



**United Nations Environment Programme**

**Global Environment Facility (GEF)**

## **TERMINAL EVALUATION – FINAL REPORT**

**“Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for  
Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and  
Divisional Levels”**

**“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance  
Integrated Management of Global Environmental  
Issues in Croatia”**

**“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for  
Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya”**

Hugo Navajas

Evaluation Office

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## ACRONYMS

ANRWG	Agriculture & Natural Resources Working Group
ANRE	Agriculture, Natural Resource & Environment Sub-committee
BSP	Bali Strategic Plan
CAEN	Croatia Agency for Environmental Management
CAP	Community Action Plan
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CSE	Centre de Suivi Ecologique (Dakar)
DFS	Data Flow System
EA	Environmental Audit
EEA	European Environment Agency
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ENDA	Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (Sénégal)
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
EU	European Union
GEAP	Gambian Environmental Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IIMS	Integrated Information Management System
IMS	Information Management System
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEA	National Environment Agency (The Gambia)
NEMA	National Environmental Management Agency (Kenya)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFP	National Focal Point
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MENP	Ministry of Environment & Nature Protection (Croatia)
MSP	Medium-size Project
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCBD	United Nations Conference for Conservation of Biodiversity
UNFCCC	United Nations Conference for Climate Change
UNCCD	United Nations Conference on Desertification and Land Degradation
VDC	Village Development Committee

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the terminal evaluations of “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”; “Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia”; and “Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs” in Kenya. Although this was not a thematic evaluation and country projects were assessed separately, there are a number of common findings and issues that lend themselves to comparative analysis, and are relevant to the implementation of the Rio Conventions, capacity building and environmental management.

2. The three projects were relevant to both national and global environmental priorities. Their design was based on the findings of National Capacity Self-Assessments (NCSAs) and supported the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) for Technology Support and Capacity Building. All sought to integrate data collection, monitoring and/or reporting mechanisms for the main Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD) at country levels through improved coordination between focal points and integrated information systems. They represent a first generation of UNEP-GEF projects that sought to implement NCSA priorities and in doing so, assist the BSP’s implementation at the country level. There were also linkages with national decentralization policies in **The Gambia** and environmental impact assessment legislation in **Kenya**. The inter-institutional dynamics of these projects supported the core environmental mandates of national executing agencies and broadened the range of interaction to local government and community levels. Project relevance in **Croatia** was offset by the country’s accession to the EU in 2013, bringing new environmental policies, indicators, data collection and compliance requirements.

3. All projects were able to deliver most of the planned outputs and deliverables by the end of their terms. To enable this, project extensions – often prolonged – were requested and approved by UNEP; for example, the project in Kenya was commenced in 2009 and remains open. A number of outputs and products have stood out for their quality and actual (or potential) impact. In **The Gambia**, the ecosystems approach to natural resource planning was successfully applied in two pilot villages, leading to the design of Community Action Plans and execution of conservation activities; the pilot plans have helped both villages mobilize additional cooperation. In **Croatia**, data flow systems were designed for 27 environmental indicators with the aim of strengthening vertical and horizontal institutional linkages to support MEA implementation. An integrated information management portal with clearinghouse functions in **Kenya** is facilitating the work of convention desk officers and has the potential to raise synergies and feedback during convention monitoring and reporting cycles. Training on environmental impact assessments, environmental audits, valuation of environmental services and indicator data flows was imparted at national and sub-national levels, feeding into pilot planning processes.

4. Outputs were delivered, yet project objectives and outcomes were only partially reached in relation to their indicators. Impact was undermined by late project starts and slow implementation, administrative delays and changing national contexts. Unrealistic expectations

were nurtured in project design by assumptions and indicators that were largely outside project control. As a result, overall effectiveness and impact were not significant and are rated as moderately satisfactory to moderately unsatisfactory by the evaluator.

5. Objectives and outcomes that envisioned permanent MEA coordination mechanisms or sought to integrate management and implementation practices were undermined by inconsistencies between the indicators, technical definitions, formats, and reporting cycles of the different Rio Conventions. Such incompatibilities cannot not be resolved nationally and need to be addressed by the convention Secretariats. In **Croatia**, only 1 of 27 selected environmental indicators was compatible with the three main conventions. Convention focal points and desk officers acknowledge the limited space they have to influence convention indicators or formats, yet consider that the priority is the quality and availability of data. **Kenya's** National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA) has advanced towards streamlining data access and management through the integrated information management system (IIMS), which has been operational since 2015. Conversely, an integrated information system and portal contracted in **The Gambia** was contracted to an external firm but not delivered satisfactorily; the absence of this key deliverable undermined the enabling framework that was needed to generate impact. Presently the NEA and Task manager continue to work on developing the information system to address this outstanding issue and ensure that it is operational as planned; an independent IT expert was engaged by the NEA to assess and address the IMS issues. The data flow system model that was designed in **Croatia** has not been adopted or implemented thus far, and the project's influence on MEA coordination has been indirect at most. However, there are plans to upload the DFS to the new environmental indicators on the portal that will be fully operational in 2017.

6. Project effectiveness and impact at sub-national levels varied and was very much influenced by the absorptive capacity of local partners and consistency of the implementation process. Pilot planning and training processes conducted in two villages of **The Gambia** were successful and generated tangible improvements, in part because both had motivated community organizations with prior experience in local development. Similar cases were found with one of the stakeholder organizations (*Friends of Yala*) that participated in the pilot component of **Kenya's** project, and the regional institutions that were engaged in the pilot testing and validation of **Croatia's** DFS model. However, other pilot processes with local associations in **Kenya** were weakened by changes in the local governance structure, high staff turnovers, low baseline capacities and inconsistent project presence. None of the resulting plans were incorporated to county development plans or budgets, and therefore have not evolved to implementation (with the exception of some activities for the Yala wetlands ecosystem). The capacity building directed at local government structures in **Kenya** and **The Gambia** had limited impact due to the re-organization of local governance framework, high rates of staff turnover and low institutional memories. However, the experience and lessons generated from these initiatives are generally positive and will undoubtedly contribute to more effective results in the future as NEMA and NEA continue to work with local governments at the county and divisional levels.

7. The evaluation's *ex-post* focus offered insight into sustainability aspects that aren't evident during the implementation period. Project sustainability depends on the extent to which outputs were consolidated, internalized and built on by national partners. When this did not happen, the enabling conditions for post-project continuity and replication were not in place. Although most outputs were achieved, time and resources – and government commitment - were often lacking to ensure their continuity beyond the project terms.

8. In **The Gambia**, the MEA Coordination Committee has not convened since the project's end. The MEA Support Unit continues to operate within the National Environment Agency (NEA), yet its functionality is limited by the absence of an operational information portal as had been envisioned. The NEA web page is being expanded yet does not have the connectivity or clearinghouse functions that are necessary to systematize collaboration between convention focal points; institutions outside of NEA were not connected at the time of the evaluator's visit. Likewise, the capacity building extended to divisional governments was not retained due to staff turnover and is likely to diminish further if not applied. There are indications of sustainability in relation to the pilot planning processes that were implemented in two villages, but these were not being replicated (by government or other projects) at the time of the evaluation. The sustainability of project outputs in **Croatia** is uncertain at this stage and will depend on whether the DFS model is uploaded to the new CAEN environmental indicators portal and adopted by relevant institutions. Training modules were designed and are on the CAEN website, and may be applied if there is a government decision to do so. The EIA/EA guidelines and tools that were promoted in **Kenya** are inherently sustainable because they support national policies and legislation; they will be enforced to some extent under the oversight of NEMA. However, the training provided to county governments is unlikely to be retained following the restructuring of local governance frameworks and staff turnover.

9. The sustainability of pilot initiatives that were implemented around three biodiversity "hotspots" – and the conservation of these sites – will largely depend on whether they are incorporated to national/county plans and budgets, which hasn't happened thus far (the upcoming 2017 planning cycle offers a new opportunity). The project's most sustainable aspect is clearly the integrated information management system (IIMS), which is operational and facilitates the work of convention desk officers. In all countries, new approaches and tools were validated and can be replicated on a wider scale; however this will require stronger government commitment.

10. The combination of late project approvals, delayed start-up and slow implementation have not encouraged efficiency. All projects have needed extensions to deliver their outputs, with Kenya requiring the longest period. There were recruitment delays and turnovers of project coordinators in **Kenya** and **Croatia**, after which these projects were executed internally by government staff members with other work responsibilities. This has benefitted institutional ownership but was not conducive towards efficiency. Externalities have also played an important role: Two contracts that were fundamental to the achievement of key project outputs and outcomes could not be executed in **The Gambia**. Project activities were interrupted in **Croatia** for an extended period, following the restructuring of public environmental institutions. Delays were compounded in **Kenya** by slow government decision-making processes.



11. Other factors have also influenced project performance. National executing agencies were prepared to execute the projects in terms of mandate and technical capacity, but were unable to provide the consistency needed to do this within the approved periods - more so when externally recruited, full-time coordinators and support staff were lacking. However, activities were executed and outputs ultimately delivered within the approved budgets. Implementation strategies were well-articulated, combining horizontal and vertical dynamics: Coordination and capacity building support at central government levels were accompanied by ‘downstream’ processes that validated new tools and methodologies. All projects attempted to strengthen environmental linkages between different levels of government, and actively encouraged the participation of community-based organizations in ecosystems management.

12. Country ownership and drive-ness were high from the onset, beginning with the NCSAs that guided project design. The three projects sought to establish coordination and steering committees with mixed levels of success; some have tended to lose momentum over time (reflecting “task force fatigue” in the words of one participant). Pilot processes were locally driven and encouraged high levels of ownership and participation when they led to tangible actions, as occurred with pilot villages in The **Gambia**, regional government authorities in **Croatia**, and the *Friends of Yala* community organization in **Kenya**.

13. Financial management was initially affected by the slow administrative response by UNEP and the unfamiliarity of government counterparts with project guidelines, yet tended to improve over time. Project budgets were periodically revised and unspent funds re-programmed. Financial audits were conducted for all projects with satisfactory results. A similar pattern was observed with the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP, which was initially lacking, as reflected in slow project approvals and activations. This was reflected in the absence of a Task Manager until 2012 (after which responsiveness and support improved considerably). Monitoring was largely *ad hoc* and did not follow plans outlined in the project documents, yet the Task Manager offered guidance and intervened when required to do so – for example, in **The Gambia** to resolve problems associated with the information management system sub-contract.

14. The evaluation report presents a number of conclusions, lessons and recommendations that are drawn from the various project experiences. Although the three projects ultimately delivered most of the planned outputs, intended outcomes were only partially reached. Project contributions to the coordination and implementation of the Rio Conventions were partial and below expectations in relation to expected outcomes and performance indicators. The harmonizing of convention mechanisms was hindered by inconsistent indicators, guidelines and reporting cycles that individual countries are unable to influence. National focal points are more interested in the quality and availability of data (that can be adjusted to different needs) than the integration of indicators or formats that they cannot influence. In this respect, integrated information management systems are more important to operationalize coordination and synergies between conventions, than establishing new committees or working groups that gradually lose momentum. Likewise, capacity building is more effective and sustainable over time when training modules are uploaded to digital formats and offered online.

