

**Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP-GEF Project**  
**'Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural**  
**biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting**  
**ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan'**  
**(GEF ID 5403)**  
**2016-2020**



**UNEP Ecosystems Division**  
**Validation date: January 2024**



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Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Terminal Review was prepared for UNEP Ecosystems Division by Nara Luvsan.

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

The review team would like to thank the project team and in particular Ms. Muhabbat Tardieva, the National Project Coordinator and the national project team members for their contribution and collaboration throughout the review process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the Technical Committee members, the Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology, the Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Genetic Resources, the Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry and academic community representatives who took time to discuss key issues during the review mission visit and provide comments to the report. The reviewer would also like to thank the Ministry of Natural Resources of Uzbekistan and its Biodiversity Policy Department, the FAO office representative for their input and time.

Special acknowledgements go to Khorezm province, the Republic of Karakalpakstan officials, Sarapayan and Shurakhon community administration and farmers' representatives for sharing their insights about the project and the overall agricultural situation of the country during the mission visit.

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

## BRIEF EXTERNAL CONSULTANT(S) BIOGRAPHY

Nara Luvsan brings on board over 27 years of development aid experience within the UN and the World Bank in key positions in country, regional and headquarters. Her considerable experience in Mongolia, Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, Russia, China and former Soviet sphere as well as in Western Europe has provided her with an in-depth understanding of the associated economic conditions, legal structures, governmental operations and social needs and realities of the region. She has extensive experience in evaluation preparation, process and methodologies. Nara has successfully lead/contributed to country evaluations, regional and global multi-agency programme mid-term and final reviews. The sectors covered include i.a. reviewing the new strategy and Regional Action Plan for Environment for Central Asia, UNDAFs, nexus of environment and poverty reduction, aspects of BRI as well as green economy policy.

Throughout her career, in her capacity as Senior Programme Policy Officer and Regional Adviser with specialised UN agencies Nara was instrumental in designing, managing, leading and closing complex country and regional programmes that required deep understanding of political sensitivities, governance issues and implementation hurdles faced by international, national and local counterparts.

## ABOUT THE REVIEW

**Joint Review:** No

**Report Language(s):** English

**Review Type:** Terminal Review

**Brief Description:** This report is a management-led Terminal Review of a UNEP-GEF funded project implemented between 2016 and 2019. The project's overall development goal was to improve rural livelihood using agrobiodiversity, especially through sustainable farming of local varieties of fruit trees and their better utilization and conservation. The review 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 review 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, the Donor<sup>1</sup> and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

**Key words:** Biodiversity, Agrobiodiversity, Sustainable Land Management; Forest Governance; Climate Change; Ecosystem Management.

**Primary data collection period:** July; part of August; part of September 2023

**Field mission dates:** July 3-6, 2023

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<sup>1</sup> GEF

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABS	Access to and Benefit Sharing
ARS	Agricultural Research Stations
BR	Budget review
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Coordination Committee
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DADO	District Agriculture Development Office
EOU	Evaluation and Oversight Unit
FFS	Farmer Field School
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HSP	Horticulture Support project
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGEBP	Institute of Genetics and Experimental Biology of Plants
IS	Intermediate State
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NPM	National Project Manager
OFP	Operational Focal Point
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoW	Program of Work
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SCC	Site Coordination Committee
SMT	Site Management Team
SQCC	Seed Quality Control Centre
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TF	Trust Fund
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

## PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE

**Table 1. Project Identification Table**

UNEP PIMS ID:	SB-00689.29.02		
DONOR (GEF/GCF etc) ID:	5403		
Implementing Partners	Executing Agency: Biodiversity International (IPGRI) Project partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making named after M. Mirzaev</li> <li>Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology (IGPEB)</li> </ul>		
Relevant SDG(s):	UNDAF 2016-20, PA 3: Environmental protection to ensure sustainable development  Outcome 6: By 2020, rural population benefit from sustainable management of natural resources and resilience to disasters and climate change  SDG2 (2.4; 2.5), SDG5(5.5), SDG15 (15.3; 15.9)		
Sub-programme:	Subprogram 3 – Healthy & Productive Ecosystems	Expected Accomplishment(s):	EA (a) The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels
UNEP approval date:	23 December 2015	Programme of Work Output(s):	POW 2018-19  Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems
Expected start date:	23 December 2015	Actual start date:	10 January 2016
Planned completion date:	July 2019	Actual operational completion date:	31 December 2023
Planned project budget at approval:	5,385,845 USD	Actual total expenditures reported as of [30 June 2023]:	6,339,894 USD
Planned Environment Fund allocation:	1,235,845 USD	Actual Environment Fund expenditures reported as of [date]:31 December 2022	1,114,011 USD
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing: PPG GEF cost	50,000 USD	Secured Extra-Budgetary Financing:	50,000 USD
Planned Extra-Budgetary Financing: MSP/FSP Co-financing	4,150,000 USD	Actual Extra-Budgetary Financing expenditures reported as of [30 June 2022]:	5,225,883 USD
First disbursement:	20 April 2016	Planned date of financial closure:	December 2022
No. of formal project revisions:	5	Date of last approved project revision:	N/a

No. of Steering Committee meetings:	3	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: 2022 8-9 February 2021	Next:
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation ( <i>planned date</i> ):	July 2018	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation ( <i>actual date</i> ):	July 2018	
Terminal Review ( <i>planned date</i> ):	June 2022	Terminal Review ( <i>actual date</i> ):	July 2023	
Coverage - Country(ies):	Uzbekistan	Coverage - Region(s):	National, Central Asia	
Dates of previous project phases:	N/a	Status of future project phases:	N/a	



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Project background

1. Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, has natural habitat for temperate fruit species and boasts a rich, inter and intra-specific diversity of fruit trees. For centuries, rural people and farmers in Uzbekistan have relied on fruit and nut trees for nutrition and livelihood. They have conserved and used local varieties, bred crossings between crops and their wild relatives, increasing beneficial traits adapted to their natural habitat and environmental stressors as drought, salinity, degraded and marginal landscapes.
2. During the Soviet era, a relatively solid base of policies, legislation, standards and scientific norms was established relative to natural fauna and flora protection and conservation, in line with the central planning structure that then prevailed. However, countries in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, have also suffered from a focus on monocrops such as cotton as well as the large-scale state kolkhoz approach to fruit and nut production that disadvantaged small-scale, traditional fruit-tree cultivation. During the transition to market economy in the 90s and early 2000 and a period of economic and social reform trial and error, many of both traditional and Soviet-period achievements and positive gains in the field of biodiversity preservation were either lost or simply not practiced.
3. Many factors contribute currently to the further deterioration of agricultural lands and declining productivity, such as: increasing population, over-exploitation and mismanagement of natural resources, overgrazing, degraded old infrastructure, and increasingly, the effects of global warming. And these are the reasons why projects are called for that promote an integrated approach to land management and agricultural production using agro-biodiversity conservation and evolution.

### This Review

4. This Terminal Review was conducted in 2023 after two years of the project completion due to the COVID pandemic-related delays. The purpose of the Review was twofold: (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, Bioversity International and the relevant national partners in Uzbekistan. The Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.
5. The main aim of the terminal review is to facilitate reflection and learning with a view to improving future similar projects' design, quality and impact. Therefore, the target audience for the results of this review are UNEP staff related to GEF projects, the evaluation office, the regional office for Europe and Central Asia. Among project stakeholders, the participating ministries and agencies in the area of biodiversity, agriculture, land and forest management, local governments, academia and research institutes, the private sector, NGOs and farmer communities in the project intervention sites. Key UN partner agencies including the Resident Coordination Office, FAO, and multilateral agencies working in the area of sustainable management of environment and natural resources will also be included in the dissemination list.

### Key findings

6. This project was the natural next step in taking forward the results from a previous Central Asian regional project that focused on on-farm maintenance of local diversity of fruit crops, in-situ conservation of their wild relatives, and protection of farmers' rights in national policy frameworks.

7. Against a backdrop of socio-political stability and the government's commitment to crop diversification, the primary focus of the project under review was the introduction of a sustainable management system as applied to the production of locally adapted fruit tree varieties. Despite cancellations and delays of some activities due to the COVID pandemic, the project delivered most outputs and outcomes in a timely and qualitatively satisfactory manner as per the targets set out in the results framework. Weaker aspects concerned no clear exit strategy, absence of a concrete tool to qualitatively assess the social and environmental aspects, and an overambitious goal relating to mainstreaming into non-project sites and other sectors.
8. Most outputs and outcomes achieved the intended results. On top of that, the intermediate states could by and large be reached as many of the drivers and assumptions were held. The project interventions contributed to some extent to longer-term impacts as per the reconstructed Theory of Change, namely the impact of "reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management" and the impact of "climate change mitigation due to avoidable loss of agrobiodiversity".
9. Throughout the project, the project team successfully mobilized stakeholders in a participatory approach that was key to empowering the main beneficiaries, namely smallholder farmers and nursery enterprises in the two intervention sites. Field work, research, assessments, various training and awareness raising events, development of technical guidelines, diversity fairs and exchange visits were based on this spirit of collaboration that helped stakeholders own the results of the project.
10. Farmers understood and owned the innovative agricultural technologies involved in growing traditional and new varieties of target nut and fruit tree crops. Their livelihood improved as they could expand their farming to more marginal and degraded land using a greater diversity of fruit tree species that had functional resistant traits. The farmers' communities could rely on better and a more reliable supply of quality seeds and planting materials thanks to the improved supply mechanism. Land sector planners, district authorities, local seed and planting material nurseries and selected schools were convinced of the importance of local agrobiodiversity in land restoration and enhancing ecosystem services. Thanks to the effort at the regional and local levels, national-level policy makers were better sensitized for the adoption of national policy options in favour of the Nagoya protocol on access and benefit sharing.

## Conclusions

11. Due to the successful achievement of key outcomes as evidenced through country visit observation and discussions, it clearly transpires that the project's agrobiodiversity approach has benefitted the institutions involved, both public and private, at the communities and provincial levels. The overall stable institutional structure that prevails, especially within those key institutions that the project team has collaborated with closely, ensures the activities' likely continuation.
12. The project's main targets were underpinned by the successful bringing together of farmers and national research institutes and by ensuring cooperation, support and advice from local authorities, extension services, the land management agency as well as farmers' councils.
13. Based on the findings of this review, the project demonstrates performance at the 'Satisfactory' level. The project has demonstrated strong performance in the areas of the results logical framework, skills and capacity building, stakeholder mobilisation, participatory approach and overall project management. Areas that would benefit/would have benefited from further attention are a

concrete strategy for institutionalising results, a tool to measure impact on the status of women and youth and concrete measures to upscale into non-project sites.

**Table 2. Summarised rating**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Rating</b>
A. Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory
B. Quality of Project Design	Satisfactory
C. Nature of External Context	Highly Favourable
D. Effectiveness	Satisfactory
E. Financial Management	Satisfactory
F. Efficiency	Satisfactory
G. Monitoring and Reporting	Satisfactory
H. Sustainability	Moderately Likely
I. Factors Affecting Performance	Satisfactory
<b>Overall Project Rating</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

### Lessons Learned

14. Lesson 1: Building on the results of the previous regional project on the same issue created a favourable environment for continuing and expanding the work on to country -specific results. The project was timely response to ongoing reforms, government’s favourable disposition to crop diversity and a sub-national level land allocation policy.
15. Lesson 2: A multistakeholder participatory approach involving actors from different domains and from national and sub-national levels facilitates empowerment and ownership.
16. Lesson 3 : During the project design it would be desirable to double check if goals such as upscaling and mainstreaming might actually be unrealistic. Such goals usually require longer timeframes and the engagement of many partners as they generally call for solutions to underlying systemic issues, root-cause related governance problems that a single project cannot address.
17. Lesson 4: Continuation and sustainability issues should be considered at the outset. An exit strategy plan could be elaborated matching key outcomes to concrete national institutions or international development aid actors working in those same or related areas.
18. Lesson 5 : Continued documenting, data collecting and monitoring are still weak aspects that require concerted attention by all as there is little motivation and incentives for this task beyond the project’s life time.

## Recommendations

19. Recommendation 1: Uzbekistan is still undergoing a process of reform, and given the continued commitment of the government to crop diversification, it is crucial that momentum not be lost. It is consequently highly recommended that a concerted effort be made to integrate the key project achievements into similar ongoing or new programmes. The UNEP Sub-regional Office for Central Asia could liaise with the UN RC Office in Tashkent, relevant divisions in Nairobi and the Regional Office in Geneva with a view to the drawing up of an action plan together with key national institutions in Uzbekistan. At the very least some of the outcome results should be incorporated into the current UNSDCF's relevant result area activities.
20. Recommendation 2: Elaborate risk mitigation, sustainability, environmental and social impact strategies and concrete measures during the formulation and design stage of the project, and adjust and refine them during implementation as needed.
21. Recommendation 3: Plan and incorporate concrete strategies and detailed actions of collaboration with the initiatives, programmes, projects that were identified as complementary in the Prodoc. For instance, the "Integrated natural resources management in drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes in Central Asia and Turkey" CACILM-II FAO-GEF project.
22. Recommendation 4: Plan for a South - South lessons-sharing activity with Armenia where programmes for crop wild relatives, traditional varieties of fruit and nut species could directly benefit from this project's results.

## Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the UNEP GEF project "Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan", set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the '**Satisfactory**' level. The Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be '**Moderately Satisfactory**' (See Annex X).

## I. INTRODUCTION

23. This document presents the Terminal Review for the UNEP-GEF funded project on “ Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan”. The project contributes primarily to UNEP’s PoW 2018-19 Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems as well as GEF’s strategic objective to Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors.
24. UNEP Ecosystems Division, GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit served as GEF Implementing Agency for this project. Bioversity international, in coordination with the Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making and Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology (IGPEB) served as the project executing agencies.
25. The project was planned to be implemented over 36 months (January 2016 to July 2019) but received four non-cost extensions with the last one until 31 December 2023 due to the delayed government registration of the grant and the COVID pandemic. The total planned budget was USD 5,385,845 of which GEF contributed USD 1,235,845.
26. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and Programme Manual, this Terminal Review was conducted after four years of the project completion in 2023 due to delays caused by COVID pandemic and the situation in the country. The purpose of the Review was twofold: (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. The Review identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.
27. The target audience for the results of this review are UNEP staff related to GEF projects, the evaluation office, the sub-regional office for Central Asia and regional office for Europe. Among project stakeholders, the participating ministries and agencies in the area of biodiversity, agriculture, land and forest management, local governments, academia and research institutes, the private sector, NGOs and farmer communities in the project intervention sites. Key UN partner agencies including the Resident Coordination Office, FAO, and multilateral agencies working in the area of sustainable management of environment and natural resources will also be included in the dissemination list.

## II. REVIEW METHODS

28. The TR was conducted in accordance with the UNEP and GEF guidance, rules, and procedures. It was undertaken in-line with GEF principles, which are: independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, ethical, partnership, competencies/capacities, credibility, and utility. A participatory approach based on information exchange and consultation with a selected range of stakeholders was used for the terminal review process. Where necessary the privacy of the interviewees was respected. The reviewer used quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods to verify and validate overall success and the concrete results achieved as well as to draw forward-looking recommendations within and beyond the framework of the project.
29. The Inception phase has started with a desk review of relevant background documentation, including the CEO endorsement as the main project document, an in-depth look at the logical framework results' chain, half-yearly and yearly progress reports as well as documentation related to similar projects of partner agencies. This resulted in an Inception report that was helped guide the country visit and next steps of the TR.
30. Based on the Inception report preliminary findings and insights, much of the verification and validation of the project's performance and achievement was carried out during the country visit mission. Individual interviews with main project stakeholders in the project field sites was undertaken. The most crucial information collection and verification happened during a one-day workshop with key national project partners where all Outcomes and Outputs were presented and discussed in the group. The review framework and the detailed questions contained in Annex III were partially used for the interviewing and data collection process during and after the mission. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity principles were adhered to.
31. The project management team, in particular the project Coordinator from the Executing Agency Bioversity together with other project partners on the ground assisted the reviewer in reaching out to as many project implementers and beneficiaries as possible during the visit.
32. Field visits were conducted to get an in-depth observation of the selected project intervention sites. The reviewer will ensure inclusion of representatives of marginalized groups, young people, women and the elderly. Effort will also made to interview and/or carry out a survey (questionnaire based) with national and international players that influence mainstreaming into the wider non-environment sector and SDG platforms.
33. Processing and Validation of Data. Once the above steps of document review, data collection, stakeholder interviews and country visit was completed, all the materials were organized according to the criteria and review questions.

*Table 3: Respondents' Sample*

		# people involved (M/F)	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project team (those with management responsibilities e.g. PMU)	Implementing agency – UNEP	4 (2/2)	4 (2/2)	3 (2/1)	75%
	Executing agency/ies - Bioversity International (IPGRI)	6 (3/3)	2 (0/2)	1 (0/1)	50%

	# entities involved	# entities contacted	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project (implementing/ executing) partners (receiving funds from the project)	12	6	22 (14/8)	20 (12/8)	90%
Project (collaborating/contributing <sup>2</sup> ) partners (not receiving funds from the project)	6	6	6 (3/3)	3 (1/2)	50%
Beneficiaries:  <i>Examples:</i> Duty bearers Gate keepers Direct beneficiaries Indirect beneficiaries Civil society representatives	11	8	10 (5/5)	10 (5/5)	100%

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<sup>2</sup> Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).

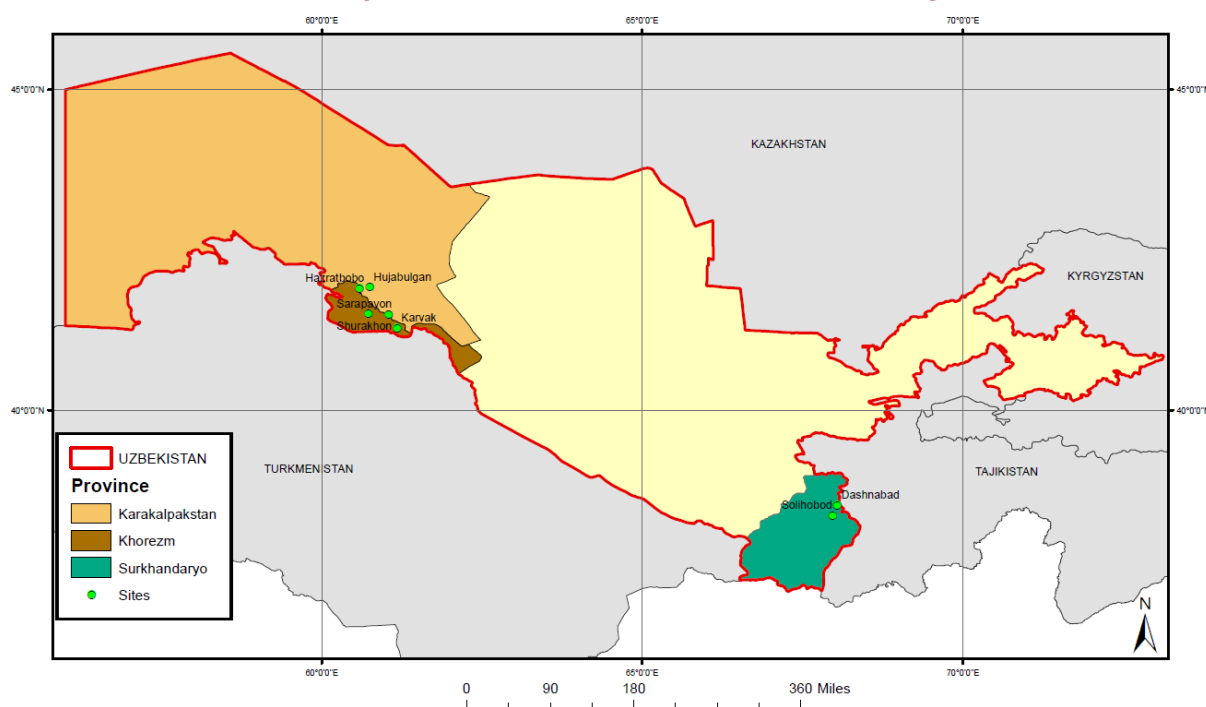
### III. THE PROJECT

#### A. Context

34. Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, has natural habitat for temperate fruit species and boasts a rich, inter and intra-specific diversity of fruit trees. For centuries, rural people and farmers in Uzbekistan have relied on fruit and nut trees for nutrition and livelihood. They have conserved and used local varieties, bred crossings between crops and their wild relatives, increasing beneficial traits adapted to their natural habitat and environmental stressors as drought, salinity, degraded and marginal landscapes.
35. Although the Soviet centrally planning economy led to monoculture in vast irrigated areas significant diversity of local fruit varieties is maintained in household orchards where traditional agricultural practices are applied and crop varieties are passed from generations to generations of farmers. This local diversity of fruit crops is the main source of nutrients and contributes to national food security and exports of Uzbekistan.
36. During the Soviet era, a relatively solid base of policies, legislation, standards and scientific norms was established relative to natural fauna and flora protection and conservation, in line with the central planning structure that then prevailed. However, countries in Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, have also suffered from a focus on monocrops such as cotton as well as the large-scale state kolkhoz approach to fruit and nut production that disadvantaged small-scale, traditional fruit-tree cultivation. During the transition to market economy in the 90s and early 2000 and a period of economic and social reform trial and error, many of both traditional and Soviet-period achievements and positive gains in the field of biodiversity preservation were either lost or simply not practiced.
37. Many factors contribute currently to the further deterioration of agricultural lands and declining productivity, such as: increasing population, over-exploitation and mismanagement of natural resources, overgrazing, degraded old infrastructure, and increasingly, the effects of global warming. And these are the reasons why this project sought to reinvigorate traditional varieties of fruit tree species in land management and agricultural production in two selected eco-regions of Uzbekistan.
38. North-western agro-ecoregion includes Aral sea area (Khorezm and Karakalpakstan) with severe climate. The area is considered the secondary centre of melons and rich with local diversity of rice and sorghum adapted to soil salinity. Agriculture depends on availability of water for irrigation. Local varieties of apple, apricot, pear, grape are resistant to cold weather and frosts in winter (-25oC) and high air temperatures (+50oC) in summer. This zone is the most affected with negative consequences of Aral sea shrinking as soil salinity, water resources shortage and their low quality. Severe cold winters and hot summer with strong winds both in winter and summer, high soil salinity are the main ecological characteristics of the project sites (Shurakhon, Hazratbobo, Hujabulgan, Karvak and Sarapayan villages) in this agro-ecoregion.
39. South agro-ecoregion includes Surkhandrya and Kashkadarya areas and is characterized with richness of fruit and nut-bearing crops as apple, grape, pomegranate, pistachio and almond resistant to drought. Many local fruit trees varieties have been originated from this eco-region and were disseminated to other parts of Central Asia. The project sites (Soliobod and Dashnabad villages) selected in this eco-region are characterized with very hot and dry summer with relatively mild winter.



