
**Evaluation of the Portfolio of five GEF funded UN
Environment projects on Access and Benefit Sharing**

SYNTHESIS REPORT



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Preamble

This synthesis report has been prepared by Patricia Moore, based on evaluation reports prepared by the author, Mario Escobedo and Franck Attere and is a product of the Evaluation Office of UN Environment. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Senior Management.

This Synthesis Report is based on evaluation findings of five GEF funded, UN Environment projects implemented between 2011 and 2015; Capacity Building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (GEF ID: 4415), Supporting the Development and Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing Policies in Africa (GEF ID: 2820), Building Capacity for Regionally Harmonized National Processes for Implementing CBD Provisions on Access to Genetic Resources and Sharing of Benefits (GEF ID: 3853), Strengthening the implementation of ABS regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean (GEF ID: 3855), and Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with Focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (GEF ID: 3801).

Four of these five projects were developed to assist countries to implement ABS – by building their capacity to do so. One of the projects focused on building capacity to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol. This synthesis report presents key findings from the evaluations of these five projects to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, as well as presenting the key lessons learned stemming from the evaluation findings to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF and their executing partners and the relevant agencies of the projects' participating countries. The five evaluation reports can be found at <http://www.unep.org/evaluation/>.

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Portfolio of five GEF/UN Environment projects on access and benefit sharing
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Acronyms

ABS	Access to genetic resources and benefit sharing
ACB	ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
FSP	Full-sized project
GEB	Global environmental benefit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (German Corporation for International Cooperation)
IUCN-SUR	International Union for Conservation of Nature South America Regional Office
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests, India
MSP	Medium-sized project
NBA	National Biodiversity Authority, India
PIR	Project Implementation Review
SCBD	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
UN Environment	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States dollars

1. Introduction

1. The third objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is “...the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources...”. CBD Article 15 established the basis for regulating what has become known as ‘access and benefit sharing’ (ABS). In 2004, the seventh CBD Conference of the Parties (COP-7) mandated the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing to elaborate and negotiate an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. On 29 October 2010, CBD COP-10 adopted the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.
2. During the period 2010-2016 (see Table 1), with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) implemented five ABS-related projects:
 - Capacity Building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (GEF ID: 4415 ‘Global Project’);
 - Supporting the Development and Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing Policies in Africa (GEF ID: 2820 ‘Africa Project’);
 - Building Capacity for Regionally Harmonized National Processes for Implementing CBD Provisions on Access to Genetic Resources and Sharing of Benefits (GEF ID: 3853 ‘ASEAN Project’);
 - Strengthening the implementation of ABS regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean (GEF ID: 3855 ‘LAC Project’); and
 - Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with Focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (GEF ID: 3801 ‘India Project’).
3. Four of these five projects were developed to work toward achieving the same goal – assisting countries to implement ABS – by building their capacity to do so. The Global Project focused on building capacity to ratify or accede to the Nagoya Protocol, rather than on national implementation.

Table 1. Chronology of and Investment in the UN Environment ABS Portfolio

	Executing Agency	Duration (in months)		Total investment ¹ (USD)	Start date	1 st extension	2 nd extension	Actual end date
		Planned	Actual					
<i>Global project (GEF MSP)</i>								
	SCBD	24	39	2,104,150	1 March 2011	27 November 2012	28 May 2014	30 June 2014
<i>Regional projects</i>								
▪ Africa (GEF FSP) 6 countries	<i>Regional</i> GIZ	29	48 (54)	1,610,750 ²	December 2010	June 2014	December 2014	December 2015, but activities continued until June 2015
	<i>National</i> 6 national agencies							
▪ ASEAN (GEF MSP) 11 countries ³	ACB	24	40	1,926,653 ⁴	1 August 2011	19 July 2013	July 2014	31 December 2014
▪ LAC (GEF MSP) 8 countries	IUCN-SUR	34	35	1,802,166	4 July 2011	N/A	N/A	June 2014
<i>National project</i>								
▪ India ⁵ (GEF FSP)	MoEF/ NBA	36	61	9,839,000	23 June 2011	24 July 2014	24 March 2015 ⁶	31 December 2016 ⁷

¹ Includes GEF funding, co-financing, and leveraged financing

² Includes GEF funding and co-financing.

³ Nine countries were GEF-eligible. One GEF-eligible country did not receive project funds. The two countries that were not GEF-eligible participated in project activities at their own expense.

⁴ Also includes leveraged funding. The ASEAN ABS project was the only one of the five projects that leveraged funding from sources other than the GEF and project co-financing.

⁵ Mid-term evaluation, rather than a terminal evaluation.

⁶ Date the extension was requested.

⁷ Projected completion date, as of the mid-term evaluation.

2. The Evaluation

2.1 Objectives and target audience

4. According to the Terms of Reference for the Portfolio Evaluation, the evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF and their executing partners. The evaluation is to identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. The Terms of Reference are attached as Annex 1 and the final evaluation reports of the five projects can be accessed through <http://web.unep.org/evaluation/>. The evaluation reports present more detailed information on evaluation approach and methods.
5. This synthesis report was prepared on the basis of the five completed project evaluations to bring together the key evaluation findings and lessons in a concise manner. The primary target audience of this synthesis report is (1) the UN Environment team that develops and manages ABS projects and (2) partners in all of the projects in the portfolio. The objectives of this synthesis report are to: explain the ABS portfolio for readers who were not aware of or involved with all five projects; identify successes and challenges from all five projects; and review lessons learned, highlighting commonalities and differences.

2.2 Approach

6. The evaluations of each of the five projects in the portfolio followed UN Environment's key evaluation principles, which require that evaluation findings and judgements be based on sound evidence and analysis, verified from different sources, and clearly documented. The Terms of Reference for the evaluation required that the findings be based on: background documentation, in particular UN Environment and GEF policies, strategies and programmes; project design documents, annual work plans and budgets or equivalent; revisions to the logical framework and project financing; project reports; Steering Group meeting minutes; annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), GEF Tracking Tools, project Mid-Term Reviews; documentation related to project outputs; relevant correspondence; and interviews with UN Environment Task Managers and Fund Management Officers, project management, project stakeholders, GEF Secretariat staff, and representatives of other relevant organizations. The evaluations used quantitative and qualitative methods to determine project achievements against the expected outputs and outcomes and against projected impacts.
7. The evaluations assessed the projects with respect to standard evaluation criteria: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; and (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation.
8. The Africa, ASEAN and India evaluations used a similar questionnaire, which was based on each project document and the evaluation Terms of Reference, to gather information from project stakeholders in a format designed to make it relatively easy to analyse and compare responses. The LAC evaluation adapted the same questionnaire to specifically target individual stakeholder groups. The evaluation of the Global Project used a shorter version of

the questionnaire. Each of the evaluations involved face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with project stakeholders.

2.3 Limitations

- 2 The evaluations of the Global Project and the three regional projects were terminal evaluations. The evaluation of the India Project was carried out after the end of the original project duration, but was done as a mid-term evaluation due to the project extensions and because a mid-term evaluation, as provided in the project document, had not been done. The evaluations of the ASEAN and LAC projects began during the final months of project implementation. The evaluations of the Global Project and the Africa Project were carried out two years after the projects ended, due to scheduling issues with the original evaluation team.
- 3 The evaluation reports of each of the five projects in the ABS Portfolio are the basis for this portfolio overview evaluation, which focuses on the findings of the individual project evaluations and on the lessons learned from them.

3. Findings

- 4 The three regional projects allocated significantly different budgets for similar national-level activities. The Africa Project involved six countries and allocated approximately 80% of its GEF funding to them. The lowest country allocation was slightly more than US\$156,000 and the highest was slightly more than US\$353,000. The ASEAN and LAC projects each involved eight countries that received project funding. The ASEAN Project allocated US\$34,000 for national-level activities in six countries and \$24,000 for activities in two countries, or approximately 24% of its GEF funding, and the LAC Project allocated approximately US\$70,000 per country, or approximately 66% of its GEF funding. The evaluations for each of the three regional projects noted that allocations for national-level activities were generally too low to achieve significant results, although individual countries in each region did so. The Africa Project did not deliver some of its regional outputs while the ASEAN Project delivered all of its regional outputs. The regional component of the LAC Project focused on capacity building at national level and sharing experiences and information and did not provide for regional outputs.
- 5 Strategic relevance. The evaluation rating for strategic relevance was ‘satisfactory’ for all five projects. The projects were designed and implemented in response to GEF’s ongoing strategic priority for ABS and complemented UN Environment’s priority of assisting countries to implement international environmental obligations. The Nagoya Protocol was adopted in October 2010 and all of the projects were approved and being implemented within less than a year afterwards. At the time of project design and implementation, the UN Environment Medium-term Strategy did not explicitly mention ABS, but focused on supporting States to implement international environmental obligations generally. The regional projects and the India project were found to be consistent with regional and national policies and priorities. The evaluation of the LAC ABS Project found that the project would have been more relevant if it had covered more of the issues involved in implementing ABS.
- 6 Achievement of outputs. The evaluation rating for achievement of outputs was ‘satisfactory’ for the Global, ASEAN, and LAC projects. The rating for the Africa project was ‘moderately satisfactory / ‘moderately unsatisfactory’⁸, primarily because one participating country did not produce any outputs due to administrative obstacles regarding funds transfers. The

⁸ The UN Environment Evaluation Office rates achievement of outputs ‘moderately unsatisfactory’.

rating for the India project was ‘moderately unsatisfactory’ because, at the end of the project’s planned three-year duration, the project had not yet achieved 100% completion of any of the project’s planned deliverables.

- 7 Effectiveness. The evaluation rating for effectiveness was ‘satisfactory’ for three of the projects and ‘moderately satisfactory’ for two projects. The Africa Project would have been more effective if it had convened a planned joint workshop to permit the specific exchange and dissemination of the lessons learned during this project and produced a planned synthesis report of the national lessons learned. The ASEAN Project was found to have been more effective in motivating stakeholders to participate in implementing ABS and somewhat less effective in building their capacity to do that.
- 8 Achievement of direct outcomes. The evaluation rating for the achievement of direct outcomes was ‘satisfactory’ for three of the projects and ‘moderately satisfactory’ for two projects. One of the countries participating in the Africa Project did not achieve any outcomes. The ASEAN Project had four expected outcomes and was found to have at least partially achieved each of them.
- 9 Likelihood of impact. GEF investments require delivery of global environmental benefits (GEB) in focal areas that correspond to the subject matter of the principal multilateral environmental agreements whose implementation the GEF supports. In the case of ABS, the focal area is biodiversity and the corresponding GEB is the third objective of the CBD: fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources. At the time the first of the evaluations for the ABS Portfolio were done, the GEF described delivering GEB as equivalent to ‘impact’. UN Environment’s Evaluation Manual specifies that projects should be designed to have the maximum possible potential for impact consistent with UN Environment’s mission. All of the projects in the ABS Portfolio were designed, approved, and being implemented before UN Environment required use of the Theory of Change approach, in which ‘impact’ is defined as a long-term goal that may be expected if a project achieves its direct outcomes and medium-term outcomes and intermediate states are subsequently also achieved.
- 10 Although the Theory of Change approach was not used to design and implement the five ABS projects, each evaluation required the evaluator to create a *post hoc* Theory of Change on which the rating for likelihood of impact was to be based. The evaluations proposed the following impacts for the projects in the ABS Portfolio:
 - “ABS contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components” -- Global and ASEAN projects;
 - “Reduced pressure/threats on biodiversity and maintenance of ecosystem services” – Africa Project;
 - “Genetic resources and traditional knowledge (TK) associated to these resources are conserved and accessed, and their benefits are shared, in a manner that is sustainable, equitable and just in the LAC Region” – LAC Project; and
 - “Enhanced benefit sharing & biodiversity conservation through better implementation of ABS provisions of BD [Biodiversity] Act” – India Project.
- 11 The evaluation rating for the likelihood of impact of the LAC Project was ‘satisfactory’, which this portfolio evaluation interprets to mean ‘likely’. The evaluation rating of the Global, ASEAN, and India projects was ‘moderately likely’ that the projects’ direct outcomes would lead to the impacts proposed in each evaluation’s *post hoc* Theory of Change. The evaluation of the Africa Project rated as ‘moderately unlikely’ the possibility that the project would achieve its proposed impact because impact will depend on many factors at the national level in individual countries, including governance – in particular institutions and legislation – finance, and critical capacity, that are currently lacking.

- 12 Achievement of project goal and planned objectives. The evaluation rating for achievement of project goal and planned objectives of the Global Project was 'satisfactory'. The evaluation rating of the Africa, ASEAN, and India projects was 'moderately satisfactory'. The evaluation of the LAC ABS Project did not provide a rating for this criterion.
- 13 Sustainability and replication. This criterion has five sub-criteria: financial; socio-political; institutional framework; environmental; and catalytic role and replication. The evaluation of the LAC Project found that, overall, the factors are in place to sustain the project outcomes and for the results to be replicable. The evaluation rating for this project was 'likely'. The evaluation rating of the Global, Africa, and ASEAN evaluations was 'moderately likely' as to whether the projects' direct outcomes would be sustainable and replicable. The evaluation rating of the India Project was 'moderately unlikely' that the project's direct outcomes would be sustainable and replicable based on the project status at the project's mid-term.
- 14 Efficiency. The evaluation rating for efficiency of the ASEAN and LAC projects was 'satisfactory'. The evaluation rating of the Global, Africa and India projects was 'moderately satisfactory'.
- 15 Factors affecting performance. This criterion has eight sub-criteria: preparation and readiness; project implementation and management; stakeholder participation and public awareness; country ownership and driven-ness; gender and equity; financial planning and management; UN Environment supervision and backstopping; and monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation rating of the LAC Project for this overall criterion was 'satisfactory', but the ratings for the individual criteria do not appear to justify an overall rating higher than 'moderately satisfactory'. The evaluation rating of the Global, ASEAN, and India projects was 'moderately satisfactory' for the overall criterion. The Africa and LAC project evaluations did not provide a rating for the sub-criterion on gender and equity.
- 16 UN Environment supervision and backstopping. The evaluation rating for UN Environment supervision and backstopping of the Africa and ASEAN projects was 'satisfactory'. The evaluation rating of the Global, LAC, and India projects for supervision and backstopping was 'moderately satisfactory'. For the Global Project, the first of the three Task Managers did not complete all monitoring and evaluation requirements, the second retired before the project was completed, and there was no record of the inputs of the third. The LAC Project evaluation found that guidance for the executing agency on GEF requirements for project management was inadequate and that there was a six-month delay in issuing official confirmation of project closure. The evaluation of the India project found that, although the Task Manager indicated in interviews that the project was significantly delayed and there were considerable difficulties in getting the executing agency to meet financial management and monitoring requirements, the Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) did not document any concerns with project progress.
- 17 Monitoring and evaluation. This criterion has three sub-criteria: Monitoring and Evaluation design; budgeting and funding for Monitoring and Evaluation activities; and Monitoring and Evaluation plan implementation. The evaluation rating of the Global, ASEAN, and India projects was 'moderately satisfactory' for the overall Monitoring and Evaluation criterion. The evaluation rating of the Africa project for Monitoring and Evaluation design was 'satisfactory' and for implementation was 'moderately satisfactory'⁹. The evaluation rating of the LAC Project for Monitoring and Evaluation overall was 'moderately unsatisfactory', but the evaluation did not provide ratings for any of the sub-criteria. The 'moderately unsatisfactory' rating was due to the fact that, while the project's Monitoring and Evaluation design adequately provided for tracking delivery of outputs, it did not provide for monitoring achievement of outcomes or budget performance with respect to Monitoring and Evaluation.