15. Future initiatives should be re-focused to work within the Rio Conventions in partnership with their Secretariats. In-country data flows and reporting mechanisms are comparatively more developed for the UNFCCC, offering a working model that can be built on. Pilot training and planning initiatives need to be accompanied by the implementation of selected activities to generate momentum, meet local expectations and sustain commitment; this requires budgetary provisions or agreements with small grants programs (including the GEF-SGP) at the design stage

16. Several lessons and recommendations address over-arching design issues: The indicators used to measure the achievement of expected outcomes were often based on external assumptions that made projects more vulnerable to assessments of underperformance; hence outcomes and expectations need to be realistically dimensioned and consistent with project attributions. For this reason, UNEP project appraisals must ensure that performance indicators are viable in relation to project attributions. Likewise, the timing and sequencing of project outputs are essential to maximize cumulative effect and move towards the expected outcomes. For example, integrated information systems need to be contracted at an early stage of the project (preferably during the PDF stage) so that they are operational from the onset and can enable other outputs and processes that are connected by causal pathways. Project appraisals should ensure that project outputs are programmed according to their causal pathways and linkages. The report recommends that Theory of Change (ToC) analysis be required at the design stage and appraised in advance of project approval.

17. The experience of this evaluation highlighted the trade-offs of scheduling *ex-post* evaluations, which offer deeper insight into overall performance, impact and sustainability yet are constrained by declining institutional memory and availability of project participants, who often move on after activities cease. Terminal evaluations should ideally be scheduled within a six-month period after the project's termination. Inception workshops should be required when there are extended gaps between project design, approval and commencement, in order to adjust work plans in line with evolving national contexts. Finally, the evaluation recommends further GEF-UNEP assistance to consolidate ongoing pilot processes in **Kenya** and replicate successful village-level ecosystem management case studies in **The Gambia** with a greater involvement by local governments.<sup>1</sup> However, the approval of new projects should be contingent on a demonstrated government commitment to implement some of the recommendations contained in this report.

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<sup>1</sup> As a EU member, Croatia is no longer eligible for GEF funding.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Introduction of the Projects

18. This report comprehends the final evaluations of three projects that were similar in objectives and approach. Their design was based on the findings of National Capacity Self-Assessments (NCSAs) and sought to improve the management of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Biodiversity Conservation (UNCBD) and Desertification and Land Degradation (UNCCD) - hereafter referred to as the Rio Conventions - at the country level.

19. The final evaluations cover the following projects:

- ***The Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels*** This four-year project aimed to strengthen the national institutional framework for integrated management of global environmental priorities, and integrate global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation. It was approved in 2008 with a total budget of US\$ 661,000 that included a US\$ 493,000 GEF contribution. The National Environmental Agency (NEA) was the designated national executing agency that managed the project over a six-year period between 2009 and 2014.
- ***Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia*** promoted integrated global environmental management through indicator models and data flow systems for the Rio Conventions. The project was approved in 2008 for US\$ 954,000 that included a US\$ 477,000 GEF allocation, and executed by Croatia's Agency for Environment and Nature (CAEN) over a five and a half year period that ended in 2015.
- ***Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya*** commenced in 2009 and remains open. It was approved with a US\$ 764,500 budget of which US\$ 487,500 represented GEF's contribution, and has been executed by the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA). The project objectives are to strengthen national environment assessment, monitoring and audit systems with tools and methods that integrate Rio Convention objectives; and to improve performance in meeting MEA requirements through integrated information and reporting systems.

### B. Objectives, approach and limitations of the evaluation

20. In line with UNEP evaluation policy and GEF guidelines for implementing agencies, projects are scheduled to undergo Terminal Evaluations (TE) on completion of activities to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts resulting from the project, including their sustainability. This 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 among UNEP and

NEA, CAEN, NEMA etc. The evaluations are expected to identify lessons and recommendations of operational relevance for future projects.

21. The first step of the TE process was a desk review of project documentation and the preparation of three Inception Reports in December 2015, followed by the country missions and interviews with national executing agencies, convention focal points and other project stakeholders in February 2016. This report represents the first draft of the main evaluation report. The evaluations analyze project performance and impact according to evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and stakeholder participation among others. The qualitative analysis is complemented by quantitative ratings for the various performance criteria. Through this assessment, the evaluation sought evidence of results that meet UNEP-GEF accountability requirements and support knowledge sharing between UNEP, GEF and national partners. Although the projects have terminated operationally, the evaluation includes a forward-looking perspective that proposes “next steps” at the country level, and recommendations on designing future projects to integrate MEA implementation, monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

22. The evaluation was guided by the following ‘key questions’ from the Terms of Reference:

- To what extent was the project successful in contributing to safeguard the global environment through improved implementation of the three Rio conventions in Gambia, Croatia and Kenya?
- To what extent has the project helped in improving and/or further implementing national environment strategies in Gambia, Croatia and Kenya?
- To what extent has the project established a framework for institutional co-ordination and collaboration for implementing the Rio Conventions in Gambia, Croatia and Kenya? Did the co-ordination mechanisms ensure information sharing and lessen redundancy in coordination, reporting, and data collection?
- To what extent has the national response to the respective global conventions been more coherent, effective and cost-efficient in Gambia, Croatia and Kenya?
- To what extent have the projects’ (Gambia, Croatia and Kenya) strategic interventions created enabling environment for a sustained, cost efficient and long-term impact at national level?
- To what extent and how has the project (Gambia, Croatia and Kenya) enhanced the abilities of the national government to address global environment issues, through a coordinated implementation of respective MEAs, enhanced assessment and monitoring procedures, reporting, data collection, and application of appropriate tools and methodologies?

23. The findings from interviews with the government executing agencies and national participants were triangulated with the desk review of project reports and the views of UNEP managers. The approach was used to identify perception trends that influenced (and were shaped by) project implementation. This has helped to systematize perceptions at different levels,

documenting “on the ground” effects and contributing factors that have influenced performance and achievement levels.

24. The desk review of project documentation (the approved project documents, PIR reports and Semi-Annual Project Progress Reports, minutes of steering committee meetings, budget revisions and other documents) was followed by country visits that enabled the evaluator to interview national executing agency and convention focal points, local government participants, community-based organizations and stakeholder associations involved in the pilot initiatives. The National Environment Agency (NEA) of The Gambia, Kenya’s National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA) and CAEN in Croatia organized the country agendas and logistics.

25. In **The Gambia**, the evaluator met with the NEA Director and participating staff, members of the MEA Coordination Committee (including convention focal points), the ex-project coordinator, divisional government representatives and community organizations in two pilot villages. In **Croatia**, meetings were focused on CAEN staff, convention focal points, government institutions that manage environmental data, and the firms that were contracted to develop the DFS models; local institutions and stakeholders that participated in the field validation of DFS indicators were not interviewed. In **Kenya**, interviews at central government levels were focused on NEMA; meetings were held with the convention desk officers who manage the operational aspects of convention monitoring and reporting, but contacts were lacking with the ministry-based convention focal points due to staff turnover. The evaluator was able to visit all of the pilot sites, where meetings were held with partner community/stakeholder associations and country governments. The country visit also offered the opportunity to interview the UNEP Task Manager for the three projects.

26. The evaluation assesses the performance of projects that had finished implementing activities one to two years earlier, although the Kenya project remains open because the pilot environmental management plans have yet to be printed. The *ex-post* scheduling of the evaluation and country visits created opportunities as well as limitations. The evaluator was able to assess post-project continuity and sustainability with the benefit of hindsight, as well as the commitment of national governments to adopt proposed mechanisms or replicate successful pilot processes on a broader scale. The trade-off to this was the unavailability of key participants, incomplete project files and a rapid decline of institutional memory. Likewise, the documentation initially provided for the evaluation was incomplete and subsequent requests were needed to complete the desk review. There were no mid-term evaluations for either of the 3 projects; The Gambia underwent a self-evaluation, while Kenya and Croatia were internally assessed by their respective Steering Committees. Another limitation was the cancellation of an international MEA workshop planned by UNEP that would have brought together key project partners from the three countries; the interaction and comparative perspective offered by the workshop would have benefitted the evaluation.

## **II. THE PROJECTS**

## **A. CONTEXT**

27. The three projects share a common context that is reflected in their design and relevance to national and global environmental priorities. They represent a first generation of UNEP-GEF projects that were formulated to address priorities identified through National Capacity Self-Assessments (NCSAs), and to support the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP).

### **A.1 The Gambia**

28. The national environmental management and policy frameworks were established by The Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP I) in 1992. With the support of a UNDP Capacity 21 project, capacity building measures were undertaken to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Environment Agency (NEA), line ministries, NGOs and local communities involved in implementing the GEAP. The subsequent approval of a GEAP II led to further capacity development activities.

29. The Gambia's NCSA was undertaken between 2002 and 2004 to identify thematic and crosscutting capacity constraints that affected the implementation of the Rio Conventions. NCSA findings noted that in spite of external funding and support, the implementation of the conventions and respective action plans were being impeded by (i) the inadequate coordination of sector policies; (ii) poorly integrated land use planning; (iii) inadequate environmental information systems; and (iv) a low understanding of ecosystem-based approaches to resource management.

30. Low institutional capacities have continued to constitute a significant barrier to effective MEA implementation and were the main justification for this project. The Climate Change Action Plan highlighted the lack of capacity to collect and analyze data on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a major constraint for the elaboration of National Communications to the UNFCCC. In relation to the UNCCD, the Action Plan for Desertification Control recognized the lack of capacity of technical institutions, NGOs, and community organizations to implement and monitor community-based projects. The capacity needs highlighted by The Gambia's NBSAP focused on the institutional-legislative frameworks for biodiversity and biosafety management, in addition to the monitoring and evaluation of biodiversity resources. Indeed, the national action plans for the three Rio Conventions concurred that low capacity levels pose major barriers to their implementation, undermining Gambia's ability to address global environmental issues of national concern.

31. The project complemented other GEF and UN initiatives that were ongoing and offered opportunities to develop synergies. At the time of the project's design, GEF was supporting the pilot approaches to climate change adaptation through UNESCO, in addition to the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Communication and development of the National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) in collaboration with UNEP. All three projects had important capacity building components. GEF support for biodiversity conservation included the Capacity Needs Assessment for Biodiversity Conservation, and funding for the Third National Report to the UNCBD.

32. Likewise, the regional NEPAD Environment Initiative and Action Plan contained an important capacity building component in support of MEA implementation. The Gambia participated in several regional projects with capacity building activities under the NEPAD. In this regard, “Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels” was expected to complement NEPAD and enhance The Gambia’s participation in this regional initiative.

## **A.2 Croatia**

33. The project was conceived to address Croatia’s fragmented institutional framework, which the NCSA had identified as the main obstacle to effective environmental management. Responsibility for environmental protection and information was spread across nine ministries. The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection the Ministry of Agriculture, the Forestry Directorate and Water Management Directorate are the lead government institutions with environmental mandates. However, responsibilities are also assigned to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development; Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of Economy, Labor and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Justice. In addition, various sub-ministerial and independent bodies also had environmental roles: The Croatian Agency for Environment and Nature; State Bureau of Statistics; Environmental Protection and Energy Efficiency Fund; Meteorological and Hydrological Service; State Inspectorate; Croatian Water; Croatian Food Agency; Nature Protection Institute; Institute for Oceanography and Fishing; National Institute of Public Health; National Institute of Toxicology; Hydrographical Institute; Soil Institute; Port Authorities; Agency for Special Wastes; Cleaner Production Centre; Institute of Tourism; and local and regional government.<sup>2</sup>

34. The fragmentation of environmental mandates undermined institutional coordination and data management in particular. The problems identified included low availability and duplication of data, inconsistent methods for data collection and management, and insufficient time devoted to data collection. The lack of cross-sector coordination and data management weakened implementation, monitoring and reporting for the UN Conventions. The NCSA highlighted the following constraints in relation to the conventions:

### 35. UNCBD

- Inadequate institutional framework for nature protection at administrative and scientific levels.
- Lack of quality data and monitoring of biological diversity, natural and cultural heritage;
- Inadequate levels of public information on the problems of biological diversity conservation;

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<sup>2</sup> Several of the government institutions engaged in the project’s design have since been restructured and/or changed in name, with a tendency towards greater integration, i.e. the integration of environment and nature protection under a common ministry.

