

Management Response: Implementation Plan for Evaluation Recommendations

General Information

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Evaluation Manager	Mike Spilsbury
Project Evaluation Title	Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project “Climate change action in developing countries with fragile mountainous ecosystems from a sub-regional perspective”
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GEF ID	n/a
UNEP Sub-programme	SP1 – Climate Change
GEF Focal Area	N/A
Project Manager/ Task Manager	Matthias Jurek
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Implementation Plan

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1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a UNEP project aims to reform policy at the national level in a limited time period, the project timeframe should be longer to reflect the time realities of national policy processes. UNEP should ensure that future project documents reflect the reality that national policy cycles do not always align 	Any follow on project should try to ensure the time frame of their projects align with existing national policy processes.	Opportunity for improvement	Project	PM		Partially Accepted	By the time the project was set up and the agreement with the donor concluded, the donor could only make a financial commitment to cover a period of four years and not longer, hence a project lifecycle of four years could only be taken. When the prodoc was elaborated and	With regards to future similar regional projects, the PM team will strive to have an adaptive approach in alignment with the policy processes at national level and their cycle. The PM team will in particular strive for respective outcomes, indicators and milestones at regional level not national level, if the project has a strong regional focus and does not last more than four years and thus an alignment with relevant national policy process is not given/ difficult. However, in this specific context, the approved

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	<p>with project timeframes and that timeframes should be extended because outputs and outcomes often materialise after the project has been completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is particularly important due to the political, institutional and legal context of the Outputs for this project, frequent turnover of personnel and institutional friction in national bureaucracies significantly slow the process. 							<p>reviewed, QAS insisted to have an outcome and indicator at national level that in the view of the PM was too ambitious to achieve, as also reflected by the evaluation team in its preliminary findings. It is obvious that a regional project is not able to catalyze national policy action within such a short project lifecycle of four years, in particular, if the project has to be aligned with respective policy cycles at national level. However, the new Adaptation@Altitude project (112.9) already builds on the outcome and milestones of this project, focusing in particular on relevant national follow up action (NAP development)</p>	<p>Adaptation at Altitude (A@A project, 112.9) that is a follow-up to this project, continues with the work at national level, targeting in particular relevant NAP process of mountain countries.</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is currently no system to track where and how governments actually refer to the Outlook or its findings. The lack of formal methods to track the usage of the Outlook leads to a lack of robust evidence for outcome 	<p>UNEP should create more robust methodologies for tracking how the Outlooks are integrated into national frameworks to determine effectiveness. To this end, UNEP should engage GRID ARENDAL and other</p>	Critical	Project	PM		Partially Accepted		<p>When similar assessment work will be undertaken in the future, the PM team will ensure that relevant funds and action will be also undertaken to continue to monitor the impact of the assessment work, working closely with relevant national partners and external partners involved, depending of course on overall project budget available.</p>

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	achievement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stronger approach would be to collect comprehensive information on how policy makers reference key policy documents (e.g. the Outlook) in their discussions, for example at UNFCCC COPs or AMSEN meetings, (and any preparatory documents). 	project partners more systematically to assist with outcome-level monitoring							With regards to the Mountain Adaptation Solution Booklets that will be produced under the new follow-up A@A project 112.9, a strong role of governments is foreseen to support the integration of results into relevant national frameworks (e.g. through prioritization of solutions and integration into relevant NAP process of selected mountain countries)
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth understanding of the environmental politics at the national level need to be clearly articulated before endeavouring to forge a process of regional cooperation. This will require more bilateral cooperation with national governments. • Economic turmoil, political unrest, language barriers, election cycles and problematic international relations will all impact the project in a non-trivial manner. Failure to adapt to these developments could slow down, or even terminate, the project before the outcomes have been achieved. • Examining the political context in advance can result in 	When preparing a project document for further project phases, UNEP should provide a more fulsome account of the regional socio-political, institutional, environmental and economic context. UNEP projects should allocate a higher proportion of project budgets to monitoring progress and risks.	Important	Project	PM		Partially Accepted	Within the timeframe of the evaluation, already a new follow-up project document A@A 112.9 was developed that already incorporates this recommendation and provides for a more detailed analysis of the regional and national context (see attached project document).	For other future similar regional projects (e.g. project 112.9 Adaptation at Altitude) a detailed analysis of the relevant national setting etc. will be made and governments involved in a bilateral level, focusing in particular on champion countries within regional processes, as the funds will be limited to tackle all countries at the same national level. Involvement of UNRC, other relevant Regional offices and country offices will be key as well. Also, a proper risk analysis and the development of contingency measures will be undertaken to address a broad variety of risks. The introduced activity reporting dashboard tool under PIMS is also a useful tool to monitor progress and assess risks on a regular basis and is commonly applied by the PM team, including for ongoing projects (e.g. follow up project A@A 112.9)