⁹ The ABS Africa TE report did not provide an overall rating for monitoring and evaluation.

3.1 Successes

- 4 Ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol achieved its 50th ratification – and the Global ABS Project achieved its objective – shortly after the project ended. All ratifications of the Nagoya Protocol took place after the Global Project began. It was not possible to directly attribute the ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol to the Global Project alone, but 84% of the countries that ratified or acceded to the Nagoya Protocol during the project period had participated in a project-sponsored event.
- 5 Information and awareness. All five projects in the ABS Portfolio responded relatively successfully to well-documented gaps in two areas that were crucial for making the case for ratifying the Nagoya Protocol and implementing ABS – information and awareness.
 - a. Information. The Global Project produced a series of high-quality policy briefs and factsheets on seven ABS-related issues, which countries are still using. The Global Project also developed the Nagoya Protocol portal on the CBD website. Information on what individual countries are doing to implement ABS, including under the regional and national projects in the ABS Portfolio, is available on the website. The Africa Project produced toolkits on ABS. The LAC Project evaluation found that the project was most successful with building capacity (see paragraph 26) and with information, providing national ABS authorities with tools, mechanisms and guidance to implement frameworks and regulations governing ABS and TK. The ASEAN Project focused on disseminating existing tools for implementing ABS, making them available and explaining them to all participating countries. The India Project was most successful in generating the country-specific information and tools that all states in the country, not only the project states, need to begin implementing ABS.
 - b. Awareness. The Global Project and the LAC project increased awareness among institutions and individuals that are not traditional CBD stakeholders. The Global Project targeted decision-makers in ministries of foreign affairs and others responsible for ratifying and acceding to international agreements. The LAC project focused in particular on creating awareness about ABS among government agencies responsible for intellectual property. The evaluation of the LAC Project found that, overall, it achieved significant successes in increasing awareness in the participating countries about issues involved with ABS and TK.

The LAC project also fostered a bilateral exchange of experience between two participating countries, which resulted in the replication of successful experiences and lessons learned in both countries. The LAC Project evaluation found that this project activity was highly valued by government actors and other sectors in both countries.

The Africa Project created awareness among ABS stakeholders, including indigenous and local communities (ILCs), of the value of genetic resources, the benefits that using genetic resources can generate, and the conservation measures needed to conserve the value and derive the benefits.

The ASEAN and India projects had varying degrees of success with awareness-raising. Governments tended to send new people to each of the ASEAN Project's workshops, which made it challenging for the project to build a critical mass of individuals with sufficient awareness and understanding of ABS. In India, even though the Biodiversity Act has been in force for more than a decade, most stakeholders are only slowly beginning to understand the significance of ABS. In three of the five original participating states, the project mid-term evaluation concluded that awareness increased moderately; two states experienced a significant increase.
- 6 Building capacity. All five projects were designed to build participating countries' capacity to ratify the Nagoya Protocol or implement ABS at national and sub-national level, but greater capacity was not ultimately the principal result of all of the projects.

- The LAC Project was found to have been most effective in achieving its outcomes related to building the capacity of national ABS authorities.
- The Africa Project began the process of developing and increasing the capacity of most traditional ABS stakeholders in the participating countries to put necessary policies and regulations in place and also to begin to implement them.
- As of the end of its originally-planned duration, the India Project apparently over-stated the achievement status of five of the six activities specifically focused on building capacity. Assuming that the project completed all activities within its extension period, it would have contributed to increasing capacity to implement ABS in slightly more than one-third of India's total of 29 states.
- The ASEAN Project's own capacity assessment found that the project had been more effective in creating motivation than in actually building capacity to implement ABS.
- The Global Project dropped the project output that focused on developing training materials to build capacity and instead concentrated its efforts on creating and building awareness of ABS and the issues involved in implementing it.

3.2 Challenges

- 7 Each project, to some degree at both the design and implementation stages, appeared not to have adequately taken into account the degree to which project components were inter-dependent and the degree to which that inter-dependence would affect implementation. Challenges are presented here as discrete overall concerns but, in practice, they were inter-connected and impacted the implementation of each project to varying degrees.
- 8 Administrative issues. Administrative obstacles that were not addressed at the project design stage created significant challenges for both the Africa and ASEAN projects. In both of those regional projects, one country that was supposed to participate did not because national procedures for accepting and receiving external funding were incompatible with project arrangements and procedures and it was impossible to resolve the incompatibilities. The considerable time that project management for both the Africa and ASEAN projects had to spend trying to resolve these ultimately unresolvable issues, could have been used much more productively to deliver project outputs and outcomes.
- 9 Wide variations in institutional and individual capacities in participating countries. Four of the projects in the ABS Portfolio were affected by the fact that project designs did not adequately provide for accommodating the capacity variations among participating countries. The Africa Project was the only one for which the evaluation did not find that capacity differences had been a challenge.

The evaluation of the ASEAN Project noted:

"The project design did not adequately factor in the significant disparity in the capacities of the participating countries to absorb project inputs and actually deliver outputs. One country respondent captured this overall challenge for the project, noting that it was difficult for a regional project to even develop a work plan that was appropriate for all participating countries because the differences among them with respect to understanding of ABS and capacity for implementing it were so great."

- 10 These design deficiencies were most apparent with respect to the tasks assigned to participating countries. The time available to countries to produce deliverables and the funding allocated for them to do so were disproportionate to their individual capacities to deliver.

The evaluation of the LAC Project articulated the issue this way:

"The project did not have a systematic and consistent assessment of country specificities to design activities to be better in line with national circumstances of each country. Instead,

the project had a 'standard package' of interventions and activities aimed at several countries with different national circumstances."

- 11 The project documents for the Global Project and the India Project acknowledged differences in the capacities of the countries and states, respectively, that would participate in those projects, but the project evaluations found that both projects were less effective than they could have been in factoring those differences into carrying out project activities.
- 12 The ASEAN Project appears to have been the only one of the projects that attempted to establish a baseline for capacity to implement ABS among all participating countries and then to evaluate the project's performance with respect to the baseline. The executing agency for the ASEAN ABS Project used a capacity self-assessment tool that it adapted from guidelines for monitoring capacity development in GEF projects. However, the first, or baseline, capacity assessment was done at the end of the first year of the two-year project. If the capacity assessment had been done at the beginning of the project, it might have been possible to revise the components, outcomes, deliverables and activities to focus on a particular capacity gap or gaps for all countries, groups of countries, or even individual countries. But that did not happen and given the relatively short period of the project, the relatively limited funding available, and the fact that so many individuals in each country needed orientation and training, it was a considerable challenge for the project to attempt to deliver on building capacity in the broad, undefined sense of the project document.
- 13 Temporal and geographic scope. The most significant challenges the Global ABS Project faced were due to the relatively brief two-year original duration of the project and the sheer number of the countries with which it ultimately had to deal. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) had already had experience with getting another protocol ratified and in force; that process took three-and-one-half years. The CBD's own Aichi Targets called for the Nagoya Protocol to enter into force by 2015, but the project target was 2012. The project document did not specify the countries the project would support, indicating simply that the project would work with at least 50 GEF-eligible CBD Parties. 'At least 50' ultimately meant more than 100 countries and during implementation the project introduced end-of-project targets that were even higher.
- 14 Language. Regional and national partners in the ASEAN Project cited language as one of the two principal challenges for implementing ABS at national level. The eight countries that received project funding have different national languages; only one of those countries uses English as a second national language. Asymmetrical command of the English language hampered feedback and interventions by participants from some countries in regional capacity-building activities. Regional virtual networks that the project created were not as successful as they might have been because the online resources are in English only.

The awareness-raising materials the Global Project produced were translated into six official UN languages. Countries that do not use an official UN language needed support to translate the ABS materials into national languages, but funding was not available. Each state participating in the India Project translated project materials, which were prepared in English, into at least one local language. The Africa Project involved countries using four languages and LAC Project countries use two languages; the evaluations of those projects did not note any challenges caused by language differences.
- 15 Sharing information and experience among the projects. This portfolio of projects could have been an opportunity for significant South-South communication and collaboration, but apparently neither the implementing agency nor any of the executing agencies was given responsibility to coordinate such an effort. The ASEAN Project and the India Project convened a joint workshop, and a representative of the Africa Project participated in one ASEAN Project regional workshop. The Global Project reported that it coordinated with the ASEAN and LAC projects, but the LAC Project evaluation reported no sharing of experience

and information with the other projects in the portfolio, except for updates to Project Steering Committee meetings.

4. Lessons Learned

16 Lessons 4.1 and 4.2 are common to four of the five projects. Lessons 4.3-4.7 reflect experience with individual projects. Annex 8 is a summary of lessons learned specifically in implementing the ASEAN Project.

Lesson 4.1 Ensure comprehensive context analysis at the design stage.

- Clearly define a project's scope and targets at the design stage.
 - Develop a project's Theory of Change at the design stage and use it as the basis for monitoring and evaluation.
 - Assess thoroughly the capacity and readiness of each participating country, or sub-national jurisdiction, to implement the project.
 - Pay particular attention to the differences among countries, or sub-national jurisdictions, and explicitly prepare for how project implementation will manage those differences.
 - Ensure that administrative capacity is taken into account, as well as the capacity to address the substantive issues involved in the project.
 - After securing country endorsement to prepare a proposal, project designers should carry out in-depth consultations with potential participating countries and other partners to understand the capacities and needs specific to each country.
 - Specifically build in to project design an inception phase that requires a critical review of project design at start-up, with substantive input from all project partners.
- 17 Four of the five projects encountered difficulties and delays because the potential impact on project implementation of differences among participating countries was not addressed at the design stage and not adequately provided for during implementation. For three of the projects, there were significant differences in participating countries' institutional and human resource capacities to implement the projects. The Global Project document had noted that countries have different procedures for ratifying international agreements, but did not anticipate the impact those differences would have on project implementation. Two of the regional projects had not anticipated the variations in individual countries' administrative procedures for receiving and disbursing funds. One country in each of those two regional projects was unable to receive project funds. Attempting to resolve those administrative issues after implementation began required substantial effort on the part of project management that could have been directed to supporting the achievement of project outputs and outcomes.
- 18 If substantive and administrative capacity issues have not been comprehensively foreseen in a draft project document, the pre-approval review process should ensure that revisions to the project document explicitly address them and provide guidance on how to manage them during project implementation.
- 19 If a project's scope and/or targets are changed during project implementation, the justification for the changes should be comprehensively documented for subsequent project management decisions and for monitoring and evaluation.
- 20 If Lesson 4.1 has not been incorporated into project design, executing agencies should do this before beginning implementation. See Lesson 4.2.

Lesson 4.2 Plan for and carry out a “reality check” re-thinking and adjustment phase before implementation begins.

- Recognizing that there may be a lapse of a year or more between project development and implementation, it would be advisable for the designers of future projects to specifically build in an inception phase that requires a critical review of project design at start-up, with substantive input from all project partners. During such a substantive inception phase, future projects would do well to: update the actual situation in participating countries and in the region against the context at the time the project document was written; assess the time and funding proposed for implementation against actual national capacity to deliver; revise project components and deliverables accordingly; and develop work plans on this basis.
- During this initial period before the start of implementation, ideally a project’s lead executing agency should visit participating countries or sub-national jurisdictions and consult national or sub-national executing partners to verify whether necessary preparations have been completed and all participating partners are ready to start implementation.
- For capacity-building projects, if capacity assessments were not done as part of the project development process, these should be carried out at the beginning of the project, rather than after the project is already well into its implementation. If capacity assessments were done as part of the project development process and the results included in the project document, these should be reviewed and updated during the inception phase.

Lesson 4.3 Design and implementation of regional projects should include regional activities.

- The LAC Project document did not define responsibilities and mechanisms for engagement with regional bodies and did not provide for implementing activities at the regional level beyond sharing experiences. A regional project approach requires more than country-level activities in order to achieve outcomes and impact at the regional level. The other two regional projects did not have this constraint. Refer to Lessons 4.1 and 4.2.

Lesson 4.4 Promote the participation of non-traditional stakeholders.

- The LAC Project evaluation found that relying solely on a country’s environment authority to implement an ABS project was not an effective approach. ABS is a multi-disciplinary issue whose stakeholders include many who are not traditional biodiversity conservation stakeholders. ABS projects need to engage stakeholders that are involved in ABS-related issues even if those stakeholders are not traditional environmental authorities, and also promote the participation of decision-makers from all stakeholder groups for political support. One way to try to ensure this would be to include in a project steering committee more than one government authority with a mandate for some aspect of ABS. The evaluations of the other regional projects and the national project did not find this to be an issue. One of the successes of the Global Project was the degree to which it did involve non-traditional stakeholders (see paragraph 25b).

Lesson 4.5 When there is a portfolio of projects on the same issue, ensure effective coordination among all projects in the portfolio.

- See paragraph 32. The five projects in the ABS Portfolio were all designed at different times and with different partners. But all of the projects were approved and began implementation within months of each other (see Table 1). While it may not have been foreseen at the time each individual project was developed that there would be five

related projects being implemented at the same time, the fact that there were four other related projects in the pipeline was certainly known by the time implementation of the first project began. Once an implementing agency is aware that there are related projects that effectively constitute a portfolio, the agency should assign overall responsibility for coordination and ensure that it is accommodated in each project in the portfolio. A 'reality check' inception phase of each project would be the opportunity to do that. See Lesson 4.2.

