as cash income for some households. However, the project set an over-ambitious target of full adoption of complex multi-cropping home garden techniques and most households practice only the techniques that are relevant to their needs. The project also provided small livestock to some households.
 - e) The project design envisaged adoption of eco-agriculture techniques including planting of trees around paddy field boundaries but these techniques proved unsuitable. Rice agriculture support consisted essentially of distribution of climate resilient rice seed to those households requesting it; the impacts of this initiative are modest.
 - f) The project trialled a number of alternative livelihood activities including cricket raising and bee keeping. These have not been very successful, perhaps because of the lack of complete value chains (e.g. for the seed stock required for cricket raising).
 - g) Water supplies were identified as a major constraint for the CPA communities and the project responded with a substantial programme of water supplies installations including spring capture systems, wells, ponds and household rainwater harvesting. These have mainly been successful and highly appreciated by the beneficiaries.

h) A further significant success demonstrating responsiveness to the needs of the CPA communities was the establishment of community savings and loans groups, which appear to be well established and sustainable.

i) The project supported construction of four Road Rest Area buildings as well as a wildlife viewing facility at one site. The Road Rest Areas are attractive buildings and well suited for community purposes, but in their intended use as public facilities they require an income stream for maintenance. The same is true of the wildlife viewing facility as well as the community nurseries. In all these cases, a more business-focused approach could have identified opportunities to generate income for community members, for upkeep of the facilities and to support the general activities of the CPA committees.

8. Project outcomes have been partially achieved.
9. **Outcome 1**, “Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and eco-agriculture interventions”, is assessed as *fully achieved* through production of studies, economic assessments, protocols for eco-agriculture and support to research by Master’s degree students of the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the Royal University of Agriculture.
10. **Outcome 2**, “Multi-use forests established and maintained and agriculture practices diversified / intensified” is assessed as *partially achieved*. The project has established only limited areas of forest (but has supported planting a large number of indigenous and fruit trees on chamkar plots), although it has had important success in stabilising existing forest and building capacity of the CPA committees for protection. The project has improved livelihoods and increased climate resilience of the CPA communities in important ways but has resulted in only limited changes to agriculture practices.
11. **Outcome 3**, “Integration of climate change risks and ecoagriculture into Cambodia’s adaptation framework and related sector policies” is assessed as *partially achieved*. The project has succeeded in building capacity, particularly within MoE. The project produced insightful analysis of existing policy gaps and a draft strategy for up-scaling, focused mainly on mobilising funds. The project did not, however, succeed in establishing the broad inter-Ministerial collaboration needed to mainstream eco-agriculture into climate change and sectoral policies and strategies. Awareness raising could have been more effective, particularly as the large number of project knowledge products, including high quality reports and policy studies, are currently unavailable on the internet. Overall, the dissemination of knowledge was weak, and the project has very little web-search visibility. The project website was taken down for administrative reasons and not replaced.
12. The project is assessed as *Moderately Likely* to achieve its planned long-term impacts. The key reason for this assessment is that most CPA community households do not depend primarily on forest-based livelihoods. Hence, their commitment to conservation and protection may be insufficient for the effort involved and to deter further encroachment and unsustainable practices. To overcome this, livelihoods and income streams must be linked more directly to conservation, but the types of livelihood activity successfully implemented under

Component 2 do not do this; while Component 3 identified policy and regulatory barriers but was not able to address these effectively.

Conclusions

13. The project performance is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory overall. A full table of ratings is presented in the Conclusions section of the report ([Table 16: Summary of project findings and ratings](#)).
14. The project has demonstrated strong performance in generating knowledge and technical materials to support ecosystem-based adaptation within the CPA context and in improving livelihoods and climate resilience of CPA communities. Capacity of the communities for conservation has increased, forest encroachment and violations have reduced, and limited areas have been restored, while a large number of new trees have been established in chamkar-based agroforestry plots. The scope of activities attempted at the CPA sites was arguably too broad, but this has resulted in valuable lessons learned on needs, solutions and technical approaches. Institutional capacity has been developed, policy needs identified, and an outline strategy developed for upscaling the project approach.
15. Weaknesses identified by the evaluation include a focus on quantity rather than quality in replanting interventions, insufficient focus on developing livelihoods linked to forest conservation, and insufficient engagement of stakeholders outside MoE to take ownership of project results and to convert research findings and lessons learned into policy proposals.

Lessons Learned

16. Lesson 1: It cannot be assumed that all CPA member households' livelihoods are strongly dependent on conserving the forest. This is a linkage that needs to be built in order for conservation through a CPA approach to be effective.
17. Lesson 2: Eco-Agriculture techniques must be clearly relevant to farmers' livelihoods.
18. Lesson 3: Establishment of new / alternative livelihoods strategies should consider whole value chain and use effective adult education techniques.
19. Lesson 4: Forest replanting should focus on quality, not just quantity.
20. Lesson 5: Sustainability of income-generating assets can be improved by structuring them as businesses.
21. Lesson 6: Membership of some CPAs may be too large and diverse to be effective.
22. Lesson 7: National level policy impact cannot be achieved without investment in building stakeholder engagement and in knowledge management and communications.

Recommendations

23. The following recommendations are presented for consideration in future development of the policy and regulatory framework for CPAs and for future project interventions in support of CPAs and / or ecoagriculture in Cambodia. The MoE has requested UNEP's support to scale up the project approach in a second phase proposed to be financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The following

recommendations have been developed for consideration during the design of the proposed second phase.

24. Recommendation 1: Support to CPAs should prioritise livelihood activities that directly strengthen the economic interest of the CPA community in forest conservation. These may include eco-tourism, forest farming, sustainable harvesting of re-planted timber and possibly other income streams such as REDD+ or Payment for Ecosystem Services.
25. Recommendation 2: MoE, with project support, should conduct a review of the CPA policy and regulatory framework with the purpose of further enabling sustainable forest-based livelihoods in an ecosystem-based adaptation framework. This may include relaxing some existing restrictions on cash-generating activities. Conditional land-use rights for sustainable agriculture within the CPA could be part of this framework.
26. Recommendation 3: Agriculture and alternative livelihoods trainings for CPA communities should follow an effective adult learning approach, the scope of which should be the value chain (inputs and markets), not only production. Consider partnering with Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF) and District agriculture officers, or with a specialised service provider for extension.
27. Recommendation 4: Forest re-planting activities in the CPA should focus on quality, not only quantity, starting with identification of areas for restoration by the CPA communities, and strong commitment to maintain and protect the restored forest.
28. Recommendation 5: Community assets with income-generating potential created by projects supporting CPA should be structured as businesses with a social purpose.
29. Recommendation 6: The membership and committee structure of CPAs should be strengthened by: (1) restricting membership to households with a clear interest and commitment; (2) keeping up-to-date membership lists; (3) requesting members to pay an annual subscription, even if it is very small; and (4) regularly re-electing the CPA committee and making sure it represents all parts of the community.
30. Recommendation 7: Future CPA support projects should adopt a more decentralised project implementation structure with stronger involvement of Provincial Department of Environment and local authorities.
31. Recommendation 8: Future CPA support projects should establish a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework, including an M&E officer and a simple but complete project management information system (MIS).
32. Recommendation 9: MoE should increase efforts to engage other relevant Ministries, particularly Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in support to CPA. Future projects will create an opportunity for this through direct involvement and through improved knowledge management and dissemination of knowledge products.

I. INTRODUCTION

33. The Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia project (“the project”) was approved by the Adaptation Fund (AF) Board on 29th June 2012 and by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Project Review Committee on 8th March 2013. The project start date was 21st May 2013. The initial planned project completion date was 2018 and this was extended to 2021 after the Mid-Term Review (MTR). The project was implemented by UNEP Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) with AF grant financing of \$US 4,566,150. The project Executing Entity was Ministry of Environment (MoE) of the Kingdom of Cambodia.
34. The project was designed with the overall goal to *increase food supply and reduce soil erosion in communities surrounding five Community Protected Areas (CPAs) in Cambodia* by: i) restoring at least 1,875 ha of degraded forests with plant species that are particularly appropriate for this goal; ii) enrichment planting of rice paddy boundaries and other cultivated areas with multi-use tree species that will enhance crop productivity; iii) trialling plots of several drought tolerant hybrid rice cultivars in order to assess their potential yield and suitability for cultivation; and iv) intensifying and diversifying the productivity of at least 1,907 family agriculture areas (including home gardens ranging in size from 0.2 ha to 1 ha) in communities living around the CPA forest sites. The project objective was to *enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around five CPA intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall*⁴.
35. The project was designed with three components: 1) protocols for ecoagriculture interventions; 2) concrete ecoagriculture adaptation interventions, and 3) institutional capacity, awareness-raising and upscaling of ecoagriculture interventions.
36. The five CPA intervention sites are listed in [Table 2](#) and shown on the site map ([Error! Reference source not found.](#)).

Table 2: CPA Intervention Sites

Name of Site	Protected Area	Province	Area (ha) ⁵	# HH ⁶
Chup Tasok	Kulen National Park	Siem Reap	359	90
Chi Ork Boeung Prey	Boeung Per Wildlife Sanctuary	Preah Vihear	1,500	158
Chorm Thlok	Boeung Per Wildlife Sanctuary	Kampong Thom	5,204	948
Skor Krouch	Boeung Per Wildlife Sanctuary	Kampong Thom	3,499	642
Rounouk Khgneng	Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary	Mondulkiri	1,743	57

⁴ Goal and Objective as stated in the narrative of the project design document. The objective as stated in the logframe refers to “at least three CPA intervention sites” – see for example PPR 2020.

⁵ Figures provided to the evaluation team by the CPA committees.

⁶ Figures from the Baseline report. Household numbers quoted for population and CPA membership vary somewhat between sources

37. Previous studies and evaluations of the project include a Baseline Assessment, and the Project Completion Monitoring Report (PCMR), which were prepared by consultants commissioned by the project team, as well as the MTR which was commissioned by the Evaluation Office of UNEP. This Terminal Evaluation is an independent evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office of UNEP.
38. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, the UNEP Programme Manual, as well as Adaptation Fund policies and guidelines, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, AF and MoE. Therefore, the evaluation identifies lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for the second phase of the project, where applicable.
39. The intended audience for the findings of the evaluation includes (1) responsible Cambodian institutions, including the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and the MoE, with its General Department of Local Community (GDLC), Department of Community Livelihoods (DCL) and Climate Change Department (CCD); (2) UNEP; (3) AF; and (4) the wider range of stakeholders in climate change response and sustainable development in Cambodia and beyond. In particular, it is hoped and intended that the evaluation findings will be valuable for stakeholders designing future interventions in eco-agriculture and community participatory sustainable development in Cambodia and elsewhere.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

40. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UNEP's evaluation methodology as set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which is attached as Annex V to this report, and in guidance documents and templates provided to the consultants. These required the project to be evaluated according to a structured set of nine key evaluation criteria, with sub-criteria, each criterion being rated on a six-point scale⁷. The headline criteria are (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.
41. In addition to these nine standardised criteria, the TOR define five key strategic questions, as follows:
- To what extent has the project succeeded in enhancing the climate change resilience of communities living around the project sites as well as downstream communities?
 - To what extent has the shift from large scale restoration to 'chamkar' (home garden) based restoration in the project ensured that the project has reached its objectives/ targets?
 - To what extent has the project contributed to mainstreaming ecosystem-based adaptation approaches/ ecoagriculture in Cambodia, in order for it to be upscaled and replicated across CPAs?
 - To what extent have the communities and community members been involved in the project activities including the management/execution of activities? Are the project interventions likely to be sustained by community members after the project end?
 - Which adaptation interventions implemented by the project proved most successful in reducing the vulnerability of communities to climate change?
42. The evaluation made use of the following approaches: (1) study of documents produced by and in connection with the project, and other relevant materials; (2) review of available data, including project monitoring data; project financial reporting; and relevant background data e.g. on climate, agriculture, markets, etc, insofar as these are available and relevant; (3) interviews with national level stakeholders; and (4) site visits.
43. The evaluation team did not have the time or resources to collect primary quantitative data. Further, the project conducted baseline and end-line surveys, the results of which were available to the evaluation team. Therefore, primary research by the evaluation team adopted a qualitative approach, including validation of project reporting data through field observations and stakeholder interviews.

⁷ Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). *Sustainability* and *Likelihood of Impact* are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and *Nature of External Context* is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

44. There were potentially a large number of national level stakeholders. These were categorised in two groups: “internal” stakeholders who had a direct role in delivery of the project; and “external” stakeholders on whom the project was expected to act, for example through capacity development, policy influence or knowledge sharing. The latter group includes government policy bodies (e.g. NCSD); Government Ministries and departments with relevant responsibilities; academic institutions; development partners and civil society organisations. To make the most efficient use of time, the evaluation team first conducted a series of thematic meetings with the “internal” stakeholders, i.e. UNEP and the Project Management Unit (PMU) and its consultants, with the aim of establishing a thorough understanding of the project timeline, activities, challenges faced in implementation and management decisions taken. The evaluation team then conducted interviews with key “external” stakeholders, primarily to evaluate the extent to which Outcome 1 (technical expertise and enabling framework) and Outcome 3 (mainstreaming eco-agriculture) were achieved. A total of 25 stakeholders were interviewed either individually or in group meetings and are listed in Annex II. These included 10 staff and consultants of the PMU and 15 “external” stakeholders.
45. Fieldwork consisted of observation of physical outputs, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and – by no means least important – opportunistic conversations with beneficiaries or other stakeholders encountered during the visits.
46. Broadly, evaluation of output indicators relied on project reporting, validated through stakeholder interviews (Components 1 and 3) and by field observations (Component 2). Key informant interviews and focus group discussions at the project sites were primarily designed to (1) assess the achievement of outcomes, particularly Outcome 2; (2) validate the assumptions and drivers in the (reconstructed) Theory of Change; (3) investigate the potentially different ways in which different sub-groups of the CPA communities have been affected by the project, and different views they may hold; (4) determine whether any negative impacts have occurred; (5) identify whether any important opportunities to enhance the project effectiveness were missed, during design or implementation; and (6) assess the sustainability of the observed impacts. In addition, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were designed to elicit answers to the strategic questions posed in the TOR (above).
47. The evaluation team visited all five CPA sites targeted by the project and conducted a general “key informant” discussion with the CPA committee (with commune and village local authorities sometimes participating) and a site visit to see physical outputs at each site. These activities occupied one full day at each site. The team also met with the local authority (Commune Council) for the Chup Tasok site. Information on project impacts on downstream and neighbouring communities was obtained from meetings with CPA community leaders and from the Commune Councils.
48. In three of the five CPA sites the team carried out thematic focus group discussions, requiring one additional day at each of these sites. Five types of thematic focus groups were organised, consisting of (1) women (3 sites); (2) youth (2 sites); (3) indigenous community leaders or informants able to provide an indigenous community perspective (2 sites); (4) farmers who participated in the resilient rice

agriculture activities of the project (2 sites); and (5) households with small or no rice land holdings (1 site). The most relevant focus groups for each site were selected based on the findings of the meetings with the CPA committee. Focus group participants were invited through the CPA committee; this was the only means available. Usually about five or six participants took part in each discussion. The team maintained a relaxed, conversational atmosphere. Discussions were in Khmer language. All participants were asked to introduce themselves individually and were encouraged to contribute to the discussion. To investigate the relative importance of different livelihood activities to each group, and priorities for development, sets of pictorial ranking cards were used.

49. After fieldwork the team conducted follow-up interviews with the project team and external stakeholders as necessary for clarification and reflection on field observations.
50. Preliminary findings of the evaluation were communicated to stakeholders through a workshop event conducted remotely on 8th of March 2022. Stakeholders were also invited to provide written feedback on the report. Stakeholder responses from the workshop and in writing were taken into account in finalising the report.
51. The following limitations to the evaluation are noted:
 - As mentioned above, the evaluation did not collect primary quantitative data, but relied on verifying data provided by the project;
 - The number of “external” stakeholders at national level, primarily meaning officials of institutions represented on the PSC, was potentially large. However, advice from the project team was that the majority of these stakeholders would have only limited familiarity with the project. Therefore, stakeholder interviews prioritised those stakeholders known to have had an active involvement, or to be directly responsible for policy and technical matters closely related to the project;
 - The project has produced a large volume of reports and other printed documents. The evaluation team has examined the most significant of these and a selection of others, but for reasons of time, has not been able to conduct a thorough quality assessment of the whole of this documentary output.
52. Throughout this evaluation process and in the compilation of the Terminal Evaluation Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. The design of fieldwork including the focus group discussions was selected to ensure that potentially divergent views of different groups within the community, including potentially disadvantaged groups (women, youth, indigenous minorities, poorer farmers) were adequately included.
53. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered after prior informed consent from people according to the UN Standards of Conduct. In reporting stakeholder interviews and discussions at the project sites, the views and opinions of identified individuals are only reported with the express permission of those individuals. However, it should be noted that discussions at the project sites were essentially open and it was not possible to ensure full confidentiality in this regard; participants would have been aware of this.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context⁸

54. Cambodia is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, largely because of the dependence of its large rural population on rain-fed agriculture. The poorest and most vulnerable sections of the rural population are those living in remote areas which are also important for biodiversity and natural resource conservation.
55. Climate change is expected to result in an increase in mean annual rainfall of up to 35% by 2100, accompanied by an increase in the frequency and intensity of flooding events. Mean annual temperatures are predicted to rise by between 1.4°C and 4.3°C by the 2090s, with an increase in the number of “hot” days and nights. Coastal and low-lying areas will be affected by sea level rise of 0.18m to 0.56m by the 2090s. Detrimental effects of these changes are likely to include a greater frequency of floods and droughts, reduced agriculture productivity, flood damage to infrastructure and direct and indirect impacts on human health. Increased soil erosion will further damage agriculture productivity and will also result in siltation and reduced capacity of hydropower dams.
56. Forest cover of Cambodia is diverse and includes dry deciduous and moist deciduous rainforest, coniferous forest, moist evergreen forest, moist mountain forest, dwarf evergreen forest, flood forest, bamboo forest and mangroves. Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) are an important source of income for local communities, while broader eco-system services provided by the forests include climate regulation, water purification and the regulation of water flow in the Mekong River Basin. Cambodia’s forest cover has reduced from an estimated 73% in 1965 to 59% in 2006 and to 48% in 2016⁹. Reduced forest cover combined with increased intensity of rainfall is expected to drive soil erosion, with consequent problems including reduced agriculture productivity, reduced water quality in water courses and increased siltation in reservoirs. Cambodia has ended large-scale commercial logging and, since 2013 (i.e. around the time the project began), has also curtailed the programme of Economic Land Concessions (ELC) that led to conversion of former forest land for agricultural uses. It is said that creation of ELCs also had the effect of spurring small farmers – including those in the CPA – to clear forest for chamkar, in the hope of securing ownership. However, effective management and conservation of forests still faces major challenges, including illegal cutting of high-value timber and continued clearing of land for farming. As a result, deforestation and biodiversity losses still continue to undermine the resilience of Cambodian forest ecosystems to the threats of climate change.
57. Cambodia has established 23 Protected Areas (PAs), representing about 18% of the land area of the country and including National Parks (NPs), Wildlife Sanctuaries (WSs), Protected Forests, Protected Landscapes and Multiple Use Areas. The Tonle

⁸ Unless indicated otherwise, data in this section are summarised from Section 1 of the project design document, which provides references.

⁹ Ministry of Environment 2018: Cambodia Forest Cover 2016

Sap Lake is protected as a Biosphere Reserve, and there are four Ramsar (Wetlands of International Importance) sites.

58. Areas within the Sustainable Use Zones of Community Zones of the PA can be designated as Community Protected Areas (CPA) under oversight of the Ministry of Environment (MoE). CPAs can be established with the consent of 60% of the community living in the area¹⁰. There are now 182 CPAs. In addition, there are about 1,600 structured communities related to natural resource management and conservation organised under other Ministries¹¹. Active consideration is being given to converting some of these to become CPAs under MoE responsibility.
59. Forests within CPAs provide important livelihood opportunities and ecosystem services to communities living in and dependant on them. Such services include the provision of food, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), timber and fuelwood for sustainable use and income generation. Typical NTFP include fruits, resin, fibre, rattan, medicinal plants, honey, mushrooms, yams and spices. However, CPA communities face food and water insecurity, leading to pressures for unsustainable agriculture practices and over-exploitation of forest resources within the CPAs, as well as the challenge of encroachment and illegal forest activities by outsiders.
60. As stated in the project design document the problem that the project seeks to address is that “the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall is causing a reduction in agricultural productivity and forest-based income as a result of droughts and loss of topsoil during intense rainfall events/floods. This is increasing the vulnerability of rural Cambodian communities, particularly those living in CPAs. The problem is exacerbated by the following underlying drivers of vulnerability: i) strong dependence on rain-fed, unimproved agriculture; ii) strong dependence on one crop, namely rice; iii) high poverty levels; iv) deforestation; and v) resultant erosion.”