- The stocktaking of biological diversity, the setting up of a biological diversity information system and the national biological diversity monitoring system have not progressed beyond the design stage;
- The recording and preservation of native cultivars of cultivated plants and breeds of domestic animals are inadequately documented and regulated;
- There has been limited effort to improve communications between sectors, and communications with local populations and NGOs.

36. UNCCD

- Preparation of technical documentation,
- Advancement of scientific and technical work,
- Strengthening cross-sector coordination and collaboration,
- Implementation at local and regional level.
- Data and information collection, dissemination, education and collaboration.

37. Improved data management was considered essential to achieve an overall picture of environment/soil state and changes, and provide a proper base for (i) developing and enforcing legislation regulating soil/land conservation; (ii) elaborating and adopting of plans and programs for supplementary irrigation, sustainable soil and water use; (iii) improvement in fire prevention and fighting efficiency; (iv) for introducing the environmentally sound technologies in agriculture and forestry; (v) strengthening public awareness of land degradation and drought-related problems; and (vi) disseminating information to the general public with the involvement of NGOs.

38. UNFCCC:

- An effective national system and implementation monitoring system;
- A system for implementing Kyoto flexible mechanisms.
- Strengthened international collaboration on climate issues.
- Networking between relevant institutions.
- A reliable and comprehensive national emission data management system, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for participants in the process of data collection, analysis, quality assurance and quality control, verification, documentation, archiving, dissemination and reporting.
- A National GHG inventory is needed to identify priorities for domestic policies and measures, but this will only be achieved when a data management system is in place.

39. Cross-MEA capacity needs:

- Integrated methodology for organization and development of a convention implementation support system.
- Integrated information flows and cross-linked data banks.



- Collective training of all participants for the convention implementation.
- Joint research and technical activities
- Joint funding

40. The Croatian Agency for Environment and Nature (CAEN) had devoted efforts to establish institutional networks and agreements, harmonize data collection and ensure timely data flows. However, environmental information systems were not operational at the time of the project's formulation, and a national indicator list of indicators was in the process of being developed. The project document recognized the "urgent need" to continue building data connectivity among the broader network of environmental institutions under the CEA's leadership. These combined factors led to CEA's designation as national executing agency for the project, in order to build on recent efforts and articulate convention focal point institutions.

### **A.3 Kenya**

41. The project was designed to maximize the global environmental and national benefits deriving from the implementation of the UN Conventions. There had been inadequate coordination and synergies in the implementation of the conventions, leading to duplications and lack of cohesion at the country level. The institutions mandated to implement the conventions were often reluctant to cooperate with each other due to the lack of a coordination framework or joint programs to encourage collaboration. As a result, inadequate attention was paid to MEA management and implementation at the national level, or to the harmonization of reporting mechanisms. As a result, MEA compliance and enforcement have been difficult to effect, particularly where performance indicators were not in place.

42. NCSA findings emphasized the need to integrate MEAs within development policies, plans and programs with particular focus on poverty reduction. The integration of the conventions was considered necessary to the sustainable use of environmental resources. The Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) of 1999 enabled the integration of environmental issues within the national planning framework to promote sustainable development, yet this objective was undermined by institutional capacity limitations at various levels.

43. The project was designed to address the following threats and barriers that were prioritized by Kenya's NCSA:

- Inadequate MEA awareness among stakeholders;
- Limited integration of MEAs in national and district level development policies and programs; and
- Inadequate coordination and synergies in MEA implementation

44. Related constraints identified by the project document included (i) the lack of adequate means for objective assessment and monitoring of impacts of environmental programs, and (ii) the limited extent to which global benefits were being realized. These were reinforced by

inadequate institutional resources and capacities, uncoordinated approaches that led to duplications and inadequate monitoring processes.

45. In particular, the NCSA had identified the following priorities for strengthening MEA implementation:

- Improved coordination of decision-making processes, so there is less contradiction between what different MEAs are trying to achieve;
- Improved institutional architecture for policy implementation;
- Improved management or operationalization of the policies and decisions; and
- Coordination of implementation of international environmental governance decisions at the national level.

46. To address these needs, the project proposed a more integrated approach to global environmental management at the national level. The project strategy aimed to incorporate climate change, biodiversity conservation, land degradation and chemical management issues within national development plans and policies. Under the first objective/outcome, pilot environmental impact assessment (EIA), environmental audit (EA) and monitoring approaches were to be applied in consultation with local environmental committees in biodiversity “hot spots” that were under threat; the Mt. Suswa volcano, Maruba Dam and Yala Wetlands ecosystems were selected for this purpose.

47. As noted, Kenya’s National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) was the designated executing agency for the project. NEMA is mandated to coordinate all environment issues on a national scale, and led the NCSA process. NEMA had also played a lead role in developing the project concept and formulating the project document. These combined factors made NEMA the logical choice to execute the project and articulate convention focal point institutions.

**B. PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

	<b>“Gambia: Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs”</b>	<b>“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia”</b>	<b>“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya”</b>
<b>Goal</b>	Enhance capacities of Gambia in contributing to the conservation of and dealing with global environmental management	Safeguard the global environment, through integrated implementation of the three Rio Conventions in Croatia, by promoting new policy decisions that are based on integrated and technically sound data and information analysis.	Enhance abilities of Kenya to address global environmental issues related to land degradation, climate change, biodiversity conservation and chemical management through effective, coordinated and integrated implementation of respective multi-lateral environmental agreement
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthening the national institutional framework for integrated management of global environmental priorities.</li> <li>2. Integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build national capacity for integrated global environmental management through the development of an indicator model and comprehensive Data Flow System.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To strengthen the national environment assessment, monitoring and environmental audit systems through the development and application of enhanced EIA/EA tools, methodologies and processes that integrate Rio Convention objectives.</li> <li>2. To enhance efficiencies and effectiveness in meeting the obligations and requirements of closely related MEAs through the development and implementation of integrated multi- convention information and reporting system.</li> </ol>

<p><b>Key Success Indicators (Objectives)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence that global environmental issues have become a national priority</li> <li>- Change in national reputation for environment management amongst donors and stakeholders</li> <li>- Improved value and reliability of national MEA reports.</li> <li>Improved rate of national report submissions</li> <li>- Usage of MEA reports to adjust national planning processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number and quality of national action plans to the conventions, and resource management activities, that use the Environmental Information System</li> <li>- Improvements in policy decisions that utilize integrated approaches for biodiversity conservation, climate change and soil protection</li> <li>- The demonstrated usage of convention-related data within ongoing national planning processes</li> <li>- The quality of the new legislation developed covering UNCCD, UNFCCC and UNCBD issues</li> <li>- The level of increased inter-institutional collaboration via the DFS</li> <li>- Changes in the level of technical capacity to collect and analyze datasets, with staff of CEA and other agencies using their new skills in data management to produce quality reports and recommendations</li> <li>- The number of new research projects and activities that begin to use the EIS rather than collect separate data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent to which a sustainable and integrated institutional mechanism to manage global environmental issues will have been in place</li> <li>- The degree of commitment and the usefulness of the integrated information system to stakeholders and beneficiaries</li> <li>- The extent to which outputs of the information system influenced policy decisions and improvement (frequency and quality) in convention reporting</li> <li>- The degree of expansion of the use of EIA and EA tools incorporating MEAs developed/enhanced through this project</li> </ul>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Institutional framework established at the national level for integrated management of global environmental issues</li> <li>2. Global environmental management integrated into Divisional level management</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An enhanced Environmental Information System that incorporates SMART indicator sets covering global environmental concerns</li> <li>2. A cooperative institutional framework (Data Flow System) that increases information accessibility and reduces redundancy in data collection</li> <li>3. Indicator system and institutional DFS piloted in areas with demonstrated convention inter-linkages and complex institutional set-up.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. National development projects and programs incorporate obligations and principles of UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and POPs through the application of appropriate environment impact assessment tools and methodologies</li> <li>2. Response to the four global environment convention obligations made more coherent, effective and cost-efficient.</li> </ol>

*Note:* These projects were not divided into components in their design, and instead were structured according to intended outcomes. The corresponding outputs for each outcome are listed in Section B. “Achievement of Output

## The Gambia

## Croatia

## Kenya

	The Gambia	Croatia	Kenya
<b>C. TARGET GROUPS &amp; AREAS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Environment Agency (NEA)</li> <li>Government ministries and institutions with environmental responsibilities</li> <li>Rio Convention Focal Points</li> <li>Divisional governments of North Bank and South Coast</li> <li>Darsilameh and TumaniTenda villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Croatia Agency for Environment &amp; Nature (CAEN)</li> <li>Government ministries and institutions with environmental responsibilities</li> <li>Rio Convention Focal Points</li> <li>Ucka National Park</li> <li>Regional institutions and stakeholders linked to pilot activities in Ucka National Park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Environment Management Agency (NEMA)</li> <li>Government ministries and institutions with environmental responsibilities</li> <li>Rio Convention Focal Points</li> <li>Stakeholder associations at pilot sites: Machakos Dam, Yala Wetlands, Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area</li> <li>County governments of Narok, Kajiado, Machakos, Busia and Siaya</li> </ul>
<b>D. MILESTONES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval: February 2008</li> <li>Implementation: January 2009 - December 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval: October 2008</li> <li>Implementation: October 2008 - December 2014</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval: March 2008</li> <li>Implementation: January 2009 – ongoing</li> </ul>
<b>E. IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executed by NEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executed by CAEN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executed by NEMA</li> </ul>
<b>F. PROJECT FINANCING</b>	<p>Project budget: US\$ 661,000            GEF Contribution: US\$ 493,000            Gov't Co-financing: US\$ 168,000</p>	<p>Project budget: US\$ 954,000            GEF Contribution: US\$ 477,000            Gov't Co-financing: US\$ 477,000</p>	<p>Project budget: US\$ 764,500            GEF Contribution: US\$ 487,000            Gov't Co-financing: US\$ 277,000</p>
<b>G. PARTNERS</b>	<p>NEA, Ministry of Environment, ANR Working Group</p>	<p>CAEN, Ministry of Environment &amp; Nature Protection</p>	<p>NEMA, Ministry of Environment</p>
<b>H. CHANGES TO DESIGN DURING IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<p>Project termination was extended from December 2012 to December 2014.</p>	<p>Project termination date was extended from September 2011 to December 2014. Design changed to base DFS on National List of Indicators.</p>	<p>Project termination date was extended from December 2011 and is expected to finish by June 2016.</p>

## **I. RECONSTRUCTED THEORY OF CHANGE**

48. As applied to UNEP evaluations, “Theory of Change” (TOC) depicts the logical sequence of desired changes (called “causal / impact pathways” or “results chains”) to which the project is expected to contribute. It shows the causal linkages between changes at different results levels (outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and impact) and identifies the factors influencing those changes. The reconstruction of a TOC can help identify linkages between outputs and outcomes, and the intermediary states between outcomes and intended impact. It identifies the “impact drivers” that move implementation forward, and the “external assumptions” in project design that affect performance yet are often outside the project’s ability to influence. Likewise, there are “intermediate states” that must be reached in order to achieve the project objectives.