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	<p>a more context appropriate course of action. For example, had UNEP identified the frozen conflicts present in the Caucasus and Balkans regions in advance, these could have been more tactly maneuvered which could have prevented the rejection of the strategic roadmap on the grounds of political relations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project should identify such barriers in the early stages, with a clear framework in place to mitigate them. For example, in regions with frozen conflicts, bilateral or sub-regional approaches could be considered in the case that pan-regional approaches prove to be dysfunctional. • More generally, UNEP needs to allocate a higher proportion of the overall budget to monitoring progress and risks. 								
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchoring project activities within existing regional bodies (E.g. EAC, CONDESAN, ICSD) helped to streamline costs and improve efficiencies. This approach also helped 	<p>In future project phases, UNEP should continue to create synergies with national processes and anchor activities within existing national and/or regional institutions. UNEP should replicate the success with the</p>	Important	Project	PM		Partially Accepted	<p>Replicating the success with the EAC in other regions might be difficult because the relevant same setting might not be given in other mountain regions. A profound analysis</p>	<p>See comment with regards to the previous recommendations. In addition, the PM team will also seek the strong synergies with the relevant UN partnerships for sustainable development and cooperation frameworks established in targeted countries with the view of ensuring that the</p>

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	<p>to ensure that pre-existing regional issues are addressed in a timely manner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening meetings through these bodies also helped to promote national uptake. This approach should be replicated in other regions. • There needs to be further anchoring the strategic agendas and fostering of the intergovernmental process, with the exception of Andes and East Africa, where this occurred. In some cases this could lead to a possible mountain convention in which UNEP will continue to work closely with the regional centres. • The project needs to be better anchored into the regions. And it is important to look to the SDGs (especially in developing countries) for overarching policy frameworks within which to ground the mountain work 	EAC in other regions by collaborating with economic bodies, especially the regional UN Economic Commissions						for other mt. regions was made before opting for the relevant institutional framework to be collaborated with. E.g. In the Andean region, the Andean Community (similar economic commission as EAC) could have provided for such a possible replication model but in comparison to the EAC, it has a very weak environmental pillar. However, the model of cooperation with EAC could be applied to other regions in Africa that include mountain regions (e.g. ECOWAS).	regional processes (comparative advantage) are also captured well in this context. In the new follow-up project 112.9 we kept the arrangement working strongly with EAC (economic commission) in East Africa and the Andean Initiative in the Andean region.
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National ownership is important to ensure the sustainability, longevity and uptake of project outputs. • Ownership will be affected by the extent 	In future project design phases, UNEP should develop a suite of approaches which will deepen national ownership.	Important	Project	PM		Partially Accepted	With regards to the national ownership, the project team will dive more into relevant national processes in the future but given the	Within the context of the follow-up A@A project 112.9 that was developed during the evaluation of this project, the PM team is already working and aiming to mainstream mountain-related aspects into NAP process in

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	<p>to which UNEP engages with national focal points to understand national context and priorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership is also reflected by the extent to which project activities actually respond to the national priorities and concerns that will have been raised by national focal points and key stakeholders. Understanding the political context of environmental issues in the region is key to drafting regional policy road maps that will have a high uptake rate. In a number of regions, there were concerns that the roadmaps did not reflect priority issues in the region. This ultimately reduced relevance and therefore the government buy-in that was essential for uptake of the final policy roadmaps. Greater consultation with regional bodies is essential. For example, water resources emerged a key issue in both Central Asia and Andes regions. If the Outlook would have prioritised these issues in more detail, there would have been higher uptake by 							<p>often limited budgets of regional projects this might not be feasible at the full scale as it will require many resources and capacities unless there are relevant national processes (e.g. NAP) that UNEP (including colleagues of other units) are already in charge of to seek synergies and match capacity issues. This is already the case for the ongoing A@A project 112.9 - building on this project, where e.g. CCAU is deeply involved in the implementation of activities as it oversees various relevant NAP process in targeted mountain countries (e.g. Rwanda, Uganda)</p>	<p>targeted mountain countries (e.g. Rwanda, Uganda, Georgia). There is not a project ID available as the project proposals under GCF have been only recently submitted to the GCF Secretariat and the projects not been approved yet.</p>