Lesson 4.6 Monitor and oversee critically to avoid over-reaching.

- The India Project was designed to work with five sub-national jurisdictions. One month after the project's original completion date, when the project had not achieved 100% completion of even one deliverable and disbursement was less than half of the GEF contribution, the Project Steering Committee extended the project to an additional seven sub-national jurisdictions. In large countries and regions with needs proportionate to their size, there is a temptation to try to meet all of those needs, whether or not it is realistic or feasible to do so with a single project. With a project whose design and/or implementation has over-reached, staff may be put in a position of simply reacting to the consequences of the over-reach. If workable mechanisms for coordinating oversight and project monitoring have not been adequately provided for in the project document, that gap could be filled during a 'reality check' inception phase of each project. See Lessons 4.1 and 4.2.

5. Conclusions

- 21 The overall lesson that emerges from the projects in the ABS Portfolio is that, in designing future projects, much more attention must be devoted to understanding the specific needs and capacities of individual countries involved. If that is not done at the design stage, it could be at least partially remedied during a substantive inception phase. If that does not happen, implementation will be affected, particularly when projects are relatively short-term, such as two years.

What were the advantages and disadvantages of a portfolio with a global project supporting ratification and regional and national projects supporting national implementation?

- 22 It is not possible to directly attribute the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol to the projects in the ABS Portfolio. Nevertheless, 18 (69.2%) of the 26 countries participating in the regional and national projects ratified during their respective projects or after their projects closed. Nine of those countries (34.6%) ratified the Protocol during the implementation of their respective projects and the implementation of the Global Project: two that participated in the Africa Project, four that participated in the ASEAN Project, two that participated in the LAC Project, and India. Seven of the nine countries that ratified during both their respective projects and the Global Project had sent a representative to at least one of the workshops the Global Project convened. Nine countries (34.6%) ratified the Protocol after their respective projects closed: four that participated in the Africa Project, two that participated in the ASEAN Project, and three that participated in the LAC Project. As of 1 March 2017, of the 26 countries that participated in the regional and national projects, eight (30.8%) had not ratified the Nagoya Protocol; five of those countries participated in the ASEAN Project and three participated in the LAC Project.
- 23 The Nagoya Protocol did not enter into force any more quickly than the previous CBD Protocol – the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Global Project used cost-saving measures, but by the end of the project, the SCBD had invested 82% more in co-financing than originally budgeted. There was no comparable project to promote ratifying the Cartagena Protocol, and the Global Project missed an opportunity to carry out an in-depth

analysis of the costs and benefits of bringing the Nagoya Protocol into force, so there is no basis on which to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages, or cost-effectiveness, of the Global Project.

What would have happened without the projects in the ABS Portfolio?

24 Without the Global Project, countries that had signed the Nagoya Protocol would have proceeded with ratification at the paces dictated by their own priorities, procedures, and capacities, and possibly more slowly. Similarly, without the regional and national projects, the participating countries and regional authorities would have proceeded at their individual paces, with no impetus for these processes to move more quickly or effectively.

What happened because of the projects in the ABS Portfolio?

25 The Global Project gave the SCBD much-needed resources for communication and outreach and specifically focused those resources on promoting ratification of the Nagoya Protocol. With these resources, the Global Project not only encouraged countries that had already signed the Protocol to ratify it, it also encouraged countries that had not signed to sign.

26 The regional and national projects' most important achievements are that they provided information and raised awareness about ABS and, as a result generated interest in implementing ABS. The global, regional and national successes were due at least in part to the fact that the projects engaged traditional and non-traditional stakeholders and enabled countries to produce information on ABS in national languages. These intangible achievements have the potential to stimulate the participating countries to undertake further efforts at the national level to implement ABS and to take part even more actively in any future regional initiatives.

Annex 1. Terms of Reference: ABS – Portfolio Evaluation: Evaluation of five UN Environment / GEF projects on Access and Benefit Sharing

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

This is the Terms of Reference for an Evaluation of UNEP/GEF Access and Benefit Sharing portfolio. It will draw its findings on Evaluations of five UNEP/GEF projects on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS), as defined under the Convention on Biological Diversity. The projects include¹⁰ “Capacity building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing” (ABS Global); “Supporting the development and implementation of access and benefit sharing policies in Africa” (ABS Africa); “Building capacity for regionally harmonized national processes for implementing CBD provisions on access to genetic resources and sharing benefits” (ABS Asean), “LAC ABS – Strengthening the implementation of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean” (ABS LAC) and “Supporting ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS through technology transfer and private sector engagement in India (ABS India).

Rationale of the portfolio projects¹¹

1. Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) is one of the three main objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), signed in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and it sets out obligations to the parties related to access to genetic resources and to the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their utilisation. As defined by the Convention, it refers to the way in which genetic resources are accessed and how the benefits from their use are shared between the people or countries using them (users) and the people or countries that provide them (providers). Accessing and using genetic resources bears significant potential benefits, since they provide information to better understand the natural world and they can be used to develop products and services, such as medicines, cosmetics and agricultural techniques. These valuable resources make up complex ecosystems which, however, can be threatened or endangered and therefore the way in which genetic resources are accessed, shared and used can create incentives for conservation and sustainable use of different ecosystems. Moreover, the current understanding and knowledge of the genetic resources is based on traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities. Therefore it is paramount to value the traditional knowledge and to value it appropriately to avoid risking the communities together with their resources.

2. The Convention identifies providers of the genetic resources as States that have sovereign rights over the natural resources under their jurisdiction. However, national legislation may entitle others, such as Indigenous and Local Communities (ILCs) as providers and thereby to negotiate on the terms of ABS. The Convention defines users as diverse groups, such as researchers for pharmaceutical, agriculture and cosmetic industries, botanical gardens and research institutes, seeking genetic resources for wide ranging purposes from basic research to development of new products. The Convention defines the potential benefits deriving from the use of genetic resources to be either monetary, such as sharing of royalties when the resource is used to create commercial products, or non-monetary, such as development of research and knowledge. The users of genetic resources are responsible for sharing the benefits with the providers. Therefore, understanding the ABS – frameworks of CBD and the Bonn Guidelines can assist governments to establish their national frameworks in a way which ensures that access and benefit-sharing is equitable and fair. In practice, the provider grants a Prior Informed Consent (PIC), i.e. a

¹⁰ Projects ABS Global, ABS Africa, ABS ASEAN, and ABS LAC will undergo a Terminal Evaluation. Project ABS India will undergo a Mid-term Evaluation.

¹¹ Sources : Convention on Biological Diversity : Introduction to access and benefit-sharing (<https://www.cbd.int/abs/infokit/revised/web/all-files-en.pdf>); UNEP/GEF project documents for the evaluated projects.

permission from a national authority to the user prior to accessing genetic resources, and negotiations are held to develop Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT), i.e. agreement on the conditions of access and use of the resources, and the benefits to be shared, to ensure fair and equitable sharing of genetic resources and associated benefits.

3. The CBD COP6 (2002) adopted the *Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization*, as voluntary guidelines to assist the governments with the implementation of the CBD ABS-framework. More precisely, the Guidelines were aimed to assist countries as providers in setting up legislative, administrative and policy measures for ABS, e.g. recommending the elements of PIC – procedures, as well as to assist providers and users in the negotiation of MATs. Moreover, in COP-6, discussions were initiated to negotiate an international regime to promote fair and equitable ABS and the following COPs discussed, agreed on and set in motion a process to establish a *Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization*, finally adopted in the COP-10 (2010) in Nagoya.

4. After the Bonn Guidelines were adopted, it was, however, recognized that some countries were constrained in fully utilizing the guidelines due to capacity constraints, and therefore unable to effectively participate in the negotiations of the international ABS regime. The five UNEP/GEF projects under evaluation now responded to the need for building capacity of countries for access and benefit sharing to enable the Parties of the CBD to elaborate, negotiate and implement the Convention.

(i) Capacity building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS Global)

5. According to the Second National Reports to the CBD, 81 countries out of the 93 attached high or medium level priorities to access and benefit sharing, in the Third National Reports, high or medium level priorities have been awarded by 98 of the 129 countries. Moreover, a study on 109 National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) showed that more than 50 % included ABS measures and / or objectives. However, the countries identified several capacity barriers and capacity building needs regarding ABS, and assessed that in general there is poor understanding of the critical issues related to access and benefit sharing, there are inadequate capacities of institutional frameworks relevant for the regulation of access and benefit sharing, there is lack of adequate skills on the valuation of biological / genetic resources, and lack of general awareness on ABS issues.

6. The ABS Global – project was designed as a global technical assistance project to address the identified capacity barriers and to contribute to the achievement of the third objective of the CBD. The project specifically arose from a request from countries participating in COP 10 to be assisted in the ratification process. Through targeted awareness raising and capacity building activities, the project aimed to help developing countries include improved ABS measures and plans in national priorities. The project was implemented from April 2011 to January 2014.

(ii) Supporting the development and implementation of access and benefit sharing policies in Africa (ABS Africa)

7. Africa contains five globally significant hotspots and numerous unique environments, home to only partially documented plethora of indigenous species. The ABS Africa - project was developed against the backdrop that Africa hosts a substantial proportion of the world's genetic diversity but that loss of biodiversity, and consequently the genetic resources, is a major concern. Moreover, for centuries Africa has contributed significantly to the world's reserve of genetic resources, but instead of the local communities, the benefits from these have mainly flowed to states, enterprises, institutions or individuals outside the region. Considering the threats to biodiversity and the fact that Africa still hosts a vast potential of undiscovered genetic resources, there is a need to ensure that benefits of sustainably utilizing genetic resources are recognized and that the benefits are equitably shared. If properly managed, the biological wealth can contribute to poverty alleviation and food security, fostering industrial innovation

and developing new medicines. However, it was recognized that whilst reasonable capacity exists in the relevant core sciences, there is lack of capacity in the legal and policy aspects of genetic resources use and conservation. This combined with adverse economic conditions, most African countries lack the human and organizational resources to conduct research and implement policies to combat threats of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, especially of indigenous food crops and other useful plants, animal species and microorganisms.

8. The ABS Africa - project was implemented from August 2010 to December 2012 to build capacities to meaningfully participate in access and benefit sharing processes. The project engaged with different actors, from governments to local communities in six African countries; Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal and South Africa.

(iii) *Building capacity for regionally harmonized national processes for implementing CBD provisions on access to genetic resources and sharing benefits (ABS Asean)*

9. The Southeast Asian region is rich in biological resources and hosts an exceptionally rich diversity of cultivated plant species and domesticated animals. Throughout the region crop cultivation is largely dependent on traditional cultivars, old varieties and landraces and the region is rich in local, unimproved varieties of regionally and globally food crops. The regions many indigenous and traditional communities constitute important repositories of biodiversity-related knowledge. However, the region is increasingly environmentally vulnerable as the forest, mountain, inland water and marine and coastal ecosystems are threatened by land conversion and degradation, pollution, deforestation and overuse of resources.

10. The ABS Asean project was developed as a regional response to the identified capacity building needs in regards to ABS in the ASEAN member countries. The countries share many biological, economic, legal, cultural and linguistic similarities and ties, implying sensibility of a regional approach to ABS capacity building. However, the project baseline study found that implementation of existing environmental legislation has left room for improvement, provisions related to ABS were fragmented and overall the ABS measures were limited. There was thus a need to establish effective ABS strategies to secure conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, to ensure that traditional knowledge on biodiversity is respected and preserved, to support the development of biotechnology in the region, and to ensure equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. The project aimed to address this by assisting the Southeast Asian countries to implement the Bonn Guidelines and to build capacity of the countries to effectively participate in the negotiations of the international ABS regime.

11. The ABS Asean project was implemented from November 2010 to October 2012 in ten Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, together with Timor Leste). The project aimed to respond to three key priority needs identified by the participating countries, namely (i) Develop the regional ABS network by building on the Agreement; (ii) Develop national capacities to ensure access and benefit sharing; and (iii) Develop a targeted public awareness and educational programme to increase awareness in marginalised and key non-governmental stakeholder and assist them to participate more effectively in the development and implementation of an ABS Policy.

(iv) *LAC ABS - Strengthening the implementation of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean (ABS LAC)*

12. The LAC ABS- project is being implemented from June 2011 to May 2014 in nine Latin American and Caribbean countries; Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama and Peru, from which all are important centres of biological and cultural diversity, and four countries are members of the Group of Megadiverse Countries. The countries are also increasingly recognizing the opportunities catalysed by an effective ABS framework, and gradually linking this area of work to protection of Traditional Knowledge (TK) and other social issues. Since the countries share a

portion of each other's resources, regional approaches to developing ABS are economically, politically and environmentally sound.

13. The project aimed to ensure that the principles of conservation, sustainability, equity and justice of the CBD in regards to access and benefit sharing and the protection of traditional knowledge are incorporated in the development and implementation of public policies, norms, programs and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The overall objective of the project was to strengthen the capacities of the nine countries to develop and / or comply with national policy and legal frameworks regarding access to genetic resources, benefit sharing and the protection of traditional knowledge. The Project consisted of three technical components that focused on (i) capacity building of stakeholders through knowledge transfer and knowledge management, (ii) capacity building for integration and application of ABS and TK regimes and for negotiating contracts and agreements, and (iii) capacity building for comprehensive cross-implementation of the various international treaties that relate to ABS and TK.

(v) “Strengthening the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (ABS India)”

14. India is one of the mega biodiversity rich countries of the world, home to four of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots and 45,968 species of flora and 91,364 species of fauna. This vast biodiversity is of immense economic, ecological, social and cultural value and it has tremendous value for posterity. However, similar to many other countries in the world, India is facing human pressure on the natural resources in the form of habitat destruction, monoculture and intensive agriculture, climate change, invasive alien species and poaching of wildlife. In the context of ABS, degradation of bio-resources also leads to the loss of traditional knowledge associated with it. Recognizing ABS potential and developing ABS agreements would help better use of country's biodiversity potential, and contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. As many other countries, however, also India is faced with gaps in the existing mechanisms in implementing the ABS provisions in terms of lack of awareness, lack of regional capacity and man power and gaps in legal mechanisms and their implementation.

