Evaluation Office of UN Environment

Terminal Evaluation of the UN ENVIRONMENT/GEF project "Mainstreaming Sustainable Management of Tea Production" executed by Rainforest Alliance

Evaluation Office of UN Environment

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Project number: GEF ID: 5750 UN Environment ID: 1266
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ABOUT THE EVALUATION[1]

Joint Evaluation: No

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Brief Description: This report is a terminal evaluation of a UN Environment-GEF project entitled "Mainstreaming Sustainable Management of Tea Production" that was implemented between 2014 and 2018.The project's overall aim was to reverse land degradation and to improve farm management practices so existing production land would become more productive, and forests, rivers, wetlands and other biologically important land adjacent to tea production areas would be protected. The project intended to achieve this in five major tea-producing regions in Asia by training and supporting farmers to apply Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices, building knowledge and capacity among government extension officers and private sector technicians to apply these practices, facilitating wider stakeholder initiatives for Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM), and measuring results to understand the role of SLM and INRM in mitigating and reversing land degradation. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment, the GEF and their executing partner Rainforest Alliance and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

Key words: Land Degradation; SLM; Sustainable Land Management; INRM; Integrated Natural Resource; Ecosystem Management; Tea; Rainforest Alliance; UNEP; TE; Terminal Evaluation; GEF; GEF Project; Integrated Pest management; IPM; China, Sri Lanka; Vietnam; India

[1] This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UN Cover photo: Tea picking in Darjeeling, India. Photo Trond Norheim, June 2018
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Terminal Evaluation of the UN ENVIRONMENT/GEF project "Mainstreaming of sustainable management of tea production" executed by Rainforest Alliance

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASLM	Alliance for Sustainable Land Management (Sri Lanka)
CC	Climate Change
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
EA	Executing Agency
EE	Energy Efficiency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EM	Evaluation Manager
ES	Ecosystems Services
ETP	Ethical Tea Partnership
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FPM	Farm Performance Monitoring
FPMT	Farm Performance Monitoring Tool
FSP	Full Size Project (GEF)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEFSEC	Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GWRC	Good Wood in Rainforest Consultancy
IDH	Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
IP	Indigenous peoples
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPSARP	Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development, Division of Policy Research (Vietnam)
IS	Intermediate State
IWM	Integrated Weed Management
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests (India)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Medium Size Project (GEF)
MTR	Mid Term Review
MTS	Medium Term Strategy (UN Environment)
NEA	National Executing Agency
NEU	National Executing Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOMAFSI	Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute (Vietnam)
NTFP	Non- timber forest products
NTRF	National Tea Research Foundation (India)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PIR	Project Implementation Review / Project Implementation Report
PM	Project Manager
POW	Programme of Work (UN Environment)
PPG	Project Preparation Grant

PRC	Project Review Committee
PRODOC	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RA	Rainforest Alliance
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (UN Environment)
RUDEC	Rural Development Centre (Vietnam)
SAN	Sustainable Agriculture Network
SC	Steering Committee
SLEM	Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (india)
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant/Results-oriented and Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TGB	Tata Global Beverages
TM	Task Manager
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TSHDA	Tea Smallholdings Development Authority (Sri Lanka)
TSFL	Tea Smallholders Factories Limited (Sri Lanka)
TTO	Tea Technologies Outsourcing (India)
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VECO	Vredeseilanden (NGO - Belgium/Vietnam)
VITAS	Vietnam Tea Association

Table 1. Project Identification Table

GEF Project ID:	5750	UN Environment Project ID:	1266
Implementing Agency:	UN Environment	Executing Agency:	Rainforest Alliance (RA)
Sub-programme:	Ecosystems	Expected Accomplishment(s):	
UN Environment approval date:	02 June 2014	Programme of Work Output(s):	
GEF approval date:	13 March 2014	Project type:	One Step MSP
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-5	Focal Area(s):	Land degradation
		GEF Strategic Priority:	LD-1 Agro-ecosystems services flows LD-3 Integrated management of wider landscapes LD-4 Adaptive project management for UNCCD and GEF
Expected start date:	21 November 2014	Actual start date:	21 November 2014
Planned completion date:	Dec 2017	Actual completion date:	31 March 2018
Planned project budget at approval:	$ 14,139,601	Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2018	$ 9,423,001
GEF grant allocation:	$ 1,999,601	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2018	US$ 1,741,909
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	N/A	Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:	N/A
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	$ 12,140,000	Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	$7,681,092 (30 June 20187)
First disbursement:	21 November 2014	Date of financial closure:	N/A
No. of revisions:	N/A	Date of last revision:	N/A
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:	Last: 28 March 2018 / Next: None
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	August 2016	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	20 May -20 Nov, 2016
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	March 2018	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	May - Nov 2018
Coverage - Country(ies):	India, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka	Coverage - Region(s):	Regional – Asia
Dates of previous project phases:	n/a	Status of future project phases:	

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Many emerging economies in Asia have been troubled by the rise of over-cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, and poor irrigation practices that are degrading lands on a large scale and resulting in negative environmental, social and economic impacts. Roughly 1/3 of India's land is subject to some form of degradation, with 25% affected by desertification, in China, 60% of the population is living in areas affected by desertification and degradation, while in both Vietnam and Sri Lanka half of all land is under considerable degradation, causing low fertility and poor agricultural production. This general situation, together with the tea production's degrading impact on the soil and landscape, was the main justification for the project "Mainstreaming sustainable management of tea production" that was implemented by UN Environment with Rainforest Alliance as executing agency, co-financed by Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project's objective was that land degradation associated with tea production in Asia should be reduced through support to farmers, and catalyzing industry and government leaders to mainstream sustainable land management and integrated natural resource management practices.

The project focused on training on Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the tea sector, including trying out new methods. At the national level, professionals with expertise from agronomy, sustainability and the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standards were appointed to coordinate the execution. The project was implemented in five pilot regions in the four countries China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, which is a huge area for such a relatively small project. The project however had a strong strategic relevance as a contribution to the overall GEF Goal of reducing land degradation and GEF's role in supporting countries' efforts to prevent and combat land degradation through SLM and ensuring soil health. UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy 2014-17 also mentions support to landscape planning and integrated management of land and water for the provision of ecosystem services, including freshwater efficiency and food. The selected countries were highly relevant for this project since they represent four of the seven largest tea producing countries in the world, and the pilot areas were among the most important tea producing regions in these countries. The project was also very relevant in relation to the official policy of the four countries, all of them parties to the three Rio Conventions (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Climate Accord.

The project had initially many implementation challenges and therefore a slow start. The NEAs and partners also needed a deeper understanding of the project to be able to reach its goals. Many of the partners had expected a traditional RA project with focus on certification, and it took some time before they gradually understood the aspects of SLM, INRM and IPM. Much training, supervision and follow-up from the Project Manager towards the pilot countries and the Pilot Countries towards national and local partners gradually improved the situation. The project should however have given more emphasis to dialogue with the governments to achieve strengthened impact.

One of the Evaluation findings was that the project would have benefitted from a longer and more complete design period. Most of the problems encountered during implementation, such as slow start-up, lack of reliable baseline, problems with the M&E system, and changes in co-financing sources, could have been avoided if the project had been designed more carefully. The project however had a very good performance in terms of effectiveness, achieving 93% of its expected outputs and 88% of the expected outcomes. The targets in the results framework were adjusted during implementation, but even with the original targets at the time of approval the project would have received a very positive assessment for effectiveness. Only on the goal of tea-producing lands that have adopted key SLM practices were the results somewhat below the target. The main reasons for this are lower than expected adoption of SLM practices by the farmers trained, and the fact that many farmers have a smaller tea area than the 1 ha that was assumed during the design phase. The relation between implementation progress and budget and time invested, shows that the project in general was implemented efficiently. At the time of the Mid-Term Review the efficiency ratio was 0.81 (moderately satisfactory), while at the end of the project implementation the ratio was 0.94 (satisfactory).

A major project weakness has been the monitoring of implementation, reflected in unreliable baselines and also unreliable figures from the field surveys. This was partly due to weak enumerators and partly due to low budget and a lack of logistical support for the surveys. Another important weakness of the project has been the limited capturing and dissemination of good practices, and promotion of the project's results in the international arena, e.g. due to the lack of a project website. Since this project had strong focus on training and capacity-building, a project website could also have been used as a training tool and knowledge-sharing platform for all interested stakeholders[2].

There is a high degree of satisfaction among the local stakeholders with the products and services they obtained through the project, mainly training events, training material and some technical assistance, however the results would have improved with more follow-up after training. One positive aspect of the project was that good training material (especially from India) was adapted and translated to local languages in the other countries. Despite high % of effectiveness, the Evaluator considers that the project's impact so far has not been high. The results of the SLM M&E *impact surveys* show that the uptake of SLM practices among farmers and estates trained is not optimal, but there are some positive signals in Sri Lanka and China. The UN Environment TM believes that uptake by smallholder farmers is much better than captured by the M&E system, due to different parameters used at baseline and in the impact surveys. Uptake by larger tea estates remains low – which is influenced by external factors, especially the difficult financial situation of many estates, which limits their interest.

The UN Environment-RA tea project played a catalytic role, and the process is already moving fast in the pilot countries. A large new national project for greening of several commodity productions is under design in India, and also in the other countries there is high interest from the public and private sector that could lead to new projects. In Sri Lanka herbicides-free weed management is getting gradually more popular, partly based on a spill-over effect from the visit of the India NC, that was appreciated and followed up locally by the Sri Lanka NC. The environmental sustainability was qualified as highly likely, while the socio-political, institutional and financial sustainability were qualified as moderately likely. Sustainability of the project's results would be first of all at a local level in the project regions, but there are expectations of scaling-up the results over larger areas, and even on national and international level. Gender participation was relatively low in all the pilot countries, with approximately 25-35% in all the regions, except for Assam with only 3.2% women participating. Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities have participated in all project regions due to the ethnicity combination of these regions, however the integration of these groups has not been a priority area for the project.

The project has shown that a smallholder approach can work and be competitive. Local tea smallholders were satisfied with the hands-on practical field training methods and training material produced in their own language. This is a "*best practice*" that should be used and scaled-up through other projects. To assure real impact and sustainability in the production value chain, from the field to the market, working with the private sector alone is insufficient, dialogue and collaboration with the national/local governments, since they are considering the public benefits, is also necessary. Another best practice is the Integrated pest management (IPM), focusing on good weeds and bad weeds, as well as good and bad insects to benefit the agricultural product. IPM can be good for the soil, the crop, public health, and even production costs since often requires buying fewer inputs. Through this project, RA and UN Environment got the confirmation of huge opportunities for improvement in sustainable land management of tea production landscapes and the tea production in general, that should be scaled up and assured through new development initiatives with different funding sources, including private sector financing.

[2] RA note that a project website was not included in the original project design, nevertheless project training materials were shared through RA's own publicly accessible training website

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The project "Mainstreaming sustainable management of tea production" was implemented by from November 2014 to March 2018 with UN Environment as Implementing Agency and Rainforest Alliance (RA) as Executing Agency, with US$ 1,999,601 financial support from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and US$ 12,140,000 planned co-financing. The project was implemented in the four pilot countries India, China, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

2. Considering the date of design and initiation of the project, it was assessed in the context of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-2017, which laid out the vision, strategic objectives and the results which UN Environment aimed to achieve by 2017. Key to successful results was the work with stakeholders with very different needs and priorities across multiple sectors of government and society, to enable them to better manage the environment and thereby safeguard the services that it provides for their countries' development and economy, which are crucial to the eradication of poverty and the well-being of their populations.

3. The business model employed by UN Environment in pursuit of its planned results was to work through partnerships, as an opportunity to expand its reach and leverage an impact much greater than it would be able to achieve on its own. In determining its focus for the period 2014–2017, what was termed a "foresight process" and the findings of the fifth report in its Global Environment Outlook series (GEO-5) identify global challenges that the world was likely to witness during the period. In that process, UN Environment weighed the most pressing global environmental challenges against the priorities of regions and those emanating from multilateral environmental agreements, and arrived at focus area, that all to different degrees are relevant for the present project:

4. The UN Environment focus area most closely related to the project design are **Ecosystems management**, with the objective that the countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human wellbeing. and the two focus areas Resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production, and Chemicals and waste (due to reduced use of agro-chemicals). The project is also related with Climate Change (mitigation and adaptation) and Disasters and conflicts (increased resilience of local producers).

5. UN Environment was the GEF Implementing agency for the project and reported to the GEF Secretariat through the UNEP GEF Coordination Office (UNEP/GEF). The UNEP/GEF Task Manager carried out project supervision and monitored implementation from the regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, in close coordination with the Ecosystems Division. UNEP provided the overall coordination and ensured that the project was in line with UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and its Programme of Work (POW). The project was financed under GEF 5 and linked to the **GEF Focal Area of Land Degradation**: LD-1 Agro-ecosystems services flows; LD-3 Integrated management of wider landscapes; and LD-4 Adaptive project management for UNCCD and GEF. UN Environment monitored implementation of the activities undertaken during the execution of the project and has been responsible for clearance and transmission of financial and progress reports to GEF.

6. Rainforest Alliance (RA) was the lead Executing Agency for the project, through a Project Team comprised of a Project Manager (PM) operating from the Netherlands (frequently travelling to visit the project) and a group of international experts. The project was not focused on certification, which is RA's core business, but more on training and trying out new methods, so it can be considered a pilot project. At the national level, professionals with expertise in agronomy, sustainability and Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standards were appointed to coordinate project execution. A Steering Committee (SC) composed of the UN Environment Task Manager, the Lead Scientist, the Senior Manager of the RA Tea Program, and representatives of the tea industry and governments provided strategic guidance to the Project Team. Securing participation from India in the SC meetings proved difficult, but the India tea industry was represented in the last meeting in China through a representative of Amalgamated Plantations Private Ltd (APPL), the second largest tea producer in the country.

7. The project intervention areas have included the Yunnan region of China; the Assam and Darjeeling regions in India; the Wet Zone of South Sri Lanka[3]; and the Northern Mountain region of Vietnam. National collaborating partners included (i) China: Good Wood In Rainforest Consultancy (firm); (ii) India: Tea Technologies Outsourcing, TTO (firm); (iii) Sri Lanka: Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management, ASLM (NGO); and (iv) Vietnam: VECO Vietnam (NGO). Among these four partners, those of China and Sri Lanka had worked with RA before the project, in India RA had worked with the NC before and it was agreed to sign a contract through his firm. , In Vietnam an ongoing project with RA was completed and closed before the GEF activities in this country started (one year after the other).

8. The Rainforest Alliance (RA) executed the project through a Global Project Management Team distributed in many countries, including the Project Manager operating out of the Netherlands (but travelling frequently in Asia), staff members in Indonesia, London, the US and Mexico, and National Coordinators (NC) contracted in each project pilot country. The original plan to contract most Coordinators directly was changed in the final project preparation phase after GEF endorsement. RA then decided to work in all countries through an organization in order to make it easier for the NCs to add support persons to the local teams, without having to sign RA contracts for each local person.

9. The purpose of the Terminal Evaluation was to assess evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned within UN Environment and among main project partners. The key audience for the evaluation findings is; UN Environment, GEF, RA and all partner organizations, as well as the UNEG member organizations FAO and UNDP. A Mid-Term Review of the Project was carried out in 2016.

10. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) was undertaken in-line with the UN Environment Evaluation Policy[4] and the UN Environment Programme Manual[5], to assess project performance and determine outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation had two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment and Rainforest Alliance. Therefore, the evaluation has identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation within UN Environment and RA. The key audience for the evaluation findings is UN Environment, GEF, RA and all partner organizations including the private sector, as well as the UNEG member organizations FAO and UNDP. A Mid-Term Review of the Project was carried out in 2016.

II. EVALUATION METHODS

11. The Evaluator reviewed the implementation progress, results, and effects/impacts, and their contribution to the overall UN Environment and GEF goal to combat land degradation through sustainable land management (SLM) and integrated natural resources management (INRM), and also the relation with other important policy and strategy goals, such as biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk management, poverty reduction, equity, land use planning, and sustainable local productive alternatives. The evaluation process was evidence-based, where the TOC was constructed collaboratively and used to inform the evaluation framework. Every possible effort was made to triangulate findings from different sources of information.

12. The TE was based on the following considerations, in accordance with OECD-DAC, UN Environment and GEF evaluation standards[6]: (i) *Free and open evaluation process*, transparent and independent from Project management and policy-making, to enhance credibility; (ii) *Evaluation ethics* that abides by relevant professional and ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, while the evaluation was undertaken with integrity and honesty; (iii) *Partnership approach*, building development ownership

[3] The pilot area with most field activities was *Liptons Seat Landscape*, within the Wet Zone of South Sri Lanka.
[4] http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx
[5] http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf .
[6] UN Environment's Evaluation Policy (2016) is consistent with the UN System Norms and Standards for Evaluation approved by UNEG. See also https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/id/8b45f5ff-c37b-4aac-b386-6b6b8e29aaed/11_Use_of_Theory_of_Change_in_Project_Evaluation_26.10.17.pdf

and mutual accountability for results. A participatory approach was used on all levels (communities, institutions, firms, implementing and executing agencies); (iv) *Co-ordination and alignment*, to consider national and local evaluations and help strengthen country systems, plans, activities and policies; (v) *Capacity development of partners* by improving evaluation knowledge and skills, stimulating demand for and use of evaluation findings, and supporting accountability and learning; and (vi) *Quality control* from UN Environment Evaluation Office throughout the evaluation process.

13. To be able to obtain all relevant information, the Evaluator relied on partnership with RA and the National Executing Agencies. Despite this participatory approach, the Evaluator strived to maintain clear impartiality and independence at all stages of the evaluation process, e.g. during planning, gathering, organization, processing and assessment of information; as well as facilitation of the evaluation results according to rules agreed with the UN Environment Evaluation Office.

14. The project was implemented in four pilot countries, of which the Evaluator was able to visit three, while the fourth country (China) was covered through Skype, e-mails and document reviews. It was planned to visit China in the June mission, but that was cancelled due to long processing time for the visa, and later UN Environment and RA jointly decided to leave China out due to budget restrictions.

15. The same thematic topics were covered in all four pilot countries to permit comparisons and strengthen general conclusions about the Project results and impacts. Data for the evaluation can be divided into the following categories: (i) Background information received from UN Environment and RA; (ii) Complementary information that was collected by the Evaluator through Internet and other sources; (iii) Material obtained from national partner organizations and other sources during the missions; (iv) Interviews through Skype and phone with persons from UN Environment, RA, project partners and other key stakeholders; (v) Face-to face interviews during missions; and (vi) Information obtained during participatory workshops and meetings. Main sources of information are included in Annex 6.

16. The sites visited were selected with emphasis on covering representative sites, but at the same time considering logistic issues such as travel time, and to assure that all project activities were included. Yunnan in China was among the regions selected but was not visited - firstly because of a visa issuance delay and later budget restrictions. Since most project activities are repeated in all pilot regions, only promotion and adoption of different SLM practices show significant differences between the regions (table 2).

Table 2. Pilot countries and geographic areas visited (marked with green)

Pilot country	Focus region	SLM practices adopted in the region
China	Yunnan	Soil exposure management, Soil erosion prevention, IPM, Integrated Soil Fertility Management, Manual weeding, Shade trees
India	Assam	Soil exposure management, Shade trees
	Darjeeling	Soil exposure management, IPM, Integrated Soil Fertility Management, Manual weeding, Shade trees; INRM
Sri Lanka	Wet Zone of South Sri Lanka	Soil exposure management, Soil erosion prevention, IPM, Integrated Soil Fertility Management, Manual weeding, Shade trees; INRM
Vietnam	North-Eastern Vietnam	Soil exposure management, Soil erosion prevention, IPM, Integrated Soil Fertility Management, Manual weeding, Shade trees

17. An Evaluation Framework, including evaluation questions, indicators/criteria and sources of information was prepared at an early stage. The evaluation criteria assessed were; Strategic relevance, Quality of project design, Nature of external context, Effectiveness, Project management, Efficiency, Monitoring, Evaluation and reporting, Sustainability, and Coordination, coherence and complementarity. The Framework included a total of 161 evaluation questions, where the relevant questions for each stakeholder group were used during meetings and interviews with specific stakeholder groups: (i) Governments and public stakeholders; (ii) Rainforest Alliance and main

project partners; (iii) Other organizations and firms; (iv) Local stakeholders and beneficiaries; and (vi) UN Environment.

18. Visits to the pilot countries included all the mentioned groups except for UN Environment. For local interviews, key informants were direct beneficiary firms and organizations, individuals that had participated in training activities, as well as female and male tea producers (beneficiaries), focusing on detection of local ownership and sustainability, e.g. if the methods and pilot interventions promoted are sufficiently accepted. 23.4 % of those interviewed were women, with large national differences, e.g. 41% in Vietnam, 0% in Sri Lanka (see also chapter V-H).

Table 3. Stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation

Countries	RA/ NC	UNEP	Local project team	Government, public inst.	Firms	Tea estates	NGO/CSO, federations	Local tea producers	Total
Global	4	4							8
China	1								1
India	1		2	5	1	2	3	4	18
Sri Lanka	1		1	8	2	1	1	2	16
Vietnam	1		2	3	8		2	6	22
Total	8	4	5	16	11	3	6	12	65

19. Information was collected using semi-structured questionnaires based on the Evaluation Framework to allow the systematization of data, but with enough space for taking notes on other relevant information and the Evaluator's observations. The Evaluator placed emphasis on interviewing local stakeholders in an informal way, so it was not perceived as a register of personal data or an exam. A flexible approach was used according to available time, education level of stakeholders, English level, quality of translation, etc., sometimes interviewing persons individually and sometimes as a group, with the goal of increasing active participation and receiving different views. All information from individual persons was differentiated by gender, except some activities implemented by partners that were without the project's direct control.

20. The evaluation considered four dimensions for the sustainability of outcomes: (i) Socio-political; (ii) Environmental; (iii) Institutional; and (iv) Economic-financial. The socio-political dimension included also social aspects, e.g. whether communities, farmers, estates, firms, women and youth were integrated in the project implementation, and if they consider the project results in their plans for the future.

21. The Evaluator received valuable assistance from the national coordinators and their support staff, for planning and implementation of the mission programme and for translation of local languages in India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Any confusing information obtained was verified with the translators and other key informants. A preliminary thematic analysis was carried out after each country visit, but the final analysis was made only after all information had been obtained.

22. The limitations of the evaluation have, first of all, been budget restrictions, reflected in the number of focus regions and one country not visited (China). These limitations were partially mitigated with support from additional RA funds for country visits and by carrying out additional interviews through Skype. This still affected the evaluation; since only 3 out of 4 countries and 3 out of 5 focus regions were visited. Complementary information indicates that Yunnan (China) has certain circumstances that are very different from the other regions. The evaluation questions were posed to a large number of different stakeholders, focusing on aspects such as the project's most important results and impacts, sustainability and lessons learned.

III. THE PROJECT

A. Context

23. More than 60% of the world's ecosystems services (ES) are either degraded or used unsustainably[7]. As highlighted in the ProDoc, since the recognition of the UNCBD and the establishment of the UNCCD in the early 1990s, a number of emerging economies in Asia – including India, China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka - have been troubled by the rise of over-cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, and poor

[7] Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Island Press, Washington, DC.

irrigation practices that are degrading lands on a large scale and resulting in negative environmental, social and economic consequences. Roughly 1/3 of India's land is subject to some form of degradation, with 25% affected by desertification[8]. The problem is also significant in China, where approximately 60% of the population is living in areas affected by desertification and degradation, and 100 million ha of steppe and pastures have been seriously degraded. In Vietnam and Sri Lanka, half of all land is under considerable degradation, causing low fertility and poor agricultural production.

24. Among the main factors for this widespread degradation are inappropriate and extensive agricultural practices for both subsistence and commodity production. The pressures for expanding agriculture have resulted in misuse and degradation of land in many parts of all these countries, as seen by heavy soil losses, high sediment yields, decline in soil fertility, salinization and marginalization of agricultural land. Projections for an increasing world population, economic growth, and changing consumption patterns are expected to cause a sharp increase in demand for agricultural commodities, especially from emerging economies where such commodities account for roughly 10% of GDP on average[9].

25. The National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) for China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam cite the need for investments in new models of sustainable agriculture that use market-based incentives to ensure long-term sustainability and build greater capacity among extension officers and farmers. Without new solutions land degrades at a rapid pace, directly impacting natural resources and reducing agricultural productivity and loss of biodiversity, vegetation cover and water. This in turn leads to decline in the quality of life for rural communities, particularly smallholders. While the governments of the four pilot countries are keen to address the problem, measures over the last decades to control land degradation have only had limited impact. These countries continue to experience increased deforestation due to conversion to agriculture, erosion of uplands and other fragile areas, low and unreliable crop yields, erosion, landslides, sedimentation of reservoirs and flooding.

26. For China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, tea is an important commodity grown for the export market as well as for domestic consumption. India and China are the world's leading tea producers, with Sri Lanka and Vietnam among the top six producing countries. In the number three producer country Kenya, the Kenya Tea Development Agency, which represents the majority of smallholders, has committed to 100% RA Certified production, with farms meeting strict standards for environmental, social and economic sustainability, providing an example for other countries.

27. Tea production systems can be both a contributor to land degradation and a segment of the rural economy susceptible to land degradation. However, well-managed tea production landscapes can help arrest or even reverse land degradation, while providing a range of economic and ecological benefits for local communities, protection of watersheds and the global commons. Tea is produced both on large plantations, employing thousands of workers and also by millions of smallholders. Since most tea estates are already at maximum production and often with old low-productive tea bushes, it is predicted that most of the new tea production to meet increased demand will come from smallholders, many of whom lack the tools, knowledge, skills, capital and support to practice SLM.

28. In both large- and small-scale tea production, inappropriate practices used in planting, growing and processing tea cause land degradation and depletion of natural resources. With global demand for tea growing at more than 2% per year, the pressures on land for cultivation will increase, and even more so due to climate change. Governments are increasingly concerned about the impacts of inappropriate practices on the health of the natural environment, especially soil erosion, contamination from agro-chemicals and inefficient use of water resources. Land degradation can also jeopardize food security, because smallholder farmers often combine growing tea and subsistence crops.

29. The main land degradation effects resulting from tea production without SLM and IPM are:

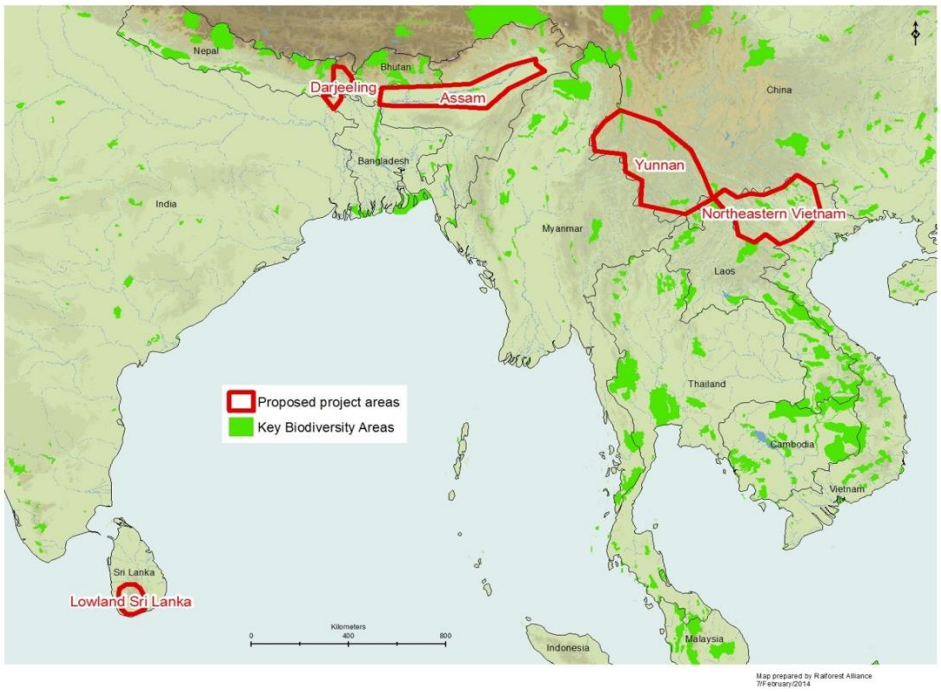
- Soil erosion, depletion of soil nutrients and cover, and increasing frequency of landslides
- Soil, surface water and ground water contamination from agrochemical waste

[8] National Adaptation Plan to Combat Land Degradation (India, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka)
[9] GEF 2013. GEF-6 Strategic Planning Document

- Decrease in soil water holding capacity, affecting ground water recharge and giving increased runoff
- Reduced shelter for wildlife, as hedgerows and copses are removed to increase planting areas
- Loss of local biodiversity due to habitat conversion and use agro-chemicals
- Spread of invasive alien species (IAS), both flora and fauna
- Lack of climate resilience.

30. An important approach to reversing land degradation is to improve farm management practices so existing production land becomes more productive, and forests, rivers, wetlands and other biologically important land adjacent to tea production areas are protected. The project intended to achieve this in five major tea-producing regions in Asia (fig. 1) by training and supporting farmers to apply SLM practices, building knowledge and capacity among government extension officers and private sector technicians to apply these practices, facilitating wider stakeholder initiatives for INRM, and measuring results to understand the role of SLM and INRM in mitigating and reversing land degradation. There was however, (with the exception of Sri Lanka) insufficient background information during the design phase to assess the capacity of collaborating institutions, and thereby determine the training and technical support needed.

Fig. 1. The Sustainable tea landscape project, pilot countries and project regions



B. Milestones/key dates in project design and implementation

31. The project under evaluation was a Medium-size Project (MSP) that was approved in one step, and RA did not have any Project Preparation Grant (PPG) for the design. UN Environment's approval date was in June 2014, and the project initiated immediately with the first disbursement 4 months later. The sources of funds for activities in this period came from RA and partners co-financing.

Table 4. Key events during project implementation

Key event	Date
Submission for CEO endorsement	07 March 2014
GEF approval date	13 March 2014
UNEP approval date	02 June 2014
Actual start date	21 November 2014
First disbursement	21 November 2014
Planned date for Mid-term Review	August 2016
Actual date Mid-term review	20 May – 20 Nov 2016

Intended completion date (on date of approval)	December 2017
Last Steering Committee meeting	28 March 2018
Formally registered completion date	31 March 2018
Last PIR	30 June 2018
Planned date for Terminal Evaluation	March 2018
Terminal Evaluation	May 29 – Nov 30, 2018

32. The Mid-term review was carried out May-Nov 2016. The project was expected to end in December 2017 but was extended until March 31st, 2018 without any additional funds from GEF, except for in Darjeeling (India) where the extension went through May 2018 since activities there had been delayed by a general strike that lasted approximately 100 days. In all regions, project related activities have continued into the first semester of 2018, but after March 31st were mostly financed by counterpart funds. The activities during this year are the reason for UN Environment's request for a new PIR covering first semester of 2018.

C. Objectives and components

33. Several changes to the results framework presented in the project document were made during implementation, however these did not change the focus of the project, and the results framework is still consistent with the text of the ProDoc that remained unchanged. Table 5 summarizes the project content in the final version (according to last PIR) with some adjustments proposed by the Evaluator. These changes relate to the preparation of a reconstructed ToC for the intervention that is used for this evaluation. The Team Leader stated that RA did not follow a very formal process with UNEP/GEF to get their approval for the changes that were suggested in the results framework. However, these changes were reflected in the PIRs that were presented to UN Environment, and according to email exchange also presented to SC meetings, but with little or no advance notice to the SC members.

34. In the following table the Evaluator has structured the main content of the last version of the results framework, and made some changes that are marked in the text. Some of these changes are simply presenting more clearly the outputs as products, while for component 2 a switch is proposed between outcome level and one of the outputs. Further analysis of the outcomes and outputs are included in relation to the reconstructed Theory of Change (chapter IV).