B. Results Framework

61. The project design adopted an eco-agriculture approach¹² to achieve the twin, complementary aims of enhancing the food supply of communities living in CPAs and maintaining ecosystem services (including protection/ restoration of forests and reducing soil erosion). The project design was developed based on extensive study and problem analysis including two CPA Community Surveys. The project was expected to provide direct benefits to communities within the CPAs and would also benefit communities living downstream of the CPAs through increased watershed protection as well as enhanced awareness and trade opportunities.
62. The project design document defines the overall goal of the project as being “to increase food supply and reduce soil erosion in communities surrounding five CPAs

¹⁰ Ministry of Environment 2018: Guideline on Procedure and Process of Community Protected Area Establishment

¹¹ These include 516 Forestry Protection Communities and 516 Fishery Communities under Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 155 Indigenous People’s Communities under Ministry of Rural Development, 86 Ecotourism Communities under Ministry of Tourism and 493 Farmer Water User Communities under Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology. Not all of these would be suitable candidates to become CPAs however.

¹² Defined as “the management of landscapes for both the production of food and the conservation of ecosystem services, in particular wild biodiversity” (Scherr and McNeely 2012, see Reference Document C1). Defined in the TOR as “a landscape approach to natural resources management that seeks to sustain agricultural/food production, conserve biodiversity and ecosystems and support local livelihoods”.

in Cambodia.” The project was to be delivered through three components, consisting of (1) Protocols for eco-agriculture interventions; (2) Concrete eco-agriculture interventions; and (3) Institutional capacity, awareness raising and upscaling of eco-agriculture interventions.

63. As has been explained in the Inception Report (page 8) for this Terminal Evaluation, some minor changes were made to the wording of project outcomes and outputs after completion of baseline studies. Some more significant changes in project activities and indicators were adopted after the baseline study and are described in Section E below. Table 3 presents the outcomes and outputs of the project with the wording used in project annual reports from Year 2 onwards.

Table 3: Project Outcomes and Outputs

Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
Component 1: Protocols for eco-agriculture interventions	
Output 1.1: Information generated on climate change impacts and preferred eco-agriculture interventions through a consultative and participatory approach.	Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and eco-agriculture interventions that build climate resilience developed at CPA intervention sites through a consultative and participatory process.
Output 1.2: Economic assessments undertaken to identify most appropriate eco-agriculture interventions and associated microfinance and insurance products.	
Output 1.3: Forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols developed for CPA intervention sites based on results from Output 1.1 and 1.2.	
Component 2: Concrete eco-agriculture adaptation interventions	
Output 2.1: Capacity of local community for building climate resilience increased, including capacity to plan, implement and maintain eco-agriculture interventions under Output 2.2.	Multi-use forests established and maintained and agricultural practices diversified/intensified to supply a diverse range of food and stabilize topsoil, despite an increase in climate change-induced droughts and floods.
Output 2.2: Forest restoration and eco-agriculture protocols implemented to build climate resilience (developed in Component 1) in CPA intervention sites.	
Output 2.3: Local communities’ livelihoods enhanced and diversified through sustainable development of NTFPs and the promotion of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies.	
Output 2.4: Socio-economic and ecosystem monitoring of AF project impacts downstream of CPA intervention sites.	
Component 3: Institutional capacity, awareness raising and upscaling of eco-agriculture interventions	
Output 3.1: Awareness increased at a local level of the importance of eco-agriculture for protecting and enhancing commercial and subsistence activities.	Integration of climate change risks and eco-agriculture into Cambodia’s adaptation framework and related sector policies.
Output 3.2: Eco-agriculture activities promoted through institutional capacity building and proposed revisions to policies, strategies and legislation.	
Output 3.3: National eco-agriculture upscaling strategy developed and institutionalised for CPAs in Cambodia.	

64. Hence, the project design followed a straightforward logical structure in which Component 1 is concerned with developing the knowledge base and specific techniques required for effective interventions at the CPA sites, Component 2 is concerned with actual interventions at the five selected sites, and Component 3

applies lessons learned to support capacity building, awareness raising and policy development for eco-agriculture and CPAs. Accordingly, the project implementation plan called for most Component 1 activities to be concentrated in the first two years of the project (54% in Year 1) while Component 2 would be implemented mainly in Years 2 to 4 and Component 3 in Years 2 to 5.

65. In addition to the three components described above, the design provided for costs management, monitoring and evaluation by the PMU, as described in Section F below.

C. Stakeholders

66. Three broad groups of project stakeholders can be identified: *first*, members of the communities affected by project interventions, including the targeted CPA communities, downstream or neighbouring communities and, potentially, other CPA communities not directly targeted by the project; *second*, institutions and personnel directly involved in delivery of the project; and *third*, the broader group of institutions engaged in eco-agriculture and closely related activities in Cambodia and elsewhere.
67. Cambodian rural communities, including the CPA communities, are not homogenous. Different types of economic activity – for example, rice agriculture, non-rice cropping, livestock farming, harvesting of forest products, small business, non-farm employment – have different relative importance for different households and this may lead to different perspectives and priorities for management of the CPA land. There are also differences in wealth levels and land holdings. Indigenous minority groups with distinct cultural practices and speaking non-Khmer languages are present at some of the CPA sites. The economic and household roles traditionally performed by women may cause their interests to differ from those of men, while women may be disadvantaged or face difficulty in articulating their interests in a public setting such as a community meeting. Young people may have different interests and ambitions for the future as compared with their elders, and this may be of significance for the long-term management and sustainability of the CPA. The CPA structure gives member households some rights (e.g. harvesting of NTFP) which incentivise them to conserve natural resources, but this creates the possibility for their interests to diverge from those of non-members and of neighbouring communities.
68. [Table 4](#) summarises selected socio-economic data on the respondents to the Baseline survey conducted at the five CPA sites, drawn from the project Baseline Assessment report.

Table 4: Selected Baseline Survey Data

Indicator	Unit	Chi Boeung Prey	Ork Thlok	Chorm Thlok	Skor Krouch	Chop Tasok	Ronouk Khgneng	5 Sites
No Education	%	69%		72%	71%	65%	38%	66%
Farming is primary occupation	%	100%		96%	94%	100%	100%	97%
NTFP is secondary occupation	%	25%		12%	3%	53%	31%	19%
Non-agriculture* 2ry occupation	%	69%		72%	45%	47%	44%	58%
Own a telephone	%	75%		52%	48%	41%	69%	55%

Indicator	Unit	Chi Boeung	Ork Prey	Chorm Thlok	Skor Krouch	Chop Tasok	Ronouk Khgneng	5 Sites
Own a motorbike	%	0%		26%	26%	41%	69%	30%
Average area of rice paddies	ha	0.30		1.10	1.00	1.80	0.80	1.03
Average area of chamkar plots	ha	1.10		1.10	1.30	1.50	1.10	1.20
Livestock farming	%	75%		70%	97%	94%	100%	84%

**Not farming, fishing, or NTFP collection*

69. Institutions involved in project delivery comprise MoE, Royal University of Agriculture, Royal University of Phnom Penh, and some NGOs engaged in collaborative activities at the CPA sites. The project implementation structure is described in Section D. Individuals involved include civil servants of MoE at national and provincial levels (including the directors and rangers of the PAs), academic staff of cooperating universities, contracted staff and consultants.
70. The “community of interest” for eco-agriculture and related activities is potentially very wide, including civil society organisations, development partners, academics and projects concerned with climate change resilience through natural resource management in Cambodia and internationally.

D. Project implementation structure and partners

71. The project implementing structure as presented in the project design document is reproduced below as Figure III-1.

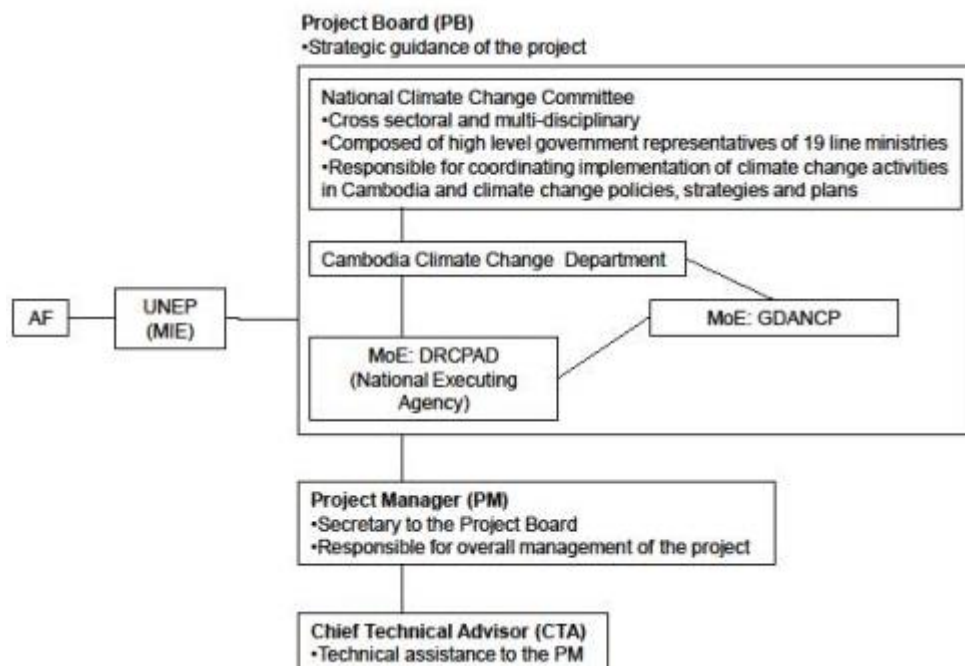


Figure III-1: Project Implementation Structure at Design

72. UNEP was designated as the Project Implementing Entity and MoE as the Project Executing Entity. The project was overseen by a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The project design document refers to this as a “Project Board” and states that

membership would include representatives of relevant Ministries including MoE and MAFF as well as District Administration¹³ offices. However, PSC meeting minutes do not indicate that MAFF (or any Ministries other than MoE) or District Administration representatives attended any meetings. The Project Manager serves as secretary to the PSC. The PSC approves annual work plans and procurement plans, and reviews project periodical reports as well as any deviations from the approved plans.

73. Within MoE, the project was implemented by a small Project Management Unit (PMU) under the Project Manager, located within the Department of Research and Community Protected Area Development which was under MoE's General Department of Administration for Nature Conservation and Protection. The PMU contracted an international Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) who worked on an intermittent basis through the whole project implementation period, as well as short-term consultants and two full-time national staff (one Finance Officer and one Administration Officer). There was also a field team of five Community Liaison Planting Officers (one per intervention site).
74. Two academic institutions, the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) participated by assigning Master's degree students to conduct research activities at the project site. Academic staff also acted as trainers for some livelihood activities.
75. The project design document assigns an oversight role to the inter-Ministerial National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) and to the Climate Change Department (CCD) which acted as Secretariat to NCCC. However, the exact planned responsibilities of these bodies for the project is not made clear.
76. During the implementation period, these responsibilities have been varied somewhat due to structural changes within Government. First, NCCC, with other bodies, was absorbed into an overarching National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) and CCD became, institutionally, a department of the Secretariat of NCSD (though still physically located in MoE). A further reorganisation transferred the NCSD Secretariat function to MoE's General Department of Policy and Strategy, of which CCD is now a Department. A new General Department of Local Community (GDLC) was created in MoE with responsibilities for the legal framework for establishment of CPAs. The Department of Community Livelihoods (DCL), within GDLC, is responsible for technical support to establishment and management of CPAs. The project PMU is now located in DCL.
77. Therefore, at the end of the project, the implementing structure is as represented in [Figure III-2](#) below.
78. Implementation at national level was primarily through MoE, with other agencies represented on the PB playing a consultative role. Provincial and District administrations, and the Provincial Departments of Environment, have cooperating roles. At the CPA level, a number of civil society organisations played roles as project

¹³ The project design document refers to "District Administrator" but there is no such position in Cambodia. The term "District Administration" is used to refer to the local government which consists of a District Council, a Board of Governors and a small administrative staff.

partners, including participation in forest regeneration activities (referred to as Forest Plantation Partners) and, in some cases, coordination of livelihoods activities.

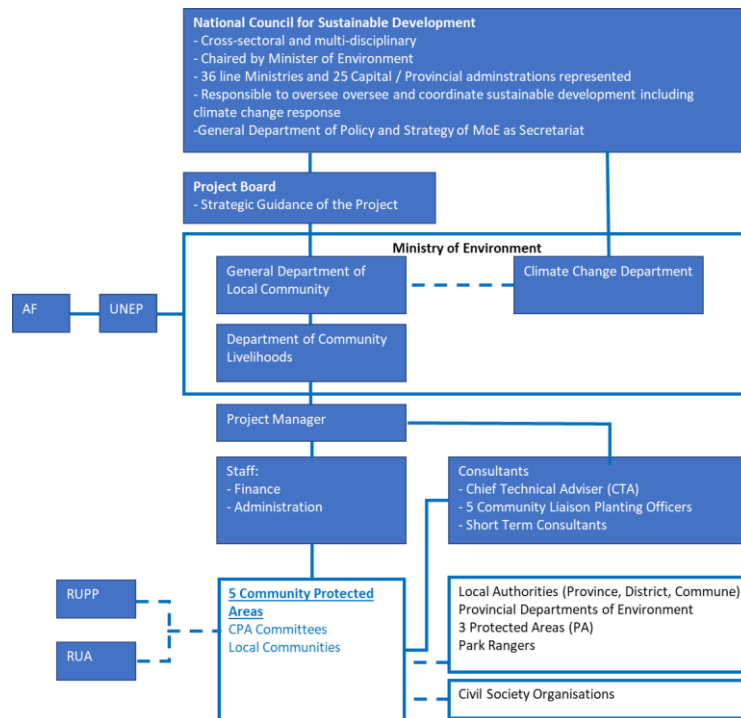


Figure III-2: Organigram of the project with key project key stakeholders

E. Changes in design during implementation

79. A number of changes to planned project activities and outputs were made as a result of the baseline assessment conducted in 2013-14. The most important reason for the changes was the finding of the baseline assessment that the area available for forest regeneration activities on degraded areas within the CPA was much smaller than that assumed at design. Degraded areas identified for regeneration (mainly on the basis of remote sensing data) were, by the time of the baseline assessment, in use as agricultural land (*chamkar*) by the local communities, who regarded these plots as private, rather than community holdings. In some cases, ELCs were created adjacent to the CPAs in this period, this spurred the CPA residents to convert forest to farm plots. Accordingly, it was decided (following discussions at the Second PSC Meeting in May 2014) to reduce the target for forest regeneration and to prioritise an alternative approach to restoration, termed *chamkar*-based agroforestry. Useful and indigenous plant species were introduced to enhance the supply of ecosystem goods and services to local communities. The total number of trees planted remained approximately in line with the original plan, but most tree planting was within *chamkar* plots and within remaining forest areas, with a much smaller area of natural forest re-established on cleared land.

80. Other changes reflected an increased emphasis on improving the livelihoods of the local community, with the expected co-benefit of reducing pressure on remaining forest resources.
81. The Baseline Survey identified lack of access to water as a major challenge in the target communities. Accordingly, the project implemented a programme of support for water supplies of various types (ponds, wells, rainwater harvesting etc.) for domestic use and for small-scale irrigation (mainly watering of home garden plots) in the target communities.
82. The project also adopted a revised definition of “downstream communities” for the purpose of monitoring the impacts of the project on these communities. In the design, this was understood as meaning communities receiving stream flows originating in or passing through the target communities. However, only one site, Chup Tasok, is an important catchment area for a significant river (Stung Siem Reap), so a broader definition of neighbouring communities, potentially affected by the project, was adopted.
83. Some initially proposed activities were found not to be feasible based on initial studies, and so were not proceeded with. These included a pilot of weather-index based crop insurance, and a pilot activity for linking the CPAs to carbon credits under the REDD+ framework. The report on REDD+¹⁴ recommended a simpler alternative, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), but this was not pursued because of difficulties in establishing the legal framework, as experienced in a separate initiative of MoE to create a PES.
84. The MTR in 2018 did not result in further revisions to outputs or indicators but recommended an extension of the project period to allow more time to deliver Component 3 and to support the upscaling and replication. Accordingly, the project was granted a no-cost extension to December 2019 and this was further extended to May 2020.
85. The PSC in its fifth meeting (August 2017) approved that the PMU should extend and increase project activities to up to 20 additional CPAs for forest plantation, fruit tree distribution, water infrastructure supply and some awareness-raising activities. In an additional PSC meeting in January 2018 it was confirmed that reforestation would be supported at a 50ha pilot site at Russey Trep National Park in Preah Vihear Province, the site having been requested by Royal Academy of Cambodia.
86. Table 5 summarises changes to output indicators adopted as a result of the baseline assessment findings and discussions at the Second PSC Meeting. The revised indicators were then used in Project Progress Reports which were submitted to and approved by AF.

¹⁴ REDD+ Feasibility Assessment for Community Protected Areas in Cambodia (2014) Author: Nguon Pheakkdeay.

Table 5: Adjustments to Output Indicators after Baseline Assessment

#	Output	Indicator	Target	Revised Indicator	Revised Target
1.1	Information generated on climate change impacts and preferred eco-agriculture interventions through a consultative and participatory approach.	Number of reports developed	23		6
		Number of PhD and MSc projects.	5 MSc projects and 2 PhD projects initiated.	MSc only	5
1.2	Economic assessments undertaken to identify most appropriate eco-agriculture interventions and associated microfinance and insurance products.	Number of reports developed	6		5
1.3	Forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols developed for CPA intervention sites based on results from Output 1.1 and 1.2.	Number technical of restoration and conservation agriculture protocols developed.	5		5
2.1	Capacity of local community for building climate resilience increased, including capacity to plan, implement and maintain eco-agriculture interventions under Output 2.2.	Number of people trained (gender disaggregated).	101 CPA Committee 20 local authority 10 agricultural extension officers 5000 CPA members (50% women)	CPA Committee, local authority and agricultural extension officers trained	60 CPA Committee 20 local authority 10 agricultural extension officers
				CPA Community members trained (gender disaggregated)	2500 (30% women)
		Incidence of transgressions.	At least a 40-60% reduction	Patrolling committees established/strengthened.	4 established, 1 strengthened
				Annual number of transgressions	40% reduction in each CPA
2.2	Forest restoration and eco-agriculture protocols implemented to build climate resilience (developed in Component 1) in CPA intervention sites. <i>(Design results framework refers to "conservation agriculture" rather than "eco-agriculture")</i>	Number of nurseries established.	5		3
		Community-liaison planting officers contracted	3		10
		Ha of degraded forest restored.	1,875 ha		30 ha
		Ha of rice paddies bordered with multi-use trees.	2,286 ha	Deleted	n/a
		Ha of intensified/diversified homegardens.	337 ha	Number of intensified/diversified homegardens	800 HG
		Ha of drought-tolerant rice varieties.	300 ha	% of hh growing climate-resilient rice.	15% of hh

#	Output	Indicator	Target	Revised Indicator	Revised Target
		Number of additional activities complement intensive conservation agriculture interventions.	31	Proportion of households in the five target CPAs that report an improvement in i) access to water; ii) access to new seed varieties; and iii) access to improved rice storage techniques, as a result of additional interventions.	80% of hh
2.3	Local communities' livelihoods enhanced and diversified through sustainable development of NTFPs and the promotion of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies.	Number of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies.	At least 10 sustainable alternative livelihood strategies developed for the 5 CPA intervention sites (50% of beneficiaries to be women).	Strategies developed	3 per CPA
				% adopting (% women beneficiaries)	25% (30%)
2.4	Socio-economic and ecosystem monitoring of AF project impacts downstream of CPA intervention sites.	Number of monitoring reports and research protocols .	At least 5 monitoring reports and research protocols	Number of socio-economic and ecological monitoring reports and research protocols (for project duration and long-term) developed to measure impacts of the project: i) in the intervention sites; and ii) downstream of the intervention sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Research/ monitoring tool to measure the impact of AF project interventions in downstream communities implemented at least 3 times. • At least 10 ecological and socio-economic monitoring reports
3.1	Awareness increased at a local level of the importance of eco-agriculture for protecting and enhancing commercial and subsistence activities.	Number of 'events' to raise awareness	28	Number of events	28
				% change in the climate change awareness index and % of community members understanding ecoagriculture	Average index score 50% understanding
3.2	Output 3.2: Eco-agriculture activities promoted through institutional capacity building and proposed revisions to	Number of REDD(+) feasibility studies and Project Idea Notes developed.	At least 1 REDD+ feasibility study and Project Idea Note.		1

#	Output	Indicator	Target	Revised Indicator	Revised Target
	policies, strategies and legislation.	Number of proposed revision of policies, strategies and legislation.	At least 3 revisions to key policies, strategies and legislation documents proposed.	Number of CPA management plans developed/ revised to incorporate the ecoagriculture approach.	5
3.3	National eco-agriculture upscaling strategy developed and institutionalised for CPAs in Cambodia.	Number of upscaling strategies developed.	1 national ecoagriculture upscaling strategy developed.	Number of national ecoagriculture upscaling strategies developed.	1

F. Project financing

87. The project was financed by an Adaptation Fund grant of \$US 4,954,273. No other sources of financing are identified in the design document or reported in the project accounts, although in practice there would be an element of co-financing in kind from Government (office premises and other overhead costs) and from the local community.
88. Of the AF Grant, \$US 4,566,150 was allocated for project execution costs of MoE, with \$US 388,123 (8.5% of execution costs) allocated for project cycle management costs of UNEP.
89. Up to December 2021 (the latest figures available to the evaluation mission) the cumulative expenditures of execution costs were \$US 4,411,869, or about 97% of the planned total.
90. As shown in [Table 6](#), actual expenditures for Component 1 somewhat exceeded the design estimate, with Component 2 and Component 3 somewhat below the initial estimates. Expenditures were in line with revised budgets prepared annually and approved by UNEP during project execution. The revisions were below the threshold that would have required approval by AF. NB that the total expenditure figure of \$US 4,411,869 is obtained from the draft Quarterly Expenditure Statement for Q4 2021 which shows cumulative expenditures by budget code (but not by component) up to December 2021. Budget lines have been assigned to components using data in the Project Activity-Based Budget dated April 2020.