15. The project was implemented from March 2011 to February 2014 to build the capacity of stakeholders at national, state and local levels in developing suitable mechanisms for effective implementation of ABS provisions towards achieving access and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of bio-resources from mountain, forests, arid/semi-arid, wetland, coastal and marine and agrobiodiversity and wetland ecosystems in India. The project aimed to facilitate valuation of bio-resources that can be commercially utilized, help India to conserve biodiversity in selected ecosystems, support documentation of the Peoples Biodiversity Registers (PBRs), valuation of biodiversity and help in establishing biodiversity heritage sites.

Project objectives and components

16. These five projects contributing to the ABS Portfolio Evaluation were developed to aim towards the same goal; to assist countries in the implementation of the third objective of the CBD – the Access and Benefit Sharing. Below are listed the specific goals for each of the projects, more detailed results frameworks are presented in Annex 8 of the ToRs.

(i) *Capacity building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS Global)*

17. Targeting the participation of at least 50 countries, the objective of the ABS Global project was “to assist GEF-eligible Parties to prepare for ratification and the early entry into force of the Protocol through targeted awareness raising and capacity building” and expected outcomes stated as (i) Enhanced Understanding by key stakeholders of the provisions in the Protocol and the implications for government and other stakeholders; (2.1) Enhanced political, legislative and policy readiness for the accelerated

ratification of the Protocol; (2.2) Enhanced national stakeholder readiness for the accelerated ratification of the protocol; (2.3) Enhanced political momentum and negotiation capacity in addressing issues of common concerns in accelerating the ratification process for the Protocol.

(ii) *Supporting the development and implementation of access and benefit sharing policies in Africa (ABS Africa)*

18. The ABS Africa project was designed to support the development, implementation and revision of ABS frameworks in Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal and South Africa. The project aimed to build awareness for ABS among all relevant agencies and stakeholders in each country, by involving them from the onset, fostering cross-sectoral dialogue and by developing targeted communication, education and public awareness materials. The specific project objective was stated as “*Development, implementation and review of ABS frameworks in six African countries*” and the project had four expected outcomes: (1) Development of national ABS policies and regulations; (2) Implementation of national ABS policies and regulations; (3) Revision of existing national ABS policies and regulations; and (4) Regional and sub-regional cooperation and capacity-development.

2.4 *Building capacity for regionally harmonized national processes for implementing CBD provisions on access to genetic resources and sharing benefits (ABS Asean)*

19. The overall goal of the ABS Asean project was “*to assist Southeast Asian countries to implement the Bonn Guidelines in a harmonized manner, in accordance with the Action Plan on Capacity-building for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing adopted by the COP, taking into consideration the draft ASEAN ABS Framework Agreement, and to build capacity for Southeast Asian countries to be able to effectively participate in the negotiation of the international ABS regime*”. The Project had three specific objectives: (i) Strengthen the capacity of Southeast Asian countries to better able to implement the CBD provisions on access and benefit sharing; (ii) Increase understanding of access and benefit sharing issues among stakeholders and the general public and strengthen national capacity to participate effectively in global discussions on ABS to strengthen national policies and promote equitable benefit sharing; and (iii) Improve public understanding of the contribution ABS can make to biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

(iv) *LAC ABS – Strengthening the implementation of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean (ABS LAC)*

20. The ABS LAC project was developed with a goal of ensuring that the principles of conservation, sustainability, equity and justice of the CBD in regards to access and benefit sharing and the protection of traditional knowledge are incorporated in the development and implementation of public policies, norms, programs and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The project objectives were (1) To strengthen the capacity of countries to develop, implement and apply the CBD provisions related to access to genetic resources and benefit sharing as well as to traditional knowledge associated to these resources; and (2) To increment the understanding and the negotiation skills of countries regarding ABS agreements / contracts, in a way that will contribute to align bioprospecting projects and national ABS decisions with the CBD, while also benefit progress under the CBD’s International Regime (ABS Protocol).

(v) *Strengthening the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (ABS India)*

21. The main objective of the ABS India project was “*to increase the institutional, individual and systemic capacities of stakeholders to effectively implement the Biological Diversity Act to achieve biodiversity conservation through implementing ABS agreements in India*”. The project consisted of 6 components; (i) Identification of biodiversity with potential for ABS and their valuation in selected ecosystems; (ii) Development of methodologies, guidelines, frameworks for implementing ABS provisions of the Biological Diversity Act; (iii) Piloting agreements on ABS; (iv) Implementation of policy and

regulatory frameworks relating to ABS provisions at national level and thereby contribute to international ABS policy issues; (v) Capacity building for strengthening implementation of ABS provisions of the Biological Diversity Act; and (vi) Increasing public awareness and education programmes.

Executing Arrangements

22. The GEF **Implementing Agency** for the five ABS projects was the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In this capacity, UNEP had overall responsibility for the implementation of the projects, project oversight, and co-ordination with other GEF projects.

23. The Lead Executing Agency of the **ABS Global** project was the Secretariat of the CBD (SCBD) working in collaboration with UNEP Regional Offices. Consultations were held with UNEP DELC to establish the legality of the SCBD becoming the LEA for a GEF project. The SCBD charged no project management costs from the project, but draw on its core resources for administrative and project management funds, to avoid the perception of conflict of interest.

24. The Lead Executing Agency (LEA) of the **ABS Africa project** was the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GTZ). The Project Manager at GTZ was responsible for overall supervision of all aspects of the project, for providing overall supervision for project staff at GTZ as well as other staff appointed by GTZ. The Project Coordinator at GTZ was responsible for the overall coordination and management of all aspects of the project, for all substantive, managerial and financial reports from the project and was to liaise closely with the National Project Coordinators. The GTZ was responsible for executing the regional component. For execution of the national components, the LEA established financing agreements with six National Executing Agencies that appointed National Project Coordinators (NPC). The NPCs were responsible for management and implementation of the respective national components of the project, for managerial and financial reports to the LEA in accordance to the financing agreement between the NEA and LEA.

25. The Lead Executing Agency for the **ABS Asean** project was the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), in collaboration with the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies and ASEAN Secretariat. National Focal Points and National Project Committees were selected in each country. The Project Steering Committee, established to provide overall policy guidance to the project consisted of the ACB, UNEP, SCBD, a member of ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN), a nominated national project focal point and a bilateral funder.

26. The Lead Executing Agency for the **ABS LAC** project was IUCN. The IUCN established a project management team and appointed a Head of Project Coordination to oversee project execution and to provide technical back-stopping. A regional Project Steering Committee was established to provide overall oversight of the project. A Technical Manager was appointed to work directly with IUCN, under the supervision of the Head of Project Coordination, to support the project team. National Focal Points representing ABS and TK authorities were selected in each country.

27. The Lead Executing Agency for the **ABS India** project was the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.

Project Cost and Financing

28. The combined total budget for these five ABS projects was a bit over US \$ 17 million, with a GEF contribution of approximately US \$ 7 million. The total budgets and funding sources are presented in Table 1 below. The **ABS Global** project had an overall budget of US \$ 2,104,150 from which US \$ 944,750 was from the GEF and US \$ 1,159,400 from co-financing. The overall budget of the **ABS Africa** project was US \$ 2,179,350 including GEF fund and co-financing from the participating country governments. The country allocations to the project were, however, very unequal and budgets for national-level activities in some participating countries would have been too small to achieve significant results. Therefore, the

allocated funds were redistributed to make national budgets more equitable, enabled mainly through a generous agreement of the National Executing Agency in South Africa.

29. The overall budget of the **ABS Asean** project was US \$ 1,500,000, of which US \$ 750,000 from the GEF and US \$ 750,000 from co-financing from Asean Member States, ACB, Asean Secretariat and UNUIAS. The overall budget of the **ABS LAC** project was US \$ 1,757,166, of which US \$ 850,000 are provided by GEF and US \$ 907,166 by the Executing Agency, project countries (in-kind) and technical partners. Finally, the overall budget of the **ABS India** project was US \$ 9,839,000, of which US \$ 3,561,000 from GEF and US \$ 6,278,000 from co-financing from the Government of India.

Table 1. Total budgets and funding sources of the five UNEP/GEF ABS projects

	<i>ABS Global</i>	<i>ABS Africa</i>	<i>ABS Asean</i>	<i>ABS LAC</i>	<i>ABS India</i>
<i>Cost to the GEF Trust Fund</i>	944,750	1,177,300	750,000	850,000	3,561,000
Co-Financing					
<i>Cash</i>	SCBD : 350,000	BUWAL: 151,302	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indonesia: 100,000; • Malaysia: 200,000; • Philippines: 150,000 	WIPO: ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gov. of India: 1,535,000; • UNDP: 1,000,000
<i>In-Kind</i>	SCBD : 809,400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Govs (6 countries): 414,150; • UNU-IAS: 81,800; • ABS Initiative: 316,100; • SCBD: 40,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNU-IAS: 100,000; • ACB: 200,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project countries: 567,166; • PDA: 35,000; • IUCN-South: 165,000; • UNEP (DELC/ROLAC): 140,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoI: 1,810,000; • Project partners: 1,933,000
<i>Co-financing total</i>	1,159,400	1,003,352	750,000	907,166	6,278,000
Total	2,104,150	2,180,652	1,500,000	1,757,166	9,839,000

Progress and Implementation

30. The **ABS Global** project did not undergo a Mid-term Review. The Project PIR 2013 rated the progress towards achieving the project objective and outcomes as satisfactory. According to the PIR, “the project has contributed to the implementation of the third objective of the CBD by providing support through capacity building and awareness raising activities to governments to assist them in meeting their obligations under the Nagoya Protocol. The project has also contributed in enhancing the awareness and understanding among stakeholder groups, including indigenous and local communities and the scientific community”.

31. The **ABS Africa** project did not undergo a Mid-Term Review, but according to the project PIR 2012, the project was well underway in terms of executing the planned activities in most countries, albeit initial delays in signing agreements caused delaying commencement of activities in other countries. The project was granted a no-cost extension to enable completion. In terms of meeting the project objectives, progress has been made in almost all countries, but with different rates of progress due to the initial delays. The PIR rated the overall project progress as Satisfactory.

32. The **ABS Asean** project underwent a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in late 2012, which found that the project had been reasonable effective in building capacity of the participating countries on ABS and in promoting regional learning, but was still in its infancy in terms of achieving the fourth outcome on common understanding and regional harmonisation of ABS issues. However, the Review is positive in terms of sustainability prospects, partly due to the high country commitment in implementing ABS. The project experienced some delays at its early days, and the review concluded that this might have negative implications especially in regards to the delivery of the fourth outcome. The latest PIR (June 2012-July 2013) rated the progress towards meeting project objectives as Moderately Satisfactory with an overview of *“Project has achieved a lot on the regional deliverables and outcomes, as well as established a good basis for national programs. However, several national outputs remain delayed in several of the AMS project countries (not only those with delayed contract), and as such outcomes are only partly met. That is comparable with the last reporting year and as such the rating cannot be increased given the project moves into the last months of implementation”*. Due to initial delays, the project was granted a no-cost extension to allow completion of planned activities.

33. The **ABS LAC** project underwent a Mid-Term Review in early 2013, which found that the project was relevant and timely response to the increasing needs in LAC countries regarding ABS and rated the overall effectiveness of the project as satisfactory. The project has been successful in increasing understanding of and improving negotiation skills for ABS contracts, but the review noted that additional effort and financial support may be needed. It was noted that the project’s limited budget is a challenge to implementing a regional project and therefore the project mainly focused on creating conditions for national authorities to develop and increase their understanding on ABS. The MTR noted some shortcomings in terms of active stakeholder involvement and country ownership, which may have negative implications on project’s sustainability if not strengthened. The PIR 2013 rated the project’s overall progress towards meeting its objectives as Satisfactory.

The **ABS India** project did not undergo a Mid-Term Review but according to the project PIR 2013, the project activities are progressing as planned. The project has held workshops and discussion meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, collected the base line information, reviewed existing ABS agreements and undertaken a gap analysis, and developed a wide range of ABS information material¹².

¹² Revision of the ToR, 2 October 2014: The ABS India project has been extended until December 2015. Therefore, the evaluation will be a Mid-Term Evaluation

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

34. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy¹³, the UNEP Evaluation Manual¹⁴ and the Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations¹⁵, the Portfolio Evaluation of the five UNEP/GEF Access and Benefit Sharing projects is undertaken six months after or prior to the completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, the GEF and their executing partners. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation.

Overall Approach and Methods

35. The ABS Portfolio evaluation draws findings from five UNEP/GEF projects on Access and Benefit Sharing¹⁶ (i) “*Capacity building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing*” (ABS Global); (ii) “*Supporting the development and implementation of access and benefit sharing policies in Africa*” (ABS Africa); (iii) “*Building capacity for regionally harmonized national processes for implementing CBD provisions on access to genetic resources and sharing benefits*” (ABS Asean), (iv) “*LAC ABS – Strengthening the implementation of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean*” (ABS LAC) and (v) “*Supporting ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS through technology transfer and private sector engagement in India* (ABS India) will be conducted by a team of independent consultants under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi), in consultation with the UNEP GEF Coordination Office (Nairobi), and the UNEP Task Managers at UNEP/DEPI.

36. The evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. The consultant team will deliver concise evaluation reports for each of the five individual projects following the evaluation approach and methods described in this Terms of Reference. In addition, the consultant team will prepare the main portfolio evaluation report, bringing the findings of the five evaluations together, identifying commonalities and differences in project designs and their implementation, and most importantly, drawing lessons to be applied in future ABS – projects by UNEP, GEF and their partners.

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

- (a) A **desk review** of project documents and others including, but not limited to:
- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP and GEF policies, strategies and programmes;
 - Project design documents; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the logical framework and project financing;

¹³ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁴ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

¹⁵ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/TE_guidelines7-31.pdf

¹⁶ ToR revision 2 October 2014: Projects i, ii, iii and iv will undergo a terminal evaluation, project v will undergo a Mid-term Evaluation.