Table 5. Project content

Project Objective: Land degradation associated with tea production in Asia is reduced through support to farmers and catalysing industry and government leaders to mainstream sustainable land management (SLM) and integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices		
Components	**Planned outcomes**	**Planned outputs**
1. Producers´ capacity building on SLM and energy efficiency	1.1. Improved SLM and INRM ~~agricultural management results~~ in ~~more sustainable~~ tea production systems and reduced vulnerability on 60,000 ha in five critical tea-producing regions	1.1.1 Training modules developed to support producers to adopt site-specific SLM practices, including locally appropriate species useful to smallholders and for erosion control and composting, alternative economic income, functional vegetative buffers around water and forest edges, and improved wood-fuel management practices in factories, households/ estates
		1.1.2 ~~Test~~ Sustainable tea production and SLM tested in ~~/~~validation sites (including demonstration/training ~~sites~~) ~~set up~~
		1.1.3 Trainers trained in key SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories and household/estate cooking stoves
		1.1.4 Smallholder tea farmers, estate and factory managers/staff trained in key SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories and household/estate cooking stoves
2. Landscape-based INRM	2.1. ~~Integrated natural resource management (INRM) plans engage key tea and non-tea stakeholders in complementary activities to support INRM and guide investment to help reduce land and resource conflicts and safeguard key ecosystem services supporting tea production and local and downstream communities~~ Increased multi-stakeholder interest in reducing supply risk and promoting sustainable tea production leads to new investment	2.1.1 Landscape context analysis and planning processes (including participatory landscape mapping and assessment) ~~are carried out~~ in two tea-producing landscapes to guide SLM
		2.1.2 ~~Industry interest in reducing supply risk and promoting sustainable tea production leads to new investment in INRM (i.e., beyond tea-focused SLM practices) actively promoted~~ Integrated natural resource management (INRM) plans that engage key tea and non-tea stakeholders in complementary activities, supporting and guiding investments to help reduce land and resource conflicts and safeguard key ecosystem services, supporting tea production and local and downstream communities

	in INRM (i.e., beyond tea-focused SLM practices)	
3. Engage key public and private institutions to mainstream SLM	3.1 Key public-sector agencies, tea associations and tea industry decision-makers have improved their understanding and capacity to implement new policies, systems, or support mechanisms to facilitate uptake of SLM in the tea industry in the focal regions	3.1.1 Tea SLM training modules ~~developed~~ for government extensionists and industry technicians~~, to build their capacity in SLM practices~~
		3.1.2 Extension officers from tea authorities and other relevant institutions ~~registered as trainers of~~ trained on the SAN standard and in on-going contact with Executing Agency
4. Monitoring & Evaluation	4.1 ~~New monitoring and analytical tools provide~~ Practical, cost-effective means to understand change and guide adaptive management related to sustainable productivity and vulnerability in tea-producing landscapes in the focal regions, based on new monitoring and analytical tool	4.1.1 ~~At least two new m~~ Monitoring and analytical tools~~developed, field-tested in one project region, and subsequently applied more broadly through project monitoring & evaluation framework and/or tea industry partners~~ to assess adoption of SLM practices and farm climate resiliency, field-tested, finalized and assessed

D. Target groups

35. RA and its main partners have done an important and efficient job in integrating local target groups. To build capacity on SLM, the project has worked through existing structures for training of trainers (TOT) and technical assistance (TA) with the goal to bring farms into compliance with some elements of the SAN standard. In each region, the project's point of entry has been through a RA National Coordinator who is also a technical specialist on sustainable agriculture. They have been in charge of TOT, including of public sector extension officers, company technicians, estate managers, partner NGOs, and private service providers, who in turn have trained target tea smallholders. The access to the smallholders has often been through tea estates, farmer organizations or communities. Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities have not been a clear target group but have been integrated in the project activities in all countries, e.g. indigenous peoples in Vietnam and China, the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka (often tea estate workers) and Nepali communities in Darjeeling (India). Women represented 25-35% of the beneficiaries in all pilot regions except for Assam where it was only 3.2% (table 28). All the groups mentioned in table 6 played significant roles in contributing to the project results, while all were also direct or indirect beneficiaries of these results.

36. **China** has a special situation since all the land is publicly owned. The government assigns each farmer the plots to manage, but in recent years some companies have been able to rent plots from different farmers (for up to 50 years) and they have large areas, partly justified by labour shortage on the individual small farms. The company Green Fountain that participated in the project rented a total of 800 ha in different villages for organic production. The local tea offices (Lincang tea office, Cangyuan tea office) are a department of the local government, responsible for tea industry. In China there are no recognized indigenous peoples, but 56 ethnic minorities. In the project the Wa minority has been an important stakeholder group, and there are also some other groups involved, such as the Lahu minority.

37. The training of farmers in China has been very positively welcomed. The farmers note a big difference with the traditional training in China, which normally consists of a meeting. The RA approach with field training was completely new for them, and they also appreciated that the trainers told them "Why", because the normal way in rural China is just to say "Do it!". The topics most appreciated by the local target groups in China were" Predator's World" (IPM), composting, identification of sources of animal manure, weed management, green manure, and shade trees. The farmers would have liked additional training topics, such as correct and safely use of agrochemicals and pesticides, since most of them are using a wrong dose and spraying times, which contribute to greater environmental degradation and soil erosion. However, this topic was never planned since the project was not promoting use of pesticides. The project also adapted, translated and printed four "cultural posters" to promote new tea management methods.

Table 6. Important participation of target groups in the pilot countries

Target group	Country			
	China	India	Sri Lanka	Vietnam
Tea estates		✓	✓	✓
Tea smallholders	✓	✓	✓	✓
Private sector (in general)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public sector (ministries, etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Communities / villages	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indigenous peoples/ ethnic minorities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Women*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community-based organizations		✓	✓	✓

*Women are mentioned in ProDoc as a target group, but there is no specific gender information by country

E. Project stakeholders

38. Key national partners during project implementation have been the four national executing agencies (NEA) led by the National Coordinators, complemented by public and private agencies. Table 7 shows the key players, while a more complete Stakeholder Analysis is included in Annex 3.

Table 7. Stakeholders with high power and high interest of the project (key players)

Stake-holders	Explain the power they hold over the project results/ implementation and the level of interest	Did they participate in the project design, and how	Type of stake-holder group*	Roles & responsibilities in project implementation	Changes in their behaviour expected through implementation of the project
International and regional					
UN Environ-ment	UN Environment is the GEF implementing agency (IA) for the project, managed by the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office. Project supervision has been from the TM in the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP) in Thailand.	Yes, as GEF agency in charge of the project design	IG	Monitoring and supervision. Reporting to GEF.	No
GEF	Global Environment Facility co-financed the project with US$1,999,601	Yes, through review of MSP Request Document, progress and evaluation reports	IG	Review and acceptance of Progress Reports, MTR and TE.	No
RA	Rainforest Alliance was the project Executing Agency (EA)	Yes, played a fundamental role during design, as the lead project executing agency	NG	The project follows RA strategy of partnerships between international, regional and national organizations. RA's Project Team has been in charge of day-to-day project management.	It is expected that RA and partners would be strengthened in INRM and SLM, especially in the tea production sector, during implementation of the project.
National Executing Agencies (NEAs)	The National Coordinators are the leaders of the NEAs and have played a fundamental role during project implementation	No. Only consultation with some persons that later became NC.	NG/BI	Formal role as national executing agency, and support for National Coordinator	Strengthened role in the national tea sector (China, India, Sri Lanka) and new role in this sector (Vietnam)
Steering Committee (SC)	The Project Steering Committee provided strategic guidance. It consisted of the UNEP task manager; the RA Senior Manager of the tea program and Lead Scientist; and a rotation of external representatives of industry and government. NCs participated as observers	No, not established yet at the time of design	NA	The Steering Committee (SC) has been meeting regularly to provide political and strategic guidance for the project, oversee and approve work plans and budgets, solve issues and other strategic decisions.	The persons participating in the SC may be gradually more committed to SAN and RA certification throughout the implementation of the project, making them agents for promoting the issue after the project ends.
Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP)	ETP is the tea industry's association, based in London with most of the leading companies as	Dialogue based on established collaboration with RA in Kenya	NG/BI	ETP's 3 largest members (Tata Global Beverages, Twinings, Taylor's of Harrogate) buy RA	Increased positive impact on the world's tea industry through continued dialogue and

	members. ETP has a base code for environmental and social management of tea production units. RA has signed an MOU with ETP so certified farms can be recognized as meeting ETP's base code. Regional Manager (SC member) is based in Sri Lanka.			Certified tea. ETP develop on their behalf sustainability initiatives, especially on reduced agrochemical use. RA and ETP have opportunities for collaborating on site-specific activities case by case and maintain dialogue on SLM/INRM.	collaboration between ETP and RA
Unilever	Unilever is the world's largest company engaged in the tea sector. It is a private sector pioneer in sustainable management, developing its own rigorous code to guide buying policy for agricultural commodities. From 2007 it committed its Lipton brand globally to source only RA Certified tea, as the first major brand.	Dialogue about the project based on already established collaboration.	BI	Unilever had 3 roles in the project: - Create demand through its brands for RA certified tea so market incentive drives adoption of SLM; - Invest in SLM/INRM through both RA and its own structure. - Provide strategic guidance and research findings on sustainable tea production through high-level meetings.	Increased influence in the world's tea industry by this leading company for SLM/INRM
Finlays	Finlays is a major international tea company, which owns estates in Sri Lanka and Kenya, and buys and manufactures large quantities of tea from other producers. Its Sri Lanka operations are RA Certified. It is a leading part of the *Tea 2030* multi-stakeholder process.	Dialogue about the project based on already established collaboration.	BI	Through its commitment as a RA Certified tea producer, Finlays promotes SLM on its tea farms. RA participates in the Tea 2030 process and contributes ideas and learning about INRM, with a view to influence land management practices in the tea industry.	Strengthened collaboration between Finlays and RA, including meetings in UK, sharing lessons learned through the landscapes for People, Food and Nature initiative.
Tata Global Beverages (TGB)	TGB is the second largest tea company. It has committed its Tetley brand globally to RA certification. It is a major tea producer in India, having its own estates and also a majority holding in Amalgamated Plantations, India's second largest tea producer.	Dialogue about the project based on established collaboration.	BI	TGB invests in its supply chain to promote the SAN standard based on its commitment to certification. Because of its market power and significant role in Trustea and ETP, Tata is an important influencer of industry adoption of SLM.	Strengthened efforts as an important influencer in the tea industry, promoting SLM.
Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)	IDH is an independent organization channelling Dutch development funds and leveraging them with funds from other bilateral donors to support sustainable trade initiatives. It works on tea Improvement with RA, Unilever, TGB in Sri Lanka and Vietnam.	Dialogue about the project based on established collaboration.	NG/GO	IDH directly contributes to the achievement of project goals in Vietnam through its project with Unilever and RA promoting the SAN standard. IDH convenes periodic learning events and annual conferences,	Strengthened collaboration with RA and the tea industry to promote SLM and INRM through SAN standard.
China					
Good Wood in Rainforest Consultancy	The firm is working much on tea, led by the National Project Coordinator	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	BI	In charge of the project implementation in China	Strengthened knowledge on SLM, INRM and IPM through execution of project activities
Lincang City tea office	The city tea office comes under the provincial industry office as a specialist local government body to implement policies and plans from the central and provincial governments in the tea sector. Its major roles are to implement strategy and plans for the local tea industry and coordinate and guide research on tea.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	RA has been working with farmers in this city jurisdiction. The office is supportive of efforts to increase productivity while conserving natural resources and reversing land degradation trends.	Strengthened promotion and research on INRM and SLM in the local tea sector

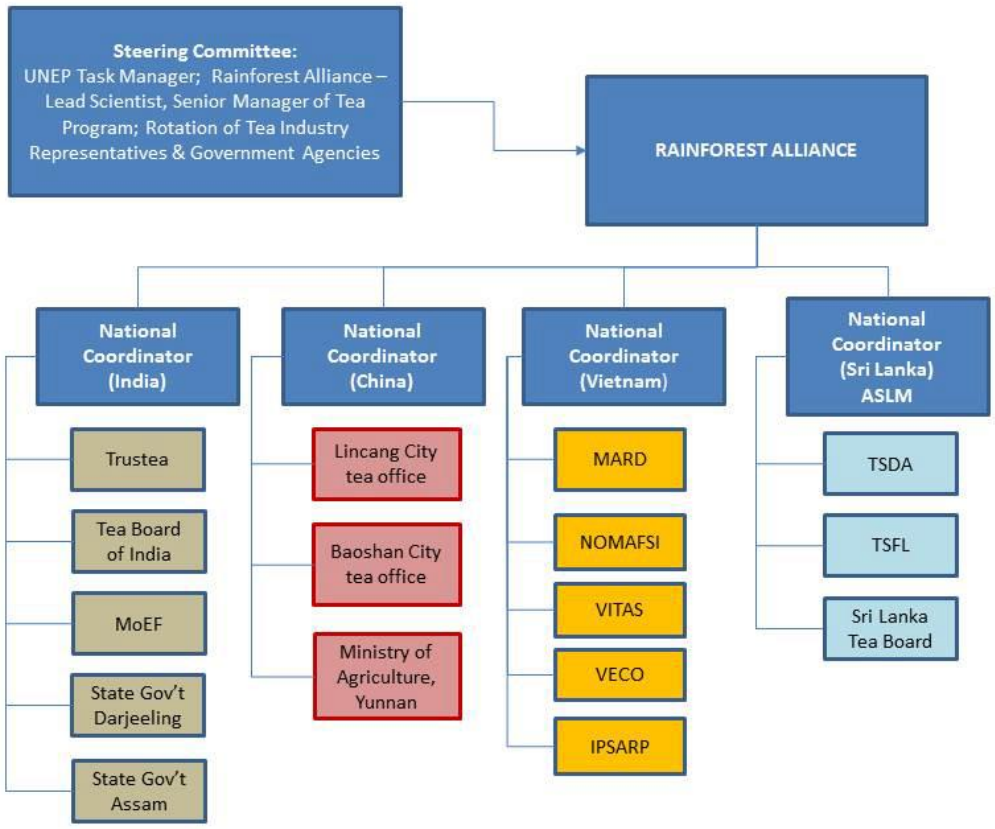
Baoshan City tea office	The Baoshan City tea office has the same roles as the Lincang City office (above).	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	RA has been working with farmers in this city jurisdiction. The office is supportive of efforts to increase productivity while conserving natural resources and reversing land degradation trends.	Strengthened promotion and research on INRM and SLM in the local tea sector
India					
Trustea	Trustea is a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the Tea Board of India with close cooperation of Unilever, TGB and IDH. It was launched in 2013 as a training and verification program, which has its own code. Trustea was founded in order to have a national code of best practice in a market that consumes most of the tea grown in the country, with its own standard.	At the time of project design, RA expected to sign an MOU with Trustea. The MOU was draftet but never signed.	GO/BI	Trustea is an additional market force promoting SLM in India. Although it is a competitive system to RA certification, RA and Trustea planned to cooperate to achieve efficiencies and market scale for producers, e.g. by benchmarking the Trustea code with the SAN standard so that producers can understand the differences and common points.	Strengthened coordination with RA and SAN, e.g. producing joint training materials or organizing joint audits.
Tea Board of India	The Tea Board of India is the main regulatory body of the Indian tea industry with a network of regional offices in all the main tea regions, as well as research institutions, including the Tea Research Association in NE India and National Tea Research Foundation (NTRF). It is a strong role of the Tea Board in Trustea.	RA was in contact with the tea board during the project design phase through its National Coordinator and through RA's engagement in Trustea.	GO/ST	The Tea Board received a presentation by RA to its Board and ideas are shared on how to support and reinforce national policy and investment plans. RA similarly planned to make an introduction to the regional board.	Strengthened commitment to SLM and INRM in the tea sector.
Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF)	MoEF is the nodal agency of the Central Government, overseeing implementation of India's environmental and forestry policies and programs, relating to conservation of the country's natural resources and the prevention and abatement of pollution. The Ministry also serves as the nodal agency for UNEP.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	MoEF is the executing agency for the Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (SLEM) Program, a joint initiative of the Government of India and GEF, with compatibility of its approach to SLM.	Strengthened political priority to SLM and INRM in the Indian tea sector.
Tea Technologies Outsourcing (TTO)	TTO is the national firm managed by the national coordinator in India.	The person later contracted as India coordinator took part in the design	BI	Had a key role in the project implementation in India	No, because the behaviour was already very positive before project start
Sri Lanka					
Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Manage-ment ASLM	ASLM is an NGO working much on tea, led by the National Project Coordinator	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	NG	In charge of the project implementation in Sri Lanka	Strengthened knowledge on SLM, INRM and IPM through execution of project activities
Tea Small-holdings Development Authority (TSHDA)	TSHDA is the government institution responsible for the well-being of smallholder tea farmers. It has 8 regional offices in the main production areas with 200 extension workers, providing training and technical support to a network of CBOs. It has trained TSHDA's extension officers in the SAN standard.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	The extension officers are completing their training in the SAN standard to be able to disseminate the SLM principles to the CBOs	TSHDA strengthened promotion of SLM and INRM among smallholder farmers in the Sri Lankan tea sector.
Tea Smallholders Factories	Tea Smallholders Factories Ltd is a former government enterprise that was privatized. 8 factories now	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	BI	The company provides the organizing structure and committed some staff resources to train	TSFL strengthened promotion of SLM and INRM among smallholder

Limited (TSFL)	operate as a common subsidiary of an established Sri Lankan tea company, buying from 8,000 smallholders in SW Sri Lanka.			smallholders in the SAN standard.	tea farmers in SW Sri Lanka.
Tea Shakti	Tea Shakti is a government organization managing tea-processing factories in the wet zones of SW Sri Lanka and the central highlands. It processes RA Certified green leaf.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	Tea Shakti facilitates market access for RA Certified tea for Sri Lankan tea farmers.	Strengthened support from Tea Shakti to certification of sustainable tea production including SLM and INRM.
Department of Forests	The government's forestry department is responsible for maintaining Sri Lanka's forested land and preventing encroachment by smallholders to establish agricultural production.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	The Department of Forests reinforces the education of smallholder communities regarding the value of forests and respect of the forest legislation.	Strengthened collaboration with RA on SLM and INRM.
Vietnam					
Vredes-eilanden (VECO)	VECO is a Belgian NGO, registered as a Vietnamese organization. VECO signed an agreement with RA 2013 on TA in the tea sector and has executed the project in Vietnam.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	NG	VECO trains Vietnamese tea famers in the SAN standard and prepares them for RA certification.	Strengthened VECO training of tea farmers on SLM and INRM
Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute (NOMAFSI)	NOMAFSI is a research institute affiliated to the Vietnam Academy of Agricultural Sciences, responsible for research and technology transfer in agriculture and forestry. Tea is a major activity area due to crop importance.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	ST	NOMAFSI forms part of the Training of Trainers (ToT) team to provide advice on best practices based on the prioritized topics influencing land degradation, such as composting and water management.	Strengthened promotion and research on SLM and INRM by NOMAFSI in the Vietnamese tea sector.
Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS)	VITAS is a governmental organization responsible for overseeing farmers' implementation of sector policy, and ensuring food safety and hygiene, and also involved in international standards of quality management. It has 200 members in the tea provinces, as an important force for implementing sustainable development.	Dialogue and joint planning with RA during the project design period	GO	The VITAS Center for Human Resource Development for the Tea industry is considered as project partner for training, and the VITAS Information Centre for disseminating project outputs and materials. VITAS also plays a role in M&E of their members, for inclusion in the project.	Strengthened promotion and training on SLM and INRM by VITAS in the Vietnamese tea sector.
My Lam Tea Joint Stock Company	My Lam is a tea producer, with a 400 ha tea estate. It hires 700 workers and is committed to integrating smallholders in local communities into SLM practices. My Lam has been a pioneer in applying and promoting the SAN standard.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	BI	My Lam plays an important role by setting an example in the tea sector and also to the government, of efficient implementation of SLM and outreach to the local communities.	Strengthened promotion of the SAN standard by My Lam in the Vietnamese tea sector
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Crop Division	The MARD Crop Division has responsibility for controlling land use in the agricultural sector and management of fertilizers. It coordinates with the other governmental agencies to recommend the solutions for environmental protection in tea cultivation.	Dialogue with RA during the project design period	GO	MARD's national and district offices was informed about the project through regular meetings and reports, and form part of the core group that is consulted on each step of project implementation. Its commitment is critical to achieving wider government support.	

Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development Division and Policy Research (IPSARP)	IPSARP is one of 6 key institutions under MARD, with functions including research; assessing impacts of policies, strategies, plans, and programs in the agricultural sector; and implementing cooperation activities in research, technology transfer, training, consultation and model development.	Dialogue and joint planning with RA during the project design period	GO	IPSARP build a favorable enabling environment for the project by advising the Ministry on tea sector development policy, forming part of the project's core group.	Strengthened work of IPSARP on SLM and INRM in the tea sector

*NG=Non-Governmental; GO=Governmental; ST=Scientific & Technological; BI=Business & Industries.

Fig. 2. Project organization



F. Project financing

39. The total project budget was USD 14,139,601 of which USD 1,999,601 was allocated from GEF, and USD 12,140,000 was planned co-financing (USD 2,140,000 cash and USD 10,000,000 in-kind). The total co-financing achieved was approximately the same as planned, USD 12,428,616 or 2.4% additional to the amount pledged. These figures require some comments: (i) There were large differences between which firms and organizations that were expected to give co-financing and those that ended up as co-financing sources, as well as the amounts from each source; (ii) The round sum of USD 10 million in-kind indicates that the amount most probably was estimated and the amounts then divided between the ten that had pledged such co-financing, where at least some of them had not yet confirmed the final amount; (iii) The *cash* co-financing ended up lower than the pledged amount and the *in-kind* co-financing higher than the pledged amount. This was a negative factor for project planning, because in-kind financing is mostly outside project management's control; (iv) Despite a high total % co-financing compared with the pledged amount, it should be noted that RA reported co-financing of US **7,681,901.19** as of June 30, 2017 , or a little over half of the pledged

amount. This was already *after project implementation*, so even though some of the amount reported could have been spent earlier during the implementation period, it reflects late co-financing that could have affected project planning.

40. The difference between pledged and achieved co-financing, as well as the difference between the companies that pledged and those that actually paid, is a reflection of a hasty design- and preparation period for the project. Four co-financiers with a planned total amount of more than USD 1 million did not provide any financial support at all, while nine co-financiers that had not pledged anything in advance financed USD 3.75 million, or 30% of the total co-financing. It should also be noted that there was some additional in-kind co-financing not registered due to lack of evidence, e.g. from several government offices and institutions, tea estates, NGOs and smallholder groups in Darjeeling. The executing agency, RA, supported the project with USD 23,576 that was not planned originally. The co-financing of approximately 86% of total amount used is impressive and shows the interest in SLM and INRM especially from the private tea companies and the public sector (in China), as well as strong effort from RA to achieve co-financing throughout the implementation period.

Table 8. Approved co-financing at the moment of GEF CEO endorsement and until June 30th 2018.

Sources of co-financing	Cash pledged		Cash final		In-kind pledged		In-kind final		Total final	
	US$	%	US$	%	US$	%	US$	%	US$	%
Dunkin Brands	50,000								0	0
Unilever[1]	1,500,000		912,351						912,351	7.3
Kirin Holdings Company	50,000		185,499						185,499	1.5
Ethical Tea Partnership					920,000		382,560		382,560	3.1
Finlays					160,000		41,247		41,247	0.3
Trustea (India)					1,000,000		1,010,256		1,010,256	8.1
Tea Smallholders Factories ltd (Sri Lanka)					840,000		125,793		125,793	1.0
Kahawatte PLC							9,226		9,226	0.1
Northern Mountain Agriculture & Forestry Science Institute, NOMAFSI					100,000				0	0
Inst. of Policy and Strategy for Agric. and Rural Development, IPSARD					100,000				0	0
My Lam					800,000				0	0
Vietnam Tea Association					120,000		359,289		359,289	2.9
Lincang Municipal Government					2,660,000		2,504,517		2,504,517	20.2
Baoshan Municipal Government					3,300,000		2,810,509		2,810,509	22.6
IDH / Unilever Tea Vietnam	540,000		323,698						323,698	2.6
Rainforest Alliance			23,576						23,576	0.2
Maskeliya PLC (Sri Lanka)							53,064		53,064	0.4
Nghia Lo JSC (Vietnam)							27,093		27,093	0.4
Tam Duong JSC (Vietnam)							399,418		399,418	3.2
Kien Thuan Tea Coop. (Vietnam)							21,029		21,029	0.2
Thai Nguyen PPSD (Vietnam)							10,501		10,501	0.1
Veco Vietnam							21,641		21,641	0.2
Cangyuan Tea Office (China)							1,648,392		1,648,392	13.3
Wengdu Local Government (China)							1,558,957		1,558,957	12.5
Total pledged	**2,140,000**	17.6			**10,000,000**	82.4			**12,140,000**	**100**
Total final			**1,445,124**	12.6			**10,983,492**	88.4	**12,428,616**	**100**

[1]Includes Unilver Global SOW5, Unilever Global SOW7-9, and Unilever Sri Lanka

IV. THEORY OF CHANGE

41. The Project Document and Results framework has been used to analyse the intervention logic and establish the project's Reconstructed Theory of Change (TOC). There is no Logical Framework for the project, and even though a results framework has many of the same characteristics, there are also differences, and the two types of frameworks serve different purposes. A results framework is much more operational and is normally used for monitoring of compliance with outputs and outcomes at specific dates or years compared with a baseline. On the other hand, it does not define expected impacts, which is a priority for both UN Environment and GEF. The initial results framework was very ambitious especially at output level for example, the target for number of farmers to train, and even an aspect of climate change was included, but it was not very concrete on the landscape approach. A monitoring system with strongest emphasis on outputs, less on outcomes and very little on impacts, made it difficult to track whether the project was going in the right direction.

42. The project has, in general, a logical design reflected in the causality between the main objective, outcomes and outputs, as mentioned in the results framework. The only major change suggested by the Evaluator for the reconstructed TOC, is a switch between one of the outputs and the outcome for component 2 (see table 5). Assumptions, Risks, Drivers and Threats are mentioned in the ProDoc text, but of these only Assumptions are mentioned in the Results Framework. Drivers and Threats are not directly related to the process from outputs to outcomes. Different impacts of natural resources management are mentioned in several places in the text, but *there are no descriptions of the pathways and drivers from project outcomes to project impacts*. Roles of national partners are defined, but not their roles for causal pathways. The timeframe to reach outcomes seems realistic. At project inception, a 2-day planning workshop was held with the project team and selected stakeholders from each country to revisit the project's key parameters and regional contexts and refine if necessary project indicators and means of verification based on a TOC logic.

43. The causal pathways from project outputs to outcomes are clearly described in the results framework, but as mentioned no pathways from outcomes to impacts. The Reconstructed Theory of Change presented in this Terminal Evaluation Report tries to remedy this part of the TOC analysis, and includes also assumptions, drivers and risks. The Evaluator also proposes intermediate states between the outcomes of all four components and project impact. In the reconstructed TOC, the impact is presented as a reformulated short version of the project objective: "Reduced land degradation associated with tea production in Asia". The reconstructed TOC also includes a higher-level impact (after project implementation), defined as "Contribution to arresting and reversing global trends in land degradation". This is an ex-post expected impact that is directly related to the GEF global goal for the Land Degradation Focal Area and could be the result of RA and other international partners' continued work based on the results of the current project.

44. The project is designed consisting of four components with 4 expected outcomes and 9 expected outputs. This is a simple and clear design, since all outcomes and outputs clearly go towards reaching the project objective. The results framework uses SMART indicators for outputs and outcomes, considering that time (T) is covered through the timeline for tracking targets at mid-term and end of the project.

45. In the model of the Reconstructed TOC, the processes between outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and impacts are part of a logic interaction where it is necessary to consider the processes, drivers, assumptions and risks, which are marked in the diagram with arrows of different colours. The information is partly taken from the project document and results framework, and partly proposed by the Evaluator. Some drivers, assumptions and risks may be repeated in different components, but they are included only where most relevant to avoid making the diagram too complex. It is also important to highlight that some issues could be assumptions and risks at the same time, especially if there was insufficient baseline information to make certain assumptions during the project design phase. In all components strong project activity and interaction with stakeholders would be drivers for results, but these general aspects are not included in the TOC.

Table 9. Process to produce Outputs*

Component	Assumptions (A)	Risks (R)
1	• Managers interest based on knowledge of SAN standard	• Number of skilled farmers to train as trainers
2	• Stakeholders participate • Stakeholders see business in INRM for tea industry	
3	• Governments and tea industry receptive to SLM	

*No drivers are included in the table, since the drivers for producing outputs are the project activities

Table 10. Process from Outputs to Outcomes

Component	Drivers (D)	Assumptions (A)	Risks (R)
1	• Validation of site specific SLM • Successful adoption of SLM and energy efficient technology	• Incentives and market affect production	• Social unrest • Increased production costs
2	• Adoption of INRM plans • Industry interest channelled into INRM	• INRM supports ES and resilience	• Climate Change affects available land • Low industry interest in INRM
3	• Capacity in SLM • On-going contacts with RA	• RA + partners maintain credibility and influence	• Drop in tea prices • Low interest for certification
4			• Low capacity to apply M&E system

Table 11. Process from outcomes to impact at the end of project implementation

Component	Drivers (D)	Assumptions (A)	Risks (R)
1	• Best practices showcased	• Best practices applied in sector	
2	• New investments in INRM	• Increasing INRM investments in sector	
3	• Sector networking and policy lobbying	• Mainstreaming of SLM in tea sector	• Meet social standards
4	• Data from M&E used to improve tea sector knowledge	• Knowledge converted to practice • Drop in available manual labour	

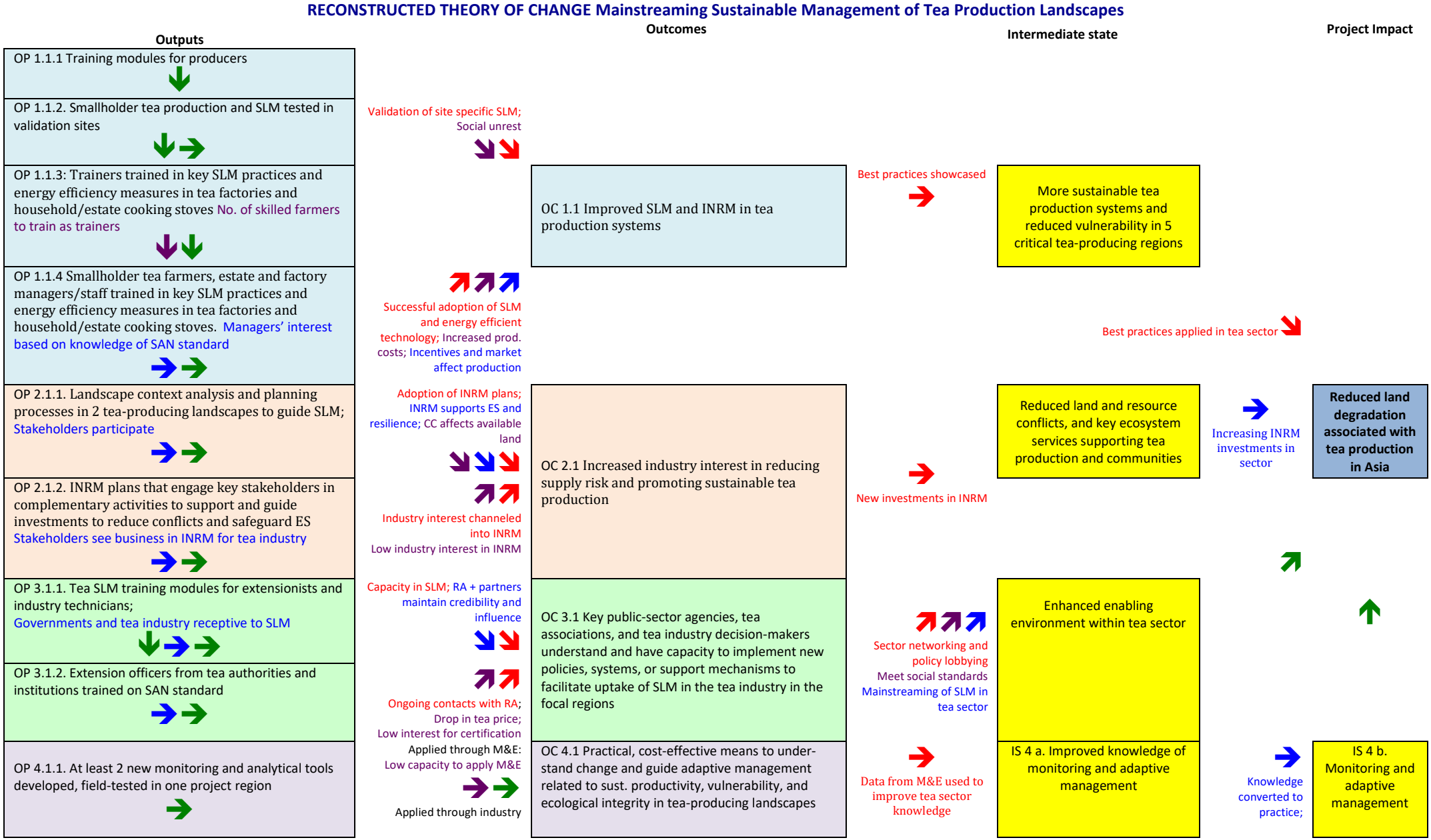
46. Returning to the subject of impact mentioned initially in this chapter, the Evaluator proposes a sequence of two impact levels, where the first impact was expected to be achieved by the end of the project implementation and the second level is expected to be achieved in the future:

Project Impact: Reduced land degradation associated with tea production in Asia

Ex-post Impact: Contribution to arresting and reversing global trends in land degradation

A model for the Reconstructed Theory of Change is presented on the following page. Please note that the text has been summarized from the full text presented in table 5.

Fig. 3. Theory of Change diagram



- Direction of process
- Driver
- Assumption
- Risk

Abbreviations

CC = Climate Change
ES = Ecosystems Services
INRM = Integrated natural resources management
IS = Intermediate State
M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation
OC = Outcome
OP = Output
RA = Rainforest Alliance
SAN = Sustainable Agriculture Network
SLM = Sustainable land Management

V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

A. Strategic relevance

47. The objectives and content of the project have a strong strategic relevance with the GEF Focal Area of land Degradation and the goal of Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The project is also giving a contribution to many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially Goal 15: Life on Land; Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production; and Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. It is however also related with Goal 1: No Poverty; Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being; Goal 5: Gender equality; Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth; and Goal 13: Climate Action.

48. GEF plays an important role in supporting countries' efforts to prevent and combat land degradation through sustainable land management and to ensure soil health. GEF is the world's largest source of funding for SLM, focusing on desertification and deforestation through removal of economic, policy, knowledge and institutional barriers, and building a foundation to improve the livelihood of rural people who rely on agriculture to survive. The GEF has been a major catalyst of innovations in SLM, for example, biodiversity conservation and agro-biodiversity, reduced risk of pollution and degradation of soil and water resources, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, as well as increased sustainability and resiliency. GEF's investments in SLM serve as an important entry point to promote climate-smart agriculture and food security.

49. UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2014-17 mentions support to landscape planning and integrated management of land and water for the provision of ecosystem services, including freshwater efficiency and food, and how integrated ecosystem management can help countries maintain the ecological foundation on which production systems depend. UN Environment has also endeavoured to show how better natural resource and environmental management, along with changes in production and consumption patterns, can improve the food pathway, increasing agricultural efficiencies, and boosting sustainable food production along the supply chains. UN Environment's POW 2016-17, Sub programme 6 mentions as one of the expected accomplishments: "Uptake of sustainable consumption and production and green economy instruments and management practices in sectorial policies and in business and financial operations across supply chains is increased, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication". On the other hand, the project is not clearly aligned with the Bali Plan, but south-south cooperation is assured through exchange of experiences between the four pilot countries and through the RA network.

50. The selected pilot countries and geographic pilot areas have been very relevant, considering economic and environmental factors, institutional setup and situation of local stakeholders in the countries. The tea sector has traditionally been devastating for the environment. The production was (and still is) normally done with no ground cover between the tea bushes, giving high erosion and soil degradation, and this is combined with high use of agro-chemicals, especially herbicides, other pesticides, and industrial fertilizers. In most areas where tea has been produced for many decades the humus-rich topsoil is all gone, the production per ha is falling, and continued production is only upheld with what is put in as fertilizers. There is also high level of cancer and birth defects in the tea producing areas, combined with high poverty index among tea smallholders and workers. People don't want to work so much in agriculture anymore if they have an alternative, and they are attracted to the cities, so the tea sector and governments had to find solutions to labour scarcity. The project tried to attack all these different problems with an integrated approach.

51. The project represents four of the seven most important tea producing countries in the world: 1. China; 2. India; 4. Sri Lanka; and 7. Vietnam. However, it would have been an advantage to count on a higher budget to include a larger project area, and thereby have a stronger impact on both local and national (institutional-political) level. The activities have been relevant to deliver against the project objectives and support the process towards SLM and INRM in the pilot countries. The interventions were however adequate compared with the incipient priorities on SLM defined in national policies and plans that often combine opportunities for economic and social development with conservation. This is also reflected in the opinion of local, national and international stakeholders in the tea sector.

Often they consider that the project design was appropriate, but that it is time to scale up the project interventions on a much larger level within the pilot countries and elsewhere.

52. The project has also been very relevant in relation to the official policy of the pilot countries. All the four countries are parties to the three Rio Conventions (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC), and they have also signed both the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. There are, however, differences between the countries and states on how this is applied in practice, especially when some politicians often wrongly conceive it as a contradiction between promoting economic development and environmental conservation. There is currently a movement in the international market towards more sustainable supply chains, and parts of the private sector seem to be ahead of the politicians.

53. To conclude, the project has been highly relevant in the framework of GEF's and UN Environment's policies and strategies, and they are also very relevant in the light of the four pilot countries' official policies and local stakeholders' interests.

Relevance is rated 'Highly Satisfactory'

B. Quality of project design

54. The Evaluator has reviewed the quality of the project design, based on the key sources Project Document with annexes and the Results Framework. The quality of project design has been reviewed considering that it is a Medium size GEF project (MSP) that did not go through any PPG phase, so it should not be expected to have the same level of detail as a ProDoc for a full-size project (FSP). Some ratings in table 12 are therefore higher than what would have been given for the same project document if it had been an FSP. The project design has both strengths and weaknesses, and the score presented in the Inception Report was reduced during the evaluation based on information on how the design affected implementation. Following the UNEP form for assessment of project design quality and its weighing of 13 section criteria, the design comes out with a total score of 4.28 on a scale from 1 to 6, which is categorized as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

55. Major strengths of the project design were the strategic relevance, and the sustainability, replication and catalytic effects. Major weaknesses were found in intended results/causality, financial planning and budgeting, and risk identification and social safeguards. The analysis is summarized in Table 12. The project was, however, too much focused on training, and with overambitious targets, which took attention away from other important issues such as change processes between outcomes and intermediate states aiming to further SLM and the landscape approach. GEFSEC commented to this effect during the design phase, but the design did not change very much.

56. The project has been indirectly supported by contributions from companies such as Unilever and Kirin, by government agencies (in-kind support) and by donor funding, e.g. support from IDH for development of sustainable tea production in the project countries. Resources from an RA cooperation project directly with Unilever in Sri Lanka provided additional financing to RA's training activities. The collaboration with ETP was through its support to sustainable tea programs in both India and Sri Lanka. Despite the mentioned actors that were already defined in the ProDoc, a large part of the project activities in India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam were implemented in collaboration with partners identified after the project started.

57. In **China** the project was largely carried out through the tea offices of Lincang and Baoshan, which were already identified before the start of the project. On the ground, implementation of project activities was organized with lower level government departments, especially in Cangyuan (Lincang) and Wengdu (Baoshan). These units also reported their own contributions as co-financing. The Green Fountain company in Cangyuan also provided support for farmer training and the establishment of several demonstration fields. The acting director of the Cangyuan Tea Office participated effectively in the project's Steering Committee, despite not being able to speak English.

58. In **India**, the national entity Trustea supports the GEF Tea project's effort to halt deforestation and land degradation associated with smallholder tea production. Trustea provides support to producers for verification against code chapters that directly relate to biodiversity and environmental management. The National Coordinator of the GEF project has participated regularly in Trustea meetings on technical issues around sustainable tea production and Trustea's verification program.

These exchanges provided a good forum to present lessons learned from the GEF Tea project. A wide range of other partners were involved in direct implementation of the project activities in India, mostly identified after the start of the project. Smallholder training was organized through local branches of farmer associations in Assam and Darjeeling, and several estates were involved in Integrated Weed Management (IWM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) demo plots while other estates participated in the demonstration and training on fuel efficient cook stoves. The firm Greenway Grameen was actively involved in training on these stoves. For the landscape activity in Darjeeling, several government offices and institutions, tea estates, NGOs and smallholder groups were involved.

59. The collaboration in **Sri Lanka** was, additional to the work with Unilever strongly aligned with ETP, since the ETP Regional Manager lives in Sri Lanka and was representative in the GEF project Steering Committee. Another partner in Sri Lanka was Finlays, investing in sustainable tea production in the Blairlomond and Duckwari regions, and Finlays estates were included in INRM work (component 2). Smallholder training received great support from the Tea Smallholdings Development Authority (TSHDA), a semi-state organization responsible for providing training and technical assistance to the country's 370,000 tea smallholders. TSHDA extension staff were trained by the Sri Lanka NC, to then in turn train the large majority of the 17,100 farmers trained by the project in that country. Several estates were also involved in training smallholders and/or organization of demonstration plots.

60. In **Vietnam** the training activities were organised through several tea companies that had previously been trained under an IDH/Unilever funded project. The plant protection department in Thai Nguyen province also agreed to organize training activities. The project's NC provided the Training of Trainers (TOT) for the farmer trainers, who then organized the local training of farmers, mostly through their own funding. The Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS) supported the project by informing its members about the project results and using those results as arguments in discussions on sustainable tea production with the government. VITAS participated also actively in the project's Steering Committee.

61. The project design was not very clear on the exact role of the partners identified before implementation started. Several organizations, particularly in Vietnam, that had committed co-financing did not have any active involvement once the project had started and declined to provide any co-financing. This resulted in the need to identify new organizations to provide support, especially for the implementation of smallholder training. Most NCs were well respected as tea experts in the project areas with a wide network of contacts that they effectively mobilized to support project activities and find additional co-financing. The NCs could however have needed support from a national committee, at least with an advisory role, to strengthen the networking and inter-institutional collaboration in favour of the project's goals. The designed structure of the project resulted in a disconnect between the international steering committee (SC) that met once a year and local farmers and eliminated the possibility for the committee to have real-time follow-up of the situation in each country.

62. One aspect of the design that didn't fit well with any of the categories in table 12 was the size of the project area. Four countries and five pilot regions appear fine, since they are among the most important tea producing countries. However, the low budget (even with co-financing included) was more apt for a 1-country project in these heavily populated countries. The important project goals would have deserved to be covered at least by a full-size GEF project, and to be carefully designed through a complete PPG design process. The reason for the low budget and fast approval process seems to be that GEF-5 funds were still available, and that the RA was incentivised to prepare a project in record time. Even though it is logical that the NGO was willing and enthusiastic about this challenge, it is worth asking UN Environment and GEF if this was the best approach to achieve optimal results.

63. Regarding the pilot countries and regions that were selected, the Evaluator considers that they were representative for tea production in Asia, and they were also geographic areas where RA had experience and contacts with the tea sector. It is important that RA and partners had on-going activities (instead of starting from zero) and areas with great possibilities of co-financing. Whilst it would have been better to have a larger project area and more field activities, reaching a greater number of beneficiaries, the project was thematically very focused and therefore gave a

representative data pool for conclusions, to discuss with tea sector representatives and governments. The follow-up from RA in each country following the completion of this project will be crucial to assure impact and sustainability.

Table 12. Summary of the project design review

	Criteria	Rating (1-6)	Explanation
A	Nature of the External Context	3	The Project Document presents a solid analysis of the tea production sector, which is the most important external context for the project implementation and possibilities for achieving results. However, since *this criteria* in the rating system has a reversed scale, the rating of Moderately Favourable is 3 (Highly Favourable = 1, Favourable = 2, Moderately Favourable = 3, Moderately Unfavourable = 4, Unfavourable = 5 and Highly Unfavourable = 6).
B	Project Preparation	4	The project preparation would have benefited from a PPG or at least more time. There is a clear situation analysis for the project, problems to resolve, threats to the sector, root causes and barriers. Environmental and social sustainability is mainstreamed throughout the project document but there is no environmental and social impact analysis. The analysis of stakeholders defines their expected roles in the project but not within a clear structure. Consultations with stakeholders are mentioned, but no details on this are given (however, it was confirmed that the content of ProDoc was influenced by it). Gender analysis in ProDoc is short but concrete. Ethnic minorities are mentioned as important stakeholder groups for the project in Vietnam and China.
C	Strategic Relevance	6	ProDoc is clearly aligned with UN Environment strategic priorities defined in MTS/PoW, including on green business, and the GEF Goals regarding land degradation and climate change. The document is also aligned with the Bali Strategic Plan, due to focus on stakeholder capacity building. The project coordinates with many private sector stakeholders, as well as with governments in the pilot countries.
D	Intended Results and Causality	3	The project has a logical design reflected in the causality between main objective, outcomes and outputs, as mentioned in the results framework. Drivers and threats are mentioned in the ProDoc text (not in the Results Framework), but are not directly related to the process from outputs to outcomes. Expected impacts of the project are mentioned several places in the text, but there are no description of pathways and drivers from outcomes to impacts. Roles of national partners are defined, but not their roles for causal pathways. At project inception, a 2-day planning workshop was planned with the project team and selected stakeholders from each country to revisit the project's key parameters and regional contexts, and refine project indicators and means of verification based on a TOC logic.
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	4	The Results Framework captures the TOC from outputs to outcomes, but not from outcomes to impacts. There are baselines, targets and clear indicators (mostly SMART) for outcomes and outputs, which are measurable and defined by mid-term and end of project. The baseline was finalized during the first year of project implementation and the results framework was also adjusted during implementation. Responsibilities for monitoring are defined in the M&E Plan, and there is an M&E budget. The initial Work Plan is clear but a bit optimistic and was built on what partners had achieved prior to the project.
F	Governance and Supervision Arrange-ments	5	The institutional arrangements for project implementation are clearly defined, including the relation between the regional/international project team and the field staff, as well as support from RA staff in charge of finance, marketing, community outreach and training, M&E, and specific technical issues. A steering committee provided strategic guidance for the implementation, consisting of the UNEP task manager; the RA Lead Scientist and Senior Manager of the tea program; and one representative each from industry and government every year on a rotating basis. The national coordinators had regular consultation with government representatives, but only in Sri Lanka on national level. Responsibilities were defined from the start, and a coordinated dialogue between the international technical team and national coordinators determined annual work plans and targets. The UNEP/GEF Coordination Office been monitoring implementation and was responsible for reports to GEF. UNEP/GEF's regional office in Thailand supervised the project directly.
G	Partnerships	5	Capacities of expected partners seem to have been well assessed. Roles of external partners were reviewed, but responsibilities of each partner were not clearly specified. Partners were partly replaced during the implementation period. The main co-financing stakeholders in the project were private sector partners from the tea industry, including the largest buyers of tea in the world (Unilever, Tata Global Beverages), and government agencies especially in China, investing in sustainable agriculture and SLM to reverse land degradation. Co-financing partners at the moment of project approval consisted of 7 private sector partners, 3 national governments, 2 municipal governments, 1 CSO, and 1 multilateral agency.
H	Learning, Communi-cation and Outreach	5	Knowledge management and training is covered mainly by components 1 and 3, however also the other two components have strong elements of capacity building. Communication with stakeholders was done from RA through publications and audio-visual products, and through communication channels of the project partners. Results and lessons learned were being disseminated both from RA and the partner organizations. Exchange of experiences and lessons learned between the NCs should have been stronger.
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	3	Financial planning during the design phase was in general good, but budgeting was not based on assured co-financing. Therefore, failed co-financing sources had to be replaced during implementation. RA achieved a pledge of US$ 12.14 million co-financing, while approx. 30% was replaced with other sources.
J	Efficiency	4	There is good relation between project duration and secured funding. The project was designed making use of the RA experience and pre-existing collaborations, and expected synergies and complementarities with on-going activities of the partner organizations, but partnerships were not sufficiently secured and specifically agreed from the start. The project document mentions the importance of GEF incremental financing, but there is no complete incremental cost analysis.

K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	3	Risks are identified in the ProDoc's Risk Table but not in the Results Framework. The Risk Table includes two market risks, two environmental risks and two social risks, which all are real risks, risk level and mitigation strategy are included. The possibility of social unrest (e.g. in Darjeeling) was not considered among social risks. It is not clear if the risk level is based on probability of occurrence and/or impact in case of occurrence. The project is planned to reduce negative environmental and social impacts of the tea producing activities, and maybe for that reason the project document doesn't consider the possibility of adverse impacts of the project itself, or the need for safeguards to avoid such impacts. No major negative and many positive environmental impacts are expected. There is no strategy to reduce the project's potential negative environmental and/or carbon footprint.
L	Sustainability Replication and Catalytic Effects	6	Sustainability is mainstreamed in the Project Document. No exit strategy should be required for pilot projects, while the main results would be integrated in the tea sector (partner activities) and RA's work at regional and global level. Replication is mentioned as part of global environmental benefits, and results from pilot projects would be promoted and replicated or improved in other countries. Replication and scaling up of successful land and ecosystem management practices and technologies would maximize synergies across the UN conventions on Biological Diversity (CBD), Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Combating Desertification (UNCCD). Environmental sustainability is mainstreamed and addressed broadly throughout the Project Document.
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/ Gaps	5	The project was not treated in the PRC. The GEFSEC checklist showed that the project complied with all requirements in the list: General, Country and stakeholder involvement, Technical design, Partners, and Budget.

Quality of Project Design is rated 'Moderately Satisfactory'

C. Nature of the external context

64. An introduction to the context of the tea production sector and its impacts is included in section II A. The sector and its development on regional and global level is the most important external context for the project implementation and possibilities for achieving results. Tea is the cheapest drink in the world after water, so it is considered "the poor man's drink". Tea has to very little extent experienced the boom in prices seen in commodities such as coffee and cocoa. Even though there are some gourmet teas that are sold at high prices, this is a very small niche market that doesn't affect the general market of a low-price commodity. Even the large firm Unilever that has promoted certification and now only sells RA certified tea on the European and US markets, is not willing to pay a premium that justifies the costs of certification, and much less the added investment costs to achieve environmental and social sustainability. The situation is therefore that tea producers are selling RA certified tea at low prices *because it is a must for access to certain markets*, while they are selling tea with an even lower price to markets with low or no restrictions on pesticide content, including many of the countries in the Middle East, Asia and Russia.

65. All the project countries and regions are affected by climate change and relatively frequently by natural disasters. Climate change is considered in the risk framework as a low to medium risk, while natural disasters are not considered. However, all the pilot countries are vulnerable to natural disasters: China to seismic activity, typhoons and flooding; and India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam especially to prolonged drought, typhoons and flooding. The likelihood of natural disasters in the pilot areas is variable and difficult to assess, but the project will increase local disaster resilience in these areas. The Evaluator however considers that this is a relatively low risk for the main project objectives, but it could have a strong effect locally depending on the pilot sites.

66. The political situation on national level is relatively stable in all the four pilot countries. Only one of them had national elections during the project period, Sri Lanka (2015). Since the project is focused on local production and the private sector, it should normally not be much affected by national elections, however in Sri Lanka trade unions are politically affiliated and therefore elections can cause disturbance to private sector activity. The local social and political situation is however a factor that can have an important impact on the project results. This was experienced especially in India, with social uprising in both Assam and Darjeeling, including a 100 days long separatist strike in Darjeeling during June-Sept 2017 that paralyzed the project activities there. It was impossible for project staff to enter the area during this period, but thanks to collaboration with the local NGO ATree the project was able to establish better stakeholder relations, which strengthened the work after the strike had finished.

67. An external factor that influenced project performance positively in individual countries was the **government policy**. It was an increasing interest for sustainable land management and integrated

pest management during the project period (as well as for RA certification – not covered by the project), which resulted in strengthened collaboration with local governments, and even co-financing from them not expected during the design phase. In Sri Lanka the National Government became increasingly interested in the project results, and in China the Cangyuan tea office, Lincang tea office and Changninghong company extended the area to be covered by the project. In Yunnan RA had already certified a high number of farmers before the project started, and the Government declared in 2017 that they would like all the farmers in the province to be certified.

Nature of External Context is rated 'Moderately Favourable'

D. Effectiveness

i. Achievement of outputs

68. The project made slow progress towards outputs in the first two years, when too much emphasis was given on setting up a system, with exception of Sri Lanka, where it was already established. Later the progress towards outputs improved everywhere.

69. The outputs and targets included in the last PIR (June 2018) were used as the expected results included in the following table, with the adjustments proposed by the Evaluator and marked in Table 5. In the table below the column "% of target" summarizes results for these sub outputs, and the % compliance refers to the output indicator as an average of the sub-output indicators. Review of the results is presented in the text. Please note that the calculation of compliance doesn't consider more than 100% of any outputs, even though the project exceeded the target on certain outputs, especially training and capacity building. The reason is that high figures for one output would not compensate for deficient results in another output.

70. For output 4 only one sub-output (with 6 indicators) has been considered. This is consistent with the results framework included as annex to ProDoc and MTR. However, the project has monitored five sub outputs more: 4.2: Develop annual NC work plans and budgets; 4.3: Organize national planning workshops; 4.4: Prepare and submit NC Progress & Financial Reports; 4.5: Project Mid Term Review; and 4.6: Project M&E System. These 'outputs' are all part of project management tasks, not to be considered as project results. In the last PIR outputs 4.2-4.4 are not even mentioned. The Project Coordinator explains that these "missing" outputs were set up to cover some specific activities in the project countries and thereby allow budget allocations to be made against them. For some reason, each activity had to be linked to an output, but these outputs had no relation to the overall project outputs.[10]

Table 13. Achievement of outputs

Description of indicator	Baseline level	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2018[1]	% of target
Output 1.1: Training modules developed to support producers to adopt site-specific SLM practices, including locally appropriate species useful to smallholders and for erosion control and composting, alternative economic income, functional vegetative buffers around water and forest edges, and improved wood-fuel management practices in factories, households/ estates					
Indicator 1.1.A: Number of training modules developed in English on key SLM practices (1 per region)	0	5	5	4	80
Indicator 1.1.B: Number of training modules developed in local language on key SLM practices (1 per region)	0	5	5	5	100
Output indicator: Average % of target					90
Output 1.2: Sustainable tea production and SLM tested in validation sites (including demonstration/training)					

[10] The Evaluation Office notes that it is common for GEF projects to feature a 'management component' in the project document with specific outputs that do not form a meaningful part of the project intervention logic.

Description of indicator	Baseline level	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2018[1]	% of target
Indicator 1.2.A: Number of field SLM demonstration/training pilot sites	0	10	10	11	110
Indicator 1.2.B: Number of demonstration/pilot sites for more sustainable biomass/ fuelwood production for factories	0	5	5	4	80
Indicator 1.2.C: Number of wood fuel efficiency stoves demonstration/ training pilot sites in estates for workers and smallholders	0	3	3	6	200
Output indicator: Average % of target					130
Output 1.3: Trainers trained in key SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories and household/estate cooking stoves					
Indicator 1.3.A: Number of trainers (extension workers/officers, lead farmers, estate managers and factory staff) trained	0	120	241	421	174.7
Indicator 1.3.B: Number of local NGOs, public institutions and other organizations with improved knowledge of SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories and household/ estate cooking stoves	0	12	24	24	100
Output indicator: Average % of target					137.4
Output 1.4: Smallholder tea farmers, estate and factory managers/staff trained in key SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories and household/estate cooking stoves					
Indicator 1.4.A: Number of smallholder farmers trained in key field SLM practices	0	9,070	27,800	27,829	100.1
Indicator 1.4.B: Number of estate managers/staff trained in key field SLM practices	0	55	180	188	104.4
Indicator 1.4.C: Number of factory managers/staff trained on fuel efficiency practices	0	25	180	127	70.6
Indicator 1.4.D: Number of smallholder farmers, and estate and factory workers trained on fuel efficient cooking stoves	0	2,500	5,500	4,648	84.5
Output indicator: Average % of target					89.9
Output 2.1: Landscape context analysis and planning processes (including participatory landscape mapping and assessment) in two tea-producing landscapes to guide SLM					
Indicator 2.1.A: Number of landscapes defined and delineated	0	1	2	2	100
Indicator 2.1.B: Number of studies for defined and delineated landscapes, compiling and analyzing existing data	0	1	2	2	100
Indicator 2.1.C: Number of participatory workshops to conduct landscape assessment and INRM planning	0	1	2	2	100
Output indicator: Average % of target					100
Output 2.2: Integrated natural resource management (INRM) plans that engage key tea and non-tea stakeholders in complementary activities, supporting and guiding investments to help reduce land and resource conflicts and safeguard key ecosystem services, supporting tea production and local and downstream communities					
Indicator 2.2.A: Number of INRM plans whose development has been supported	0	1	2	2	100
Indicator 2.2.B: Number of workshops to support ongoing development and adaptive management of INRM plans	0	1	2	1	50
Output indicator: Average % of target					75
Output 3.1: Tea SLM training modules for government extensionists and industry technicians					

Description of indicator	Baseline level	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2018[1]	% of target
Indicator 3.1.A: Number of case studies and thematic papers finalized	0	0	5	5	100
Indicator 3.1.B: Number of case studies and thematic papers translated, published and distributed to government and tea sector decision makers	0	0	5	3	60
Output indicator: Average % of target					80
Output 3.2: Extension officers from tea authorities and other relevant institutions trained on the SAN standard and in on-going contact with Executing Agency					
Indicator 3.2.A: Number of field visits organized	0	0	5	4	80
Indicator 3.2 B: Number of seminars organized	0	0	5	7	140
Output indicator: Average % of target					110
Output 4.1: Monitoring and analytical tool to assess adoption of SLM practices and farm climate resiliency, field-tested, finalized and assessed					
Indicator 4.1.A: Draft Farm Performance Monitoring Tool developed to assess key SLM practice adoption	0	1	1	1	100
Indicator 4.1.B: Draft Climate Resilience Monitoring Tool developed	0	1	1	1	100
Indicator 4.1.C: Farm Performance Monitoring Tool to assess key SLM practice adoption finalized	0	1	1	1	100
Indicator 4.1.D: Climate Resilience Monitoring Tool finalized	0	1	1	1	100
Indicator 4.1.E: Practicality and cost-effectiveness of Farm Performance Monitoring Tool assessment report.	0	1	1	1	100
Indicator 4.1.F: Practicality and cost-effectiveness of Climate Resilience Monitoring Tool assessment report	0	1	1	1	100
Output indicator: Average % of target					100
Average of output indicators (with no output calculated >100%)					92.8%

[1]Results extracted from Draft Final Report and PIR June 30, 2018, partly reformulated based on the Evaluator's analysis.

71. Based on the figures above, it seems clear that the activities carried out have delivered nearly all the planned project outputs based on the targets in the last version of the Results Framework. It should, however, be noted that the outputs and targets were adjusted several times during implementation. Based on the original results framework approved by GEF the output results would still be good, with an average of: 90.8% of outputs 1; 75% of outputs 2; probably 100% of outputs 3; and an unknown % of outputs 4 since it was not specified on how many farms monitoring tools were applied.

72. The implementation period was officially extended by 3 months until March 31st 2018, without additional funds from GEF, and some activities have also continued after that with RA and local partners funds. This issue is also addressed by this report in the chapter on sustainability. Despite a few issues where the project was well below target (number of factory managers/staff trained on fuel efficiency practices; number of workshops to support ongoing development and adaptive management of INRM plans; and number of case studies and thematic papers translated, published and distributed), RA through its extended network seems to have performed well as an executing agency, and this is also reflected in the opinion of the UN Environment TM in charge of project supervision.

73. For the national partners (NEA) led by the National Coordinators (NCs) it was a learning-by-doing process on the administrative and financial part of project management, but not on the technical part. The Coordinators had been selected based on their previous collaboration with RA, and they were of a high technical standard. Only for VECO Vietnam and its Coordinator, the collaboration with RA and

the tea sector was a relatively new work area. The technical content was partly based on the content of the UN Environment – GEF project "Greening the cocoa sector".

74. As mentioned, the percentages for output delivery compliance against targets refer strictly to the defined indicators. This means that for indicators that are not very specific it could theoretically be possible to achieve a high score but at the same time mask deficiencies in the outputs. For instance, the high number of farmers trained does not reflect how much they learned, and even less whether they applied their new knowledge. The project had introduced an extensive system to measure adoption of SLM practices the farmers were trained as a serious attempt to address this apparent weakness in the project output delivery. However, the M&E system did not work well. For that reason the Evaluator has looked further into the aspects of quantity, quality and timeliness for achieving the outputs. Regarding **quantity**, for each indicator there is a strong variability between the countries, but for the overall delivery against the targets the project has achieved at least the planned volume of most outputs, and especially for 1.3 "Trainers trained" and 1.2 "Sustainable tea production and SLM tested in validation sites". However, for these sites, most of them were established late in the implementation period (see table 14), and the value of them would increase if they are taken over by local institutions for research, education and training purposes.

Table 14. SLM validation sites

Location	Topic	Events or results shared with wider audience
CHINA		
Green Fountain Tea company	Composting	From 2016: Several government offices visited GF company and visited the demos. Site visited during 2018 SC meeting.
Green Fountain Tea company	Green Manure	From 2017: Several government offices visited GF company and visited the demos. Site visited during 2018 SC meeting.
INDIA		
Mancota Tea Estate, Assam	IPM	From 2017: Trial not completed. But results used at GEF Tea estate staff workshops in Assam
Ganeshbari Tea Estate, Assam	IWM	From 2017: Trial not completed. But results used at GEF Tea estate staff workshops in Assam
Romai Tea Estate, Assam	IWM	From 2017: Trial not completed. But results used at GEF Tea estate staff workshops in Assam
Farmer field, Darjeeling	Composting	From 2018: Not visited by outsiders except the local farmer group.
SRI LANKA		
Hapugastenne estate, Maskeliya RPC	IWM	From 2016: Farmer training, workshop/opening Hapugatenne training center, GEF media visit, RA Sri Lanka video
Ekarella estate, Kahwatta RPC	IWM	From 2017: Thematic Field Visit and National Workshop (March 8-9, 2018)
Dambetenna estate, Agarapathana RPC	IWM	From 2017: Thematic Field Visit and National Workshop, from 2017 (March 8-9, 2018)
Dambetenna estate, Agarapathana RPC	IWM	From 2017: Thematic Field Visit and National Workshop (March 8-9, 2018)
VIETNAM		
Lai Chau (farmer field)	Different SLM methods	From 2017: National workshop and field visit. Basic for cost-benefit analysis (presented at 2018 SC meeting)

75. The information collected in the demonstration sites was used for the events mentioned in the table, as well as for training activities, and presentations at workshops inside and outside the project. There is, however, no summary of the individual events, but a good summary is given for weed management demo sites in Sri Lanka. Except for the two sites at Dambatenna estate in Sri Lanka, all the sites have been completed. These two sites are still managed by the estate with the support of ASLM and students from a local University.

76. Regarding **quality** of outputs, this was more difficult to assess. The Evaluator reviewed a sample of technical documents and material from all countries visited, e.g. training material, communication material (including videos), field posters, generic tools, M&E system, and summary documents from seminars and training events. Most outputs reviewed were of a high technical level. Some excellent videos were made about IPM (in India) and sustainable tea production (in Sri Lanka). It was especially positive that the project functioned as an exchange network where information and training material from one country (especially India) was adapted, translated and used in other countries.

77. The quality of training performed from RA's side seems to have been good, but not all trainers trained had sufficient base knowledge and interest, so the quality of their training of farmers varied significantly. The quality of training was given more importance following the MTR, but it appears that only Vietnam has assessed the improved results of the increased emphasis on quality training. It would be interesting to review the impact of training e.g. in Sri Lanka where it seems very positive based on a long tradition, and in China where the number of people trained reached very high figures. Regarding monitoring, there were some problems, mentioned in section G (Monitoring and Reporting) of this report.

78. Regarding **timeliness**, since the project was building on some previous projects and activities executed by RA partners, this gave the opportunity for a faster start than if it had initiated without that previous experience. Since the project was extended by only three months (and 5 months in Darjeeling), within the same budget, and approved by UN Environment, the Evaluator considers this within the bounds of timely execution. However, some tasks were still not finished even within the extended project period, so to reach the final goal on *all* targets with the required quality and expected sustainability, an extension of one year might have been more appropriate.

79. The lack of secured co-financing from some of the planned sources may also have been a factor affecting timeliness in the early and middle phases of implementation. Reviewing the whole project period, the issues where the project may have benefited from more time to reach the complete targets were the numbers of: (i) SLM training modules developed in English; (ii) Factory demonstration/pilot sites for sustainable biomass and fuelwood production; (iii) Factory managers/staff trained on fuel efficiency practices; (iv) Smallholder farmers, and estate and factory workers trained on fuel efficient cooking stoves; (v) Workshops to support development and adaptive management of INRM plans; (vi) Case studies and thematic papers translated, published and distributed; and (vii) Field visits.

80. There was a gradual trend of improved effectiveness at international level through the implementation period, especially after the Mid-Term Review. The RA Project team maintained the same efficient Project Manager throughout the implementation period that, despite being resident in the Netherlands, had a good presence in the region with frequent country visits. The National Coordinators were satisfied with the support from him and also maintained fluent communication with the M&E team, led by the M&E Director in the Headquarters and one M&E person operating from Indonesia (changed once during the project period). The RA project team, including NCs were also satisfied with the strict but technically solid supervision and support received from the UN Environment TM. The trend in improved effectiveness came, most of all, from a gradually increasing understanding of the project approach and the strengthened capacity of the national partners.

81. Additional to country visits, the internationally based team members maintained good and transparent communication with local partners also through e-mails, Skype, phone calls and publications. Communication between the PM and NCs was frequent, although not on a fixed schedule, and the MTR found the level of communication to be effective. The PM travelled to project sites in all pilot countries on many occasions, for monitoring and for direct participation in certain activities (e.g. the planning workshops and ToT). In **India**, training and implementation of herbicides-free weed management had been going on since before the project started, and with the contracting of a high-level national expert on integrated pest management (IPM) as NC it gave the project a flying-start, especially in Darjeeling. Also, in **Sri Lanka,** RA contracted an NC with broad experience on IPM, and the training on herbicides-free weed management was further strengthened through a visit of the India NC. The topic has been very popular and received much attention in national media and from the public and private sector. A training document[11] prepared by the NC describes the harmful weeds as having strong root systems, competing with the tea for resources such as nutrients, water, space and sunlight, being difficult to kill using herbicides (often resistant), when the herbicides are applied they spread further, and some weed species release chemicals that are harmful for the tea bush. On the other hand, the benign weeds (or "soft weeds") are characterized by having a weak root system, being less competitive with the tea, spreading and covering the open soil (enhancing soil conservation), helping to retain moisture in the soil, protecting and enriching the soil, and providing

[11] Rainforest Alliance 2018. Herbicides free integrated weed management in Sri Lanka Tea Cultivation. 9 pp. (training doc., not published)

habitat for predators that eat harmful insects. The following pictures are from the aforementioned document.

Fig. 4. Some identified harmful weeds in tea farms in Sri Lanka (including invasive species)

Spermacoce hispida

Imperata cylindrica

Panicum repens

Fig. 5. Some identified innocent weeds in tea farms in Sri Lanka

Desmodiumtriflorum

Lagasceamollis

Digitariasanguinalis

82. Exchange of experiences and best practices as the example between India and Sri lanka, as well as sharing of advice among NCs happened only sporadically, and focused mostly on specific requests from one NC to another. This is an important opportunity missed, because countries faced common implementation challenges that could have been better addressed if NCs had learned more from exchanges with each other in a systematic way. This was however to some extent compensated by meetings between the NCs and PM around the project steering committee meetings, where the NCs were present as observers.