## Uzbekistan - Sites in the Provinces of: Karakalpakstan, Khorezm and Surkhandaryo



### B. Objectives and components

40. The project's objective was to mainstream the conservation and use of fruit tree biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services and thereby improve the resiliency of traditional agricultural production systems in water-scarce landscapes. The project aimed to achieve this through the following three components and corresponding outcomes and outputs.

- Component 1: Mainstreaming mechanisms that use agricultural biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in water-scarce environments.
  - Outcome 1. Area devoted to sustainably managed fruit treediversity is increased and ecosystem services are enhanced through greater use of biodiversity in water-scarce agricultural production systems.



Multi-stakeholder consultation event

- Component 2: Increasing the use of fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem services in water-scarce environments.
- Outcome 2. Farmers benefit from having increased availability of locally adapted materials to improve ecosystem resilience through better regulation of pollination service levels, diseases and arthropod pests, land degradation and water use efficiency.



Planting material grown by dekhkan farms in the Northern project site

- Component 3: Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services.

- Outcome 3. Options for national access and benefit sharing laws identified to support the promotion of ecosystem services within agricultural production systems.



*Custodians of eco-system services*

### **C. Stakeholders**

41. The prodoc describes clearly the roles and contributions of all key stakeholders and in particular mentions over 10 institutions with which the two key executing agencies (Bioversity and Uzbek Horticulture Institute) have built close relationship and trust over the years. Key stakeholders included : national level actors as the State Committee of Nature Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources whose contribution to the Project Steering Committee and in developing strategy, policy- and- law – level work was essential. Provincial government and selected communities in the two pilot agro-ecoregions were the main target of the project. That is where agricultural biodiversity in the relevant land use sectors was introduced and related capacity building activities took place, and where a truly participatory approach of national, sub-national, academic, private sector stakeholders had the most impact. The institutes of horticulture, agricultural research, genetics and plant biology, the agrarian university and field-based training centres played pivotal role in providing scientific and technical inputs for the development of methods and approaches in sustainable management of traditional fruit varieties with specific functional resistance traits. Public and private suppliers of planting materials, farmers' union, women farmers and youth groups were involved in the delivery of key outputs. The stakeholder section clearly identifies the roles of key groups for the execution of various interventions during the project.
42. As the project progressed, it's clear that the active participation of stakeholders has increased and their interaction has expanded. So have the various stakeholders' level of awareness, knowledge and practice in sustainably managing fruit and nut tree agrobiodiversity. Especially the power relationship between smallholder farmers ( who have high interest but lower power) and key players with high power and high interest such as local government authorities evolved in a more positive direction. The farmer communities in the two selected pilot project regions were empowered as they gained more practical knowledge, skills, tools, access to better network and increased income.
43. Thanks to the multi-stakeholder and participatory approach as well as training events, local government and extension service entities better fulfilled their institutional role of support, advisory and provisioner services. The project team successfully mobilised

relevant national entities and the association of farmers in the formulation of the enabling policy for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

44. The project successfully involved women farmers and youth in key interventions. However, it is difficult to measure the influence this project had on promoting women and youth as change agents in the overall agricultural sector. This effort would anyway require a larger scope.



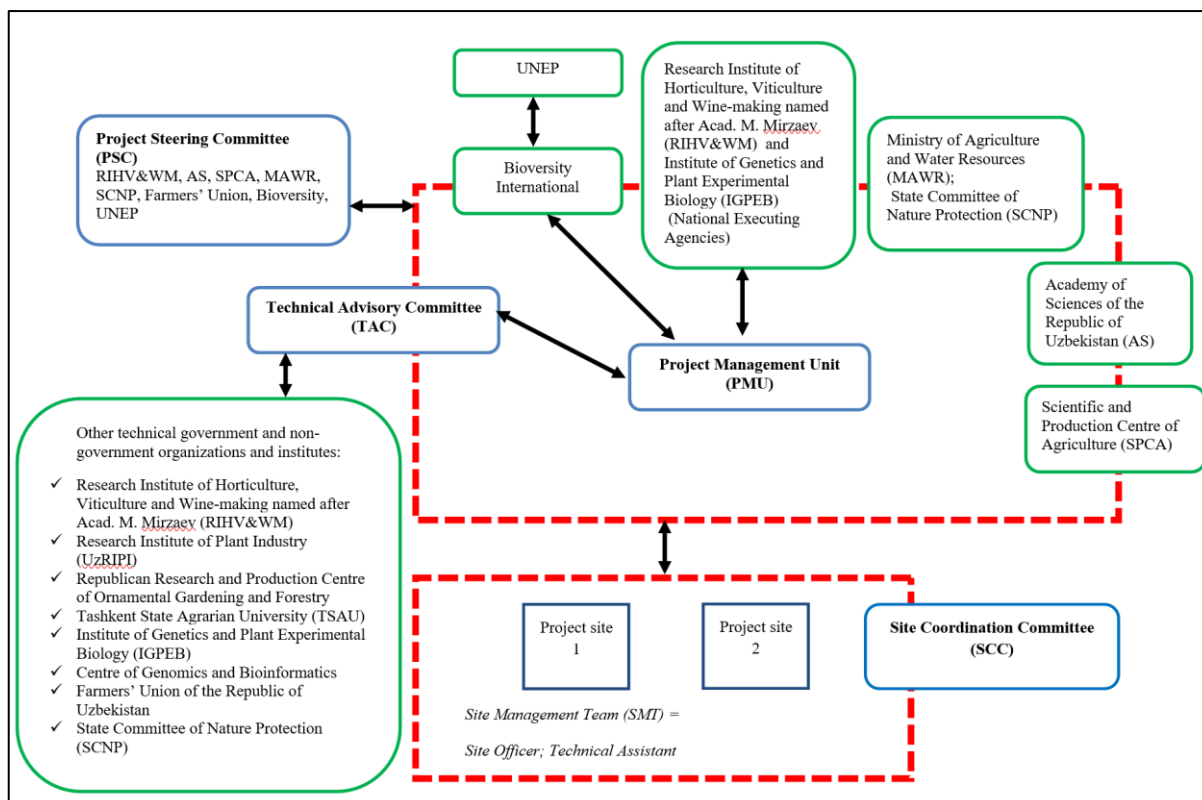
#### **D. Project implementation structure and partners**

45. UNEP as the IA had the overall responsibility for the project implementation, oversight and coordination. Bioversity International was responsible for the overall execution of the project, and provided appropriate scientific support and technical expertise as required by the national Executing Agencies, which were the Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making and the Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology (IGPEB). Their responsibilities covered the overall coordination and execution of the project in accordance with the objectives and key activities outlined in Annex F. Project Workplan.
46. The PSC role was mainly to evaluate the overall progress, to provide strategic direction and to guarantee the necessary inter-institutional coordination. Reports and recommendations of all PSC meetings, and other relevant project meetings, were prepared and disseminated no later than one month after the actual meeting. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) provided technical expertise to the project team, site management teams and the PMU.
47. On the ground work was managed by the Site Management Teams (SMT), which consisted of a Site Officer, a site level Technical Assistant, and local village authorities' representative, farmers, extension service staff, members of the Republican Association of Farmers at provincial level. Site Management Teams worked closely with Agricultural Research Stations (ARS) in the project sites. The Site Management Teams met bimonthly.
48. In order to share cross-site experiences and to coordinate activities, a Site Coordination Committee (SCC) was established. SCC was composed of Site Officers, Site level Technical Assistants, National Project Coordinator, local thematic contact people, local village authorities' representative, leading farmers, Farmer Field School (FFS)

representatives and members of the Farmers' Union of the Republic of Uzbekistan at province level in the two project sites. The SCC held two meetings per year.

49. The Project Management Unit served as the critical link between the project sites and the partner national agencies, civil society organizations, local authorities and the lead executing agencies on an ongoing basis and ensured smooth communication of information between all national and international partners.

**Figure 1: Organigram of the Project with key project key stakeholders**



## E. Changes in design during implementation

50. There were no changes in the design during the project implementation. However, there were four non-cost extensions with the last one until 31 December 2023.
51. This extension period overlapped with the COVID pandemic and lockdown measures implemented by the government for most of 2020. Almost all group events such as training, workshops, and exchange visits to share the knowledge and skills between two project sites were cancelled.
52. During the 'non-trip' period the project continued to maintain communication with key farmers and local focal points in the project sites via phone, providing consultancy to the farmers on the project activities.

## F. Project financing

**Table 4 . Project financing by components**

Project Component	Grant Amount (\$)	Co- financing (\$)
<b>COMPONENT 1.</b> Mainstreaming mechanisms that use agricultural biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in water scarce environments	512,495	1,360,000
<b>COMPONENT 2.</b> Increasing the use of fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem regulating services in water-scarce environments.	300,000	1,335,966
<b>COMPONENT 3.</b> Promoting and enabling environment for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services.	211,000	618,534
Project monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management.	100,000	272,000
Sub-total	<b>1,123,495</b>	<b>3,586,500</b>
Project Management	112,350	563,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,235,845</b>	<b>4,150,000</b>

**Table 5. Project co-financing by sources**

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	Grant	268,646
National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	In-kind	574,421
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	Grant	260,934
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	In-kind	296,466
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	Grant	43,800
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	In-kind	81,200
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	Grant	411,620
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	In-kind	259,176
National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	Grant	15,000

National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	In-kind	226,442
Private Sector	Albatros Oil Service	In-kind	100,000
NGO	Center for Agro Information-Innovation, Uzbekistan	In-kind	562,295
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	Grant	320,000
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	In-kind	580,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	150,000
<b>Total Co-financing</b>			<b>4,150,000</b>

#### IV. THEORY OF CHANGE AT REVIEW

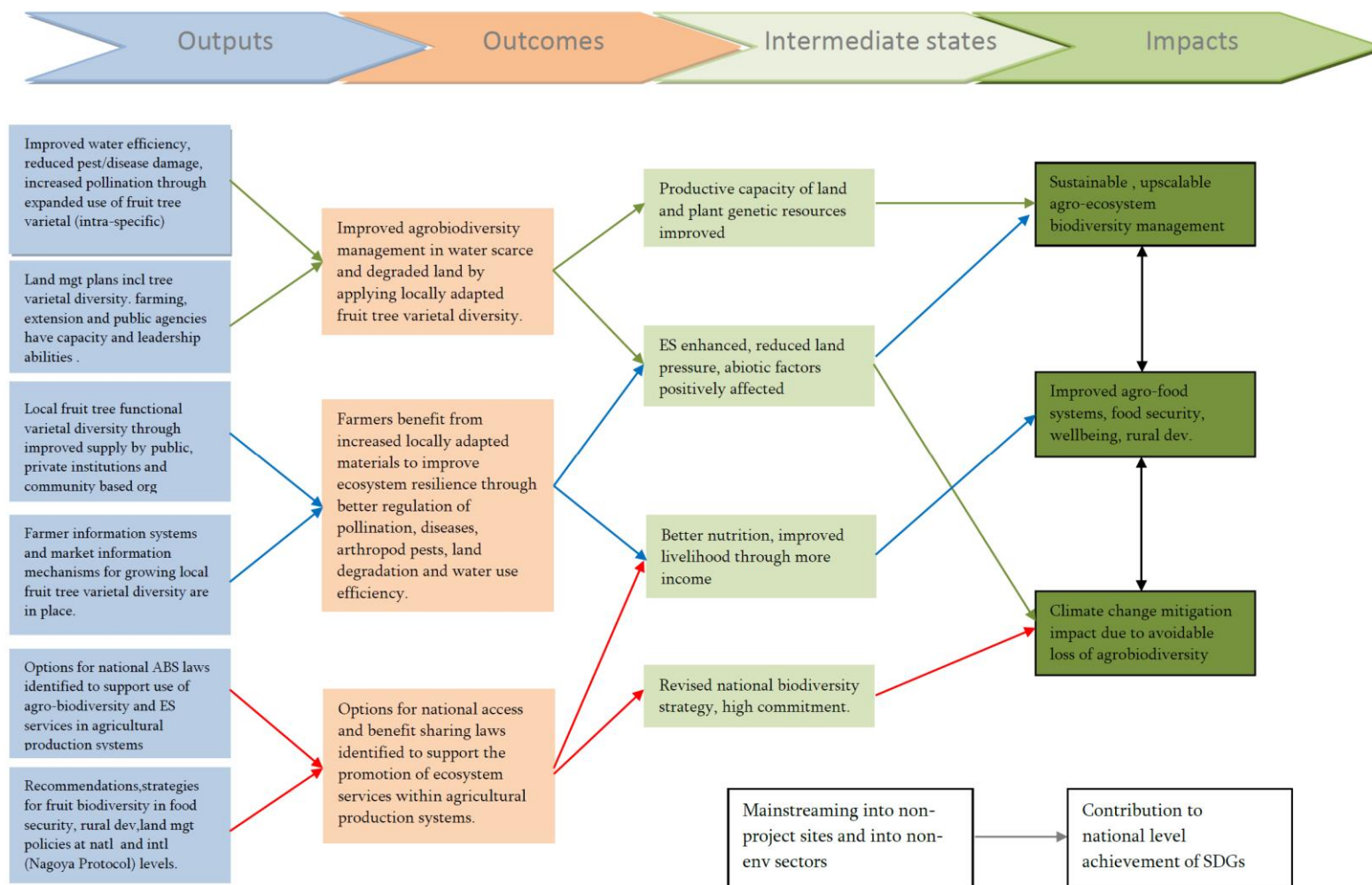
53. As this was a GEF5 project, a ToC exercise was not a requirement. From project documents currently made available to the evaluator the CEO Endorsement document of 15 July 2015 is closest to a ProDoc. The Annex describing the project's results framework could be used to construct a ToC.
54. The sequential logic of all outputs and the three main outcomes lend themselves to two causal pathways that accumulatively contribute to the Intermediate States and Impacts created in the new Reconstructed ToC diagram. This chain of results builds a foundation for the project's objective to mainstream the conservation and use of resilient local fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem services in degraded landscapes.
55. Additionally, two further causal pathways are proposed by the reviewer at this stage of Reconstructed ToC. One relates to nutrition and food security, and the other to mainstreaming agrobiodiversity into non-environmental sectors and into longer-term national development agenda such as green economy.
56. First about the two main causal pathways that could be extracted from the project's initial results framework (Annex in the Endorsement document) as well as subsequent yearly PIRs:
57. The first causal pathway is the aggregated effect of the interventions of all outputs under outcomes 1, 2 and 3 which leads to the IS of "Productive capacity of land and plant genetic resources improved " and the IS of "Ecosystem services enhanced, abiotic factors positively affected". The longer description would be that expanded use of intra-specific varieties (output 1.1.) in land management planning (output 1.2.) coupled with improved supply mechanism of planting materials (output 2.2.), and ABS law (output 3.2.) lead to the above ISs and contribute to longer-term Impact of "reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management" and Impact of "climate change mitigation due to avoidable loss of agrobiodiversity". However, these effects would not have happened if the following conditions were not met, namely:
  - D1- the government has designated 3000 ha of marginal land for the specific purpose of demonstrating ecosystem regulating services
  - D2 – an enabling environment created thanks to previous projects as "In situ/on farm Conservation and use of Agricultural Biodiversity in Central Asia"
  - A1 – economic and political stability along with stakeholders' commitment, interest, understanding and acceptance of promoting conservation, utilization and protection of traditional fruit tree varieties
  - A2 - capacities of key stakeholders and funding (state and donors, such as GEF) allow the adoption of new practices
58. The second causal pathway is the improvement of livelihood, food security, and rural development impact pathway. This pathway is achieved thanks to reaching an intermediate state of having amended and revised the national biodiversity strategy and involvement of policymakers, especially at the ministerial level, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Nature Protection. The outputs 3.1 and 3.2 namely identifying national ABS law options as well as drafting strategies to promote fruit tree biodiversity in food security and rural development add up logically to the component three, which is the creation of an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services. The results framework recognizes committed policy makers and partners as a key assumption.
59. An additional rather obvious causal path is a logical contribution of the preceding two outcomes and two components to outcome 3. The results that demonstrated the benefit



and value of functional agro-biodiversity at pilot sites also act as a necessary condition for component three (ABS mechanism and accession to Nagoya protocol) to be successful. Actually there is enough references in the project background and the results framework to rural development, nutrition, and well-being, and therefore adding a **causal pathway to food security and improved well-being** seems an obvious one.

60. With regard to assumptions, it is suggested two more aspects be added. One is on funding as sustainable channel of budgeting and funding will be required for proper mainstreaming. The other fact concerns the work force and brain drain. More rural people and especially young people are migrating to towns and even to other countries in pursuit of jobs and higher incomes. So therefore, the reviewer added these two aspects that could contribute to causal pathways at this stage of the reconstructed TOC.
61. The project team played a key role in bringing together and mobilising male and female farmers, research community, public and private district authorities, to representatives of line ministries in delivery of all outputs. The assumption at the beginning that many of these stakeholders were not fully convinced of the project's objectives were overcome through consultations, surveys, training and public awareness events. Most activities were delivered using multi-stakeholder participatory approach where all key stakeholders were engaged and actively contributed to the improvement of the final results.
62. The project introduced an innovative gender-oriented approach whereby selected women farmers mobilised other women in their communities that contributed to elevating their status from an informal and mostly unpaid background labour situation.

Diagram. Reconstructed Theory of Change



## V. REVIEW FINDINGS

### A. Strategic Relevance

**Finding 1.** The project is well aligned with relevant GEF, UNEP, UNDAF and SDG objectives. The main focus of the project on traditional local varieties of fruits and nuts is highly relevant in Uzbekistan's arid, semi-arid and rainfed arid mountainous territories. The local varieties are more resistant to drought risk and other climate change-induced variations.

**Finding 2.** In addition to its favorable environmental impact, an agrobiodiversity-friendly approach to farming is relevant for Uzbekistan's food security goals and complies with SDG indicator 2.5.1 (Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in either medium- or long-term conservation facilities) .

**Finding 3.** The Prodoc actively acknowledges the links, complementarity and the need with other recent, ongoing or planned interventions by UNEP or other organisations as IFAD, JICA, GIZ working in the project area or on the same problem/issue. Due to lack of clearly identified follow-up activities, it is not clear and difficult to assess to what extent actual cooperation happened.

63. The design clearly identified benefits to collaboration with GEF, UNEP, UNDAF and national strategies and programmes. However, this is not the case with other recent, ongoing or planned interventions of other organisations working in the project area or on the same problem/issue.

#### **Alignment to UNEP's Medium Term Strategy<sup>3</sup> (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

64. The project contributes to the PoW 2018-19 Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems, EA (a) "The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels". A considerable volume of training materials and guidelines/manuals for selection, cultivation, certification and marketing of locally adaptable fruit and nut tree varieties as well as for seeds and planting materials were introduced.

#### **Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities**

65. The project contributes primarily to GEF Strategic Objective 2, "Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors" and Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation" by introducing participatory and sustainable management practices that support traditional crop varieties that are resistant to water-scarcity, pests and diseases, that use natural pollinators and that can be cultivated in degraded and marginal environments.
66. A good number of national environment action plans, GEF, UNDP projects and reports were studied during the preparation period and highlighted in the Prodoc as complementary. However, no noticeable follow-up actions were taken during the implementation.

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<sup>3</sup> 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>.