- Project reports such as progress and financial reports from the executing partners to the Project Management Unit (PMU) and from the PMU to UNEP; Steering Group meeting minutes; annual Project Implementation Reviews, GEF Tracking Tools, project Mid-Term Reviews and relevant correspondence;
 - Documentation related to project outputs;
- (b) Interviews with:
- UNEP Task Managers (Nairobi, Washington, Bangkok) and Fund Management Officers (Nairobi, Moscow);
 - Respective project management and execution support;
 - Respective project stakeholders, including relevant government agencies, NGOs, academia and local communities;
 - Relevant staff of GEF Secretariat; and
 - Representatives of other multilateral agencies and other relevant organisations.
- (c) **Country visits.** The five ABS projects were implemented in six African countries; Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Senegal and South Africa; ten Southeast Asian countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, together with Timor Leste); nine Latin American and Caribbean countries; Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama and Peru; and in India. One of the projects was a global initiative. The countries to be visited will be determined in consultation with the Project Teams, the UNEP Evaluation Office and the Evaluation Team, however, including all projects and taking into consideration budgetary and logistical limitations.

Key Evaluation principles

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

39. The evaluation will assess the five projects, and further the entire portfolio, with respect to a **minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in four categories: (1) Attainment of objectives and planned results, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the review of outcomes towards impacts; (2) Sustainability and catalytic role, which focuses on financial, socio-political, institutional and ecological factors conditioning sustainability of project outcomes, and also assesses efforts and achievements in terms of replication and up-scaling of project lessons and good practices; (3) Processes affecting attainment of project results, which covers project preparation and readiness, implementation approach and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership/driven-ness, project finance, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation systems; and (4) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The evaluation should also assess cross-cutting issues, especially (5) gender mainstreaming and integration of social and environmental safeguards at design and during implementation. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

40. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale for the individual projects. The evaluation team, in consultation with the Evaluation Office, will determine the feasibility of providing portfolio-level ratings. Complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes and cross-cutting issues are not rated. Annex 2 provides detailed guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation criterion categories.

41. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the projects and the entire portfolio, the evaluators should consider the difference between *what has happened with and what would have happened without the projects*. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluators to make informed judgements about project performance.

42. Particular attention in this Portfolio Evaluation should be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “*Why?*” question should be at front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants needs 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. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category 3). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultants to explain “*why things happened*” as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction, which goes well beyond the mere review of “*where things stand*” today.

Evaluation criteria

Strategic relevance

43. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the portfolio objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with: i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs; ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation; and iii) the GEF Biodiversity focal area, strategic priorities and operational programme(s).

44. It will also assess whether the five projects were relevant in regards to broader ABS-related national/regional and global needs, whether the project objectives were realistic, given the time and budget allocated to the projects, and assess the baseline situation and the institutional context in which the projects were to operate.

Achievement of Outputs

45. The evaluation will assess the projects’ success in producing the programmed results, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness. Briefly explain the degree of success of the projects in achieving their different outputs, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project objectives). The achievements under the regional and national demonstration projects will receive particular attention. The Portfolio Evaluation will provide and overall assessment of achievement of outputs at the project level, giving a particular focus on outputs deemed as “key outputs” in contributing to the Portfolio level – objectives.

Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

46. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the projects’ objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

47. The Project Evaluations will reconstruct a Theory of Change (ToC) for each of the projects based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews. The ToC of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) over outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (changes in environmental benefits and living conditions) identifying how the project is contributing to broader ABS

objectives. The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called intermediate states. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the pathways, whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control). The Portfolio Evaluation will present a ToC, following the guidance above, but focusing on the portfolio level; depicting causal pathways from the portfolio projects towards the portfolio objectives. It will assist in examining complementarities among the five projects and assessing whether a causal logic exists at the portfolio level.

48. The assessment of effectiveness at both, project and portfolio level, will be structured in three sub-sections:

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs.
- (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a *Review of Outcomes to Impacts* (ROtI) approach as summarized in Annex 6 of the TORs. Appreciate to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute to changes in stakeholder behaviour as a result of the projects' direct outcomes, and the likelihood of those changes in turn leading to changes in the natural resource base, benefits derived from the environment and human living conditions.
- (c) Evaluation of the **achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes** using the projects' own results statements as presented in the original logframes and any later versions of the logframe. This sub-section will refer back where applicable to sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework Matrix (Logframe) of the projects, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the projects' success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F.

Sustainability and replication

49. Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the projects while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the projects but that may condition sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The reconstructed ToCs will assist in the evaluation of sustainability both at the project and portfolio level.

50. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability*. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of projects results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders sufficient to allow for the projects results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the projects?
- (b) *Financial resources*. To what extent are the continuation of projects results and the eventual impact of the projects dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that

adequate financial resources¹⁷ will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the projects? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of projects results and onward progress towards impact?

- (c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining projects results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources?
- (d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled?

51. **Catalytic role and replication.** The *catalytic role* of GEF-funded interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP and the GEF also aim to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by these projects, namely to what extent the projects have:

- (a) *Catalysed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects; ii) strategic programmes and plans developed; and iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at local, national and regional level;
- (b) Provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalysing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) Contributed to *institutional changes*. An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in the regional and national demonstration projects;
- (d) Contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) Contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, the GEF or other donors;
- (f) Created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyse change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

52. *Replication*, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the projects to promote replication effects and appreciate to what extent actual replication has already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of experiences and lessons from the projects?

Efficiency

53. The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of execution of the projects. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the projects as far as

¹⁷ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

possible in achieving their results within the programmed budgets and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays, if any, have affected execution, costs and effectiveness of the projects. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the projects will be compared with that of other similar interventions. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to increase project efficiency all within the context of project execution, by, for example making use of/building upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects, such as the other projects within this portfolio.

Factors and processes affecting project performance

54. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focusses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders¹⁸ adequately identified? Were the objectives and components of the five projects clear, practicable and feasible within their timeframes? Were the capacities of executing agencies properly considered when the projects were designed? Were the project documents clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to implementation of the projects? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.? Were GEF environmental and social safeguards considered when the projects were designed¹⁹? The evaluation should also specifically assess the complementarity of the portfolio projects; were projects designed jointly or in separation, were complementarities and synergies identified, and what was the relation of the ABS – Global project vis-à-vis the regional/ national projects.

55. **Project implementation and management.** This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the projects, their management frameworks, their adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project designs, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the implementation mechanisms outlined in the project documents have been followed and were effective in delivering project outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management of each of the projects and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the projects.
- (c) Assess the role and performance of the units and committees established and the execution arrangements of the projects at all levels.
- (d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the Steering Committee and UNEP supervision recommendations in each of the five projects.
- (e) Identify operational and political / institutional problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the projects, and how the project partners tried to overcome these problems. How did the relationship between the project management team and the local executing agencies develop?
- (f) Assess the level of exchange between the portfolio projects during their implementation; was there cross-fertilization? Was there a mechanism in place to share experiences, challenges and best practices?

¹⁸ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

¹⁹ <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/4562>

- (g) For the projects that underwent a Mid-term Review, assess the extent to which MTR recommendations were followed in a timely manner.
- (h) Assess the extent to which the project implementation met GEF environmental and social safeguards requirements.

56. **Stakeholder participation and public awareness.** The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions, private interest groups, local communities etc. The TOC analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and outcomes to impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination between stakeholders, (2) consultation between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) The approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders in the design and implementation of the projects. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the projects' objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities? What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the projects?
- (b) The degree and effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the projects; or that are built into the assessment methods so that public awareness can be raised at the time the assessments will be conducted;
- (c) How the results of the projects (strategic programmes and plans, monitoring and management systems, sub-regional agreements etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including in decision making.

57. **Country ownership and driven-ness.** The evaluation will assess the performance of government agencies involved in the projects, as relevant:

- (a) In how far have the Governments assumed responsibility for the projects and provided adequate support to project execution, including the degree of cooperation received from the various public institutions involved in the projects and the timeliness of provision of counter-part funding to project activities?
- (b) To what extent have the political and institutional frameworks been conducive to project performance?
- (c) To what extent has the participation of the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organisations been encouraged in the projects?
- (d) How responsive were the government partners to project coordination and guidance, and to UNEP supervision?

58. **Financial planning and management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the lifetimes of the projects. The assessments will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the projects and their partners;
- (b) Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced performance of the projects;

- (c) Present to what extent co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the projects overall, and to support projects activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 3).
- (d) Describe the resources the projects have leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the ultimate objectives of the projects. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.

59. Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken by the Executing Agencies or UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Appreciate whether the measures taken were adequate.

60. **UNEP supervision and backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs and outcomes, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management);
- (c) The realism and candour of project reporting and ratings (i.e. are PIR ratings an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks);
- (d) The quality of documentation of project supervision activities; and
- (e) Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision.

61. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project documents. The evaluation will appreciate how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
 - Quality of the project logframes (original and possible updates) as a planning and monitoring instruments; analyse, compare and verify correspondence between the original logframes in the Project Documents, possible revised logframes and the logframes used in Project Implementation Review reports to report progress towards achieving project objectives;
 - SMART-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives of each of the projects? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?

- Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent have baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable?
 - Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? In how far were users of the projects involved in monitoring?
 - Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
 - Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.
- (b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:
- The M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards objectives of the projects throughout the project implementation periods;
 - Annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings;
 - The information provided by the M&E system was used during the implementation of the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs.
- (c) *Use of GEF Tracking Tools.* These are portfolio monitoring tools intended to roll up indicators from the individual project level to the GEF portfolio level and track overall portfolio performance in focal areas. Each focal area has developed its own tracking tool²⁰ to meet its unique needs; the relevant tracking tool for the ABS Projects is the *Biodiversity Tracking Tool*. Agencies are requested to fill out at CEO Endorsement (or CEO approval for MSPs) and submit these tools again for projects at mid-term and project completion. The evaluation will verify whether UNEP has duly completed the relevant tracking tools for these projects, and whether the information provided is accurate.

Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes

62. UNEP aims to undertake GEF funded projects that are aligned with its own strategies. The evaluation should present a brief narrative on the following issues:

- (a) *Linkage to UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and POW 2010-2011 / 2012-2013.* The UNEP MTS specifies desired results in six thematic focal areas. The desired results are termed Expected Accomplishments. Using the completed ToC/ROtI analysis, the evaluation should comment on whether the projects make a tangible contribution to any of the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should be fully described. Whilst it is recognised that UNEP GEF projects designed prior to the production of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 (MTS)²¹ would not necessarily be aligned with the Expected Accomplishments articulated in those documents, complementarities may still exist and it is still useful to know whether these projects remain aligned to the current MTS.
- (b) *Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)²².* The outcomes and achievements of the projects should be briefly discussed in relation to the objectives of the UNEP BSP.

²⁰ http://www.thegef.org/gef/tracking_tools

²¹ <http://www.unep.org/PDF/FinalMTSGCSS-X-8.pdf>

²² <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

- (c) *Gender*. Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?
- (d) *South-South Cooperation*. This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. Briefly describe any aspects of the projects that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

The Consultants' Team

63. The evaluation team will consist of a team leader and two supporting consultants, working in close collaboration. The Consultant Team will produce Project Evaluation Reports for the five projects, under the overall coordination of the team leader. The assigned Responsible Evaluator for each project, will coordinate data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the evaluation report of her/his respective project, with contributions from the other team members, as relevant. The distribution of duties will be done in collaboration with the consultant team and the evaluation office. The Team Leader will be responsible of delivering the main Portfolio Evaluation Report, which collates findings from the individual Project Evaluation Reports. Each consultant will ensure together that all evaluation criteria are adequately covered.

64. Each consultant should be familiar with CBD and its ABS – frameworks, bioprospecting and incorporation of ABS considerations into national planning. The Team Leader should have a strong evaluation background. The consultants should have a master's degree or higher in environmental sciences, environmental law, environmental economics or equivalent, and be fluent in both written and spoken English. The Team Leader should have a minimum of 15, and the Supporting Consultants a minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience. The consultant responsible for evaluating the ABS-LAC project should be fluent in Spanish, and able to translate the ABS LAC Project Evaluation Report into Spanish as deemed necessary.

65. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the consultants certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

66. The evaluation team will prepare an **inception report** for the ABS Portfolio Evaluation (see Annex 1(a) of ToRs for Inception Report outline) containing a thorough review of the context of the portfolio and the respective projects, review of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the ABS portfolio and the individual projects, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

67. The review of design quality of the projects will cover the following aspects (see Annex 9 for the detailed project design assessment matrix):

- Strategic relevance of the project;
- Preparation and readiness (see paragraph 25);
- Financial planning (see paragraph 30);
- M&E design (see paragraph 33(a));
- Complementarities with UNEP strategies and programmes (see paragraph 34);

- Sustainability considerations and measures planned to promote replication and up scaling (see paragraph 23).

68. The detailed project design assessment matrix will be completed for each of the five projects, and presented in the annex of the inception report, accompanied by a brief overview of the design strengths and weaknesses. The main part of the inception report will present synthesised findings from these project-specific assessments.

69. The ToC will define which direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions of the portfolio and individual projects need to be assessed and measured to allow adequate data collection for the evaluation of effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability. It is, therefore, vital to reconstruct the ToC *before* the most of the data collection (review of reports, in-depth interviews, observations on the ground etc.) is done. The main part of the inception report will present a portfolio-level ToC, with detailed assessment on how the individual projects contribute to the broader, portfolio-level goals and identifying common assumptions, impact drivers and intermediate outcomes. The project-specific ToCs will be presented in an annex, accompanied with a narrative.

70. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the evaluation questions under each criterion with their respective indicators and data sources. The framework will be specifically tailored to the project-level evaluations, but can include additional questions for the portfolio-level evaluation as deemed necessary. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection, verification and analysis should be specified.

71. The inception report will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process, including a draft programme for the country visit and tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed. In addition, the inception report will present a suggested distribution of duties for the consultant team.

72. The inception report will be submitted for review and approval by the Evaluation Office before the evaluation team travels to the selected countries.

73. **The project evaluation reports** should be brief (no longer than 20-25 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), to the point and written in plain English. The reports will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1(b). The reports will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. Each report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible and easily extractable for the main evaluation report. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

74. **The main portfolio evaluation report** should be concise, explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The main report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1(c) and draw from the findings presented in the project evaluation reports, presenting balanced findings and consequent conclusions. The main evaluation report will identify portfolio-level lessons to advise future initiatives, building on the lessons identified in the Project Evaluation Reports. The Portfolio evaluation report may also present portfolio-level recommendations, as deemed relevant. The individual project evaluation reports will be annexed to the main evaluation report. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetition in the report, the authors will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

75. **Presentation of the key findings.** The Team Leader will prepare a brief presentation of the key findings, lessons and recommendations of the Portfolio Evaluation, which s(he) will present in the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing to be held in the Republic of Korea 6-17 October 2014.