49. Project design and performance can be interpreted through the analysis of causal pathways and the extent to which related outputs and outcomes are connected sequentially, both in project design and during implementation. The analysis of causal pathways for this project indicates that most outputs lead to their respective outcome with several examples of cross-linkages between outputs and outcomes pertaining to the two immediate objectives. There are not many project elements to organize – it has only 7 outputs and 2 outcomes – and the logical framework does not include results; therefore there aren’t many options for the analysis of causal pathways.

### **I.1 The Gambia**

50. There are linkages at different levels, starting with the two objectives that are interdependent and directly connected to the over-arching goal. Both the decentralized application of the ecosystem approach and integration of environmental issues within division planning (Objective 2) feed into the strengthened national framework for integrated environmental management that is envisioned by the first objective.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the second outcome (a rewording of the objective) contributes to the broader national scale foreseen by the first outcome. While the project size enables the simultaneous implementation of activities at both central and division government levels, the causal pathway that connect outputs to outcomes shows that integrated planning will need to be consolidated at decentralized levels before a functional framework can be achieved nationally, precisely because the work done at the division level both informs the center and provides a venue for implementing MEA-related actions.

51. The planned outputs tend to follow a logical sequence that leads to their respective outcome and objective, although the ToC analysis suggests minor variations in their positioning on the causal pathway. The establishment of the technical MEA Unit (Output 1.2) is a fundamental first step to move project implementation forward and generate the momentum needed to achieve outputs and outcome under the first objective. Understanding

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<sup>3</sup> Particularly if “national institutional framework” is interpreted as country-wide and *macro* in scale, and not limited to central government. However, the issue is more semantic than substantive and may not have make any difference in terms of project design or implementation. In either case, the point to be made is the strong interdependency between the two objectives and their outcomes.

the ecosystem approach (Output 2.1) is the basis for advancing to other outputs and the outcome for the second objective. Under the first objective, the technical MEA Unit is the starting point and is followed by the creation of the MEA Committee (Output 1.1) both of which are essential to enable the implementation process. Both of these outputs generate enabling conditions for the national institutional framework for integrated planning that represents the first outcome. They also contribute to improved collaboration between focal points (Output 1.3) although the causal relationship is not direct; the establishment of a new committee or unit does not necessarily change institutional behavior or improve aggregate performance (as many project evaluations can attest).

52. It can also be argued that improved collaboration between focal points is closer to being an outcome – or an intermediate state preceding impact – rather than another output. For this reason, Output 1.3 is illustrated as a higher-order deliverable that is positioned at the same level as its outcome, and connects directly to the immediate objective. However, the evaluator considers that these findings do not significantly affect the quality of project design, nor would the variances appear to influence the likelihood of impact.

53. The outputs that lead to the second outcome and objective also follow a logical sequence, with minor variations resulting from the ToC analysis. Initial exposure and training in the ecosystem approach (Output 2.1) are followed by pilot evaluation exercises (Output 2.2), generating the basic capacity and experience needed to promote cross-sector collaboration at the TAC/Division level (Output 2.5), enabling the mainstreaming of environmental concerns under the decentralized planning framework (Output 2.4). Again, the question arises as to whether the output of “functional cross-sector collaboration” is closer to being an outcome; the ToC analysis positions this output at the same level of the second outcome (“Global environmental management integrated into divisional level planning/implementation through ecosystem approach”) on the causal pathway, with a direct connection to the second objective.

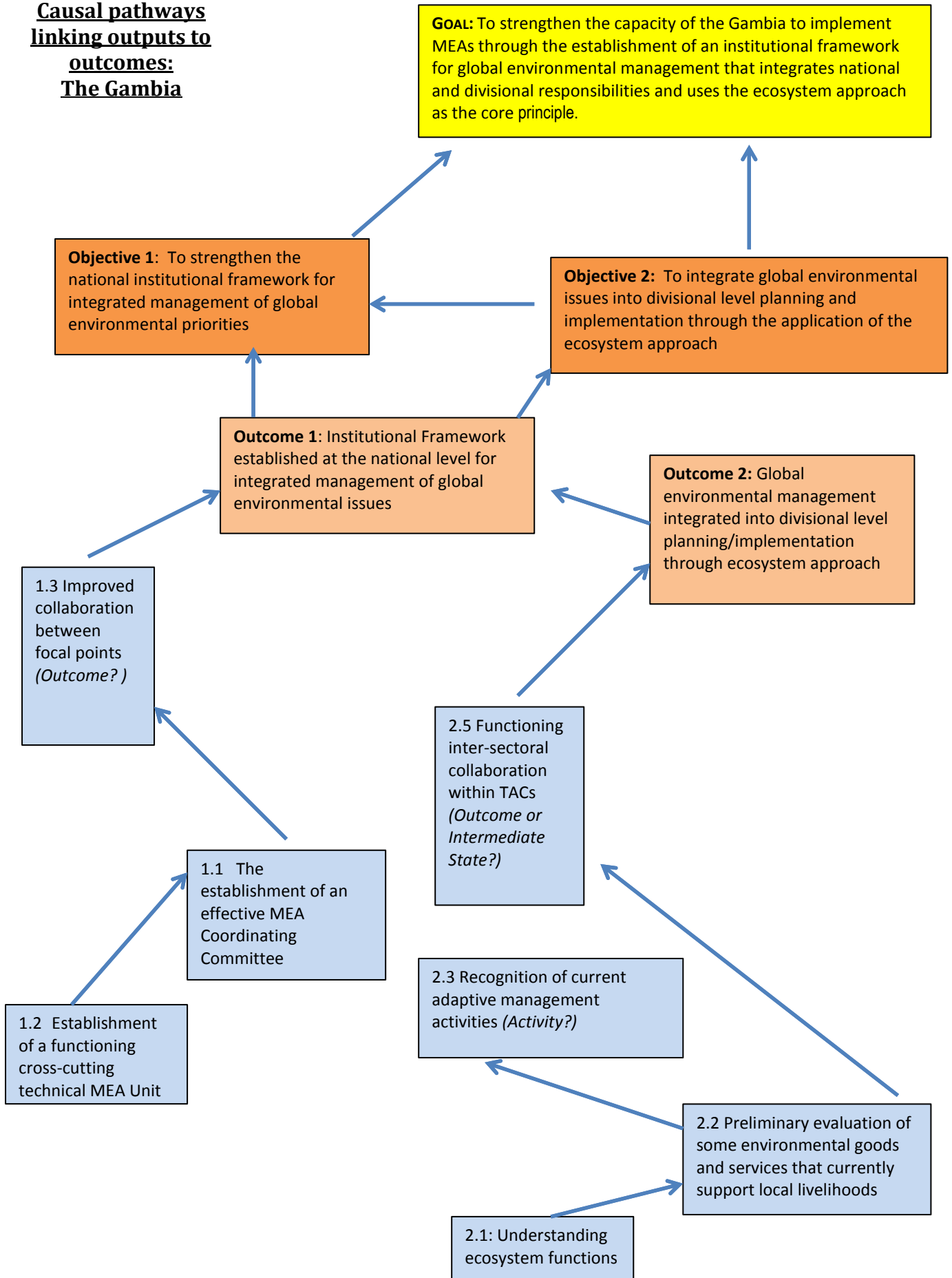
54. An exception to the project’s well-articulated design is Output 2.3 “Recognition of current adaptive management activities”, a stand-alone output that would be better placed as an activity within Output 2.2. There is no distinction between Output 2.4, Outcome 2, or the second objective – all of which essentially say the same thing and overlap. Likewise, Output 2.4 (“empowered committees - global environment mainstreamed into decentralized planning processes”) duplicates Outcome 2 and Objective 2; hence it is not included in the impact pathways in Figure 2. However, these observations do not detract from the overall logic of the project’s design, and are unlikely to have had an effect on implementation or delivery.

55. The drivers that are expected to move the implementation process forward are:

- The Gambia’s adherence to the Conventions for Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification Control.
- The cross-sector mandates of the National Environment Agency (NEA) and Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environment Policy Working Group (ANRE).
- A participatory implementation approach encourages commitment and ownership at central government and divisional levels.
- The project has adequate timelines and budgetary allocations.

**Figure 1**

**Causal pathways linking outputs to outcomes:**  
**The Gambia**





- The integration of MEA planning, monitoring and reporting guidelines is expected to rationalize convention focal point workloads and reduce the level of duplication.
- Synergies are built with compatible on-going initiatives such as the regional NEPAD, NBSAP and CAPs.
- Adequate monitoring, guidance and technical backstopping is provided UNEP

56. Although it listed as an activity (within Outputs 2 and 3) under the first outcome, the development of the integrated information management system (IMS) is one of the most critical drivers for the first outcome and the project in general. The IMS is essential to operationalizing coordination between MEA focal points and integrating convention mechanisms, in particular through the planned clearinghouse mechanism that systematizes cross-convention feedback during MEA monitoring and reporting cycles.

57. A commendable aspect of the project's logical framework is the inclusion of underlying assumptions for the various outputs and outcomes. These assumptions are correctly associated with the risks faced by the project, given that they are outside the project's control. The following assumptions are listed:

- Appropriate committee members are identified for the MEA Coordinating Committee
- There is continued national support for decentralisation (this is assumed to mean continued commitment by government policy and decision-making levels).
- Institutions are willing to share data sources with the technical MEA Unit
- The NEA continues to provide in-kind support to the project
- NFPs are committed to change practices and seek greater integration (for improved collaboration between MEA focal points)
- Communities are willing to participate in project activities.
- Division-level governments are committed to the project.
- The EU continues to fund the SDRD (Support to Decentralisation and Rural Development) project, which the second outcome of the project was designed to build upon.

58. To these assumptions, the evaluator added the project's timely commencement and operation as an assumption for satisfactory performance and impact, because they are often influenced by externalities outside the project's control.

59. In retrospect, the achievement of the first outcome was limited by the absence of the integrated information system, which was not designed as planned and wasn't available during the implementation period. Hence the key driver on which operational collaboration and integrated mechanisms linking convention focal points should have been built, was lacking, and the MEA Coordination Committee meetings were insufficient in themselves to move the process forward. Likewise, the second outcome as limited by the assumption that divisional governments would be committed to the project and that decentralization policies would be supportive of the project. In practice, the division governments and ANRE sub-committees in particular lacked the capacity and resources to fully participate in the project and incorporate global environmental concerns in divisional plans and programs.

## **I.2 Croatia**

60. The analysis of causal pathways for this project indicates that all outputs lead directly to their respective outcome, with some examples of linkages between outputs and outcomes. There are not many project elements to organize – ten outputs for four outcomes, and project design does not include results; therefore there aren't many aspects for analysis.

61. There is a logical sequence that starts with the design of indicators and data flows, continues into their pilot application, adaptation and validation, and then towards full implementation supported by capacity building. The linkages between outputs and their outcomes are logical and seem viable; there are direct connections between the first and second outcomes (design of indicators, data flows under the EIS and institutional protocols) that lead to the pilot testing under the third outcome, the results of which feed back into the design of the indicators and EIS. The third outcome connects directly with the first two outcomes, than to the project objective. There is another feedback loop between the products of most outputs for the first three outcomes, which offer inputs to the design of the capacity building program foreseen under the fourth outcome (output 4.1). The first and second outcomes connect directly to the project objective and therefore represent the intermediate stages that must be reached in order to achieve impact; the fourth outcome is also directly linked to the objective and is essential to sustain the impacts generated through the first two outcomes. In this regard, the higher order outputs that are strategic for reaching the objective are 1.2, 2.3 and, from a sustainability perspective, 4.2.