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

67. The expected global environmental benefits of the project include: (i) conservation of globally important biodiversity adapted to water-scarce agricultural landscapes (ii) increased number of hectares in the target sites in the agro eco-regions of Uzbekistan with biodiversity-rich solutions as a substitute for external inputs in these globally important ecosystems, (iii) conservation of traditional fruit tree genetic diversity of apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*), grape (*Vitis vinifera*), pomegranate (*Punica granatum*), almond (*Amygdalus* sp.), pistachio (*Pistacia vera*), and apple (*Malus* sp.) and the ecosystem services they provide through a set of globally applicable technologies to increase the resilience of water-scarce agricultural ecosystems (iv) globally applicable, community-based conservation models and tools that support indigenous and local communities – as well as the scientific and development communities – to conserve and use local fruit tree biodiversity to regulate pests and diseases, increase pollination services, and improve soil conservation and water use efficiency in water-scarce production systems.
68. The adoption of the 2019 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) is a step forward for protection of biodiversity and implementation of the country's international commitments on biodiversity. The project is in line with Uzbekistan's contribution to the CBD's Strategic Plans. Most directly it contributes to the Aichi Target 7 on sustainable management of areas under agriculture and to the maintenance of the diversity of cultivated plants, species (Target 13); integrating biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies (Target 2); seeking to reduce pollution from excess nutrients (Target 8) and improving the provision of essential services from ecosystems (Target 14) of global significance. The project is fully in line with Uzbekistan's development of policies on Access and Benefit sharing.

## Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

69. The project was based on the main outputs and lessons learned from UNEP/GEF project "In situ/on farm conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity (horticultural crops and wild fruit species) in Central Asia", implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan in 2006-2013 and which focused on the exchange and provision of knowledge, methodologies and enabling policies to help farmers, institutes and local communities to ensure sustainable in situ/on-farm conservation and utilization of local diversity of apple, apricot, almond, grape, cherry-plum, mulberry, peach, pear, pomegranate, pistachio, sea-buckthorn and walnuts of Central Asia. The project resulted in policies that support the sustainable management of fruit species' genetic diversity (cultivated and wild resources), better knowledge about fruit crop diversity and its distribution, traditional knowledge of farmers on management practices, participation of farmers and local communities in conservation actions, and improved capacity of stakeholders to implement legal, scientific, and social aspects of fruit species' genetic diversity conservation. At the global level, the project continued collaboration and exchange of expertise with the UNEP/GEF project "Conservation and sustainable use of cultivated and wild tropical fruit diversity: promoting sustainable livelihoods, food security and ecosystem services".
70. The Prodoc referred also to a series of projects by other partners such as IFAD, JICA, GIZ and the Uzbek government, for example: the "Horticulture support project" funded by IFAD, the GEF-UNDP projects "Sustainable agriculture and climate change mitigation project" in the area of improving knowledge and skills of farmers and local communities in water use efficiency and agricultural productivity and "Reducing pressures on natural resources from competing land use in non-irrigated arid mountain, arid semi-desert and desert landscapes in Uzbekistan" in the area of development of integrated policy, legal and institutional framework for integrated landscape management.

71. The project team made linkages with the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research (www.Agrobiodiversityplatform.org), hosted by Bioversity International to mainstream project results to its global network of partners.

**Rating for Strategic Relevance: Satisfactory**

## B. Quality of Project Design

*RQ: Has the project design fully considered the 13 critical areas described in the Project Design Quality template <sup>4</sup>?*

**Finding 4. The project design is strong in terms of alignment and relevance to UNEP/GEF/Donor and global/national priorities and the linkages to those priorities are clearly described. All the steps necessary for preparing, planning and designing project documents and the many annexes as well as on-the-ground work to mobilise main stakeholders were carried out in a timely and qualitatively satisfactory manner. Overall the results framework has a good flow of logic, the outputs and outcomes were well defined, with baselines and indicator information.**

**Finding 5. In terms of mainstreaming, the sustainable management of production system of locally adapted fruit tree varieties is adequately integrated in the two selected project sites, and into local level land management and supply mechanism for quality planting materials. However, the bigger mainstreaming into non-project sites, and into non-environment sectors and national development agenda has hardly been touched. For longer-term sustainability and upscaling, this “mainstreaming” is crucial. An absence of a clear exit strategy and plans for measuring the gender-differentiated impact were weaker aspects.**

**Finding 6. The project design has been assessed along the 12 critical areas described in the PDQ template. These areas with their scores and weights are summarized in the below table, and the total weighted score shows that the overall quality of the project’s design is rated as .**

*Table 6. Summary table for project design quality assessment*

	Section	Rating <sup>5</sup>	Weighting	Total
A	Operating Context	5	0.4	0.2
B	Project Preparation	5	1.2	0.6
C	Strategic Relevance	5	0.8	0.4
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	0.8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	5	0.8	0.4
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	0.4	0.2
G	Partnerships	4	0.8	0.32
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	0.2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	0.2

<sup>4</sup> The PDQ completed template is annexed.

<sup>5</sup> Rating scores: 6=highly satisfactory, 5=satisfactory, 4=moderately satisfactory, 3=moderately unsatisfactory, 2=unsatisfactory, 1=highly unsatisfactory, 0=not applicable

J	Efficiency	5	0.8	0.4
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	5	0.8	0.4
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	3	1.2	0.36
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	4	0.4	0.16
<b>Total Weighted Score</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>4.64</b>

**Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory**

### C. Nature of the External Context

**Finding 7. The project has enjoyed a favourable external context against a backdrop of socio-political stability, and government’s commitment to crop diversification and organic agriculture.**

72. When in September 2016 the long-standing former President Islam Karimov passed away, there was a degree of apprehension within the country regarding its future, shared also among its neighbours and globally. Following a period of internal struggles, the Prime Minister under President Karimov was appointed President in December 2016. He was re-elected for another seven-year- term in July 2023. Uzbekistan has gone through a period of relative political and institutional stability and has been undertaking a series of reforms.
73. This process of reforms provides a good opportunity to integrating sustainable environmental measures into the national legal and policy framework. The fact that the government has recognised organic agriculture as a flagship subsector creates a favourable external environment for this project. A number of government decisions have been adopted to increase the production and export of fruits and vegetables. However, the changing mandates, roles, and staff of the reforming structures has undeniably also raised challenges. At the time of this review, the State Committee of Nature Protection has been merged with 2-3 other structures into the Ministry of Ecology, Environment Protection and Climate Change.
74. Uzbekistan is a party to UNCCD and is committed to the LDN (Land Degradation Neutrality) targets, creating a favourable conditions for potential co-benefit, since the project targets arid, semi-desert and non-irrigated arid mountain areas .

**Rating for Nature of the external context: Highly favourable**

### D. Effectiveness

#### Availability of Outputs

**Finding 8. The project delivered most outputs as per its initial plan in terms of quality and quantity. The outputs were made available to the intended beneficiaries in time to allow high levels of use, bar some delays during the COVID pandemic. Progress reports attest fully satisfactory completion of the outputs.**

**Finding 9. Targeted stakeholders for all key interventions were well engaged in the preparation and delivery of the outputs. Some of the highlights of the outputs are detailed below. As per progress reports and the country visit by the reviewer, it is clear that the project team successfully mobilised stakeholders around a participatory partnership approach for the key activities and outputs.**

75. The considerable efforts deployed by national partners to promote local crop diversity into the production system and to ensure the recognition of farmers' role in maintaining this diversity lead to a milestone with the issue and publication of Government Resolution No. 504 on "Measures to restore local crop varieties with rare traits and features that are endangered, and organization of their seed supply" by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on 28 August 2020. The Resolution also highlights the need for patenting of farmer's crop varieties.

**Table 7 . Increasing the diversity of propagated varieties of target crops- apple and apricot at the project sites**

Project site	Number of varieties of propagated target crops					
	Apple			Apricot		
	2016 year	2020 year	in %	2016 year	2020 year	in %
Northern project site	26	42	162	17	24	141
Southern project area	13	19	146	13	19	146

**Table 8 . Increasing the diversity of propagated varieties of target crops - grapes and pomegranates at the project sites**

Project site	Number of varieties of propagated target crops					
	grapes			pomegranate		
	2016	2020	in %	2016	2020	in %
Northern project site	14	19	136	4	5	125
Southern project site	9	14	155	12	15	125

76. Thanks to the joint effort of farmers, researchers, local communities and land sector planners, Land management plans of 5 communities in the South project sites and 4 communities in the North project sites were reviewed leading to improved land use plans being submitted to the Community and District authorities and State Land Resources Management and Cadastre Agency. Unplanned grazing, water and wind factors were revealed as the main reasons for the soil erosion.

77. Improved land management plans including the use of fruit tree varietal diversity allowed the rehabilitation of degraded lands. A greater diversity of fruit tree species that are more resistant to drought, pests and diseases enabled farmers in water-scarce environments to expand the area to more marginal or degraded lands. The canopy and root systems of perennial fruit trees can significantly reduce the effects of wind and water erosion of the

soil, improve the penetration and retention of rainwater, and contribute to the restoration of organic matter, structure, and fertility of degraded soils.

78. A participatory and multi-stakeholder approach was applied in supporting male and female farmers in application of innovative agricultural technologies in growing traditional and new varieties of target nut and fruit tree crops, conservation of local agrobiodiversity and land restoration. Throughout the project they were engaged in various horticulture management practices. Flowing from these efforts a number of decisions were agreed by the stakeholders including:

- a need to strengthen collaboration among farmers and national research institutes in development of innovation technologies and new fruit tree varieties for sustainable horticulture production and use of soil and water resources.
- to request Farmers' Council to assist farmers in getting access to land resources and planting material of fruit and nut tree crops.
- to request community authorities to select male and female community members who are willing to establish orchards in degraded lands while receiving leadership skills development with a view to their lobbying on behalf of farmer and other community interests with regard to the restoration of degraded lands.



79. As a result of the establishment of nurseries ( 24 in the North project site and 38 in the South project site) and demonstration plots, 47 varieties of planting materials in the South project site and 50 varieties in the North project site were produced. Nine demonstration plots in farmers' orchards served as a source of grafting material of 26 varieties of apple, 13 varieties of apricot, 11 varieties of grape, 8 varieties of pomegranate and 5 varieties and hybrids of almond. Four Diversity Fairs of Planting Materials were organized. Based on field findings, for the first time in Uzbekistan, Standards for Cuttings and Saplings of Pomegranate were developed and submitted to the Agency on Standardization, Metrology and Certification for review and approval.



80. The School of Young Horticulturists in Kizilolma and Karabog communities in the South project site engaged local youth in agrobiodiversity conservation actions and efficient use of land and water resources. . Five trainings events for farmers on quality standards and procedure for certification of planting material and two training events on quality standards and certification procedure for fruit tree products were organized.



Conducting classes with participants of the "Young Gardener" circle

81. To increase public awareness on ABS issues, two brochures have been developed, published and distributed: "ABS and agrobiodiversity" and "Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization". A training seminar was organized on ABS and 26 representatives of the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Farmers' Council, universities and research institutes took part in the seminar.

**Table 9. Achievement of outputs table**

Planned outputs	Reported results as per Project Final	Comments , observations by the reviewer
<b>Comp. 1, outcome 1</b>		
1.1 Expanded use of fruit tree varietal (intra-specific) diversity in adverse and degrade landscapes to improve water use efficiency, reduce pest and disease damage, and increase pollination levels	<p>As of January 1, 2021, the area of the gardens has increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern project area by 56% (apple - 45%, apricot -39%, grapes - 180% and pomegranate - 162%.</li> <li>Southern project site by 300%.</li> </ul> <p>(Statistic data collected in March-April 2021)</p>	Thus the initial target of 'increase in areas by 20% ' was well surpassed.
1.2 Land management plans for water-scarce and degraded land, which include the use fruit tree varietal diversity, are developed and implemented and farming communities, extension and public government organizations have the capacity and leadership abilities to carry them out	Improved land management plans were provided for five communities in the South project site and four communities in the North project site focused on the use of local diversity of nut and fruit tree crops	Besides farmers and researchers, these land management plans were developed in consultation with local communities and with input from the specialists of state land resources management and cadastre agencies. This is a good example of mainstreaming into another sector

<p>1.3 Increased number of varieties of target fruit crops with economically valuable traits in gardens and land management plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southern project area by 34% (apple tree - 23%, apricot - 38%, grapes - 56% and pomegranate - 25%).</li> <li>Northern project area - by 30% (apple tree - 17%, apricot - 33%, grapes - 71% and pomegranate - 33%).</li> </ul> <p>(Data from 12 FGDs in March-April 2021)</p> <p>Land use plans indicating degraded lands where orchards and vineyards can be grown have been developed for 9 villages covered by the project and submitted to district khokimiyats in 2020.</p>	<p>Thanks to interventions of the project, smallholder farms have played an important role in diversifying agricultural production, which contributes to conservation efforts for these species with special functional traits, to enhanced ecosystem services in degraded lands and food security.</p> <p>As a result of all these efforts, a number of decisions were agreed by the stakeholders, including a need to strengthen collaboration among farmers and national research institutes, and request farmers' councils to assist farmers in getting access to land resources and planting materials. Local authorities became aware of the mutual benefits and supported more readily in selecting male and female community members who were willing to establish orchards in degraded lands.</p>
<p><b>Comp. 2, outcome 2</b></p>		
<p>2.1 Local fruit tree functional varietal diversity is available and accessible to farmers to use in their production systems.</p>	<p>Based on the collected long-term field data, Catalogues of varieties were published for each project site with data on agromorphological and technical assessment of varieties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southern project site - 14 varieties and 8 forms of apple trees, 24 varieties of apricots, 14 varieties of grapes, 7 varieties of pomegranates, 6 varieties and 24 forms of almonds and 4 varieties of pistachios.</li> <li>Northern project area - 29 varieties of apple trees, 25 varieties of apricots, 12 varieties of grapes and 4 varieties of pomegranates.</li> </ul> <p>A portfolio of varieties with a description of economically valuable traits has been published:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Southern project area - 38 varieties of apple and apricot. pomegranate, grapes, almonds and pistachios with economically valuable signs of resistance to drought, heat, winter frosts and diseases.</li> <li>Northern project area - 36 varieties of apple and apricot. Pomegranate and grapes with economically valuable signs</li> </ul>	<p>This result attests to the mutually beneficial partnership between scientific and farmers communities.</p> <p>An example of mainstreaming was the fact that a list of local varieties and forms of target fruit crops (58 varieties and forms) with economically valuable traits of resistance to unfavourable environmental conditions in project areas has been developed and submitted to the State Commission for Variety Testing for their inclusion in the State Register of zoned varieties of agricultural crops.</p>

	of resistance to drought, salinity, pests and diseases.	
2.2 Farmer information systems and market information mechanisms for growing local fruit tree varietal diversity are in place.	<p>There is a system of 59 community, private and public nurseries that produces and supplies planting material for 67 varieties of target fruit and nut crops in the Southern project area and 56 varieties of target fruit crops in the Northern project area.</p> <p>The number of varieties of target fruit crops with economically valuable traits increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern project area by 41% (apple tree - 42%, apricot - 46%, grapes - 56% and pomegranate - 41%).</li> <li>• Northern project area by 25% (apple tree - by 29%, apricot - by 20%, grapes - by 27% and pomegranate - by 25%.)</li> </ul> <p><i>(Data from 10 focus groups and 59 households in March-April 2021)</i></p> <p>Nurseries of 5 state research institutes located on project sites propagate varieties of target fruit crops with economically valuable traits and supply farmers with seedlings of local varieties of apple (7), apricot (7), grapes (10) and pomegranate (3).</p>	<p>Farmers' skills, and the capacities of local communities and extension services (farmers union's staff and universities) in the establishment and sustainable running of fruit tree nurseries and orchards, were improved as the result of several training events organised by the project.</p> <p>However, it is not clear how this will be institutionalised further without regular repeats of these workshops and training events.</p> <p>Continued monitoring is desirable to document if targeted communities will actually continue using the participatory methodology or if it might simply peter out without external funding.</p>
<b>Comp. 3, outcome 3</b>		
3.1 Options for national access and benefit sharing (ABS) laws identified to support the promotion of ecosystem services within agricultural production systems.	<p>To increase public awareness on ABS issues, 2 brochures have been developed, published and distributed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "ABS and agrobiodiversity"</li> <li>• "Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization".</li> </ul> <p>On December 9, 2021, a training seminar was organized with the participation of an international consultant on ABS. 26 representatives of the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Farmers' Council, universities and research institutes took part in the seminar.</p>	<p>A higher level result of this intervention was the fact that ratification of the Nagoya Protocol was included in the Roadmap for 2022-2024 Environmental protection program approved by the government .</p>
3.2 Recommendations and strategies drafted that promote diversified fruit tree biodiversity in	<p>A proposal was developed and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of</p>	<p>It is important not to lose momentum created by the project and revisit in-situ/on-farm and ex-</p>

<p>food security, rural development and land management policies at national (Biodiversity strategy) and international (Nagoya Protocol) levels</p>	<p>Innovation and the Academy of Sciences of the republic to create a National Coordination Council for Agrobiodiversity and the development of a National Program for the Conservation of Agrobiodiversity.</p>	<p>situ management of agrobiodiversity in the country.  Further follow-up is required, e.g. by the Central Asian subregional UNEP Office .</p>
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## Achievement of Project Outcomes

**Finding 10. Despite delays due to the COVID period lockdown, the intended outcomes, thus most of the intermediate states (see section IV. Theory of Change) were achieved. The main assumptions with regard to political stability, commitment, interest and capacity of key stakeholders to allow progress from project outputs to outcomes could hold in most cases.**

**Finding 11. The main drivers to support transition from outputs to project outcomes were in place at the outset. Namely: a) around 3000 ha of land was made available for the specific purpose of promoting conservation, utilization and protection of traditional fruit tree varieties and b). overall enabling environment was created thanks to previous projects such as UNEP/GEF project “In situ/on farm conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity (horticultural crops and wild fruit species) in Central Asia” from 2006 to 2013.**

82. The first Outcome focused on improving agrobiodiversity management in water-scarce and degraded land by expanding the cultivation of locally adapted, fruit-tree varietal diversity. The second Outcome essentially concerned smallholder farmer communities benefitting from having increased availability of locally adapted materials to improve ecosystem resilience through better regulation of pollination service levels, control of diseases and arthropod pests, and water use efficiency.
83. The assumptions of “various stakeholders’ acceptance and understanding of the role of fruit tree” and “their active participation and support in the joint activities” could hold and lead to the achievement of the Intermediary State of “Productive capacity of land and plant genetic resources improved “ and the IS of “Ecosystem services enhanced, abiotic factors positively affected”.



*The 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> year comparison of farmer Pardaev’s rainfed almond plot in Karabog village*

84. A key illustration of this assumption is the participatory approach and close partnership between farmers, researchers, training centres and universities around field work, testing, and the various training and capacity building events that did indeed take place. Thanks to cataloguing, registration and policy-influencing documents, the management and conservation of traditional varieties could be demonstrated as an appropriate response to reducing pressure on land. The functional traits as tolerance to drought, high and low temperature, soil salinity, resistance to pest and diseases could be proven. Furthermore, market information as ripening season, yielding, type of use, suitability for transportation to long distances were documented.
85. The assumption of commitment and partners having the capacity to use the tools offered was illustrated by the example of an improved supply of quality planting materials. Thanks to the establishment of nurseries and demonstration plots, the number, quality and supply channel of planting materials that are locally available were markedly improved. District authorities and land sector planners engagement in project activities enhanced farmers' capacity and leadership skills and ensured their further commitment to agrobiodiversity approaches in land use.
86. The assumption of committed policy makers and partners did hold for Outcome 3 leading to the elaboration of options for national access and benefit sharing laws to support the promotion of ecosystem services within agricultural production systems. This is a much welcome move when implemented it would facilitate on a broader scale the sustainable conservation of traditional fruit tree varieties and benefit the custodians of this system.

#### **Achievement of Likelihood of Impact**

**Finding 12 . As described most outputs and outcomes achieved the intended results. Additionally, the intermediate states could by and large be reached as many of the drivers and assumptions were held.**

87. The project interventions contributed to some extent to longer-term impacts as per the reconstructed ToC, namely the impact of "reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management" and the impact of "climate change mitigation due to avoidable loss of agrobiodiversity". However, the project could not address the broader-scale mainstreaming, namely upscaling into non-project sites and mainstreaming into non-environment sectors that impact sustainable development. The main reason for the latter is the overly ambitious initial goal-setting for this project's scope.
88. The intensive agricultural production system that focuses on fewer varietal diversity and mono-cropping is still the dominant approach in the country. Without upscaling the project results nationwide, the project's impact remains limited to that of a successful pilot project in the area of fruit tree biodiversity in water-scarce agricultural production systems.
89. The project mobilized the engagement of female farmers and youth quite successfully as described in the sections concerning stakeholders participation. As no socio-economic analysis was carried out, it is difficult to determine if the project had a longer-lasting impact on improving the status of women and youth in the management of fruit and nut tree farming overall.

**Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory**

## E. Financial Management

### Adherence to UNEP’s Financial Policies and Procedures

90. The Bioversity International has been responsible for overall financial management of the project. It has ensured timely submissions of quarterly, bi-annual and annual financial reports as per workplans and budgets to UNEP. Bioversity International (IPGRI) as the international executing agency of the project reported on a quarterly basis all expenditures with accompanying detailed explanations. Cash advance requests with detailed explanations were done on a needs-based basis and cleared by the MNP. All expenditures were within the approved annual budget. Annually from 2016 through 2021, Armenia’s pledged grant amount (1,236) was included in the Exhibit 2 in the independent yearly global “Audited financial statements” report of Bioversity International by PWC.