83. The need for preparing and communicating the project's objective, approach and field technologies tested, as well as best practices gained, was suggested and agreed already during the first project SC meetings. First RA considered to establish a project website, later a Blog, and finally fact sheets withinfographs, but these were finalized after project completion. It is important to mention that the MTR recommended the implementation of a general communications strategy for project approaches and achievements, and RA's Communications Division agreed to this. The recommendation was later repeated frequently by the UN Environment TM. However, the output of this strategy was very limited and came too late; and support to the individual NCs for their communication and outreach was also limited. In-country activities to increase engagement with key public and private institutions to mainstream SLM under component 3 were identified only for the final months of the project and remained limited in scope and use. For this kind of project with a strong focus on external communications and outreach, the communication activities and support from RA should have been built into the project design and budget from the start so staff would give it sufficient importance.

84. As shown in the following table, there are large differences between the project regions regarding the degree of application of SLM practices.

Table 15. Summary of results for each project region

Project region	% of farmers in the region applying SLM	Number of farmers trained	Average ha/farmer	Areas where SLM is applied (ha)
China (Yunnan)	40%	6,101	1.00	2,440
India:				
Assam	16%	999	0.87	139
Darjeeling	37%	419	0.87	135
Sri Lanka	65%	17,105	0.60	6,671

Project region	% of farmers in the region applying SLM	Number of farmers trained	Average ha/farmer	Areas where SLM is applied (ha)
Vietnam	51%	3,144	0.99	1,587
Total	**50.39***	**27,768**	**0.74***	**10,972**

*Weighted by the number of farmers in each area

85. **The evaluation revealed some aspects partly related to the project outputs:** As mentioned above, the project's strategies and goals were transparent from the early design throughout the implementation, with broad stakeholder engagement and information on the project's progress and outputs, through publications, training events and seminars. It is, however, important to highlight that most local stakeholders, and even some NCs that didn't take part in the design phase, and *didn't completely understand the project approach* from the start. The Evaluator considers that project staff and partners have to really understand the deeper meaning (intentionality) and approach of a project before they start working effectively. This situation was, however, gradually resolved through training events and other exchange efforts.

86. The pilot regions were maintained throughout project implementation. The evaluator found the quality of products; often study reports, methodologies, procedures, etc. to be high. The TM, however, mentions some issues with the high cost of producing some reports. The high quality of products was partly a result of the high levels of professionalism of RA, NCs and main partners. RA selected coordinators they had worked with before and had confidence in (except for Vietnam, where it was a new partner). The selection of national coordinators was key, because with a weak NC the whole country programme might have failed. There was a high degree of satisfaction among the main stakeholders with the products and services delivered through the project, mainly training events and information material. However, many beneficiaries of training (both ToT participants and local farmers) thought that more training was necessary per person and that it should have been followed up with direct technical assistance on the participants' farms.

87. Even though the quality of the project design was dealt with in Chapter V-B, the Evaluator has in this section given special emphasis to the Project *performance* as a result of the design. The project structure doesn't provide a logical relationship between the training given to individuals and the issue of SLM. It could even be considered that the design is 'upside-down', starting with training before knowing where to practice it. A more logical design might have been to start with some project areas selected based on pre-identified criteria – then design SLM plans for each area through a participatory process – define what is needed to resolve the problems in each area – and finally train trainers and through them the local farmers on how to resolve the specific issues in each area. This approach would probably have improved both project effectiveness and efficiency, and at the same time given the opportunity to present larger contiguous pilot areas of best practices.

88. The results framework was used by all NCs to plan and monitor project activities and expected outputs. The framework was the basis for the reporting from the countries to the PM, who with support from the M&E staff synthesized the results in the reports to UNEP/GEF. The GEF SLM tracking tool was however not used. A mid-term impact report was requested by UN Environment however, no MTR budget had been allocated. Instead, after consultation with the Task Manager, an RA-led exercise managed by the M&E Director was undertaken.. Some NCs expressed that the monitoring and reporting took too much of their time, because there were too many targets to keep track of. In the opinion of the Evaluator, a more process-oriented monitoring system at the national level would have been better, linking activities, procurement, and products, considering the time required for each process and when the different outputs were needed, (this is a standard functionality of the MS-Project and other software). However, it was never planned that the project should develop or support their partners in changing to such an integrated system.

89. Prioritisation of the outputs based on the activities included in the project was considered satisfactory to promote and consolidate best practices. Lessons learned from previous RA's and partners' activities were satisfactorily reflected in the design since RA had certified firms in all countries and thereby achieved experience and established contacts. However, the project was rather inactive to engage with central and leading industry bodies to enable adoption and replication on national level. It is also unclear whether lessons learned from other projects (UN, development banks, bilateral

donors and NGOs) were integrated in the project design, or whether synergies were sought with such projects. Often the funding can be so significant that it influences the whole sector and thereby should be considered in project design, planning and implementation. Just to mention a few potentially missed opportunities for collaboration (a review would have revealed possible synergies): (i) World Bank smart staple crop production, China (US$30 million); (ii) UNDP-GCF Integrated water management for smallholders, Sri Lanka (US$9.14 million) and UN-REDD Phase 2, Vietnam (US$30.2 million).

90. All outputs are considered as relevant and useful for reaching the project objectives. A large number of training events, training material and convincing information videos on IPM and SLM were produced as part of the project development process. It was positive that much training and information material was adapted to local conditions and translated into local languages in the pilot countries, most often on initiatives taken by the NCs.

Achievement of Outputs is rated 'Satisfactory'

ii. Achievement of direct outcomes

91. In the following table, the achievement of direct outcomes was assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change. The text is analysed literally, which gave a high degree of compliance (88.1%). The figures are based on the project's self-reporting, since the time and budget for the TE did not give the opportunity for any alternative recompilation of data on project performance. The Evaluator's assessment therefore focused on verifying if the reported results were reasonable and logical according to information from other sources (mostly stakeholder interviews). Please note that for some of the processes that were executed in parallel in all four pilot countries, not necessarily all countries have to finalize all activities to consider compliance for the project as a whole.

Table 16. Achievement of outcomes

Outcomes	Description of indicator	Baseline level[1]	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2018[2]	% of target
1. Improved SLM and INRM tea production systems and reduced vulnerability on 60,000 ha in five critical tea-producing regions	1A. Area (ha) of tea-producing lands that have adopted key SLM practices	0	16,800	19,320	10,973	56.8
	1B. Area (ha) of certified tea-producing lands under improved SLM practices	0	12,500	25,000	1,585	98.3[3]
	1C. Percent of trained smallholdings and estates that have adopted each key SLM practice	32%	N/A	50%	42%	84
	1.D. Percent of farmers (having farms adjacent to a water body) that have established vegetated riparian buffers	0	N/A	50%	31%	62
	1E. Percent of trained smallholdings applying improved fuel-efficient cooking stove methods	0%	N/A	50%	?	
	Outcome indicator (average % of targets)		75.3			
2. Increased industry interest in reducing supply risk and promoting sustainable tea production leads to new investment in INRM (i.e., beyond tea-focused SLM practices)	2A. Number of key institutions and stakeholders engaged in supportive SLM and INRM activities that target land degradation issues	0	4	10	23	230
	2B. Area (ha) in pre-selected regions where multi-stakeholder INRM plans address key land degradation challenges.	0	N/A	N/A	26,900	?
	Outcome indicator (average % of targets)		230			

Outcomes	Description of indicator	Baseline level[1]	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level at 30 June 2018[2]	% of target
3. Key public-sector agencies, tea associations and tea industry decision-makers have improved their understanding and capacity to implement new policies, systems, or support mechanisms to facilitate uptake of SLM in the tea industry in the focal regions	3A. Number of public-sector agencies, tea associations, and tea industry decision-makers active in each region, with improved understanding and capacity to implement new policies, systems, or support mechanisms to facilitate uptake of SLM in the tea industry in the focal regions	0	5	10	13	130
4. Practical, cost-effective means to understand change and guide adaptive management related to sustainable productivity and vulnerability in tea-producing landscapes in the focal regions, based on new monitoring and analytical tool	4A. Number of enumerators, technicians and government staff who have strengthened capacity to implement practical, cost-effective monitoring and analytical tools to understand change and guide adaptive management related to sustainable productivity and vulnerability in tea-producing landscapes in the focal regions.	0	14	14	19	135.7
Average of outcome indicators (with no outcome calculated >100%)		88.1				

[1]Depending on selected indicator, quantitative or qualitative baseline levels and targets were used
[2]Results were extracted from the PIR June 2018 and partly reformulated based on the Evaluator's findings and analysis
3Includes 1,585 ha registered for China and Vietnam, and an *estimated area* of 23,000 ha in India.

92. Based on the figures included in the table, the project has made important contributions against the outcome targets, and the financing therefore seems to have been well justified. Only on outcome 1 the results achieved were well below the targets. Especially target 1A for hectares of tea-producing lands that have adopted key SLM practices seems to have been overly optimistic. The main reasons for not attaining this target are lower than expected adoption of SLM practices by the farmers trained and the fact that many farmers have a smaller tea area than the 1 ha assumed when calculating the target. Regarding 1B, even though the total figure is close to the target it should be noted that most of the reported performance is derived from an *estimated* 23,000 ha in India, while Vietnam and China had low results, and no training of certified producers was carried out by in Sri Lanka. This is mainly due to low uptake of tea estates companies that are affected by the chemical industries' efforts to maintain their markets.[12]

93. For 1C and 1D the results were also lower than expected. For 1C the M&E system seems to not capture the positive results on SLM observed in SMEs in Sri Lanka. For other countries (e.g. India) it would have been important to interact more with the private sector and introduce SLM to the company executive levels. For 1D it should be noted that figures from India are not included since no farmer surveyed in Assam had a farm adjacent to a water body and survey results in Darjeeling were considered to be unreliable. No data was presented by the project for 1E since reporting on training was slow and no data were received on adoption. This indicator was therefore not considered in the outcome average. However, training of smallholders and estate workers on fuel-efficient stoves was implemented in Assam and, on a smaller scale, in Sri Lanka through external implementing partners. One plantation company in Assam reported to have received 2,572 fuel-efficient stoves during 2017 that are still in use. It thus seems like adoption of such cook stoves has a good potential, except for areas were most cooking is done by natural gas or electricity.

94. For outcome 2A, in Sri Lanka there were 14 institutions carrying out activities identified as part of the INRM action plan, while 9 institutions were identified in Darjeeling. No target was set for indicator 2B, and this figure has therefore not been considered in the outcome average. The June-2018 figure self-reported by the project is the total for Darjeeling, India and Sri Lanka. For outcome 3 the project interviewed 4-5 stakeholders in each country, using a questionnaire. A total of 13 organizations replied and all showed progress on the different indicators in the tool, with most progress in China.

[12] It was a project decision to focus more on the smallholder sector as it was felt that there was potentially much more to gain in that sector through improving their SLM. Estates (especially the certified ones) are already applying quite a few SLM practices.

For outcome 4 a total of 43 enumerators were trained, 24 of them just before the baseline survey in 2016 and 19 before the final survey in 2017. It was necessary to train new enumerators in 2017 because most of the people trained in 2016 were no longer available.

95. As mentioned, the outcomes of the project are, in large part, due to good quality NCs and their supervision and support to local partners and trainers, combined with quality supervision of the NCs. Based on the outcomes, the project financing seems to have been well justified, considering international and regional priorities, as well as national priorities in the four pilot countries. There are no signs of duplication of efforts with other projects, but many synergies, including with on-going RA projects and SAN certification activities.

96. The UNEP-RA tea project has played a catalytic role, and the process is already moving fast in the pilot countries. A large new national project is under design in India for greening of several commodity production processes, and also in other countries there is high interest from the public and private sector that could lead to new government and company initiatives, with or without new project financing. In Darjeeling, India, herbicides-free weed management is getting much attention, and the same topic is also gradually more popular in Sri Lanka, partly based on a spill-over effect from the visit of the India NC, that was followed up locally by the Sri Lanka NC. In China the local governments are eager to continue many of the practices the project promoted, financed with their own funds.

Achievement of Direct Outcomes is rated 'Satisfactory'

iii. Likelihood of impact

97. The direct impact of the project would be *"reduced land degradation associated with tea production in Asia"*, and the long-term (ex-post) global benefit *"contribution to arresting and reversing global trends in land degradation"*. To reach the direct project impact, the Evaluator has defined intermediate stages for each of the four components (see fig. 3 Reconstructed TOC):

1. More sustainable tea production systems and reduced vulnerability in 5 critical tea-producing regions
2. Reduced land and resource conflicts, and key ecosystem services supporting tea production and communities
3. Enhanced enabling environment within the tea sector

4 a. Improved knowledge of monitoring and adaptive management

4 b. Monitoring and adaptive management practiced in the Asia tea sector.

98. The project impact "reduced land degradation associated with tea production in Asia" has already occurred on local level. The important questions are however ***from what baseline?*** and ***to what degree?***. As mentioned earlier, the project was very small (in budget and areas covered) compared with the huge areas of tea production in the region. A real impact of the project would therefore depend on a continuous process, where the best practices presented through the project could be multiplied. This depends partly on maintaining the project areas as a showcase for SLM, IPM and INRM long after the project has finished, which would require an effort from RA and partners, in dialogue with the tea sector and governments.

99. Some positive environmental impacts of the project activities are already noticed by the local stakeholders, e.g. reduced soil erosion due to increased soil cover my mulch, green manure and "good weeds" combined with shade trees. Some positive environmental impacts are not immediately noticed, but the project has come with some convincing arguments, making the local farmers convinced that the positive impacts will come. One striking example is in Yunnan, where a delegation of all the men in a village came to the trainer after the training had finished and said: *"We think you are right. We get our drinking water from a pond on the bottom of a hill where we have been spraying with herbicides. Now we understand why so many of us have cancer"*.

100. An indication of the project's impact would be the adoption of different SLM practices by the local farmers. An impact survey was carried out in two parts: baseline during quarter 4 of 2016 and the follow up survey during quarter 4 of 2017 but was inconclusive, with differences from the baseline survey that were difficult to understand. Because the implementation of the first survey (during quarter 4 of 2016), which was meant to be a "baseline" on farmers´ SLM practices before training, was

delayed, and therefore was applied to farmers soon after training, the initial % of farmers´ SLM practices may have been skewed upwards, as farmers may have responded what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. Although the survey instrument contained clear instructions, these may not have been followed by enumerators, and NCs may not have checked the data well enough for quality and consistency. Figures were available from the follow-up survey conducted in quarter 4 of 2017 for the evaluation from the PIR June 30-2018, tables 17-21, however also these data seem to have been affected by too high baseline data. Maybe with the exception of Vietnam, all the other countries seem to have unreliable data for % of uptake.

Table 17. Estimated adoption of SLM practices by local farmers in Yunnan, China, adjusted May 2018 (sample = 159)

ISLM Practice	Quasi-baseline % adoption	Follow-up % adoption	% uptake
Soil exposure management	33	34	1
Soil erosion prevention	3	10	7
Integrated soil fertility management	47	47	0
Integrated pest management	12	12	0
Manual weeding	99	97	-1
Shade trees*	40	7	-33
Average	**39**	**40**	**1**

* Excluded from average due to suspicious data in follow-up survey.

Table 18. Estimated adoption of SLM practices by local farmers in Assam, India, adjusted May 2018 (sample = 18)

ISLM Practice	Quasi-baseline % adoption	Follow-up % adoption	% uptake
Soil exposure management	6	78	72
Soil erosion prevention	0	0	0
Integrated soil fertility management	22	0	-22
Integrated pest management	0	0	0
Manual weeding	0	0	0
Shade trees*	44	6	-39
Average	**6**	**16**	**10**

* Excluded from average due to suspicious data in follow-up survey.

Table 19. Estimated adoption of SLM practices by local farmers in Darjeeling, India, adjusted May 2018 (baseline sample = 60, follow-up = 46)

ISLM Practice	Quasi-baseline % adoption	Follow-up % adoption	% uptake
Soil exposure management	97	26	-71
Soil erosion prevention	8	0	-8
Integrated soil fertility management	100	59	-41
Integrated pest management	0	0	0
Manual weeding	48	100	52
Shade trees*	80	46	-34
Average	**51**	**37**	**-14**

* Excluded from average due to suspicious data in follow-up survey.

Table 20. Estimated adoption of SLM practices by local farmers in Sri Lanka, adjusted May 2018 (baseline sample = 168, follow-up = 134)

ISLM Practice	Quasi-baseline % adoption	Follow-up % adoption	% uptake
Soil exposure management	82	82	1
Soil erosion prevention	42	42	1
Integrated soil fertility management	80	75	-4
Integrated pest management	10	10	1
Manual weeding	86	84	-2
Shade trees*	89	92	3

Average	**65**	**65**	**0**

Table 21. Estimated adoption of SLM practices by local farmers in Vietnam, adjusted May 2018 (baseline sample = 173, follow-up = 174)

ISLM Practice	Quasi-baseline % adoption	Follow-up % adoption	% uptake
Soil exposure management	3	60	56
Soil erosion prevention	29	29	0
Integrated soil fertility management	11	48	37
Integrated pest management	3	21	17
Manual weeding	90	90	-1
Shade trees*	36	59	23
Average	**29**	**51**	**22**

101. Since most training was implemented through local organisations both public and private sector, there was, according to the last PIR, a good level of uptake and replication through integration into the general training programs for some of these organisations and firms, e.g. TSHDA in Sri Lanka and the Cangyuan Tea Office in Lincang, Yunnan. The project's training materials provided more focus on sustainable tea production while the training methodology was adapted to local circumstances, e.g., smaller groups of participants during group training in China. Most direct (short-term) impact in this country was achieved with the green manure module, which positively influenced the economy of local farmers. It is interesting that they had been doing intercropping before (more than 50 years ago), and this old tradition made the project's approaches more easily accepted. A very strong impact was recorded by the Cangyuan county tea office, where yield of tea for areas covered by the GEF project showed an increase of 285 kg/ha compared with non-GEF covered areas (information from China National Project Coordinator). There was also some additional income from selling buckwheat and peas that are green manure crops, but these figures were not registered.

102. In Component 2, activities in Darjeeling focused on water conservation practices and solid waste management. Sri Lanka prioritized reduction of agrochemicals, reducing pollution, improved watershed management, reducing the risk of forest fires and improving conservation of forests and other green belts through more responsible use of firewood by communities and factories. All the activities undertaken gave according to the PIR June 2018 impact beyond the tea production area. For Sri Lanka, collaboration with the government on watershed protection could also lead to the replication of the activities in the GEF Tea landscape to other parts of the country. For Darjeeling, the stakeholder workshop and baseline survey resulted in better communication between different stakeholders (government, estates, NGOs, smallholders) who had previously not discussed land degradation issues together.

103. Despite high % levels of compliance with output and outcome targets, the Evaluator considers that the project's impact so far has not been high. The project's performance has gradually improved, but the results of the SLM M&E *impact surveys* show that the uptake of SLM practices among farmers and estates trained is not optimal. However, the UN Environment TM believes that uptake by smallholder farmers is much better than captured by the M&E system, due to different parameters used at baseline and in the impact surveys. The project remained rather weak on capturing and disseminating good practices, as well as engagement with national policy makers and lead industries through high-level fora and seminars. Uptake by larger tea estates remains low – which is influenced by external factors such as the difficult financial situation of many estates, which limits their interest for investing in something new with unknown results. Another factor mentioned in Sri Lanka is that estates are reluctant to go green because their mother companies are owners of large agro-chemicals factories.

104. The long-term impact of "arresting and reversing global trends in land degradation" (corresponding with a GEF global goal) would only occur after project implementation, which is normal for long-term positive environmental impacts. On local level it would occur cumulatively through a gradual "contagious effect" when farmers see positive results in their communities and get information that it has been achieved with less input costs. One example was during the drought in Sri Lanka 2016-17, when the tea farmers could observe that their neighbouring SLM farms could still pick tea when

the farms with traditional practices couldn't, which provided a positive example for promoting interest in the project's approach.

105. Long-term impacts are highly dependent on the market trends as an important driver. There is currently a global trend of increased demand for certified agricultural products, and stricter requirements for pesticide levels in agricultural commodities such as tea. During the project evaluation came news that a man in the US won US$ 289 million in a demand against the Bayer company Monsanto, because he had worked with the herbicide Glyphosate and developed cancer. Glyphosate is the most common herbicide worldwide, and a long line of similar cases are expected to arise. On the other hand, during the week of the Evaluator's visit to Sri Lanka it became public that a group of farmer organizations, researchers, patients and the families of deceased farmers are set to take Bayer-Monsanto and other glyphosate herbicide manufacturers to the national Supreme Court over the link between glyphosate-based herbicides and fatal chronic kidney disease, which is estimated to have killed approximately 25,000 people in the country. All these new developments add credence to the project approach of reducing herbicide use.

106. The final project survey showed some positive trends toward long-term impact. For instance, in Vietnam smallholders trained showed uptake of SLM practices, and there was also a positive response from other stakeholders on the SLM practices promoted under Component 1. The project TM commented that in the beginning he was worried that the project would be mostly business-as-usual, but that he has seen good impacts for local farmers. At central Government level it has proven to be more difficult.

107. The demonstration plots were, as mentioned, established late in the project period but mostly show, according to the PIR 2018, the results expected. Even though the Evaluator has not been able to carry out any independent data register, the interviews carried out during evaluation missions and information achieved from National Coordinators seem to confirm the same. The feedback from visitors to the sites has been positive, especially on the non-chemical weed management in Sri Lanka and the use of green manure crops in China. Both techniques increase soil cover, thereby reducing soil erosion, improving the soil's organic matter (reducing need for chemical fertilizers), and reducing proliferation of noxious weeds. The demonstration plot in Vietnam highlighted the effect of several techniques combined. A cost-benefit analysis for this demonstration plot carried out by the project showed that the application of SLM could benefit producers through a reduction in inputs, while maintaining yields and increasing product quality.

108. One risk to achieving impact is if the tea sector would be able to meet social standards with the current low prices for tea on the world market. On the tea estates of India and Sri Lanka there is a high number of workers, and the estates are required by law to maintain the same number of workers, and care for their families' social wellbeing (housing, local healthcare, primary education, etc.). These "original" estates also have the oldest tea-bushes with lowest productivity, so they are in a challenging competitive environment with newer farms established without such requirements; where newer farms are able to combine a lower number of workers and increased mechanization, e.g. for harvesting. There are low expectations for change of the laws to reduce the workforce, because the estate workers are well organized and able to put pressure on the politicians.

109. A full assessment of environmental and social risks during the project design phase was not conducted. The environmental and social issues mentioned in the project document focused mostly on the baseline situation and environmental impacts of the traditional tea production (e.g. land degradation and contamination). No potential negative economic or financial impacts were defined in ProDoc, only some market risks, logically outside the project's control. The pilot activities were implemented without pre-determined models on economic-financial feasibility, through "learning-by-doing" and carrying out monitoring and studies during the implementation to determine degree of environmental and socioeconomic impact.

110. There were some unexpected positive results and impacts of the project, where the most important of these impacts were experienced in **China**, due to the collaboration with the public tea offices. For instance, four project training modules were introduced to companies that are seeking RA certification, which were very positively received. One company in the Hubei province established a

pilot to encourage their 300+ farmers to plant Green manure crop with the purpose of protecting the sticky soil in that area. The Cangyuan county tea office developed their own training materials based on the project's colourful training material, as they found the posters were easy to understand for the farmers. The same office introduced the UNEP-RA methods to their own project "Developing production and lifting people out of poverty", where already *more than 7000 people* were trained by the government in late 2017 and early 2018. Similarly, the Fengqing county tea office is developing a calendar based on the project training contents, as they found it is easy to understand by farmers and that the techniques are practical to use. On this basis they are planning to train all the county farmers. China is a very special case, where after a few years struggle the local government is really on board, with expectations for strong impact.

111. In the other countries there is mostly the private sector that would drive the process towards impact. To enhance long-term impact and sustainability it is necessary to up-scale the project activities and approach among the tea industry's key players at national and international levels. It is a pity that this was not started early during the project implementation, however there is still time if RA and partners want to continue the efforts based on the project's results.

112. No unintended negative social and environmental impacts were found as consequence of the project activities. This is logical since the main goal of the project was to reduce the negative environmental impacts of the tea production, and there were no infrastructure investments financed by the project. The local pilot projects aimed at promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability. However, even such projects with good intentions could theoretically have some adverse impacts, but the evaluator has not been able to detect such negative impacts in any of the pilot regions visited.

113. The Project Document did not include a strategy to reduce the project's negative environmental/ carbon footprint, and logically no such strategy was implemented. The Evaluator has no doubt that in total the project had a positive environmental and carbon footprint, especially considering reduced land degradation and carbon sequestration in shade trees and increased vegetation in general. However, it would have been good practice for the project to prepare an analysis of this positive figures set against the negative figures caused e.g. by international travel. Despite the Project Manager's frequent and important international travels, the carbon footprint caused by travel in the framework of the RA tea project is probably lower than in the majority of global projects, since most of the activities have been going on in the four pilot countries managed by national staff, supported by a small international core staff mostly through the Internet.

Likelihood of Impact is rated 'Moderately Likely'

Overall Rating for Effectiveness is 'Satisfactory'

E. Financial management

114. The Evaluator analysed whether the organisation and administration of the resources affected the timeliness of project delivery, the results achieved, against the timeframes and costs planned initially. The financial management was assessed under three broad themes:

(i) Completeness of financial information

115. At the time of the Terminal Evaluation, the financial information provided was complete through June 30, 2018. The four NCs presented their financial statements related to each progress report to RA, and RA presented financial statements to UN Environment for review. The Evaluator received the information directly from RA, however the financial management team in UN Environment should also have the same information. Given that the project still had some expenditures related to 2018 including the TE and some last deliverables in Darjeeling, the TM allowed RA to submit the final expense report until October 15th, and the last payment from UN Environment to RA was yet to be made (Oct. 2018. The last payment being dependent on presenting of one deliverable that was agreed after the approved ProDoc, which is the stand-alone manual/guidelines on methodology developed and results obtained for the SLM M&E System (the Evaluator has used information from the last PIR).

116. The financial information handled by the project included the budget for GEF funding and counterpart sources; Cash-advance requests; Fund transfer documents; Expenditure sheets; Proof of in-kind contributions (e.g. signed sheet for all participants in training events); Financial Reports; and Audit Reports.

117. Each National Coordinator prepared his/her budget to RA presented through the NEA, and their participation in the overall project budget allocation and transfer of resources were according to the agreed budget limits. Even in some rural areas where the collection of formal receipts was not possible, RA was strict in ensuring there was proof that the activities had been carried out. In the case of India, RA sometimes commented that the NC had achieved savings, so part of the budget resources could be used elsewhere[13]. Procurement was handled according to the budget, and administrated based on required resource use.

118. Pledged counterpart contributions were USD 12,140,000, or 86% of the total project budget. Despite some co-financing sources failing to materialise, actual co-financing throughout the project life ended up higher than anticipated, and reached USD 12,428,616 or 2.4% more than expected, however with only 12.6% was received as cash contributions (see table 8). It was difficult for the evaluator to review and verify the real monetary value of all the in-kind co-finance contributions.

119. The following financial documentation was requested for the TE (***documents actually presented in bold***):

- An up-to-date 'Co-financing and Project Cost's table: ***Co-Financing Cumulative Report to June 30, 2018***
- A summary report on the project's annual financial expenditures during the life of the project: ***GEF Tea Preliminary Financial Report through August 2018***
- Financial documents from Mid-Term Evaluation/Review (where appropriate): N/A *There are no specific documents since MTR used the regular RA reports.*
- **All relevant project legal agreements** (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA) – *for PCA*
- **Associated financial reports** for legal agreements (where applicable): *GEF budget documents were presented.*
- **Copies of all completed audits.** The audit for the year 2018 will be available in June 2019.

Completeness of financial information is rated 'Satisfactory'

[13] RA noted that the program expenditures in China were higher than the originally foreseen in the agreement with the China NEA and so funds were reallocated accordingly.

(ii) Communication between financial and project management staff

120. The financial management officers at RA maintained communication with the Project Manager, and through him contact with the four NCs to ensure financing of activities to achieve the planned outputs and outcomes. There was a need for a responsive and adaptive management approach. The NCs were all very satisfied with the high-quality support they received from the PM, but some complained that reimbursement of costs took a long time, from 3 months at the beginning of the project down to 1 month in the end. The NEAs varied a lot regarding financial management staff and other support staff, from almost a 1-person company such as in India (additional staff only ad-hoc) to established NGOs in Sri Lanka and Vietnam. However, in each case the NC was the main person in charge of, or closely supervising, the national budget management, procurement, payments, and accounting, while the financial management staff of RA handled the same for international costs. The Project Manager supervised the financial management handled by the NCs, and provided comments and advice.

121. The main link between the financial and technical project management was on the issue of procurement, when it was important to ensure the required budget allocation (amount and timeliness) for each service to procure, considering the time required. However, the NCs managed the advance of funds and could ask for new transfers in time before running out of money. All procurement was reviewed by the UN Environment Task Manager (TM) with rules according to amount, etc., however the TM did not report any problems.

122. RA was satisfied with the supervision and support received from the TM stationed in Bangkok. The TM expressed that the project financial management was fast in its response to any issues he took up. The TM regards RA as being technically good, but a bit deficient regarding planning and reporting related to project SC meetings. Procurement plans were based on the budget, and most procurement was carried out in time to obtain the required goods and services for project activities. The TM was not satisfied with the UN Environment financial management system and HQ support during parts of the project implementation period. He claims that before they had a good system with many efficient financial managers, but that was changed with introduction of new procedures and formats combined with fewer staff for follow up. He feels that UN Environment fell short for a period from June 2015 to first quarter 2016 during the introduction of the Umoja system. That was, however, greatly corrected in May 2017 with 7 full-time finance staff working on the GEF portfolio.

123. The accounting documentation will be transferred and stored according to the institutional rules and requirements of UN Environment and RA when the final project accounting and audit has finished.

Communication between financial and project management staff is rated 'Satisfactory'

(iii) Compliance with financial management standards and procedures

124. The Evaluator has been able to review the RA annual financial audit statements and discuss with UN Environment's TM the issue of compliance with financial standards. The evaluation concludes that the financial management was handled according to proper financial management standards and practice, and adherence to UN Environment's financial management policies. There was, however, specific mention of the project only in the statement for the fiscal year 2014-15, which was the first period of project implementation. There were no auditor's observations or comments for improvement.

125. Table 8 shows actual costs spent across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors, summarized in Table 23. RA did not track costs by outcome/outcome or component, but by project budget line. The Evaluator reviewed RA's annual audit reports that cover the project and verified that proper financial management standards were followed. No financial management issues affected the timely delivery of the project or quality of its performance.

126. The project audits were incorporated into the RA general annual audits for July to June each US fiscal year. The Audit July 2014 through June 2015 included a project disbursement amount of only USD 299,438. The statement mentioned that: (i) no material weaknesses were identified; (ii) no significant weaknesses were identified; and (iii) no questioned costs were reported.

127. For the fiscal periods 2015-16 and 2016-17 there was no specific mention of the project, however the general audits both included the same text: "In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referenced above, present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Rainforest Alliance, Inc. and Subsidiaries as of June 30, 2016, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended, in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America".

Table 22. Total project costs, GEF funding

Budget line	Total project budget	Budget 2018	Total expenditures current year	Total expenditures to date	Unspent balance	Organization
Project personnel						
Lead Scientist	42,061.23	6,026.47	5,334.86	41,236.36	824.87	RA
Project M&E Specialist	101,799.96	16,852.10	7,165.06	89,061.85	12,738.11	RA
Geospatial Scientist	45,620.05	4,393.94	6,838.56	42,592.47	3,027.58	RA
Reporting & Processing	73,737.33	17,033.58	21,965.29	78,550.28	-4,812.95	RA
Asia-Pacific Tea Manager	185,984.30	26,377.22	37,850.58	210,309.20	-24,324.90	RA
Senior Program Lead	97,600.99	0.00	0.00	70,085.13	27,515.86	RA
Asia-Pacific Finance Coordinator	7,192.94	1,091.84	6,418.53	10,619.15	-3,426.21	RA
Asia-Pacific Finance Assistant	4,739.96	0.00	1,352.22	6,369.93	-1,629.97	RA
Training Manager	78,647.15	0.00	659.98	80,280.54	-1,633.39	RA
Evaluation & Research Associate	141,919.81	19,032.97	2,437.77	113,090.57	28,829.24	RA
Senior Manager, South East Asia	65,213.69	8,616.05	20,781.98	68,119.83	-2,906.14	RA
Consultants						
Vietnam program coordinator	10,643.26	543.12	0.00	10,673.07	-29.81	RA
Graphic design, training and materials	3,097.08	377.17	783.82	3,399.90	-302.82	RA
Communications Consultant	14,258.27	4,526.03	6,619.14	6,619.14	7,639.13	RA
Consultant M&E Darjeeling Action Plan	14,394.30	2,715.62	10,443.43	10,443.43	3,950.87	RA
Travel on official business						
Program Coordinator travel	2,590.66	1,257.23	267.94	1,542.46	1,048.20	RA
Staff travel in Asia	104,275.81	18,707.60	24,994.83	111,262.02	-6,986.21	RA
Travel for Steering Committee	23,205.23	6,789.05	0.00	12,656.72	10,548.51	RA
Training						
Inception and validation workshops	11,048.14	0.00	0.00	11,120.43	-72.29	RA
M&E and other training workshops National Coordinators	1,543.00	0.00	0.00	1,545.61	-2.61	RA
Expendable equipment						
Mobile devices / GPS cameras for E&R	7,721.25	0.00	208.53	5,683.98	2,037.27	RA
Cameras, stationery & tools, other monitoring equipment	1,126.82	0.00	79.48	3,617.57	-2,490.75	RA
Non-expendable equipment						
Computers	2,586.00	0.00	0.00	2,823.22	-237.22	RA
Operation & maintenance equipment						
Maintain/Repair Equipment	22.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.38	RA
Reporting costs						
Terminal evaluation consultancy	35,000.00	35,000.00	0.00	0.00	35,000.00	
Subgrants						
India subgrant (Tea Technologies Outsourcing)	251,430.76	25,421.23	46,372.43	185,038.26	66,392.50	TTO
Sri Lanka subgrant (ASLM)	287,924.10	34,956.06	43,528.86	234,228.46	53,695.64	ASLM
China subgrant (Good Wood in Rainforest Consultancy)	246,575.74	41,816.93	56,556.43	263,234.62	-16,658.88	GWRC
Vietnam subgrant (Veco Vietnam)	137,639.90	19,567.55	15,500.13	118,976.35	18,663.55	VECO
GRAND TOTAL	**1,999,600.11**	**291,101.74**	**316,159.83**	**1,793,180.54**	**206,419.57**	

Table 23. Co-financing Table[1] (GEF format, US$1,000)

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UN Environment own financing		Government		Other[2]		Total		Total Disbursed
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Grants	0	0	0	0	2,140	1,184	2,140	1,184	1,184
Loans/Credits									
Equity investments									
In-kind support	0	0	5,960	8,522	4,040	2,461	10,000	10,983	10,983
Totals	**0**	**0**	**5,960**	**3,735**	**6,180**	**3,947**	**12,140**	**12,167**	**12,167**

[1]Represents co-financing data October 2018.