Table 6: Expenditure by Outcome

Component/sub-component/outcome <i>All figures as USD</i>	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure <i>(to Dec 2021)</i>	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1 / Outcome 1	360,000.00	440,883.33	122%
Component 2 / Outcome 2	3,423,000.00	3,362,357.43	98%
Component 3 / Outcome 3	387,000.00	278,884.40	72%
Management, Monitoring and Evaluation	396,150.00	329,743.81	83%
Sub-total for Project Execution	4,566,150.00	4,411,868.97	97%
Project Cycle Management Fee (UNEP)	388,123.00	388,123.00	100%
Total AF Financing	4,954,273.00	4,799,991.97	97%

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

91. The project design was prepared in 2012, before “Theory of Change” (TOC) became a routine feature of project designs. Therefore, no explicit, unitary and comprehensive TOC is articulated in the design document. A project results framework (RF) was developed, articulating the planned outputs, expected outcomes and impacts (objective and goal levels), and this was subsequently modified following the baseline assessment, as has been described in Section E above.
92. In line with the limitations of the results framework format, the RF does not fully articulate the implied TOC, lacking as it does explicit descriptions of the initial and intermediate states, causality, horizontal linkages between components / outcomes, as well as a full description of assumptions, influencing factors and the enabling environment.
93. A TOC was developed in the first report of the Research and Monitoring Program developed by consultants in 2015¹⁵. However, this version does not elaborate the assumed causal chain from outputs to outcomes and impacts. It also includes some assumptions that require updating.
94. Accordingly, a TOC narrative and diagram were reconstructed from material that appears in different sections of the design document, the baseline study report and the Research and Monitoring Program. The TOC was presented in the Inception Report for this Terminal Evaluation and was discussed and validated with the project team. Further consultations during the evaluation process confirmed that this narrative and diagram are a fair representation of the intentions of the project designers and the implementation team.
95. The project addresses the problem of climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall causing a reduction in agricultural productivity and forest-based income as a result of droughts and loss of topsoil during intense rainfall events/floods. This increases the vulnerability of Cambodian communities, particularly those in PAs, and is exacerbated by dependence on rain-fed agriculture; dependence on a single crop (rice); high poverty levels; deforestation and resultant soil erosion – these factors are considered as *drivers of vulnerability*.
96. The project identifies an eco-agriculture approach, combining extensive restoration and improvement of community protected forest areas, and intensive adoption of resilient agricultural practices in rice paddy and home garden plots, as a response to this complex problem. The eco-agriculture approach is expected to deliver the twin benefits of improved, sustainable ecosystem services and improved, resilient livelihoods.
97. Barriers to implementing the response include limited community awareness regarding climate change impacts and adaptation responses; limited technical capacity of local and national stakeholder to plan and implement eco-agriculture interventions; lack of physical and financial resources for adaptation; limited

¹⁵ Fish Report.

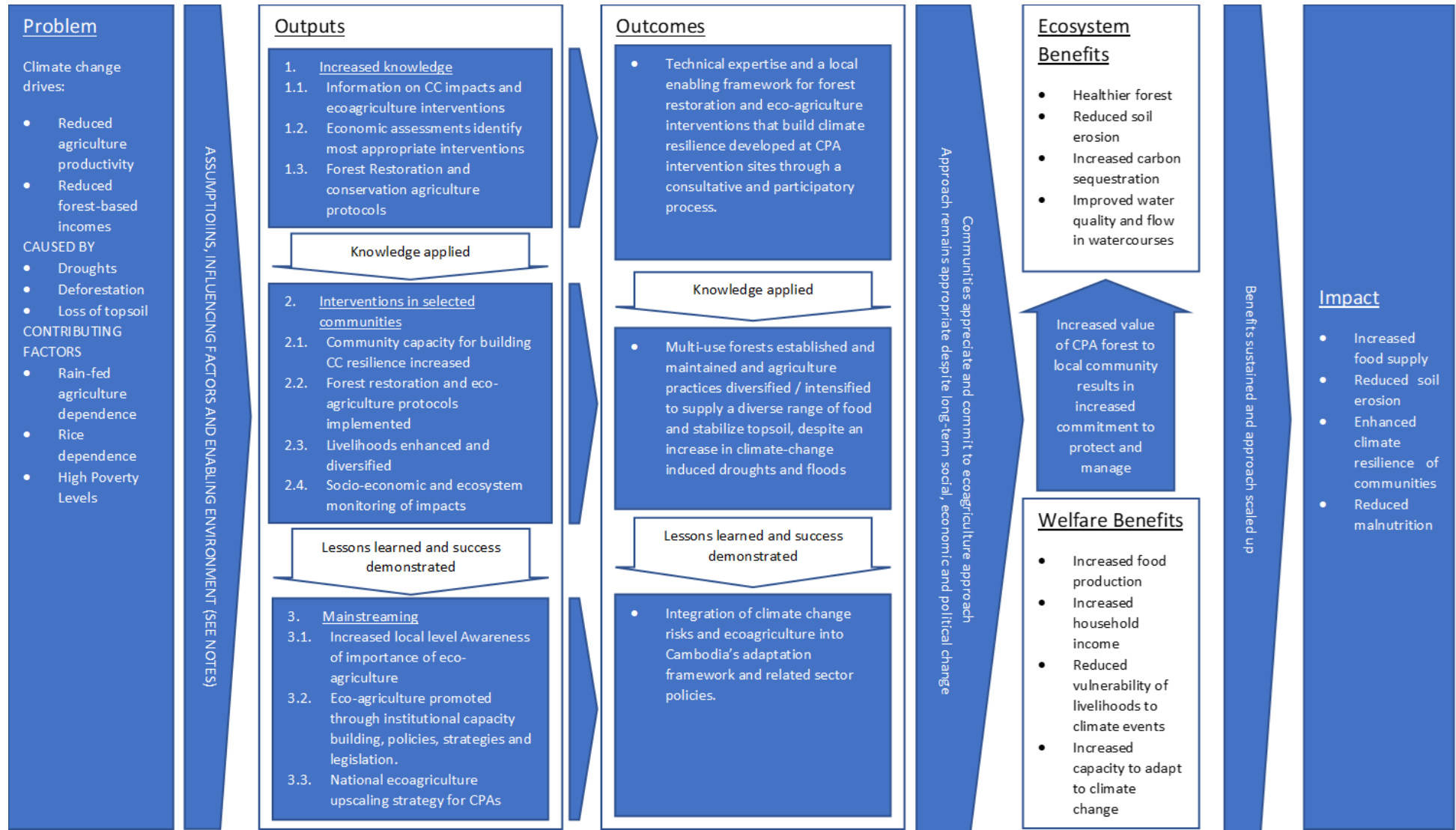
demonstration of ecoagriculture approaches to enhance resilience; a policy environment that does not specifically support restoration and intensification approaches; and a lack of climate-related data and lack of secure land tenure.

98. The project seeks to overcome these barriers through interventions at three levels, corresponding to the three project components. *First*, research and development will result in increased knowledge and technical capacity to support appropriate, ecoagriculture-based interventions. *Second*, this knowledge and technical capacity will underpin interventions in selected CPA communities. *Third*, lessons learned and the demonstrated success of this approach in the selected communities will influence policy and result in scaling-up of the approach, leading to a potentially nationwide, sustainable long-term impact. These three levels of intervention are defined as *drivers of change* in the TOC.
99. The specific interventions are selected based on research and community consultations as appropriate to the target communities (and could in principle be different in other communities, within the overall approach). The “extensive” forest regeneration interventions will result in a healthier forest, reduced soil erosion and improved downstream water quality and flow, and, by planting species with an economic value for the local community, will directly enhance livelihoods. This will in turn increase the value of the forest to the local community, strengthening their commitment to manage and protect their CPA. The “intensive” interventions will result in increased food production and household incomes, and greater availability of nutritious foods, while improving the sustainability of production (e.g. improved soil fertility, reduced need for shifting cultivation) and reducing the vulnerability of farm output to climate events (primarily flood and drought).
100. The ecosystem impacts of these outcomes will include healthier, sustainable, well-managed CPA forests, increased carbon sequestration, improved soil health and improved downstream water quality and flow. The human welfare impacts will include increased income, improved food supply and nutrition and enhanced climate change resilience. Through its combination of ecosystem and welfare impacts the project contributes to Sustainable Development Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts.
101. This description of the project TOC is illustrated graphically below.
102. The project model implies a number of assumptions – listed in the TOC – which are essential to the project logic. These are identified as:
 - Conservation threats are capable of being mitigated by community action, i.e. external threats such as conflict with or encroachment by outsiders are secondary or can be overcome;
 - Unsustainable practices (e.g. forest encroachment) result from lack of awareness (including lack of CC awareness) and lack of sustainable livelihood alternatives;
 - Eco-agriculture solutions are (in principle) suited to the CPA social situation and physical conditions, and offer opportunities for improved, resilient livelihoods aligned with conservation;

- Benefits of the eco-agriculture-based approach will be shared equitably, including by women and by potentially disadvantaged groups within the community;
- Eco-agriculture solutions, which may require clarification of land tenure / use rights, will be applied consistent with human rights of local communities including disadvantaged groups; and
- (In the original project design) a large amount of land was available for reforestation.

103. The project logic does not make any clear distinctions between the interests of different groups within the local communities; these may include ethnic groupings, women, people with disabilities, youth, (relatively) poorer households, etc. The target communities may in fact be relatively homogenous, but this is not explicitly stated or demonstrated in the project design. The project design document does highlight specific benefits that women will gain from the project (e.g. women engage in livelihood activities based on NTFP) but this does not constitute a full gender analysis of the project logic and impacts (this omission seems to result from the design template used). Accordingly, an inclusive and equitable distribution of benefits from the project, consistent with UN expectations on human rights and gender equality, is included as an assumption in the reconstructed TOC.

Figure IV-1: Reconstructed Theory of Change



Drivers of Vulnerability *(in Problem Statement)*

- Strong dependence on rain-fed, unimproved agriculture
- Strong dependence on one crop, namely rice
- High poverty levels
- Deforestation
- Resultant erosion

Assumptions *(implied in project design)*

- Conservation threats originate primarily from within the community, i.e. external threats / conflicts / encroachment are secondary or can be overcome.
- Unsustainable practices (e.g. forest encroachment) result from lack of awareness (including lack of CC awareness) and lack of sustainable livelihood alternatives.
- Eco-agriculture solutions are suited to the CPA social situation and physical conditions, and offer opportunities for improved, resilient livelihoods aligned with conservation
- Land is available for forest restoration activities.
- Benefits of the eco-agriculture-based approach will be shared equitably, including by women and by potentially disadvantaged groups within the community.
- Eco-agriculture solutions, which may require clarification of land tenure / use rights, will be applied consistent with human rights of local communities including disadvantaged groups.

Drivers of Change *(implied project logic)*

- Increased technical knowledge leads to eco-agriculture solutions that can be directly applied in the target communities.
- Eco-agriculture solutions result in enhanced livelihoods and reinforce community commitment to conservation.
- Demonstrated success at the five pilot sites will lead to replication and to integration of lessons learned in adaptation framework and CPA management policy and practice.

Influencing Factors: *(recognized as relevant and potentially subject to project influence)*

- Access to technology
- CC Awareness/ Skills on CC adaptation
- Access to capital and markets
- Land tenure
- Access to water for domestic use and small-scale irrigation
- Governance, including capacity and commitment of local authorities to enforce protected areas regulations.
- Capacity and commitment of CPA committee members
- Protected Area and CPA laws and regulations create facilitating environment for change
- NGO assistance directed to target communities?
- Potential for social enterprise / sustainable enterprise development identified / proven

104. This description of the TOC and the accompanying diagram should be considered as an articulation and visual representation of the TOC implied in the project design (and slightly modified after the baseline assessment), not as a full “reformulation”. However, for convenience, [Table 7](#) presents the design logic alongside the reconstructed TOC.

Table 7: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in Results Framework (RF) used in project reporting	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC	Justification for Reformulation
LONG TERM IMPACT		
Goal: Increase food supply and reduce soil erosion in communities surrounding five CPAs in Cambodia	No change	n/a
Objective: Enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around at least three CPA intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall.	Reduced malnutrition is an expected impact of the project	Stated in project design narrative but not in RF
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
Not described	Ecosystem benefits include healthier forest, reduced soil erosion, increased carbon sequestration and improved water quality and flows Welfare benefits for local community include increased food production, increased household income, reduced vulnerability of livelihoods to climate events and increased capacity to climate change Welfare benefits are (a) sustainable post-project, and (b) align the economic interests of the community, and of groups within the community, with ecosystem conservation.	Implied, but not fully articulated, in project design logic
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
Outcome 1: Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and ecoagriculture interventions that build climate resilience developed at CPA intervention sites through a consultative and participatory process.	No change	n/a
Outcome 2: Multi-use forests established and maintained and agricultural practices diversified/intensified to supply a diverse range of food and stabilize topsoil, despite an increase in climate change-induced droughts and floods.	No change	n/a
Outcome 3: Integration of climate change risks and ecoagriculture into Cambodia's adaptation framework and related sector policies.	No change	n/a
OUTPUTS	No change to project outputs	n/a

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Strategic Relevance

Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

105. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities is assessed as *Satisfactory*.
106. The project design document does not specifically address alignment with UNEP strategic priorities.
107. At the time of project design, the relevant UNEP strategy documents were the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-13 and the biennial Programme of Work (PoW) 2012-13. The project aligns with the MTS 2010-13 thematic priority on climate change (“strengthen the ability of countries to integrate climate change responses into national development processes” and in particular with the expected accomplishment of “adaptation planning, financing and cost-effective preventative actions are increasingly incorporated into national development processes that are supported by scientific information, integrated climate impact assessments and local climate data”).
108. The project remains aligned with current UNEP strategic priorities. The MTS 2022-25 “For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution” includes thematic programmes on climate action and nature action which are highly relevant to the project.

Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic Priorities

109. Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic Priorities is assessed as *Highly Satisfactory*.
110. Alignment of the project design to strategic priorities of Adaptation Fund is detailed in an Annex to the project design document. The table below summarises the alignment between project results and the AF Results Framework.

Table 8: Alignment of Project Results with AF Results Framework

Project Result	Corresponding AF Result	Comment
Objective: Enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around at least three CPA intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall.	Outcome 5: Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress.	AF outcome 5 refers to ecosystem resilience, while project objective refers to resilience of communities
Outcome 1: Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and ecoagriculture interventions that build climate resilience developed at CPA intervention sites through a consultative and participatory process.	Output 1.1: Risk and vulnerability assessments conducted and updated at national level	Outcome 1 not primarily concerned with risk and vulnerability assessments
Outcome 2: Multi-use forests established and maintained and agricultural practices diversified/intensified to supply a diverse range of food and stabilize topsoil, despite an increase in climate change-induced droughts and floods.	Output 5: Vulnerable physical, natural and social assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability.	Good match between project and AF results
Outcome 3: Integration of climate change risks and ecoagriculture into Cambodia’s adaptation framework and related sector policies.	Output 7: Improved integration of climate- resilience strategies into country development plans.	Re-wording of Outcome 3 after baseline assessment directly reflects the AF Output

111. Given that the project addresses ecosystem resilience and community livelihoods in a holistic manner, it is arguable that *AF Outcome 6: Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas* would have been equally relevant.
112. Relevant indicators of the AF results framework were identified and regularly reported through a results tracker template integrated in the annual Project Progress Reports (PPR).
113. Overall, the project design is a good match with the priorities and intended results of the Adaptation Fund.

Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

114. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities is assessed as *Satisfactory*.
115. The project alignment with the Cambodian policy framework for climate change response and for natural resources conservation is detailed in Part II, Section D of the project design document.
116. The Cambodia's policy framework for development at the time of project design was the RGC's Rectangular Strategy (Phase 1) implemented through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2009-2013. Strengthening the management of Protected Areas (PA) including "management of PA Communities" was identified as a priority in the NSDP. The Cambodia National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) specifically targeted restoration of forests in degraded CPA sites, stabilising soils and reducing the impact of floods, so providing a strong policy anchor for the project design. The project design is also consistent with relevant policy documents for the forestry and agriculture sectors. However, the project results framework did not integrate specific indicators from national policy or planning documents.

Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

117. Complementarity with Existing Interventions / Coherence is assessed as *Satisfactory*.
118. At the time of project design, and up to the present day, there are a considerable number of development interventions supporting conservation and community development at CPA sites, as well as relevant strategic interventions supporting forest conservation, sustainable agriculture development and climate change response. The project design document¹⁶ lists 12 ongoing (at the time of design) interventions in the target CPA and details potential synergies with the AF project. The design document also identifies¹⁷ 20 climate change adaptation projects active at the time of design, mainly to verify that there would be no duplication of activities with the AF project.
119. The project design document identifies specific opportunities for partnership with ongoing interventions at the target CPA sites, in areas including promotion of non-

¹⁶ See Table 6, Page 58 in the project design document for full list

¹⁷ See Table 7, Page 59 in the project design document.

timber forest product livelihoods, community patrolling, water supplies improvements and micro-finance.

120. The project design document also identifies potential synergies with projects promoting climate change adaptation nationally in Cambodia. In the main, these synergies comprise opportunities to capitalise on capacity building efforts previously implemented by other projects. Some more specific opportunities are identified, notably the potential for restoration protocols and results to be used in REDD+ programmes, and for REDD+ funds to be used to scale up the AF project interventions. The Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform for Asia and Asia Pacific Adaptation Network¹⁸ was identified as a potential platform for sharing knowledge gained and best practice guidelines. The design document does not specifically identify opportunities for the AF project to collaborate on policy development initiatives (for example, through the Technical Working Group framework).

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Satisfactory

B. Quality of Project Design

121. A systematic review of the quality of the project design was presented in the Inception Report. Based on this review, the quality of the design was assessed as *Moderately Satisfactory* (overall score 4.28), a little below the threshold for “satisfactory” rating.
122. The presentation of the design in the project design document¹⁹ could have been clearer, but this is largely a function of a somewhat cumbersome structure imposed by the design template. This results in repetitive descriptions of the proposed project interventions in different parts of the document, while down-playing or obscuring some key elements of the design logic, stakeholder analysis and risks.
123. A notable weakness in the design document – again, perhaps constrained by the design template – is that the logical framework is not presented as a whole in the narrative document, but only in sections by component, making the overall project logic harder to discern. The project design document does not specify indicators or quantitative targets at the outcome or objective levels.
124. Other relatively weak points in the design, leading to lower evaluation scores, include (1) lack of full stakeholder analysis; (2) lack of a capacity assessment of the project partners; and (3) assessment of project risks, and environmental and social risks, could have been stronger.
125. The project design quality assessment is based on the design document. It is noted that some of the weaknesses identified, particularly in the project results framework, were addressed during the Baseline Assessment²⁰. Additional indicators were adopted at Objective and Outcome levels, and a number of adjustments were made to output indicators and targets. These revisions to the results framework were adopted by decision of the 2nd meeting of the PSC in May 2014.

¹⁸ Merged in 2013 with [APAN – Asia Pacific Adaptation Network](#)

¹⁹ UNEP (2012): Request for Project/Programme Funding from Adaptation Fund

²⁰ C4 Ecosolutions (2014): Baseline Information and Indicators for the AF Project

Rating for Project Design: Moderately Satisfactory

C. Nature of the External Context

126. The external operating context of the project is rated as *Moderately Favourable*. During the project implementation period, previous to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Cambodia experienced political stability and steady economic growth. Violation of Protected Areas laws occasionally led to minor security issues but this does not appear to have hampered project operations significantly. Drought conditions caused some disruption to forest restoration and eco-agriculture activities.

127. Travel restrictions necessitated by COVID-19 created difficulties for project operations from early 2020 onwards, but most project field activities were completed by this time.

Rating for Nature of the external context: Moderately Favourable

D. Effectiveness

Availability of Outputs

128. Delivery of project outputs is assessed as *Satisfactory*. The assessment is based on project reporting, field observations and focus group discussions. Quantities of outputs delivered are obtained from project reporting and are consistent with (limited) field observations.

129. Based on project reporting, the project has succeeded in delivering most of the physical outputs targeted in the revised results framework adopted after the baseline study. Output indicators, targets and reported results are tabulated in Table 9 below, with commentary and an assessment of achievement on the scale Fully Achieved / Partially Achieved / Not Achieved. Most important outputs are considered as good quality by the users but some defects were identified. The level of ownership of project outputs is assessed as acceptable.