76. **Review of the Project Evaluation reports.** The evaluation team will submit the project evaluation reports, no later than 3 weeks after the completion of the respective field mission, to the UNEP Evaluation Office and revise the drafts following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. The EO will assess adequacy and quality of information provided in the project evaluation reports, to support drafting of the main portfolio evaluation report. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EO will share this first draft report with the respective UNEP Task Managers, who may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. It is also very important that the Task Managers provide feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons.

77. **Review of the Portfolio Evaluation Report.** The evaluation team will submit the zero draft portfolio evaluation report no later than 3 weeks after approval of the project evaluation reports, to the UNEP EO and revise the drafts following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EO will share this first draft report with the respective UNEP Task Managers, who will ensure that the report does not contain any blatant factual errors. The UNEP Task Managers will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders for review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. It is also very important that stakeholders provide feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the evaluation team for consideration in preparing the final draft reports.

78. The evaluation team will submit the final draft portfolio report no later than two weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The team will prepare a **response to comments**, listing those comments not or only partially accepted by them that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated in the final report. They will explain why those comments have not or only partially been accepted, providing evidence as required. This response to comments will be shared by the EO with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

79. **Submission of the final Portfolio Evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by Email to the Head of the Evaluation Office, who will share the reports with the Director, UNEP/GEF Coordination Office and the UNEP/DEPI Task Managers. The Evaluation Office will also transmit the final report to the GEF Evaluation Office.

80. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site www.unep.org/eou. Subsequently, the report will be sent to the GEF Office of Evaluation for their review, appraisal and inclusion on the GEF website.

81. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against both GEF and UNEP criteria as presented in Annex 4.

82. The UNEP Evaluation Office will assess the ratings in the final evaluation report based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the evaluation consultants and the internal consistency of the report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluation consultants and UNEP Evaluation Office on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The UNEP Evaluation Office ratings are the final ratings that will be submitted to the GEF Office of Evaluation.

Logistical arrangement

83. This ABS Portfolio Evaluation will be undertaken by a team of independent evaluation consultants contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultants will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize field visits, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The Project Management Units, in coordination with

UNEP Task Managers will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, transport etc.) for the country visits, allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

Schedule of the evaluation

84. The contract for the Team Leader will begin on 16th January and end on 19th October 2014. The contract for the first Associate Evaluator will begin on 20th January and end on 30th September 2014. The contract for the second Associate Evaluator will begin on 31st March and end on 30th September 2014.

85. Each consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). There are two options for contract and payment: lump-sum or “fee only”.

86. **Lump-sum:** The contract covers both fees and expenses such as travel, per diem (DSA) and incidental expenses which are estimated in advance. The consultants will receive an initial payment covering estimated expenses upon signature of the contract.

87. **Fee only:** The contract stipulates consultant fees only. Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel and communication costs will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

88. The payment schedule for each consultant will be linked to the acceptance of the key evaluation deliverables by the Evaluation Office:

- Final inception report: 20 per cent of agreed total fee
- First draft main evaluation report: 40 per cent of agreed total fee
- Final main evaluation report: 40 per cent of agreed total fee

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

90. If the consultants fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. within one month after the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the respective consultant’s fee by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

Annex 2. Project evaluation ratings tables²³

Capacity Building for the early entry into force of the Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (GEF ID: 4415 'Global Project')

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	The project was designed and implemented in response to GEF's ongoing strategic priority for ABS and complemented UNEP's priority of assisting countries to implement international environmental obligations. The Nagoya Protocol was adopted in October 2010 and the project was approved and being implemented within less than a year.	S
B. Achievement of outputs	The project final report indicated that the project achieved 100% of its outputs.	S
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	The project was timely and the objective was clear, which helped to make it effective in assisting GEF-eligible CBD Parties to prepare for ratification and the early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol.	S
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	The packages of high-quality, reportedly well-received materials the project produced was, and continues to be, a significant contribution to broader understanding of ABS and the Nagoya Protocol, which cannot be underestimated. Project activities targeted legislators and policy-makers more than any other stakeholder group and secured statements and resolutions from bodies representing African countries, Arab states, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Caribbean promoting ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The project also targeted the CBD's usual stakeholders including national CBD and ABS Focal Points. It is not possible to definitively state that any particular country's ratification of the Nagoya Protocol was entirely due to the project, but the project final report noted that the project did contribute to at least initiating the ratification process or placing it as a priority on the national political agenda.	S
2. Likelihood of impact	The immediate project outcome – the Nagoya Protocol is in force – will require sustained support for national measures to implement it, well beyond project completion, and additional follow-up activities will be required for the intended impact to occur. The likelihood of the project's outcomes leading to the impact/global environmental benefit will depend in part on the direction the Nagoya Protocol COP MOP gives to the GEF to fund capacity building for implementing the Protocol. It will also depend on the commitment of Parties to the Nagoya Protocol to initiate their own follow-up actions, independent of GEF funding.	ML
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	The MSP document did not state a goal for the project. The objective was to assist GEF-eligible CBD Parties to prepare for ratification and the early entry into force of the Protocol through targeted awareness raising and capacity building. The project was successful in promoting the ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol.	S
D. Sustainability and replication	Financial, socio-political, and institutional sustainability and replicability are all moderately likely, therefore the overall rating for sustainability and replication is moderately likely.	ML
1. Financial	The GEF takes direction from the CBD COP for the content of its biodiversity focal area strategy. As ABS is one of the CBD's three	ML

²³ The evaluation ratings tables for the five projects have been extracted from the respective full evaluation reports at <http://www.unep.org/evaluation/>

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	fundamental objectives, it may be considered likely that the COP will continue to include ABS in its direction to the GEF. Bilateral donors, particularly Germany and Japan, continue to provide funding to build capacity for ABS. Financial support from the Japan Biodiversity Fund is enabling the SCBD to develop training materials to support implementing the Protocol. Financial sustainability of the project's results – which require actually implementing the Nagoya Protocol – does not depend solely on GEF funding or other sources of international aid. It will also require commitment from governments to invest cash and in-kind resources to the task.	
2. Socio-political	The project attracted interest from a diverse audience that included national government officials and regional bodies that are not usually considered ABS stakeholders, as well as traditional CBD and ABS stakeholders. It stimulated further discussion and dissemination of information regarding the Nagoya Protocol. Countries are using the materials the project produced, which are available on the internet as well as in hard copy, to develop national measures to implement the Protocol. Several factors that could negatively affect the sustainability of implementing the Nagoya Protocol at national level include: lack of funding; governments assigning low political priority to ABS; lack of political will; inadequate capacity building; and inadequate governance structures.	ML
3. Institutional framework	The institutional framework exists at the international level – the SCBD. The SCBD collaborates with the ITPGRFA Secretariat and with other intergovernmental institutions, such as the International Development Law Organization, particularly on training to implement ABS and the Protocol. National institutions will ultimately have to sustain project results by regulating ABS and countries across all regions have indicated a lack of institutional capacity to implement ABS.	ML
4. Environmental	The MSP document and the project final report did not address environmental safeguards or environmental sustainability. It was not possible to rate environmental sustainability for this project.	N/A
5. Catalytic role and replication	The project indicated that it was working with countries that had already ratified the Nagoya Protocol to act as 'champions' to promote ratifying the Protocol among other countries, but did not report on whether that was successful. This project's strategy and activities – reaching out to decision-makers who are not traditional ABS stakeholders and providing them with reliable information in a variety of ways – are replicable in the event that the Parties to the CBD decide to adopt another Protocol.	S/ML
E. Efficiency	The project built on the outcomes of the GEF-financed National Capacity Self-Assessment projects, coordinated closely with the network of National ABS Focal Points world-wide, and coordinated with the regional UNEP/GEF ABS projects for the ASEAN countries and Latin America. The project used a variety of cost-saving measures. The project's intention to expedite ratification of the Nagoya Protocol was intended to be a cost-saving investment. There was insufficient information available to determine whether the total investment was cost-effective.	MS
F. Factors affecting project performance	Of the eight factors affecting performance, two were satisfactory, five were moderately satisfactory, and one was moderately unsatisfactory. The overall rating, therefore, is moderately satisfactory.	MS
1. Preparation and readiness	Both UNEP and the SCBD were involved in designing the project. The overall focus of the MSP document and the components it proposed were appropriate and the project activities necessary to achieve the project objective, but some risks were insufficiently addressed and affected project implementation. The MSP document implied that	MU

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	SCBD/project staff would visit countries on an individual basis. That was not feasible, either in terms of time or available funding. The MSP document did not realistically establish its scope. The MSP document did not address the issue of how to assist countries in designing national follow-up actions to enable them to implement the Nagoya Protocol once the project closed.	
2. Project implementation and management	Project management was adaptive and the project achieved its objective. From that perspective, project implementation and management were satisfactory. However, the project extension requests indicated that the project knew which countries were close to ratification and needed additional assistance, but did not record which countries those were. The project did not systematically document the information needed to identify the countries it interacted with so that even a superficial comparison could be made of those countries and the ones that signed and ratified the Nagoya Protocol. The project final report did not include information that the PSC specifically requested. From that perspective, project implementation and management were moderately unsatisfactory. The overall rating for project management and implementation is therefore moderately satisfactory.	MS
3. Stakeholder participation and public awareness	The MSP document identified the primary group of stakeholders of the project to be national politicians, legislators, National ABS Focal Points and National Competent Authorities for ABS. The secondary group of stakeholders was indigenous and local communities. Other stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society, academia and research groups, were to be included in some project activities where appropriate. Component 2 of the project was entirely dedicated to <u>engaging stakeholders to promote ratification of the Nagoya Protocol.</u>	S
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project arose from a request from countries participating in CBD COP-10 to be assisted in the ratification process. The project design followed recommendations that GEF-eligible developing country CBD Parties had made on how to address capacity barriers and capacity-building needs that GEF-eligible countries across all regions had themselves identified. Both project extensions were needed, in part, to allow the project to respond to requests from countries, which were at an advanced stage in their internal ratification processes, for targeted awareness-raising and capacity-building activities.	S
5. Gender and equity	The MSP document stated that gender consideration would feature prominently in the implementation of the project. The majority of participants in project-sponsored events were designated by their governments. The project and the SCBD could encourage, but not require, governments to assign women to participate. Project reports did not address gender issues and did not indicate what percentage of the decision-makers the project targeted were women. The MSP document did not mention youth. The project objective was to convince decision-makers to ratify the Nagoya Protocol, and youth are unlikely to be working at the high levels of governments where such decisions are made. Representatives of ILCs participated in all three capacity-building workshops the project sponsored..	MS
6. Financial planning and management	Total co-financing from the SCBD was 82% higher than budgeted. The project did not leverage any funds. Two budget re-allocations increased the budget line for staff travel % and reduced the budget line for publications. The SCBD submitted four expenditure reports and two reports on co-financing. The project was not audited because it was internally executed.	MS
7. UNEP supervision and backstopping	Two UNEP Task Managers were successively responsible for supervising project implementation. The first Task Manager did not complete all M&E requirements. The second Task Manager based her	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	supervision on the PSC meetings and on the PIRs that the SCBD submitted. She moved on to other responsibilities in 2014 before the project completed.	
8. Monitoring and evaluation	M&E design was satisfactory. Budgeted funding for M&E was slightly below UNEP's recommended minimum and therefore moderately unsatisfactory. Implementation of the M&E plan was moderately satisfactory. The overall rating is therefore moderately satisfactory.	MS
a. M&E Design	The narrative section of the MSP document on M&E explained that the project would carry out M&E according to UNEP and GEF minimum requirements for project monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures. The MSP document provided for a terminal evaluation only.	S
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Budgeted funding for M&E was slightly below UNEP's recommended minimum.	MU
c. M&E plan implementation	The SCBD submitted two PIRs. In the first PIR, the UNEP Task Manager did not rate progress toward project objectives, project implementation progress, or risks but rated implementation of the M&E plan as satisfactory. In the second PIR, the UNEP Task Manager rated progress toward project objectives and project implementation progress as satisfactory, the project's overall risk factors as low, and implementation of the M&E plan as moderately satisfactory. The MSP document did not plan for a mid-term review and the project did not conduct one, although both PIRs indicated that a mid-term review was planned for March 2012.	MS
Overall project rating	The project achieved 100% of its outputs and the Nagoya Protocol achieved its 50 th ratification shortly after the project closed. Some project design issues affected project performance and the project did not address the follow-up that would be needed to sustain its outcomes.	S

Supporting the Development and Implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing Policies in Africa (GEF ID: 2820 'Africa Project')