### Completeness of Financial Information

91. A major timing difference occurred at the start of the project implementation. This was caused by the delay (almost one year) in obtaining the needed official registration of the grant from the Uzbekistan authorities. As per interview with the national project coordinator and documentations provided by UNEP FMO, except a few delays in receiving the funds, all of the following were done in a timely and satisfactory manner:

- Approval and disbursement of cash advances to partners
- Regular analysis of actual expenditure against budget and workplan
- Timely submission of regular expenditure reports (six-monthly and annual)
- Expenditure was within the approved annual budget. Yearly and timely budget reviews were submitted and approved without affecting the total budgeted amounts.
- High level project budget (costs) for secured and unsecured funds.
- High level project budget by funding source(s) for secured and unsecured funds.
- Disbursement (Funds Transfer) document from funding source(s) to UNEP.
- Project expenditure sheet (to-date).
- Detailed project budget for secured funds.
- Proof/report of delivery of in-kind contributions.
- Partner legal agreements and documentation for all amendments exist.

**Table 10 : Original budget and revised budget figures<sup>6</sup>**

	Original budget (CEO Endorsement 2015 )	Revised budget BR in 2018	Revised budget in 2021-2022	Difference 2018 and 2022 (%)
Personnel	301,747	301,747	520,442	+ 72,4

<sup>6</sup> UNEP annual budget review excel sheets

Sub-contracts	582,064	606,497	126,615	- 79,1
Training	130,500	140,500	113,662	- 19,1
Equipment and premises	55,500	28,567	16,054	- 43,8
Miscellaneous	166,534	158,534	106,469	- 32,8
Total	1,235,845	1,235,845	1,235,845	

92. As per approved budget reviews, the above differences occurred mainly due to the following reasons: personnel cost increase to cover time of Bioversity Project Coordinator who contributed advanced technical expertise, engagement of an international legal/policy expert in the project. Most savings occurred due to reduced number of group events, reduced number of inside and overseas travel caused by COVID-19 lockdown as well as due to co-financing provided by national agency in plant disease expertise.

#### **Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff**

93. Based on the yearly budget approved by the National Coordinating Committee, all quarterly expenditure was agreed with Bioversity International. The project staff prepared payment requests which were signed by the National Project Coordinator and the National Executing Agency and submitted to Bioversity International. Once the request were approved by Bioversity International, ICARDA office in Uzbekistan which hosts the Bioversity's office in Uzbekistan disbursed the project's funds to national executing agency. The finance department of Bioversity International was in regular contact with the FMO in UNEP and solved any outstanding issues.

**Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory**

#### **F. Efficiency**

94. Due to the Covid pandemic, a non-cost extension until 31 December 2020 was requested and approved. Between March and August 2020, when the government enforced the lockdown measures, the project team worked on project's publications, namely six technical fliers, two technical manuals and a textbook. During the 'non-trip' period the project team maintained the communication with key farmers and local focal points in the project sites via phone and continued providing consultancy to the farmers.

95. The project applied cost-effective measures in the following ways: expertise and skills of participants and partners from the environment, agriculture, soil conservation and land management sectors ensured that the agro-biodiversity agenda was addressed in ways that reflect the experience, interests and concerns of a wide range of stakeholders. The involvement of different ministries, departments and research institutes maximized the technical cost effectiveness of the activities. Existing plots, orchards, nurseries in the two selected eco-regions, local administrative institutional mechanisms and international expertise available within the EA was fully utilised.

**Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory**

## G. Monitoring and Reporting

### Monitoring Design and Budgeting

96. As per progress reports, the project team consistently followed monitoring and evaluation plans. Day-to-day project monitoring was the responsibility of the project management team but other project partners will have responsibilities to collect specific information to track the indicators. The project progress was reviewed at national technical meetings and PSC meetings with participation of all stakeholders groups. Local communities were involved in the evaluation of the project's progress at the site meetings organized by the national project team during field visits to the sites. National partners and stakeholders participated the semi-annual reviews of the project progress.
97. A detailed M&E plan was developed at the outset of the project. The project's Results Framework presented in Annex A included SMART indicators for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of-project targets. These indicators along with the key deliverables and benchmarks were included in Annex G and used as the main tool for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results were being achieved. The means of verification and the costs associated with obtaining the information to track the indicators were given in the costed M&E Plan. Other M&E related costs such as for the mid-term and terminal reviews were integrated in the project evaluation budget. The direct costs of reviews and evaluations will be charged against the project evaluation budget.

### Monitoring of Project Implementation

98. From progress report and discussions with the project team, it is evident that the initial monitoring and workplans were updated as necessary and followed succinctly. The baseline information, mid-term and end targets facilitated the process of monitoring the implementation. Gender- disaggregated data was collected for farmer beneficiaries and major events such training seminars and round-tables. The Site Coordinators from the two selected agro eco-regions have been in regular contact with the project team and solved any problems as they arose. The implementation progress was also discussed at the TAC meetings and reviewed by the PSC. The UNEP Task Manager was regularly updated. In a nutshell, the monitoring was done in a consultative and participatory manner. The Project Implementation Reviews did not mention any particular issues that needed additional measures.

### Project Reporting

99. The progress reports of 2018, 2019 and 2020 contained a thorough reporting of all outputs, activities and outcomes. Project Steering Committee received periodic reports on progress and made recommendations to UNEP concerning the need to revise any aspects of the Results Framework or the M&E plan. Project oversight to ensure that the project meets UNEP and GEF policies and procedures has been the responsibility of the Task Manager in UNEP-GEF. The Task Manager also reviewed the quality of draft project outputs, provided feedback to the project partners. The weak aspect of the overall reporting is absence of disaggregated data by vulnerable/marginalised groups, including gender for many of the outputs, although as mentioned above the number of female farmer beneficiaries and participants in major events as training and round-table meetings.

**Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:** **Satisfactory**



## H. Sustainability

### Socio-political Sustainability

**Finding 13. Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev since 2016 won another seven -year term in the July 2023 election. The government pledged to continue Uzbekistan 2030, a national development plan in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, which all bodes for likely continued socio-political stability in the country.**

100. As mentioned above under C. Nature of external context and D. Effectiveness, the assumptions for political stability, and interest and commitment of decision makers and other key players held, and contributed positively to the achievement of outcomes.

### Financial Sustainability

**Finding 14. The income and income sources of smallholder farmers, nurseries and extension service agents have increased thank to the project interventions, and the likelihood that they will continue investing in sustainable farming practices of locally adapted fruit and nut tree diversity is relatively good. The outputs that lead to government decisions and decrees are likely to get some funding from the state budget. However, the financial stability of most outcomes will be dependent on external donors' continued funding. Upscaling and mainstreaming into the wider economic sectors will require additional funding altogether.**

101. The assumption that without financial sustainability the project's impact into medium-and-longer-term is unlikely to be kept, still holds. Therefore, securing a reliable funding source, for instance through partnership and joint programmes (e.g. LDN programmes) is recommendable.

### Institutional Sustainability

**Finding 15. Due to the successful achievement of key outcomes, through country visit observation and discussions there is evidence that the agrobiodiversity approach has benefitted institutions, public and private, at the communities and provincial level. The overall stable institutional structure, especially those key institutions that the project team has collaborated with closely, continues.**

102. The project site farmers' communities, nurseries and demonstration plots are likely to build on the project results and expand their business to a certain extent. The increase in income is meanwhile an incentive to stay in the field of organic agriculture. The academic and scientific community is highly committed to expanding the field work, assessments and research in crop diversity and plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, but the allocated budget from the state is not sufficient to conduct comprehensive and continuous research in this domain.
103. The knowledge management and capacity building materials and know-how are kept at the Training Centres located near the pilot sites. Demonstration orchards will likely to continue their activities into the medium-term.
104. The national level interventions on policy and legislation, such as the ABS, is expected to be adopted in due course, however their enforcement and implementation are subject to mandates and roles of different line ministries and their sub-national level institutions. Therefore the sustainability of the impact of the project is subject to further reforms, capacities and funding affecting these institutions.

**Rating for Sustainability: Satisfactory**

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

### **Preparation and Readiness**

**Finding 16. Project preparation and readiness were carried out fully satisfactorily. Minor improvements were made after the approval, such as further baseline information gathering. However, detailed plans to follow up coordination with other similar projects and initiatives to prepare an exit strategy, as well as measuring the impact on women and youth, were not elaborated.**

105. An informal coordination team involving Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, State Committee of Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, research institutes of Academy of Sciences, Farmers' Association, Bioversity International and UNEP was established during the preparation for this project to oversee project preparation and ensure full participation of stakeholders during this process. The project development team ensured that all relevant stakeholders were consulted and involved in the development of the project proposal. Consultations with stakeholders were made on a regular manner. Two workshops with stakeholders were organized during the project preparation stage to consult, generate information, validate the approach and develop stakeholders' partnership strategy for implementation of the project. In addition, separate consultation and discussion were organized with stakeholders to develop co-financing plan and ensure its implementation. The most importantly consultation with local communities at the project sites were undertaken. These consultations utilized the already established Multifunctional Site Committees (MSC) and Coordination Committees (CC) mechanisms that were developed within the UNEP-GEF project "In situ/on farm conservation and use of agro-biodiversity in Central Asia".
106. Sites were selected by the executing organizations and their partners because of (i) high intra and inter specific diversity of the target crops; (ii) agroecological diversity including altitude, aspect, land type, soil type, vegetation, availability of irrigation; (iii) the importance of target crops for food security and overall livelihood strategy of the households in the community; (iv) logistics, as high altitude sites have operational constraints in terms of costs, access, time and facilities, thus, project sites were selected where partner institutions already have their presence in the districts; and (v) the level of community interest.

### **Quality of Project Management and Supervision**

**Finding 17. The project was professionally managed by the executing agency Bioversity International, as well as the Uzbek Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Winemaking and a dedicated national project team following agreed-upon work plans. The working relations were highly collegial and based on good team spirit.**

**Finding 18. The project supervision was provided by the PSC, the Site Coordination Committees and the Technical Advisory Committee. Both Bioversity International and UNEP backstopping was sought when needed and was appreciated by the project team and national partners. The support and missions completed by the task manager were greatly welcomed.**

107. The PSC was be responsible for taking decisions about the implementation of the project. The PSC fulfilled its functions to evaluate the overall progress of the project relative to the outputs and milestones expected, to provide strategic direction for the implementation of the project and to guarantee the necessary inter-institutional

coordination. Reports and recommendations of all PSC meetings, and other relevant project meetings, were prepared and disseminated in a timely manner. The PMU provided excellent secretariat support to the PSC, both in technical substance and administrative matters.

108. The members of the Site Coordination Committees role was essential in day-to-day project management in regular consultation with the PMU. The working relations between the PMU with the Site Coordination Officers and the PSC was constructive and was managed very well by the members of the project team. The PSC would play a proactive role in mainstreaming good practices and be conducive to policy support in the country. All PSC members will undertake to disseminate information about the project and its outputs through their various networks, conferences, meetings and other relevant consultations. The PSC will be chaired by National Executing Agency.

### **Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation**

**Finding 19. The project team identified all key project partners at the design stage and clearly identified their contribution and expected roles for the delivery of various outputs and activities. From documentation it is clear that the project team very closely engaged and fully involved project partner agencies in planning, in the implementation of activities and in sharing of results.**

109. As a result of the multi-stakeholder participatory approach, a number of decisions were agreed by the stakeholders : their commitment to strengthen collaboration among farmers and national research institutes; closer cooperation with farmers councils to better access land resources and planting materials; proactive support by community authorities in establishing orchards in degraded lands by individual farmers; improved coordination between agriculture and environment sectors that lacked effective coordination at the outset of the project . Thanks to outreach activities, women farmers and youth were fully engaged in all key interventions in the two selected agro-ecoregions.
110. The national and international scientific community and their research and breeding programs benefitted from access to germplasm of target fruit crops, the properties of which have been accurately documented through field characterization and the knowledge collected from the farmers and nurseries in the two selected project sites.
111. On a less positive note, there was somewhat passive cooperation and communication with partners engaged in similar initiatives and projects, limited to posting information on websites and participation in some meetings and training events.
112. The mainstreaming into non-project sites and other sectors was initially intended in the endorsement document. Since this upscaling did not take place, outreach to a wider circle of stakeholders ( e.g. the UN RC platform, or the national coordinating platforms on SDGs) was not realized.

### **Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality**

**Finding 20. Some attention was devoted to both gender and youth aspects during the project design and implementation stages. However, there is no data available to determine longer-term effect and to what extent their status has improved thanks to project interventions.**

113. Selected women farmers mobilised other women farmers in the community which was well received and appreciated by the communities in the project sites. Around 30% of workshops and round table discussions were women participants. The School of Young Horticulturists was established in Kizilolma and Karabog communities in the South

project site to engage local youth in agrobiodiversity conservation actions and the efficient use of land and water resources.



*“Young gardener”*

114. Participatory and partnership approaches used in the project, as well as capacity building events on leadership skills empowered women and youth groups and boosted their knowledge, self-confidence and skills in contacting various extension service agencies and in better dealing with bureaucracy besides improving their sustainable farming practices. Social inclusion and improved incomes were certainly some of the positive aspects of the project.



*Training in almond and pistachio budding in the villages of Shelkan and Karabog*

115. The prodoc correctly identified the need to investigate “linkages among all actors involved in agricultural production, land and water resources management and agrobiodiversity maintenance at local and national levels” from a gender perspective. But this assessment was not carried out.

### **Environmental and Social Safeguards**

**Finding 21. UNEP/GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist was completed at the outset of the project implementation, and no particular high risk was identified.**

**No substantial or high risks were identified during subsequent PIRs that required specific interventions.**

116. By its very nature the project targeted species that can grow in degraded, arid land, and using little inputs thus the project had no or minimal negative environmental footprint and/or social impact.
117. The project had both environmental and social positive impact. It contributed to restoring soil and ecosystem services in degraded land. The main beneficiaries of the two agro eco-regions benefitted from increased productivity as the result of using rich diversity of crops and planting materials and as results improved their social status and incomes.

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

**Finding 22. The objective of the project is well aligned with the country's goals in the area of sustainable management of environmental resources and climate change commitments. The active engagement of national partners and stakeholders in the implementation of all the project activities is a clear sign of their commitment to the project and by extension of country ownership. However, critical government entities' continued interest and commitment to sustaining the results into the longer-term would require continued support and technical assistance from international donors and partners.**

118. The fragmentation of mandates and responsibilities coupled with insufficient coordination among vertical and horizontal administrative structures are still an impediment for a comprehensive approach to the agricultural production systems and by extension to country driven-ness. The latest EPR for Uzbekistan refers to organic agriculture as a "pillar to help Uzbekistan progress towards sustainable agricultural practices" and notes that the legal framework for organic agriculture is largely lacking.
119. Despite quite extensive involvement of key stakeholders in all the stages, starting from project preparation to delivering activities/services, as well as high-level commitment and support, the reviewer is of the opinion that country ownership and driven-ness has still a way to go and would benefit from further analysis.

### **Communication and Public Awareness**

**Finding 23. Communication and learning between the project partners and beneficiaries were achieved through many round tables, fairs and through participatory field work.**

**Finding 24. Targeted knowledge and communication products were widely disseminated among relevant stakeholders and the general public.**

120. Project outputs and materials were disseminated in the form of technical fliers and posters. PA materials such as videos, stories, TV and radio interviews were produced and diversity fairs organized. The project team disseminated the gathered knowledge through three research papers published in proceedings of national on-line scientific conferences.
121. Web-portal <http://centralasia.bioversityinternational.org> established within Regional UNEP-GEF/Bioversity project "In situ/on farm conservation and use of agrobiodiversity (fruit trees and wild fruit species" in Central Asia" (2006-2013) was used as a mechanism for dissemination of results of the project and lessons learnt as well as technical and public awareness products developed by the project. The project's

approaches and methodologies were shared with other international projects on a regular basis through the project's web-portal.

122. Project team contributed to proceedings of on-line International Scientific and Practical Conference "Study, development, conservation and prospects of effective use of biodiversity of the genetic resources of cotton and other crops" organized by Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Experimental Plant Biology on 20-21 October 2020 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

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

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. Conclusions

123. Uzbekistan boasts a rich diversity of natural and cultivated fruit crops that are resistant to drought, salinity, pests and diseases as well as climate-induced impacts. Although this diversity is recognized by the government and supported through various initiatives, the country still has a way to go to fully utilize the potential of traditional fruit crops for improved ecosystems, food security and exports.
124. Some of the key drivers that influenced the successful implementation of this project were: a). a previous Central Asian regional UNEP-GEF project that addressed some fundamental issues relating to the local diversity of fruit crops b). the favourable disposition of the government to crop diversity, organic agriculture, and to socio-political stability c). relatively easy access to and availability of land plots (e.g. the 3000 ha obtained for this project) thanks to land sector's and local government's measures in this area.
125. Building on the in-situ, on-farm project for Central Asia, this project targeted two agro eco-regions, one in the South, and one in the North to help farmers adapt their farming practices to a range of local adaptive varieties with a view to their then selecting what those that are best suited to their particular land type and agricultural conditions. The project used a three-pronged approach: by empowering farmers at the grassroots level in the sustainable management of fruit-tree production; by supporting a supply chain approach for the obtaining of quality planting materials, and; by facilitating national-level policy and legal work in the area of ABS. The following are some of the highlighted project achievements:
126. The considerable efforts deployed by national partners to promote local crop diversity into the production system and to ensure the recognition of farmers' role in maintaining this diversity was ultimately rewarded with the issue and publication of Government Resolution No. 504 on "Measures to restore local crop varieties with rare traits and features that are endangered, and organization of their seed supply" by the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on 28 August 2020. The Resolution also highlights the need for the patenting of farmer's crop varieties.
127. Improved land management plans were provided for five communities in the South project site and for four communities in the North project site focused on the application of local diversity to nut and fruit tree crops. These land management plans were developed in consultation with local communities and with input from the specialists of state land resources management and cadastre agencies. This is a good example of mainstreaming into another sector.
128. As a result of the establishment of nurseries (24 in the North project site and 38 in the South project site) and demonstration plots, 47 varieties of planting materials in the South project site and 50 varieties in the North project site were produced. Nine demonstration plots in farmers' orchards served as a source of grafting material for 26 varieties of apple, 13 varieties of apricot, 11 varieties of grape, 8 varieties of pomegranate and 5 varieties and hybrids of almond. Four Diversity Fairs of Planting Materials were organized. Based on field findings, for the first time in Uzbekistan, Standards for Cuttings and Saplings of Pomegranate were developed and submitted to the Agency on Standardization, Metrology and Certification for review and approval.
129. The proposal to ratify the Nagoya Protocol was included in the Roadmap for the 2022-2024 Environmental Protection Programme approved by the government .

130. The aggregated effect of the interventions lead to the intermediate states of improved productive capacity of land and plant genetic resources; enhanced ecosystem services; improved livelihood and revised national strategy.
131. Less strong aspects included the absence of clear institutionalization, no longer-term sustainability strategy nor socio-economic assessment at the project outset, all of which could have allowed one to measure the impact of the project on gender and youth as well as in terms of medium-to-longer term sustainability. Upscaling and replicating the project results beyond the pilot sites was an overambitious goal. These weaker aspects are partly due to project design and planning mistakes and partly due to insufficient funding.
132. The project contributed to achieving the impact of “reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management”.
133. The direct beneficiaries , namely male and female farmers and youth, felt empowered thanks to the knowledge gained and tools provided, to not only sustainably manage fruit crop diversity but also in their new-found ability to better manage relations with local authorities relative to accessing services, counselling and the provision of equipment and materials.
134. The assumptions of low level of awareness, interest and knowledge were overcome thanks to the participatory approach of farmers, researchers, training centres and local community entities. Their joint efforts, ongoing dialogue and round tables where guidelines, technical manuals, methodologies of adaptable varieties of fruit and nut tree species were developed and improved were of considerable value. Farmers’ rights as breeders of seeds were strengthened through the establishment of nurseries for quality planting materials and seed exchanges during the diversity fairs. Once the Nagoya protocol is approved by the government, the smallholder farmer custodians of ecosystem services will be further encouraged to sustainably manage their plots of land and contribute to conserving genetic resources of traditional species of global importance.
135. This was a successful project in and of itself. However, whether the project had a significant leveraging effect on alternatives to the current practice of promoting intensification of agricultural production systems is difficult to assess within the scope of this terminal review.

## **B. Summary of project findings and ratings**

136. The table 11 below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter V. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of ‘Satisfactory’.



### **UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:**

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex X) management led Terminal Review reports and validates the performance ratings therein by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations.

The Evaluation Office assesses a Terminal Review report in the same way as it assesses the initial draft of a Terminal Evaluation report. It applies the following assumptions in its validation process:

- That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.
- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.
- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.
- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office validates the overall project performance rating at the '**Satisfactory**' level.