Table 9: Achievement of Physical Output Indicators

Indicator	Description	Target	Actual	Achievement	Comment
1.1.1	Number and type of specialist reports developed for the project – through a participatory approach with local communities where relevant – in the first year.	6	6	Full	
1.1.2	Number of MSc research projects on ecoagriculture initiated at a local university.	5	15	Full	
1.2.1	Number and type of economic assessment reports developed for the project – through a participatory approach with local communities where relevant – in the first year.	5	5	Full	
1.3.1	Number and type of technical protocols – informed by output 1.1 – for ecoagriculture	5	5	Full	

Indicator	Description	Target	Actual	Achievement	Comment
	interventions developed in the second year of project.				
2.1.1	Number of CPA Management Committees, local authority (LA) members and agricultural extensions officers located throughout Cambodia trained on climate change and ecoagriculture interventions.	90	139	Full	139 CPAs x 2 trainings with 2 CPA Committee and 1 LA representative per training
2.1.2	Number of CPA community members, gender disaggregated, at project intervention sites trained on climate change and ecoagriculture interventions.	2500	6,000	Full	68 training events with an average of 100 participants per event, Estimated in Final PPR
2.1.3	Number of patrolling committees established/strengthened.	5	5	Full	Final report states effectiveness low
2.1.4	% reduction in annual number of transgressions in each CPA between July 2014 and the end of the AF project.	40%	40%	Full	Stated in Final PPR
2.2.1	Number of community-managed nurseries established at project intervention sites.	3	3	Full	Nurseries not active at time of field visits
2.2.2	Number of qualified community-liaison planting officers contracted to assist with implementation of project activities at intervention sites.	10	10	Full	
2.2.3	Hectares of degraded forest within target CPAs restored.	30	72.3 ha	Full	Final PPR. Table 19 of completion report implies 105ha, with 337,331 trees. In addition, 155,176 indigenous trees and 462,442 fruit trees provided for planting outside CPAs.
2.2.4	Number of intensified/diversified home-gardens established at the target CPAs.	800	1,193	Partial	1,193 hh received HG support (PPR 2020). Not all these have continued with HG activities. See comment in text (Para 132) on definition of indicator.
2.2.5	Percentage of households at each CPA growing climate-resilient rice.	15%	46%	Full	872 hh received rice seed (PPR 2020), equivalent to about 46% of all households in the CPAs
2.2.6	Proportion of households in the five target CPAs that report an improvement in i) access to water; ii) access to new seed varieties; and iii) access to improved rice storage techniques, as a result of additional interventions.	80%		Full	Clear count of households is not reported, but extensive water supply interventions were implemented in all CPAs and reached almost all households in at least 2 CPAs
2.3.1	Number of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies developed – through a participatory approach with local communities where relevant – through the project.	3	5	Full	3 per site. 5 types mentioned in the PPR 2018

Indicator	Description	Target	Actual	Achievement	Comment
2.3.2	Percentage of target households adopting sustainable alternative livelihood strategies (dissagregated by gender).	25%	27%	Full	503 hh, which is 26.5% of hh in CPAs, reported in PPR 2020
2.4.1	Number of socio-economic and ecological monitoring reports and research protocols (for project duration and long-term) developed to measure impacts of the project: i) in the intervention sites; and ii) downstream of the intervention sites.	1 tool, 5 monitoring reports		Full	Baseline and MTR survey in 5 sites so considered as achieved
3.1.1	Number of 'events' held and/or products developed to raise awareness on climate change and the benefits of adaptive agricultural techniques.	28	50	Full	50 is approximate number
3.1.2	Climate change awareness index and understanding of ecoagriculture in the target communities (index score).	50%	44.10%	Partial	Baseline value was 22% so significant improvement achieved. Final PPR states 51.5% but it seems to be an adjustment after the evaluation draft and based on the same data as the earlier, lower figure. Observed climate change awareness is very low.
3.1.3	Number and type of REDD+ feasibility studies and Project Idea Notes (if applicable).	1	1	Full	Feasibility study concluded not to proceed at this stage
3.2.1	Number of CPA management plans developed/ revised to incorporate the ecoagriculture approach.	5	4	Full	1 management plan was pre-existing so all CPAs have plans
3.3.1	Number of national ecoagriculture upscaling strategies developed.	1		Full	Upscaling strategy due to be completed by end of project

130. Based on [Table 9](#), eighteen of 22 physical output indicators are considered as fully achieved, with the remaining 4 considered as partially achieved. Given the diverse scope of the project interventions and the challenging implementing conditions this must be considered as a commendable level of achievement.
131. The PPR 2020 reports a 39% reduction in forest transgressions (indicator 2.1.4) based monthly patrolling reports, but it appears that these reports were not submitted systematically until late in the project. The PCMR states that transgressions have reduced at Chup Tasok and that no transgressions are reported at Chi Ork or Ronouk Khgneng. Evidence of ongoing transgressions (areas re-planted by the project fenced and converted to chamkar) was observable at Chorm Thlok during field visits.
132. Intensified and diversified home gardens (indicator 2.2.4) are defined in the results framework as having "at least 20 species, of which: i) at least 5 are indigenous fruit/soil-binding tree species; and ii) at least 8 are different vegetable species. Furthermore, the species planted within the home-garden should be representative of at least 4 different canopy layers (emergent, canopy, understory, shrub and herb)."

According to the Final PPR, 1,193 households benefitted from home-garden activities (distribution of seeds and equipment accompanied by training), as reported in [Table 9](#). However, the PCMR comments that these home-gardens do not match the indicator definition. The view of the evaluation team is that the indicator definition is quite unrealistic in context of the needs and constraints of the beneficiaries and it is better thought of as a description of an idealised home-garden to be used as a reference, with the aim that beneficiaries would observe and adopt those techniques most relevant to them. To this end, the project could have made greater efforts to establish model home-gardens for demonstration purposes (this was done for one year only at three sites). Actual home-gardens seen in the field were more modest in scope but tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries. High opportunity cost of labour and seasonal water shortages were cited by beneficiaries as constraints on their home-garden activities.

133. The climate change awareness index (indicator 3.1.2) was measured at 44.1% by the end-line survey (PPR 2020), as compared to the target value of 50%. The PCMR comments that “despite the awareness raising campaign that were implemented the level of awareness of some community members remains limited.” This is supported by field observations; in fact, even CPA leaders could give only a very limited explanation of climate change, with deforestation cited as the direct cause in most cases.
134. Preparation of an eco-agriculture up-scaling strategy (indicator 3.3.1) is in progress and work has also begun on a concept note for an upscaling project. In fact, the upscaling strategy itself focuses on mobilisation of funds rather than mainstreaming eco-agriculture in strategic planning. An “upscaling project” is a worthy initiative but is some way short of a national strategy. The evaluators note that it would be problematic for MoE to develop a “national eco-agriculture strategy” except through collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and the necessary relationships to facilitate this do not appear to be in place.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

135. Achievement of Project Outcomes is assessed as *Moderately Satisfactory* based on the observations of the evaluation team, including document studies, stakeholder consultations and field visits.
136. *Outcome 1, “Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and eco-agriculture interventions that build climate resilience developed at CPA intervention sites through a consultative and participatory process”* has the indicator “*Change in the capacity of national and local government officials to implement forest restoration and conservation agriculture interventions that build climate resilience*”. Project M&E did not include a specific method of measuring the improved capacity, though the evaluation team was able to observe that for national officials interacting with the project, at least, the level of knowledge is high.
137. Outcome 1 is considered to have been fully achieved. Within the project design logic and Theory of Change, Outcome 1 was expected to result largely from the effects of increased knowledge, acquired initially through the baseline survey and situation analysis, economic assessments and the development of forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols. This knowledge would then be applied through

interventions in the CPAs and the effects would be further studied, through project evaluations (mid-term and end-line surveys) and through the studies conducted by MSc. students.

138. The initial body of research and development of methodology was fully completed, as reflected in the full achievement of all output indicators for Component 1 ([Table 9](#)). The reports examined by the evaluators are generally of high quality. The reports are quite technical in nature and some of the recommendations developed (for example in the Agriculture Market Assessment Report²¹) might require more specialised sector development projects for full implementation.
139. Knowledge is not static and, inevitably, implementation of the adopted methodology produced a range of results, as discussed under Outcome 2 below. The MTR and PCMR reports produced by the project are notable for documenting weaknesses as well as strengths of the results achieved on the ground. The MSc. students' research also provides a rich resource of additional knowledge. Going forward to the scale-up phase, it will be essential to take account of these evaluation and study findings – in other words, it will not be sufficient simply to apply the methods and protocols developed and documented early in the project, but rather, to update these based on the observed outcomes at CPA level.
140. Outcome 2, *“Multi-Use forests established and maintained and agriculture practices diversified / intensified to supply a diverse range of food and stabilize topsoil, despite an increase in climate-change induced droughts and floods”* has the outcome indicator *“Number of households that have benefited from chamkar-based agroforestry plots and intensified / diversified home-gardens”* (target 1,000). The PPR 2020 states that in addition to the 1,895 CPA member households, almost all of whom received fruit trees, a further 11,500 households in CPAs surrounding the target sites also received fruit trees to plant on agroforestry plots. On this basis, the indicator is considered as fully achieved.
141. However, the outcome overall is assessed as partially achieved. The project has not significantly expanded the area of multi-use forest, but has succeeded in planting forest and fruit trees, to the benefit of the CPA communities. Food supply has been improved overall. There is very limited evidence available on the topic of topsoil stabilization; the majority of the protected forest areas are in relatively flat topography and the effects of erosion would not be immediately obvious in these areas (this is a general challenge for ecosystem-based adaptation projects as the time needed for benefits to become visible may be much longer than the project period).
142. Outcome 2 was expected to arise from application of the knowledge generated under Component 1, in the form of a set of interventions that can be summarised as (1) forest restoration and conservation including re-planting, forest patrols and establishment of community tree nurseries; (2) distribution of fruit trees and forest trees for planting in chamkar plots and at homesteads; (3) support for home-garden production; (4) support for livestock production (pigs and chickens); (5) support for rice production; (6) innovative livelihood activities such as cricket-raising; (7) water supplies installations, appropriate to the needs of each community, primarily for

²¹ Agriculture Market Assessment Report of Community Protected Areas, dated 2014

domestic use; (8) support to community savings groups; and (9) construction of road rest areas and (at Chi Ork) a wildlife viewing facility. The effectiveness of each class of interventions, and the contribution to the intended outcome, is assessed in the following paragraphs based on field observations, key informant interviews and focus group discussions, backed by project reporting.

143. As illustrated in the reconstructed Theory of Change (Figure IV-1), **forest restoration and conservation** is considered as a major and direct contribution to one of the two key intermediate impacts of the project, i.e. ecosystem benefits. Threats to the forest arise primarily from two sources: conversion of forest land to agricultural land, and non-sustainable harvesting of timber and (possibly) other forest products.
144. The logic of the CPA approach to forest protection is that the local community has a strong interest in protecting the forest, and (assuming an adequate regulatory framework and supportive authorities) has the means to do so. Field observations of the evaluation team, consistent with project reporting, are that these conditions are only partially fulfilled at present.
145. Community interest in forest protection arises from forest-based livelihoods, from the cultural values of the community and from the role of the forest in reducing environmental degradation affecting soil fertility, water supplies etc.
146. Field observations show that the direct importance of forest-based livelihoods to the CPA communities is quite small. In particular harvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFP), while quite widespread as a supplementary activity, is not a major component of livelihoods except perhaps for a few households. Focus groups were asked to rank seven income sources; NTFP ranked fifth overall, with one group (women in Chup Tasok) placing NTFP third and no other of the 12 groups placing NTFP higher than fourth (Table 10). The project design assumption that NTFP play a critical role in CPA community livelihoods, and / or that improving NTFP livelihoods could have a transformative impact on forest conservation, is not substantiated.

Table 10: Results of Income Source Ranking by Focus Groups

Income Source	Rank	Score*
Chamkar and Home Garden	1	1.67
Livestock	2	2.25
Rice farming	3	3.67
Wage labour (local)	4	3.92
NTFP and handicrafts made from NTFP	5	4.92
Small Business	6	5.25
Migratory Labour / Remittances	7	6.75
<i>* Score is average ranking for 12 groups, awarding 7 for non-applicable income sources.</i>		

147. CPA committee members and focus groups associate forest degradation with climate change and (in a few cases) directly with loss of water resources. The potential link between forest degradation and soil erosion or fertility loss was not mentioned by any group. Thus, preservation of “public goods” ecosystem services does not seem to be a strong motivating factor.

148. Other livelihoods linked to the forest are also of relatively minor importance. CPA communities harvest firewood from the forest for cooking, but shortage of firewood is not encountered as a problem in most non-forest rural areas of Cambodia. Timber is cut from the forest for housing materials, fence-posts etc, but scaling up this activity would be self-defeating for forest conservation (informal observations are consistent with continuing small-scale harvesting for commercial sale). Other potential income sources are discussed below, but none are significant at present.
149. All CPA communities value the forest and regret its loss, but the extent that this translates into an active commitment for conservation varies. The evaluation team found that indigenous communities, present as a minority at Chorm Thlok and as the majority at Ronouk Khgneng, have strong cultural commitment which includes recognition of areas of specific value, including traditional burial grounds and areas used for religious ceremonies. At the other extreme, the large CPA communities at Chorm Thlok and Skor Krouch include many members for whom the forest plays no significant role in their lives (e.g. at Skor Krouch, the CPA committee estimated that about 30% were in this category, with a further 50% entering the forest for NTFP collection as a seasonal supplementary or recreational activity and only 20% having NTFP as a significant income source).
150. Perhaps the strongest commitment of the communities to the CPA is its perceived value in preserving land use rights. This has two components: establishment of the CPA is seen as safeguarding the land against inclusion in Economic Land Concessions (ELC) or informal outside encroachment; while it is also seen as establishing the right of the community to continue to farm existing agricultural plots and (possibly) to extend these plots. The situation found by the evaluation team was somewhat different between communities (see box). However, it does not appear that the potential of the CPA to leverage land use rights to strengthen conservation is fully realised at present.

Land use rights on Phnom Kulen

The community of Chup Tasok on Phnom Kulen described their perception of traditional land ownership or use rights in which areas of forest have been in recognised family ownership for generations – before the Khmer Rouge regime of the 1970s which resulted in an effective “reset” of land ownership in most of Cambodia. This perception is wholly different from the legal position in which the land is State property as part of the Phnom Kulen national park. Furthermore, recent efforts to strengthen conservation in the national park have led to cessation of traditional upland rice production in the area, and to an understanding that the extensive existing cashew plantations may be harvested but may not be replanted, so that this important income source will diminish and eventually disappear. The Commune Council told the evaluation team that proposals to define areas of agriculture land within the CPA have been submitted but not yet approved. This example indicates the potential for effective regulatory action supporting

151. Considering the capacity of the CPA committees to effectively protect the forests, the picture is again somewhat mixed. The CPA committees vary in administrative capacity and in unity of purpose, with generally those in the smaller CPA communities (Chup Tasok and Ronouk Khgneng) showing a higher level of effectiveness. All CPA committees report good cooperation with the local authorities, park ranger services and police. CPA committees appear capable of taking action against transgressors, for example by confiscating equipment and materials from illegal timber harvesters. However, the Skor Krouch CPA committee reported removing fence-posts placed by encroaching farmers, only for the illegal posts to reappear. The patrol system appears to be of limited effectiveness – as patrols are organised only one or two times per month even with project support, it

must be easy for transgressors to evade them. It is also notable that, as CPA community members are regularly active about their private business in the CPA areas, a system of report-and-response might be more effective than formal patrolling.

152. Results of the project forest conservation activities are mixed. As recognised at the baseline study stage, the project was not able to significantly expand forest coverage within the CPA. Perhaps the most important result should be seen as stabilisation, i.e. protection against further encroachment. This seems to have been achieved in most CPAs, with the exception of Skor Krouch where encroachment has clearly continued through the project period.
153. Tree-planting was mainly in small infill areas in the forest and in areas with existing, but sparse, forest cover. Results have been mixed. The PCMR reports survival rates ranging from as low as 10% on some plots to over 100% (i.e. further natural propagation) on others. This is consistent with evaluation team observations. Poor soils – or inappropriate soils for the species planted – may have been responsible for poor results in some cases. However, in Skor Krouch the evaluation team was able to observe replanted areas which had subsequently been fenced around and converted to cashew plantation – this activity is done by CPA members and / or with the full knowledge, if not necessarily consent, of the CPA committee. In Ronouk Khgneng, seedlings planted in 2015 had failed to grow to more than 0.5m – 1m high, while others planted in 2018 at the nursery site had already reached 3m – 4m. The CPA committee attributed this failure to regular burning of the forest land as a side-effect of setting fires for resin harvesting or by herders. If so, it appears to demonstrate insufficient commitment by the CPA committee and community to preserve the results of the re-planting efforts. Existing trees in these over-burned areas appear unaffected by the fires, but if the situation continues then lack of new growth will ultimately lead to degradation of the forest.
154. The project invested in community tree nurseries at three locations. Ongoing activities at these nurseries are very limited. The evaluation team considers that a more business-oriented approach to operation of these nurseries is needed. Forest tree saplings are in demand by forest-conservation projects and NGOs but also by the commercial sector – given the extent of resort development around Sen Monorom (capital of Mondulkiri Province), the potential for the Ronouk Khgneng nursery to supply that market may be large. Forest tree saplings could also be sold as a side-activity to eco-tourism. This approach would provide an income for operation of the nursery, for the CPA committee and for community members whose commitment to forest conservation would increase as a result.
155. **Fruit tree distribution** has been a notable success of the project and was cited amongst its most important benefits by CPA committees and focus groups. Some species have grown better than others. Fruit is harvested mainly for own consumption (important in itself) but also for commercial sale. One farmer in Ronouk Khgneng commented that he could have taken greater advantage of the fruit trees if he had time to prepare his land before planting. Planting of the trees seems to have been mainly at homestead plots and to a lesser extent in or around chamkar plots. Stronger training and advice could have been provided to farmers to integrate the trees into a more systematic eco-agriculture approach.

Table 11: Tree Planting by Type and Location

Tree Type	5 Intervention Sites	Other CPAs	Total
Indigenous	604,190	343,500	947,690
Fruit	263,542	255,000	518,542
All	867,732	598,500	1,466,232

156. **Home Garden support** consisted primarily of distribution of seeds and of equipment including nets (mainly for fencing), water butts etc. In some cases home gardens were integrated with water supplies interventions, increasing the potential for year-round production. Some farmers reported receiving training. The home garden support was highly appreciated by the recipients and is thought to have significantly increased the level of home gardening activity in the CPA communities (with an odd exception at Chup Tasok, where, for reasons that were not very clear, the community reported that they had ceased home gardening activities during the COVID pandemic). However, observations and discussions with farmers indicate that the project has not achieved a transformative impact on home gardening techniques – broadly, farmers grow vegetables and homestead fruit trees in much the same way that they did before the project.
157. Farmers who received support for **pig and chicken production** generally reported satisfactory results. However, this represents only a modest scaling up of a pre-existing activity. Pig production is seen as the more important income source but is affected by African swine fever. Chicken production can be an attractive income source for small farmers in Cambodia, but the CPAs are disadvantaged by distance from the market. Also, successful market-oriented smallholder chicken production generally requires a more systematic approach, e.g. permanent caging and a broiler system in which farmers purchase vaccinated chicks from an incubator operator, rather than the broadly traditional free-range approach followed by the CPA farmers.
158. **Rice agriculture support** by the project appears to have been limited in practice to distribution of improved rice seeds (Rumduol variety). No farmers reported having attended training on rice agriculture technique supported by the project or having fundamentally changed their technical approach to farming as a result of the project. Rumduol was one of the variants commonly in use before the project intervention, though farmers reported that the project-supplied seed was of high purity and gave an increased yield and better fragrance. In most cases, farmers have continued to plant seed preserved from the previous harvest, i.e. originating from the project supply. Some farmers practice seed purification techniques but it is not clear how widespread this is. At Chorm Thlok there is an established agriculture cooperative with membership overlapping with the CPA, and the cooperative activities include seed production.
159. **Agriculture Extension training** provided by the project does not appear to have been highly effective. Most farmers joining focus groups could not recall attending trainings or did not appear to have retained a detailed recollection of what was taught. It may be that the project relied excessively on classroom-style trainings delivered by content specialists (academics and consultants) while a learning-by-doing approach based on demonstration plots could have been more effective. Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (PDAFF) are

experienced in delivering training through local intermediaries such as lead farmers and Commune Extension Workers, and closer cooperation with PDAFF might have produced better results.