62. There is a broad gap between the project objective and goal: The model not only has to be established as envisioned by the objective, but also used properly and the three conventions implemented accordingly before there are actual changes in the way the environment is preserved. The project's contribution to the stated goal is likely to be indirect at most, and possibly difficult to detect at this time. In retrospect, this gap was fundamental as the DFS model was designed satisfactorily yet has not been adopted or applied to date.

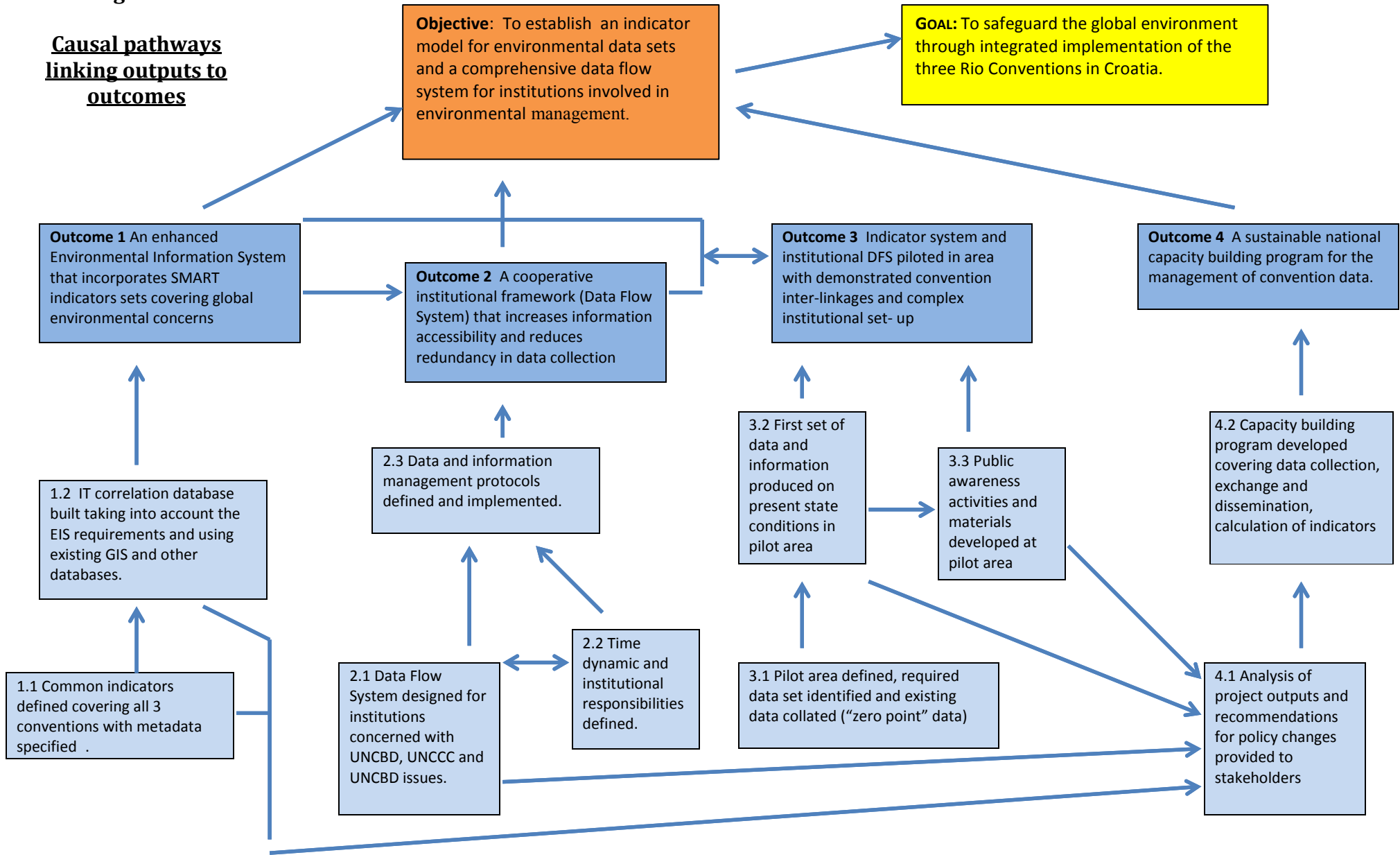
63. In addition to output-outcome linkages and impact pathways, project performance is also likely to be affected by a combination of drivers that move the implementation process forward, and external assumptions that are outside the project's control. The drivers that are expected to move the implementation process forward are:

- Croatia's adhesion to the Conventions for Biodiversity, Climate Change and Desertification Control.
- The cross-sector mandate of the Croatian Agency for Environment and Nature (CAEN) with regards to the Environmental Information System (EIS).
- A participatory implementation approach (i.e. establishment of a project steering committee and thematic working group) that encourages commitment and ownership at central government and divisional levels.
- The project design includes adequate timelines and budgetary allocations.
- The integration of MEA planning, monitoring and reporting guidelines is expected to rationalize the workload of focal points in the Ministry, reducing the time involved and level of duplication.

- Synergies with compatible, on-going initiatives such as the regional UNDP/GEF project “Capacity Building for Improving the Quality of Greenhouse Gas Inventories

**Figure 2**

**Causal pathways linking outputs to outcomes**



- (Europe/CIS Region) and the World Bank-supported Karst Ecosystem Conservation project (KEC).
- Adequate monitoring, guidance and technical backstopping is provided UNEP

64. A commendable aspect of the project's logical framework is the inclusion of underlying assumptions for the various outputs and outcomes. These assumptions are correctly associated with the risks faced by the project, given that they are outside the project's control. The following assumptions are listed:

- Government commitment to maintaining a transparent public disclosure policy.
- Government institutions make policy decisions based on quality data rather than other factors.
- Data gathering for fulfilling convention obligations remains a priority.

65. To these, the evaluator would add (i) the ability of government MEA focal points to coordinate monitoring and reporting activities, and integrate these functions within their core functions, given the high level of fragmentation in terms of institutional responsibilities; (ii) weather conditions will permit the controlled vegetation fires as scheduled under the third component; and (iii) time-consistent data will be available to feed into the indicators.

66. Although the project was considered to have a low risk of failure, according to the project document, the project objective and goal were not achieved due to (i) the aforementioned gaps between the design, adoption and utilization of the DFS, and (ii) unforeseen changes to the national context that were triggered by Croatia's accession to the EU – which brought more immediate environmental data management and reporting priorities – and the restructuring of government environmental institutional framework, which indirectly led to an extended suspension of project activities. Another contributing factor was the key (yet flawed) assumption that the indicators and mechanisms used by the main Rio Conventions could be integrated or at least made more compatible at the country level, when this requires actions at the level of the convention Secretariats.

### **I.3 Kenya**

67. As illustrated in Figure 2, project design and performance can be interpreted through the analysis of causal pathways and the extent to which related outputs and outcomes are connected sequentially, both in project design and during implementation. There are not many project elements to organize –five outputs for two outcomes, and therefore not many scenarios aspects for analysis. The analysis of causal pathways for this project indicates a high level of linkages between the two objectives and their respective outcomes, and a logical sequence of outputs towards their respective outcomes. Likewise, both objectives are mutually reinforcing and contribute directly to the project goal.

68. The pathways illustrated in Figure 2 connect the development and on-site validation of improved EIA/EA methodologies (outputs 1.1 and 1.2), the harmonization of procedures and data classification (output 4) and establishment of enhanced information systems (output 3), to strengthened national environment assessment, monitoring and audit systems (objective 1), and to better and more efficient reporting both for national environmental programmes and MEAs (output 5 and outcome 2). Both outcomes can be considered “intermediate states” that must be reached in advance of achieving their respective objectives. However, the first outcome – national plans and programmes that incorporate MEA considerations based on sound environmental assessments and audits – appears broader and more “cross-cutting” as it is nurtured by outputs from both project objectives.

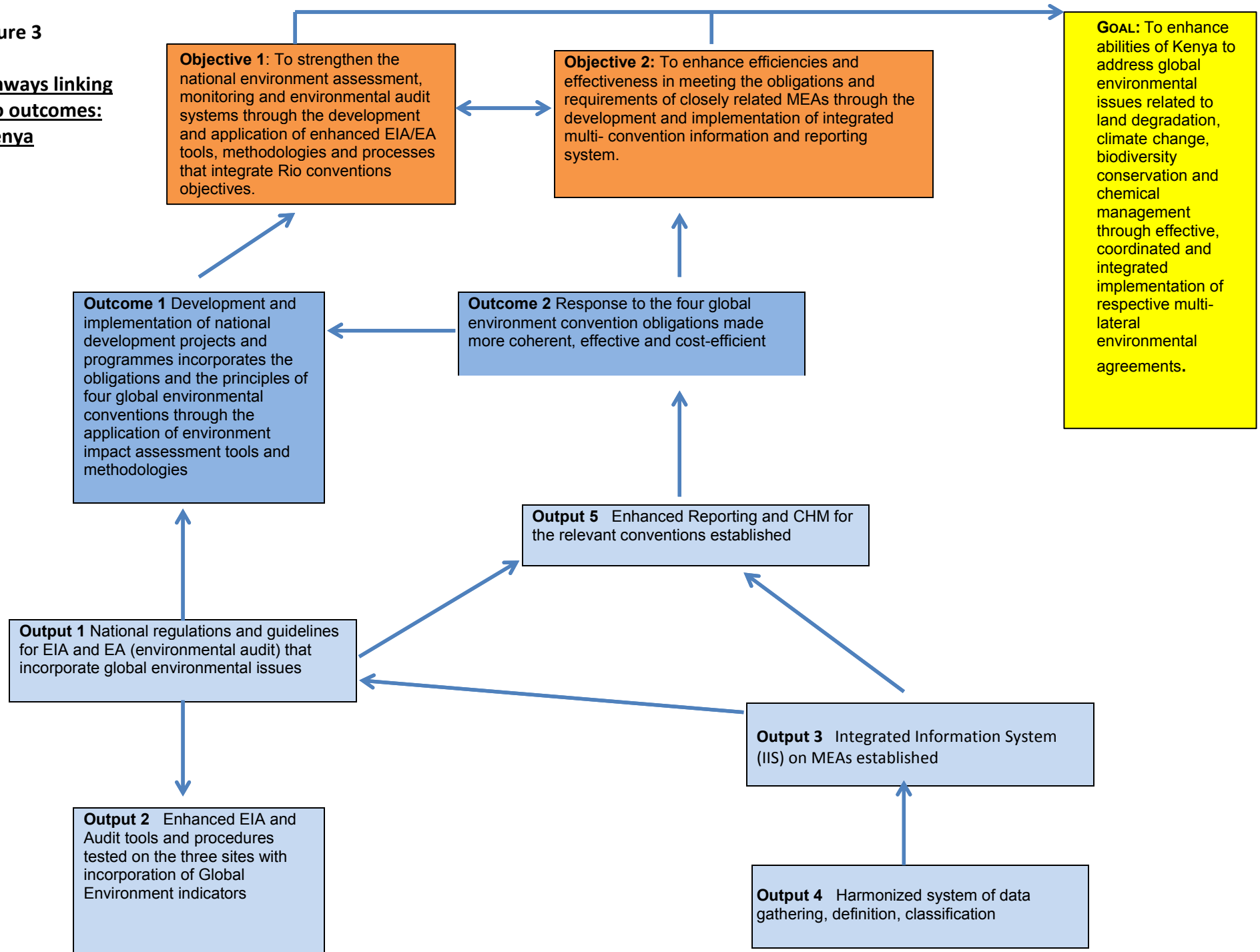
69. The project design has few outputs for an initiative of this scale, and all are essential to the achievement of the objectives and outcomes. Of these, outputs 2 (testing and validation of enhanced EIA and EA methods in three sites) and 4 (harmonized data gathering, definition and classification) constitute the base of the causal pathways that culminate in strengthened national assessment systems, mainstreaming of MEAs into development plans, and enhanced environmental monitoring and reporting.