Criterion	Consultant's Summary Assessment	Consultant's Rating	Evaluation Office rating	Evaluation office summary assessment
A.Strategic relevance	The project's objective is highly consistent with the challenges facing African countries in wanting to meet their obligations for the CBD. It responded to the needs of participating countries to have the capacity of the concerned sectors' stakeholders increased, to develop and implement appropriate ABS measures in their countries. The project was designed and implemented in response to GEF's on-going strategic priority for ABS and UNEP's priority of assisting countries to implement international environmental obligation. It is also relevant to UNEP's programmatic objectives and expected accomplishments under Ecosystem Management cross-cutting priorities of its Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013 and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.	S	S	
B. Achievement of outputs	Most outputs of the four components of the project (considered as two substantive direct components, national and regional) were delivered and capacity building/training was undertaken in most of the countries, as well as CEPA tools developed, although in Mozambique no activities took place during the implementation period.	MS	MU	No activities took place in Mozambique
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	The project's intended outcomes were not fully achieved. No activities were undertaken in Mozambique.	MS	MS	
Achievement of direct outcomes	Despite some difficulties at the onset of the project, the project in most of the five countries managed to build capacity of relevant stakeholders to develop and/or reviewed existing ABS related policies and regulations. ABS Frameworks began to take shape with increased awareness on the issues. Activities have been undertaken by the national focal	MS	MS	

	points, assisted later by the sub-regional/regional institutions. Training and exchange of experiences were launched in English and French languages. Highest achievements were reported in Madagascar and South Africa.			
Likelihood of Impact	The review at the end of project implementation period, showed that the likelihood of the project's outcomes through intermediate states leading to impact/global environmental benefits is rated as moderately unlikely. It will depend on many factors currently lacking (Governance, Institutions, finance, legislation and critical capacity) and largely on support from the GIZ-implemented ABS Capacity Development Initiative. The regional component must organize itself and probably elaborate a regional strategy to carry forwards the gains/results (including the elaboration of business models) of the present ABS Africa project, since financial support could be coming from the GIZ-implemented ABS Capacity Development Initiative.	MU	MU	
Achievement of project goals and planned objectives	The project achieved its goals in strengthening capacity of various key stakeholders and laying the foundation for the implementation of ABS measures in the five countries by developing and/or reviewing policies, regulations for establishing frameworks and to begin implementing ABS measures in five of the six participating countries. Regional activities were also initiated and provided platforms to the national focal points to meet and begin to exchange lessons learned adapt tools for training, communication and awareness raising and associating regional institutions that can facilitate the interventions for collaboration /integration.	MS	MS	
D. Sustainability and replication	The overall rating for sustainability and replication is Moderately satisfactory	MS	MS	
Financial factors	There are good prospects for continued financial support through the GIZ-implemented ABS Capacity Development Initiative. It is hoped that participating countries will also	MS	MS	

	add funds received from the use of their resources.			
Socio-political factors	The project was designed at the request of many countries of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD –among which was a number of African countries. Participating countries in the project have realized the gains they can make by increasing their capacity and implementing ABS measures. Hence the socio political support for the project. Their willingness to see it continue, and to support regional collaboration that could help continue working on the results of the project, propagate best practices and see other countries replicate and adopt appropriate use of genetic resources.	S	S	
Institutional factors	The project design factored in strategies to sustain the benefits of the outcomes through follow up which include the involvement of governments and the established institutions managing the ABS process. Indeed the development and /or refinement of the institutional frameworks (depending of the countries), makes it easy to continue the implementation of decisions, plans and processes regarding the ABS policies and regulations long after the end of this project.	MS	MS	
Environmental factors	In the current context of climate change, proper management of genetic resources helps in protecting/conserving better the existing resources and ecosystems, while avoiding wastages, and also undue pressures on the environment.	MS	MS	
Replication	The project has produced a number of lessons and best practices as well as methodologies and tools exchanged during the initiation of regional activities that will facilitate replication in other countries. In addition, the prospect of adoption of common positions by countries in the region, and the greater support and financial resources by the GIZ-implemented ABS Capacity Development Initiative which will boost scaling up of activities towards replication in new countries. The evaluation relied on these processes to say that the	MS	MS	

	project will have a catalytic role towards accelerating replication in the region and even serve as an example for replication in other regions.			
E. Efficiency	Measures to ensure efficiency included organizing/undertaking activities through national focal/coordinating institutions. The project benefited from their experiences and made use of their existing information, data sources and ongoing/continuing programme at the national and regional levels with the GIZ-implemented ABS Capacity Development Initiative. The building of capacity/training of the various stakeholders helped achieve greater outputs.	MS	MU	Project was extended several times to expend unused budget. Delays in disbursements resulted in activities being carried out late or not at all
F. Factor affecting performance				
Preparation and readiness	Preparation and readiness were mainly supported by the level of engagement with governments as well as the identification of the right stakeholders and the choice of implementing and executing partners.	MS	MU	Delays occurred in the establishment and finalization of financial agreements between the EA and the NEAs in most of the countries, particularly in Mozambique. This negatively affected the delivery of the project.
Project implementation and management	The project implementation phases started at different times in each of the participating countries. Delays were mainly due to the financial arrangements between GIZ and the NEAs. Some project activities seem to have been delivered after the expiry of the last official extension.	MS	MS	
Stakeholder participation and public awareness	Stakeholders' identification and analysis was done by all countries and revealed the existence of two major categories: i) the administration/government, researchers, academics and the private sector; ii) indigenous and local communities. The elaboration of appropriate communication and technical tool kits in general and the	S	S	

	<p>initiation of training workshops stimulated their understanding of ABS issues. This facilitated the full participation and inclusiveness of all concerned parties: non-governmental organizations, private sector, the research institutions and indigenous and local communities in the various activities and effectively secure the involvement of national authorities thus boosting public awareness on the ABS issues while at the same time building on 30 years of UNEP's involvement in the region.</p>			
Country ownership/driveness	<p>This project was consistent with national development priorities and plans. It was designed to respond to governments concerns and willingness to resolve issues regarding the appropriate management of genetic resources and the sharing of benefits accrued from their use. It responded to the need for increased capacity of the various stakeholders concerned/involved in the use and management of genetic resources in the countries</p> <p>Despite the complexity of the matter and technical and administrative difficulties, authorities have generally acted in favor of the smooth development of the project activities, especially in participating countries which have succeeded in providing adequate training to public/government personnel/staff such as Madagascar and South Africa.</p>	MS	MS	
Financial planning and management	<p>Financial planning and management was in accordance with UNEP's requirements. There were no irregularities but audit reported that for some costs, there were no corresponding vouchers. Countries were unable to receive and handle the transfer of funds speedily. So delays were encountered, particularly in Mozambique. Countries such as Kenya, Cameroon and Senegal experienced late disbursement of funds which in some case prevented the implementation of some activities.</p>	MS	MS	
UNEP supervision and backstopping	<p>UNEP provided effective supervision and backstopping and no major issues in project implementation</p>	S	S	

	and execution were encountered.			
G. Monitoring and Evaluation				
M&E Design	The project was designed to follow UNEP standard monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes and procedures and plans were made for the review and revision of the M&E plan to assist stakeholders to understand their role and responsibilities concerning M&E implementation. A mid-term management review or evaluation was planned for and the project document made provision for a Terminal Project Report at the end of the project and for an independent terminal evaluation.	S	S	
Budgeting and Funding for M&E	Appropriate budget was allocated for M&E, and the Terminal Evaluation.			
M&E Plan Implementation	Reporting on the activities, on outputs was quite regular and consistent from the five active countries and financial reporting and auditing were done quarterly and submitted to UNEP by the lead agency but there was no mid-term review of the project.	MS	MS	
OVERALL RATING		MS	MS	

Building Capacity for Regionally Harmonized National Processes for Implementing CBD Provisions on Access to Genetic Resources and Sharing of Benefits (GEF ID: 3853 'ASEAN Project')

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	The project was designed and implemented in response to GEF's ongoing strategic priority for ABS and complemented UNEP's priority of assisting countries to implement international environmental obligations. ABS was an ASEAN regional priority at the time the project was designed. In the opinion of NPCs at the end of the project, ABS was a national priority for the majority of the participating countries.	S
B. Achievement of outputs	The project final report indicated 97% achievement of all project deliverables.	S
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	Achievement of the project goal, objectives and outcomes was moderately satisfactory and the likelihood of impact is moderately likely; therefore, the overall rating for effectiveness is moderately satisfactory.	MS
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	The project enabled all countries that received project funding to work toward a national ABS framework to at least some degree (Project Outcome 1). Stakeholders' participation in the project enhanced their motivation to participate in implementing ABS to a greater degree than the project enhanced their capacity (Project Outcome 2). The opportunities for face-to-face interactions that the regional workshops provided were more effective in enhancing cooperation and sharing of experiences than the project's web-based initiatives (Project Outcome 3). The project added to understanding within the South East Asia region of the legal and technical issues associated with ABS, which should contribute to future policy analysis and decisions (Project Outcome 4).	MS
2. Likelihood of impact	The likelihood of the project's outcomes leading to the impact/global environmental benefit will be significantly dependent on support from sources external to the South East Asia region.	ML
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	One of the project goals and part of one of the project's three objectives were superseded by the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol before project implementation began. The project achieved its goal of assisting participating countries to implement ABS by providing the opportunity for them to complete a national policy and regulatory regime, make further progress in developing draft national ABS laws and regulations, or to develop, or build the foundation for developing, a draft national ABS framework. Almost all participating countries still need to build capacity to develop and implement domestic measures to regulate ABS. The project achieved its objective of increasing understanding and capacity to a lesser degree – stakeholders' participation in the project enhanced their motivation to participate in implementing ABS more than it was able to build their capacity to do so.	MS
D. Sustainability and replication	Socio-political and institutional sustainability and replicability are rated moderately likely, while financial sustainability is rated moderately unlikely; therefore, the overall rating is moderately likely.	ML
1. Financial	The project document did not fully address the issue of funding, from any source, to sustain project outcomes. Regional project partners anticipate that sustaining project outcomes will be entirely dependent on external funding. At the national level, the situation is somewhat more optimistic in some participating countries.	MU

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
2. Socio-political	At both national and regional levels there are socio-political factors that could either positively support or negatively affect the sustainability of project outcomes. Respondents from regional project partners indicated ways in which their institutions would seek to support the sustainability of project outcomes. Overall, the outlook is more positive than negative.	ML
3. Institutional framework	NPCs felt that national institutions and governance are either completely or primarily responsible for sustaining project outcomes. NPCs from half of the participating countries believed that government authorities responsible for ABS have sufficient awareness, interest, and commitment to take the actions necessary to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes of the project. Regional institutions are strong enough to carry out the necessary work to follow up on the ASEAN ABS Project's outcomes.	ML
4. Environmental	The degree to which each participating country conserves its biological resources can influence the future flow of project benefits either positively or negatively. As stakeholders increase their understanding of ABS and their capacity to implement it, the potential for conserving biological resources should increase. A potential negative environmental impact that could result from up-scaling the project is that the lure of potential monetary benefits from ABS may provide incentives to harvest biological resources unsustainably and/or obtain associated traditional knowledge without appropriate safeguards for those who provide the traditional knowledge.	MU
5. Catalytic role and replication	The degree to which the project enabled a "champion" institution or individual and the degree to which project outcomes will have a catalytic role in implementing ABS vary considerably from country to country.	MS/ML
E. Efficiency	The regional project component and most country projects used cost-saving measures and built on other previous or existing initiatives.	S
F. Factors affecting project performance	Financial planning and management and UN Environment supervision were satisfactory and all other factors were moderately satisfactory; the overall rating is therefore moderately satisfactory.	MS
1. Preparation and readiness	None of the participating countries or regional project partners were involved in designing the project. The activities as designed would have produced all intended outputs and outcomes, but the project design did not adequately factor in the wide variation in the capacities of the participating countries to actually deliver the outputs. Once implementation began, some of the design deficiencies were remedied, which allowed the project to make progress and meet almost all of its output targets.	MS
2. Project implementation and management	Overall, the regional project partners played the roles expected of them and arrangements for project implementation and management were relatively responsive and adaptive. The IPSC was perceived to have effectively helped to guide the project and to resolve any problems. Overall, ACB was perceived to be responsive to requests from country projects and adapted project management to changes during implementation. UNU-IAS and the ASEAN Secretariat played the roles that other project participants expected them to play during the project. The project should have been better prepared for the scale of the variations in relatively implementation arrangements at the national level and the time it would take to put them into place and should have accommodated and justified country-specific adaptations when it was clear that several country projects were struggling.	MS
3. Stakeholder	All ABS stakeholders the countries identified participated in	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
participation and public awareness	national consultations and workshops and most participated in at least one regional workshop. Respondents from about half of the countries perceived that awareness had increased significantly, while the others perceived that awareness had increased moderately or minimally.	
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	Three-quarters of NPCs believed that national government institutions in their countries assumed full responsibility or a great deal of responsibility for the project and provided all implementation support that the project requested. Private sector participation in the national projects was relatively low but private sector participation at the regional level was greater. NGO involvement varied from country to country.	MS
5. Gender and equity	Women were well-represented in project activities and outputs. Overall, youth were not well-represented in national project activities and outputs; the regional project did not use age as a basis for monitoring participation. ILCs were well-represented in Philippines, whose laws require their participation, but overall were not well-represented in national activities, although national outputs included ILCs to a moderate degree. ILCs were, in some cases, represented by government officials in at least one regional workshop. Regional outputs included roles for ILCs in implementing ABS.	MS
6. Financial planning and management	Financial reporting was done regularly. Co-financing was significantly greater than anticipated, particularly from AMS, but project accounting did not provide a break-down indicating which participating countries made in-kind contributions and what they were. ACB secured additional leveraged funding.	S
7. UNEP supervision and backstopping	The UNEP Task Manager maintained active engagement with the project management team throughout the duration of the project, providing guidance on administrative issues and participating in project events.	S
8. Monitoring and evaluation	The rating of M&E design is unsatisfactory, budgeting and funding for M&E was within UNEP parameters and therefore satisfactory, and M&E implementation was moderately satisfactory. The overall rating for monitoring and evaluation is, therefore, moderately satisfactory.	MS
a. M&E Design	Design deficiencies had to be rectified when the project began, which resulted in implementation delays.	U
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Budgeting and funding for M&E was within UNEP parameters in the project document and was maintained at that level throughout the project.	S
c. M&E plan implementation	The rating for M&E plan implementation takes into account the design deficiencies that the project team had to overcome balanced with the Task Manager's own assessment of implementation.	MS
Overall project rating	The project achieved almost 100% of its deliverables. It achieved its goal of enabling all countries that received project funding to work toward a national ABS framework to at least some degree. And the project created motivation within most participating countries to continue working to implement ABS. The primary challenge to ensuring sustainability of the project's outcomes is that all project partners perceive that this will be entirely or at least significantly dependent on support from sources external to the South East Asia region.	MS

**Strengthening the implementation of ABS regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean
(GEF ID: 3855 'LAC Project')**

Criterion	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory (S)
B. Achievement of Outputs	Satisfactory (S)
C. Effectiveness: Achievement of planned objectives and outcomes; probability of impacts	Satisfactory (S)
1. <i>Achievement of direct outcomes</i>	Satisfactory (S)
2. <i>Likelihood of impact</i>	Satisfactory (S) ²⁴
D. Sustainability and Replication	Likely (L)
1. <i>Financial sustainability:</i>	Moderately Likely (ML)
2. <i>Socio-political Sustainability:</i>	Likely (L)
3. <i>Sustainability of the Institutional Framework:</i>	Highly Likely (HL)
4. <i>Environmental Sustainability:</i>	Highly Likely (HL)
5. <i>The Catalytic Role and Replication of the Project:</i>	Satisfactory (S)
E. The Efficiency of the Project	Satisfactory (S)
F. Factors and processes that affected the Project performance.	Satisfactory (S)
1. <i>Preparation of the Project</i>	Satisfactory (S)
2. <i>Project Implementation and Management</i>	Satisfactory (S)
3. <i>Stakeholders participation and public awareness</i>	Satisfactory (S)
4. <i>Country ownership and driven-ness</i>	Satisfactory (S)
5. <i>Financial Planning and Management</i>	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
6. <i>UNEP Supervision and Backstopping</i>	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)
7. <i>Monitoring and Evaluation</i>	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)
8. OVERALL RATING	Satisfactory (S)

²⁴ This is interpreted to mean 'likely'. See paragraph 15.

Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with Focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (GEF ID: 3801 'India Project')

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic relevance	The project's objectives are consistent with national issues and needs with respect to ABS and it is reaching stakeholders in the participating states who must be involved in implementing ABS.	S
B. Achievement of outputs	The Project Implementation Review (PIR) for the GEF fiscal year 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 reported that the project had not yet achieved 100% completion of even one project deliverable.	MU
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	The project has been most effective in producing information and tools that will continue to be used after the project ends. For that reason, as of this mid-term evaluation, the overall rating for effectiveness is satisfactory.	S
1. Achievement of project outcomes	The project has produced economic valuation methodologies that all states, not only the project's participating states, need to implement ABS. As participating states, and other states, use the methodologies, understanding of economic values of biological diversity, and how to apply it, will be enhanced. As of July 2015, three participating states had already approved a total of more than 50 ABS agreements. It may be assumed that the participating SBBs that approved these agreements used the tools, methodologies and guidelines the project has developed in their decision-making processes and that they will continue to do so, and there is reason to foresee that other states will follow suit. The texts of the agreements were not available for the evaluation, but it is reasonable to assume that they incorporated the project's guidance on benefit-sharing and there is reason to foresee that other states will follow suit.	S
	It is also very likely that all participating states will at least enter into ABS agreements during the project period. The project has already convened events to share India's experience with ABS and learn from the experience of other South Asian countries, the countries that participated in the UNEP-GEF ASEAN ABS Project, and selected African countries, which have likely boosted understanding of national implementation provisions of ABS mechanisms at international level and vice versa.	
	The project has produced an ABS Guidance Manual, which explains how ABS is supposed to operate in practice under the Biological Diversity Act. Participating states are translating it into their local languages. When this manual is generally available in several national languages, it will likely contribute to improved understanding of ABS provisions of the Biological Diversity Act at national level and at state and local levels, in at least the participating states.	

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	<p>The project has produced tools – including particularly the economic valuation methodologies, the ABS Guidance Manual, the BMC Toolkit and the LBF Guide – that all states, not only the project’s participating states, need to implement ABS. The BMCs the evaluation visited had been established in communities where development initiatives had been ongoing for several years prior to the creation of the BMC. The BMCs the evaluation visited could well be models for others, but the foundation for their success was laid well before the project began. It is not clear to what extent other BMCs created under the project could serve as models for others to learn from.</p> <p>Finally, the project has fostered the participation of private sector, academic, and civil society representatives and produced guidelines for the continuing participation of community members through BMCs.</p>	
2. Likelihood of impact	<p>The likelihood of the project’s outcomes leading to the expected impact and global environmental benefit will depend on the degree to which India achieves the intermediate states: functioning BMCs and benefits flowing to communities. After 37 months of project implementation, the project was close to having created its target numbers of BMCs in the original five participating states, but it was not clear to what degree each of those BMCs was functioning effectively. Getting tangible benefits flowing to communities will require bringing into force a critical mass of ABS agreements. The project has produced most of the tools required to generate the information needed as a basis for an ABS agreement. The principal missing element is training BMCs in the skills they will need to negotiate ABS agreements. With the exception of Gujarat, participating states had only just begun the process of facilitating ABS agreements.</p>	ML
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	<p>The project document did not state a goal; the objective is to increase stakeholders’ capacity to implement ABS. The project has carried out activities designed to do this, but project reporting has apparently over-stated the achievement status of five of the six activities specifically focused on building capacity. Assuming that within the extension period the project completes all activities as planned, it will have contributed to increasing capacity to implement ABS in slightly more than one-third of India’s total of 29 states.</p>	MS
D. Sustainability and replication	<p>The ratings for financial and socio-political sustainability and for replicability are moderately unlikely, while institutional and environmental sustainability are moderately likely; the overall rating, therefore, is moderately unlikely.</p>	MU
1. Financial	<p>Multilateral and bilateral funding, with significant contributions from the national government, will be required to sustain the project’s outcomes in the project states and scale them up to additional states. UNDP appears to be the only project partner that is in the process of developing a new ABS initiative project to take forward the work of its previous project and this project.</p>	MU
2. Socio-political	<p>The influence of socio-political factors varies considerably from state to state and depends to a significant degree on the extent to which decision-makers understand ABS and the contribution it could make to sustainable development. At the national level, there is a move to amend the Biodiversity Act and Rules as well as other laws that govern the environment and biodiversity. The changes could have positive or negative impacts on the</p>	MU

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	sustainability of the outcomes of the project.	
3. Institutional framework	The degree to which the NBA and SBBs internalize and institutionalize what they have gained from the project will determine the institutional sustainability of implementing ABS. The project has demonstrated how the NBA can work with SBBs and how SBBs can work with BMCs.	ML
4. Environmental	The project's outcomes have the potential to enhance conservation of biological resources, but the project and the NBA should not ignore the potential problem that emphasizing cash income may encourage communities to maximize income by using biological resources unsustainably.	ML
5. Catalytic role and replication	The project is creating opportunities for institutions and individuals at state level to bring about change. The project's default assumption is that because BMCs are statutory bodies under the Biodiversity Act, all states will create them appropriately, provide them with adequate support, and thus ensure the replicability of this project's outcomes. It is not clear that this assumption is completely justified, at least in the short- and medium-term.	S/MU
E. Efficiency	The project built on the initial steps that some of the participating states' SBBs had already taken to begin implementing ABS and also built on and collaborated with the 2008-2011/2012 UNDP/GEF project that supported strengthening institutional structures to implement the Biological Diversity Act. At both national and state levels, government institutions have extended the support necessary to implement project activities. The project uses existing infrastructure, where available and, everywhere the skill sets are available, existing human resources. The project also follows procurement procedures that aim to assure that it receives the maximum possible value for use of project funds. Timeliness is also a dimension of efficiency and timeliness of outputs is a serious issue for this project.	MS
F. Factors affecting project performance	Five of the eight factors are rated moderately satisfactory, one is satisfactory, one is moderately unsatisfactory, and one is unsatisfactory. The overall rating, therefore, is moderately satisfactory.	MS
1. Preparation and readiness	The NBA, one SBB, two project partners, and UNEP were involved in designing the project. At the state level there are concerns that the project did not adequately take into account the diversity of existing capacity and experience among the participating states and that there could have been more interaction between the PMU and participating states at the beginning of the project to ensure that all were interpreting the project's expected outcomes the same way. There was also some lack of clarity as to the basis for allocating funds to activities and to participating states. The activities as designed should produce all intended outputs and outcomes, but the project design did not adequately factor in the wide variation in the capacities of the participating states to actually deliver the outputs in the time originally allotted.	MU
2. Project implementation and management	The PSC helps to guide the project and to resolve any problems but was unable to articulate a vision for the project other than that it was moving forward. The PMU and SBBs are responding effectively to each other. Two SBBs indicated some delays in responding to requests from BMCs. National project management could improve the project's effectiveness by:	MS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	ensuring more frequent PMU communication with SBBs and counseling from the PMU concerning activities; more regular meetings with SBBs; and by creating and maintaining more links with related projects at the national level and in the participating states. State project management would be improved by: ensuring that all participating states had at least one full-time project staff person; building the capacity of SPU teams and TSGs; more timely decision-making; and more effective engagement of experts in activities to produce outputs within project timeframes.	
3. Stakeholder participation and public awareness	All project partners and participating states felt that the project had adequately identified stakeholders. Stakeholder participation in project activities is increasing stakeholders' motivation to contribute to implementing ABS to a moderate degree; post-project follow-up will be required to maintain their interest. ABS stakeholder groups are participating in project events at least in part because ABS is a new issue for them and they want to learn more about it. All project partners are providing meaningful input into most aspects of project implementation.	MS
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	National government institutions have assumed a great deal of responsibility for the project and are providing implementation support when the project requests it. The situation varies among the five original participating states, some of which had delayed or had not disbursed money to BMCs. Private sector participation varies considerably among the five original participating states; issues of how benefits under ABS agreements, especially any potential in-kind benefits, will be considered for corporate tax purposes in light of the CSR law remain to be resolved. The awareness, interest and commitment of non-governmental ABS stakeholders vary significantly.	MS
5. Gender and equity	The Biodiversity Rules stipulate that one-third of the members of a BMC must be women and 18% must be members of legally-recognized castes and tribes. The Biodiversity Rules make no other reference to social inclusion. The PMU cited this regulatory requirement as the reason for women's participation. The project added an activity specifically focused on youth that was not included in the project document. Indigenous and local communities (ILC) have been participating in all or most project activities and are contributing to project outputs in most of the original participating states.	S
6. Financial planning and management	Expenditures have been seriously delayed, the project has not been audited as UNEP requires, the single audit was late and audited expenditure low, the GoI's cash co-financing is low, and UNEP's and UNU-IAS's in-kind co-financing has not been reported.	U
7. UNEP supervision and backstopping	The original Task Manger maintained active engagement with the PMU team but experienced considerable difficulty in getting the executing agency to meet financial management and monitoring requirements. From the FY2012-2014 PIRs available for the evaluation, it appears that the Task Manager simply concurred with the PMU's assessments of project progress. The PIRs do not document any concerns on the part of the Task Manager with project progress.	MS
8. Monitoring and evaluation	M&E design was satisfactory. The M&E budget was not consistent with the costed M&E plan. The M&E sections of the PIRs were not completed.	MS
a. M&E Design	The project document proposed to adhere to all GEF and UNEP	S

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
	requirements for M&E. It included a costed M&E plan and a summary of reporting requirements and responsibilities. The costed M&E plan in the project document provided for all regular reporting to UNEP and GEF as well as for PSC meetings, regular technical monitoring missions by the PMU, annual audits, and mid-term and terminal evaluations.	
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Budgeting and funding for M&E was within UNEP parameters but the budget was not consistent with the costed M&E plan either in the original project document or in the revised budget and costed M&E plan	MS
c. M&E plan implementation	The PMU submitted a Half Yearly Progress Report for the period June-December 2012 and PIRs for UNEP GEF Fiscal Years 2012, 2013, and 2014. The M&E section of each PIR requires yes/no answers for a list of 11 questions, has seven questions that require narrative answers, and has a section that calls for information on experiences and lessons. In each PIR, the yes/no questions were answered and the FY2012 PIR included brief answers to three of the seven questions. Otherwise, the M&E section of the PIRs was left blank. The mid-term evaluation that was originally planned and budgeted for was not carried out.	MU
Overall project rating	The project is much-delayed and there is a reasonable question whether it will be able to deliver all outcomes even within the extension period. Nevertheless, the project has significantly contributed to creating the foundation for implementing ABS. The overall rating for the India ABS Project, based on the assessment findings is, therefore, moderately satisfactory.	MS

Annex 3. Specific lessons from the ASEAN ABS Project

1. Regional project management could have been more effective if ASEAN Member States, through the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity and the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment, had been fully consulted during the planning and design of the project and if capacity building for members of national project teams who had no, or limited, prior project management experience had been incorporated in project design and costing. Regional project management would also have been more effective if the following had been done:

- Hired the required project team immediately at the beginning of the project and contract them for the full duration of the project. The regional project team should have been composed of a coordinator, a communication specialist, an information management specialist, and a financial specialist; and
- Determined capacity needs of the project team at the beginning of the project and provided the required training so that the team could effectively and efficiently execute the project.

Hiring the required project team immediately at the beginning of a project is ideal, but in reality it is sometimes difficult to ensure that prospective project staff with appropriate skill sets can be available soon after the first project disbursement is made. Contracting procedures may depend on the internal administrative arrangements of the executing agency. The skills required for a regional project team would need to be taken into account in the implementation arrangements of any future project document. Capacity building for project teams would need to be explicitly budgeted for in planning any future project.

2. Options for streamlining decision-making in future projects include:

- Have national coordinators recommend solutions for project management issues to the regional coordinator, who coordinates with the UN Environment Task Manager;
- More actively seek guidance from a project steering committee through briefings that set out decision options; or
- Enforce requirements in country grant agreements for regular progress reporting, and use consolidated progress reports as input for decision-making by the regional coordinator, the UN Environment Task Manager, and the IPSC.

3. Project designers would need to consult closely with the intended project partners to identify the governance arrangement that would be most appropriate to streamline decision-making for a particular project.

4. National project management could have been more effective in some or all of the countries if the following had been done:

- a. Incorporate capacity building for national project teams in project activities and costs at the project design stage;
- b. Design and organize national projects on the basis of a better understanding of the differences in resources and expertise among participating countries, with differential allocation of funding to better fit national circumstances;
- c. Be more realistic about national capacities to meet agreed timetables;
- d. Ensure that funds were budgeted to undertake situational analyses and reach common understandings with national officials as to what might be achieved with available resources; undertake a project review after the first phase;

- e. Be realistic in adopting standard processes for resolving project design and management issues;
- f. Form national project teams at the start of the project and have them meet collectively at the regional level after the project inception meeting to coordinate national work plans and reporting mechanisms;
- g. Hire a national coordinator with a good command of the English language who is accountable to the regional project coordinator, and one dedicated full-time technical staff person;
- h. Involve a wider range of stakeholders, incorporate their views for better solutions, and provide them concrete project activities that they can continue after the project closes;
- i. Focus and test activities at provincial and local levels to gather current information in order to understand ABS issues in-depth at those levels; and
- j. Foster South-South cooperation by bringing in expertise from the South to build capacity for the South; and
- k. Create a national steering committee that links the project to some existing institutional arrangement to get more support from the highest levels of government.

5. Items a, g, i, and j in the list above would need to be explicitly budgeted for in planning any future project. Items b-f, h, and k are of equal priority and would need to be explicitly incorporated into the implementation arrangements of any future project. For future ABS projects at national level, it may be advisable to include at least one person from the team that implemented this project, to take advantage of their experience with this project and familiarity with the tasks and issues involved.

4. These findings – which are synthesized from interviews and questionnaire responses from all project partners – could be categorized as underlying weaknesses in project management. It would be more productive to read them as evidence that the individuals with actual, hands-on experience with implementing this project learned significant lessons about how to manage a project that addresses a new and complex suite of issues, at national and regional levels simultaneously, with a relatively short implementation horizon, and relatively limited funding, and presumably will be able to apply them in the future.