160. **Innovative livelihood activities** promoted by the project have been less successful. The project introduced cricket raising and bee keeping, but these seem to have failed because of inadequate techniques or lack of a developed value chain (it seems that cricket colonies need to be re-established with new seed stock after a few cycles, but the CPA farmers did not have access to a supplier for this).
161. **Water supplies** interventions were a significant success and highly appreciated by the beneficiaries overall. The establishment of the water system at Chup Tasok had a transformative effect with almost all households now receiving water directly from a spring capture system. A community pond established at Chi Ork is in good condition, though used mainly by about eight nearby households. The pond would be an important resource for the broader community in the event of a drought. A rehabilitated natural pond at Chorm Thlok has a larger group of users, primarily consisting of indigenous families who live in that area. The pond is also expected to benefit wildlife. At Skor Krouch, 52 pump-wells were provided as well as a spring capture system for one village (not seen by the evaluation team). At Ronouk Khgneng, 13 wells were installed, but these have had maintenance problems and only about half are currently functioning. CPA members reported that they do not use the well water for human consumption because of a high carbonate content – they perceive this as a health issue although it is probably more a matter of taste. Seventy-nine rainwater harvesting systems – roughly one for each original CPA member household – were provided and perform well, but do not have sufficient storage capacity for use in the dry season.
162. The **community savings and loan schemes** appear to be a considerable success. Project support was sufficient to establish schemes with about 20 households as members; this is a significant proportion of the community at Chup Tasok and Ronouk Khgneng though less so in the other CPAs. At Ronouk Khgneng the project support has been combined with additional finance from other sources – apparently including some REDD+ funds, so that the total size of the fund is now reported as 196 million riel (about \$US 50,000) and is sufficient for multi-purpose credit for all community members who want to borrow.
163. **Road Rest Areas** are attractive buildings and are in regular use for community meetings and events, and as a headquarters for the CPA committees. The buildings feature attractive artwork promoting environmental protection messages. Two examples were seen of these buildings being used by non-community members. At Chi Ork the road rest area is located on a highway and appears to be regularly used by passers-by. Unfortunately, this does not result in an income that can be used for cleaning and hygiene, so the toilets are in very poor condition and the building is surrounded by garbage. At Skor Krouch the road rest area was in use as accommodation and staging area by a team of travelling raffia-collectors from Siem Reap province (this was the only example seen of a genuinely market-oriented NTFP activity, but not involving CPA members). Again, the toilets were in very poor condition. These examples demonstrate the potential for the road rest areas and other assets of the CPA to be “monetized” in support of sustainability and strengthened conservation – this will be further discussed in a later section. The

wildlife sanctuary and viewing area at Chorm Thlok appears to have high potential but is not in active use – this may be partially due to COVID-19 but also reflects an insufficiently business-oriented approach to the management of these assets.

164. Overall, the project has had a beneficial impact on the welfare of the CPA communities (the second key intermediate state, as per the Theory of Change) through improved food supplies and agriculture income, improved access to water and reduced vulnerability to climate change.
165. **The linkage between the two key intermediate states – i.e. the extent to which improved community welfare leads to increased commitment to forest protection – is critical to the overall logic of the project as expressed in the Theory of Change.** The view of the evaluation team is that the potential for this linkage is demonstrated but not fully realised by the project. In retrospect, the project probably supported too broad a range of activities, some of which were not strongly linked to forest conservation either directly or indirectly. Particularly in the Boeung Per CPAs, many beneficiaries of livelihood activities appear to be farmers with no strong interest in the forest. The project has not succeeded in developing significant, potentially transformative, income streams for the CPA committee and community directly linked to forest conservation. Potential means whereby this might be achieved are discussed in Section [VI](#) (especially paragraph 219).
166. Outcome 3, *Integration of climate change risks and ecoagriculture into Cambodia's adaptation framework and related sector policies*, has the outcome indicator "number, type and sector of policy revisions to address climate change risks proposed" and the associated target "At least 3 revisions to incorporate climate change and ecoagriculture into relevant environmental, agricultural, forestry and / or development policies / plans proposed by the end of the AF project."
167. As results against this outcome indicator, the PPR 2020 cites the development / updating of CPA management plans for all five CPA. Four management plans were prepared and one existing plan was updated, which is an important achievement for the sustainability of the CPA. However, these are local plans, while the wording of the Outcome clearly implies an impact on national policymaking and adaptation strategy.
168. The major policy output of the project appears to be the Policy Gap Analysis report prepared in 2021²². This important and valuable report provides a comprehensive overview of the policy and institutional context of the CPAs and some of the challenges faced, including areas where regulation is not clear, potentially excessive restrictions on community livelihood activities in the CPAs and complex or conflicting institutional mandates. The report rightly identifies the key issue of increasing the potential for CPA communities to gain livelihoods from the forest in ways that enhance, rather than threaten, conservation. The report provides recommendations for (1) making it easier for CPAs to gain livelihoods from sustainable exploitation of NTFPs; (2) management of small-scale infrastructure, particularly water systems; (3) forest restoration and conservation; and (4) savings groups.

²² Dr. Ou Ratanak (2021): Final Report of Policy Gap Analysis and Development for Community Protected Areas Management Cambodia.

169. The policy recommendations on NTFP harvesting are detailed and would have a positive impact if implemented. However, as assessed by the current evaluation (and consistent with remarks in project reports) the income potential from NTFP is quite limited so the effects of the proposed changes would probably be less transformative than is assumed in the report.
170. The other areas addressed by the policy gap analysis are more technical than policy-oriented: there are no major policy-based obstacles to the development of rural domestic water supplies below the level of commercial supply systems. Recommendations on forest conservation are primarily technical in nature, though an important point on potential for sustainable timber harvesting by local communities is addressed. Management of savings groups is not really a policy issue from the point of view of MoE and CPA management.
171. Although the physical outputs of Component 3 have been largely achieved, the project does not appear to have succeeded in promoting any formal changes to government-wide policy or strategy (although the outcome requires only that changes are proposed, not formally adopted). There are two likely contributing factors. First, the project timescale is short for convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of the eco-agriculture approach, and the final stages of the project – when evidence of effectiveness might have been available – have coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic which hampered both project and policy-dialogue activities. Second, the project has not succeeded in developing strong collaborative linkages with institutions outside MoE, who would be expected to partner in policy-making. In particular, coordination with MAFF appears to be very limited, although MAFF endorsement would likely be needed for adoption of a strategy document with "eco-agriculture" in the title.
172. The evaluation team believes that there is a further underlying issue with the defined policy objectives of the project. As stated in the project design, the key policy focus of the project is eco-agriculture. However, eco-agriculture is not (as mentioned above) wholly within the mandate of MoE; neither is it a full solution to the complex challenge of strengthening the effectiveness of forest conservation through the CPAs. This latter point is illustrated by the scope of project interventions which go well beyond what can narrowly be defined as "eco-agriculture." The policy effectiveness may have been greater if the focus had more specifically been on strengthening policy and strategy for CPA management – clearly within the MoE mandate and at the same time broad enough to cover all necessary types of intervention. This point will be discussed further in Section VI (paragraph 223).

Achievement of Likelihood of Impact

173. Achievement of Likelihood of Impact is assessed as *Moderately Likely*. The intended impact of the project is expressed in the Objective statement: "Enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around at least three CPA intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change induced hazard of erratic rainfall." The reconstructed Theory of Change ([Figure IV-1](#)) identifies that the objective will be achieved through a combination of intermediate impacts on the welfare of the CPA communities (increased food production, increased household income, reduced vulnerability of livelihoods to climate events and increased capacity to adapt to climate change) and on the ecosystem (healthier forests, reduced soil

erosion, increased carbon sequestration and improved water quality and flow in watercourses).

174. Five site-specific drivers of vulnerability were identified in the project design as i) strong dependence of communities on rain-fed, unimproved agriculture; ii) a strong dependence of communities on one crop, namely rice; iii) high poverty levels in all communities surveyed; iv) deforestation; and v) erosion due to land mismanagement. Evaluation findings confirm that the communities are strongly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, using mainly traditional or “unimproved” methods at the start of the project. Past deforestation has clearly had a major impact at all sites. The communities have high poverty levels and this is a constraint to community-based conservation efforts. However, the communities are not strongly dependent on rice alone, in fact, rice growing was rated the third most important income source overall by focus groups, after livestock raising and non-rice crops. Communities in the CPA do not appear to be aware of soil erosion as an urgent issue.
175. The project has resulted in improvements to agriculture, primarily by introducing new crops (fruit trees, vegetables) rather than improving techniques used for the existing crops. Observations are consistent with the project having achieved a reduction in poverty, though this cannot be quantified with the available information. The project has addressed deforestation through planting trees – though it has succeeded in restoring only a modest area of forest. Tree planting is expected to have a positive impact on soil erosion, but again, this cannot be quantified. Provision of domestic water supplies was one of the most successful project activities but is only indirectly related to the drivers of vulnerability identified above (improved water supplies may be directly considered as a reduction in multi-dimensional poverty and are expected to indirectly impact on drivers of income poverty).
176. The reconstructed Theory of Change ([Figure IV-1](#)) identifies six assumptions as implicit in the project logic. These are listed in [Table 12](#) with notes on the extent to which these assumptions proved valid.

Table 12: Validity of Design Assumptions

Assumption	Validity
Conservation threats originate primarily from within the community, i.e. external threats / conflicts / encroachment are secondary or can be overcome.	Valid , to the extent that there do not appear to be externally-driven threats to the viability of the project CPAs (some incidental encroachment by non-CPA members occurs)
Unsustainable practices (e.g. forest encroachment) result from lack of awareness (including lack of CC awareness) and lack of sustainable livelihood alternatives.	Partially valid . Forest encroachment in the target CPAs seems driven mainly by income-generating opportunities (e.g. expanding cashew plantations). The most successful project-supported livelihood activities (fruit trees, home gardens) might only supplement, not replace, non-sustainable activities.
Eco-agriculture solutions are suited to the CPA social situation and physical conditions, and offer opportunities for improved, resilient livelihoods aligned with conservation	Partially valid . Some eco-agriculture solutions introduced by the project were successful, but others were not.
Land is available for forest restoration activities	Not valid (to the extent that was initially assumed). To be fair, this problem was identified at an early stage and the project strategy was adjusted as a result.
Benefits of the eco-agriculture-based approach will be shared equitably, including by women and by potentially disadvantaged groups within the community	Valid . Community member asserted project benefits were shared fairly amongst members including women and disadvantaged groups.
Eco-agriculture solutions, which may require clarification of land tenure / use rights, will be applied consistent with human rights of local communities including disadvantaged groups.	Valid . There was no evidence that introduction of eco-agriculture solutions led to violation of rights of any group.

177. The evaluation team investigated the distribution of project benefits (and any possible negative impacts) through extensive focus group discussions based on a multidimensional typology of community members: women, youth, rice farmers, non-rice farmers and indigenous groups. This exercise identified some important differences in perspectives and material interests of different groups (not greater than would be expected however) but did not find evidence of negative impacts or unfair exclusion from project benefits. Overall, the conclusion was that project benefits were widely spread amongst the community and were shared equitably.
178. Finally, the reconstructed TOC identifies three key processes or “drivers of change” that are implicit in the project logic and link the project interventions in all three components to the project objective:
- *Increased technical knowledge leads to eco-agriculture solutions that can be directly applied in the target communities.* The project (Component 1) succeeded in generating new knowledge of eco-agriculture solutions but encountered difficulties in directly applying these solutions in the target communities, in some cases.
 - *Eco-agriculture solutions result in enhanced livelihoods and reinforce community commitment to conservation.* The eco-agriculture solutions that were applied resulted in improved livelihoods. The project also reinforced community commitment to conservation. However, the direct linkage between these two is not so clear, meaning that the more successful livelihood activities promoted (home gardens, fruit trees etc) did not depend directly on increased conservation effort for their success. The project did not succeed in identifying and successfully introducing livelihood activities that would create a direct, material interest in forest conservation.
 - *Demonstrated success at the five pilot sites will lead to replication and to integration of lessons learned in adaptation framework and CPA management policy and practice.* The project is widely regarded as a success and as a model with potential for replication, and, in fact, a proposal for scaling up has been prepared. However, more needs to be done to connect lessons learned in project implementation to valuable improvements in the CPA management policy and practice framework.
179. Based on this assessment, the likelihood of the project achieving its intended impact is assessed as Moderately Likely.
180. This assessment is also consistent with the level of achievement of the two objective level indicators defined in the project results framework: “*Percentage change in the climate vulnerability index at each target CPA*” with a target of a 20% decrease; and “*Number of project beneficiaries, gender disaggregated, benefitting from the project’s eco-agriculture interventions*” with a target of at least 1,000 people, 50% of them women.
181. The climate change vulnerability index was measured at each CPA at baseline, MTR and completion. The maximum vulnerability index score is 120, but normally ranges between 0 and 50. Findings are summarised in [Table 13](#).

Table 13: Climate Vulnerability Index Measurements

CPA	Vulnerability index			
	Baseline	MTR	End	Target
Chiork Boeung Prey	10.4	27.6	15.7	8.3
Chorm Thlok	15.2	49.4	15.1	12.2
Skor Krouch	25.8	27.8	18.7	20.6
Chop Tasok	12.1	21.4	16.7	9.7
Ronouk Khgneng	27.6	29.9	21.4	22.1

182. It is seen that the measured value of the climate vulnerability index increased at all sites between baseline and MTR, with a particularly large increase seen at Chorm Thlok. The index then fell again by the end-line survey, but reached the target (20% reduction on baseline) at only two sites, Skor Krouch and Ronouk Khgneng.
183. The MTR comments that external factors may have affected the increase in measured vulnerability. Measured adaptive capacity had also increased, but not by so much as to offset the increase in vulnerability. Without the project interventions, the increase in vulnerability would have been greater. These are reasonable points, although the possibility of measurement error must also be considered, particularly given the seemingly implausibly large increase in vulnerability at Chorm Thlok.
184. The outreach target of 1,000 individual beneficiaries (50% female) was considerably exceeded, with a total of approximately 24,000 beneficiaries reported in the PPR 2020.
185. The project objective as stated can be considered to have been partially achieved, as the observed outcomes (assessed in the previous section) taken in total, can be expected to increase the climate resilience of the CPA communities. Impacts on “downstream” communities (in the strict sense of communities located downstream on a watercourse passing through the CPA) are harder to assess. The view of the evaluation team is that it was probably not realistic to expect direct, measurable, physical impacts in terms of water flow or quality, given the scale and nature of the project interventions. The project adopted a looser definition of “downstream communities” to include the impacts on all neighbouring communities. These impacts would include improved ecosystem services as well as indirect benefits from capacity building and improved agriculture technique; however a quantitative assessment of these impacts is not possible.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Satisfactory

E. Financial Management

Adherence to UNEP’s Financial Policies and Procedures

186. Adherence to UNEP’s Financial Policies and Procedures is rated *Satisfactory*. There were no identified instances of deviation from UNEP’s financial policies and procedures. Some delays occurred in finalisation of financial reports.

Completeness of Financial Information

187. Completeness of Financial Information is rated *Satisfactory*. The evaluation team was provided with full financial information including the project budget and subsequent amendments, expenditure reports and audit reports for periods 2014, 2015-16, 2017 and 2018. Quarterly expenditure sheets provided to the evaluation team were signed by project officials. The Audit Report for 2019 has not been finalised at the time of reporting as the auditor's fieldwork was delayed by COVID restrictions.

Table 14: Financial Management Table

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		S	
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ²³ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	
2. Completeness of project financial information²⁴:		S	
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	Excel table of costs by output and line item
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Annual budget revisions in Excel format
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	PCA
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Examples of Fund Transfer Remittances Advice documents provided by UNEP
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	N/A	
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	Expenditures by line item up to May 2020
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	Yes	3 biennial audit reports

²³ If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation may be given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

²⁴ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

NON-GEF AND GEF PROJECTS			
Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		S	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		S	
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		HS	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		S	
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		S	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		S	
Overall rating		S	

Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

188. Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff is rated *Satisfactory*. Good communication on financial management issues was maintained between the UNEP Fund Management Officer and the Project Manager. Financial reporting was generally timely and with adequate supporting documentation. Only minor financial management issues arose and were dealt with through communication between the Task Manager, the Fund Manager and the Project Manager.

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

F. Efficiency

189. The project has delivered virtually all its planned physical outputs within the allocated budget. As expected, there are some variations between planned and actual costs at the output level and overall the project spent more on Component 1 (22% increase) and on project management and M&E (8% increase) and less on Component 3 (36% decrease) as compared with the plan. Component 2, representing about 75% of all expenditures, spent 3% less than the plan while producing a higher volume of outputs than planned overall (see Section D). Actual expenditures in [Table 15](#) are based on expenditures by output reported annually in the Project Progress Reports up to May 2020 and an estimate for the period to May

2021. Therefore, the total expenditure reported in [Table 15](#) should be regarded as an estimate and slightly exceeds the figure of \$4,411,869 reported in [Table 6](#) based on quarterly expenditure statements which is for the period to December 2021. Project expenditures will be finalised by end 2022.

Table 15: Planned and Actual Expenditures Per Output

Out-put	Description	Expenditure		
		Planned	Actual	Variation
Component 1: Protocols for eco-agriculture interventions				
1.1	Information generated on climate change impacts and preferred eco-agriculture interventions through a consultative and participatory approach.	\$ 150,000	\$ 200,418	34%
1.2	Economic assessments undertaken to identify most appropriate eco-agriculture interventions and associated microfinance and insurance products.	\$ 60,000	\$ 28,000	-53%
1.3	Forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols developed for CPA intervention sites based on results from Output 1.1 and 1.2.	\$ 150,000	\$ 209,301	40%
	<i>Component 1 sub-total</i>	<i>\$ 360,000</i>	<i>\$ 437,719</i>	<i>22%</i>
Component 2: Concrete eco-agriculture adaptation interventions				
2.1	Capacity of local community for building climate resilience increased, including capacity to plan, implement and maintain eco-agriculture interventions under Output 2.2.	\$ 319,773	\$ 219,960	-31%
2.2	Forest restoration and eco-agriculture protocols implemented to build climate resilience (developed in Component 1) in CPA intervention sites.	\$ 2,721,227	\$ 2,778,038	2%
2.3	Local communities' livelihoods enhanced and diversified through sustainable development of NTFPs and the promotion of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies.	\$ 220,000	\$ 197,247	-10%
2.4	Socio-economic and ecosystem monitoring of AF project impacts downstream of CPA intervention sites.	\$ 162,000	\$ 110,920	-32%
	<i>Component 2 sub-total</i>	<i>\$ 3,423,000</i>	<i>\$ 3,306,166</i>	<i>-3%</i>
Component 3: Institutional capacity, awareness raising and upscaling of eco-agriculture interventions				
3.1	Awareness increased at a local level of the importance of eco-agriculture for protecting and enhancing commercial and subsistence activities.	\$ 271,000	\$ 158,192	-42%
3.2	Eco-agriculture activities promoted through institutional capacity building and proposed revisions to policies, strategies and legislation.	\$ 70,000	\$ 80,400.00	15%
3.3	National eco-agriculture upscaling strategy developed and institutionalised for CPAs in Cambodia.	\$ 46,000	\$ 8,200.00	-82%
	<i>Component 3 subtotal</i>	<i>\$ 387,000</i>	<i>\$ 246,792</i>	<i>-36%</i>
Project Execution Costs				
4.1	Project Management	\$ 256,150	\$367,519	43%
4.2	Monitoring and Evaluation	\$ 140,000	\$61,816	-56%
	<i>Project Execution Subtotal</i>	<i>\$ 396,150</i>	<i>\$ 429,335</i>	<i>8%</i>
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES		\$ 4,566,150	\$4,420,012	-3%

190. There are insufficient data for a fine-grained analysis of unit costs. However, costs appear reasonable, with the project having achieved a surprisingly large volume of physical interventions in the CPA communities, considering the overall project size. Savings were made due to lower-than-expected unit costs and this allowed the project to extend training, water supply and tree planting activities to additional CPAs beyond the five that were targeted. The final number of direct beneficiaries was much larger than initially targeted (see Paragraph 184).

191. The no-cost extension of time does not appear to have had a negative impact on efficiency of project implementation by PMU, although it may have had a small cost implication for UNEP supervising staff costs. However, it is likely to have been

beneficial in ensuring that project support to the CPA committees could be extended over a longer period.

192. The project made use of existing institutions (the CPAs and their existing committee structures). Arguably the project could have adopted a more decentralised implementation structure which would have made more use of the existing capacities of the Provincial Departments of Environment (PDoE) and the local authorities. The project could perhaps have benefited from technical cooperation with other provincial technical agencies, for example, PDAFF for delivery of agriculture extension trainings, and Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) in support of the water supplies interventions. At national level, the project does not appear to have developed strong mutual linkages with other donor-finance projects with a similar technical focus, for example, the National Action Programme to Combat Land Degradation (2018-27) promoted by MAFF.
193. The project does not appear to have monitored, or taken specific measures to minimize, the carbon footprint (this matter does not seem to be addressed in the project design). However, given the nature of the project, associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are expected to be very small, and offset by the extensive tree planting programme. The PCMR comments that “tools such as Ex-ACT may ... be used to estimate the carbon sequestered at the landscape level. [This] however will require a comprehensive GIS database”.

Rating for Efficiency: **Satisfactory**

G. Monitoring and Reporting

Monitoring Design and Budgeting

194. Monitoring design and budgeting is assessed as *Moderately Unsatisfactory*. The project design allocated a sum of \$US 140,000 (about 3% of total costs) for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities. Given the scope of the project outputs, the high costs of travel to the target areas and the complexity of measurement of some of the expected outcomes, this budget may, with hindsight, be seen as rather too low. No full-time M&E staff were included in the project plan and this may have contributed to a rather weak monitoring and reporting performance overall.

Monitoring of Project Implementation

195. Monitoring of project implementation is assessed as *Moderately Satisfactory*. Routine project monitoring was based on field observations and reporting by a variety of staff and stakeholders including PMU staff, consultants, MSc. Students and the beneficiaries themselves. This approach should have been backed by establishment of a simple but systematic “management information system” (MIS) at PMU. This need not have consisted of more than a well-designed spreadsheet but should have regularly and consistently captured information on quantity and location of physical outputs delivered, number of participants in trainings and other activities (gender disaggregated); number of beneficiaries receiving each type of assistance (fruit trees, home-garden support, water supplies support); etc. Perhaps because there was no full-time M&E staff, these types of record were not compiled systematically.