**Table 11: Summary of project findings and ratings**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
<b>Strategic Relevance</b>	<b>The project is well aligned with relevant GEF, UNEP,UNDAF and SDG objectives. A clearly defined exit strategy would have helped</b>	<b>S</b>	Rating validated	<b>S</b>
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project contributes to the PoW 2018-19 Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems, EA (a) “The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels”. Considerable number of training materials, improved seed and planting materials, guidelines/manuals for selection, cultivation, certification and marketing of locally adaptable, resistant fruit and nut tree varieties were introduced.	HS	Rating validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities	<p>The project contributes primarily to GEF Strategic Objective 2, “Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors” and Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation” by introducing participatory and sustainable management practices that support traditional crop varieties that are resistant to water-scarcity, pests and diseases, that use natural pollinators and that can be cultivated in degraded and marginal environments.</p>	S	Rating validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	<p>Most directly it contributes to the Aichi Target 7 on sustainable management of areas under agriculture and to the maintenance of the diversity of cultivated plants , species (Target 13); integrating biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies (Target 2); seeking to reduce pollution from excess nutrients (Target 8) and improving the provision of essential services from ecosystems (Target 14) of global significance. The project is fully in line with Uzbekistan's development of policies on Access and Benefit sharing.</p> <p>The main focus of the project on traditional local varieties of fruits and nuts is highly relevant in Uzbekistan's arid, semi-arid and rainfed arid mountainous territories. The local varieties are more resistant to drought risk and other climate change-induced variations.</p>	S	Evidence presented in para. 67 and 68 shows that the project was fully aligned and contributed to global, regional, sub-regional and/or national environmental priorities and results' indicators. Rating adjusted to 'Highly Satisfactory'.	HS
4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions/coherence	The Prodoc actively acknowledges the links, complementarity and the need with other recent, ongoing or planned interventions by UNEP or other organisations as IFAD, JICA, GIZ working in the project area or on the same problem/issue. Due to lack of clearly identified follow-up activities, it is not clear and difficult to assess to what extent actual cooperation happened.	MS	Rating validated	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
<p><b>Quality of Project Design</b></p>	<p>The project design is strong in terms of relevance to global/national priorities. All the steps necessary for preparing, planning and designing project documents and the many annexes as well as on-the-ground work to mobilise main stakeholders were carried out in a timely and qualitatively satisfactory manner. Overall the results framework has a good flow of logic, the outputs and outcomes were well defined, with baselines and indicator information.</p> <p>In terms of mainstreaming, the sustainable management of production system of locally adapted fruit tree varieties is adequately integrated in the two selected project sites, and into local level land management as well as supply mechanism for quality planting materials. However, the bigger mainstreaming into non-project sites, and into other sectors and national development agenda has hardly been touched. For longer-term sustainability and upscaling, this “mainstreaming” is crucial. An absence of a clear exit strategy for sustainability and plans for measuring the gender-differentiated impact were weaker aspects.</p>	<p><b>S</b></p>	<p>Rating validated</p>	<p><b>S</b></p>

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
<b>Nature of External Context</b>	Uzbekistan has been socio-politically relatively stable since independence from the former Soviet Union. Fruits, nuts, vegetables sector is recognised as essential for food security and export by the government.	<b>HF</b>	The report emphasizes challenges stemming from COVID-19, resulting in project activity delays or cancellations. However, it falls short in thoroughly examining the effects of the post-President Karimov period and subsequent government structural changes, notably the merger of the State Committee of Nature Protection. A more in-depth analysis of how these factors impacted project implementation and performance is needed for a comprehensive assessment. Therefore, rating is adjusted to 'Moderately Favourable'	<b>MF</b>
<b>Effectiveness</b>		<b>S</b>	Rating validated	<b>S</b>
1. Availability of outputs	The project delivered most outputs as per its initial plan in terms of quality and quantity. They were made available to the intended beneficiaries in time to allow high levels of use, except some delays during the COVID pandemic. Progress reports attest fully satisfactory completion of the outputs. Targeted stakeholders for all key interventions were well engaged in the preparation and delivery of the outputs.	HS	The project delivered most outputs as per its initial plan in terms of quality and quantity. Rating changed to Satisfactory	S
2. Achievement of project outcomes	Despite delays due to the COVID period lockdown, the intended outcomes, thus most of the intermediate states were achieved. The main assumptions with regard to political stability, commitment, interest and capacity of key stakeholders to allow progress from project outputs to outcomes could hold in most cases.	S	Rating validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Likelihood of impact	The project interventions contributed to some extent to longer-term impacts as per the reconstructed ToC, namely the impact of “reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management” and the impact of “climate change mitigation due to avoidable loss of agrobiodiversity”. However, the project could not address the bigger scale mainstreaming, namely upscaling into non-project sites and mainstreaming into non-environment sectors that impact the overall sustainable development. The main reason for the latter is the initial too ambitious goal-setting for this project’s scope.	ML	Rating validated	ML
<b>Financial Management</b>		<b>S</b>	Rating validated	<b>S</b>
1. Adherence to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures	The Project Steering Committee provided general oversight of the project’s budget and co-financing status. As there was two kinds of financial support (GEF contribution and co-financing), different financial reporting regulations were adhered to. The overall financial responsibility remained with the Ministry of Nature protection. All expenditure was reported to and cleared by MNP. In addition, the Project Executing Agency provided financial oversight over the GEF contribution. The National Project Coordinator reporting line to UNEP was through the Project Executing Agency.	<b>S</b>	The project clearly addressed adherence to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures, including timely submissions of reports and adherence to budget. Rating changed to Highly Satisfactory	<b>HS</b>

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Summary assessment</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)</b>	<b>EOU Validated Rating</b>
2. Completeness of project financial information	As per interview with the national project coordinator, except a few delays in receiving the funds, all of the financial transactions, reporting and auditing were done in a timely and satisfactory manner.	S	Rating validated	S
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Based on the yearly budget approved by the National Coordinating Committee, all quarterly expenditure was agreed with Bioversity International. The project staff prepared payment requests which were signed by the National Project Coordinator and the National Executing Agency and submitted to Bioversity International. Once the approval from Bioversity International was obtained, financial requests were sent to UNEP. The finance department of Bioversity International was in regular contact with the FMO in UNEP and solved any outstanding issues.	S	Rating validated	S
<b>Efficiency</b>	As the project team faced technical difficulties in completing policy-related activities of the project due to changes in the government structure, it was agreed with Bioversity International to request a non-cost extension of the project till April 2019, then to December 2019.	<b>S</b>	The project had four no-cost extensions. The project initial end date was extended by four years, from 2019 to 2023. Rating adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory'	MS
<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>	The monitoring was done in a consultative and participatory manner.	<b>S</b>	Rating validated	<b>S</b>



Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	<p>The project's M&amp;E plan was consistent with GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The Project Results Framework presented in Annex A includes SMART indicators for each expected outcome as well as mid-term and end-of-project targets. These indicators along with the key deliverables and benchmarks included in Annex G were used for assessing project implementation progress and achievement of project results. The means of verification and the costs associated with obtaining the information to track the indicators were also summarized in Annex H. Costed M&amp;E Plan. Other M&amp;E related costs were fully integrated in the overall project budget. Detailed disaggregation by stakeholders, gender and other groups was not carried out.</p>	S	<p>Rating adjusted to 'Moderately Satisfactory' as the monitoring plan did not include a detailed disaggregation by stakeholders, gender and other groups.</p>	MS
2. Monitoring of project implementation	<p>From progress reports and discussions with the project team, it is evident that the initial monitoring and workplans were updated as necessary and followed succinctly. The baseline information, mid-term and end targets facilitated the process of monitoring the implementation. Gender- disaggregated data was collected for farmer beneficiaries and major events such training seminars and round-tables. The Site Coordinators from the two selected agro eco-regions have been in regular contact with the project team and solved any problems as they arose.</p>	HS	Rating validated	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Project reporting	<p>All reports were done in a timely and satisfactory manner from the Site Coordination team to the PMU, to the EAs and UNEP.</p> <p>The implementation progress was also discussed at the TAC meetings and reviewed by the PSC. The UNEP Task Manager was regularly updated. The Project Implementation Reviews did not mention any particular issues that needed additional measures.</p>	S	<p>Para. 99 states that “The weak aspect of the overall reporting is absence of disaggregated data by vulnerable/marginalised groups, including gender for many of the outputs”.</p> <p>Rating adjusted to Moderately Satisfactory</p>	MS
<b>Sustainability</b>		<b>ML</b>	<b>The weighted ratings approach of the Evaluation Office aggregates the three sub-categories of sustainability to the lowest of the three – this is because they are considered to be mutually limiting.</b>	<b>MU</b>
1. Socio-political sustainability	The project has benefitted of the socio-political stability and commitment by the government to crop diversification.	L	Rating validated	L
2. Financial sustainability	Smallholder farmers and several nurseries became relatively financially independent as the result of the project. As for the other outcomes, for the most part external financing will be needed to sustain results into the future.	ML	The long-term sustainability of the project requires continued donor funding and upscaling. This has not been secured. Moreover, the project did not include an exit strategy with a financial component. Rating adjusted to Moderately Unlikely	MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Institutional sustainability	2 pilot ecoregions' farmers communities, planting material suppliers and their network with local authorities are likely to continue the project's achievements. Organic agriculture is a flagship sector, thus a certain level of state budget is allocated for the entities concerned. But for the overall sectoral development the country is still dependent on foreign aid. The institutional sustainability at a wider scale was not achievable within this project.	ML	Based on challenges in institutional sustainability related to policy and legislation adoption, enforcement, and implementation, subject to further reforms and capacities. The rating is adjusted to Moderately Unlikely.	MU
<b>Factors Affecting Performance</b>		<b>S</b>	Rating validated	<b>S</b>
1. Preparation and readiness	The project preparation and readiness was carried out fully satisfactorily. Minor improvements were made after the approval such as further baseline information gathering. However, detailed plans to follow up coordination with other similar projects and initiatives to prepare an exit strategy, and measuring the impact on women and youth were not elaborated.	S	Rating validated	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project was professionally overseen and managed by the IA and EAs.	S	Rating validated	S
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	As per discussions with national project team UEP's technical and administrative advice and inputs were much appreciated since PPG stage till the project closure.	S	Rating validated	S
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	EAs and key partners had a long-standing good working relationship that also has proven fully satisfactorily for this project.	S	Rating validated	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Engagement and cooperation of all the main stakeholders was excellent. On the less positive note, there was rather passive cooperation and communication with partners engaged in similar initiatives and projects, limited to posting information on websites and participation in some meetings and training events.	S	Rating validated	S
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Both gender and youth aspects were successfully addressed through project activities. However, there is no data available to determine to what extent their status has improved in a sustainable manner.	S	Rating validated	S
5. Environmental and social safeguards	UNEP/GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist was completed at the outset of the project implementation, and no particular high risk was identified. And during PIRs no substantial or high risks were identified that required specific interventions	S	Rating validated	S
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Crop diversification and organic agriculture are stated as important by the government. Despite quite extensive involvement of key stakeholders in all the stages, starting from project preparation to delivering activities/services, and high-level commitment and support, the reviewer is of the opinion that country ownership and driven-ness has still a way to go and would benefit from further analysis.	MS	Rating validated	MS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
7. Communication and public awareness	<p>The communication and learning between the project partners and beneficiaries was achieved through many round tables, fairs and through participatory field work.</p> <p>Targeted knowledge and communication products were widely disseminated among relevant stakeholders and the general public.</p>	S	Rating validated	S
<b>Overall Project Performance Rating</b>		<b>S</b>	<b>Overall rating validated</b>	<b>S</b>

### C. Lessons learned

<b>Lesson Learned #1:</b>	<b>The project built on the results of a previous similar project that provided favourable conditions for a continuum.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	The project was based on the main outputs and lessons learned from UNEP/GEF project “In situ/on farm conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity (horticultural crops and wild fruit species) in Central Asia”, implemented in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan in 2006-2013 and which focused on the exchange and provision of knowledge, methodologies and enabling policies to help farmers, institutes and local communities to ensure sustainable in situ/on-farm conservation and utilization of local diversity of apple, apricot, almond, grape, cherry-plum, mulberry, peach, pear, pomegranate, pistachio, sea-buckthorn and walnuts of Central Asia. (para 69.)

<b>Lesson Learned #2:</b>	<b>Too ambitious goals set during the project preparation and design stage</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	The project’s objective reads “ mainstream the conservation and use of fruit tree biodiversity .....” .Mainstreaming into other sectors, upscaling into other locations than the project sites, or having a functional supply chain approach for agrobiodiversity friendly eco-produces is a gradual and iterative medium-to-long-term process that was unrealistic for a 36 month project with rather a limited scope and financial envelope. (paras 87, 88)

<b>Lesson Learned #3:</b>	<b>Medium-and-longer-term sustainability of results beyond the project would have benefitted from concrete strategy and plans</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	An exit strategy with concrete measures, methodologies and also resources to institutionalize the results of the project would have helped with longer-term sustainability. However, this effort should be carried out in collaboration with many other partners.

<b>Lesson Learned #4:</b>	<b>Documenting, data collecting and monitoring are still weak aspects that require concerted attention by all</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	Many national partners see this as a side task, do not pay much attention, or put aside resources to go on documenting and monitoring the progress of the results after the completion of the project.

## D. Recommendations

<b>Recommendation #1:</b>	Upscaling and mainstreaming of this project's results is still crucial given Uzbek government's commitment to crop diversity, to combatting the expansion of arid zones, land degradation and climate change adverse effects. In fact, a second phase of this project as designed with these mainstreaming and upscaling goals would be a right response. Integrating into similar new projects would also be another solution.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to distinguish between aspects that are technical deliverables versus systemic and root cause-related aspects and have clearly targeted interventions and strategies for each</li> <li>- be aware that the more systemic and root-cause related the more inter-agency thorough preparations would be required to design more realistic projects.</li> <li>- and elaborate a proper strategy to work with other actors than environment, especially devote the necessary time and resources to dialogue and reach an agreement with UN RC Office.</li> <li>- accept the fact that UNEP and its direct partners in the government are not fully equipped to deal with political issues or for that matter working with non-environment sector actors, governance and systemic issues despite their complete knowledge of them. Many project documents perfectly identify and articulate them. But putting them in practice cannot and should not be done in a silo-sector mode.</li> <li>- mainstreaming and upscaling alone requires huge multi-year and multistakeholder effort as seen from projects like the Poverty Environment Initiative as well as PAGE.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority Level:</b>	High
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	For future project
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP divisions responsible for cooperation with UN RC Office, Europe regional office, country based RC Office, TM for the project, national partner agencies
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	2024 – 2028

<b>Recommendation #2:</b>	<b>Elaborate risk mitigation, sustainability, environmental and social impact strategies and concrete measures during the formulation and design stage of the project, and adjust/refine them during implementation as needed.</b>
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<p>Have in place project exit strategy to identify actions needed to secure sustainability of project achievements and create entry points for upscaling of results from demonstration areas.</p> <p>To mainstream into non-environment sectors, preparatory studies, as making the case for economic analysis would be required. For instance, now that the State Committee for Nature Protection is merged with other structures into a big Ministry of Ecology, Environment Protection and Climate Change, elaborate studies</p>

	<p>that demonstrate the economic case of negative impact of pests and diseases, degradation of water and land resources, as well as climate change and benefits/cost-saving through agro-biodiversity friendly farming.</p> <p>Conduct in-depth socio-economic analysis to show qualitative difference in the status of disadvantaged groups. For instance, most country offices have UN women representatives that could help in jointly designing a targeted gender and socio-economic assessment.</p>
<b>Priority Level:</b>	Medium
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	For future project formulation and design
<b>Responsibility:</b>	TM, project team, UN RC Office, other relevant partner international and national agencies
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	As of 2024

<b>Recommendation #3:</b>	Plan and incorporate concrete strategies and detailed actions of collaboration with the initiatives, programmes, projects that were identified as complimentary in the prodoc.
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation</b>	<p>Despite the numerous previous, current or in-the-pipeline projects and initiatives funded by the international donor community in addressing biodiversity land degradation issues, there is limited cooperation among all these initiatives.</p> <p>Exchanges of information, joint meetings and launching a few events here and there is not sufficient to make the best of the complementarity and improve impact.</p> <p>The coherence and partnership between various projects that is acknowledged in project documents need to be converted into implementation of joint outputs/outcomes using the UNSDCF platform and joint programming.</p> <p>Better outreach by UNEP sub-regional office for Central Asia and European Regional Office to the UNRC Office in the country</p>
<b>Priority Level:</b>	Medium
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	Strengthening partnership
<b>Responsibility:</b>	<p>UNEP EO as initiator to implement TR recommendations.</p> <p>The Division of Policy and Programme; the Strategic Planning Unit; Europe Regional Office of UNEP, TM, country UN RC Office</p>
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	As of 2024.



## ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

**Table 12: Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate**

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Reviewer Response

## ANNEX II. PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE REVIEW

**Table 13: People consulted during the Review**

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
The northern project site in Khorezm	An older female farmer in Sarapayan village	An experienced long-time farmer	F
Community administration	Staff from Sarapayan community administration	Head and deputy head of the local authority	2 M
The northern project site in Sarapayan	Farmer (Mr. Dilshod Bekmetov)	Orchard owner, smallholder farmer	M
The northern project site Khorezm	Farmer (Mr. Abdurahmon Durumov)	Fruit tree nursery farmer	M
Khorezm branch of Farmers Union of Uzbekistan	Staff of the provincial branch of the Union	Staff representatives	2M, 2F
The northern project site in the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Staff of local authority of Shurakhon village	Leaders of the local authority	3M, 2 F
The northern project site in the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Farmer (Mr. Shavkat Arabov)	Orchard owner	M
Ministry of Natural Resources, Tashkent	Ms. Gavhar Mahmudova	Head of biodiversity policy department	F
FAO Office in Uzbekistan, Tashkent	Mr. Sherzod Umarov	National Officer in the FAO country office	M
Private intermediary company for exporting of fruits and nuts	Young entrepreneur	Founder and owner of the company	M
Bioversity International (IPGRI)	Muhabbat Turdieva	Regional Project Coordinator	F
Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology	Dr. Yuldash Saimnazarov	Senior researcher	M
Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Genetic Resources	Parhod Nazarov	Horticulture specialist, Project site Coordinator	M

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology	Elena Dorohova	Senior researcher	F
Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry	Dr. Evgeniy Butkov	Senior researcher, and project Leader for the Southern site	M
Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology	Gulchehra Karakhodjaeva	Lead scientist	F
Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology	Nodir Jalilov	Lead scientist, and project site monitor	M
Tashkent State Agrarian University	Prof. Khasan Buriev	Professor	M
Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology	Shuhrat Ahmedov	Lead scientist, project site monitor	M
UNEP Central Asia subregional Office, Almaty, Kazakhstan	Aidai Kurmanova	Head of UNEP Central Asian subregional office	F

**Table 14 :** Overview of review mission to Uzbekistan , 3-7 July 2023

Date, place	Meetings- visits	Observations
3 July, the North project site , Khorezm province	Meeting with farmers and local authorities in Sarapayan village. An older female farmer.	A female farmer who has been working in the collective farm obtained some degraded land through the project. Grows apricots and grapes. Even has her own seeds and planting materials to sell/exchange. With her income is able to help her grown-up children. Also trains other women if requested. A good example of a hard working older women who has managed to improve her and her family's living standard.
3 July the North project site	Office of Sarapayan Community Administration	Meeting with staff of local authorities of Sarapayan village and its evaluation of the work done by the project in Sarapayan community. The local varieties are more adaptable than imported and introduced varieties. Many farmers prefer the local varieties, because they guarantee the harvest, more or less adaptable to the local conditions, and they provide a good harvest every year. The project created favorable conditions for Khorezm. However, more land, more education, storage and processing hubs, help in certification and marketing are areas requiring further concerted effort, especially by the leaders of regional gov.
3 July the North project site, Sarapayan village	Orchard of farmer Mr. Dilshod Bekmetov in Sarapayan village	Demonstration of the project's work on increasing the diversity of apple and apricot varieties with functional traits of tolerance to soil salinity, drought, chilling temperatures and heat in farmers' production systems. Bekmetov's father worked on the previous project. He has 13 ha of land, necessary machinery and equipment, good income. Is in mutual cooperation with neighbors. They help each other during planting season. Bigger cooperatives could help further expand agrobiodiversity-friendly farming. But that is a longer-term goal, without state support and subsidies is not easy to expand.
3 July the North project site, Sarapayan village	Fruit tree nursery of farmer Mr. Abdurahmon Durumov in Sarapayan village	Demonstration of the project's results on improving farmers' access to -quality and diverse planting material of target fruit crops with functional traits of tolerance to soil salinity, drought, chilling temperatures and heat. Working on early and later ripening fruit trees (apricots, apples, peaches). The unification of smallholder farmers into a bigger cooperative where they could benefit from a better agricultural extension services is still a way to go.
3 July, Khorezm province	Provincial branch of Farmers' Union of Uzbekistan	Meeting with staff of the provincial branch of Farmers' Council of Uzbekistan in Khorezm province . They support to the extent possible sustainable farming with access to loans, manuals about land plots to use for traditional farming, assist with creating new gardens and introduce organic gardens to school children. Still organic agro-production needs supporting politics from above, and also financing.