70. In addition to output-outcome linkages and impact pathways, project performance is also likely to be affected by a combination of drivers that move the implementation process forward, and external assumptions that are outside the project’s control.

71. The drivers that are expected to move the implementation process forward are:

- Kenya’s adhesion to the Conventions for Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation.
- The cross-sector mandate of the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) with regards to EIA/EA and institutions involved in MEA implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- The establishment of a project steering committee and designation of a NEMA Project Focal Point should encourage commitment and ownership at central government and participating district levels.
- The integration of MEA planning, monitoring and reporting guidelines is expected to rationalize the workload of the institutional focal points, reducing the time involved and level of duplication. This should motivate their commitment and support to the project.
- Synergies with a variety of on-going initiatives that include the work undertaken by UNEP at the global level with regard to development of environment law and EIA (the PADELIA and WIO-Lab projects), the Compliance and Enforcement programme, and the issue-based clustering of MEAs supported mainly by the DFID and USAID. Other initiatives that could guide project implementation include the Integrated Environment Assessment and Reporting (IEA) and the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) both implemented by UNEP Division on Early Warning and Assessment) and the Belgium-funded pilot synergies project implemented for four African countries (Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda & Mozambique). Finally, the project is expected to build linkages with GEF-supported projects such as “Assessment of Capacity Building Needs and

**Figure 3**  
**Causal pathways linking**  
**outputs to outcomes:**  
**Kenya**



- Country Specific Priorities in the Conservation of Biodiversity”, “Participation in the National CHM”, “Preparation of the Second National Report to the CBD”, “Development and Implementation of a Resource Management Plan for Mt. Marsabit” and “Desert Margins Programme and Management of Indigenous Vegetation for the Rehabilitation and Degraded Lands.”

72. As noted earlier, the ToC analysis also considers the underlying assumptions that influence project design yet are outside its direct control. The project document addresses assumptions in somewhat general terms, while considerably more attention is given to describing risks and the measures that will be monitored.<sup>4</sup> Section 1B “Key Indicators, Assumptions and Risks” identifies the following assumptions:

- A high degree of institutional collaboration, cross-sector policy dialogue and commitment towards utilizing project results for MEA management at the national level.
- The “traditional sectorial approach” typical in government sectors, and which could limit the full utilization of project products, will be offset by the approval of binding agreements and MOUs between participating government agencies, to strengthen their commitment to the project’s objectives and sustainability measures.

73. To these, the evaluator would add (i) the availability of time-consistent data to feed into the EIA and Global Environment Indicators in relation to the first objective; (ii) the full availability and commitment of the Project Focal Point, who will be appointed from NEMA’s core staff, and (iii) the adequacy of implementing a project of this scale within a four-year period (an assumption given GEF’s limits on project extensions). In retrospect, these assumptions influenced project performance: The project’s execution by NEMA staff raised government ownership yet lowered efficiency and delivery, leading to a drawn-out implementation process that required a significant extension (and remains open).

74. Likewise, an unanticipated development was the re-structuring of local governance frameworks by grouping districts under new country governments. This led to high turnovers of local government staff, weakened institutional memory and altered the project’s institutional arrangements - undermining the impact and continuity of activities conducted in the three pilot sites (outputs 2-4 under the first objective).

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<sup>4</sup> Described in Section F “Monitoring and Evaluation”



### III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

#### A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

75. The three projects were linked from inception by a common foundation and were relevant to both the national and global contexts in similar ways. Their design was based on NCSA findings and supported the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) for Technology Support and Capacity Building, adopted in 2004 to assist developing countries and transition economies in implementing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)<sup>5</sup> through training, technological transfer and collaborative partnerships. The BSP additionally seeks to strengthen UNEP's delivery of technology support and capacity building by mainstreaming these themes within projects and applying best practices drawn from other contexts.<sup>6</sup>

76. These projects represent a first generation of initiatives that were designed to implement the BSP. They were conceived to follow-up on the recommendations of the NCSAs that were held in these countries after the BSP's approval. Hence the three projects share similarities in their relevance to the implementation of MEAs in general and the BSP in particular. In all cases, project support intended to strengthen national capacities for managing, monitoring and reporting to the Conventions on Biodiversity (CBD), Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Desertification (UNCCD) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (PoPs). All projects included IT components that aimed to operationalize data collection, information sharing and other linkages among convention focal points and other stakeholders. And to varying degrees, all supported "downstream" pilot processes involving local governments and community-based organizations to demonstrate new approaches to ecosystems management. Relevance to the BSP was strongest in **The Gambia** and **Kenya**, which were among the six African countries selected to pilot its implementation.

77. The three projects sought to enhance institutional collaboration for the UN Conventions, raise awareness and technical capabilities through training, and integrate data collection and reporting mechanisms. In Croatia, data flow systems were designed for MEA indicators that linked institutions responsible for data management; one of the DFS models was tested in a national park to measure variations in GHG emissions. In **Kenya**, a common database was developed to facilitate monitoring and reporting; while environmental impact assessment (EIA) and audit (EA) tools were disseminated and tested at pilot sites with the participation of local government and community stakeholders. Institutional coordination was encouraged in **The Gambia** through the creation of a high-level Coordination Committee and the planned design of an information management system. In addition, training was given on the ecosystems approach to natural resource planning and valuation, and Community Action Plans designed in two pilot villages.

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<sup>5</sup> Including the Millennium Declaration, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other U.N. Conferences.

<sup>6</sup> Based on objectives A.iv, A.vi, C, D, F and H of the *Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building* (December 2004).

78. The projects were relevant to UNEP and GEF mandates. The three projects supported GEF's strategic priority of "Cross-cutting Capacity Building" and program area of "Targeted Capacity Building across Focal Areas". They also supported UNEP's mandate to promote integrated environmental information and assessment. In all cases, project objectives were relevant to UNEP's Environmental Governance sub-program<sup>7</sup> and Expected Accomplishment in Ecosystems Management<sup>8</sup> under the Medium Term Strategy (MTS).

79. **Croatia's** project was supportive of UNEP's work on the Global Environment Outlook and associated networks (i.e. GRID) that were established by the Division of Environmental Assessment & Early Warning (DEWA). The design of indicator data flow systems was also consistent with UNEP's *Environment Watch* and UN General Assembly resolution 2997 (on keeping the world environment system under review). Project design in **Kenya** and **The Gambia** built on the progress achieved by the regional NEPAD initiative, the Integrated Environment Assessment and Reporting (IEA) project and the Africa Environment Information Network (AEIN) implemented by DEWA, as well as the "Partnership for Development of Environmental Laws and Institutions in Africa" (PADELIA).

80. At the time of their formulation, the three projects were very relevant to national environmental issues because they addressed capacity needs identified by the NCSAs. Several of these needs continue to be relevant to the extent that follow-up actions are still required, i.e. an operational information management system in **The Gambia**; further dissemination of ecosystem-based natural resource management practices<sup>9</sup> in high-biodiversity areas of **The Gambia** and **Kenya**; a continuing need to update and streamline data management as convention indicators and information requirements evolve over time; and the persisting challenge of harmonizing monitoring and reporting practices between MEAs - part of a broader process that must necessarily engage the Convention Secretariats in order to have success.

81. There were direct links to national policy as well. In **The Gambia**, the project's decentralized component (*global environmental management integrated into Divisional level management*) supported the Technical Advisory Committees and Agriculture, Natural Resource & Environment (ANRE) sub-committees that function within divisional governments. The two Divisions that participated in the project were - and remain - the only two that have implemented the national policy of establishing ANRE sub-committees. The ecosystem planning processes that were piloted in Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda villages can be replicated in other communities to mitigate coastal erosion, a major environmental threat that affects the capital city and almost 50% of the national territory. In **Kenya**, the project supported the coordination and oversight role of the National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA) at county levels, and introduced a new information system with common databases that facilitates the work of

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<sup>7</sup> Defined as "The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations" (MTS 2010-2014)

<sup>8</sup> Which included support to countries in "...creating the enabling environment for the implementation of biodiversity-related MEAs, with a particular emphasis on the achievement of the Aichi biodiversity targets." (MTS 2010-2014).

<sup>9</sup> UNEP's Ecosystem Approach is summarized in Annex 7.

convention desk officers who monitor the status of indicators and draft the reports. The project pilot supported the formulation of action plans for recognized biodiversity ‘hotspots’ that could assist their categorization as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) with more stringent environmental safeguards. The pilot community planning and training processes implemented in **The Gambia** and **Kenya** offer methodological lessons that can inform policymakers and guide future initiatives for decentralized environmental management and climate change resilience. In all countries the support given to institutional coordination and data sharing indirectly benefited the formulation of other documents such as the State of the Environment and Habitat III reports.

82. Project relevance in **Croatia** was affected by national developments that significantly altered the policy landscape and baseline situation. These included the country’s accession to the European Union, the introduction of new environmental indicators and data requirements, a change of government that was followed by the suspension of project activities over an extended period. National environmental policies and legislation were revised to comply with the standards established by the Europe Environment Agency (EEA); indicators and data collection were expanded to meet Eurostat requirements. Almost a year after the project’s termination, the data flow systems designed by the project have yet to be adopted, although their inclusion is foreseen under the new Environmental Indicators Portal that will be operational in 2017. To an extent, parallel advances in institutional coordination superseded the project’s relevance: A national coordination committee was established for the UNFCCC, as were other working groups that connect providers and users of environmental data (i.e. the Meteorological and Hydrological Service, the Forestry Directorate and State Bureau of Statistics); however in such cases the project played an indirect role at best.

83. Gender issues were not considered in project design and are not reflected in the objectives, outcomes or implementation strategies. Indeed, the focus on MEA coordination, information systems and data management did not require explicit gender components. However, the work done at pilot sites in **The Gambia** and **Kenya** was implicitly relevant to gender participation in development. Participatory rural appraisals and planning exercises were conducted with Village Development Councils and CBOs that included women in their membership. The projects reinforced gender participation in local planning in Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda villages in **The Gambia**, and in communities surrounding the Yala wetlands in western **Kenya**.<sup>10</sup>

## **B. ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS**

### **B.1 The Gambia**

84. Performance evaluations usually focus on outputs and deliverables contained in the approved project document, with their respective targets and indicators. In this case, disparities were found between the outputs listed in the project document and those reported in the annual

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<sup>10</sup> This assumption is based on the meeting held with Friends of in Busia district and the methodology applied in preparing the *Yala Wetlands Integrated Management Plan*.

Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs). The differences are substantial in concept and scale. The PIRs consider three outputs instead of the original six that were approved in the project document; two of these are identical to outcomes listed in the same reports. The outputs that appear in the PIRs are broad in scope and over-dimensioned for a project of this scale, while several of the original outputs are listed as activities. There is no explanation for this variance and none of the changes were approved by a project revision or revised work plan to the evaluator’s knowledge. For the purpose of clarity, this assessment will consider the six outputs that are listed in the project document and evaluation Terms of Reference.

**Figure 4**  
**Gambia: Project Outcomes, Success Indicators and Outputs**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcome Success Indicators</b>	<b>Outputs: Project Document</b>	<b>Outputs: PIRs</b>
1. Institutional framework established at the national level for integrated management of global environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functional inter-ministerial collaborative institutional framework for dealing with multi-lateral environmental agreement and GEF issues</li> <li>The extent to which the project enhanced abilities of the GEF and convention focal points to express national priority environmental issues and capacity needs in a more integrated and strategic manner adopting the ecosystem approach</li> </ul>	1.1 Establishment of an effective MEA Coordinating Committee  1.2 Establishment of a functioning cross-cutting technical MEA Unit	1. An institutional framework established at the national level for integrated management of global environmental issues.
2. Global environmental management integrated into Divisional level management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harmonized policies on key identified cross-sectoral issues affecting response to global environmental challenges</li> <li>Enhanced reporting for three principle Rio Conventions for which GEF serves as financial mechanism</li> <li>Increased technical capacity of NB and Western divisions to understand global environmental issues</li> <li>Divisional planners incorporating the economic value of natural resources into Community Action Plans (CAPs)</li> <li>CAPs containing a more flexible, adaptive approach to economic development that takes climate change into account</li> <li>Management, co-ordination and prioritisation of global responsibilities embedded into divisional processes</li> <li>More balanced and integrated application of resources in divisions</li> </ul>	1.3 Improved collaboration between focal points  2.1 Understanding of ecosystem functions  2.2 Preliminary evaluation of environmental goods and services that currently support local livelihoods  2.3 Recognition of current adaptive management activities  2.4 Global environmental issues mainstreamed into decentralised planning process  2.5 Functioning inter-sectoral collaboration within TACs	2. Global environmental management integrated into Divisional level management  3. Improved collaboration between focal points

Under the first outcome, the project delivered outputs 1.1 and 1.2 by establishing a MEA Unit within the National Environment Agency (NEA) and an inter-institutional MEA Coordination Committee linked to the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Working Group, which is chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture and NEA serve as the secretariat for the ANR and the Executive Director serves as secretary of the NEMC work with Ministry of Environment to advise the National Environment Management Council (NEMC) on policy matters. The Coordination Committee included the three main Rio Convention focal points, government planning institutions, local government authorities, civil society organizations, NGOs and private sector representatives. However, it appears to have lacked functionality; the frequency of meetings declined over time and was discontinued after the project's termination.<sup>11</sup> The Coordination Committee was initially expected to meet on a quarterly basis, following the schedule of the ANR Working Group. Although meetings were held regularly during the initial stages of project implementation, they gradually declined to one or two meetings per year; some of the interviewed members were unable to recall specific meetings or the issues discussed. The MEA Coordination Committee hasn't met during the past 18 months and lacks an operational budget to sustain activities. There is not much evidence of improved collaboration between convention focal points (output 2.1) or the mainstreaming of global environmental issues mainstreamed into decentralized planning processes (output 2.4).

85. A MEA Support Unit was created within NEA (as envisioned under outputs 1.1) and is presently operational. It is composed of an Information Manager and support staff. The MEA Unit has assisted communications and data flows between MEA Coordination Committee members and convention focal points in particular, contributing indirectly to the 2014 UNCCD and State of the Environment reports. However, its primary mandate was to manage an integrated Information Management System (IMS) that was not satisfactorily delivered due to factors outside the project's control. The Dakar-based *Centre de Suivi Ecologique* (CSE) was contracted to design the IMS but lacked the technical expertise to do so. After extended delays (and efforts by NEA and UNEP to ensure its delivery) an unsatisfactory product was submitted that could not be used due to software incompatibilities with the NEA server. Renewed efforts to get CSE to correct these deficiencies were not successful and there continue to be disagreements over a final payment.

86. What is available at present is a NEA web page that is well structured and offers in-house information, but is not connected to external institutions (nor can they upload data) and therefore has not had effect on MEA coordination, monitoring or reporting. References to the main UN Conventions or their associated databases are absent on the main page (Figure 2).<sup>12</sup> Further assistance to develop the website was given by the GEF-funded "Coastal Resilience to Climate

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<sup>11</sup> This is not a negative finding and merely reflects the cyclical demand for such a Committee. MEA Committees are likely to be more effective if convened selectively according to the "peak" phases of Convention monitoring and reporting, rather than on a quarterly basis (which in this case, duplicated the ANR meetings that involved some of the same participants).

<sup>12</sup> Reliable information with regards to the three Rio Conventions current activities will be uploaded onto the website. According to NEA, a web link to the other three (3) Rio Conventions websites will also be created.

Change” project. Although the web page was expected to be fully functional by March, additional work is needed to develop the IMS as initially envisioned. The IMS was the most important deliverable of the first outcome and possibly the project as well; the unavailability of a functional portal with clearinghouse functions and institutional connectivity has weakened the progress achieved under the first outcome and several related outputs.<sup>13</sup> However, UNEP is working toward resolving the issue soon by exploring option of providing IT support from its headquarters.

87. The inconsistent meetings of the MEA Coordination Committee and absence of an operational IMS restricted opportunities for improving collaboration between MEA focal points – and between central and local government. Division-based ANRE sub-committees were trained on the ecosystem approach and there were positive examples of communication and data sharing between environmental authorities; the 2014 UNCCD, State of the Environment and Habitat III reports are examples. However, this was considered by several respondents to reflect personal initiative rather than the influence of the project.

88. Communications between convention focal points are mostly *ad hoc* outside of the ANR Working Group and national climate change committee. Important parallel initiatives (including a planned US\$ 21 million Green Conservation Fund project for community-based climate change adaptation) are unaware of the project’s pilot activities at the village level, which can be replicated on a broader scale.<sup>14</sup>

89. There is consensus that more progress was made towards the second outcome, particularly with regards to the pilot Community Action Plans (CAPs) drafted by the villages of Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda. Several factors have contributed to the successful ecosystem-based planning processes conducted in both villages, and which have leveraged further support:<sup>15</sup> Both locations were very well selected. In addition to having the requisite Village Development Council, Darsilameh already had a registered community organization (AFES) that was active in tree planting, wood harvesting and fruit cultivation. Tumani Tenda’s

*“Community Action Plans (CAPs) are the final outputs of PRAs that have identified the community priority development concerns with the participation of the affected community. The proposed interventions are then costed and ranked by community members with the PRA team, including technical experts, based on set criteria for selection. These interventions are then proposed as Community Actions that need to be taken to address the identified prioritized concerns...The CAPs are then agreed upon by the community members and the PRA team as those projects that will be implemented.”*

*- Review of Community Action Plans adopting an Ecosystem Approach: North Bank and West Coast Regions Workshops (May 2012)*

<sup>13</sup> Based on the success indicators listed for the first outcome and the outputs 1.2-1.3 (Figure 1).

<sup>14</sup> These are the evaluator’s findings and are based on the feedback provided by interviewed project participants and other stakeholders. . However, NEA’s Director has noted that Rio conventions focal points do report quarterly to the ANR working group of which NEA is the secretariat, and that the information is shared with the MEA Unit team. Likewise, NEA’s Director has observed that other initiatives such as the GEF-funded « Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change » and the Green Climate Fund initiative are now building on the work of the project at village level activities e.g in Darsilameh.

local organization had been prized by NEA for its environmental work, and currently manages a tourist camp near the village. The capacity and motivation of these organizations were important drivers of local participation and commitment. During the evaluation visits, both community organizations expressed a keen interest in receiving further training on project proposal writing and intend to use their CAPs to seek support from other donors.

90. In both villages, local capacities for environmental planning and management were strengthened. The aforementioned Community Action Plans articulate local development and conservation priorities, and offer an important tool for mobilizing external support. Since the project's termination, additional support was received from UNDP's Sustainable Livelihood Investment Program (SLIP), FAO and ECO (an environmental NGO) for village projects. The pilot experiences validated the ecosystems approach and have generated tangible benefits; the methodology that was used merits replication on a wider scale (which has not happened).

91. The activities implemented at the village level have had didactic value. Local attitudes were changed – initially villagers in Tumani Tenda had not understood what the project was offering, in the absence of material support. The appreciation of capacity development as a community asset was largely a consequence of the project. The ecosystems approach combined Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, Venn diagrams, ZOPP exercises and ranked

*"This was our first experience in community planning."*

*- CAP participant from Tumani Tenda*

valuations of environmental services that were imparted in an accessible and user-friendly manner. This has changed local perceptions towards natural resources and extractive activities such as salt mining. The acquired learning led to the identification of new initiatives for tree and mangrove planting, beekeeping, soil protection and land reclamation that are reflected in the CAPs.

92. Unfortunately, the successful experiences that were implemented in the pilot villages were not replicated in other locations, nor have they influenced local government. The project provided ecosystems training to the Agriculture, Natural Resource and Environment (ANRE) Sub-Committees that are linked to the Technical Advisory Committees of divisional government. This was intended to support national decentralization policies, increase local government awareness, reflect the economic value of natural resources in development plans, and build linkages between the ANRE sub-committees and central ANR Working Group. The evaluator's visits to the North Bank and South Coast Divisions suggest that none of these were realized.

**Figure 6**

**Community Action Plan for Tumani Tenda Village: Matrix of Problems and Opportunities**

RANKING	PROBLEM	OPPORTUNITY	ACTION/RESOURCES		COMMENTS/ EXPECTED RESULTS
			Community	Donor/External	
1	Salt water intrusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construction of dykes</li> <li>- Liming</li> <li>- Application of chemicals to correct acidity (Calcium carbonate, etc.)</li> <li>- Provision of salt resistant crop varieties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skilled labor</li> <li>- Provision of lime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical support</li> <li>- Provision of chemicals</li> <li>- Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved vegetable production</li> <li>- Improved income</li> </ul>
2	Low oysters and shrimps production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community Sensitization</li> <li>- Community management community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobilization of community</li> <li>- Formulation of bye-laws</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sensitization and training of community members on importance of biodiversity, conservation and management Funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved conservation and management</li> <li>- Increased oysters and shrimp population</li> </ul>
3	Illegal gravel mining and deforestation	Refilling old illegal sites replanting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skilled labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision of sand and gravel by donors</li> <li>- Provision of seedlings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved environmental conservation and management</li> </ul>
4	Land erosion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Construction of diversions for water run-off</li> <li>- Tree planting Refilling of erosion affected sites</li> <li>- Community sensitization on effects of over grazing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skilled labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding</li> <li>- Provision of sand and gravel for affected areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved environmental conservation and management</li> </ul>



Only two of the seven ANRE sub-committee members that had participated in the project were still present, as most had been transferred elsewhere. There was little knowledge of the Darsilameh Community Action Plan. The interviewed participants felt that they had not received enough training, and that contact with the project team had been inconsistent. ANRE sub-committee members from West Coast Division were not available for interview during the evaluator’s visit to Tumani Tenda, and villagers had no recollection of their presence during the planning process. In both Divisions, staff turnover and lack of an operating budget limit the ANREs options, to the point of restricting travel within their jurisdiction. Environmental matters are more likely to be discussed by the Technical Advisory Committees, although implementation is almost entirely dependent on external financing. National or local funding mechanisms to replicate the pilot processes in other villages do not exist.