196. A research and monitoring programme was developed and implemented by consultants, based on a monitoring plan presented in the first output²⁵. However, this programme was implemented through annual surveys and focused primarily on monitoring of outcomes (e.g. change in forest cover, household climate vulnerability index). Hence, this programme did not substitute for routine monitoring and systematic recording of project activities and outputs.

Project Reporting

197. Project reporting is assessed as *Satisfactory*. Regular project reporting was through spreadsheet-based Adaptation Fund Project Progress Reports (PPR), submitted annually in July, which include financial summary reports, procurement data, an updated risk assessment, self-evaluation ratings against key milestones, project indicators (an updated Results Framework), lessons learned, and a results tracker for Adaptation Fund standard indicators. The format of the PPR is quite comprehensive. The project also provided half-year progress reports to UNEP each January. However, progress against results framework indicators was reported in the PPR through narrative statements and often miss a quantitative value expressed in the same units as the indicator, even when this should have been possible. The reports were compiled largely by the Chief Technical Adviser from whatever information was available. If an MIS had been in place, preparation of these reports would have been more straightforward and the reports may have made for clearer reading.
198. The project produced three major M&E-related reports: the Baseline Study, the Mid-Term Review (MTR) and the Project Completion Monitoring Report (PCMR). These reports were compiled by consultants engaged for the purpose and are comprehensive and perceptive. Once again, however, the reports could have been improved by inclusion of a full set of updated indicators, expressed in the units specified by the results framework.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

H. Sustainability

Socio-political Sustainability

199. Socio-political sustainability is assessed as *Moderately Likely*. Socio-political sustainability of the project impacts depends critically upon two factors: first, the commitment of the CPA communities to integrate forest conservation with adequate, sustainable livelihoods; and second, the commitment of authorities at national and sub-national levels to support them.
200. As discussed above, a preference to preserve forests and other natural resources is universal amongst members of the CPA communities but will not result in effective action if conservation is seen as conflicting with livelihood opportunities. The evaluation findings indicate that most CPA community members depend directly on forest-based livelihoods to a lesser extent than was assumed at project design. The project has successfully explored and piloted various sustainable livelihood

²⁵ Research and Monitoring Program (2015): Edward V. Maningo and Yim KimChhean

strategies but has not yet succeeded in developing these to the point where they create a strong, direct, material incentive for CPA community members to protect the remaining forests, still less to expand forest areas by re-planting. Potential income streams directly and sustainably linked to forest conservation are discussed in the final section of this report.

201. Aspects of the existing regulatory framework may create additional barriers to sustainable livelihoods based on forest conservation. Regulatory barriers to income generation from NTFPs are described and analysed in detail in the Policy Gap Analysis report. While the view of this evaluation is that the potential of NTFPs as an income source is rather limited, it is very likely that similar barriers could arise to other livelihood strategies, for example, development of eco-tourism.
202. Cambodia has established a broadly appropriate legislative framework for protection of natural resources and biodiversity and for the rights of indigenous minorities. However, the history of implementation of this framework has been rather inconsistent. Substantial parts of protected areas have been allocated as economic land concessions, with mixed economic results but ending any attempt at natural resources conservation on the concession lands. At a lower level, illegal harvesting of high-value timber and expansion of agriculture plots has continued within protected areas, with the responsible authorities apparently unable or unwilling to take effective action. The Government view is that the situation is improving and that, while transgressions continue, they are at a smaller scale than in the past. The optimistic view of the situation is that, as Cambodian society becomes more affluent, the pressure on natural resources will diminish while the State apparatus becomes better-funded and more effective. An important recent development is the decentralisation of responsibilities for protection of natural resources to District level local authorities; it is too early to say how effective this will be.

Financial Sustainability

203. Financial sustainability is assessed as *Moderately Unlikely*. Many of the project outputs, including tree planting, support to rice agriculture, home-gardens and livestock raising either do not require ongoing funding or are inherently self-financing. The water supply systems appear to be within the capacity of the communities to maintain, although broken handpumps have become an issue at Skor Krouch.
204. The project has provided financial incentives for forest patrols conducted by the CPA committees. As discussed above, these patrols are of limited direct effectiveness, though they may be important in maintaining a sense of purpose and focus on conservation. Without continuing financial incentives, patrolling activity is likely to decrease or even cease. Potential sustainable financing for patrolling activity could come from public funds (which would be an appropriate recognition of the wider societal benefits from the conservation efforts of the CPAs) or from income generated by the CPA from other activities. Either of these options is inherently feasible, but neither is in place as yet.
205. Major outputs of the project that require ongoing funding include the community nurseries and the road rest areas. The community nurseries are currently almost inactive but have the potential to be re-activated and run on business lines, with tree saplings as a marketable product. Run this way, the nurseries could be self-

sustaining and support other CPA committee activities. The need for maintenance of the road rest areas is correlated with the extent to which they are used by non-community members: those buildings that are used mainly as community resources remain in adequate condition, but those regularly used by the public, particularly the one at Chi Ork, are deteriorating. Again, imaginative strategies can be deployed to generate an income from these assets, for example, establishment of simple stalls selling basics such as drinking water alongside forest products, within the road rest areas.

206. At the sixth PSC meeting in April 2019 it was agreed to prepare an exit strategy for the project, but this has not been done. It is noted that project staff were not able to travel to the field during 2020 and 2021 due to COVID and this may have made preparing an exit strategy more difficult.

Institutional Sustainability

207. Institutional sustainability is assessed as *Moderately Likely*. The institutional framework for sustainability of the CPAs is in place, though could be strengthened based on lessons learned from the project, in particular with regard to generation of incomes to support CPA committee activities as well as community livelihoods. The actual institutional and administrative capacity of the CPA committees varies. As described above, the evaluation team assessment is that the smaller CPA communities have more coherent and purposeful committees. A reorganisation of the larger CPA in Boeung Per could be considered, with the aim of creating a smaller, more focused group of households with stronger cultural and economic links to the forest.
208. The institutional context for adoption of eco-agriculture remains undeveloped beyond MoE itself. The project does not appear to have had significant participation from other Ministries, including MAFF, that were proposed to join the PSC at design. Formal adoption of an “eco-agriculture strategy” or regulatory reform of the CPA will require cross-Ministerial cooperation and this should be given higher priority in the next phase.

Rating for Sustainability: **Moderately Unlikely**

I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

Preparation and Readiness

209. Project preparation and readiness is rated as *Satisfactory*. There was a significant delay between the AF Board approval date (June 2012) and the UNEP approval date (March 2013). Subsequently, project start-up appears to have proceeded at an acceptable pace given the need to recruit staff, establish systems and conduct the baseline study.

Quality of Project Management and Supervision

210. Quality of project management and supervision is rated as *Satisfactory*. The project had a relatively small core PMU team. No major project management issues arose.

211. The project management structure was rather centralised, with funds managed at national level and only light involvement of Provincial Departments of Environment (PDoE) or sub-national authorities at Province, District or Commune level. A more decentralised approach might have reduced costs for monitoring activities and might have resulted in greater local inputs to selection of appropriate activities (for example, tree and crop varieties) for each site.

Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

212. Stakeholder participation and cooperation is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. The project was implemented with good participation and cooperation of the CPA communities, local authorities and the Provincial Departments of Environment. There was effective collaboration with a number of partner projects and NGOs as well as with the academic institutions (Royal University of Phnom Penh and Royal University of Agriculture). However, the project did not succeed in developing effective participation and cooperation with Ministries represented on the PSC, which would have been highly beneficial to the policy and strategy development results of the project.

Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

213. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality is rated as *Satisfactory*. No negative impacts on human rights or gender equality were identified during the evaluation or in project reports. However, a more pro-active approach to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and more specific recognition of the interests of ethnic minority groups, could have strengthened the project.

Environmental and Social Safeguards

214. Environmental and social safeguards performance is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. The project did not develop a complete environmental and social risk analysis and risk management plan. No negative environmental or social impacts of the project were identified by the evaluation or in project reporting. Environmental sustainability was a core concern in design of project activities.

Country Ownership and Driven-ness

215. Country ownership and driven-ness is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. The project is aligned with and seeks to implement national policy and strategy on CPA and natural resource management. Ownership by MoE is strong but there is little evidence of ownership or commitment by other Ministries.

Communication and Public Awareness

216. Communication and public awareness is rated as *Moderately Satisfactory*. The project has developed a substantial volume of 216216 products which are professionally and attractively presented in hard-copy format. However, these products are not accessible through any public website, which must be considered a significant weakness. The project did establish a stand-alone website, but this was subsequently converted into a web-page on the MoE site, then taken down during an upgrading of the MoE site. In any scale-up phase, provision should be made to routinely publish knowledge products on the web together with summary or easily

accessible products such as video segments, blogs and short, concise policy briefs on aspects of project implementation.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Satisfactory

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Overall Assessment

217. The project has made a significant contribution to stabilising and protecting existing forest cover in the CPA intervention sites, but this remains a very challenging long-term task. The future conservation of these forest areas cannot be regarded as assured. Through its adoption of a mixed strategy including tree planting on chamkar and homestead land the project has significantly increased tree cover.
218. The project has made a discernible contribution to livelihoods of the CPA communities through a diverse range of interventions. Important lessons will have been learned both on the effectiveness of different types of intervention, and, perhaps more importantly, on the importance of ensuring that interventions are tailored to the specific needs of each location and community.
219. The successful livelihood interventions do not, in the main, directly increase the material interest of the communities in forest conservation. Many of these activities are undertaken at a distance from the forest and / or by households that have little direct interest in the forest. Improved livelihoods may reduce the pressure on forest resources somewhat, but this effect is likely to be modest in relation to the large private gains obtained by illegal timber harvesting or expansion of agriculture plots. The potential to develop livelihoods (importantly, from the point of view of the communities, including cash incomes) linked to forest conservation has not been fully explored. Potential income-generating activities, suitable according to location, might include some or all of the following:
- Community-based eco-tourism, probably through partnership with an ethically committed tourism business;
 - Forest farming of crops such as cardamon, shiitake mushrooms etc;
 - Sustainable harvesting of timber for commercial sale. This could be based on allocating private use-rights to blocks of re-planted high-value trees, which would accord with the traditional approach of the forest communities to activities such as resin collection. It would require changes in the regulatory framework (as might other activities listed here, if expanded beyond a pilot basis) but would be preferable to the unregulated small-scale harvesting that appears to continue at present.
 - Forest grazing, perhaps of high-value livestock varieties such as wild or hybrid pigs.
220. An alternative or complementary approach to strengthening incentives for forest conservation would be allocation of conditional land-use rights for sustainable agriculture on defined plots within the CPA. This could be attractive for the farmers as strengthening their security of tenure and could be conditional on returning part of the encroached land to forest and committing to no further encroachment or violations.
221. In either of these cases, CPA members could be required to pay a modest contribution to the costs of the CPA committee in return for these rights. It is

recognised that these approaches could not be implemented without policy and regulatory change, but these ideas (foreshadowed to an extent in the Policy Gap Analysis) could become a more important focus of policy development under the proposed second phase of the project.

222. The larger assets created by the project – road rest areas, nurseries and the wildlife viewing area – can only be sustainable if they generate an adequate income stream. This requires a more business-focused approach to management of these assets, probably involving a private operator (from within the community) operating the asset under a concession arrangement with the CPA committee sharing the proceeds.
223. The policy and strategy development activities under Component 3 appear to have had limited effects. The project focus on eco-agriculture as a policy or strategy issue may be misguided – the real focus of the project is on CPA management within an ecosystem-based adaptation framework, which is more clearly within the mandate of MoE. However, stronger inter-Ministerial coordination and a more effective communications strategy would be important components of any successful policy initiative.

Strategic Evaluation Questions

224. The following paragraphs provide summary responses to the Strategic Evaluation Questions defined in the consultants' TORs.
225. *To what extent has the project succeeded in enhancing the climate change resilience of communities living around the project sites as well as downstream communities?* The climate change resilience of the CPA communities has been increased. There is less impact on downstream or neighbouring communities.
226. *To what extent has the project contributed to mainstreaming ecosystem-based adaptation approaches/ eco-agriculture in Cambodia, in order for it to be upscaled and replicated across CPAs?* The project has contributed to knowledge on ecosystem-based adaptation and eco-agriculture. Farmers adopted elements of the eco-agriculture system, notably planting tree crops in combination with annual crops in chamkar and home gardens. However, this reflects farmers taking advantage of opportunities presented by the project rather than a changed approach to agriculture overall. Farmers have not developed a high understanding of eco-agriculture or fully adopted it as a farming method. The project has not achieved transformative effects at the landscape scale through application of eco-agriculture.
227. *To what extent has the shift from large scale restoration to 'chamkar' (home garden) based restoration in the project ensured that the project has reached its objectives/ targets?* The project has supported planting 947,690 forest trees which is approximately the number required to restore 2,370 ha of forest²⁶, so exceeding the project target of 1,875 ha of land planned for restoration. The project has also supplied 518,542 fruit trees. Trees supplied to farmers for planting in chamkar and home gardens were highly appreciated. However, for forest conservation and restoration, tree planting may be less important than strengthening protection based on ensuring communities have a material interest in protecting the forests.

²⁶ Estimate from the project Chief Technical Adviser

228. *To what extent have the communities and community members been involved in the project activities including the management/execution of activities? Are the project interventions likely to be sustained by community members after the project end?* Communities and community members have been extensively involved and generally have a good knowledge of the project activities. However, the range of interventions was probably too broad, so community members did not have a full understanding of the purpose of the project as a whole. Most project interventions are likely to be sustained, but there are not adequate provisions for ensuring that assets such as road rest areas, community nurseries and the wildlife sanctuary can be sustained. A more business-focused approach to managing these assets is needed.

229. *Which adaptation interventions implemented by the project proved most successful in reducing the vulnerability of communities to climate change?* The water supplies interventions had the most immediate impacts and were amongst the most highly appreciated by the communities. However, the increased variety of crops produced, particularly tree crops and home-garden crops, have the effect of diversifying food supplies and increasing food security in the event of droughts or other climate change related shocks.

B. Summary of project findings and ratings

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

Table 16: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		S
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Project is aligned with MTS 2010-13. POW is not available.	S
2. Alignment to UNEP/Donor strategic priorities	Detailed alignment to AF priorities presented in design document and relevant AF results framework indicators tracked in project reporting	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Alignment to Cambodian policies and strategies presented in design document, but no specific indicators integrated in logframe.	S
4. Complementarity with existing interventions / Coherence	Some potential partnerships and synergies identified in the design document	S
Quality of Project Design	Weaknesses include lack of stakeholder analysis, no complete and integrated description of impact drivers and assumptions, limited analysis of beneficiary communities (potentially differing needs / interests).	MS
Nature of External Context	Political and economic stability. Some impacts from weather events. Later stages affected by COVID-19.	MF
Effectiveness		MS
1. Availability of outputs	Most outputs delivered. Most important outputs considered good quality by users (some defects). Acceptable level of ownership of outputs.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The most important project outcomes were partially achieved. The change logic from outputs to outcomes holds for most outputs. However, some outputs were not clearly connected to the outcomes.	MS
3. Likelihood of impact	Some intermediate states were partially achieved. The change logic from outcomes to impacts holds. Drivers to support transition are partially in place.	ML
Financial Management		S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	No major problems were recorded	S
2. Completeness of project financial information	Some information requested by the evaluation was not available.	S
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Good communication	S
Efficiency		S
The project was implemented within the planned budget with minor variations. The no-cost extension was justified. Project activities were sequenced effectively.		
Monitoring and Reporting		MS
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	The monitoring budget was too small and did not include a full-time monitoring and evaluation officer.	MU
2. Monitoring of project implementation	No management information system or systematic collection and recording of data was in place. Some indicators not quantified using the units in the logframe.	MS
3. Project reporting	Regular annual progress reports and high-quality baseline, mid-term and completion reports were produced.	S
Sustainability		MU
1. Socio-political sustainability	High dependency on socio-political factors (continued commitment to forest protection and to CPA at national level and at local level). Mechanisms are in place but need further strengthening.	ML
2. Financial sustainability	Moderate dependency on financial resources (some outputs only) but necessary financial resources (e.g. reliable income streams for CPA committee) are not secured.	MU
3. Institutional sustainability	Moderate dependency on institutional factors. Mechanisms are in place but need strengthening.	ML
Factors Affecting Performance		S
1. Preparation and readiness	First disbursement 2 months after project approval by UNEP	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Project management was effective	S
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Project did not develop effective cooperation with national level stakeholders (non-MoE Ministries)	MS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	No human rights issues identified. Gender approach could have been more pro-active.	S
5. Environmental and social economic safeguards	Project did not develop a complete environmental and social risk analysis and risk management plan. However, risks are considered low and environmental concerns integrated in design.	MS
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Good ownership by MoE but less involvement of other Ministries.	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
7. Communication and public awareness	Communications and public awareness activities moderately effective. No project website so high-quality publications not effectively disseminated.	MS
Overall Project Performance Rating		MS

C. Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	It cannot be assumed that all CPA member households' livelihoods are strongly dependent on conserving the forest. This is a linkage that needs to be built in order for conservation through a CPA approach to be effective.
Context/comment:	<p>Very few households in the CPA communities depend on forest products as a major income source (small increases in NTFP production will not change this).</p> <p>For many CPA members, the key benefit of the CPA is protection of their right to use the land against encroachment by outsiders.</p> <p>All CPA members see preserving the forest as valuable, but in practice it can conflict with their need to earn a living from agriculture, which is their major income source.</p> <p>Effective conservation through the CPA approach depends on linking CPA members' livelihoods to forest conservation.</p> <p>Ways to do this can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, more productive forest-linked livelihoods, e.g. eco-tourism, sustainable timber production, agro-forestry; • Link forest conservation to clear, contract-based conditional land use rights; • Subsidise forest protection as a public good.

Lesson Learned #2:	Eco-agriculture techniques must be clearly relevant to farmers' livelihoods.
Context/comment:	<p>Some of the eco-agriculture techniques promoted by the project were not practical or relevant to farmers' needs.</p> <p>Farmers have not developed a strong understanding of eco-agriculture.</p> <p>Eco-agriculture needs to be applied flexibly, based on an understanding of:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will succeed in the local conditions (soils, water availability, climate etc); • What will fit with the other economic activities of farmers (for example, do farmers have enough time and labour? What are the opportunity costs?) • Is there a market for the eco-agriculture products? Can the project intervene to improve marketing?
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Lesson Learned #3:	Establishment of new / alternative livelihoods strategies should consider whole value chain and use effective adult education techniques.
Context/comment:	<p>Training of beneficiaries in alternative livelihoods was only moderately effective.</p> <p>In some cases, key parts of the value chain (necessary input supplies, produce markets) were missing.</p> <p>Training seems to have been delivered by subject experts who may not have been skilled trainers / extension agents. Classroom teaching techniques are not effective with farmers. Partnership with extension specialists such as Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries could be effective.</p>

Lesson Learned #4:	Forest replanting should focus on quality, not just quantity.
Context/comment:	<p>The forest replanting was successful in some places, less successful in others. Some issues seem to have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases, the tree species planted were not suitable to the location (Chi Ork) • Some replanted areas were later encroached and converted to chamkar (Chorm Thlok) • Not enough commitment by the CPA to preserve the planted trees, so they are damaged by fires set by CPA members (Ronuk Khneng) • Not always clear that re-planting is more effective than just allowing natural re-growth <p>Successful replanting depends on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring real commitment by the CPA community to restore and conserve an identified area of forest • Considering what will grow naturally (self-planting) in that area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting tree species that will grow well there, and have future value for the community • Ensuring that the CPA committee can effectively maintain and protect the re-planted trees, particularly while they are still small • Considering establishing clear use-rights for sustainable harvesting of replanted trees when they reach maturity.
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Lesson Learned #5:	Sustainability of income-generating assets can be improved by structuring them as businesses.
Context/comment:	Community assets such as roadside rest areas, wildlife viewing facility and community nurseries all have potential to generate the income they need for sustainability, but this will not happen automatically. Generally, direct management of these assets by the CPA committee is likely to prove ineffective. An alternative approach would be to structure them as businesses that provide a social benefit to the CPA community.

Lesson Learned #6:	Membership of some CPAs may be too large and diverse to be effective for this specific type of intervention.
Context/comment:	<p>CPA communities include households that depend on NTFP for an important part of their income (not so many), households that depend on farming land inside the CPA, and households that live mainly by farming land outside the CPA.</p> <p>CPA communities include indigenous minorities who have different cultural beliefs about the forest as well as traditional forest-based livelihoods.</p> <p>At Chorm Thlok and Skor Krouch, the CPA communities are very large and many members have no real connection to the forest or direct interest in conservation.</p> <p>For the CPA to be effective, it needs to comprise households that have a real commitment to conservation and protection of the forest.</p>

Lesson Learned #7:	National level policy impact cannot be achieved without investment in building stakeholder engagement and in knowledge management and communications
Context/comment:	The strategic policy impacts of the project have not been fully achieved. Policy concerns of the project (eco-agriculture) are not fully

	under responsibility of Ministry of Environment so engagement of other Ministries and a broader range of stakeholders is needed. Very little of this type of engagement seems to have occurred. Further, the project did not make maximum use of the research and knowledge products generated by the project, as a means to engaging stakeholders.
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D. Recommendations

230. The following recommendations are presented for consideration in future development of the policy and regulatory framework for CPAs and for future project interventions in support of CPAs and / or ecoagriculture in Cambodia. The MoE has requested UNEP's support to scale up the project approach in a second phase proposed to be financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The following recommendations have been developed for consideration during the design of the proposed second phase.