[2]This refers to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

128.The following table is a questionnaire directed to the evaluator, to rate the financial management carried out throughout the period of project execution, including a column that gives evidence and comments to the ratings.

Table 24. Financial Management

Financial management components		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Questions relating to financial management across the life of the project:			
Compliance with financial requirements and procedures of UN Environment and all funding partners (including procurement rules, financial reporting and audit reports etc)		S	UNEP info
Timeliness of project financial reports and audits		S	UNEP info
Quality of project financial reports and audits		S	Evaluator review
Contact/communication between the PM/TM & FMO		S	UNEP / RA info
PM/TM & FMO responsiveness to addressing and resolving financial issues		S	UNEP info
2. Questions relating to financial information provided during the evaluation:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the provision of A-F below)		S	Evaluator experience
A.	An up-to-date 'Co-financing and Project Cost's table	Y	"
B.	A summary report on the project's annual financial expenditures during the life of the project.	Y	"
C.	Financial documents from Mid-Term Evaluation/Review (where appropriate)	N	N/A
D.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA) – where appropriate	Y	PCA
E.	Associated financial reports for legal agreements (where applicable)	Y	GEF budget
F.	Copies of any completed audits	Y	All completed audits
Demonstrated knowledge by the PM/TM & FMO of partner financial expenditure		S	Evaluator review
PM/TM & FMO responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		S	Evaluator experience
Overall rating		**S**	

Compliance with UN Environment Standards and Procedures is rated 'Satisfactory'

Overall Rating for Financial Management is 'Satisfactory'

F. Efficiency

129.The Evaluator *recognizes the challenge* of implementing a regional project in Asia with five pilot regions, an overly optimistic project design in relation to the low core budget, a design phase that was completed in record time (therefore co-financing commitments and partnerships were not sufficiently ensured), and a structure with many national and local partners from the public and private sector and civil society in each country. Additional challenges were found in each country, e.g. the traditional and very colonial style tea estates in India and Sri Lanka, where changes are slow. To manage such a project in an efficient way, the project management would have required more financing/staff, that only would have been feasible if it had a higher core budget. This issue could partly have been mitigated with a larger share of the budget allocated to national and local staff (including for M&E) but in the opinion of the Evaluator too large a share went to international staff, without a commensurate contribution to the project results. International staff were (with exception of the PM) not sufficiently involved during project implementation, and the UN Environment blocked attempts to increase that part of the budget because the TM considered the budget for RA staff resources made available already to be much higher than usually is the case for MSP and FSP paid through GEF.

130.It was an intelligent strategy from RA's side to build on pre-existing relationships with firms and institutions that RA was already working with in the pilot countries, with the aim of starting project activities relatively quickly. This included carrying out training and other activities in geographic areas where the partners already were active and had their networks with local stakeholders. The focus on productive landscapes was promoting resource efficiency, compared with strategies that only concentrate on the individual products. Despite the established networks in the countries, the NCs were still not completely ready for the project since they had not participated in the design team, and

the topic of SLM promoted from UN Environment's side towards RA was relatively new for the Coordinators. For that reason it still took some time before the NEAs came up to speed. In Vietnam the NEA had an ongoing project with RA which was completed and closed before the GEF activities in this country started (one year after the others)

131. A common indicator of efficiency is the ratio of outputs to effort (or % of targets achieved to % of expenditures) during the implementation time. The underlying assumption being that achieving 100% of targets during the planned execution period would give an efficiency ratio of 1. At the time of the MTR, the efficiency ratio was 0.81 (moderately satisfactory), while at the end of the project implementation the ratio was 0.94 (satisfactory). The calculation of this ratio is shown in the following table.

Table 25. Calculation of efficiency ratio at end of project

Input	Calculation	Result
Targets achieved	Outputs 89.9% + Outcomes 92.8% / 2	91.4
Part of budget used (GEF funds only)	USD 1,741,909 as % of 1,999,601	87.4
Time used	40 months as % of 36 months*	111.1
Efficiency Ratio	91.4 x 100 / 87.4 x 111.1	**0.94**

*Considered 3 months extension, since only Darjeeling had 5 months extension.

132. The relationship between implementation progress and financial resources invested shows that the project in general was implemented efficiently. Please note that the calculation only covers GEF resources, since co-financing (mostly in-kind) is more difficult to verify, and the GEF financing has to be used only during the implementation period.

133. The timeliness of project execution (one small no-cost extension) was due to slow progress of activities and financial disbursements during the initial period. This partly had to do with design and partly with setting up a project implementation structure with national coordinators during a very short period. The Evaluator considers that even though the 3-month no-cost project extension was completely justified at least in *one* of the pilot regions (Darjeeling), the project would probably have been executed better in *all* the regions as a 4-year project. This should preferably have been understood already during the design phase but could alternatively have been resolved with a 12-month extension instead of only 3 months. This would have secured a greater impact and sustainability of the results, towards the ex-post impact goal. It is however interesting to note that most of the national partners have continued to work towards a strengthening of the process towards the project's long-term goals after the project finished, based on their own resources, partner relations and interests.

134. The project had initially many implementation challenges and therefore a slow start in most countries. Another issue was that the NEAs needed a deeper understanding of the project goals and what to do to reach them before they were able to do an efficient job. Much advisory, supervision and follow-up from the PM towards the pilot countries and the NCs towards the national and local partners gradually improved the situation. This included frequent Skype meetings between the PM and each NC, reviews of plans, budgets and reports, often visits to the countries, including in relation to workshops and other events, and frequent email communication to follow up on issues and propose solutions. Also, UN Environment's TM carried out several supervision travels.

135. Regarding *challenges and barriers* to achieve effectiveness and efficiency specific for each country, in **China** (i) The travel cost to the villages was very high as the trainers and enumerators are scattered in distant mountain areas, which meant that the training and monitoring took considerable time and had a high cost; (ii) The awareness of farmers was variable, some could assimilate the training in a short time, while others needed repeat training several times on the same topic, for which the project did not have a budget; (iii) Qualified trainers were not easy to find and it was difficult to train them during a short period. This highlights a barrier to be addressed if the project is to be scaled up to a larger area, considering the cost and time for training the right trainers; (iv) The project did not have

sufficient budget to collect and transport the farmers for the training, and this was only partially solved through support from the government.[14]

136. In **India** one important challenge was social uprisings in both Assam and Darjeeling. *Assam* had for many years suffered violence, peaking in July 2012 with riots between indigenous Bodo people and Bengali speaking Muslims of Bangladeshi origin. The conflict continued during the project implementation period but improved a bit after the state election in 2016, since the new state government promoted greater unity between religious and ethnic groups. However, there were still frequent uprisings and strikes for increased salaries and better working conditions, not least in the tea sector. In *Darjeeling* a 100-day long strike June-Sept 2017 was provoked by a decision of the West Bengal government to introduce Bengali as a compulsory subject in all schools across the state. The strike was called by separatists that want a separate state for the majority Nepali-speaking Gorkhas in the region. During this period all tea estates were completely paralysed, and project activities stopped. For example, training events had to be postponed or had fewer participants than invited because the strikes resulted in road blocks, cancellation of public transport, and a general feeling of insecurity affecting people's willingness to travel. The only project relations maintained with local stakeholders were indirectly through the local NGO ATree.

137. In **Sri Lanka** an important barrier was the resistance from transnational companies in the agro-chemical sector. These firms have strong national representatives, efficiently lobbying their networks in the public and private sector; they regard Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and herbicide-free weed management (HFWM) as threats to their business. A highly qualified manager from a national company that had been trained through the project was removed from his position because he successfully argued for HFWM. The representatives of the agro-chemical firms sometimes even staged a dirty trick to damage the project's reputation. One of them was probably behind an incident during the international media-trip to Sri Lanka in March 2017, organized by UN Environment. During a field demonstration of herbicide-free weed management suddenly a man started spraying, and the press took photos and filed articles. Nobody knew who the person was, and even though he was spraying with water the damage was done. Later attempts from the NC to take legal actions have not yielded any results.

138. In **Vietnam** the main barrier appeared to be the tradition of using very high doses of pesticides. It has been difficult for a small project with limited geographic coverage to be able to change that mind-set, and even more difficult since the NC doesn't have strong relations with the tea sector. Vietnam has passed through a period of rapid economic growth, and there is lack of manual labour. It is therefore easy for any company manager to come through with arguments like "we don't have enough employees for the labour-intensive practices promoted by RA", and "if we cannot export to Europe due to pesticide content there are always other markets". These attitudes can only be confronted through best practices combined with a strong dialogue with national authorities, where important arguments would be the impact on public health, soil and water conservation, and tea export prices.

139. **Efficiency in the use of human resources:** The regional project was led by a very small Project Management Team under the leadership of the PM stationed in the Netherlands, with support from M&E staff in the HQ and Indonesia, and management staff in different locations, including London. In certain periods some RA staff members worked remotely from other countries, including Mexico. The PM and the M&E staff followed up the four NCs, who were the face of the project in each country and had, to a variable degree, support from the NEAs technical and administrative staff plus consultants. The NCs were also the key persons to maintain relations with governments, partners and co-financing agencies on national level.

140. This seems to be a cost-efficient use of human resources because the average cost for staff in the pilot countries is lower than for internationally recruited staff and because it can lead to higher efficiencies when most staff is situated close to the field activity locations. There was, however, also a risk factor, because RA had to rely completely on the NC partners that were not RA staff members to implement

[14] RA management notes that the project design in general did not consider any detail on the organization of the training (both in terms of training methodology and in the selection of partner organizations to receive TOT and implement the training). Given the limited budgets available in each country (and the relatively short project implementation time) that was difficult to solve 100% during project implementation.

the work and monitor the local situation. This can work very efficiently with good partners but not so well had there been any weak coordinators or partner organizations going through periods of crisis. The very simple structure (in periods with "1-person teams") also had its deficiencies from a capacity point of view. Even with a very high-level NC it should not be expected that the person would be able to achieve the same results as a national team of e.g. 3-4 professionals. This again highlights the issue of relationship between tasks and financial resources.

141. **Coordination, coherence and complementarity:** The project´s relationships with national stakeholders have been maintained and strengthened compared with the firms and institutions that already had a collaboration with RA, mentioned in the project document. However, RA seems to have relied too much on support from its pre-established network, because not all firms that are interested in RA certification would necessarily be interested in SLM and INRM, and not all public sector partners would be equally interested in all aspects of the project. This resulted in four of the partners that had pledged co-financing not delivering any co-finance at all, and seven partners delivered co-finance at a level lower than the sum that was pledged. Even the large transnational firm Unilever that only markets RA certified tea in Europe and the US delivered co-financing below the amount that was pledged. The reduced level of co-financing from partners identified in the project design was compensated by ten new partners, whilst three of the partners co-financed more than planned.

142. The relations between the NCs/NEAs and provincial and local institutional and community structures in all pilot countries were also important to be able to support project priority issues while at the same time disseminating knowledge and training. Coordination with other organizations and projects was handled locally, especially for training activities.

143. The partnerships with Governments were important to present project results and assure influence in political circles, to promote impact and sustainability. However, in large countries such as China and India, RA did not expect the project to have much influence on the national government but concentrated on state-provincial governments. The China NC tells that provincial level government officers started to call her, since they were interested in the results of the project when considering new local policies and strategies. In Sri Lanka, being a smaller country, RA and the NC had already an established relationship with the national government and collaboration with public agencies that has been strengthened through the project, while the selected NC/NEA in Vietnam did not have such relations.

144. A deficiency was noted during the evaluation regarding the project's lack of interactions with the national government in **Vietnam**, and therefore also limited impact on political decision-making. This was a lost opportunity, partly caused by the fact that the NEA VECO was relatively new in the tea sector, with limited sector network on national level, and partly because RA had focused on the Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS) for its public sector relationship. VITAS is, however, a "parastatal" organization responsible for overseeing farmers' implementation of sector policy, and ensuring food safety and hygiene, and also involved in international standards of quality management. It has nearly 200 members in the tea provinces, as an important force for implementing sustainable development objectives. During the Evaluator's meeting with VITAS, when the question of government tea policy was raised, the answer was quite surprising: *"-Policy? – There is no government policy for the tea sector!"*. This opinion was however later refuted in the Evaluator's meeting with the National Coordinator for tea in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), where a complete national tea policy was explained. *This was VECO's first meeting about tea with the central ministry*, and the NC was satisfied to have established the contact.

145. It would have been possible to achieve a stronger collaboration with programs and projects working on INRM and SLM in the same geographic regions. However, it appears that RA, as a result of the short design phase, concentrated on partners and projects they already knew instead of analysing all alternatives with an open mind. This may have led to some lost opportunities for partnerships and collaboration, including ad-hoc co-funding of seminars and other activities and alignment to assure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts on local level. An important exception was in China, where there was an excellent relationship with the government agencies in the Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, yielding co-financing and direct support, e.g. for transport of participants to training events. This collaboration could be continued even in other regions, since the government seems satisfied

with the project results. In this vein, RA and the NEAs may have been able to establish stronger collaboration in all countries with both the governments and international agencies such as UN Environment, UNDP, FAO, IFAD, World Bank and Asian Development Bank, and several bilateral agencies that are providing financing to sustainable agriculture.

146. The efficiency in terms of number of **beneficiaries compared to applied resources** seems to have been very high in this project. The people trained included 421 trainers, 188 estate managers, 127 factory managers, 4,648 smallholders trained on fuel efficient cooking stoves, and 27,829 smallholders trained on SLM. Even though many of the smallholder farmers participated in both types of training, probably around 30,000 people were trained. Since all training was concentrated in component 1, this gives a cost of less than two USD from the GEF grant for each person trained. Additionally, 24 local NGOs were trained, and they have later used the new knowledge in relation to their beneficiaries.

Efficiency is rated 'Satisfactory'

G. Monitoring and reporting

(i) Project reporting

147.UN Environment has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly status reports against agreed project milestones. In this case, as a GEF funded project, monitoring of the project activities and outputs from RA's side was done through the yearly project implementation reports (PIR) in the GEF format, based on reports from each NEA/NC to the Project Manager, and the mentioned half-yearly progress reports in the UN Environment format from the TM. Financial reports were presented quarterly, together with requests for the advance of funds for new expenditure. The projects' final report (until June 30-2018) was finished during the evaluation period.

148.The quality of the PIR reports has been generally good, however a gradual improvement was noticed from the start to the end of the implementation period, because RA was getting used to the review and requirements from UN Environment and the NCs were getting used to the review from RA's M&E staff. The information and ratings presented in the last PIR (Jan-June 2018) was, in general, consistent with the evaluation findings, but the Evaluator has not graded each indicator (as in the PIRs) but the outputs and outcomes they relate to.

149.RA staff's travel, meetings, Skype conferences and reviews complemented the formal reporting. The Evaluator considers it was efficient to use the same format (PIR) from national level to regional and international level, and from there to the Implementing agency (UN Environment) and all the way to GEF, thereby fulfilling the reporting requirements of both the implementing agency UN Environment and the donor agency GEF. Additionally, the project had the requirement of monitoring outcomes and impacts with GEF's tracking tool for the Soil Degradation Focal Area, in this case called Tracking Tool for Tea and SLM.

Project Reporting is rated 'Moderately Satisfactory'

(ii) Monitoring design and budgeting

150.The project's monitoring plan was designed to track progress on implementation against the targets defined in the Results Framework, approved by GEF together with the project document. There were baselines, targets and SMART indicators for both outputs and outcomes, however some of the text for outputs and outcomes was changed during project implementation, as were some of the targets. The responsibilities for monitoring were defined in the M&E Plan, and there was also an M&E budget.

151.The project´s M&E system was defined and targets agreed-upon in the M&E workshop in Bangkok April 2015. The system contained indicators to track project performance and achievements, as well as activity progress against annual workplans, with distribution of responsibilities for tracking and reporting. The evidence-based system provided major inputs for project tracking, semi-annual reports and the annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs).

152.The Farm Performance Monitoring (FPM) Tool used in the project to assess key SLM adoption was designed and field-tested with tea farmers *in Indonesia*. Despite specific training and constant technical assistance by a full-time M&E specialist within the RA project team, the implementation of the M&E system faced continuous logistical challenges in the field, in addition to the problems with overworked NCs with limited experience on project management and lack of sufficient support staff.

153.As mentioned, the results framework originally had baseline data, however RA later considered that new baseline data should be recollected after the ToT. The late start of farmer trainings and a lack of timely decisions on; exact project locations, participation of the partners organizing these activities, exactly which farmers to work with, and communication problems, led to significant delays in the baseline data collection on farmer practices. As a result, data on farmers´ SLM practices were first collected during the training (and sometimes even later), which most probably affected the reliability of the baseline survey data. This could have been avoided by a clearer identification of project locations together with the partner organizations in the very early stages of the project. Alternatively, the number of farmers included in the baseline survey could have been selected differently, but this would have resulted in larger numbers of farmers to be surveyed, and consequently would have

required a larger M&E budget. The NCs were also in charge of overseeing the survey process, enumerator trainings and required field verification of actual practices, including photos and other information for verification. Finally, the NCs were required to check the quality and consistency of data with the conditions in the field, and also perform the same tasks for the follow-up survey.

154. The project´s original budget underestimated the financial resources that were required for the M&E system and it had to be adjusted to cover day-to-day implementation of the system (including training of enumerators) and the final evaluation. There was no budget allocated for the MTR. The Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between UN Environment and RA, par. 13 h) mentions that UNEP shall "undertake a mid-term review or request the Evaluation Office (EO) of UNEP to perform an independent mid-term evaluation". During the project design the previous TM agreed with RA that although no budget could be made available for an MTR, the project would conduct a stripped down version of the MTR, e.g. by preparing an expanded version of the PIR report. However, later once the present TM took over it was agreed to conduct a modest MTR yet supported through the RA M&E staff resources already being available in the GEF budget. The TM however insisted that a MTR had to be carried out, and as a compromise it was agreed that RA's Director of M&E should conduct the MTR as an expanded PIR, using the general project budget for her time and travel.

155. The TE Evaluator considers that RA could have understood the PCA as if UN Environment or the EO would cover the cost of the MTR, and this misunderstanding might have been the reason for no project budget allocation for the review. However, this should have been clarified between the two parts before signing the PCA. A completely different issue is whether it was wise that RA evaluated its own project implementation, or if it should have been done by an independent consultant, but as mentioned no funds were available for this. The TE Evaluator has however reviewed the MTR report and found that the review was professionally done. It was also important that RA's Director of M&E who was in charge of the MTR had not participated in the project design. The MTR pointed out several weaknesses that had to be corrected during the rest of the implementation period, including the project monitoring.

156. The budget for Monitoring & Evaluation (component 4) including the SLM M&E system development, training etc was US$ 194,767 plus US$ 583,333 planned co-financing. It is necessary to highlight that this amount should cover not only relevant M&E data from all pilot countries, but also new tools improve monitoring of key LD results and are applicable beyond this project to a wider segment of the GEF LD portfolio.

Monitoring Design and Budgeting is rated 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'

(iii) Monitoring implementation

157. RA's M&E Team carried out training for monitoring, as well as supervision of the NC's monitoring and reporting, while UN Environment supervised RA through review of workplans and progress reports, supervision visits and participation in the SC. A very positive local monitoring tool introduced by the project has been that all local farmers participating are required to use a logbook for their farm management, inputs, activities, outputs, etc. The result of the different aspects of project supervision was a gradual improvement of monitoring implementation throughout the project execution period.

158. The results framework was used as the main tool to monitor and report compliance with outputs and outcomes at specific dates or years compared with a baseline. For *outputs* that is considered perfectly fine, but for *outcomes* it is not so easy to determine a specific date or year of attainment, because achieving goals such as "reduced vulnerability" and "improved understanding" are gradual processes with broad sets of beneficiaries and no cut-off date. The processes will hopefully continue beyond the project period. Establishing more specific indicators for the outcomes does not solve the problem, because most of these indicators look more like outputs.

159. Outcomes on component 1 were originally programmed to be assessed through comparing baseline data on farmers´ management practices obtained early in the project, with those measured at the project´s mid-term, using the Farm Performance Monitoring Tool (FPMT), a sample-based survey that was planned to be developed under component 4. However, application of FPMT to produce baseline data was not possible because the trainers from government and farmer organizations were not able

to pre-identify individual farmers to be trained before the training started, and they were also not able to pre-identify who would be the target population for the FPMT. In order to address this weakness in project design, it was decided during the Bangkok M&E workshop 2015 that a quasi-baseline would be obtained on trained farmers, as soon as trainings took place.

160. However, as mentioned in D-iii, these surveys failed, for three main reasons: (i) low quality training of the enumerators; (ii) deficient control of data quality and consistency; and (iii) the time at which the surveys were carried out. Regarding no iii, what affected the results was probably that the baseline survey was carried out just after training, when the farmers were enthusiastic, and maybe gave the project what they though was "the right answer". The *analysis* of the final (impact survey) had to be carried out twice[15], due to inconsistencies in the data, but that could of course still not make up for any weaknesses in the baseline data.

161. There were also several adjustments in the wording for output indicators and the figures for targets during the implementation period. The UNEP TM and the PM had in that relation some correspondence on the need and a process of finetuning the Results Framework. As the TM said "even with a perfect project design, it could be necessary to re-design it if there are delays". The adjustments initiated already during the project start-up training on the M&E in the mentioned Bangkok workshop. The RA Director of M&E was present and questioned the feasibility of the set targets, e.g. number of farmers trained and area of land under SLM. Subsequently, on two other occasions during the project implementation, changes were proposed and made. The problem was not any fundamental changes to the design, but that the changes always were proposed, with no prior notice, during the presentations at the SC meetings, followed by approval of the UNEP's TM if he thought it made sense. There was therefore no time available for the TM and other SC members to study the issues relating to the proposed changes prior to the meetings. Communications on such matters as well as day-to-day challenges faced by the project coordinator/PMU were generally not communicated with the TM until a decision was needed or a problem already too big to continue remained unresolved.

162. As an example of a proposed change that was not discussed well enough in advance, the TM recalls a PSC where he was surprised that the project team no longer wanted to work on energy efficiency (EE) in tea factories for various, but in his opinion weak, reasons. The team, however, wanted this change reflected in the targets of the logframe. As a way of seeking an alternative solution the TM motivated e.g. Sri Lanka to do a needs and opportunity assessment and see what the project could still facilitate towards EE, which later turned out well. Any changed logframe items and targets used in a PIR where based on previous revised versions during a SC meeting. The Evaluator therefore considers the changes mentioned to have been accepted by UN Environment, even though there was no formal register of these decisions.

163. According to the GEF guidelines[16], *if the changes do not include an increase in GEF project financing, changes for an MSP proposed after the CEO has approved the project are made at the discretion of the responsible GEF Agency. They are reported to the GEF Secretariat as part of the annual Project Implementation Review after agency approval*. There should therefore not be any formal problems associated with the target changes that were carried out in this project. However, another question is whether the revised indicators and targets were appropriately approved. That the proposed changes to the results framework were presented by RA with little or no advance notice to the SC and Task Manager does not constitute a good practice.

164. The Project Mid-Term Review (MTR) found that there were significant delays in setting up a robust M&E system, and training country teams of enumerators to obtain SLM baseline data on farmer practices, due to logistical challenges, delayed farmer trainings, and weak NC oversight. The MTR however considered that the target for Component 4 – "Outcome-related new monitoring and analytical tools being able to provide practical, cost-effective means to understand farmers' SLM adoption and its potential effect on sustainable productivity, vulnerability, and ecological integrity" had been achieved by mid-term! (June 30th 2016). Seventeen enumerators who had been trained on

[15] Survey results were analyzed directly after data collection but then reviewed again after the presentation of initial analysis at the SC meeting in China (and many questions were posed on the inconsistencies and questionable outcomes compared to the baseline survey).

[16] GEF 2017. Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. 93 pp.

the use of FPMT were able to apply the tool and produce expected quasi-baseline data within the budget. The delays in farmer trainings however meant that the NCs reported only 37% of the data needed for the farmers' management practice analysis by mid-term.

165. In addition, the NCs considered the need for monitoring of the M&E system, but from another angle. Some NCs though that there were too many indicators, and that the monitoring took too much time away from practical work. One recommendation mentioned by them was that the indicators should have been short and clear, and matching the training content. It was also mentioned that the budget for enumerators was too low, because it did not consider the long distances and time to travel on mountainous roads. This could have been one of the explanations for the often illogical results, because many surveys seem to have been filled out without going to the field. In the case of Yunnan, the NC mentioned that it would have been impossible to carry out the surveys without the local government's support.

166. As described above, despite training of enumerators, the field monitoring confronted many difficulties. When the M&E team started to analyse the data, the results looked very negative. Even with adjustments and ignoring the most illogical data, many results still seem negative (see tables 17-20). It would of course have been better to take out all the samples that appeared to be wrong, but the problem was how to know which were wrong, and how to avoid that the executing agency would use this to change the results in the project's favour? Another approach would have been to concentrate only on a few parameters that are relevant from a statistical point of view, to capture the most important information.

> *"The project has done a lot of positive things. But much of the positive I have seen came out negative in the monitoring data"* (UN Environment Task Manager, June 2018).

167. In addition to the monitoring of targets in the results framework, the project also established a "Tracking Tool for Tea and SLM" for monitoring of outcomes and impact, based on GEF's monitoring tool for the Land Degradation Focal Area. This was filled in before the project started as an annex to the project application, then again in October 2016 (during the MTR) and finally at the end (July 2018). Each criterion in the tracking tool has its score guide, and when the score is a single number it ranges from 1 (worst situation) to 5 (best situation). What is interesting is therefore to review where the number has changed.

168. This tracking tool seems to have suffered some of the same problems as the FPMT due to lack of reliable baselines and field problems with the enumerators. For instance, the last version of the tool mentions that an impact survey on shade tree use were applied, but *only Vietnam and Sri Lanka have valid results*. From these data it was estimated that the number of shade trees increased on 9,840 ha of land. The report nevertheless presents shade tree data for all the five project regions.

Table 26. Outcome monitoring from Tea and SLM Tracking tool with comments

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
LD1 – Ecosystem services in production landscapes (agriculture, rangeland)				
i. An enhanced enabling environment within the agricultural sector	Agriculture Policy	1	1	
	Agricultural policies incorporating smallholder and community tenure security (No.)	1	1	New policies could presumably be on national or sub-national level, however no new policies were recorded as result of the project.
	Land tenure security	Not defined	2	No baseline and no evidence except for project self-reporting (2018) that land tenure arrangements and use rights partially are in place.

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
ii. Improved agricultural management	Sustained agricultural productivity	1	1	
	Agriculture policies incorporating smallholder and community tenure security (No.)	0	1	The score guide for 1 means that yields of main crops / livestock productivity are stable. This is not directly related to the indicator and should have been corrected.
	Community vulnerability	3	3	Tracks livelihood context of the beneficiaries (ref. GEF LD Monitoring Tool).
iii. Sustained flow of services in agro-ecosystems	Land area of production systems with increased vegetation cover (ha)	0	2,255	Impact survey on shade tree use are applied. However, only Vietnam and Sri Lanka have valid survey results. From these data it is estimated that on 9,840 ha the number of shade trees increased.
	Land area under diversified production (ha)	0	N/A	Not measured, but the project reports that they know this area has increased, e.g. many trained farmers grow buckweed between the rows of tea for green manure, seeds and additional income.
iv. Increased investments in SLM	1. Direct payments or PES schemes (US$)			
	2. Small credit schemes (US$)			
	3. Voluntary carbon market (US$)			
	4. Eco-labeling, certification schemes (US$)	0	244,273	Project was unable to measure money invested and used certified area instead (however not project result).
LD2 – ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN FOREST LANDSCAPES: Considered outside the project's thematic scope				
LD3 – SLM in wider landscapes (integrated management)				
i. Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management	Framework strengthening INRM	1	2	INRM framework was discussed and formally proposed. Info updated 2017 (Darjeeling and Sri Lanka plans are now agreed)
	Integrated land management plans (No.)	0	2	Info updated 2017 (Darjeeling and Sri Lanka plans are now agreed)
	Capacity strengthening	1	2	Initial awareness raised (work-shops, seminars). (Situation description 1-5 based on project tracking/reporting)

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
ii. Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities	Spatial coverage of integrated natural resource management practices in wider landscapes (ha)		5,090,000	Updated 2017 (total for Darjeeling and Sri Lanka). Source: Project tracking and self-reporting
	Indicate number of INRM tools and methodologies introduced by the project and list at most three below	0	3	Updated by project 2018 but INRM tools and methodologies not listed
iii. Increased investments in integrated landscape management	1. Direct payments or PES schemes (US$)			
	2. Small credit schemes (US$)			
	3. Voluntary carbon market (US$)			
	4. Eco-labeling, certification schemes (US$)	0		Reported under LD1 iv.
LD4 – Adaptive management and SLM learning				
i. Increased capacities of countries to fulfill obligations in accordance with the provisions provided in the UNCCD.	Will the project contribute to UNCCD reporting by country? Mark X Yes X No			Same text in project start and end
	Select the UNCCD 10-year Strategy Objective(s) to be **directly** addressed by project and **describe** nature of contribution:			
	SO1 To improve the living conditions of affected communities This project will be an important contributor to arresting or even reversing land degradation, while providing a range of economic benefits for local communities, downstream beneficiaries, and the global commons. The project will help ensure the future sustainability and resilience of the agricultural economy. [Same text in start and end]			Same text in project start and end
	SO2 To improve the conditions of affected ecosystems This project will be an important contributor to arresting or even reversing land degradation, while providing a range of environmental benefits for local communities, downstream beneficiaries, and the global commons. The project will help ensure the future resiliency of ecosystem service flows in the targeted landscapes. [Same text in start and end]			Same text in project start and end
	SO3 To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD			Same text in project start and end
	SO4 To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors			Same text in project start and end
	Select Operational Objective(s) from the UNCCD 10-year Strategy to be **directly** supported by the project and **describe** nature of support.			
	1. Advocacy, awareness raising and education		This project promoted a dialogue among relevant stakeholders for two landscapes, one in India and one in Sri Lanka, which raised awareness about local INRM challenges and developed an action plan to address them.	
	2. Policy framework			
	3. Science, technology and knowledge	The project will design and maintain new monitoring and analytical tools that are practical, cost-effective mean to understand change and guide adaptive management related to sustainable productivity, vulnerability, and ecological integrity in tea-producing landscapes in the focal regions.	Same text in start and end	
	4. Capacity building	The project will design and implement site-specific outreach to train large numbers of smallholders and	Same text in start and end	

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
		selected estate managers in the SAN network standards' best managed practices (incl. climate friendly practices), prioritizing those that most directly address land degradation. A train-the-trainers approach (lead farmers) will be adopted to build capacity and transfer knowledge at scale.		
	5. Financing and technology transfer			
ii. Improved GEF portfolio monitoring using new and adapted tools and methodologies				
	1. Knowledge management websites		1	Training materials generated by the project will be put on RA's Sustainable Training website
	2. Exchange workshops		4	National work-shops organized in each country
	3. Knowledge management networks	1	0	Reduced to zero. Originally value was 1 but the SAN network already existed.
	4. Monitoring tools/systems established for			
	a) Land Degradation Trends	*0*	0	
	b) Environment and Development Benefits	*2*	2	Landscape INRM management methodology and Performance Monitoring questionnaire
2. Co-financing from sectors (US$)				
i. Agriculture	(no other sectors)	10,000,000	12,452,413	
3. Knowledge application				
a. Knowledge resources utilized from GEF-financed targeted research (**describe**)				
i. Data		None	None	
ii. Tools and Methodologies		None	None	
iii. Best Practices		None	None	
b. Knowledge resources contributed to focal area learning objectives (**describe**)				
i. Data		Data collected using the two farm-level methodologies described below will be aggregated into a management index that, 1) provides an integrated portrait of how the project is driving substantive change in land management practices of tea-producing areas targeted for sustainable improvements and improved resiliency to climate change, and 2) becomes fundamental to how farmer group Internal Management Systems (IMS) and auditors evaluate and implement continuous	Same text in start and end	