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	national governments in the region								
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular changes in personnel, both within UNEP and focal points in the regions, disrupted information dissemination and project implementation. The best way to deal with this reality is simply to be prepared for it and to ensure the institutional memory is not dependent on one individual. This can be rectified by clear hand-over plans. It would be beneficial to have specific committees with stakeholders from different sectors, assigning them designated positions and well-structured responsibilities, that would be unaffected by governmental transitions and staff changes. Anchoring the project within frameworks and institutions, not individuals, will help to overcome the loss of institutional memory during turnover of personnel. This would help improve project continuity, and resolve the issue of interruptions of the 	UNEP should create risk mitigation strategies that addresses the potential for change in personnel and in regional focal points, a common problem in projects such as this one.	Important	Project	PM		Partially Accepted	<p>The recommendation is not really understood as during the project implementation cycle, no staff change in the PM team occurred so consistency was given throughout the whole project. The only major change of focal point role occurred in the LAC Office but appropriate handover was made. The challenge that occurred was that the hiring process of the PM (P3 level) under this project started late during implementation of the project causing delays. This can be avoided if HR relevant processes are boosted up in the future and also temporary solutions e.g. are being found to cover the inception phase period. In addition, the PM kept a strong documentation of project management using e.g. tools/tables to monitor and adjust planning, contracts, budgets, HR and</p>	The future risk management strategies to be elaborated with new projects will incorporate this specific element in order to avoid possible staff turnover. The PM will continue to use relevant tools available and keep a strong documentation of project management (e.g. tools /tables to monitor project progress + overview/agreements/HR/finance etc.) and technical progress (PIMS and activity reporting as monitoring tool as well as donor reporting) and other means to establish track record.

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	<p>knowledge flow during staff turnover.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changeover of staff often resulted in expertise and insight being lost, reducing the effectiveness of the project. • UNEP could engage permanent focal points, such as a regional office, when dealing with the issue of climate adaptation in mountain regions. 							also technical progress which is accessible for other colleagues.	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAPs provide a firm institutional vehicle to mainstream the knowledge from the policy roadmap into concrete national policy. Currently, governments acknowledge the usefulness of the UNEP knowledge, but are failing to mainstream this knowledge into concrete NAPs. • Highlighting the linkages between ecosystem health and ecosystem services, and the potential for climate change maladaptation to disrupt these vital services also ought to be emphasised to nations in the hope that it will be included in NAPs. • NAPs are currently underutilised in cementing climate change adaptation 	<p>UNEP should engage with NAPs as a tool to integrate project outputs and extend the reach of the project beyond individuals, depending on the lifecycle of the NAP process. This will result in greater uptake of the project beyond the relatively brief political cycle.</p>	Important	Project	PM		Accepted		<p>Within the context of the new A@A project 112.9, the PM team will, in particular, work at the national level and engage with the NAP development in targeted mountain countries (including Georgia, Rwanda and Uganda), where UNEP has the lead with the NAP development (GEF,GCF). The aim of the intervention will be to mainstream mountain-related issues into these NAP processes. Specific project IDs are not yet available as the projects under GCF NAP readiness are only at proposal stage and not approved by the respective boards.</p>

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	<p>policies into mainstream national development policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedding dialogue within institutions and processes, like NAPs, is more effective than anchoring onto individual ministers as there is frequent personnel turnover which can result in progress being lost. When individual ministers or staff leave their role, their successors can continue progressing the work as it is embedded within the NAP, not the individual 								
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political commitment to mountains is gaining momentum, UNEP ought to maintain and build on this. As well, the topic of mountains should be elevated among UNEP's top priorities, especially glaciers and also significant changes in regions without permafrost). 	<p>UNEP should consider choosing mountains and climate as the theme for UNEA-6 in order to build on and sustain the political momentum that has been generated by this project. As well, UNEP should elevate the importance of mountains within UNEP, in particular at senior management level, and in recognition of UNEP's strong delivery on mountains.</p>	<p>Opportunity for improvement</p>	<p>UNEP-wide</p>	<p>SMT</p>		<p>Accepted</p>		<p>The recommendation is already taken up as the PM in close coordination with UNEP's mountain focal points and Ecosystem Division is taking steps to elevate mountains in UNEP among SM in particular in support of the ongoing transformation process and MTS delivery. Relevant follow up will be made with SM (involving in particular Director of Europe Office and Ecosystem Division) concerned. See attached prepared ppt that was developed following a wider consultation process and presented to SM.</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP should scale up efforts to highlight and share best practices of adaptation in other regions and in 	<p>UNEP should scale up the sharing of best practices as regards the integration of mountains in climate adaptation. For example, UNEP</p>	<p>Opportunity for improvement</p>	<p>Project</p>	<p>PM</p>		<p>Accepted</p>		<p>The recommendation is already taken up and the new overall A@A programme by SDC that UNEP is also a partner to (through the existing project 112.9), already addresses in its outcome 3 the</p>

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	<p>disseminating information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP should demonstrate mutual benefits of NbS, combining adaptation and mitigation and show examples of where it works. 	<p>could create a portal that would enable the sharing of best practices. As well, UNEP could introduce a compilation of best practices.</p>							<p>solutions component. UNEP and its partners will be, in particular, involved in helping to collect, review and visualize mt solutions via the Weadapt Platform (decided by SDC) and prepare relevant visualization products including two mountain solution booklets in South Caucasus and East Africa planned for 11 December 2021 , Mountain Day. Furthermore, the PM has recently submitted a project concept for possible financing to the Government of Austria supporting the application/ testing of concrete mountain adaptation solutions (see attached provided concept) through established small-grants programmes.</p>