Recommendation #1:	Support to CPAs should prioritise livelihood activities that directly strengthen the economic interest of the CPA community in forest conservation. These may include eco-tourism, forest farming, sustainable harvesting of re-planted timber and possibly other income streams such as REDD+ or Payment for Ecosystem Services.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Livelihood activities implemented by the project are too diverse and in most cases do not have a strong link to forest conservation. This has improved livelihoods but has not created a strong incentive for the communities to protect and conserve the forests.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE / UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D, paragraph 146
- Section VI-A, paragraph 219

Recommendation #2:	MoE, with project support, should conduct a review of the CPA policy and regulatory framework with the purpose of further enabling sustainable forest-based livelihoods in an ecosystem-based adaptation framework. This may include relaxing some existing restrictions on cash-generating activities. Conditional land-use rights for sustainable agriculture within the CPA could be part of this framework.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	As identified in the policy gap analysis, the CPA regulatory framework does not sufficiently facilitate sustainable livelihoods, importantly including cash-generating activities, within the CPA. Recommendation to be passed on effectively to implementing partners and considered by Project Team during design of second phase.
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Partners/Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE / UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D Paragraph 146, 169
- Section VI-A Paragraph 219

Recommendation # 3:	Agriculture and alternative livelihoods trainings for CPA communities should follow an effective adult learning approach, the scope of which should be the value chain (inputs and markets), not only production. Consider partnering with Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF) and District agriculture officers, or with a specialised service provider for extension.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Agriculture and alternative livelihood trainings conducted by the project were of very limited effectiveness. Farmers do not learn best from classroom trainings, even when these are delivered by highly knowledgeable consultants or academics. In some cases, livelihood activities failed because no provision was made for necessary input supplies (example, cricket raising, see para 160).
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE / UNEP Project Team / PDAFF
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D paragraph 160

Recommendation # 4:	Forest re-planting activities in the CPA should focus on quality, not only quantity, starting with identification of areas for restoration by the CPA communities, and strong commitment to maintain and protect the restored forest.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Forest re-planting had varying success, and there is evidence of insufficient commitment by the CPA committees and communities to maintain and protect the re-planted land.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE /UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D paragraphs 151 - 153
- Section VI-A

Recommendation # 5:	Community assets with income-generating potential created by projects supporting CPA should be structured as businesses with a social purpose.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Assets created by the project including nurseries, road rest areas and wildlife viewing area have potential to generate the income needed for sustainability, but this is not being used effectively. Community members could be trained and supported in business skills and granted a concession to operate the assets as a business, with profits shared with the CPA committee.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE /UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D paragraphs 154, 163
- Section VI-A

Recommendation # 6:	The membership and committee structure of CPAs should be strengthened by: (1) restricting membership to households with a clear interest and commitment; (2) keeping up-to-date membership lists; (3) requesting members to pay an annual subscription, even if it is very small; and (4) regularly re-electing the CPA committee and making sure it represents all parts of the community.
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Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	CPA communities, particularly at Chorm Thlok and Skor Krouch, include large numbers of households with little direct commitment to forest conservation. It is also important to ensure that CPA committee's are gender inclusive and represent all parts of the community.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE / UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D paragraphs 151
- Section V-H paragraph 207

Recommendation # 7:	Future CPA support projects should adopt a more decentralised project implementation structure with stronger involvement of Provincial Department of Environment and local authorities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Centralised implementation is costly and time-consuming and may miss valuable local knowledge (e.g. some forest replanting and livelihood activities were understood as impractical by local residents before they were tried).
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE /UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-I paragraph 192192

Recommendation # 8:	Future CPA support projects should establish a stronger monitoring and evaluation framework, including an M&E officer and a simple but complete project management information system (MIS).
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Project did not systematically record basic data on project activities and outputs. Project progress reports present data in partial form or with units that are inconsistent with logframe indicators, and do not always give a clear and comprehensive overview of progress. Reading the reports, the impression gained is that the reporters were struggling with incomplete information.

Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE /UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-G paragraph 195 - 196

Recommendation # 9:	MoE should increase efforts to engage other relevant Ministries, particularly Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in support to CPA. Future projects will create an opportunity for this through direct involvement and through improved knowledge management and dissemination of knowledge products.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	<p>The project design included engagement with a range of stakeholders including relevant Ministries through the Project Steering Committee. However, these Ministries did not attend PSC meetings and it is not clear that policy dialogue took place with these Ministries in any other setting.</p> <p>Ministerial responsibility for developing a national eco-agriculture strategy appears to be within the mandate of MAFF, or at least shared with MoE.</p> <p>The knowledge products of the project should have been an important tool for advocacy and policy dialogue but these seem not to have been widely distributed, with lack of a project website being a key weakness.</p> <p>If the follow-up project has the same scope of ambition to influence policy-making requiring consensus with stakeholders outside MoE, it will need to invest more in dialogue supported by improved knowledge management.</p>
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project Level
Responsibility:	MoE /UNEP Project Team
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Follow up project, e.g. 6 – 12 months

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

- Section V-D paragraph 134, 171
- Section V-I paragraph 216

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS**Table 5: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate**

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	-	-	

ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
General Department Of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	Ouk Navann	Deputy Director of General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment and project manager.	M
Ministry of Environment	Pouk Bunthet	Project Team Leader, General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Moy Vathana	Project Finance Officer, General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Sun Kolvira	Project Administrative Officer, General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Ros Cor	Project Team Work, General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Kim Sarin	Project Team Work, General Department of Local Community, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Sum Thy	Deputy General Secretariat of National Committee for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Tin Ponlok	Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment	M
Ministry of Environment	Hak Mao	Director of Climate Change Department, Ministry of Environment	M
Free Lance Consultant	Edward Maningo	Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant	
Royal University of Agriculture	Kim Soben	Dean of the Royal University of Agriculture	M
Free Lance Consultant	Khou Eang Hout	Botanist Consultant	M
UNDP Cambodia	Ngin Navirak	National Project Coordinator, small grant UNDP	F
LEG	Uch Sophay	Livelihood Expert	F
Ministry of Environment	Ou Ratanak	Policy Gap Analyses	M
Youth Chamber International	Reak Smey	Director of Youth Chamber International	F
Green Prey Lorn	Chhit Sam Art	Project Manager of Green Prey Lorn	M
NGOs Forum	Toeuk Vannara	Director of NGO Forum	
Ministry of Environment	Heng Chanthoeun	Deputy General Secretariat of National Committee for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment	M

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
Toek Dey Sovannphum NGO	Sovan Dara	Director of Toek Dey Sovannaphum NGO	M
RECOFT	Hou Kalyan	Director of RECOFT	F
AF Project Management Unit (MoE)	Nicholas Tye	Chief Technical Adviser	M
UNEP Climate Change Adaptation Unit	Atifa Kassam	Programme Officer / Task Manager for Cambodia AF Project	F
UNEP Ecosystems Division	David Ocholla	Finance Officer	M
UNEP	Anna Kontorov	Programme Officer	F
Chup Tasok CPA	CPA Committee	CPA leaders and beneficiaries	Both
Chup Tasok CPA	Women group	Project beneficiaries	F
Chup Tasok CPA	Youth group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Chup Tasok CPA	Chamkar Farmer group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Commune Council	Council chair and members	Local authority	Both
Chorm Thlok CPA	CPA Committee	CPA leaders and beneficiaries	Both
Chorm Thlok CPA	Women group	Project beneficiaries	F
Chorm Thlok CPA	Youth group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Chorm Thlok CPA	Rice Farmer group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Chorm Thlok CPA	Chamkar Farmer group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Chorm Thlok CPA	Indigenous People group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Ronus Khgneng CPA	CPA Committee	CPA leaders and beneficiaries	Both
Ronus Khgneng CPA	Women group	Project beneficiaries	F
Ronus Khgneng CPA	Rice Farmer group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Ronus Khgneng CPA	Indigenous People group	Project beneficiaries	Both
Chi Ork Boeung Prey CPA	CPA Committee	CPA leaders and beneficiaries	Both
Skor Krouch CPA	CPA Committee	CPA leaders and beneficiaries	Both

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

A: Project planning and reporting documents

#	Title	Origin	Date
1	Request for Project/Programme Funding from Adaptation Fund	UNEP	2012
2	Project Budget and Results Framework (at design)	MoE and UNEP	2013
3	Response to AF Comments on Design	UNEP	2012
4	Project Cooperation Agreement	AF / UNEP / MoE	2013
5	Cambodia AF Project Budget and Results Framework	UNEP	2012
6	Baseline information and Indicators for the AF Project (authors: Nicholas Tye, Alice McClure and Anthony Mills)	C4 EcoSolutions	2014
7	Research and Monitoring Program. Authors: Edward V. Maningo and Yim KimChhean,	PMU	2015
8	Mid-Term Review Report (authors: Jonathan McCue and Atifa Kassam)	UNEP	2018
9	Project Progress Reports 2014-2018, 2020 and 2021	UNEP / PMU	2014-2021
10	Request for Extension of Project	UNEP	2018
11	Cambodia AF Project Activity-Based Budget	PMU	2020
12	Project Completion Monitoring Report (authors: Dr. E.V. Maningo and Dr. Yim Kimchhean).	UNEP	2019
13	Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Fund Balance 2018	PMU	2019
14	Report of the independent auditors for 2014	APV (Cambodia)	2014
	Progress Report – Livelihood Expert Group May 2015 to June 2016	PMU	2016

B: Project Publications

#	Title	Origin	Date
1	Baseline Study on Climate Forecasting for Community Protected Areas in Preah Vihear, Siem Reap, Kampong Thom and Mondulkiri Provinces. Author: Dr. Heng Chan Thoeun	PMU	2014
2	Final Report of Policy Gap Analysis and Development for Community Protected Areas management in Cambodia. Author: Dr. Ou Ratanak	PMU	2021
3	Abstracts of MSc. theses supported by the project	PMU	2019
4	Legal, Institutional and Policy Gap of Ecoagriculture Interventions in Community Protected Areas, Cambodia. Author: Dr. Ou Ratanak	PMU	2014
5	Upscaling Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Cambodia: a Strategic Framework (workshop presentation)	PMU	2020
6	Agricultural Market Assessment Report of Community Protected Areas.	PMU	2014
7	Assessment of Water Catchment and Infrastructure Interventions to Enhance Climate Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia. Author: L. Oeung Chanthan	PMU	2014
8	REDD+ Feasibility Assessment for Community Protected Areas in Cambodia Author: Nguon Pheakkdey	PMU	2014

C: Reference Documents

#	Title	Origin	Date
1	Ecoagriculture: Strategies to Feed the World and Save Wild Biodiversity (authors: Jeffrey A. McNeely and Sara J. Scherr)	Future Harvest	2012
2	Local Leadership in Adaptation Finance: Learning from locally-led action in Adaptation Fund Projects and Programmes	Adaptation Fund	2021?
3	UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2018 - 2021	UNEP	2016
4	Operations Manual for General Secretariat of the National Council for Sustainable Development	GoKC	2017
5	Sub-decree on the organization and functioning of the ministry of environment	GoKC	2021
6	Revision of Royal Decree establishing NCSD	GoKC	2020
7	Cambodia Forest Cover 2016	MoE	2018
8	Capacity Strengthening for Community Protected Area (CPA) Communities in Boeung Per Wildlife Sanctuary to Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change: Policy Brief	CCCA	2013
9	For people and planet: the United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022-2025 to tackle climate change, loss of nature and pollution	UNEP	2021
10	Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund	TANGO International	2018
11	Mid-Term Evaluation of UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013	UNEP	2013
12	Royal Decree on Establishment of National Council for Sustainable Development	GoKC	2015
13	Country Landscapes Program Strategy: Restoring Landscapes in Steung Siem Reap Watershed Area	COMDEKS	2012
14	Capacity Strengthening for Community Protected Area (CPA) Communities in Boeung Per Wildlife Sanctuary to Adapt to the Impacts of Climate Change	CCCA	2013
15	Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management and Bio-Energy Markets to Promote Environmental Sustainability and to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Cambodia		

ANNEX IV. BRIEF CVS OF THE EVALUATORS

Name: Julian Abrams

Profession	Local Development Specialist
Nationality	United Kingdom
Country experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Europe: UK • Africa: Somalia, Zambia • Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Timor Leste, Vietnam • Oceania: Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSc. Economics of Rural Change, Imperial College, London

Short biography

Mr. Abrams is an independent consultant based in Phnom Penh. His clients are mainly multilateral donor agencies. His practice areas include policy, institutional development and economic analysis as well as rural infrastructure, agriculture sector and climate change adaptation issues. Recent tasks include leading project design and supervision missions for IFAD in Cambodia, Laos and Pacific Islands Countries, technical assistance to the Cambodian Government for preparation of a new phase of its National Programme for Sub-National Democratic Development and support to UNCDF's Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) programme, including assistance to national agencies in Cambodia, Bhutan and Niger to gain accreditation to GCF. Mr. Abrams has worked in international development assistance since arriving in Cambodia as a VSO volunteer in 1992. From 1997 to 2007 he was a staff technical adviser in UNDP's programme of assistance to decentralised rural development in Cambodia.

Name: Chantan Kong

Profession	Local Governance and Climate Change specialist
Nationality	Cambodian
Country experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia: Cambodia
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Degree in Public Policy (Local Government system, climate change adaptation and DDR management at Local Level).

Short biography

Mr. Chanthan is based in Phnom Penh and works as a freelance consultant and as a long-term adviser to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia's National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development Secretariat on implementation of climate change adaptation programmes through local governments. Mr. Chanthan has over 15 years' experience as an adviser on development projects with international financing and previous to that, nine years as a civil servant and an educator. Mr. Chanthan holds a Master's degrees in Public Policy (Local Government System Specialist) from Tokyo Japan and Master of Arts (International, National and Local Community Development) from Melbourne Australia as well as Bachelor's degrees in Business Management and in Khmer Literature.

ANNEX V. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/Adaptation Fund project

“Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia”

SECTION 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

AF Project ID:	AF Project ID:KHM/MIE/Food/2011/1		
Implementing Agency:	UNEP	Executing Agency:	Cambodia, Ministry of Environment
Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):	SDG 13		
Sub-programme:	Climate Change	Expected Accomplishment(s):	A
UNEP approval date:	08 March 2013	Programme of Work Output(s):	4
AFB approval date:	29 June 2012	Project type:	Regular Project
Expected start date:	2012	Actual start date:	21 May 2013
Planned completion date:	2018	Actual operational completion date:	June 2021
Planned project budget at approval:	\$4,566,150	Actual total expenditures reported as of [31 Dec 2020]:	4,392,737.23
AF grant allocation:	\$4,566,150	AF grant expenditures reported as of [31 December 2020]:	4,200,481
Project Preparation Grant - AF financing:	n/a	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	n/a
Expected Project co-financing:	n/a	Secured Project co-financing:	n/a
First disbursement:	May 2013	Planned date of financial closure:	June 2022
No. of formal project revisions:	3 ²⁷	Date of last approved project revision:	14 November 2019
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	6	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: April 2019 Next: Final one in 2021 (TBC)
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	2016	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	April 2018 (completed)
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	2018	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	2021
Coverage - Country:	Kingdom of Cambodia	Coverage - Region(s):	Asia and the Pacific

²⁷ To Confirm with Task Manager

Dates of previous project phases:		Status of future project phases:	
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2. Project rationale

The climate change observations for Cambodia indicate that rainfall patterns are becoming more erratic. These observations include an increase in the frequency and severity of droughts, floods and windstorms, an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, an increase in the mean annual temperature and an increase in the frequency of hot days. The erratic rainfall levels are negatively impacting agricultural productivity and therefore also constraining the efforts to reduce poverty levels. Some of the most vulnerable communities in Cambodia are rural communities living in protected areas, since they are strongly dependent on ecosystem services and lack alternative, climate-resilient livelihoods. These communities may be particularly affected by the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall. Droughts can reduce yields or result in crop failure whereas floods can increase soil erosion and damage crop production or damage infrastructure and limit access to urban markets. As a result of the erratic rainfall and the consequent decreasing agricultural productivity, these communities are increasingly reliant on forest ecosystems to provide supplementary food sources and income from collecting and selling non-timber forest products and fuelwood. However, widespread degradation of forest ecosystems is reducing the efficacy of this adaptation response. The problem is further exacerbated by underlying drivers of vulnerability, including strong dependence on rain-fed agriculture, strong dependence on rice, high poverty levels, deforestation and resulting erosion.

The problem that the project sought to address related to the climate change-induced hazard of erratic rainfall that causes droughts and intense rainfall and results in a reduction of agricultural productivity and forest-based income which in turn increases the vulnerability of rural Cambodian communities, particularly those living in protected areas.

The Adaptation Fund project “Enhancing climate change resilience of rural communities living in protected areas of Cambodia” aimed to build climate resilience of rural Cambodian communities living in protected areas through interventions which that would enhance food supply and maintain ecosystem services. The project was to employ the ‘ecoagriculture’ concept, defined as “a landscape approach to natural resources management that seeks to sustain agricultural/food production, conserve biodiversity and ecosystems and support local livelihoods”. The barriers the project had identified to implementing the ecoagriculture concept

included: i) limited community awareness regarding climate change impacts and adaptation; ii) limited technical capacity of local and national stakeholders to plan and implement the ecoagriculture interventions; iii) lack of physical and financial resources to adapt to climate change and vulnerability; iv) limited demonstration of ecoagriculture approaches to enhance resilience; v) the policy, strategy and legislative environment not specifically support restoration and intensification approaches; vi) lack of climate-related data; and vii lack of secure land tenure

According to the project document, the project was to differ from an ‘ordinary’ restoration/reforestation intervention in Cambodia in that the restored multi-use forests would produce more food, mainly fruit, than original forests, they would bind soils more effectively, they would provide more ecological services, including water flow regulation, timber provision, enhanced biodiversity, carbon sequestration, pollination, pest control and provision of medicine, fibre, resin and other non-timber forest products. The planted tree species were to be selected following requests by the communities, taking indigenous knowledge as well as the most up to date scientific knowledge into account.

The broad target areas for the project were initially selected based on the vulnerability of communities to the impacts of climate change, the adaptive capacity of the communities, the dependence of communities on ecosystem services, and the number of on-going climate change and development

projects in the area. Communities in the CPAs were engaged in two surveys to promote the participatory approach of the project site selection. The selection of the five CPA intervention sites was based on the results of two CPA community surveys. The originally selected CPAs were:

- *Chom Thlok, Chiork Boeungper, and Skor Crouch* in Boeungper Wildlife Sanctuary,
- *Chop Tasok* in Phnom Kulen National Park, and
- *Ronouk Khgeng* in Phnom Prech Wildlife Sanctuary.

3. Project objectives and components

The overall goal of the project was to increase food supply and reduce soil erosion in communities surrounding five community protected areas in Cambodia. The project aimed to implement the ecoagriculture concept using two approaches; 1) an extensive approach which included i) restoring at least 1,875 ha of degraded forests in community protected areas at a landscape-level by planting predominantly indigenous tree species that provide food and are particularly effective at stabilizing soils i.e. restoring natural capital; and 2) an intensive approach which included conservation agriculture intervention namely ii) enrichment planting of rice paddy boundaries and other cultivated areas with multi-use tree species that would enhance crop productivity; iii) trailing plots (300 ha) across the five CPA sites of several drought-tolerant hybrid rice cultivars in order to assess their potential yield and sustainability for cultivation; and iv) intensifying and diversifying the productivity of at least 1,907 existing family agriculture areas in communities living around the CPA forest sites by encouraging the cultivation of various beneficial crop species in combination with the introduction of improved conservation agriculture practices such as green manuring and reduced tillage. An additional aspect of the project was to be water use efficiency, with a focus on rainwater harvesting and affordable micro-irrigation technology.

The objective of the project was “to enhance the climate change resilience of communities living around five community protected area intervention sites, as well as downstream communities, to the climate change-induced hazards of erratic rainfall”. The project was to deliver on this objective through three components; 1) protocols for ecoagriculture interventions; 2) concrete ecoagriculture adaptation interventions, and 3) institutional capacity, awareness-raising and upscaling of ecoagriculture interventions.

Component 1 was to use biophysical, ecological and socio-economic research to develop restoration and conservation agriculture protocols to be implemented in Component 2. This first component was identified as necessary to ensure that the protocols are grounded in a participatory approach and capture indigenous knowledge, as well as being scientifically appropriate for the selected intervention sites. Component 2 was to ensure that the restored forests and productive agricultural areas are maintained and the benefits maximised. Alternative livelihoods established through the AF project were to increase the resilience of local communities to the effects of climate change. Component 3 was to create an enabling environment for the ecoagriculture concept to be implemented in other PAs in Cambodia, through awareness raised at a local and national level, and an upscaling strategy supported by policy revision where required.

While the outcomes/outputs of the project have remained unchanged, the results framework was revised based on the findings of the Baseline Study. (Please see revised/original results framework in Annex.)

Table 2. Project expected outputs and outcomes.

Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
Component 1: Protocols for ecoagriculture interventions	
Output 1.1: Information generated on climate change impacts and preferred ecoagriculture interventions through a consultative and participatory approach.	Technical expertise and a local enabling framework for forest restoration and conservation agriculture interventions

Output 1.2: Economic assessments undertaken to identify most appropriate ecoagriculture interventions and associated microfinance and insurance products.	that build climate resilience developed at CPA intervention sites through a consultative and participatory process.
Output 1.3: Forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols developed for CPA intervention sites based on results from Output 1.1 and 1.2.	
Component 2: Concrete ecoagriculture adaptation interventions	
Output 2.1: Capacity of local community for building climate resilience increased, including capacity to plan, implement and maintain ecoagriculture interventions under Output 2.2.	Multi-use forests established and maintained and agricultural practices diversified/intensified to supply a diverse range of food and stabilize topsoil, despite an increase in climate change-induced droughts and floods.
Output 2.2: Forest restoration and conservation agriculture protocols implemented to build climate resilience (developed in Component 1) in CPA intervention sites.	
Output 2.3: Local communities' livelihoods enhanced and diversified through sustainable development of NTFPs and the promotion of sustainable alternative livelihood strategies.	
Output 2.4: Socio-economic and ecosystem monitoring of AF project impacts downstream of CPA intervention sites.	
Component 3: Institutional capacity, awareness raising and upscaling of Ecoagriculture interventions	
Output 3.1: Awareness increased at a local level of the importance of ecoagriculture for protecting and enhancing commercial and subsistence activities.	Restoration and conservation agriculture interventions to build climate resilience of local Communities mainstreamed into Cambodia's adaptation framework and related sector policies.
Output 3.2: Ecoagriculture activities promoted through institutional capacity building and proposed revisions to policies, strategies and legislation.	
Output 3.3: National ecoagriculture upscaling strategy developed and institutionalised for CPAs in Cambodia.	

4. Executing Arrangements

UNEP was the Multilateral Implementing Entity (MIE) for the project (Figure 1). In this capacity, UNEP was to provide the overall coordination and management, as well as oversight of project implementation. UNEP was to manage and disburse AF funds in accordance with the AF financial standards and to report on budget performance, to provide quality assurance and accountability for project deliverables, to provide information and communication management, to provide general administration and support costs and to provide oversight of the evaluation process for project performance.

UNEP was to enter into a contractual agreement with the lead national executing partner, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Cambodia. MoE hosts the National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) and the Cambodia Climate Change Office (CCCD).

The Project Manager hosted by the Executing Agency was to be responsible for the overall management of the project. The Project Manager was to ensure that the project is implemented in accordance with AF and UNEP guidelines and approved workplans and budgets.

The Chief Technical Advisor was to assist the Project Manager and to provide technical guidance on the implementation of the project.

The Project Board/Project Steering Committee was to be responsible for making management decisions for the project, as well as to undertake project assurance, ensure performance improvement, and to ensure accountability and learning. The Project Board/Project Steering Committee was to comprise of a designated senior technical representative from relevant ministries, and representatives from local District Administrator offices. The Project Manager was to serve as secretary of the Project Board.

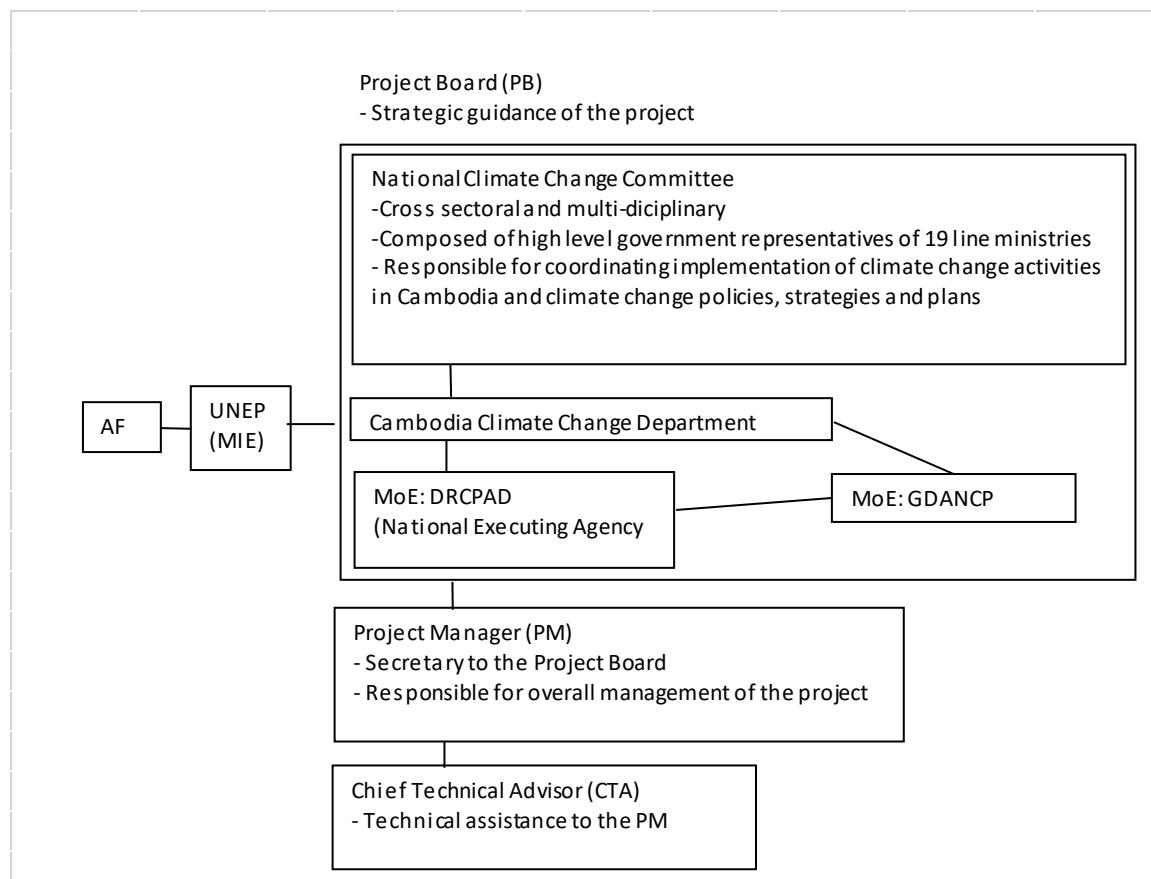


Figure 1. Project management arrangements

5. Project Cost and Financing

The Adaptation Fund grant was US\$ 4,954,273 in the AF project category of a 'regular project'. The project underwent 3 project revisions. The revisions were considered in Steering Committee/ Project Board meetings, and the minutes include proposed budget revisions.

Table 3. The proposed expected costs as per the project document.

Project Component	Expected Cost (US\$)
Component 1: Protocols for ecoagriculture interventions	360,000
Component 2: Concrete ecoagriculture adaptation interventions	3,423,000
Component 3: Institutional capacity, awareness raising and upscaling of Ecoagriculture interventions	387,000
Components total	4,170,000
Project execution cost	396,150
Total project cost	4,566,150

Project cycle management fee charged by the implementing entity	388,123
Amount of financing requested	4,954,273

6. Implementation Issues

The project underwent a Mid-Term Review in 2018 (completed in April 2018). The MTR concluded that the project was 'on track' towards achieving its primary objectives but emphasized that capacity building together with awareness-raising must continue targeting both CPA and non-CPA stakeholders with a particular focus on decision-makers and natural resources and land-use managers. The MTR provided several recommendations for the project across a range of different topics. These included extending the project to December 2019 to account for the time needed to deliver Component 3 and to support the upscaling and replication. Other recommended actions included updating the stakeholder analysis and engagement plan, focusing the training topics, designing train the trainer initiative, improving the monitoring of seedling growth, as well as mainstreaming eco-agriculture and EbA protocols into community development plans and Provincial Plans.

The project was granted a no-cost extension to December 2019. Again, in November 2019, the project was granted another six-months no-cost extension to May 2020.

The Steering Committee in its fifth meeting approved that the PMU should extend and increase project activities to other CPAs for forest plantation, fruit tree distribution, water infrastructure supply and some awareness-raising activities.

SECTION 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

1. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy²⁸ the UNEP Programme Manual²⁹, as well as Adaptation Fund policies and guidelines, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, Adaptation Fund and the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for the second phase of the project, where applicable

8. Key Evaluation Principles

2. Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

3. **The “Why?” Question.** As this is a terminal evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “Why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

4. **Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association:** In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

5. **Communicating evaluation results.** A key aim of the evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main evaluation report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an evaluation brief or interactive presentation.

²⁸ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

²⁹ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

Key Strategic Questions

6. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- (a) To what extent has the project succeeded in enhancing the climate change resilience of communities living around the project sites as well as downstream communities?
- (b) To what extent has the shift from large scale restoration to 'chamkar' (home garden) based restoration in the project ensured that the project has reached its objectives/targets?
- (c) To what extent has the project contributed to mainstreaming ecosystem-based adaptation approaches/ ecoagriculture in Cambodia, in order for it to be upscaled and replicated across CPAs?
- (d) To what extent have the communities and community members been involved in the project activities including the management/execution of activities? Are the project interventions likely to be sustained by community members after the project end?
- (e) Which adaptation interventions implemented by the project proved most successful in reducing the vulnerability of communities to climate change?

9. Evaluation Criteria

7. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria and a link to a table for recording the ratings is provided in Annex 1). A weightings table will be provided in excel format (link provided in Annex 1) to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The evaluation consultant(s) can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

A. Strategic Relevance

8. The evaluation will assess *'the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor'*. The evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

- i. *Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy³⁰ (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)*

9. The evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW.

- ii. *Alignment to UNEP / Adaptation Fund Strategic Priorities*

10. Donor, including AF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building³¹ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations

³⁰ UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

³¹ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. AF priorities are specified in published strategy and policy documents (particularly as stipulated in the project performance results).

iii. *Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities*

11. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented. Examples may include: national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc.

iv. *Complementarity with Existing Interventions*

12. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization³², took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UN Development Assistance Frameworks or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness

B. Quality of Project Design

13. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established (www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/our-evaluation-approach/templates-and-tools). This overall Project Design Quality rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item B. In the Main Evaluation Report a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage is included, while the complete Project Design Quality template is annexed in the Inception Report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity

C. Nature of External Context

14. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval³³). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project

³² A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

³³ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team.

implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the evaluation consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs³⁴

15. The evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the TOC. In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. The evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision³⁵

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes³⁶

16. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed³⁷ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Communication and public awareness

ii. Likelihood of Impact

17. Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (*i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact*), the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts

³⁴ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

³⁵ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

³⁶ Outcomes are the use (*i.e. uptake, adoption, application*) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

³⁷ All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available on the Evaluation Office website, <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-unenvironment/evaluation> and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

18. The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects. Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards.³⁸

19. The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication³⁹ as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact.

20. Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes. However, the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partners.

21. The evaluation will assess the extent the project outcomes and possible impacts were aligned with, and the extent to which they have contributed to the Adaptation Fund Strategic Framework.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

E. Financial Management

22. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output level and will be compared with the approved budget. The evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

³⁸ Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at <http://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/8718>

³⁹ *Scaling up* refers to approaches being adopted on a much larger scale, but in a very similar context. Scaling up is often the longer-term objective of pilot initiatives. *Replication* refers to approaches being repeated or lessons being explicitly applied in new/different contexts e.g. other geographic areas, different target group etc. Effective replication typically requires some form of revision or adaptation to the new context. It is possible to replicate at either the same or a different scale.

F. Efficiency

23. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

24. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities⁴⁰ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency. The evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

25. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

26. The evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

27. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART⁴¹ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation. In particular, the evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

28. The evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups in project activities. It will also consider how information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution,

⁴⁰ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

⁴¹ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

iii. Project Reporting

29. The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and AF reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups. The evaluation will assess the quality and accuracy of reporting, including that against the Adaptation Fund strategic framework.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

H. Sustainability

30. Sustainability⁴² is understood as the probability of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (ie. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

31. The evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

ii. Financial Sustainability

32. Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new resource management approach. The evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where the project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

33. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

⁴² As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-term maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

I. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

(These factors are rated in the ratings table, but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. Where the issues have not been addressed under other evaluation criteria, the consultant(s) will provide summary sections under the following headings.)

i. Preparation and Readiness

34. This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

35. In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, as in the case of Adaptation Fund funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP.

36. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

37. Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the Executing Agency. The assessment will consider the quality and effectiveness of all forms of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

38. The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within

this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment⁴³.

39. In particular the evaluation will consider to what extent project implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements⁴⁴ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

40. The evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gender and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

41. The evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

⁴³ The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

⁴⁴ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

SECTION 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

42. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

43. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A **desk review** of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia Cambodia National Adaptation Plan, Cambodia National Environment Strategy and Action Plan, UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013 and corresponding Programmes of Work;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); baseline studies, annual work plans and budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project, the logical framework and its budget, legal agreements;
- Project progress and financial reports; such as half-yearly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes including those of the Steering Committee, relevant correspondence;
- Documentation related to project deliverables, including proceedings of training events, reports and studies delivered by the project;
- Mid-Term Review of the project;
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

(b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:

- UNEP Task Manager (TM), Fund Management Officer (FMO); Climate Change Adaptation Portfolio Manager and Climate Change Sub-Programme Coordinator;
- Members of the Project Board / Project Steering Committee
- Project management team, including the Project Manager, Admin assistant and Financial Assistant within the Executing Agency;
- Project staff at national and regional levels;
- Project Technical Advisor(s) – Chief Technical Advisor, Planting Liaison Officers – Planting Teams from the 3 provinces.
- An inclusive representation (*marginalized and vulnerable groups, equal representation of women and men*) of community members at and around the project sites, either all 5 or a selection decided in conjunction with the project team and Evaluation Office;
- Park Rangers of the Community Protected Areas;
- Project partners, including selected private sector partners and NGOs, as well as International Monitoring and Research specialists, National Monitoring and research specialists, Livelihood Expert Group, Academics/students from Royal University of Phnom Penh and Royal University of Agriculture;
- Relevant contractors and other staff involved in the delivery of the project;
- Relevant individuals at other Cambodia ministries, such as MAFF, MRD, MLMUPC, MoT, NCDM, CDC.

- Any other relevant resource persons.
- (c) **Surveys** The evaluation might use surveys to collect evidence beyond the evaluation interviews. The Inception Report will describe details of the potential surveys.
- (d) **Field visits** The Evaluation will visit selected project sites in Cambodia. The site selection criteria will be clarified in the evaluation inception report.
- (e) **Other data collection tools** The inception report will clarify the use of any other data collection tools.

10. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

44. The evaluation consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for links to all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

45. An **Evaluation Brief**, (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and key evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

46. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The evaluation team will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Task Manager and Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward revised draft report (corrected by the evaluation consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the evaluation consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

47. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

48. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the main evaluation report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

49. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 18 months.

11. The Evaluation Team

50. For this evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of a Principal Evaluator and one Evaluation Specialist who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager [Myles Hallin], in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager [Atifa Kassam], Fund Management Officer [Bwiza Wameyo-Odemba] and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Climate Change Sub-programme], [Niklas Hagelberg]. The consultants will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, each consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

51. The Principal Evaluator will be hired over a period of 6 months [November to June 2021] and should have: an advanced university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area; a minimum of 10 years of technical / evaluation experience, including of evaluating projects and using a Theory of Change approach; a good understanding of climate change adaptation is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and intergovernmental organizations is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

52. The Evaluation Specialist will be hired over a period of 3 months [December to February 2021] and should have: an undergraduate degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area; a minimum of 5 years of technical experience; some understanding of climate change adaptation is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, a working knowledge in oral and written English is a requirement. Working knowledge of the UN system and intergovernmental organizations is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

53. The Principal Evaluator will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, for overall management of the evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 10 Evaluation Deliverables. The Evaluation Specialist will make substantive and high-quality contributions to the evaluation process and outputs. Both consultants will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered. Specifically, Evaluation Team members will undertake the following:

Inception phase of the evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager.

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Office guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager;
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the evaluation consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons).

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

12. Schedule of the evaluation

54. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Consultants contracted	September/October 2021
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	September/October 2021
Inception Report	November 2021
Evaluation Mission	December/January 2021
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	January 2021
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	February 2021

Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	February 2021
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	February/March 2021
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	March 2021
Final Report	March/May 2021
Final Report shared with all respondents	May/June 2021

13. Contractual Arrangements

55. Evaluation consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP /UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

56. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

57. Schedule of Payment for the Principal Evaluator:

58. Deliverable	59. Percentage Payment
60. Approved Inception Report (<i>as per annex document 9</i>)	61. 30%
62. Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per annex document 16</i>)	63. 30%
64. Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	65. 40%

66. Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Specialist:

67. Deliverable	68. Percentage Payment
69. Approved Inception Report (<i>as per annex document 9</i>)	70. 50%
71. Approved Mission report summarizing evaluation interview findings	72. 50%

73. Fees only contracts: Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

74. The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP’s Anubis information management system and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

75. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

76. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX VI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluand Title:

Enhancing Climate Change Resilience of Rural Communities Living in Protected Areas of Cambodia
Adaptation Fund Project ID: KHM/MIE/Food/2011/1

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>Quality of the Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The Executive Summary provides a concise summary of the report's findings.</p>	6
<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)</p> <p>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Complete section that highlights a concise statement of the purpose of the Evaluation.</p>	6
<p>II. Evaluation Methods</p> <p>A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.).</p> <p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Detailed description of the approach taken provided and limitations addressed</p>	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p> <p>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement?</p>	Ethics and Human Rights and Gender addressed.	
<p>III. The Project</p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Context</i>: Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • <i>Results framework</i>: Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • <i>Stakeholders</i>: Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • <i>Project implementation structure and partners</i>: A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • <i>Changes in design during implementation</i>: Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • <i>Project financing</i>: Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Comprehensive section covering all elements.</p>	6
<p>IV. Theory of Change</p> <p>The <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.</p> <p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>⁴⁵ was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow UNEP's definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The TOC at Evaluation presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Detailed discussion of causal pathways and an effective diagram, including identification</p>	6

⁴⁵ During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'</i>.</p> <p>Check that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) has been included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there was no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic was made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.</p>	of Drivers and Assumptions included.	
<p>V. Key Findings</p> <p>A. Strategic relevance:</p> <p>This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation⁴⁶), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW) vi. Alignment to Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities vii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities viii. Complementarity with Existing Interventions 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Detailed discussion of all elements</p>	6
<p>B. Quality of Project Design</p> <p>To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good summary of assessment of project design.</p>	6
<p>C. Nature of the External Context</p> <p>For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval⁴⁷), and how they affected performance, should be described.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Provides accurate summation of external context during time of implementation</p>	5

⁴⁶ A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

⁴⁷ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<p>D. Effectiveness</p> <p>(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes: How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention.</p> <p>The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>This section includes a detailed discussion of the availability of outputs and achievement of outcomes.</p>	6
<p>(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Determining the Likelihood of Impact was challenging due to the nature⁴⁸ of this project</p> <p>Analysis of evidence relating to likelihood of impact could have included more detail.</p>	5
<p>E. Financial Management</p> <p>This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table.</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good discussion of elements of financial management with supporting tables. Discussion of communication could have been more descriptive.</p>	6
<p>F. Efficiency</p> <p>To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implications of delays and no cost extensions 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>A clear and concise section in which the assessment of efficiency is made</p>	6

⁴⁸ this project was designed to enhance coordination. The intended Impact was: *Enhanced understanding and capacity of countries to implement the transparency framework of the Paris Agreement*. The actual application of the resources and knowledge provided was entirely at the volition of the participants, over which CBIT GCP itself had little direct influence. CBIT was also a new concept and most CBIT countries have not yet, or only recently, embarked on CBIT implementation.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint. 	evident and all elements are included.	
<p>G. Monitoring and Reporting</p> <p>How well does the report assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) Project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>) 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Clear and concise discussion providing succinct information on all 3 sections.</p>	6
<p>H. Sustainability</p> <p>How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-political Sustainability Financial Sustainability Institutional Sustainability 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The discussion covers all three dimensions and adequately identifies and assesses factors within each, which determine the levels of likelihood in each dimension that underpins the overall rating.</p>	6
<p>I. Factors Affecting Performance</p> <p>These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation and readiness Quality of project management and supervision⁴⁹ Stakeholder participation and co-operation Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity Environmental and social safeguards Country ownership and driven-ness Communication and public awareness 	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Good summary of cross-cutting issues in general.</p>	6

⁴⁹ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations		
<p>i. Quality of the conclusions: The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section.</p> <p>It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The conclusion brings together the main findings and insights contained in the report. The strategic questions set out in the TOR are addressed in this section and the main strengths and weaknesses of the project are highlighted.</p>	6
<p>ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>The lessons are relevant and clear.</p>	6
<p>iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations:</p> <p>To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when.</p> <p>At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</p> <p>In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.</p> <p>Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.</p>	<p>Final report:</p> <p>Section complete, recommendations are relevant and focus on proposed second phase.</p>	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria		
VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality		
i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report: The report follows the UNEP guidelines. All Annexes are included.	6
ii) Quality of writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?	Final report: The report is concise and well-written.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		5.2 Satisfactory

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.