4 July, North project site in the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Office of Shurakhon Community Administration	Meeting with staff of local authorities of Shurakhon village. Since 2000s the community has been participating in different project and state programmes. Auction of land is organized regularly, technical, financial assistance as well as access to the small logistics and processing centre is provided for. Main challenges are still proper marketing as farmers still rely on intermediary private individuals who buy from them to sell in Kazakhstan, Russia and other countries. Added value from supply chain approach is not realized.
4 July, North project site in the Republic of Karakalpakstan	Orchard of farmer Mr. Shavkat Arabov in Shurakhon village	The farmer obtained degraded plot of land and confirmed the benefit of the partnership with research community to improve the soil quality and ncreasing the diversity of apple, apricot and grape varieties with functional traits of tolerance to soil salinity, drought, frost and extreme heat.
5 July, Tashkent	Ministry of Natural Resources of Uzbekistan (Tashkent) Meeting with Ms. Gavhar Mahmudova, Head of Biodiversity Policy Department.	She highlighted importance of closer collaboration between the scientific community, farmers and industry to better use agrobiodiversity for enhancing ecosystem services. Improving the database, re-examining the legislative base, developing new legal actions, new laws, new regulations, and improving the potential of all the personnel are areas the ministry is aiming to work on. The value -added approach of supply chain for organic agro-produces still is premature in the counry. Attracting other stakeholders from other sectors and cross-sectoral cooperation is weak.
5 July, Tashkent	FAO office in Uzbekistan (Tashkent)	Meeting with Mr. Sherzod Umarov, representative of FAO office. For projects in the field, and especially for local communities, the ongoing reform, restructuring, merging of ministries has created certain obstacle in terms of understanding their mandates, roles and responsibilities. Due to the more market-oriented tendencies in Uzbekistan, the prices in the market for imported agriculture products can often be cheaper than the ones produced locally. Thus targeted government subsidies to promote local organic agriculture could help boost local producers income and food security . For further promoting agrobiodiversity approach for farming, public private partnership should be utilised.
7 July Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Genetic Resources	National workshop with project partners	National workshop with project partners in Uzbekistan to brief the consultant and discuss project results (Workshop's program is provided below)

### National Workshop Programme

**Workshop purpose:** Face-to-face meeting with the national project partners, familiarization with and discussion of project results

Time	Topic	Rapporteur
10:00 – 10:15	Workshop opening and introduction of the participants	<b>Muhabbat Turdieva,</b> Regional Project Coordinator, Bioversity International (IPGRI)
10:15 - 10:20	Welcome statement	<b>Dr. Yuldash Saimnazarov,</b> Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology after acad. Mahmud Mirzaev
10:20 - 10:40	Objectives and procedure of project terminal evaluation	<b>Nara Luvsan,</b> Project Terminal Evaluation Consultant, UNEP
10:40 - 11:10	Main outputs and deliverables of UNEP-GEF project «Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan»	<b>Muhabbat Turdieva,</b> Regional Project Coordinator, Bioversity International (IPGRI)
11:10 - 11:20	Management of functional agro-biodiversity of target fruit crops (apple, apricot, grape and pomegranate) possessing tolerance to drought, heat and soil salinity in the project sites	<b>Parhod Nazarov,</b> Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Genetic Resources  <b>Elena Dorohova,</b> Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology after acad. Mahmud Mirzaev
11:20 - 11:30	Management of functional agro-biodiversity of target nut- bearing crops (almond and pistachio) possessing tolerance to drought, heat and spring frosts in the project sites	<b>Dr. Evgeniy Butkov,</b> Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry
11:30 - 11:45	<b>Coffee/Tea break</b>	

Time	Topic	Rapporteur
11:45 - 11:55	Increasing competitiveness of small-holder farmers in the project sites through supply of quality and diverse planting material of target fruit crops	<b>Gulchehra Karakhodjaeva,</b> Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology after acad. Mahmud Mirzaev
12:05 - 12:15	Market intensives tool in improving access of smallholder farmers to functional diversity of target fruit crops to support ecosystem services in the project sites.	<b>Nodir Jalilov,</b> Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology after acad. Mahmud Mirzaev
12:15 - 12:25	Increase of public awareness, capacity and partnership as a basis of the project's sustainability	<b>Prof. Abdihalil Kayimov,</b> Tashkent State Agrarian University
12:25 - 12:35	Strengthening of national policy and legal framework on ABS issues related to agrobiodiversity	<b>Prof. Khasan Buriev,</b> Tashkent State Agrarian University
12:35 - 12:45	Ensuring project sustainability through research and development	<b>Shuhrat Ahmedov,</b> Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Enology after acad. Mahmud Mirzaev
12:45 - 13:15	Discussion	
13:15 - 14:30	<b>Lunch</b>	
14:30 – 16:00	Individual meeting of the Consultant with national project partners	Ms. Nara Luvsan, Project Terminal Evaluation Consultant, UNEP

### ANNEX III. REVIEW FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

	INDICATORS	MEANS OF
<b>A. Strategic relevance</b>		
1 To what extent is the project in alignment with UNEP’s MTS 2014-2017 / 2018-2021 and Programme of Work (POW)?	Level of alignment with (contribution of results to) sub-regional environmental issues, UNEP mandate, SDGS and the GEF FA objectives	Project documents, UNEP MTS – 2014-2017 / 2018-2021, and Programme of Work, SDGs UNEP staff, PSC members, representatives of donor agencies
2 To what extent are project’s objectives and implementation strategies consistent with global, regional and national environmental priorities?		
3 To what extent is the project in alignment with the targets of SDGs?		
4 To what extent has the project explored and built complementarity with other existing initiatives? (Assessment of coherence/Level of alignment with initiatives by national and local government agencies and donor funded projects)		
<b>B. Quality of Project Design</b>		
See Annex 3 of this report		Project document; Progress reports Project team
<b>C. Nature of External Context</b>		
5 How did the political, environmental, social, institutional context change, if at all, and how did it affect project implementation?	Reported adaptive management measures in response to changes in context	Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders
6 What were, if any, the adaptive management measures planned and implemented in response?		
<b>D. Effectiveness</b>		
<b>Availability of Outputs</b>		
1 Could the project achieve the outputs along the impact pathway of “reduced pressures on degraded land and contributing to sustainable NRM, as well as avoiding loss of agrobiodiversity”. In particular: (a) in increasing intraspecific varieties in land mgt planning (b) in improving the supply mechanism of planting materials	Output level indicators of Results Framework (RF)  Availability and quality of knowledge products created Current situation of research institutes and universities	Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders, case studies, survey data  Filed observations
2 Did the assumption and driver hold along the above causal pathway, namely continued political will and commitment, including an enabling environment created, understanding and acceptance of fruit tree genetic diversity as a provider of ecosystem services		
3 Did the project deliver outputs 3.1 and 3.2 namely identifying national ABS law options as		



<p>well as drafting strategies to promote fruit tree biodiversity in food security and rural development in a planned and timely manner? In case of delays or modifications to the outputs, what were the reasons?</p> <p>4 How participatory was the delivery of outputs?</p> <p>5 How satisfactory was the quality of generated knowledge products content-wise (incl. studies, training and other information materials, etc.) in terms of communicating clearly key findings / concepts, relevant issues?</p>	<p>concerned</p>	
<p><b>Achievement of Project Outcomes</b></p>		
<p>6 Did the project achieve outcomes along the second causal pathway as per TOC? Namely, improvement of livelihood, food security, and rural development. In particular,</p> <p>(c) in identifying national ABS law options</p> <p>(d) in drafting strategies to promote fruit tree biodiversity in food security, rural management, rural development, and land management policies?</p> <p>7 Did the condition, namely the commitment of policy makers, experts, and other partners, especially at the ministerial level, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Nature Protection hold ?</p> <p>8 Did the project achieve the outcome of an additional causal pathway related to mainstreaming. Especially mainstreaming into other non-project sites that are equally affected by degradation and water scarcity?</p> <p>9 What is the situation with assumptions for reliable funding and migration to towns of rural people, especially of young people ?</p>	<p>Outcome level indicators of Results Framework (RF)</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders, survey data</p> <p>Field observations</p>
<p><b>Likelihood of impact</b></p>		
<p>10 Related to the above mainstreaming, as well as related to all the outputs and outcomes, how were the barriers, the three barriers mentioned in the initial project document addressed?</p> <p>11 What has been the effort for mainstreaming into non-environment sectors and into other higher level national development agenda and processes such as green economy?</p> <p>12 Were new seeds developed based on landraces and farmers' varieties.</p> <p>13 What is the status of research into genetic diversity and food security?</p> <p>14 Has the number of local varieties recommended for conservation increased ?</p> <p>15 Has dynamic and innovative seed systems been established?</p> <p>16 Has innovative varieties as result of mixture/blends of traditional varieties increased ?</p> <p>17 Is there enough evidence now (catalogues, manuals, guidelines as well as practices</p>	<p>Degree of integration of project results, new practices. mainstreaming actions and effort taken</p> <p>Degree of participatory processes</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders, survey data</p> <p>Conversation and survey with partner development agencies</p>

<p>and tools etc) document and explain fruit trees' diversity Characteristics (as genetic resources) that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(e) Resistant to drought, salinity and other stressors (overgrazed, overharvested, inadequate irrigation and land mgt)</li> <li>(f) Use natural micro-organisms and pollinating insects</li> <li>(g) Use natural enemies of pests and diseases</li> <li>(h) Demonstrate increase of soil microorganisms, pollinators and natural enemies of pests</li> <li>(i) Demonstrate that organic, very diversified systems are able to suppress bacteria</li> <li>(j) Displaying better plant health and seed health (naturalist vs. normativist approach)</li> <li>(k) Improve yield, quality, productivity</li> <li>(l) Reduce external inputs with their cost and env impact</li> <li>(m) Conservable at farm level</li> <li>(n) Better adapted evolutionary breed to shocks and climate change</li> <li>(o) Linkage between in-situ and ex-situ</li> <li>(p) Conserve cultural and heritage values</li> </ul> <p>18 At the bigger scale of things, what is the percentage of traditional local varieties versus modern genetically uniform high yielding varieties of fruit trees?</p> <p>19 What is the attitude of nationally protected areas to in-situ conservation of crop wild relatives and land races (positive or negative)?</p>	<p>Availability of catalogues, guidelines, training materials etc. and their continued use</p>	
<p><b>E. Financial Management</b></p>		
<p>20 To what extent did the financial management of the project adhere to UNEP's financial policies and procedures?</p> <p>21 How complete was the financial information of the project?</p> <p>22 How adequate was the amount of financing for achieving stated outcomes/project objective?</p> <p>23 How sound was the budget planning and execution? (Did expenditures match the approved budget / work-plan? What were the reasons for under/overspent budget, if any?)</p> <p>24 To what extent did the financial management issues affect the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance?</p> <p>25 What levels of co-financing did the project obtain (Percent of planned)?</p>	<p>Completeness of financial inputs, analysis and final sheets</p>	<p>Annexes to project document FMO inputs Progress reports Financial reports</p>
<p><b>F. Efficiency</b></p>		
<p>26 To what extent was the implementation of project activities compliant with the original plan,</p>	<p>Level of compliance</p>	<p>Project documents, project</p>

<p>both with regards to time and financial budgets? If not, were there any impacts on planned outputs and outcomes?</p> <p>27 To what extent was the project cost-effective?</p> <p>28 To what extent did the project utilize/build on the existing data sources, structures, information and communication channels, networks, similar initiatives? If yes, how did they influence the delivery of project results?</p> <p>29 To what extent the partnerships/synergies were established with similar initiatives?</p>	<p>with work plan, financial plan, M&amp;E plan</p> <p>Inclusion of lessons learnt and collaboration with former or current similar initiatives</p>	<p>team</p> <p>Progress reports</p> <p>Partner agencies reports, interviews.</p>
<p><b>G. Monitoring and Reporting</b></p>		
<p><b>Monitoring design and budgeting</b></p>		
<p>30 How adequate was the project's M&amp;E plan in terms of completeness of indicators, indicator definitions (SMART), frequency of data collection, and resource allocation (both human and financial).</p> <p>31 To what extent were the project's indicators and methods for data collection relevant and appropriate for tracking progress?</p>	<p>Level of compliance with work plan, financial plan, M&amp;E plan</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Monitoring of project implementation</b></p>		
<p>32 To what extent was the monitoring system operational - indicators measured timely, with indicated frequency and methods of data collection - throughout the project's implementation?</p> <p>33 To what extent is the gathered baseline data relevant, accurate and appropriately documented?</p> <p>34 To what extent was the monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (incl. women, marginalized, vulnerable groups) in project activities conducted?</p> <p>35 What was the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and for ensuring sustainability?</p> <p>36 What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets?</p> <p>37 To what did the project implement MTR recommendations?</p>	<p>Level of implementation of M&amp;E plan (execution of activities)</p> <p>Changes in project implementation as result of midterm review, and external circumstances</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Project reporting</b></p>		
<p>38 To what extent were the reporting requirements fulfilled - vis a vis the taken obligations (PIR, progress reports, financial reports, etc.) and with respect to the effects of the project on disaggregated groups?</p>	<p>Timely delivery of all reports</p>	<p>Progress reports, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>H. Sustainability</b></p>		
<p><b>Socio-political sustainability</b></p>		
<p>39 To what extent do social and political factors support the continuation and further</p>	<p>Extent of which</p>	<p>Progress reports, project</p>

<p>development of project outcomes?</p> <p>40 To what extent the individual and/or institutional built capacities, if any, are sustained or have a potential to be sustained, considering the socio-political stability, staff turnover, and other factors.</p> <p>41 To what extent do the trained national and local government representatives remain in the system?</p> <p>42 What is the level of readiness of national government stakeholders to continue work on the project's initiated policy and legal changes, and on strengthening the institutional arrangements.</p>	<p>drivers and assumptions were holding</p>	<p>team, interviews with key stakeholders and partner agencies</p> <p>Field observation</p>
<p><b>Financial sustainability</b></p>		
<p>43 To what extent are the project outcomes financially sustainable at pilot sites', communities, and national levels?</p>		<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders, case studies</p>
<p><b>Institutional Sustainability</b></p>		
<p>44 To what extent the sustainability of project outcomes (esp. policies and laws) dependent on issues related to institutional frameworks and governance?</p> <p>45 To what extent are the institutional capacity development efforts likely to be sustained?</p> <p>46 What change in the management and governance of tree diversity was possible thanks to the results of the project interventions?</p> <p>47 Do all interested stakeholders have now enough scientific evidence and practical knowledge to better manage agrobiodiversity?</p>	<p>Degree of achievement of intermediate states and impacts</p>	<p>MoUs Formal agreements Progress reports, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p> <p>Field observation</p>
<p><b>I. Factors affecting project performance and cross cutting issues</b></p>		
<p><b>Preparation and readiness</b></p>		
<p>48 What changes were made to the project design after the project approval?</p> <p>49 To what extent the documents promised in the design were developed: e.g. communication and stakeholder engagement plan?</p> <p>50 What was the extent and quality of engagement of the project team with all the relevant stakeholder groups (how well those groups were identified)?</p>	<p>Time between project approval, first disbursement and actual implementation</p> <p>Measures taken to address weaknesses to respond to changes.</p>	<p>PIF, PPG documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Quality of project management and supervision</b></p>		
<p>51 How effective was the project management in terms of: - Planning and implementing activities for delivering the stated results, supervising the</p>	<p>Feedback of satisfaction or dissatisfaction among partners and</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key</p>

<p>project performance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring the participation of all the relevant stakeholders in project activities?</li> <li>- Ensuring coordination, knowledge sharing among the involved parties / similar initiatives</li> <li>- Responding to and overcoming challenges, managing risks?</li> </ul>	<p>project staff</p>	<p>stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Stakeholder participation and cooperation</b></p>		
<p>52 To what extent the stakeholder engagement plan was implemented?</p> <p>53 How was the participatory approach implemented (farmers, policy makers, researchers, businesses, consumers)?</p> <p>54 How effective were the mechanisms for stakeholder participation and cooperation – e.g. PSC, knowledge portal, etc.</p> <p>55 To what extent the following stakeholders were affected and or influenced by the project results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a). Stakeholders with direct responsibility for the project, e.g. executing partners</li> <li>b). Stakeholders with authority to make decisions.</li> <li>c). Stakeholders at local level who benefit directly or indirectly from the interventions.</li> <li>d. Secondary stakeholders, only indirectly or temporarily affected</li> <li>e). other interest groups that were not directly affected, but who can exert influence or help upscale, leverage the results of the project, e.g. development agencies working in the same domain, civil society organizations</li> <li>f). How have outputs and outcomes affect, positive or negative, the most vulnerable groups. For instance, women, elderly and the youth</li> </ul> <p>56 How did social relations around seed exchange to maintain the genetic diversity and agrobiodiversity evolve ?</p> <p>57 To what extent was the engagement of different - gendered, marginalized groups, etc. – was ensured?</p>	<p>Level of participation of various groups of stakeholders and beneficiaries</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</b></p>		
<p>58 To what extent has the project applied the UN Common Understanding in the human-rights based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People</p> <p>59 To what extent does the intervention adhere to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment?</p> <p>60 To what extent has project implementation and monitoring 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</p>	<p>Any positive or negative changes in interactions as well as in power relations between stakeholders.</p> <p>Gender</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders.</p>

<p>disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation?</p> <p>61 What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas?</p> <p>62 Who owns property rights, patent rights over the varieties, over the new varieties of seedlings? And how does this affect different groups of stakeholders? Farmers, breeders, private sector, planting material suppliers and of course the institutions, research institutions and the gene bank storage facilities.</p>	<p>transformative actions taken.</p>	
<p><b>Environmental and social safeguards</b></p>		
<p>63 To what extent did the project address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage?</p> <p>64 To what extent did the project assess and manage risks (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project activities? How the identified risks were addressed?</p> <p>65 To what extent UNEP requirements<sup>7</sup> 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?</p> <p>66 To what extent were the pilot projects screened for any safeguarding issues and environmental and social risk assessments conducted?</p> <p>67 To what extent did the project management management of the project minimize the project's environmental footprint?</p> <p>68 What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?</p>	<p>Level of compliance with ESG plans</p>	<p>Project documents, progress reports, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Country ownership and driven-ness</b></p>		
<p>69 To what extent was the momentum built among the project's stakeholders for them to take the results from outcomes to intermediate states and impacts.</p> <p>70 How committed are the stakeholders (incl. gov. representatives across different ministries) to implement the developed plans and adopt the suggested changes to the legal framework (e.g. the adoption of the Law on Windbreaks ,etc.)?</p>	<p>Endorsement of project documents. Commitment expressed.</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key stakeholders</p>
<p><b>Communication and public awareness</b></p>		
<p>71 What was the effectiveness of communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life?</p>	<p>Available media and communication</p>	<p>Project documents, project team, interviews with key</p>

<sup>7</sup>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.

<p>72 What were the challenges and effectiveness of the knowledge management approach (knowledge gaps identification, knowledge generation, transfer, application), including: knowledge and learning deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); knowledge products/events; communication strategy; lessons learned and good practice; adaptive management actions?</p> <p>73 What is the sustainability of the communication channels established under the project?</p> <p>74 What was the effectiveness of public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behavior among the target stakeholders?</p> <p>75 How effectively were the existing communication channels and networks used, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalized groups?</p> <p>76 How the feedback was gathered from the involved stakeholders? What was the effectiveness of feedback channels? of grievance redress mechanisms, if available?</p>	<p>materials and their sustained use</p>	<p>stakeholders</p>
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## ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

### Project planning and reporting documents

- Terms of Reference for the Terminal Review
- CEO endorsement document and its Annexes from A to S, PIF document, and GEF secretariat review
- UNEP Evaluation Tools/Guidelines
- UNEP MTS 2014-2017 / 2018-2021
- Project PIRs and half-year implementation reports from 2016 -2020
- Package of financial documentations from 2016 -2020

### Project outputs – Overall

#### Manuals:

- Manual “Guidelines on comprehensive agronomic practices and use of varietal diversity for improving immunity of pomegranate trees to pests and diseases” (in Uzbek in Cyrillic script)
- Manual “Guidelines on comprehensive agronomic practices and use of varietal diversity for improving immunity of pomegranate trees to pests and diseases” (in Uzbek in Latin script)
- Manual “Guidelines on comprehensive agronomic practices and use of varietal diversity for improving immunity of grape plants to pests and diseases” (in Uzbek in Cyrillic script)
- Manual “Guidelines on comprehensive agronomic practices and use of varietal diversity for improving immunity of grape plants to pests and diseases” (in Uzbek in Latin script)

#### Textbooks:

- Use of fruit and nut trees biodiversity in sustainable management of land resources (in Uzbek in Cyrillic script)

#### Trainings:

*Rapid Market Appraisal Survey (In 2018 the project team conducted Rapid Market Appraisal to understand the structure and major trends within the value chain for saplings in general and explore interest of farmers in production of planting material of fruit tree varieties resistant to soil salinity, spring frost and drought resistant in both project sites.)*

- Training on grating technologies of fruit and nut trees in Korabog village
- Training on grating technologies of fruit and nut trees in Shelkan village
- Training on grating technologies of fruit and nut trees in Kizilolma village
- Training on Quality Standards and Procedure for Certification of Planting Material
- Training workshop on Land use practices, which include use of intraspecific diversity of fruit and nut tree crops in land management in Kizilolma village
- Training workshop on Land use practices, which include use of intraspecific diversity of nut and fruit tree crops in land management in Karabog village
- Training on Quality control of planting material - quality standards and certification
- Training workshop on Land use practices, which use fruit tree diversity in land management in South project site
- Training on Quality control of fruit tree products – standards and certification
- Training on Technologies of production raisins



- Training on Quality control of planting material and fruit tree products - quality standards and certification
- Training on Land use practices, which use fruit tree diversity in land management in Khorezm Province (North project site)
- Training on Land use practices, which use fruit tree diversity in land management in South project site
- Training on Land use practices with use fruit tree diversity in land management in Karakalpakstan (North project site)
- Training on Quality control of planting material and fruit tree products - quality standards and certification
- Training on Development of skills in leadership, management and decision making in horticulture development
- Workshop on Exchange of experience in cultivation of fruit and nut tree crops, establishment of networks for exchange and propagation of planting material
- Diversity Fair of planting material of fruit tree crops, adapted to environment of South project site
- Workshop on Establishment of partnership between extension services, research institutes, groups of male and female farmers and development of their leadership skills and increasing their participation in decision-making in horticulture and nut production development process
- Diversity Fair of planting material of fruit tree crops, adapted to environment of North project site
- Diversity Fair of planting material of fruit tree crops, adapted to environment of South project site
- Workshop on Establishment of partnership among extension services, research institutes, groups of male and female farmers and building their leadership skills and capacity in leadership and decision-making
- Training on “Cultivation technology of target fruit crops seedlings”
- Regional workshop on “Development of farmers’ leadership skills, participation in management and decision-making on agriculture, including horticulture”
- Regional workshop on “Development of farmers’ leadership skills, participation in management and decision-making on agriculture, including horticulture in Surkhandarya province”
- Training on “Cultivation technology of target fruit crops samplings”
- Training on “Pruning and shaping the crown to ensure the ventilation of the crown (reducing the spread of diseases and pests)”
- Training on “Land management practices including the use of fruit tree diversity in land management” for extension workers
- Regional Workshop on "Land use practices, including the use of the diversity of target fruit crops, and land management in the North Project Site"
- Workshop on “Establishment of apple, apricot, almond and pistachio plantations on irrigated and rainfed lands, optimal space arrangement of trees and pruning their crowns for sustainable yields”