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
		improvements on tea farms.		
ii. Tools & methodologies		The project's Farm Performance Monitoring Tool to quantify the adoption of sustainable land management practices over time. The tool will use a survey instrument, semi-structured farmer interviews, and field observations of trained technicians to quantify and report change in agricultural practices that are promoted by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Standard and localized to reflect the key land degradation issues in any given each region. A climate resiliency measurement tool to assist technical assistance teams and auditors to carry out practical and cost-effective monitoring of tea producers' resiliency to climate change and how this resiliency is changing as a result of SLM training and investments. The tool will provide a structured framework for quantifying the adoption of practices that affect climate adaptation and resiliency. Field observations and measurement will place particular focus on climate smart practices such as establishing conservation set-asides, reforestation and fuelwood management, shade management, water and wastewater management, water use efficiency, integrated crop management, and soil conservation.	Under component 2 the project will develop a landscape delineation method and a participatory situation assessment method to identify and map threats, drivers, and opportunities for land degradation and its remediation and a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify and work to engage other key stakeholders in tea-producing landscapes whose activities are critically associated with land degradation or restoration. Under component 4, the project has developed a Farm Performance Monitoring Tool to quantify the adoption of sustainable land management practices over time. The tool uses a survey instrument, semi-structured farmer interviews, and field observations of trained technicians to quantify and report change in agricultural practices that are promoted by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) Standard and localized to reflect the key land degradation issues in any given each region. The tool provides a structured framework for quantifying the adoption of practices that affect climate adaptation and resiliency. Field observations and measurement will place particular focus on climate smart practices such as establishing conservation set-asides, reforestation and fuelwood management, shade management, water and wastewater management, water use efficiency, integrated crop management, and soil conservation.	
iii. Best practices		Training programs and guidelines for group administrators to collect, manage, and analyze data on producers for compliance to the SAN Standard and developing continuous improvement plans. This includes best practices on creating and documenting farm	Training programs and guidelines for sustainable land management in tea are developed under component 1. Best practices are collected through survey and participatory stakeholder workshops. Based on priorities set in these workshops training materials are developed. Roll out of the training through training of smallholders and estate staff is organized with these stakeholders and the project's M&E system will measure adoption. Results will be reported back to the stakeholders	

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
		maps/sketches using mobile devices, that include location, production plots, roads, buildings, the total farm area, and the total area set-aside for conservation, as well as the respective High Value Ecosystem and restoration portions.		
4. Knowledge contribution as global public goods				
i. Publications			Posters and trainer guides will be developed under the project for training under component 1 and are made available through RA's Online Platform for Sustainable Agriculture (www.sustainableagriculturetraining.org)	
ii. Tools and Methodologies	Under component 2 the project will develop a participatory situation assessment method to identify and map threats, drivers, and opportunities for land degradation and its remediation and a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify and work to engage other key stakeholders in tea-producing landscapes whose activities are critically associated with land degradation or restoration		Under component 2 the project will develop a landscape delineation method and a participatory situation assessment method to identify and map threats, drivers, and opportunities for land degradation and its remediation and a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify and work to engage other key stakeholders in tea-producing landscapes whose activities are critically associated with land degradation or restoration. Under component 4, the project has developed a Farm Performance Monitoring Tool to quantify the adoption of sustainable land management practices over time.	
iii. Best practice guidelines	Under component 1 the project will develop training materials for the SAN Standard and Climate Module that are contextualized to the project's geographic and have increased focus on SLM and INRM		These are included in the project's publications.	
b. Knowledge dissemination (Describe)				
i. Websites	Knowledge generated from the project will be shared via the following websites: a) www.Rainforestalliance.org (main website for Rainforest Alliance); b) UNEP web site; c) GEF web site; d) sustainableagriculture.org (free training materials on sustainable agriculture practices); and e) www.Eco-Index.org (project portal for conservation projects throughout the tropics)		Knowledge generated from the project will be shared via the following websites: a) www.rainforest-alliance.org (the main website for Rainforest Alliance); b) UNEP web site (if possible); c) www.sustainableagriculturetraining.org (free training materials on sustainable agriculture practices); and, if possible, d) www.Eco-Index.org (project portal for conservation projects throughout the tropics)	
ii. Workshops	The project will include two local / regional stakeholder workshops per country per year; these will be used to determine and agree on BMPs at the start of the project, and then to share BMPs and project lessons learned towards the end of the project.		The project will include one stakeholder workshop per country at the start of the project and one in the final year; these will be used to determine and agree on BMPs at the start of the project, and then to share BMPs and project lessons learned towards the end of the project.	
iii. Conferences and seminars	Opportunities to present learning from the project will occur at one or more of the several conferences that Rainforest Alliance attends each year. These include: the annual ISEAL members conference (the major conference in the calendar for certification issues), the Rainforest Alliance sustainability conference (held on the day of the annual gala in New York), and the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative's Supply Chain congress (a major event in the European calendar). Rainforest Alliance receives several invitations each to speak at food sustainability conferences. In addition, Rainforest Alliance will attend industry seminars, such as Tea 2030 and Ethical Tea Partnership events.		Opportunities to present learning from the project will occur at one or more of the several conferences that Rainforest Alliance attends each year. These include: the annual ISEAL members conference (the major conference in the calendar for certification issues), the Rainforest Alliance sustainability conference (held on the day of the annual gala in New York), and the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative's Supply Chain congress (a major event in the European calendar). Rainforest Alliance receives several invitations each year to speak at food sustainability conferences. In addition, Rainforest Alliance will attend industry seminars at international and national level, such as Tea 2030 and Ethical Tea	Nearly same text in the project start and end, but mentions also that examples of ETP Team Up India and UK and ETP producer meeting in China.

LDFA Objectives and Outcomes	Indicators and Measures	Start	End	Comments
			Partnership events including the ETP Team Up India and UK and ETP producer meeting in China.	
iv. Networks	Learning *will* be shared among the members of the Sustainable Agriculture Network, a coalition of organizations working on sustainable agriculture in the tropics. Members hail from 10 countries.		Learning *could* be shared among the members of the Sustainable Agriculture Network, a coalition of organizations working on sustainable agriculture in the tropics. Members hail from 10 countries.	Note project's comment: "could be shared" (result not yet achieved)
5. SLM Learning				
a. Describe how and what the project will contribute toward a framework and tools for linking the measurement of GEBs at project level to impacts across multiple scales.				
Text July 2018: CAN ONLY BE ANSWERED ONCE THE PROJECT HAS DETERMINED IT INDEED GENERATES GEBs.				
b. Describe how the project will increase understanding of multiple benefits from integrated management of landscape mosaics, and mixed agricultural and forest ecosystems				
Through engagement with multiple stakeholders, the project will undertake landscape context analysis and planning processes (including participatory landscape mapping and assessment) *in three regions*. An output of these consultations will be to develop activity plans for INRM initiatives that secure future tea production and drive other benefits for the wider community. Through engagement in Tea 2030, Rainforest Alliance will also develop plans with the industry about wider landscape management where tea is grown in important ecosystems.				Text July 2018 says *"in two areas"* instead of in three regions.

169. The project document was responsive to gender equity, but the monitoring and reporting on gender issues was only in the form of headcount for participation in training and other project activities. The project staff considered as positive the rule of tea farms that women should not do pesticide spraying because they could be pregnant or be giving milk, but this rule was not the result of the project. Indigenous peoples were mentioned in the project document, but their participation was not part of any specific project effort or monitoring. Human rights was dealt with mainly related with working conditions, especially health issues due to use of pesticides (see also socio-political sustainability in chapter H). Some NCs mentioned that the budget allocated for monitoring was not enough to effectively cover all issues.

170. As mentioned in the review of the quality of project design (see table 12), the risk table in ProDoc mentioned a total of six risks, which are all real risks, considering risks as *"issues that are outside the project management control but could affect project performance"*. The risk monitoring reported through the PIRs is however not based on the risk table but includes a long list of factors both under and outside the project's control. Table 27 mentions all these issues, and states which of them are real risks. Please note that it is *positive* that the project monitored all these different factors, however the day-to-day monitoring, supervision and backstopping of the NCs should focus on what was under the project management's control, while the risk monitoring should be treated differently, mainly reviewing and updating the degree of risk (especially probability of occurrence) and how to mitigate the potential impact. An important risk factor that was not included in the project design and risk monitoring was the labour shortage in certain regions (e.g. in China and Vietnam), affecting the quality of certain techniques like hand weeding.

Table 27. Issues mentioned in the PIR risk table.

Real risks (outside project management control)	Not real risks (under project management control)
Co-financing	Budget
Political influences*	Management structure
Political stability	Governance structure (of project)
Environmental conditions	Work flow
Social, cultural and economic factors	Stakeholder involvement
Capacity issues (of other organizations)	Science and technology issues
Markets	Financial management
	Internal communications
	External communications
	Short term/long term balance
	Reporting

*This issue is only partially a risk because it can be mitigated through internal project control mechanisms

171.As discussed in the chapter on quality of project design, the results framework is good for planning and monitoring, but it does not define expected ***impacts***, which is a priority issue for GEF and UN Environment. As mentioned in the chapter on likelihood of impact (V-C iii), there are two levels of impact made by the project: (i) the direct project impact defined as *reduced land degradation associated with tea production in Asia*, and (ii) the long-term (ex-post) global impact through the project's *contribution to arresting and reversing global trends in land degradation.* It is a pity that the impact surveys during implementation failed to provide data on the direct project impact, because the Evaluator has observed many positive results and there are most probably already positive impacts in all project countries, especially among local farmers.

Monitoring Implementation is rated 'Unsatisfactory'

Overall Rating for Monitoring and Reporting is 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'

H. Sustainability

172.The Evaluator considered four dimensions of the sustainability of project outcomes: (i) Socio-political; (ii) Environmental; (iii) Institutional; and (iv) Economic-financial. The socio-political dimension included also social aspects.

(i) Socio-political sustainability

173.The Country Ownership from a **Government's** point of view is not strong in this project, and that is partly due to the project design with more focus on the private sector than on the public sector, and partly a low interest in dialogue with the central government, including GEF focal points, except for in Sri Lanka. In the three other countries the relationships with public sector agencies have been on regional/state and local (provincial) level. This is important to be able to carry out local activities, and even for co-financing, but it cannot replace the potential impact of dialogue at national level on how to best resolve the country's rural problems and also being able to showcase the positive results of the project. Most governments recognize the problems with land degradation, pesticide over-use and related environmental and health problems, and rural poverty.

174.In huge countries such as China and India it is easy to understand why RA would concentrate the efforts of this small project at a local level and also limit the dialogue to state/province level. However, also in Vietnam, where the NC/NEA is situated in the capital Hanoi, the NC met with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the first time to discuss tea production during the Terminal Evaluation[17]. There is no valid argument for this, because an actor like RA will not be relevant at national level if it doesn't consider the government's policy in the planning of activities in state-ruled countries such as Vietnam and China. On the other hand, there are signs that the project's work with the government of China (even on provincial level) has impacted the regional policy priorities, and there is hope that positive project results would be followed up from the local government's side and sustain some of what the project has achieved.

175.The project's work on SLM, INRM, IPM and value chains has caught the governments' attention, at least at local level, with perspectives for long-term sustainable solutions. Related topics where the project is impacting are watershed protection and management, e.g. better water quality for public drinking water companies, and less sedimentation in dams for hydroelectric power plants. These issues are already part of the dialogue RA has established with the local governments in Sri Lanka. The stakeholder analysis (see table 7) includes some public sector institutions that have collaborated with the project and even given co-financing.

176.As mentioned in the project document, **communities, indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities, farmer organizations, international and national companies, and women** were integrated in the project design. Public institutions, firms and NGOs were also important partners for implementation.

[17] RA observes that in Vietnam, partners such as IPSARD (the MARD policy think tank) was supposed to provide the project with the link to government policy. However, when IPSARD learned they would not financially benefit from the project they declined any participation (similar to NOMAFSI, the government's leading research institute for tea) and hence also did not provide any co-financing

Many of them, as well as local farmers and some of their organizations, consider the project results in their plans for the future. The UNEP-RA tea project has resulted in awareness-raising, and based on the positive results achieved, combined with follow-up from local partners, the Evaluator expects that they would last and probably increase beyond the project period, however it would depend on follow-up from the partners and preferably RA's side. The sustainability of the project's results would be first of all on local level in the project regions, but there are expectations of scaling up the results on larger areas, and even national and international level. In Zunyi, China, based on the interest of farmers for IPM and training received from RA, the local tea office would like to continue working with RA to develop a pest monitoring and control system for tea companies. A new large follow-up project is already in the design phase in India, to cover agricultural commodities and SLM in several states including Assam but not Darjeeling, and probably similar projects will appear in the other countries.

177. During implementation the aspects of gender mainstreaming and participation of ethnic minorities did not have any important space in the project. The approach of the project has been that "everyone is welcome to participate, and there is no discrimination based on gender or ethnicity". But this is not sufficient, because in most of the countries (and especially in India and Sri Lanka) there is a strong male dominance in the tea sector. The project should therefore have done something more, and not only registered the number of men and women in the project activities. A total of more than 9,000 women (31.4% of the total) received training on SLM, INRM, IPM, etc. in the tea sector. But for the issue of sustainability, gender mainstreaming should be more than headcount. It has to do with women empowerment and influence at all levels, and women's traditional conservation of nature and sustainability perspective, including the care for family income and health.

Table 28. Men and women trained according to region and type of training

Topic of training	Training of Trainers		Smallholder Farmers		Estate managers and staff		Fuel efficiency in factories		Fuel efficient stoves		Total	
Region	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Yunnan, China	58	20	4,209	1,892	64	4	0	0	0	0	4,331	1,916
Assam, India	144	20	980	19	52	1	18	2	87	0	1,281	42
Darjeeling, India	46	7	300	153	0	0	0	0	153	116	499	276
Sri Lanka	82	7	11,136	5,996	56	1	107	0	19	41	11,400	6,045
Vietnam	31	6	2,327	817	9	1	0	0	0	0	2,367	824
Total	**361**	**60**	**18,952**	**8,877**	**181**	**7**	**125**	**2**	**259**	**157**	**19,878**	**9,103**

178. The figures included in table 28 give the share of women trained to be approximately 25-35% in most of the regions: Darjeeling 35.6%, Sri Lanka 34.7%, Yunnan 30.7% and Vietnam 25.8%. Assam is an exception with only 3.2% women, and even on the topic of fuel-efficient cooking stoves there were no women participating in this region. The reason may be partly cultural, however the large difference with the figures for Darjeeling indicate that it could be due to little effort from the local staff of the project and partners in Assam to integrate women in the training activities[18]. In the case of China there are more men than women in most areas that were covered by the project, China's former 1-child policy may have contributed to this. This situation is however changing, and in the winter season there are many areas with a majority of women workers because the husbands go to the large cities for work and come back before the harvest season. The effect on the project activities is that training would reach a higher percentage of women during the winter than in the rest of the year.

179. Table 28 does not show the total of people trained, because in the period 2016-17 additional training activities for estate workers and staff in India was organized by the partner organization Greenway Grameen. A total of 1,660 persons were reportedly trained, while another partner, APPL, provided 2,572 stoves to its workers. No gender statistics were recorded for any of these activities. In the opposite direction, reducing the total number, is the fact that some of those mentioned in table 28 are the same persons that participated in two or more training activities.

180. Regarding indigenous peoples, only China and Vietnam were mentioned in the ProDoc, however these two countries do not formally recognize indigenous peoples but, rather, ethnic minorities. All

[18] RA suggests that one reason was that the training in Assam was done through the estates while in Darjeeling the training was organized by the NEA and integrated in the general SLM smallholder training.

the project regions have a strong influence from indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities. In **China** the project did not have any problems working with the Wa ethnic minority in the project area, since the trainers can speak the Wa language. In the Cangyuan district most of the farmers that were trained were from the Wa minority, since that was the dominant ethnic group. There were also other minorities in the project region that had equal opportunities for training, but the trainers could not speak all the languages. In **India**, a very high percentage in Darjeeling (probably the majority) were ethnic Nepalese. It is difficult to find official statistics, because people move frequently across the border with Nepal. However, according to the old 1971 census, 433,283 Nepali-speaking persons were living in Darjeeling (30.5% of the population) including citizens of Nepal. In **Sri Lanka,** the majority of the workers in the tea estates were ethnic Tamils that were brought there by the British 200 years ago, and they have little in common with the Tamils in the north of the island that fought a bloody war with the Singhalese majority population. In January 2004 it was predicted that 145,000 Sri Lankan citizens of Indian origin would receive their National Identity Cards[19]. **Vietnam** has 53 ethnic minority groups, accounting for about 13.4 million people, or 14.6% of the population, however, the percentage was much higher in the project region, especially in mountainous areas. In 2015 the poverty rate registered for ethnic minorities was 23.1%, while the national average was 7%. One of the challenges for the minorities is land tenure and allocation of forest land to communities. UN-REDD was the first programme in Vietnam to promote participation of ethnic minorities at all levels of the country, with technical support from UN Environment, FAO and UNDP, including pilot testing of FPIC (free, prior and informed consent)[20].

181. For the local stakeholders, the importance for them was the local projects. When they experienced that they resulted in positive results suggesting the activities would be continued through local RA partners, communities, firms and other stakeholders. The sustainability at a local level also depends on the conscience-building that has been developed through the project, and the training and capacity building that the project did in collaboration with local partners. The Evaluator's visits to three pilot countries indicate that the capacity building carried out through the project and the partnership with local stakeholders have created a variable degree of ownership, and that it is necessary to follow this up through continued collaboration and if possible scaling-up the approaches to assure sustainability, based on recognition among local and regional stakeholders of what is in their own interest.

Socio-Political Sustainability is rated 'Moderately Likely'

(ii) Environmental sustainability

182. Environmental sustainability has been right at the core of RAs work since the organization's foundation in 1987, and it is integrated in the different certification mechanisms RA is implementing. All entities that would like to be RA-SAN certified have to comply with the different aspects of sustainability. Environmental sustainability was also one of the issues that the UNEP-RA tea project has been trying to achieve, through SLM, INRM and IPM. The environmental sustainability however is not a direct product of how many people were trained, and not even with what they learned, but a product of the *adoption of the new techniques* on the land. The project's own monitoring indicates that the adoption of new SLM techniques was low, however it seems like these monitoring data are not very reliable. To find out if new techniques for land management was adopted and maintained, an improved monitoring (e.g. through partners) combined with an ex-post evaluation would be needed.

183. The project has demonstrated the important issue that it is possible to achieve social and economic progress *through environmental sustainability*, and that the different issues of sustainability are interlinked. For instance, with the different production approaches the project has promoted, the farmers can (i) reduce the volume of agro-chemicals (pesticides and fertilizers) and thereby reducing production cost; (ii) produce a higher quality tea product with perspective of higher price in niche markets; and (iii) achieve improved socio-economic conditions for the farmers/workers, while at the same time creating a more healthy work environment. One example is the Yunnan province, where the use of pesticides has been reduced with approximately 20% and could be reduced with at least

[19] www.reliefweb.int
[20] www.iwgia.org

50% if the new government policy is being implemented, promoting organic farming with use of organic fertilizers in several pilot villages. Also one large farm (800 ha) is now producing organic[21].

184.The international market is moving towards more demand for healthy food products, including organic tea. This is a trend that has been going on for some time and probably will be strengthened, promoting environmental sustainability. It is the strongest driver for continued focus on the topics that the project has been working with. This is a win-win situation, where environmental and economic sustainability are mutually strengthening each other.

185.RA is already using the results from the tea project to promote environmental sustainability also in other sectors. For instance, the Project Manager, in his new position for RA after the project ended, has used the analysis of weed management demos Sri Lanka that were made by the NC in that country to adapt it to Indonesia conditions, with possible application in smallholder cocoa farms.

Environmental Sustainability is rated 'Highly Likely'

(iii) Institutional sustainability

186.The Evaluator assessed the institutional sustainability of the project partly based on what it will mean institutionally for RA and for the new organization that is being built through a merge with UTZ (headquarters in the Netherlands). It seems as if this project has been an add-on to RA's core business, which is forest certification and certification of sustainable agriculture through the SAN network; this project did not have the emphasis on certification. The opportunity for getting GEF financing for this project and experiencing that the implementing agency UN Environment was pushing for more holistic landscape-based solutions, made changes in the way RA was working. Institutionally, the landscape approach reflected in SLM, INRM and watershed management, has now probably strengthened within RA, and the merge with UTZ will most probably further strengthen that process. On the other hand, the different issues promoted through the project could be fully integrated into the new RA-UTZ certification system that is now under discussion, with many changes in the pipeline.

187.The comment that this project seemed like an add-on to RA's traditional work, was also reflected in the day-to-day project implementation. The RA international staff had a very distant role in the project, and local staff in the region had the impression that HQ staff used very little of their time on the project issues. The NCs mentioned that they had very little interaction with RA, with the exception for the PM, and sometimes an exchange of information with the M&E team. There was also no project website, even though the project had strong focus on training and capacity-building, so a project website could have been used as a training tool and knowledge-sharing platform for all interested stakeholders. The only RA staff member that had a permanent role related only with the project was the PM, while all national coordinators were contracted as consultants. It is important to remember that consultants have other parallel activities going on, including other projects for RA and consultancies for other institutions. The low level of interaction with RA on international level was also expressed through a very limited promotion of the project's results in the international arena (see Communication and Public Awareness, par. 197). An important exception was an international media trip to Sri Lanka, that was mainly organized by UN Environment but supported locally by RA. The tour got very good coverage in international media in Asia and Europe.

188.One issue that affects the tea estates is their responsibility for the labour force, which goes centuries back in time. Today the workers are better organized, and require increased payment, better housing and improved social services. All this sounds logical, but a continuing problem is that tea estates in India and Sri Lanka are required by law to maintain a certain number of workers (and their families), and the increased labour costs should go hand-in-hand with improved efficiency that would reduce the need for manual labour, which the law prohibits. On the other hand, the tea producers in China and Vietnam (as well as some newer estates in India and Sri Lanka) have a lack of skilled labour because people migrate to the cities. The project's emphasis on manual weeding and manual tea plucking in most areas is experienced by many tea farms as an obstacle to modernization and improved efficiency. However, this is because they still don't know how to manage the farms with a green approach, and how to get an excellent product with mechanized harvesting. However, in very

[21] Personal comment from the National Project Coordinator

steep areas mechanization is difficult without terracing, e.g. in the project area in Yunnan where more than 80% is hand-plucked.

189. On national and local level, a key issue for institutional sustainability is ownership. This has been achieved by the partner institutions and firms to variable degree. In Yunnan, **China**, there has been a strong collaboration with the local government tea offices, and they seem interested in continuing to promote many of the activities they have learned through the project. The Government has already started promoting the practices of composting and green manure, but they are not equally interested in other practices such as IPM to reduce or eliminate use of pesticides. Many government officials regard this as being too complicated, and they also refer to labour shortages. For RA's follow-up after the project the NC not being stationed in the region presents a problem, and it is an open question whether RA would be able to continue the SLM work in Yunnan. In **India,** a new and larger GEF project is under preparation in collaboration between UN Environment, RA and IUCN, partly based on the project under evaluation. According to the PIF that was presented the project budget is USD 7 million, with suggested geographic location Tamil Nadu & Karnataka. IUCN is also reviewing the option of including Ladhak in Jammu & Kashmir[22]. In **Vietnam**, the NGO VECO has learned a lot about tea during the project implementation. However, their limited integration with the tea sector and lack of contacts at government level indicate that tea will not be a priority issue for VECO after project completion. It is still a possibility that local and national firms would be able to continue the activities in collaboration with VITAS.

190. Finally, **Sri Lanka** is the country with the best options for institutionalizing the results of the project. This is partly due to the tea sector with many smallholders, and partly because the NC will continue to work with RA and is well connected with the public and private tea stakeholders. The Sri Lankan NGO Alliance for Sustainable Land Management (ASLM), of which the NC is the director, will continue to coordinate the implementation of the project action plan beyond the life of the GEF Tea project.

Institutional Sustainability is rated 'Moderately Likely'

(iv) Economic-Financial

191. As mentioned earlier, despite that many co-financing partners failed to give the expected amount, the level of co-financing was very good, with 86% of the total project financing if all GEF resources are being used. This indicates a high level of interest from the corporate tea sector and the public sector in favour of the topics the project has covered, which gives expectations for financial sustainability through non-donor funded sources.

192. Resources from RA´s cooperation project directly with Unilever in Sri Lanka provided additional financing to RA's training activities and will continue beyond the life of the UNEP-GEF Tea project. The two projects complemented each other in such a way that farmers trained in SLM practices through the GEF project were then supported to obtain RA certification through the Unilever project. Additionally, Unilever´s own project with the Sri Jayawardena Pura University finance the institution's training of 200 "model farmers" on sustainable tea production, and those farmers will then be paid by Unilever to train 200 farmers each in the same villages as those supported by UNEP-GEF. In similar ways, Kirin supported farmer training for RA certification in Sri Lanka, while IDH supported such a training program in Vietnam.

193. The economic and financial sustainability of the project was based on the costs and benefits of the project outcomes within a long-term perspective, and whether these would be economically sustainable in the future without project donations. This however, remains a market issue, where much depends on RA and partners' ability to assure better paid niche markets for sustainable tea products. The Evaluator has noted certain disappointment among local tea producers and national firms that large players such as Unilever require RA certification, but they are not willing to pay a premium that would significantly benefit local farmers. Many stakeholders in the region even claim that Unilever buys the cheapest low-quality tea, but still want it to be certified, which is not financially sustainable for the producers.

[22] Information from India National Project Coordinator, October 2018

194.The Evaluator considers that to produce high quality tea in a sustainable manner and with reasonable socioeconomic benefits for the producers, the average price must increase. It is a question of supply and demand, where the buyer of the certified tea in the end-market should have to pay for it. This is one of the reasons why it was necessary to combine improved sustainable production with extensive market studies. The problem is that there is "too much" tea in the global market, and more volume is entering. This indicates that to elevate the price there are two alternative ways forward: (i) To produce certified high-quality gourmet tea, and market it similarly to the process we have seen in the coffee market; or (ii) To foster cooperation among the main producer countries (similar to OPEC) to reduce total production and thereby increase the price. The first alternative for the moment seems most feasible, but large volumes of the world's tea will still go to countries that only are interested in price, where tea continues to be the poor's drink.

195.The high-price tea products are however not only for the export markets. There are examples of "traditional tea" (not tea bags) that sell with high prices to selective clients especially in India and, to a certain extent, also in China. Another factor that could strengthen the trend of higher prices in domestic markets is the interest of the governments in the region for quality tea with low or no traces of pesticides, based on the political goal of improving the population's general health.

196.In general, the economic feasibility of the UNEP-GEF tea project in Asia depends on the success in establishing sustainable business models for the whole value chain, from the tea field to the end consumer. Some of these businesses could be strengthened through RA certification, but that is not sufficient. To achieve sustainable tea production that considers conservation of biodiversity, soil and water, reduction or elimination of pesticides, and improved living conditions for the local producers, it is necessary to "educate the market", the same way as RA has promoted the same for timber and other commodities.

Financial Sustainability is rated 'Moderately Likely'

Overall Rating for Sustainability is 'Moderately Likely'

I. Factors affecting performance

197.These factors have been discussed in different sections of the document, so this chapter presents only a brief summary. Ratings for these factors are also given in the ratings table.

198.***Preparation and Readiness:*** The design stage of the project was carried out rapidly and without a Project Preparation Grant (PPG). Some of the deficiencies of the design that affected the implementation could have been avoided through a longer design period with greater stakeholder engagement also including with the co-financing partners to ensure the amounts from each of them could have been much closer to reality. Given that the RA had such a short period for the project design they had little choice but to rely on their already established partners and contacts, instead of reviewing all options. This gave certain benefits where RA's work was already ongoing, but caused start-up difficulties in Vietnam where they had to look for a completely new national project coordinator[23]. Another weakness as a result of the rapid design phase was that the baseline data on local level were not relevant and reliable, and sometimes non-existent, which affected the project's monitoring system during implementation. It also became clear that the partners did not have a deep understanding of what the project aimed to achieve because many of them expected it to be a more 'traditional' RA project focused on certification. Even some of the NCs had from the start certain difficulties to make the mental shift from certification to SLM and INRM. No major changes were made to the project document, but the output definitions and targets in the results framework were adapted during the implementation, as reflected in the PIRs. However, the end results show that even with the initial targets the project would have received good effectiveness at output level. Preparation and readiness is rated 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'.

[23] RA does not agree on this and comments that a weakness in the design was that there was hardly any consideration on the process to roll out the training for farmers (particularly for the energy efficiency). This resulted in a mismatch between the partners initially identified (and asked to provide co-financing) and the ones that were finally involved in the training roll out. That was a major reason for the slow start of the project.

199.***Quality of Project Management and Supervision:*** The RA Project Manager resided in the Netherlands, but travelled frequently in the Asian region and supervised the National Coordinators (NCs) directly and from abroad. Most NCs had high technical knowledge about the project issues, but less experience with administrative project management. There was good monitoring and supervision throughout the implementation period both from RA with headquarters in the US and the RA office in Indonesia. UN Environment provided excellent supervision of RA from the Task Manager based in Bangkok, Thailand, and RA was satisfied with his role. The supervision and continuous follow-up resulted in improved effectiveness of the project outputs and outcomes achieved. The project had only one minor extension of 3 months, and 5 months in Darjeeling justified based on a 100 days dead period there due to social uprising and a general strike. The international Steering Committee played both advisory and decision-making roles, while there were no national steering committees. The Risk Table included only six risks with risk level and probability of occurrence, but the potential impact and probability of occurrence were not defined, making it difficult to monitor and mitigate the major risks. The risks were monitored throughout the project implementation, but on national level the risk mitigation was most often ad-hoc. The Quality of project management and supervision is rated 'Satisfactory'.

200.***Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:*** There has been a broad stakeholder participation based on the partner organizations', other organizations' and local stakeholders' interest in the topics of reduced land degradation and reduced use of pesticides. The achievements in each country depended much on the quality and efficiency of the NCs/NEAs. Despite support from an international team, the project was, however, not able to achieve effectiveness in communication and consultation with stakeholders. The PM carried out supervision and advisory missions to give support to the NCs, but most of the contacts with local stakeholders and field activities were logically the responsibility of the NCs. Reporting was completed each semester from NEAs to RA, from RA to UN Environment and onwards all the way to the GEF Secretariat. Stakeholder participation and cooperation is rated 'Satisfactory'.

201.***Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity:*** Despite mention of indigenous peoples and gender in the project document, these issues did not have any strong influence on the project implementation. It can be said that everyone had the same opportunity to participate in training and other project activities, independent of ethnicity and gender, and both ethnic minorities and women participated (to different extents, depending on the countries). However, the project did not make any extra effort to empower these groups or promote more equity. Gender was one of the issues included in the monitoring system, and reported for training activities, but just as a headcount. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity is rated 'Moderately Unsatisfactory'.

202.***Country Ownership and Driven-ness:*** The Country Ownership from the Governments' point of view is not so strong in the UNEP-GEF tea project as in many other projects, mostly because RA's strong focus on the private sector. Many government agencies at national level (Sri Lanka) and local level (the other countries), however, recognize the value of SLM and reduced levels of pesticides in tea production. The project had a strong collaboration with the private tea sector at national and local levels. At a local level, there was also certain ownership of the project's outcomes from SMEs, CSOs, communities, and other stakeholder groups, however the degree of ownership varied considerably between geographic areas. Country ownership and driven-ness is rated 'Satisfactory'.

203.***Communication and Public Awareness:*** Communication is considered by the Evaluator as one of the project's weakest points. Even though the project achieved many positive results that can be disseminated to the public and replicated, this took place to very limited degree, and when it happened it was normally on the initiative of one of the National Coordinators. This issue was flagged several times by UN Environment, without major change, and the project did not even have its own website. This issue seems contradictory to RA's tradition of high-quality and high impact communication products at an international level. RA decided to prepare a blog instead, but this also did not happen. During the third year of implementation, RA requested that a communication consultant be hired, however there is little if any information regarding the results[24].

[24] Information from the UN Environment TM

204. Training and capacity building on SLM, INRM and IPM was carried out with the participation of a large number of people in all four pilot countries. Experience-sharing between the countries was carried out to a limited extent, through the participation of the NCs in the kick-off workshop in Bangkok, as observers in the Steering Committee, and some bilateral contacts between them to share experiences on different topics. A positive aspect was the translation of information material on IPM from India to national/local languages in the other pilot countries. At the beginning of October 2018, the TM received a poster/info-graphic prepared by the communication consultant on project approach and some results, which is partly responding to the issue of the 'need for better communication' that he had brought up repeatedly during the implementation, since the project had much good work and best practices to disseminate. Communication and public awareness is rated 'Unsatisfactory'.

205. ***Catalytic Role, Replication and Scaling Up:*** As it has been demonstrated through this evaluation report, the project was designed to have a catalytic role, to foster replication in other regions and countries. The pilot activities carried out on SLM, INRM and IPM that were pushed from UN Environment's side are already being replicated in the same region of the countries, and to a certain degree in other parts of the countries. GEF has lately given higher priority to SLM, especially through the GEF-7 Land degradation Focal Area – Objective 1: Supporting on the ground implementation of SLM to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)[25]. A new and larger project in India is scaling up the experiences from the tea project but also includes other agricultural and agroforestry crops. There are high expectations for scaling up SLM, INRM and IPM in relation to a reformulated certification system that RA currently is discussing with UTZ in relation with its merger with that organization. Catalytic role, replication and scaling up is rated 'Satisfactory'.