## **Previous reviews/evaluations**

- Mid-term Review of the FAO – GEF funded project “Integrated natural resources management in drought-prone and salt-affected agricultural production landscapes in Central Asia and Turkey” CACILM-II

### **Reference documents**

- Conservation of fruit tree diversity in Central Asia: Policy options and challenges, Bioversity International, 2014
- Gender, agriculture and rural development in Uzbekistan, Country gender assessment series, FAO, Budapest 2019
- Environmental Performance Review, 3<sup>rd</sup> Review Uzbekistan, UNECE, Geneva, 2020
- United Nations Sustainable Development Framework 2021 – 2025, Uzbekistan

## ANNEX V. PROJECT BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

**Table 15: Project Funding Sources Table (IF NOT ALREADY WITHIN THE REPORT)**

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount (\$)
National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	Grant	268,646
National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	In-kind	574,421
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	Grant	260,934
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	In-kind	296,466
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	Grant	43,800
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	In-kind	81,200
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	Grant	411,620
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	In-kind	259,176
National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	Grant	15,000
National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	In-kind	226,442
Private Sector	Albatros Oil Service	In-kind	100,000
NGO	Center for Agro Information-Innovation, Uzbekistan	In-kind	562,295
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	Grant	320,000
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	In-kind	580,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	150,000
<b>Total Co-financing</b>			<b>4,150,000</b>

**Table 16: Expenditure by Outcome/Output**

<b>Project Outcome</b>	<b>Grant Amount (\$)</b>	<b>Cofinancing (\$)</b>
Outcome 1. Mainstreaming mechanisms that use agricultural biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in water scarce environments	512,495	1,360,000
Outcome 2. Increasing the use of fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem regulating services in water-scarce environments.	300,000	1,335,966
Outcome 3. Promoting and enabling environment for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services.	211,000	618,534
Project monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management.	100,000	272,000
Sub-total	<b>1,123,495</b>	<b>3,586,500</b>
Project Management	112,350	563,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,235,845</b>	<b>4,150,000</b>

## ANNEX VI. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Table 9: Financial Management Table (IF NOT ALREADY WITHIN THE REPORT)**

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
<b>1. Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures:</b>		<b>HS:HU</b>	<b>S</b>
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence <sup>8</sup> to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes/No	No
<b>2. Completeness of project financial information<sup>9</sup>:</b>			
Provision of key documents to the reviewer (based on the responses to A-H below)		<b>HS:HU</b>	<b>S</b>
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes. Co-financing by sources and types. Project costs by budget line.
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Done by National Project Steering Committee at its annual meetings based on review of project progress by project activities and outputs in close consultation with the EA. The EA further submitted BR requests to UNEP.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes/No or N/A	Yes. The PCA and its amendment. Co-financing letters.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Bank Transfer forms from UNEP and Bioersity, financial reports of national executing agency
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	Signed letters proving co-financing from project partners have been submitted annually
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	Submitted to UNEP quarterly
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses ( <i>where applicable</i> )	Yes	IPGRI's annual report. The project's pledged grant information was included in the EA's global annual independent audit financial statement by the PWC.
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Yes/No or N/A	No
<b>3. Communication between finance and project management staff</b>		<b>HS:HU</b>	<b>S</b>
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		S	Project manager and Task Manager were in continuous communication re project expenses and budget revisions to meet

<sup>8</sup> If the review raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

<sup>9</sup> See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

		successfully the project's objectives
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.	S	Request for funds were submitted based on annual workplan and budget approved by National Project Steering Committee
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.	S	No issue was highlighted in bi-annual reports
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer, Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.	S	No problem was highlighted in bi-annual reports
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process	S	No problem was highlighted in bi-annual reports
<b>Overall rating</b>	<b>S</b>	

## ANNEX VII. BRIEF CV OF THE REVIEWER

**Name: Nara Luvsan**

<b>Profession</b>	Independent international consultant in sustainable development Euroasia Senior Coordinator for GASP (Global alliance for a sustainable planet)
<b>Nationality</b>	Mongolia
<b>Country experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan</li><li>• Trans-Caucasus: Armenia, Georgia</li><li>• Eastern Europe</li><li>• Americas: USA</li><li>• Asia: Mongolia, China</li></ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Master in International Public Policy, Johns Hopkins, SAIS</li></ul>

### Short biography

Ms. Nara Luvsan is an independent international consultant in sustainable development and green economy. She brings on board over 27 years of development aid experience within the UN and the World Bank in key positions in country, regional and headquarters. Her considerable experience in Mongolia, Central Asia, the Trans-Caucasus, Russia, China and former Soviet sphere as well as in Western Europe has provided her with an in-depth understanding of the associated economic conditions, legal structures, governmental operations and social needs and realities of the region. She has extensive experience in evaluation preparation, process and methodologies.

Nara has successfully lead/contributed to country evaluations, regional and global multi-agency programme mid-term and final reviews. The sectors covered include i.a. reviewing the new strategy and Regional Action Plan for Environment for Central Asia, UNDAFs, nexus of environment and poverty reduction, aspects of BRI as well as green economy policy.

Throughout her career, in her capacity as Senior Programme Policy Officer and Regional Adviser with specialised UN agencies Nara was instrumental in designing, managing, leading and closing complex country and regional programmes that required deep understanding of political sensitivities, governance issues and implementation hurdles faced by international, national and local counterparts.

## ANNEX VIII. REVIEW TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF project

**“Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan”**

**GEF ID Number 5403**

### Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

#### Project General Information

**Table 1. Project summary**

<b>UNEP Sub-programme:</b>	Subprogram 3 – Healthy & Productive Ecosystems	<b>UNEP Division/Branch:</b>	UN Environment Programme Ecosystems Division GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit Biodiversity and Land Branch
<b>Expected Accomplishment(s):</b>	EA (a) The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels	<b>Programme of Work Output(s):</b>	POW 2018-19 Subprogramme 3 Healthy and Productive Ecosystems
<b>SDG(s) and indicator(s)</b>	UNDAF 2016-20, PA 3: Environmental protection to ensure sustainable development Outcome 6: By 2020, rural population benefit from sustainable management of natural resources and resilience to disasters and climate change SDG2 (2.4; 2.5), SDG5(5.5), SDG15 (15.3; 15.9)		
<b>GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7<sup>10</sup>)</b>	N/A, GEF-5		
<b>Dates of previous project phases:</b>	N/a	<b>Status of future project phases:</b>	N/a

<sup>10</sup> This does not apply to Enabling Activities



**FROM THE PROJECT'S PIR REPORT (use latest version) :**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan
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<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Bioversity International (IPGRI)
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<b>Project partners:</b>	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making named after M. Mirzaev  Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology (IGPEB)
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<b>Geographical Scope:</b>	National, Central Asia
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<b>Participating Countries:</b>	Uzbekistan
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<b>GEF project ID:</b>	5403	<b>IMIS number*<sup>11</sup>:</b>	P1-33GFL-000825
<b>Focal Area(s):</b>	Biodiversity	<b>GEF OP #:</b>	BD 2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors  BD 4
<b>GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:</b>	BD-2, BD-4	<b>GEF approval date*:</b>	27 July 2015
<b>UNEP approval date:</b>		<b>Date of first disbursement*:</b>	20 April 2016
<b>Actual start date<sup>12</sup>:</b>	10 January 2016	<b>Planned duration:</b>	36 months
<b>Intended completion date*:</b>	July 2019	<b>Actual or Expected completion date:</b>	December 2021
<b>Project Type:</b>		<b>GEF Allocation*:</b>	1,235,845 USD
<b>PPG GEF cost*:</b>	50,000 USD	<b>PPG co-financing*:</b>	

<sup>11</sup> Fields with an \* sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer

<sup>12</sup> Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases were a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.

<b>Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:</b>	4,150,000 USD	<b>Total Cost*:</b>	5,385,845 USD
<b>Mid-term Review/eval. (planned date):</b>	July 2018	<b>Terminal Evaluation (planned date):</b>	June 2022
<b>Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):</b>	July 2018	<b>No. of revisions*:</b>	N/a
<b>Date of last Steering Committee meeting:</b>	8-9 February 2021	<b>Date of last Revision*:</b>	N/a
<b>Disbursement as of 30 June 2021*:</b>	831,130 USD	<b>Date of planned financial closure*:</b>	December 2022
<b>Date of planned completion<sup>13*</sup>:</b>	July 2019	<b>Actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2021<sup>14</sup>:</b>	821,601 USD
<b>Total co-financing realized as of 31 June 2021:</b>	4,792,178 USD	<b>Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December [year]*:</b>	
<b>Leveraged financing:<sup>15</sup></b>			

## Project Rationale<sup>16</sup>

Uzbekistan is located at the heart of Central Asia—one of the world’s five most important centres of origin and diversity of cultivated plants. Over the course of several centuries, the diverse natural and climatic conditions have helped Central Asian farmers to produce traditional fruit tree varieties adapted to drought and resistant to a number of abiotic and biotic stress factors.

Recent surveys of households and commercial orchards from 2006-2011 demonstrated that Uzbekistan is still the home of 83 traditional varieties of apricot, 43 – of grape, 40 - of apple, 30 of walnut, 21 of pomegranate, 15 of pear, grown within the farmers’ production system. Wild almond, pistachio and walnut and other wild fruit and nut species are still concentrated in the forests and used by local people as sources of wild nuts and fruits for their food and income. This local diversity of fruit crops is the main source of nutrients for the inhabitants of both rural and urban areas since people here consumes fruit products as fresh fruits in the season and dried fruits in the off seasons. Local varieties of fruit crops and their wild relatives continue to form the basis of the livelihood of local people in Uzbekistan.

Despite these conditions and the ongoing government efforts to restructure and diversify Uzbekistan’s agri- cultural sector, the country faces serious problems of genetic erosion of this globally important traditional fruit tree diversity and the ecosystem services it provides particularly in water scarce environments.

From this perspective, the project aims to address the following problems: a) loss of globally significant traditional fruit tree varieties and accompanied indigenous knowledge in water scarce areas

<sup>13</sup> If there was a “Completion Revision” please use the date of the revision.

<sup>14</sup> Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Task Manager

<sup>15</sup> See above note on co-financing

<sup>16</sup> Grey =Info to be added

of Uzbekistan, b) loss of the ecosystem regulating and support services that these biodiverse production systems provide; c) lack of full valuation given to the ecosystem services provided and the local custodians who maintain this diversity and the ecosystem services they provide.

## **Project Results Framework**

The project objective is to mainstream the conservation and use of fruit tree biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services and thereby improve the resiliency of traditional agricultural production systems in water-scarce landscapes.

The project will achieve this through the following three components and corresponding outcomes and outputs.

*Component 1: Mainstreaming mechanisms that use agricultural biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in water-scarce environments.*

**Outcome 1.** Area devoted to sustainably managed fruit tree diversity is increased and ecosystem services are enhanced through greater use of biodiversity in water-scarce agricultural production systems.

- **Output 1.1** Expanded use of fruit tree varietal (intra-specific) diversity in adverse and degraded landscapes to improve water use efficiency, reduce pest and disease damage, and increase pollination levels
- **Output 1.2** Land management plans for water scarce and degraded landscapes, which include the use fruit tree varietal diversity, are developed and implemented and farming communities, extension and public government organizations have the capacity and leadership abilities to carry them out.

*Component 2: Increasing the use of fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem services in water-scarce environments.*

**Outcome 2.** Farmers benefit from having increased availability of locally adapted materials to improve ecosystem resilience through better regulation of pollination service levels, diseases and arthropod pests, land degradation and water use efficiency.

- **Output 2.1** Local fruit tree functional varietal diversity is available and accessible to farmers to use in their production systems
- **Output 2.2** Farmer information systems and market information mechanisms for growing local fruit tree varietal diversity are in place.

*Component 3: Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services.*

**Outcome 3.** Options for national access and benefit sharing laws identified to support the promotion of ecosystem services within agricultural production systems.

- **Output 3.1.** Options for national access and benefit sharing (ABS) laws identified to support the promotion of use of agro-biodiversity and ecosystem services within agricultural production systems
- **Output 3.2** Recommendations and strategies drafted that promote diversified fruit tree biodiversity in food security, rural development and land management policies at national (Biodiversity strategy) and international (Nagoya Protocol) levels.

## **Executing Arrangements**

UNEP's Ecosystems Division, GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit served as GEF Implementing Agency for this project. Bioversity International (IPGRI) is an international executing agency of the project. In Uzbekistan, the Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making named after M. Mirzaev (under Scientific and Production Centre for Agriculture of Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan) and Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology (IGPEB) were the National Executing Agencies responsible for the overall coordination and execution of the Project in accordance with the objectives and key activities.

The National Executing Agencies were supported by Bioversity International as the Leading project Executing agency responsible for overall project execution and for ensuring effective linkages between the implementing agency and the national executing agencies.

The Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making named after M. Mirzaev hosted the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PMU served as the critical link between the project sites and the partner national agencies, civil society organizations, local authorities and the lead Project Executing Agencies, to ensure that lessons learned were shared among sites and within national committees and to provide visibility of the project at the national and international level. The PMU and Bioversity International were responsible for ensuring adequate communication of information to all national and international partners.

The PMU consisted of the National Project Coordinator (NPC), supported by a Project Assistant. PMU staff were appointed by National Executing Agency to fulfill specific project management and coordination responsibilities.

Other project stakeholders included Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan; Tashkent State Agrarian University, Uzbek Research Institute of Plant Industry, Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology, Uzbek Research Institute of Forestry, Innovation Centre of Republican Union of Farmers, local communities in Sarapayan, Karvak, Buston, Shurakhon, Soliobod, Dashnobod, Karabog, Kizilolma and Shelkan.

### **Project Cost and Financing**

Project budget at design, broken down per component and funding source (GEF grant and co-financing) are presented in the Tables below.

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Grant Amount (\$)</b>	<b>Cofinancing (\$)</b>
<b>COMPONENT 1.</b> Mainstreaming mechanisms that use agricultural biodiversity to enhance ecosystem services in water scarce environments	512,495	1,360,000
<b>COMPONENT 2.</b> Increasing the use of fruit tree biodiversity that enhances ecosystem regulating services in water-scarce environments.	300,000	1,335,966
<b>COMPONENT 3.</b> Promoting and enabling environment for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms that recognize and enhance the custodians of ecosystem services.	211,000	618,534
Project monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management.	100,000	272,000
Sub-total	<b>1,123,495</b>	<b>3,586,500</b>
Project Management	112,350	563,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,235,845</b>	<b>4,150,000</b>

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Amount (\$)</b>
National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	Grant	268,646

National Government	Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture	In-kind	574,421
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	Grant	260,934
National Government	Uzbek Republican Research and Production Centre	In-kind	296,466
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	Grant	43,800
National Government	Tashkent State Agrarian University	In-kind	81,200
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	Grant	411,620
National Government	Uzbek Research institute of Plant Industry	In-kind	259,176
National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	Grant	15,000
National Government	Institute of Genetics and Plant Experimental Biology	In-kind	226,442
Private Sector	Albatros Oil Service	In-kind	100,000
NGO	Center for Agro Information-Innovation, Uzbekistan	In-kind	562,295
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	Grant	320,000
Other Multilateral Agency	Bioversity International	In-kind	580,000
GEF Agency	UNEP	In-kind	150,000
<b>Total Co-financing</b>			<b>4,150,000</b>

## Implementation Issues

### Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

#### Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>17</sup> and the UNEP Programme Manual<sup>18</sup>, the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational 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 Review 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

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

<sup>18</sup> <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

among UNEP, Bioversity International, and Uzbek Research Institute of Horticulture, Viticulture and Wine-making named after M. Mirzaev. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

## Key Review principles

Review findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Review 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.

The “Why?” Question. As this is a Terminal Review and a 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 consultant(s)’ minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) 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.

**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 reviews. 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.

**Communicating Review Results.** A key aim of the Review 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 review process and in the communication of review findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all review deliverables. Draft and final versions of the main Review Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Task Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant will plan with the Task Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key review findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of a review brief or interactive presentation.

## Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the strategic questions<sup>19</sup> listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TR:

- Q1: To what extent has the Project helped improve the resiliency of traditional agricultural production systems in water-scarce landscapes?

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<sup>19</sup> The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.

- Q2: What were the most successful examples of mainstreaming mechanisms adopted by the Project to enhance ecosystem services in water-scarce environments?
- Q3: Is there evidence and what impact has been achieved to improve health and productivity of targeted ecosystems?
- Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report:

### **Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:**

What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided<sup>20</sup>).

a). Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:

What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? (This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)

b). Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality:

What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)

c). Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:

What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. (Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this Review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)

d). Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? (This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)

## **Review Criteria**

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review 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.

Annex 1 of these Terms of Reference provides a table with a list of various tools, templates and guidelines that can help Review Consultant(s) to follow a thorough review process that meets all of UNEP's needs.

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<sup>20</sup> This does not apply to Enabling Activities

## **A. Strategic Relevance**

The Review will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Review 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's Medium-Term Strategy<sup>21</sup> (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities**

The Review 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. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building<sup>22</sup> (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations 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.

### **ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities**

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

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

The Review will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. 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 will also be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) or, national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no-one behind.

### **iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence<sup>23</sup>**

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization<sup>24</sup>, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review 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 work within UNDAFs or One

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<sup>21</sup> 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>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

<sup>23</sup> This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

<sup>24</sup> 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.



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**

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating<sup>25</sup> should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review 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**

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval<sup>26</sup>). This rating is entered in the final review 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 implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and Task Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

## **D. Effectiveness**

### ***i. Availability of Outputs***<sup>27</sup>

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in 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 Theory of Change (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. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs available and meeting expected quality standards.

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<sup>25</sup> In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

<sup>26</sup> 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. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

<sup>27</sup> 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).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision<sup>28</sup>

## ii. **Achievement of Project Outcomes**<sup>29</sup>

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed<sup>30</sup> 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. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review 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

## iii. **Likelihood of Impact**

Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the Review will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts 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 reviews is outlined in a guidance note 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.

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

The Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role<sup>31</sup> or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a

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<sup>28</sup> For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' will refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP, as Implementing Agency.

<sup>29</sup> 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)

<sup>30</sup> UNEP staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during a review 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 changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the review.

<sup>31</sup> The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project

project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long lasting impact.

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-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Review 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 partner(s).

*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**

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 Review 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/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Review 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 Review will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Review will assess the level of communication between the Project 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

## **F. Efficiency**

Under the efficiency criterion the Review 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 Review 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 Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project

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*– these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.*

timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review 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 complementarities<sup>32</sup> with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. Consultants should note that as management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to UNEP and Executing Agencies.

*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**

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

### ***i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting***

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART<sup>33</sup> results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review 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 Review 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, where applicable.

### ***ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation***

The Review will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards project 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, including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities, in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Review should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

The performance at project completion against Core Indicator Targets should be reviewed. For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

### ***iii. Project Reporting***

UNEP has a centralised project information management system (Anubis) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Review Consultant(s) by the Task Manager. Some projects have additional

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<sup>32</sup> Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

<sup>33</sup> SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Review will assess the extent to which both UNEP and GEF 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.

*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. H. Sustainability**

Sustainability<sup>34</sup> is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. '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 direct outcomes may also be included.

### ***i. Socio-political Sustainability***

The Review will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from 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 Review will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

### ***ii. Financial Sustainability***

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 natural resource management approach. The Review 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 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***

The Review 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 Review will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

*Factors affecting this criterion may include:*

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

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<sup>34</sup> 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*)

- 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 Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues**

*(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Review Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other review criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the Review Criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the reviewed project should be given in this section)*

### **i. Preparation and Readiness**

This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Review 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 Review 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**

For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' may refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP as Implementing Agency. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency; Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Review 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.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; 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**

Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs, target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the executing partner(s). 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.

The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

### **iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality**

The Review 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 Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment<sup>35</sup>.

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular the Review 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 and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent.

#### **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 Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements<sup>36</sup> 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 reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

The Review will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.

Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

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

The Review 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 Review will consider the involvement 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

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<sup>35</sup>The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP 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](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)

<sup>36</sup> 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.

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**

The Review 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 Review 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 Review will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate

The project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

### **Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES**

The Terminal Review will be an in-depth review using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the review process. Both quantitative and qualitative review 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 review implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the review findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) should 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.)

The findings of the Review will be based on the following:

A desk review of:

Relevant background documentation, inter alia biodiversity and natural resource management strategies, other substantive documents prepared by the projects and others;

Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;

Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool and others;

Project deliverables (e.g. publications, reports, assessments, surveys);

Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;

Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

(a) Interviews (individual or in group) with:

UNEP Task Manager (TM);

Project Manager (PM);

Project management team;

UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);



Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;

Project partners based on stakeholder analyses;

Relevant resource persons;

Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

- (b) **Surveys;**
- (c) **Field visits;**
- (d) **Other data collection tools,** all as appropriate for the terminal review and elaborated in the inception report.

## **E. Review Deliverables and Review Procedures**

The Review Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of 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, review framework and a tentative review 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.
- **Draft and Final Review Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

A **Review Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and review findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Task Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

**Review of the Draft Review Report.** The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The Task Manager will then forward the revised draft report 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 Task Manager for consolidation. The Task Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

The final version of the Terminal Review report will be assessed for its quality by the UNEP Evaluation Office using a standard template and this assessment will be annexed to the final Terminal Review report.

At the end of the review process, the Task Manager will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals, and circulate the **Lessons Learned**.

## **F. The Review Consultant**

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Task Manager in consultation with the Fund Management Officer, the Head of Unit/Branch, the Portfolio Manager and the Sub-programme Coordinators of the relevant UNEP Sub-programmes as appropriate.

The Review Consultant will liaise with the Task Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) 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 Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired for 40 workdays over a period of 4 months (1 September 2022 to 31 December 2022) and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach. A good/broad understanding of biodiversity and land management issues is desired. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is required, the knowledge of Russian is an asset. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

The Review Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Task Manager, for overall quality of the review and timely delivery of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Review Deliverables, above. The Review Consultant will ensure that all review criteria and questions are adequately covered.

## **G. Schedule of the Review**

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review over 4 months since start of the assignment.

**Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review**

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Tentative Dates</b>
Inception Report	3 weeks from starting date
Review Mission	6 weeks from starting date
E-based data collection through interviews, surveys and other approaches.	8 weeks from starting date
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	8 weeks from starting date
Draft Review Report to Task Manager (and Project Manager)	12 weeks from starting date
Draft Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	13 weeks from starting date
Final Review Report	16 weeks from starting date
Final Review Report shared with all respondents	16 weeks from starting date

## **H. Contractual Arrangements**

The Review Consultant(s) will be selected and recruited by the Task Manager under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultant certifies that they have not been associated with the design and

implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any 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.

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

Schedule of Payment:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Percentage Payment</b>
Approved Inception Report (as per Annex I document #9)	30%
Approved Draft Main Review Report (as per Annex I document #10)	30%
Approved Final Main Review Report	40%

**Fees only contracts:** Where applicable, 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 Task Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, Anubis, SharePoint, etc.) 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 Review Report.

In case the consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by UNEP, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of Branch or Portfolio Manager until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

If the consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to the Project Manager in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, UNEP reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultant's fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the project team to bring the report up to standard or completion.

## ANNEX IX. PORTAL INPUTS (FOR GEF FUNDED PROJECTS)

Table II: GEF portal inputs

<p><b>Question:</b> What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7<sup>37</sup>, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided<sup>38</sup>).</p>
<p><b>Response:</b> This was a GEF-5 project. Nonetheless, the following GEF 7 indicators could be retrospectively correlated.</p> <p><i>Indicator 3.1. Area of degraded agricultural land restored; 4.1. Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity; 4.3. Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems.</i></p> <p>At the CEO Endorsement stage, this GEF -5 project directly covered 3000ha of degraded land in the North and South project sites of Khorezm, Karakalpakstan and Surkhandarya regions. Landscape area indirectly covered by the project was 6000 ha. At the completion of the project and as at January 1, 2021, the area devoted to sustainably managed fruit tree diversity has increased as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the northern project area - by 56% (apple - 45%, apricot -39%, grapes - 180% and pomegranate - 162%.</li> <li>• Southern project site - by 300%. (<i>Statistic data collected in March-April 2021</i>).</li> </ul> <p>The number of varieties of target fruit crops with economically valuable traits increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern project area by 41% (apple tree - 42%, apricot - 46%, grapes - 56% and pomegranate - 41%).</li> <li>• Northern project area by 25% (apple tree - by 29%, apricot - by 20%, grapes - by 27% and pomegranate - by 25%.)</li> </ul> <p>(Data from 10 focus groups and 59 households in March-April 2021)</p>
<p><b>Question:</b> What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? (<i>This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval</i>)</p>
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>At the design stage, the project team had a well-elaborated stakeholder engagement plan with all key project partners' contribution and expected roles for the delivery of various outputs and activities. As a result of the multi-stakeholder participatory approach, a number of decisions were agreed by the stakeholders : their commitment to strengthen collaboration among farmers and national research institutes; closer cooperation with farmers councils to better access land resources and planting materials; proactive support by community authorities in establishing orchards in degraded lands by individual farmers; improved coordination between agriculture and environment sectors that lacked effective coordination at the outset of the project . Thanks to outreach activities, women farmers and youth were fully engaged in all key interventions in the two selected agro-ecoregions.</p> <p>Overall the engagement of stakeholders in the project has been well organised by following outreach strategies.</p>
<p><b>Question:</b> What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (<i>This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent</i>)</p>

<sup>37</sup> The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. .(i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)

<sup>38</sup> This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

**Response:**

Some attention was devoted to both gender and youth aspects during the project design and implementation stages. However, there is no data available to determine longer-term effect and to what extent their status has improved thanks to project interventions.

Selected women farmers mobilised other women farmers in the community which was well received and appreciated by the communities in the project sites. Around 30% of workshops and round table discussions were women participants. The School of Young Horticulturists was established in Kizilolma and Karabog communities in the South project site to engage local youth in agrobiodiversity conservation actions and the efficient use of land and water resources.

At the CEO Endorsement, the prodoc correctly identified the need to investigate “linkages among all actors involved in agricultural production, land and water resources management and agrobiodiversity maintenance at local and national levels” from a gender perspective. But this assessment was not carried out.

**Question:** What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

**Response:**

UNEP/GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist was completed at the outset of the project implementation. No substantial or high risks were identified during subsequent PIRs that required specific interventions. By its very nature the project targeted species that can grow in degraded, arid land, and using little inputs thus the project had no or minimal negative environmental footprint and/or social impact.

The project had both environmental and social positive impact. It contributed to restoring soil and ecosystem services in degraded land. The main beneficiaries of the two agro eco-regions benefitted from increased productivity by using biodiversity-rich crops and planting materials and as a result improved their social status and incomes.

**Question:** What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

**Response:**

Communication and learning between the project partners and beneficiaries were achieved through many round tables, fairs and through participatory field work. Targeted knowledge and communication products were widely disseminated among relevant stakeholders and the general public.

Project outputs and materials were disseminated in the form of technical fliers and posters. PA materials such as videos, stories, TV and radio interviews were produced and diversity fairs organized. The project team disseminated the gathered knowledge through three research papers published in proceedings of national on-line scientific conferences.

Web-portal <http://centralasia.biodiversityinternational.org> established within Regional UNEP-GEF/Biodiversity project “In situ/on farm conservation and use of agrobiodiversity (fruit trees and wild fruit species” in Central Asia” (2006-2013) was used as a mechanism for dissemination of results of the project and lessons learnt as well as technical and public awareness products developed by the project. The project's approaches and methodologies were shared with other international projects on a regular basis through the project's web-portal. Project team contributed to proceedings of on-line International Scientific and Practical Conference “Study, development, conservation and prospects of effective use of biodiversity of the genetic resources of cotton and other crops” organized by Uzbek Institute of Genetics and Experimental Plant Biology on 20-21 October 2020 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

**Question:** What are the main findings of the evaluation?

**Response:**

- This project was the natural next step in taking forward the results from a previous Central Asian regional project that focused on on-farm maintenance of local diversity of fruit crops, in-situ conservation of their wild relatives, and protection of farmers' rights in national policy frameworks.
- Against a backdrop of socio-political stability and the government's commitment to crop diversification, the primary focus of the project under review was the introduction of a sustainable management system as applied to the production of locally adapted fruit tree varieties. Despite cancellations and delays of some activities due to the COVID pandemic, the project delivered most outputs and outcomes in a timely and qualitatively satisfactory manner as per the targets set out in the results framework. Weaker aspects concerned no clear exit strategy, absence of a concrete tool to qualitatively assess the social and environmental aspects, and an overambitious goal relating to mainstreaming into non-project sites and other sectors.
- Most outputs and outcomes achieved the intended results. On top of that, the intermediate states could by and large be reached as many of the drivers and assumptions were held. The project interventions contributed to some extent to longer-term impacts as per the reconstructed Theory of Change, namely the impact of "reduced pressure on land contributing to sustainable natural resources management" and the impact of "climate change mitigation due to avoidable loss of agrobiodiversity".
- Throughout the project, the project team successfully mobilized stakeholders in a participatory approach that was key to empowering the main beneficiaries, namely smallholder farmers and nursery enterprises in the two intervention sites. Field work, research, assessments, various training and awareness raising events, development of technical guidelines, diversity fairs and exchange visits were based on this spirit of collaboration that helped stakeholders own the results of the project.
- Farmers understood and owned the innovative agricultural technologies involved in growing traditional and new varieties of target nut and fruit tree crops. Their livelihood improved as they could expand their farming to more marginal and degraded land using a greater diversity of fruit tree species that had functional resistant traits. The farmers' communities could rely on better and a more reliable supply of quality seeds and planting materials thanks to the improved supply mechanism. Land sector planners, district authorities, local seed and planting material nurseries and selected schools were convinced of the importance of local agrobiodiversity in land restoration and enhancing ecosystem services. Thanks to the effort at the regional and local levels, national-level policy makers were better sensitized for the adoption of national policy options in favour of the Nagoya protocol on access and benefit sharing.

## ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE REVIEW REPORT

Review Title: Conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity to improve regulating and supporting ecosystem services in agriculture production in Uzbekistan' (GEF ID 5403)

Consultant: Nara Luvsan

All UNEP Reviews are subject to a quality assessment by the UNEP Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the review product (i.e. Main Review Report).

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
<b>Substantive Report Quality Criteria</b>		
<p><b>Quality of the Executive Summary</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> acts as a stand alone and accurate <u>summary</u> of the main review product, especially for senior management.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• concise overview of the review object</li> <li>• clear summary of the review objectives and scope</li> <li>• overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria</li> <li>• reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report</li> <li>• summary response to key strategic review questions</li> <li>• summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions</li> </ul> <p>summary of lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report covers all required elements in detail and is well-written.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>However, it lacks a summary response to key strategic review questions and a reference to the location of the review ratings table within the report.</p>	5
<p><b>Quality of the 'Introduction' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> introduces/<u>situates</u> the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc)</li> <li>• date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report does provide a detailed introduction</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The final report lacks a reference to the Mid-Term Review conducted in 2018. Additionally, the timeframe of the evaluand is unclear and there are</p>	4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of project phases (where appropriate)</li> <li>• results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome)</li> <li>• coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented)</li> <li>• implementing and funding partners</li> <li>• total secured budget</li> <li>• whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.)</li> </ul> <p>concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.</p>	<p>inconsistencies regarding the project completion date.</p> <p>Para. 26 states that “...this Terminal Review was conducted after four years of the project completion in 2023 due to delays caused by COVID pandemic and the situation in the country”. However, the previous paragraph mentioned that the project “received four non-cost extensions with the last one until 31 December 2023”. Therefore, the project did not reach operational completion in 2019, as implied in para. 26.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the <u>credibility</u> of the findings and performance ratings.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• description of review data collection methods and information sources</li> <li>• justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face)</li> <li>• number and type of respondents (see <i>table template</i>)</li> <li>• selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited</li> <li>• strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation</li> <li>• methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc)</li> <li>• details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.)</li> <li>• methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc)</li> <li>• review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc)</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The section is good, but it could benefit from mentioning how respondents were selected, for transparency and credibility</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The final report lacks crucial details on the methods used to include diverse voices and analyze data. While it mentions efforts to incorporate marginalized groups and provides a respondent count, it does not specify selection criteria, data analysis methods, or limitations encountered. This omission reduces transparency and weakens the report's credibility.</p>	4



<p>ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>‘Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.</i></p>		
<p><b>Quality of the ‘Project’ Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <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)</li> <li>• <i>Results framework:</i> summary of the project’s results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)</li> <li>• <i>Stakeholders:</i> description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics</li> <li>• <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners</li> <li>• <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</li> </ul> <p><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>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report generally focuses on the required sections sections and the higher-level results (Intermediate States and Impact), in addition to the project outcomes.</p> <p>Para. 40 states that “The project aimed to achieve this through the following three components and corresponding outcomes and outputs”. However, the project outputs are not presented.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The report fails to mention project outputs in the 'Objectives and components' section, despite mentioning their inclusion. Additionally, the project financing section lacks clarity regarding whether presented tables are actual or planned, and omits information on expenditures. This undermines the overall comprehensiveness and transparency of the report.</p>	4.5
<p><b>Quality of the Theory of Change</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report largely covers the required sections.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p>	3

<p>assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• description of how the <i>TOC at Review</i><sup>39</sup> was designed (who was involved etc)</li> <li>• confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions</li> <li>• articulation of causal pathways</li> <li>• identification of drivers and assumptions</li> <li>• identification of key actors in the change process</li> </ul> <p>summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. <i>The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) 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'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.</i></p>	<p>It includes a Reconstructed ToC (rToC) diagram but omits Drivers and Assumptions from the diagram. While the casual pathways are clear, a summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in a table is missing. Additionally, Output 5 and Outcome 3 have identical wording, requiring further clarification.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of Key Findings within the Report</b></p> <p><u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source.</p> <p><u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix.</p> <p><u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. <b>A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to</b></p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>Evidence presented by the reviewer is clear and consistent. Each evaluation criteria has finding statements</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>While evidence presented by the reviewer is clear and consistent, each finding statement lacks broader insights that could aid in learning beyond the specific evaluand.</p>	5

<sup>39</sup> During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review 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 review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

<p><b>the evaluand.</b> In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.</p>		
<p><b>Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval.</p> <p>To include:</p> <p>Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities</li> <li>• Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities</li> <li>• Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities</li> </ul> <p>Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation<sup>40</sup>), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.</p>	<p>Final report (coverage/omissions):</p> <p>All elements are covered to a satisfactory level.</p> <p>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</p> <p>The final report adequately assesses the project's strategic relevance, covering all required elements. However, it should have additionally referenced the Subprogrammes and Expected Accomplishments/PoW Outcomes of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017, considering the project's implementation start date in 2016.</p>	5
<p><b>Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.</p>	<p>Final report (coverage/omissions):</p> <p>The final report provides a project design quality assessment table.</p> <p>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</p> <p>While the strengths and weaknesses are mentioned, a more comprehensive discussion would be beneficial for understanding the project's design effectiveness.</p>	4
<p><b>Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural</p>	<p>Final report (coverage/omissions):</p> <p>The report provides a concise overview of the project's external context.</p> <p>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</p>	4

<sup>40</sup> 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.

<p>disaster, political upheaval<sup>41</sup>), and how they affected performance.</p> <p>While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.</p>	<p>The report overlooks the impact of COVID-19 on project performance despite mentioning delays and cancellations caused by the pandemic in other sections.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section</b></p> <p><b>(i) Availability of Outputs:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget</li> <li>• assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets</li> <li>• assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries</li> </ul> <p>identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report covers the required sections.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The final report adequately presents the outputs achieved by the project, but it fails to assess their achievement against their intended indicators, baselines, and targets. Additionally, Output 1.3 is missing from the rToC, raising questions about its alignment with the project's overall objectives.</p>	4
<p><b>(ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report provides a good overview of the project's outcomes.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>While the report presents a brief assessment of output uptake and outcome achievement, it omits an essential table with outcome indicators and baselines/targets, hindering a comprehensive evaluation. Moreover, the 3rd Outcome and Output 3.1 statements are the same. Additionally, the report would benefit from a more quantitative</p>	3

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets</li> <li>discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself</li> <li>any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work</li> </ul> <p>identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</p>	<p>analysis of the project's impact on outcomes and a consideration of how these outcomes addressed the needs of disadvantaged groups.</p>	
<p><b>(iii) Likelihood of Impact:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown</li> <li>an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents</li> <li>explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out</li> </ul> <p>identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report covers the required sections.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>A more explicit discussion of the reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) and its causal pathways would strengthen the analysis.</p> <p>All the elements required to be discussed in this section, i.e., likelihood of impact based on the casual pathways represented in the rToC; unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups; explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents.</p>	4
<p><b>Quality of 'Financial Management' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed).</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report adequately assesses adherence and completeness of financial information, but some details related to timely approvals and disbursements should have been presented in the adherence section.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p>	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used</li> </ul> <p>communication between financial and project management staff</p>	<p>The overall assessment raises no major concerns.</p> <p>The Evaluation Office notes that the last row of Table 9 (Annex VI) should have assessed the “Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the review process”. However, the reviewer indicated that “No problem was highlighted in bi-annual reports”.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of ‘Efficiency’ Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness).</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• implications of any delays and no cost extensions</li> </ul> <p>the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP’s environmental footprint.</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The section only mentions that a cost-extension was granted till end of 2020 due to COVID-19, without, however, discussing that the project received four no-cost extensions with the last one until 31 December 2023. The initial end date was extended by four years, from 2019 to 2023. The reasons behind the four project extensions and implications should have been presented in this section.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The report fails to discuss the extent to which project management minimized UNEP’s environmental footprint, hindering a complete evaluation of efficiency and environmental responsibility.</p>	3
<p><b>Quality of ‘Monitoring and Reporting’ Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand’s monitoring and reporting.</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quality of the monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>)</li> <li>• quality of monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report provides a satisfactory overview of the project’s monitoring and reporting systems</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>A section states that “the project’s Results Framework presented in Annex A included SMART indicators...” and that “these indicators along with the key deliverables and benchmarks were included in Annex G..”. However, it appears that these Annexes were part of</p>	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quality of project reporting (e.g. PIMS and donor reports) \</li> </ul>	<p>the Project Document and not of the Terminal Review report.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of 'Sustainability' Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level).</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>socio-political sustainability</li> <li>financial sustainability</li> </ul> <p>institutional sustainability</p>	<p>Final report (coverage/omissions):</p> <p>The final report provides an overview of the project's sustainability prospects and highlights efforts towards long-term viability.</p> <p>Final report (strengths/weaknesses):</p> <p>A more detailed and integrated exploration of the three dimensions of sustainability would have strengthened the assessment and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the project's potential for lasting impact.</p>	5
<p><b>Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</p> <p>Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparation and readiness</li> <li>quality of project management and supervision<sup>42</sup></li> <li>stakeholder participation and co-operation</li> <li>responsiveness to human rights and gender equality</li> <li>environmental and social safeguards</li> </ul>	<p>Final report (coverage/omissions):</p> <p>The report adequately addresses the required cross-cutting themes</p>	5

<sup>42</sup> 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. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>country ownership and driven-ness</li> </ul> <p>communication and public awareness</p>		
<p><b>Quality of the Conclusions Section</b></p> <p><b>(i) Conclusions Narrative:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the <u>performance of the evaluand as a whole</u>, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process.</p> <p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project</li> <li>clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions</li> </ul> <p>human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The conclusions section provides a strong and comprehensive overview of the project's performance.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>Reference to Key Strategic Questions including a concluding/summary answer to these should have been provided in the conclusions section.</p>	5
<p><b>ii) Utility of the Lessons:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization)</p> <p>Consider how well the lessons achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future)</li> <li>briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful</li> </ul> <p>do not duplicate recommendations</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report presents conflicting information regarding the number of lessons learned. While the Executive Summary lists five, the Conclusions section only mentions four.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>The report fails to translate the identified findings into actionable and generalizable lessons, limiting their wider application and use.</p>	3
<p><b>(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations:</b></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> to present 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.</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>While the Executive Summary lists four recommendations, the Conclusions section only mentions three.</p>	3



<p>Consider how well the lessons achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when</li> <li>• include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions</li> <li>• represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.</li> </ul> <p><b>NOTES:</b></p> <p><b>(i)</b> 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><b>(ii)</b> 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 (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>Under 'Type or recommendations', the reviewer should have indicated either 'Project Level', 'UNEP-wide' or 'Partners'.</p> <p>The recommendations identified should have had a measurable performance target in order to be able to monitor their compliance.</p> <p>There is no recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights or gender dimension.</p> <p>Under responsibility for the 3<sup>rd</sup> recommendation, the report states "UNEP EO as initiator to implement TR recommendations". However, the Evaluation Office notes that the project team is responsible for the implementation of Review recommendations. Also, the UNEP Evaluation Office does not monitor compliance of Review recommendations.</p>	
<p><b>Quality of Report Structure and Presentation</b></p> <p><b>(i) Structure and completeness of the report:</b></p> <p>To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines?</p> <p>Are all requested Annexes included and complete?</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The report is complete and follows the Evaluation Office guidelines. All the required Annexes are included in the report.</p> <p>Final report (<i>strengths/weaknesses</i>):</p> <p>No weaknesses noted</p>	6
<p><b>(ii) Writing and formatting:</b></p> <p>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?</p>	<p>Final report (<i>coverage/omissions</i>):</p> <p>The final report is well-written and easy to understand, but it contains some minor formatting inconsistencies (spacing) and typos.</p>	5

Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report ( <i>strengths/weaknesses</i> ): The reviewer made an error in the "Type of recommendation" section, potentially impacting the implementation and relevance of the recommendations.	
<b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b>		<b>4.3</b>