[25] GEF 2018. GEF-7 replenishment programme directions (prepared by the Secretariat). 148 pp.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

206.More than 60% of the world's ecosystems services are either degraded or used unsustainably. As highlighted in the ProDoc, since the recognition of the UNCBD and the establishment of the UNCCD in the early 1990s, a number of emerging economies in Asia have been troubled by the rise of over-cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, and poor irrigation practices that are degrading lands on a large scale and resulting in negative environmental, social and economic consequences. Roughly 1/3 of India's land is subject to some form of degradation, with 25% affected by desertification. The problem is also significant in China, where approximately 60% of the population is living in areas affected by desertification and degradation, and 100 million ha of steppe and pastures have been seriously degraded. In Vietnam and Sri Lanka, half of all land is under considerable degradation, causing low fertility and poor agricultural production. This general situation, together with the traditional tea production's degrading impact on the soil and landscape, was the main justification for the project. The project's objective was that "Land degradation associated with tea production in Asia is reduced through support to farmers and catalysing industry and government leaders to mainstream sustainable land management and integrated natural resource management practices" (par. 34).

207.The project focused on training on Sustainable Land Management (SLM), Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in the tea sector, including trying out new methods. At the national level, professionals with expertise in agronomy, sustainability and Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standards were appointed to coordinate the project execution. (par. 6).

208.The project was implemented in five pilot regions in the four countries China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, which is a huge area for such a relatively small project (par. 62). The project however had a strong strategic relevance as a contribution to the overall GEF Goal of reducing land degradation (par. 47), and GEF's important role in supporting countries' efforts to prevent and combat land degradation through sustainable land management and to ensure soil health (par 48). On the other hand, UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy 2014-17 mentions support to landscape planning and integrated management of land and water for the provision of ecosystem services, including freshwater efficiency and food (par. 49).

209.The selected countries have been very relevant since they represent four of the seven largest tea producing countries in the world (par. 51), and the pilot areas were situated in some of the most important tea regions in these countries. The project has also been very relevant in relation to the official policy of the four countries. All of them are parties to the three Rio Conventions (UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC), and they have signed the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (par. 52).

210. The project would have benefitted from a longer and more complete design period, preferably a PPG phase. Most of the problems encountered during implementation, such as slow start-up, lack of reliable baseline, problems with the M&E system, and changes in co-financing sources (par. 39-40), could have been avoided had the project been designed more comprehensively over a longer period (see table 12).

211.The project had a very good performance in terms of effectiveness, achieving 92.8% of its expected outputs (table 13) and 88.1% of the expected outcomes (table 16). The targets in the results table were however adjusted during the implementation, but even with the original targets at the time of approval, the project would have received favourable judgements for effectiveness. Only on the goal of tea-producing lands that have adopted key SLM practices were the results below the target. The main reasons for this are lower than expected adoption of SLM practices by the farmers trained and the fact that many farmers have a smaller tea area than the 1 ha assumed.

212. The relationship between implementation progress, and budget and time invested, shows that the project in general was implemented efficiently. At the time of the MTR, the efficiency ratio was 0.81 (moderately satisfactory), while at the end of the project implementation the ratio was 0.94 (satisfactory). Another aspect of efficiency is cost/benefit, where the project probably had achieved a

better relation if the total budget had been larger, because many of the centrally administrated costs (for M&E, finance management, etc.) would not have increased with the same degree as the total budget.

213. A major project weakness was the monitoring of implementation, reflected in unreliable baselines and unreliable (often wrong) figures from field surveys. This was partly due to weak enumerators and partly due to a low budget and a lack of logistical support for the surveys. Another important weakness of the project was been the low level of attention paid to the capturing and dissemination of good practices, and the promotion of the project's results in the international arena, e.g. due to the lack of a project website. Since this project had strong focus on training and capacity-building, a project website could also have been used as a training tool and knowledge-sharing platform for all interested stakeholders (par. 187).

214. There was a high degree of satisfaction among the local stakeholders with the products and services they obtained through the project, mainly training events, training material and some technical assistance, however the results would have improved with more follow-up after training. One positive aspect of the project was that good training material (especially from India) was adapted and translated to local languages in the other countries (par. 90).

215. Despite high % effectiveness, the Evaluator considers that the project's impact so far has not been high. The results of the SLM M&E *impact surveys* show that the uptake of SLM practices among farmers and estates trained was not optimal (par. 100), but there are some positive signals in Sri Lanka and China (par. 101). The UN Environment TM believes that uptake by smallholder farmers was much better than captured by the M&E system, due to different parameters used at baseline and in the impact surveys. Uptake by larger tea estates remains low – which is influenced by external factors, especially the difficult financial situation of many estates, which limits their interest.

216. The UNEP-RA tea project has played a catalytic role, and the process is already moving fast in the pilot countries. A large new national tea project is under design in India and also in the other countries there is high interest from the public and private sector, that could lead to new projects. In Sri Lanka herbicides-free weed management is getting gradually more popular, partly based on a spill-over effect from the visit of the India NC, that was appreciated and followed up locally by the Sri Lanka NC (par. 96).

217. The project initially had many implementation challenges and therefore a slow start. The NEAs and partners also needed a deeper understanding of the project and its goals to be able to do a good job on how to reach them. Many of the partners had expected a traditional RA project with focus on certification, and it took some time before they gradually understood the aspects of SLM, INRM and IPM. Much training, supervision and follow-up from the PM towards the pilot countries and the NCs towards national and local partners gradually improved the situation (par. 134). The project should however have given more emphasis to dialogue with the governments to achieve strengthened impact.

218. The environmental sustainability was qualified as highly likely, while the socio-political, institutional and financial sustainability were only qualified as moderately likely. Sustainability of the project's outcomes would be first of all at a local level in the project regions, but there are expectations of scaling up the results over larger areas, and even at a national and international level.

219. Gender participation has been relatively imbalanced in all the pilot countries, with approximately 25-35% in all the regions, except for Assam with only 3.2% women participating (par. 35 and 178). Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities have participated in all project regions due to the ethnicity combination of these regions, however the integration of these groups has not been a priority area for the project.

220. The evaluation has addressed the key strategic questions mentioned in the TOR, with the following results:

a) *How and to what extent was the introduction of sustainable tea production technologies affected by management practices in China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam?*

All the four countries have unsustainable and soil-degrading management practices in the tea sector, causing land degradation and contamination. The sector would have had to change anyway, with or without the project, because the productivity of the land and product quality has been declining while the markets in Europe and the US increasingly require high-quality tea products with a low pesticide content. India and Sri Lanka have a traditional conservative estate-based and privately-owned tea sector, which is slow to change, however Sri Lanka has a larger share of smallholder producers that are more open to change than the old estates. China and Vietnam have a state-dominated tea sector, with the difference among them being that the Chinese government agencies at a local level are very active and will promote change if they are convinced of anything new. The government in Vietnam has a more "hands-off" approach and is reluctant to engage too much with the private sector. Vietnam's agricultural ministry prefers to define the general goals and strategies and create the framework conditions for the sector.

b) *How and to what extend did innovations introduced by the project contribute to reduce environmental degradation, stabilise or improve tea production and community welfare in the project countries? Were gender related aspects considered?*

The methods introduced through the projects, such as SLM, INRM and IPM, are not really innovations from a global perspective, but have been applied only at a very small scale in the Asian tea sector. The methods reduce land degradation and can even improve the soil quality, thereby requiring lower use of fertilizers. IPM has also a direct and indirect effect on health and welfare, both for the workers and the population in general, due to reduced use of pesticides and other agro-chemicals. Gender aspects have received very little emphasis in the project. Even though gender was registered for all project activity participants, there was no strategy for strengthening women's participation or to empower their role.

c) *Was the INRM approach a suitable methodology and partnership platform to enable reduction in external drivers/vectors affecting tea production, as well as the upscaling of 'best practice' with regards to sustainable tea production?*

The INRM approach was a suitable strategy to improve sustainable land management and tea production. An important external driver in that direction is the world markets' gradually increasing demand for RA certified high quality tea with low traces of pesticides. However, an external driver in the opposite direction is the world market's demand for low priced tea (even when RA certified), as well as the option of selling low quality tea with high pesticide content to markets in the Middle East, Russia and other countries. The Evaluator considers that the best options for upscaling of best practices would be through strengthened collaboration not only with the private sector but with the Governments, which has overarching goals that include aspects of public health, soil conservation and disaster risk reduction.

d) *How and to what extent did the project promote knowledge sharing and learning among project countries and above?*

The project promoted knowledge sharing among the project countries to a very limited degree. This is partly a result of low project budget that didn't permit regional seminars, but also a result of low priority from the project's side to exchange of experiences between the countries, e.g. through a project website. Also at a higher level (global stage) there were lost opportunities to showcase important project results.

Table 29. Ratings Table

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
A. Strategic Relevance		**HS**
1. Alignment to MTS and POW	High degree of alignment	HS
2. Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor strategic priorities	High alignment to overall goals	HS
3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Relevant for priorities in tea producing countries in Asia and globally	HS

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
4. Complementarity with existing interventions	Built on on-going RA work and partner relations, but not other projects	S
B. Quality of Project Design	See table 12: Good ratings except "Intended results and causality", Financial planning/budgeting and "risk identification and social safeguards"	**MS**
C. Nature of External Context	Moderately favourable due to receptiveness in tea sector, however low tea prices affect impact	**MF**
D. Effectiveness	High compliance, but targets were changed during implementation	**S**
1. Achievement of outputs	92.8% compliance with targets	S
2. Achievement of direct outcomes	88.1% compliance with targets	S
3. Likelihood of impact	Moderately likely, but after implementation	ML
E. Financial Management		**S**
1.Completeness of project financial information	Information complete	S
2.Communication between finance and project management staff	Good support communication	S
3.Compliance with UNEP standards and procedures	Satisfactory review, also TM opinion	S
F. Efficiency	Slow start, later improvement	**S**
G. Monitoring and Reporting	Satisfactory during implementation	**MU**
1.Project reporting	Simple & efficient, using GEF form	MS
2. Monitoring design and budgeting	Not good logframe as basis for M&E	MU
3. Monitoring implementation	Slow, with partly unreliable results	U
H. Sustainability	Overall very high sustainability	**ML**
1. Socio-political sustainability	Good ownership, less interaction with Government	ML
2. Environmental Sustainability	High sustainability, basis for future	HL
3. Economic-Financial sustainability	High sustainability through new business models and certification	ML
4. Institutional sustainability	Integrated in RA's core strategy	ML
I. Factors Affecting Performance	See par. 197-205	**MU**
1. Preparation and readiness	Partners needed more training and preparation. Unreliable co-financing figures	U
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Satisfactory on regional and national level	S
3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation	Good stakeholder participation on local and sub-national levels	S
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity	Not focused on indigenous peoples and gender participation	MU
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	Good ownership of national stake-holders except national government	S
6. Communication and public awareness	Major weakness not to communicate well the good project results	U
7. Catalytic role, replication and scaling up	Replication of SLM, INRM and IPM an opportunity in RA-UTZ and GEF-7	S
Overall project rating		**MS**

B. Lessons learned

Generic lessons:

221. During the design phase UN Environment and RA had the opportunity to prepare an MS project with funds that were available, but under the condition that the design was done fast. This resulted in a weak design that seriously affected implementation on several aspects, like baseline, monitoring and effective co-financing. Lessons learned are that *it is better to have a more complete design phase than to suffer the design weaknesses during implementation*, and that *financing of proper design is good investment because it saves money during implementation*.

222.The short design period and limited dialogue with partners in this period also resulted in partners and even national coordinators not gaining sufficient understanding of the project intervention. They had expected a traditional RA project with a focus on certification, and it took time for them to understand the concept of Sustainable Land Management; this affected the initial project effectiveness. A lesson learned is that both project staff and partners need to *understand the project completely to be able to work efficiently*.

223.The project has shown that a smallholder approach can work and be competitive. Local tea smallholders were satisfied with the hands-on practical field training methods and training material produced in their own language. This is a "*best practice*" that should be used and scaled-up through other projects.

224.To ensure real impact and sustainability in the production value chain, from the field to the market, the private sector is not sufficient. It is necessary to have dialogue and collaboration with the governments, since they are also considering the public benefits.

Lessons on technical aspects of the project (SLM, INRM, IPM):

225.Integrated pest management (IPM) is a best practice from the project, focusing on good weeds and bad weeds, as well as good and bad insects to benefit the agricultural product. IPM can be good for the soil, the crop, public health, and even the production costs since it requires buying fewer inputs.

226.RA has often been regarded as an organization focused only on certification of forest management, sustainable agriculture, and chains of custody. RA has through the project for sustainable management of tea production landscapes been able to broaden its scope, that could make RA and UTZ (now merging together) more relevant in the future.

227.Through the project, RA and UN Environment have confirmed the huge opportunities for improvement in sustainable land management of tea production landscapes and the tea production in general, that should be scaled up and realised through new development initiatives with different funding sources, including private sector financing.

C. Recommendations

228.*Since the project has terminated, only UN Environment can be held formally accountable for implementing recommendations for this project. For RA the recommendations are therefore just ideas that RA Management and partners might consider in light of the TE findings and RA-UTZ's institutional strategy, including through their ongoing sustainable tea programmes and staff in the countries.*

Recommendations for UN Environment:

229.Recommendation 1. Based on the finding that many of the implementation problems were due to a deficient and fast design process, UN Environment should give priority to a complete design phase whenever possible, even for Medium-Size Projects.

230.Recommendation 2. UN Environment should, in collaboration with GEF and other funding mechanisms, continue to support sustainable land management and integrated natural resource management, including watershed management, soil & water conservation, and reduction of pesticide use through integrated pest management.

231.Recommendation 3. UN Environment should explore how to scale up collaboration with RA-UTZ in the areas of sustainable land management, green business and value chain development, especially for important commodity productions like tea, coffee and cocoa, however also through collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders in the UN system, development banks and large NGOs like IUCN, WRI, TNC, CI and WWF.

232.Recommendation 4. UN Environment should assure that the project designs promote strengthened collaboration and coordination between the public and private sector and civil society, since low participation of any of these three groups would seriously affect the impact and sustainability of any land management and commodity project.

Recommendations for RA and partners:

233. Recommendation 1. Based on the finding that many of the implementation problems were due to a deficient and fast design process, RA and partners should give strengthened priority to complete and high quality project designs, even when these processes are not fully financed by a funding agency.

234. Recommendation 2. RA should fully integrate and strengthen SLM, INRM and IPM in the new RA-UTZ certification system, related with green business and value chain development, especially for important commodity productions like tea, coffee and cocoa.

235. Recommendation 3. RA should strengthen its collaboration and dialogue with the governments, because collaboration with only the private sector and civil society would have limited impact in most countries.

236. RA and partners should assure to replicate the best practices from this project through its existing and planned programmes in the region, as well as in other countries with similar conditions.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Comments register - Response to stakeholder comments received on draft report

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
	Rainforest Alliance				
1.	Although there was no project website (not included in original project design and therefore difficult to implement) project training materials were shared through RA's own publicly accessible training website.	iii	Exec Summary	Information acknowledged	Detail added as a footnote
2.	The project had very good collaboration with governments at local level (e.g. in China) and with many government agencies (e.g. TSHDA in Sri Lanka, PPSD in Vietnam)	iii	Exec Summary	Information noted	Minor edit to remove possible unintended and tacit criticism
3.	Nepal listed as a project country – instead of China	1	1	Factual correction	Amended to China
4.	Incorrect info on Vietnam. Because RA was implementing a project through this NGO in Vietnam it was deemed better to start the GEF project after completing that other project.	2	7	Factual correction	Amended in-line with comment received
5.	"total registered co-financing was only USD 6,497,462" Comment- This is completely incorrect. RA reported co-financing of US **7,681,901.19** as of June 30, **2017** already	13	39	Factual correction	Amend -but the figure does not affect the overall observation
6	This could probably be better defined as all the training also focused primarily on SLM. So what aspect of SLM was not given enough attention?	19	55	Comment noted	Minor edit introduced to improve clarity
7.	Especially with regards to the training of farmers.	22	Table 12 'B'	Comment noted	No change required
8.	Between who in the countries? I think among the NCs exchange was sufficient.	22	Table 12 'H'	The comment relates to implementation	No Change required

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
				whereas the Table is assessing the original design only	
9.	That figure can't be right (20% of farmers in Yunnan are RA certified). Rural population of Yunnan is > 25 million people. RA had certified around 850,000 tea farmers worldwide by June 2018.	23	66	Figure to be checked and statement amended as needed	Statistic removed
10.	The Project Coordinator explains that these "missing" outputs were set up to cover some specific activities in the project countries. RA comment: And thereby being able to allocate a budget for it	24	70	Comment improves clarity	Minor edit made.
11.	Why not mention that the project had an extensive system to measure adoption of SLM practices the farmers were trained upon by the project? This M&E system did not work well but was a serious attempt to address this apparent weakness in the project output delivery	26	74	Comment is well-balanced	Edit made
12	"A mid-term impact report was requested by UN Environment, but was more an RA exercise than an integrated project management tool. "This sounds unnecessarily negative. Because no budget for a MTR was included in the project, RA (in consultation with the TM) decided to use its own resources to carry out the MTR through the services of the M&E director.	30	88	Comment noted	Amended in-line with comment received
13.	"This is mainly due to low uptake of tea estates companies that are affected by the chemical industries' efforts to maintain their markets." RA Comment "Not sure if that is the main reason. It was actually more a project decision to focus more on the smallholder sector as it was felt that there was potentially much more to gain in that sector through improving their SLM. Estates (especially the certified ones) are already applying quite a few SLM practices	32	92	Comment noted	Alternative perspective included as a footnote

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
14.	"An impact survey was carried out 2017-18 but was inconclusive "This period is incorrect. The survey was conducted in two parts: baseline during quarter 4 of 2016 and the follow up survey during quarter 4 of 2017.	33	100	Factual correction	Edited accordingly
	"In the case of India, RA sometimes commented that the NC had achieved savings, so part of the budget resources could be used elsewhere. Which actually happened as the program expenditures in China were higher than the originally foreseen in the agreement with the China NEA.	38	117	The comment provides additional information.	Added as a footnote
15.	Why "on the other hand"? That sounds like a contradiction which is not there	39	122	Comment noted	Minor edit made as suggested
16.	See comment 4 above	42	130	See comment 4 above	See comment 4 above
17.	"but could alternatively have been resolved with a 12-month extension instead of only 3 months." RA comment: Interesting suggestion but this would have been difficult given the RA structure of funding staff in the project and the TN's reluctance to increase the allocation for RA salaries.	42	113	Comment noted	No amendment necessary as no recommendation made.
18.	"that the NEAs needed a deeper understanding of the project goals and what to do to reach them before they were able to do an efficient job" RA comment: Especially with regards to components 2 and 4.	42	134	Comment noted	No amendment necessary
19.	In general, the project design did not consider any detail on the organization of the training (both in terms of training methodology and in the selection of partner organizations to receive TOT and implement the training). Given the limited budgets available in each country (and the relatively short project implementation time) that was difficult to solve 100% during project implementation.	42-43	135	Comment noted	RA's perspective included as a footnote
20.	This hampered project implementation at time. For example, training events had to be postponed or had fewer participants than invited because the strikes resulted in road blocks, cancellation of public	43	136	Comment noted	Detail added

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
	transport, and a general feeling of insecurity affecting people's willingness to travel				
21.	"The final (impact survey) had to be carried out twice" I think this is a misunderstanding. The final survey was only done once (during Q4 of 2017). Survey results were analyzed directly after data collection but then reviewed again after the presentation of initial analysis at the SC meeting in China (and many questions were posed on the inconsistencies and questionable outcomes compared to the baseline survey)	48	160	Factual correction.	Text amended accordingly and detail added in a footnote
22.	"The risk monitoring reported through the PIRs is however not based on the risk table, but includes a long list of factors both under and outside the project's control." RA Comment: That is required by the standard PIR format issued by GEF.	55	170	Comment noted	No amendment required
23.	"The Country Ownership from a Government's point of view is not strong in this project, and that is partly due to the project design with more focus on the private sector than on the public sector, and partly a low interest in dialogue with the central government, except for in Sri Lanka:". RA Comment: also partly due to the general lack of interest from the national GEF contact persons (all government people). No GEF contact person, for example, attended the project kick off meeting	57	173	Comment noted	Minor edits made
24.	"However, also in Vietnam, where the NC/NEA is situated in the capital Hanoi, the NC met with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the first time to discuss tea production during the Terminal Evaluation." RA Comment: In Vietnam, partners such as IPSARD (the MARD policy think tank) was supposed to provide the project with the link to government policy. However, when IPSARD learned they would not financially benefit from the project they declined any participation (similar to NOMAFSI, the government's leading research institute for tea.) and hence also did not provide any co-financing	57	174	Comment noted	Additional perspective from RA added as a footnote

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
23.	The reason may be partly cultural, however the large difference with the figures for Darjeeling indicate that it could be due to little effort from the local staff of the project and partners in Assam to integrate women in the training activities. RA Comment: One reason is that the training in Assam was done through the estates while in Darjeeling the training was organized by the NEA and integrated in the general SLM smallholder training.	56	178	Comment noted	Additional perspective from RA added as a footnote
24.	What is nice here (and why the government was keen to use the project's results and materials) was that the project gave a good practical methodology for the implementation of the different government policies.	59	183	Comment noted	No edit required
25.	Many issues related to, for example, IPM, weed management and soil management are getting key focus in the development of the new standard of the merged organization. This new standard will become effective in 2020.	60	186	Comment noted	No edit required
26.	"This gave certain benefits where RA's work was already ongoing, but caused start-up difficulties in Vietnam where they had to look for a completely new national project coordinator." RA Comment This is not correct in my opinion. However, what was weak in the design was that there was hardly any consideration on the process to roll out the training for farmers (particularly for the energy efficiency). This resulted in a mismatch between the partners initially identified (and asked to provide co-financing) and the ones that were finally involved in the training roll out. That was a major reason for the slow start of the project	62	198	Comments noted	The additional perspective appended as a footnote
27	"At the beginning of October 2018, the TM received a poster/info-graphic on project approach" RA Comment: The was the work of the consultant mentioned in para 203.	63	204	Factual addition	Minor edit
28.	Para 212 Unclear	66	212	Edited for clarity	
29	I have read the TE report, mostly concentrating on references made to the M&E system´s design and implementation, and find that claims made generally convey the challenges and overall situation of the	N/A	N/A	Comments noted, however the evaluation	No changes introduced.

No.	Comment received	Page	Paragraph reference	Response	How addressed
	M&E system´s design and implementation. That said, I would appreciate seeing a more nuanced analysis regarding: a) major deficiencies in the project´s design of its training component; b) major deficiencies in the project´s design of its energy efficiency component; and c) the fact that NCs were "overworked" because they lacked sufficient support staff and because they divided their time between this project and other projects unrelated to their commitments with RA. d) the fact that there was no formal, systematic follow-up of the MTR recommendations, nor clarity about which were approved by the SC.			process has now run its course	
30.	Sri Lanka: Alliance for Sustainable Land Management, ASLM	1 61	7 190	Sri Lanka: Alliance for Sustainable Landscapes Management, ASLM	Factual correction made
31.	Prolonged droughts in the case of Sri lanka	24	65	Comment noted	Minor edit made
32.33.	In Sri Lanka elections affect significantly for local production and private sector, because the labour and trade unions are strong allies of political parties	24	66	Comment noted	Minor edit made
	Repetition and incorrect labelling	27	Table 14	Errors noted	Corrected

Annex 2. Evaluation TOR

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UN Environment/Global Environment Facility project
"Mainstreaming Sustainable Management of Tea Production Landscapes"

SECTION 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

GEF Project ID:	5750		
Implementing Agency:	UN Environment	**Executing Agency:**	Rainforest Alliance
Sub-programme:	Ecosystems	**Expected Accomplishment(s):**	
UN Environment approval date:	02 June 2014	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	
GEF approval date:	13 March 2014	**Project type:**	One Step MSP
GEF Operational Programme #:		**Focal Area(s):**	Land degradation
		GEF Strategic Priority:	**LD-1** Agro-ecosystems services flows **LD-3** Integrated management of wider landscapes **LD-4** Adaptive project management for UNCCD and GEF
***Expected* start date:**	21 November 2014	**Actual start date:**	21 November 2014
***Planned* completion date:**	Dec 2017	**Actual completion date:**	31 March 2018
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	$ 14,139,601	**Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2017**	$ 1,127,981.08
GEF grant allocation:	$ 1,999,601	**GEF grant expenditures reported as of** 30 June 2017	US$ 1,127,981.08
Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:	n.a	**Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:**	n.a
***Expected* Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	$ 12,140,000	**Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:**	$7,616,809 (30 June 2017)
First disbursement:	21 November 2014	**Date of financial closure:**	N/A

No. of revisions:	N/A	**Date of last revision:**	N/A	
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	**Date of last/next Steering Committee meeting:**	**Last:** 28 March 2018	**Next: none**
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation *(planned date):*	August 2016	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):**	20 May -30 July, 2016	
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	March 2018	**Terminal Evaluation (actual date):**	May - July 2018	
Coverage - Country(ies):	India, China, Vietnam, Sri Lanka	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Regional - Asia	
Dates of previous project phases:		**Status of future project phases:**		

Project rationale

Tea is produced on both small-holder plots as well as large estate plantations, employing thousands of workers, and by millions of farmers, for whom it often provides the only source of cash income. Evidence suggest that in both large- and small-scale production systems, planting, growing and processing tea practices often cause land degradation, environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources. With global demand for tea growing at more than 2% per year, the pressures on land for cultivating the crop may increase, even more intensely because of climate change. India and China are the world's leading tea producers, with Vietnam and Sri Lanka among the top six producing countries.

Many tea estates in the countries mentioned above are reportedly at maximum production. Tea industry observers predict that most of the new tea production needed to meet increased demand will come from smallholders, many of whom lack the tools, knowledge, skills or support for long-term productivity. Well-managed tea production landscapes can help arrest or even reverse land degradation, while providing a range of economic and ecological benefits for local communities, downstream beneficiaries, and the global commons.

The project planned to address major technical and financial barriers to reverse land degradation on at least 60,000 hectares in key degraded landscapes through an incentives-based approach to sustainable land management. New monitoring and analytical tools were developed to provide practical, cost-effective means to understand change and guide adaptive management, particularly focused on sustainable productivity, vulnerability, and ecological integrity in tea-producing landscapes in the focal regions.

Project objectives and components

The Project Objective is stated in the project document as: "to reduce land degradation associated with tea production in Asia by supporting farmers and catalyzing industry and government leaders to mainstream sustainable land management (SLM) and integrated natural resource management (INRM) practices".

The project has four components, each captured by an outcome. Table 2 'project results' below presents an overview of the planned outcomes, its indicators, targets, and related outputs.

Table 2: project results

Outcome	Outcome indicators	Outputs
1. Improved agricultural management results in more sustainable tea production systems and reduced	i) Area (hectares) of tea-producing lands that have adopted key SLM	1.1: Training modules (one per region) developed to support producers to adopt site specific SLM practices,

Outcome	Outcome indicators	Outputs
vulnerability in five critical tea producing regions	practices (disaggregated by region, and practices adopted) Baseline:0; Target: 37,300 ii) Area (hectares) of certified tea producing lands under improved SLM Practices Baseline: 0; Target: 25,500 iii) Length and proportion of streams with vegetated riparian buffers Baseline: TBD; Target: TBD	including locally appropriate species useful to smallholders and for erosion control and composting, alternative economic income (e.g., fruit trees), functional vegetative buffers around water and forest edges, and improved wood-fuel management practices
		1.2: Smallholder tea farmers and field and factory managers trained in landscape-prioritized SLM practices and energy efficiency measures in tea factories
		1.3: Trained lead farmers use farms as demonstration units to showcase best management practices
2. Integrated natural resource Management (INRM) plans engage key tea and non-tea stakeholders in complementary activities to support INRM and guide investment to help reduce land and resource conflicts and safeguard key ecosystem services supporting tea production and local and downstream communities	i) Number of key institutions and stakeholders engaged in supportive SLM and INRM activities that target land degradation issues Baseline:0; Target: 10	2.1. Landscape context analysis and planning processes (including participatory landscape mapping and assessment) are carried out in three tea-producing landscapes to guide SLM investments and engage key tea and non-tea stakeholders in complementary activities to support INRM
		2.2. Industry interest in reducing supply risk and promoting sustainable tea production landscapes leads to new investment in INRM (i.e., beyond tea-focused SLM practices)
3. Key public-sector agencies, tea associations, and tea industry decision-makers understand and have capacity to implement new policies, systems, or support mechanisms to facilitate uptake of SLM in the tea industry in the focal regions	ii) Number of organizations and companies active in each region with improved of SLM-related awareness, policy and support mechanisms Baseline: 0; Target: 5	3.1. Tea SLM training modules developed for government extensionists and industry technicians, to build their capacity in SLM practices
		3.2. Extension officers from tea authorities and other relevant institutions registered as trainers of the SAN standard and in ongoing contact with Executing Agency
4. New monitoring and analytical tools provide practical, cost effective means to understand change and guide adaptive management related to sustainable productivity, vulnerability, and ecological integrity in tea producing landscapes in the focal regions	i) Land area (has) for which these tools have been applied and are generating useful information for land managers and value chain actors Baseline: 0; Target: 6000 ii) Number of farmers for which these tools have been applied and are generating useful information for land managers and value chain actors Baseline: 0: Target: 3000	4.1. At least two new monitoring and analytical tools developed, field-tested in one project region, and subsequently applied more broadly through project monitoring & evaluation framework and/or tea industry partners

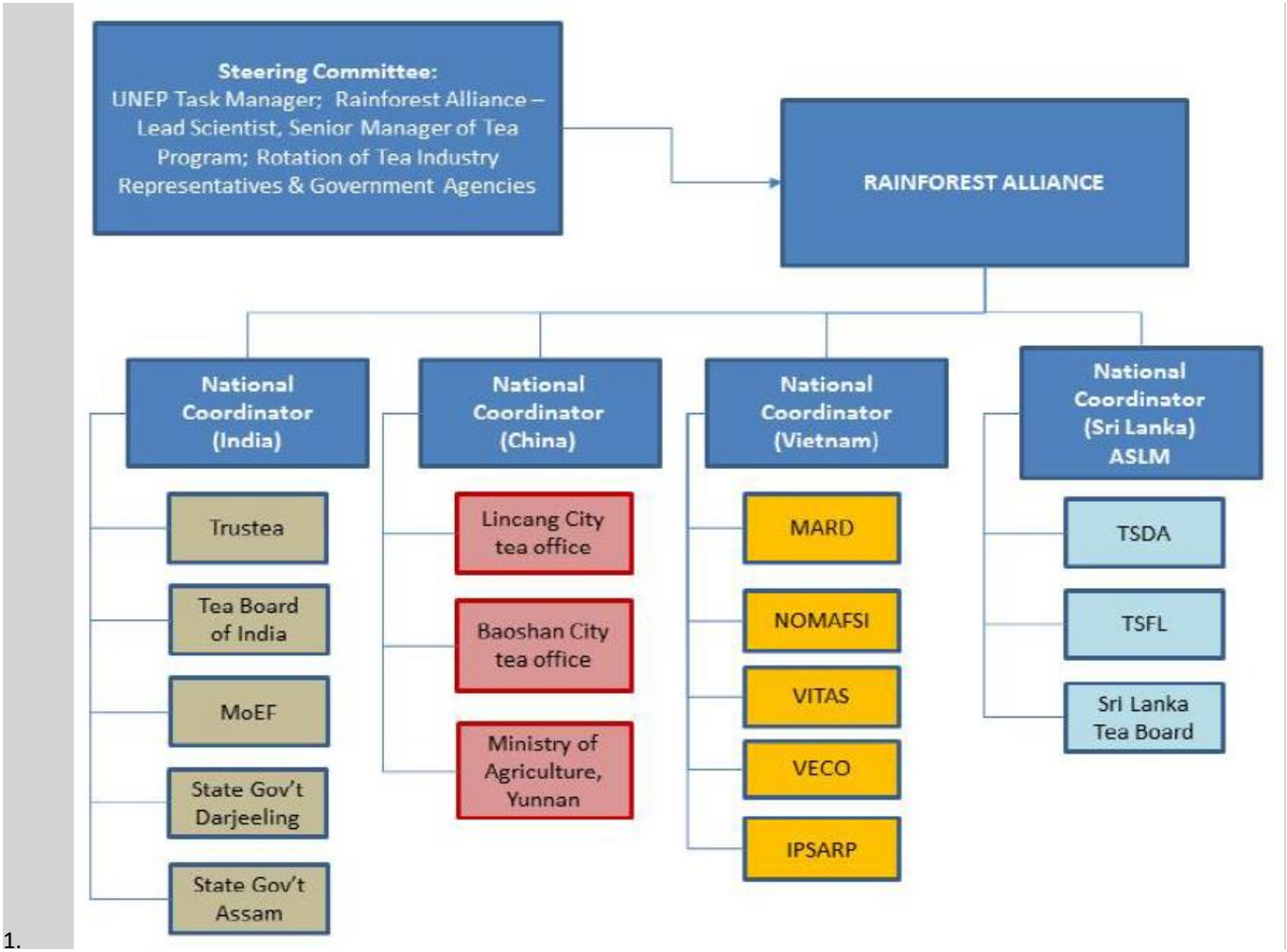
Executing Arrangements

The project intervention area was restricted to the Assam and Darjeeling regions in India; the Northern Mountain region of Vietnam and Sri Lanka's wet zone of South West. It was implemented by UN Environment's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in closer coordination with the Ecosystems Division. The Rainforest Alliance (RA) located in London served as the Executing Agency in collaboration with i) India: Tea Technologies Outsourcing (TTO); ii) Sri Lanka: Alliance for

Sustainable Land Management (ASLM); iii) China: Good Wood In Rainforest Consultancy Co and iv) Vietnam: VECO Vietnam.

The day-to-day execution of the project was carried out by a Project Team formed by a Project Manager and an international team of experts hosted by RA. At the national level, professionals with expertise in agronomy, sustainability and Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standard were appointed to coordinate project execution in each project country. A Steering Committee composed by UN Environment Task Manager, the Lead Scientist and the Senior Manager of the Tea Program from Rainforest Alliance and representatives of industry and governments provided strategic guidance to the Project Team. Figure 1 below "Implementation Arrangements" present an overview of the planed organizational structure.

Figure 1 Organizational Structure



1.

Source: Request for MSP Approval

Project Cost and Financing

Table 3: Project cost and sources		USD
Cost to the GEF Trust Fund	Grant amount	1,999,601
	Agency fee	189,962

Co-financing in cash		
Private sector	Dunkin' Brands	50,000
	Unilever	1,500,000
	Kirin Holdings Company	50,000
CSO	Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH)	540,000
	Total cash co-financing	2,140,000
Co-financing in -kind		
Private sector	Ethical Tea Partnership	920,000
	Finlays	160,000
	My Lam Tea Joint Stock Company	800,000
	Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS)	120,000
National Government	Teas Small Holders Factories Ltd.	840,000
	Northern Mountain Agriculture & Forestry Science Institute	100,000
	Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development (IPSARD)	100,000
Subnational Government	Municipal Government, Lincang City	2,660,000
	Municipal Government, Baoshan City	3,300,000
	Total co-financing	12,140,000
	PROJECT TOTAL COST	16,466,563

Source: Request for MSP Approval

Implementation Issues

The project started in October 2014 and was designed to deliver results in 42 months. A Mid Term Review was conducted between May and July 2016 and key recommendations referring to the project ambition and prioritizing quality over quantity are reported to have been accepted by the Steering Committee and followed up by the project team and national programs. The last PIR, 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, suggest that several deliverables are behind schedule and considers co-funding at substantial risk 'which could indicate less than optimal partnership and nationally upscaling/ mainstreaming of SLM practices with national government and industry players'.

The 4th ISC meeting (Changyuan, China (28 March 2018), as reported by the Task Manager, recognized that national replication in the four project countries is modest, on one hand due to the lack of national polices and legislation towards SLM goals and, on the other hand, due to the project approach in capturing and communicating best practices resulting from the intervention. It was also stated that the Sustainable Land Management impact monitoring system in place – through its 100 indicators- has not been able to provide evidence on positive impacts of the smallholder training. On the positive side, the sustainable tea production technologies promoted by the project are increasingly being adopted and resulting in reductions in the use of agro-chemicals e.g. 50%, and 75% of the total area of 100,000 of tea farms and estates to be 'organic'/certified by 2022 in Yunan, China. In Vietnam. some 45,000 farmers -15 000 of which are RA certified- have reduced or stopped the use of agro-chemicals.

There is indication that for the Steering Committee the biggest challenge of the tea sector in the project countries is currently the drop in available manual labor.

SECTION 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Key Evaluation principles

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) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

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

Baselines and counterfactuals. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project intervention, the evaluators should consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions, trends and counterfactuals in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. It 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, trends or counterfactuals is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

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

Objective of the Evaluation

In line with the UN Environment Evaluation Policy[26] and the UN Environment Programme Manual[27], the Terminal Evaluation (TE) is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UN Environment and Rainforest Alliance. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation [especially for the second phase of the project, if applicable].

Key Strategic Questions

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

(a) How and to what extent was the introduction of sustainable tea production technologies affected by management practices in China, India, Sri Lanka and Vietnam?

(b) How and to what extend did innovations introduced by the project contribute to reduce environmental degradation, stabilise or improve tea production and community welfare in the project countries? Were gender related aspects considered?

(c) Was the INRM approach a suitable methodology and partnership platform to enable reduction in external drivers/vectors affecting tea production, as well as the upscaling of 'best practice' with regards to sustainable tea production?

[26] http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx
[27] http://www.unep.org/QAS/Documents/UNEP_Programme_Manual_May_2013.pdf . *This manual is under revision.*

(d) How and to what extent did the project promote knowledge sharing and learning among project countries and above?

Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. *Alignment to the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy[28] (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)*

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

ii. *Alignment to UN Environment / Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities*

Donor, including GEF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. UN Environment strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building29 (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. GEF priorities are specified in published programming priorities and focal area strategies.

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

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

[28] UN Environment's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UN Environment's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UN Environment's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes.

[29] http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf

iv. *Complementarity with Existing Interventions*

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

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

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

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

C. Nature of External Context

At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Delivery of Outputs

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

shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision[30]

ii. Achievement of Direct Outcomes

The achievement of direct outcomes (short and medium-term effects of the intervention's outputs; a change of behaviour resulting from the use/application of outputs, which is not under the direct control of the intervention's direct actors) is assessed as performance against the direct outcomes as defined in the reconstructed31 Theory of Change. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs. As in 1, above, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of direct outcomes is necessary. The evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UN Environment's intervention and the direct outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UN Environment's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the direct outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

iii. Likelihood of Impact

Based on the articulation of longer term effects in the reconstructed TOC (i.e. from direct outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact), the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long term impacts. The Evaluation Office's approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available on the EOU website, web.unep.org/evaluation and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, 'Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree'. Essentially the approach follows a 'likelihood tree' from direct outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

The evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects. Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards.32

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

[31] UN Environment staff are currently required to submit a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2013 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the evaluation.

[32] Further information on Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (ESES) can be found at http://www.unep.org/about/eses

The evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role or has promoted scaling up and/or replication33 as part of its Theory of Change and as factors that are likely to contribute to longer term impact.

Ultimately UN Environment and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-term or broad-based changes. However, the evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the high level changes represented by UN Environment's Expected Accomplishments, the Sustainable Development Goals34 and/or the high level results prioritised by the funding partner.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

E. Financial Management

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

In keeping with the OECD/DAC definition of efficiency the evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within

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

34 A list of relevant SDGs is available on the EO website www.unep.org/evaluation

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

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

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART35 indicators towards the delivery of the projects outputs and achievement of direct outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation. The evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for mid-term and terminal evaluation/review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

The evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups in project activities. It will also consider how information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

iii. Project Reporting

UN Environment has a centralised Project Information Management System (PIMS) in which project managers upload six-monthly status reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The evaluation will assess the extent to which both UN Environment and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled.

[35] SMART refers to indicators that are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-specific.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

H. Sustainability

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

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

I. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance

(These factors are rated in the ratings table, but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above)

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

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

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity

The evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UN Environment's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment.

In particular the evaluation will consider 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.

v. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects

results, ie. either a) moving forwards from outputs to direct outcomes or b) moving forward from direct outcomes towards intermediate states. The evaluation will consider the involvement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices. This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long term impact to be realised. This ownership should adequately represent the needs of interest of all gendered and marginalised groups.

vi. Communication and Public Awareness

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

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

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia inter alia UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for 2010-2013 and the respective Programmes of Work;
- Full list to be made available by RA;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the PRC and GEFSEC reviews at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Logframe & indicators, and Budget revisions);
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and quarterly financial reports, RA progress reports from national programs, Inception report, ISC meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews (PIR reports) and GEF Tracking Tool etc.;
- Technical reports, manuals, polices/strategies, normative documents, research reports, published papers and documentation related to project outputs and deliverables

- M&E reports, e.g. on the SLM M&E system and results; GEF Tracking Tools, etc
- Communications and outreach materials including media articles, video Sri Lanka
- Mid-Term Review report of the project;
- Evaluations/reviews of similar GEF projects (e.g. Greening the Cocoa Industry).

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

- UN Environment Task Manager (TM) - Mr Max Zieren and Fund Management Officer (FMO) - Mr Paul Vrontramitis
- Global project management team of Rainforest Alliance/UTZ, specifically: Koen den Braber – Tea Project Coordinator, Edwards Millard – Director Africa and South Asia; Mr Joni – Project M&E specialist; Beatriz Ávalos Sartorio - Director Monitoring, Evaluation and Quality Assurance
- UN Environment
- Ecosystems Management Sub-Programme Coordinator, Ms Marieta Sakalian;
- Project partners, including [Tea technologies Outsourcing (TTO) -India; The Alliance for Sustainable Landscape Management (ASLM) – Sri Lanka; Good Wood in Rainforest Consultancy - China; VECO – Vietnam; Dunkin's Brands; Unilever; Kirin Holdings Company; Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH); My Lam Tea Joint Stock Company; Tea Smallholders Factories Ltd; Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS); Lincang City Government; Baeshan City Government];
- National government partners e.g. the Tea Small-holder Development Authority in Sri Lanka; Indian tea Board, Cangyuang Tea authority – China,
- Corporate industry partners, e.g. UNILEVER, MARS, AMALGAMATED Plantations,
- Project stakeholders, including a good representation of community tea small-holders, tea estate staff;
- Sample of members of the INRM work teams or participants in India and Sri Lanka

(c) **Results of training, impact studies and M&E surveys**

(d) **Field visits**. The terminal evaluation will include visits to at least 3 of the four project countries (India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and China) to meet with the project partners and a wide range of different stakeholders, including visits to at least 1 field site in each of the visited countries. The country and site selection criteria will be developed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

(e) **Other data collection tools**

Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

The evaluation consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for links to all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.

- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a powerpoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** (see links in Annex 1) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.
- **Evaluation Bulletin:** a 2-page summary of key evaluation findings for wider dissemination through the EOU website.

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

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

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

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

The Evaluation Consultant

For this evaluation, the evaluation team will consist of one Evaluation who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager [Mr Francisco Alarcon], in consultation with the UN Environment Task Manager [Mr Max Zieren], Fund Management Officer [Mr Paul Vrontramitis] and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the UN Environment Ecosystem Management Sub-programme, [Ms Marieta Sakalian]. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UN Environment Task Manager and project team will,

where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

The consultant will be hired for 6 months spread over the period 21 May 2018 to 20 November 2018 and should have: an advanced university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area; a minimum of 12 years of technical / evaluation experience, including of evaluating large, regional or multi-country projects, as well as GEF project experience. Prior working experience with using a Theory of Change approach is an advantage, A broad understanding of sustainable agriculture, and preferable the Tea industry; expert knowledge in Sustainable Land Use Management and Integrated Natural Resources Management is required; proficiency along with excellent writing skills in English is necessary; team leadership experience and, where possible, knowledge of the UN system, specifically of the work of UN Environment.

In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the evaluation and timely delivery of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

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

Data collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, including:
- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress and engage the Project/Task Manager in discussions on emerging findings throughout the evaluation process.

Reporting phase, including:
- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- prepare a 2-page summary of the key evaluation findings and lessons;

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

Schedule of the evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Desk review	Late May
Inception Report	Early June
Telephone interviews, surveys etc.	Mid June
Country evaluation visits Mission	End June-late July
PowerPoint presentation on preliminary findings	End July
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	Mid August
Draft Report shared with UN Environment Project Manager and team	End August
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	Early September
Final Report	Mid September
Final Report shared with all respondents	Late September

Contractual Arrangements

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

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

Schedule of Payment for the [Consultant/Team Leader]:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report *(as per annex document 7)*	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report *(as per annex document 13)*	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

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

The consultants may be provided with access to UN Environment's Programme Information Management System (PIMS) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

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

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

Annex 3. Evaluation itinerary

Activity		Dates
Preparation phase	Signature of contract	25.05/29.05
	Review of documents and information; Skype meetings	25.05-05.06
	Preparation of draft Inception Report; Consultations with EM	29.05-05.06
	Submission of draft Inception Report	05.06
	Review of draft Inception Report by UNEP EM	05-06.06
	Adjustments and **Submission of final Inception Report***	06.06
	Skype and e-mail communication with UNEP-EM, UNEP-TM, RA-PM, China NC.	27.05-08.06
	Mission planning	06-08.06
Mission phase, part 1	Travel from Oslo to Bangkok	09-10.06
	Meeting with UN Environment TM, Bangkok	11.06
	Field travel, Vietnam	12-15.06
	Meeting with companies and government agencies, Hanoi	18-19.06
	Travel from Hanoi to Oslo	19-20.06
Intermediate period	Summarize mission 1; follow-up with TM and Vietnam PM	21.06-03.07
	Vacation break	04.07-24.07
	Skype with RA M&E Director and Project M&E staff	25-26.07
	Communication with PM and TM	27.07-10.08
	Prepare prel. reports Bangkok/Vietnam	27.10-10.08
	Mission planning for and visas for India and Sri Lanka	03-10.08
Mission phase, part 2	Travel from Oslo to Kolkata, India	11-12.08
	Meetings with firms and government agencies in Kolkata	13.08
	Field trip Darjeeling	14-16.08
	Flight Kolkata, India to Colombo, Sri Lanka	17.08
	Feld trip to higher tea production areas	18-20.08
	Meetings with firms and government agencies in Colombo	21.08
	Flight from Colombo to Oslo	22.08
Draft report elaboration	Skype interviews/e-mails to follow-up issues from missions	23.08-31.08
	Computerize data and summarize conclusions of mission 2	27.08-31.08
	Data analysis and Report work	01-04.09
	Skype meeting with China (replacement for mission)	05.09
	Work on draft TE report; Communication with PM, TM and EM	06.09-14.10
	Submission of draft TE report*	14.10
Analysis and comments from client	Draft Report reviewed by Evaluation Manager (EM)	x
	Comments presented from EM to Consultant	x
	Review of comments and adjustment of report by Consultant	x
	Skype meeting with EM to agree on changes	x
	Agreed changes done and report forwarded to EM	x
	EM share Draft Report with stakeholders	x
	EM receive comments and synthesize into joint comments	x
	EM present comments to Consultant	x
Final report elaboration	Elaboration of Final Evaluation report, considering comments	x
	Submission of Final Terminal Evaluation report*	x

*Deliverables

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

1. Co-Executing agencies

Country	Institution	Representative and contact data
International	Rainforest Alliance (RA)	Koen den Braber, RA Project Coordinator
International	Rainforest Alliance	Beatriz Avalos, RA Director of Project M&E and Quality Assurance
International	Rainforest Alliance	Joni Kasim, RA Senior M&E Associate
China	Rainforest Alliance (RA)	National Coordinator: Angela Hu Xinyan (contracted through company Good Wood).
India	Tea Technologies Outsourcing	National Coordinator: Harkirat (Harki) Sidhu. (contracted through company Tea Technologies Outsourcing)
Sri Lanka	ASLM	National Coordinator: Giri Kadurugamuwa Kadu, (contracted through the NGO ASLM)
Vietnam	VECO	National Coordinator: Hai Thanh Hoang (contracted through the NGO VECO)

Annex 3. Stakeholders interviewed

LIST OF PERSONS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

1. Co-Executing agencies

Country	Institution	Representative and contact data
International	Rainforest Alliance (RA)	Koen den Braber, RA Project Coordinator
International	Rainforest Alliance	Beatriz Avalos, RA Director of Project M&E and Quality Assurance
International	Rainforest Alliance	Joni Kasim, RA Senior M&E Associate
China	Rainforest Alliance (RA)	National Coordinator: Angela Hu Xinyan (contracted through company Good Wood).
India	Tea Technologies Outsourcing	National Coordinator: Harkirat (Harki) Sidhu. (contracted through company Tea Technologies Outsourcing)
Sri Lanka	ASLM	National Coordinator: Giri Kadurugamuwa Kadu, (contracted through the NGO ASLM)
Vietnam	VECO	National Coordinator: Hai Thanh Hoang (contracted through the NGO VECO)

2. Steering Committee			
Country	**Institution**	**Contact person**	**Details**
International	UN Environment	Max Zieren, Project Task Manager	UNEP Regional Office Asia Pacific, Bangkok
International	Rainforest Alliance	Koen den Braber, RA Project Coordinator	Rainfall Alliance
Sri Lanka	ETP	Dushy Perera	Regional coordinator for Sri Lanka of the ETP
Vietnam	VITAS	Nguyen Thi Anh Hong	VISTAS

3. UN Environment	
Contact person	**Details**
Michael Spilsbury (Director UN Environment Independent Evaluation Office)	Evaluation Office of UN Environment
Francisco Alarcon (Evaluation Manager, EM) Evaluation Officer Evaluation Office, UN Environment UN Environment Evaluation Office	Evaluation Office of UN Environment
Max Zieren (Task Manager, TM) UNEP/DGEF Regional Focal Point Asia & Task manager Biodiversity and Land Degradation	UNEP Regional Office Asia Pacific, Bangkok
Mercy Mwangi Senior Programme Management Assistant Evaluation Office, UN Environment	Evaluation Office of UN Environment

4. LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Organization	Name	Sex	Position/Title	
Vietnam				
Vredeseilanden (VECO) Vietnam	Hoang Thanh Hai	Male	National Coordinator for the Tea Project	
Tam Duong Tea Company	Giang A Chang	Male	Farmers	
	Sung A Chia	Male		
	Phe A Di	Male		
	Lieu A Seng	Male		
	Giang A Phi	Male		
	Bui Van Tuan	Male	Technical agricultural officer	
	Lo Minh Tuan	Male	Technical agricultural officer	
Lai Chau Plant Protection and Crop Production Department	Truong Thi Nhan	Female	Director of Lai Chau Plant Protection and Crop Production Department	
Kien Thuan Tea Cooperative	Dang Van Hung	Male	Farmers	
	Bui Van Son	Male		
	Nguyen Thi Tuong	Female		
	Tran Thi Xuan	Female		
	Doan Thi Thom	Female		
	Vu Thi Huyen Trang	Female	Technical agricultural officer	
Thai Nguyen Plant Protection and Crop Production Department	Luong Van Vuong	Male	Director of Thai Nguyen Plant Protection and Crop Production Department	
	Nguyen Thi Hang	Female	Vice head of Plant Protection Division	
Vietnam Tea Association (VITAS)	Nguyen Thi Anh Hong	Female	General Secretary (Vice Chair-woman) of VITAS, Project Board member	
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)	Le Van Duc	Male	Deputy General Director and Chief of Crop Department	
Xuan Viet Trading Company ltd (XVT)	Nguyen Thu Hang	Female	Vice Director	
China				
Good Wood in Rainforest Consultancy	Angela Hu Xinyan	Female	National Coordinator for the Tea Project	
Alliance for Sustainable Land Management, ASLM / Rainforest Alliance	Giri Kadurugamu-wa Kadu	Male	National Coordinator for the Tea Project	
Tea Smallholdings Development Authority, TSHDA	D.G. Mahipala	Male	General Manager	

Tea Smallholdings Development Authority, TSHDA	C.J.I.T Fernando	Male	Deputy General Manger	
Tea Smallholdings Development Authority, TSHDA	Aruna Shantha	Male	Regional Manager	
Tea Smallholdings Development Authority, TSHDA	H.M. Premakumara	Male	Assistant Regional Manager (Extension)	
ASLM/ Rainforest Alliance	Thushara Ranasinghe	Male	Project consultant on INRM	
Dambetenne Estate Haputale.	Y.M. Chandra-sekara	Male	Assistant Manager of the Estate	
(local beneficiary)	William Rajamuni	Male	Smallholder farmer trained by the project	
Disaster Management Unit	B.B.S.P. Perera	Male	Vice Manager, District Disaster Management Office	
Ella Divisional Secretariat	K.A.K. Janaki Priyangika	Female	Divisional Secretary	
Ministry of Plantations Industries	J.A. Ranjith	Male	Secretary	
Ministry of Plantation Industries	Tharangani Wickrema-singhe	Female	Additional Secretary (Development)	
Unilever Sri Lanka	Ishan Rajasuriya	Male	Head of Tea Procurement	
Ethical Tea Partnership ETP, Sri Lanka	Dushy Perera	Male	Manager	
India				
Tea Technologies Outsourcing / Rainforest Alliance	Harkirat (Harki) Sidhu	Male	National Coordinator for the Tea Project	
Tea Technologies Outsourcing	Pompy Ghosh	Female	Local project consultant / support	
Tea Technologies Outsourcing	Sulochana Thapa	Female	Local project consultant / support	
IDH Trustea	Ronnie Babaycon	Male	Coordinator	
Tea Board of India	S. Soundara-rajan	Male	Development Director	
India Tea Association	Arijit Raha	Male	Director General	
Amalgamated Plantations	Jagjeet Kandal	Male	Managing Director	
Rossell Tea/ Andrew Yule	Sunil Sikand	Male	Executive Officer	
Rossell Tea	Ajay Jalan	Male	Managing Director	

Darjeeling Tea Board	Prahlad Chhetri	Male	Assistant Director	
ATREE	Sarala Khaling	Female	Director for North-East India	
Mineral Springs Sanyukt Vikas Sanstha, MSSVS Darjeeling	Nilam Pradhan	Male	Committee President (local beneficiary)	
Mirik Small Teagrowers Association, Darjeeling	Ganga Prasad Rana	Male	President	
Mirik Small Teagrowers Association, Darjeeling	Nirupa Gurung	Female	Secretary	
Gayabari Tea Estate, Darjeeling	Santanu Sarkar	Male	General Manager	

Annex 4. Summary list of documents and other information consulted

Documentation consulted includes, but is not limited to, the following:

GEF MSP approval request with 15 appendixes

GEF CEO approval letter

Project Document

Results Framework: (i) Initial version in Document for GEF CEO Endorsement; (ii) Versions in progress reports (PIR) showing modified version after Inception Workshop and in the end.

Project Tracking Tool for Tea and SLM.

Risk matrix (in project document; and mitigation decisions reported in PIRs

UN Environment Policies, MTS and POW (www.unep.org)

GEF policies and strategies (www.thegef.org)

GEF CEO Endorsement document and annexes

Project Implementation Plan

Work plans and budgets

Financial statements with audits

Agendas and Meeting Memos for Steering Committee (SC)

Memos from UN Environment TM Missions

Memo from project kick-off workshop in Bangkok

Memos from workshops and seminars (only samples reviewed)

PIRs for the whole implementation period

UN Environment Half Yearly Progress Reports

Mid-term Review Report

Individual consulting reports and publications

Project publications (only samples reviewed)

Training materials and tools (samples reviewed, including during field missions)

Brochures, posters, Powerpoint presentations, videos and other material from project and partners

Project media kit

Co-financing tables

Rainforest Alliance website: www.ra.org

UTZ website: www.utz.org

Annex 5. Brief CVs of the Evaluator

The Consultant Dr. Trond Norheim (PhD Forest Ecology) is a Norwegian Forestry, Environment and Climate Change Specialist with 35 years international experience in 50 countries on all continents. His main competence is Team Leadership for design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes.

His work experience comprises 12 years as Senior Specialist in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), 9 years as Swedforest International Regional Director for Latin America & Caribbean, and many assignments for UN organizations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies. He has been Team Leader for design and implementation of full-size GEF projects and many evaluations of GEF operations, and is from November 2018 contracted by GEF's Independent Evaluation Office to carry out strategic country cluster evaluations.

May 2017- CEO, DIMES and Partner, SCANTEAM as
UN Environment: (i) Terminal Evaluation of the GEF project "Mainstreaming Sustainable Management of Tea Production Landscapes in Asia"; (ii) Terminal Evaluation of the GEF global project "Expanding Rainforest Alliance certification at landscape level through incorporating additional ecosystem services"
UNDP: (i) Terminal Evaluation of the GEF project "Enhancing Capacity to Develop Global and Regional Environmental Projects in the Pacific"; (ii) Mid-Term Review, GEF project "Economy-wide Integration of Climate Change Adaptation & Disaster Risk Management to Climate Vulnerability of Communities in Samoa; (iii) Terminal Evaluation of the GEF project "Capacity for Implementing Rio Conventions in Samoa"; (iv) International Landscape Restoration & Carbon Benefits Expert, design of GEF project "Restoring degraded forest landscapes and promoting community based, sustainable and integrated natural resource management in the Rora Habab Plateau", Eritrea; (v) Biodiversity and Protected Areas Expert for design of the GEF project "Conserving Biodiversity and Reducing Land Degradation Using a Ridge-to-Reef Approach", St Vincent & the Grenadines; (vi) Forestry & Agroforestry Expert for design of the project "A ridge-to-Reef Approach for Integrated Management of Marine, Coastal and Terrestrial Ecosystems", Seychelles.
Norad/Scanteam: (i) Team Leader, End review "Support to the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for Disaster Risk Reduction Initiatives on National and Regional Level"; (ii) Mid-Term Review: "Strengthening the Environment Component of the Oil for Development Programme (OfD) 2016–2020" through agreement OfD-UN Environment.

Aug 2014-Apr 2017 Senior Advisor, Forestry & Climate Change, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bolivia
Implementation of the Bolivia Forestry & CC Programme; Institutional development, Policy advice, Project design, M&E.

Jan 2012-Jul 2014 CEO COBODES ltd.
UNDP: (i) Midterm Review, GEF project "Integration of CC Risks and Resilience into Forestry Management in Samoa"; (ii) Project Design Specialist, UNDP/CABEI GEF project "Central American Markets for Biodiversity".
IDB/MIF: Midterm Evaluation of the Rainforest Alliance regional program "Forest Conservation through Certification, Marketing and Strengthening of Forestry SMEs", Mexico, Central America and Peru
EU: Technical Supervisor, "Lake Poopó Watershed Master Plan", Bolivia
NORAD: Team Leader, Final Evaluation of CATIE Regional Mesoamerican Agro-Environmental Programme
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through Scanteam): Mid-term Review of RFN regional programme "Rights-Based Sustainable Management of Large Contiguous Territories in the Amazon"
Norwegian Forestry Group: (i) Design of REDD+ project in the RAAS indigenous autonomous region, Nicaragua; (ii) Team Leader, design of REDD+ research project in the Amazon (Bolivia, Brazil, Peru)
SIDA: Team Leader, Midterm Evaluation of Baba Carapa Forest Industry Programme, Bolivia
TYPSA-AGRER-CIAT: Prepared proposal to EIB "Climate Action Support to the Caribbean Development Bank"

Nov 2010-Jan 2012 Senior Sector Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank, Suriname
Member of IDB country strategy team; Focal Point for Climate Change; Team Leader for projects on Environment, Disaster Risk Management, CC, Forestry, Coastal Zone Management; and Agriculture. Team member, GEF renewable energy project.

Jun 2008-Oct 2010 Senior Sector Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank, Bolivia
Member of IDB country strategy team; Focal Point for Climate Change and Coordinator of Inter-agency Group on CC; Team Leader for projects on Environment, Disaster Risk Management, CC (incl. PPCR), Forestry, Hydrology, Watershed management; DRM; Cadaster/land tenure; Agriculture/food security; and Biodiversity; including GEF and FCPF projects.

Jul 1999-May 2008 Natural Resources Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC, USA
Team Leader for design, implementation, M&E of investment programs in Central America & Caribbean, on Forestry; Agriculture; Tourism; Protected Areas; Watershed management; Land use; and Indigenous peoples (GEF). Team member, new Bank policies on Environment, Indigenous peoples, Gender, Forestry and Rural development. Gender Focal Point.

Jun 1998-Jul 1999 Director General, Nordic-Latin American Resource Group (NORLAT)
Consultancy and network company registered in Norway with Representations in 4 Nordic and 9 Latin American countries.

Dec. 1989-June 1998 Regional Director for Latin America & Caribbean, Scandiaconsult / Swedforest International
Managed Regional Office and support to 13 national representatives. Managed contracts for World Bank, IDB, EU, UNDP, NDF, ITTO, IUCN and bilateral agencies: two large SIDA forestry programs in Bolivia (5 years) for the public and private sectors. Consultancies in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Central America.

Annex 6. Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Evaluation Title:

Terminal Evaluation of the UN ENVIRONMENT/GEF project "Mainstreaming of sustainable management of tea production

All UN Environment evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills. Nevertheless, the quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to evaluation consultants, especially at draft report stage. This guidance is provided to support consistency in assessment across different Evaluation Managers and to make the assessment process as transparent as possible.

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
Substantive Report Quality Criteria			
Quality of the Executive Summary: The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.	Draft report: Good executive summary	Final report: Good Summary	6
I. Introduction A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.) Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?	Draft report: Introduction thorough and complete	Final report: Introduction thorough and complete	6
II. Evaluation Methods	Draft report: Suggested some additions e.g. reference to triangulation and to UNEP Eval Office tools and guidance.	Final report: Suggestions adopted comprehensive description.	6

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
This section should include a description of how the *TOC at Evaluation*[36] was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.). Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section. The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described. It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome. Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views.			
III. The Project This section should include: • *Context:* Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses). • *Objectives and components*: Summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • *Stakeholders:* Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • *Project implementation structure and partners:* A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners	Draft report: Thoroughly completed.	Final report: Thoroughly completed.	5

[36] During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Design* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions). During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
• *Changes in design during implementation:* Any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • *Project financing:* Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing			
IV. Theory of Change The TOC at Evaluation should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors. Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project's intentions or do not follow OECD/DAC definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project's results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the TOC at Evaluation. *The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'.*	Draft report: ToC clearly presented	Final report: ToC clearly presented	5
V. Key Findings **A. Strategic relevance:** This section should include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UN Environment's mandate and its alignment with UN Environment's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed: v. Alignment to the UN Environment Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW) vi. Alignment to UN Environment/ Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities vii. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities viii. Complementarity with Existing Interventions	Draft report: Thoroughly completed	Final report: Thoroughly completed	6
B. Quality of Project Design To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively summarized?	Draft report: Thoroughly completed	Final report: Thoroughly completed	5

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
C. Nature of the External Context For projects where this is appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval), and how they affected performance, should be described.	Draft report: Thoroughly completed	Final report: Thoroughly completed	5
D. Effectiveness **(i) Outputs and Direct Outcomes:** How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) delivery of outputs, and b) achievement of direct outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention. The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.	Draft report: Sound analysis inevitable challenges with triangulation of data derived from field measurements	Final report: Sound analysis inevitable challenges with triangulation of data derived from field measurements	5
(ii) Likelihood of Impact: How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact? How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed? Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.	Draft report: More emphasis needed on change pathways	Final report: Likelihood of impact is discussed and key pathways highlighted	5
E. Financial Management This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *communication* between financial and project management staff	Draft report: Financial management is adequately covered given the depth of information available	Final report: Financial management is adequately covered given the depth of information available	4
F. Efficiency To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including: • Implications of delays and no cost extensions • Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe	Draft report: Efficiency is discussed fully	Final report: Efficiency is discussed fully	5

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
• Discussion of making use of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • The extent to which the management of the project minimised UN Environment's environmental footprint.			
G. Monitoring and Reporting How well does the report assess: • Monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • Monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • Project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor report)*	Draft report: Thoroughly completed	Final report: Thoroughly completed	5
H. Sustainability How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved direct outcomes including: • Socio-political Sustainability • Financial Sustainability • Institutional Sustainability	Draft report: Thoroughly completed	Final report: Thoroughly completed	5
I. Factors Affecting Performance These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are **integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate**. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes: • Preparation and readiness • Quality of project management and supervision[37] • Stakeholder participation and co-operation • Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity • Country ownership and driven-ness • Communication and public awareness	Draft report: Final report:	Final report: Final report:	5
VI. Conclusions and Recommendations **i.Quality of the conclusions:** The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed	Draft report: Conclusions and recommendations consistent with evaluation findings	Final report: Conclusions and recommendations consistent with evaluation findings	5

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

	UN Environment Evaluation Office Comments		Final Report Rating
explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.			
ii) Quality and utility of the lessons: Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons must have the potential for wider application and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.	Draft report: Lessons and good practices presented are rather limited	Final report: Lessons and good practices presented are rather limited	3
iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations: To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when. At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UN Environment interventions, should be given. Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.	Draft report: Recommendations are relevant but rather general	Final report: Recommendations are relevant but rather general	4
VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality			
i)Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Draft report: Structure followed, report fairly complete	Final report: Structure followed and complete	5
ii)**Quality of writing and formatting:** Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?	**Draft report:** The report is comprehensive and thorough written English needed some editing as the author does not speak English as a mother tongue	Final report: The report is comprehensive and thorough	5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING			5

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

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Independence:		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	**X**	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	**X**	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		**X**
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Financial Management:		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?	**X**	
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?	**X**	
Timeliness:		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?		**X**
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?	**X**	
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?		
Project's engagement and support:		
14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?	**X**	
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	**X**	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	**X**	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	**X**	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	**X**	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?		X
20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	**X**	
Quality assurance:		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions, peer-reviewed?	**X**	
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	**X**	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	**X**	
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	**X**	
Transparency:		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	**X**	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft	**X**	

report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?		
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	**X**	
28. Were stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	**X**	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond to all factual corrections and comments?	**X**	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	**X**	

Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.

Process Criterion Number	**Evaluation Office Comments**
11	The TE was late being initiated due to a backlog of work in the evaluation Office
19	There were no comments forthcoming on the recommendations and lessons – most of which related to future project designs