## B.2 Croatia

93. There are also variances between the outputs that are listed in the approved project document and those that appear in the annual PIRs. In this case, however, the number of outputs was increased (from 12 to 13) and they do not overlap with project outcomes. Given that several outputs were adjusted by the Croatian Agency for the Environment and Nature (CAEN) following extended delays in activating the project, this assessment is based on the outputs contained in the PIRs. Most of the outputs relating to the first three outcomes – incorporation of indicators, design of data flow systems (DFS) and pilot testing of the model – were delivered satisfactorily after a slow start. There were performance problems with the company that was initially selected and these deliverables were re-contracted to EKONERG and OIKON, an established consortia with demonstrated expertise in environmental data management.

**Figure 7**

### **Croatia: Project Outcomes, Success Indicators and Outputs**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcomes Success Indicators</b>	<b>Outputs: Project Document</b>	<b>Outputs: PIR Reports</b>
1. An enhanced Environmental Information System that incorporates SMART indicators sets covering global environmental concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMART indicators identified to cover national needs in convention implementation</li> <li>• IT correlations established and data incorporated into existing EIS</li> </ul>	1.1 Common indicators defined covering all 3 conventions with metadata specified  1.2 IT correlation database built taking into account the EIS requirements and using existing GIS and other databases	1. Analysis of the current data collection system  2. Definition of common indicators related to all three conventions.  3. Identification and linking of sources/institutions relevant to data sharing and flow  4. Design of data flow system for all three conventions
2. A cooperative institutional framework (Data Flow System) that increases information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DFS established for UNCCD, UNCCC and UNCBD institutions</li> <li>• All relevant institutions and</li> </ul>	2.1 Data Flow System designed for institutions concerned with UNCCD, UNCCC and UNCBD issues	5. Identification of data gaps and making a plan for baseline data collection

accessibility and reduces redundancy in data collection	agencies utilize the DFS effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data management cost reduced with decrease in redundant data collection</li> </ul>	2.2 Time dynamic institutional responsibilities defined 2.3 Data and information management protocols defined and implemented	6. Definition of pilot area and identification of required data set 7. Database creation based on GIS databases, available non-spacious databases and individual information related to three conventions
3. Indicator system and institutional DFS piloted in areas with demonstrated convention inter-linkages and complex institutional set-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report on impact of biomass burning on direct and indirect GHG emissions/removals and soil erosion</li> <li>Increased awareness of environmental issues among key stakeholders</li> </ul>	3.1 Pilot area defined, required data set identified and existing data collated (“zero point” data) 3.2 First set of data and information produced on present state conditions in pilot area 3.3 Public awareness activities and materials developed at pilot area 3.4 DFS web-enabled	8. Visibility event stakeholders and public from pilot area for the defined area for pilot project testing data flow system created for all three conventions 9. Website development with DFS web enabled and accessible 10. Testing of data flow system with feedback from various stakeholders
4. A sustainable national capacity building program for the management of convention data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective capacity building program undertaken by staff of all key institutions covering calculation of indicators, and data collection, exchange, and dissemination</li> </ul>	4.1 Analysis of project outputs and recommendations for policy changes provided to stakeholders 4.2 Capacity building program developed covering data collection, exchange and dissemination, calculation of indicators	11. Analysis of project outputs and recommendations for policy changes to stakeholders 12. Analysis of DFS and check on possible needs for adoption/improvements of the document based on the pilot project results 13. Capacity building plan for relevant stakeholders

94. The design of the DFS model was assisted by inter-institutional working groups and consultations with CAEN, the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection (MENP) and other public institutions that use environmental data. The resulting framework is comprehensive and well designed: 49 environmental indicators were drawn from the 266 indicators that constitute the National List of Indicators. Of these, 17 were selected for UNFCC, 18 for UNCBD and 19 for UNCCD. The list of indicators was further refined to reflect changes in legislation,<sup>16</sup> relevance to national and international requirements, and operability, resulting in a final list of 23 indicators.

95. Problems in harmonizing Rio convention indicators were encountered at an early stage. The intention of designing indicators and data flows that were compatible with the three main conventions was difficult to achieve within the existing list of national indicators: 7 of the 17 indicators selected for the UNFCCC were also compatible with UNCDB, 11 were suitable for UNCCD, and 5 were compatible with EU reporting requirements. However, only one indicator

<sup>16</sup> The National List of Indicators was developed prior to Croatia’s entry to the EU. Since then, new indicators were added to comply with EEA and EUROSTAT requirements

(Burnt Forest Area) out of 23 was found to be compatible with the three conventions. Five of the 23 indicators were relevant to both the EU and at least one Rio Convention. Two over-arching indicators (Productivity of Land Cover and Land Cover Potential for Biodiversity) were added, as was an indicator of public awareness that was tested during the pilot exercise in Učka Nature Park.

**Figure 8**

**Selected National Environmental Indicators for UN Conventions and DFS**<sup>17</sup>

<b>Selected UNFCCC indicators</b>	
<b>KP 1</b>	Emission and removals of greenhouse gases
<b>KP 2</b>	Projections of emissions and removals of greenhouse gases with policies and measures
<b>KP 3</b>	Emissions of nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O)
<b>KP 4</b>	Emissions of methane (CH <sub>4</sub> )
<b>KP 5</b>	Emissions and removals of carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )
<b>Selected UNCBD indicators</b>	
<b>ZPV1</b>	Protected areas under the Nature Protection Act
<b>BR 1</b>	Areas in the ecological network of Croatia
<b>BR 12</b>	High nature value farmland
<b>BR14</b>	Forest: deadwood
<b>BR 17</b>	Financing protection and conservation of biodiversity
<b>BR18</b>	Public awareness on nature protection
<b>Š 1</b>	Forest and forest land cover

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- P3 Productivity of land cover and land cover changes in productivity;
  - BR19 Land cover potential for biodiversity.

Selected UNCCD indicators	
<b>KZ 11</b>	Deposition of oxidized and reduced N compounds (NOX and NHX), and deposition of oxidized sulphur compounds (SOX)
<b>KP 7</b>	Trend of mean annual air temperature
<b>KP 16</b>	Trend of annual frequency of dry and rainy periods with annual assessment by means of standardized precipitation index (SOI)
<b>KP 18</b>	Assessment of aridity during 30-years period and monitoring of aridity trend
<b>P1</b>	Land use and land use change
<b>TP 1</b>	Land take due to land use change
<b>GO 18</b>	Remediation of contaminated sites (Hot spots)
<b>Š3</b>	Burnt forest areas
<b>Š6</b>	Use of pesticides in forestry
<b>IM 1</b>	Exploitation of mineral resources
<b>IE 1</b>	Accidents with adverse effects on the environment by location and by cause

Source: DFS : Part 1, slides 12-13 (Ekoner Power Point presentation)

96. The 23 indicators are described in the EKONER and OIKON reports, which include DFS diagrams illustrating data collection, processing and reporting flows. They were presented to the project Steering Committee, discussed and adjusted. However, the data flow systems have not been formally adopted to date, although in practice data flows for climate change and biodiversity exist and are applied by the national climate change coordination committee and other inter-institutional working groups.<sup>18</sup> The work done is of a high professional caliber, yet the decision to base the choice of indicators on the National List proved to be a limiting factor, given the subsequent expansion of indicators and data requirements following Croatia's accession to the EU. Outputs 1-5 were delivered as set forth in the project document; likewise, there are operational data flows in the case of the UNFCCC and UNCBD. However, the progress achieved has not met the expectations that "all relevant institutions and agencies utilize the DFS effectively" or "data management costs are reduced with a decrease in redundant data collection"

<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the Forest Department is an important provider of data that feed into indicators for the UN Conventions.

as stated in the success criteria for this outcome.

**Figure 9**

**Recommendations for the Application of Environmental Data Flow Systems**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FINAL PROJECT REPORT**

- Harmonize legislation to ensure data flows and the appointment of the national reference centers
- Indicators should be continually updated and upgraded in regard to methodology, emerging issues, common sets of activity and data sources, and quality assurance/ control, to ensure compatibility
- The Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection and National Focal Points should prepare a coordination programme for the Rio Conventions as a platform that would define objectives, activities, deadlines, activity performance holders and common elements of reporting, with emphasis on the DFS model.
- A web application with GIS browser and database should be appropriately embedded in the Environmental Information System managed by the Croatian Environmental Agency.
- The introduction of new chapter to the national reports and communications is proposed relating to policies and measures, in order to address the coordination of sectoral policies and measures regarding climate change, desertification and biodiversity.
- Local stakeholders should assume a more active role in developing and improving country-specific methodologies and parameters for calculating indicators used to report to the UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNCBD conventions.
- Capacity building programme for key stakeholders should be implemented in the short term, with focus on strengthening data flow system for common climate change, biodiversity and desertification indicators.
- CAEN should consider modalities for the transfer of knowledge and good practices gained through the project to other countries (particularly developing countries) in support of capacity building and technology transfer.

- Source: *Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia – Final Report (CAEN, 2015)*

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EKONERG STUDY**

***Ministry of Environment & Nature Protection and Convention Focal Points:***

- Prepare coordination program for the Rio Conventions (defining objectives, activities, deadlines, activity performance holders, common elements of reporting etc.)
- Existing data and indicators flow system should be upgraded introducing modalities for stronger horizontal connections (the bottom-up principle)
- A new chapter should be introduced to national reports related to policy and measures.
- Harmonize legislation in order to ensure the data flow
- **Appoint national reference centers for each convention**

***CAEN:***

- Continually update indicators selected under this project (23) as well as 2 new indicators
- Incorporate web application with GIS browser and database in the EIS
- Implement in the short term the capacity building program for key stakeholders.
- Encourage a more active role of stakeholders in improving and developing country-specific methodologies and parameters for calculation of indicators

-Source: *D. Rados, Ekonerg 2016 (Power Point Presentation)*

97. It is encouraging that CAEN plans to upload the DFS to the new Environmental Indicators Portal that will be operational in 2017. This development would correspond to outputs 9 and 10, and ultimately determine the utility of the model - in particular for the UNCBD and UNCCD, as the UNFCCC focal point already has data flow arrangements in place. Another positive step is the collaboration between the UNFCCC and UNCCD focal points on information sharing and possible co-funding for projects of mutual interest (i.e. linking land degradation with adaptation to climate change).

98. As recommended by Ekoner (Figure 7), the adoption and implementation of the DFS model will require government ordinances to establish responsibilities and ensure compliance. This calls for a degree of political commitment that has not been manifested thus far due to institutional changes and staff turnovers; CAEN had three Executive Directors during the project period. Since Croatia's accession to the EU in 2013, the overriding environmental priority is compliance with EU guidelines and reporting requirements.

99. A more likely – and less ambitious - scenario is that environmental data flows will continue to develop (as they have) in response to evolving national/international requirements, which, as mentioned, are largely driven by EU standards. According to national respondents, EEA and Eurostat data requirements for climate change are now aligned to those of the UNFCCC; in the case of biodiversity, the available data needs to be re-interpreted in order to be used by the UNCBD, FAO and other global organizations that require such information. The usefulness of the DFS framework will be clearer once the indicators are uploaded to the Environmental Indicators Portal, a three layer web application with GIS browser that will connect a broad range of institutions.<sup>19</sup>

100. Reporting to UNCCD is comparatively more complex, since Croatian legislation does not mandate soil or land degradation monitoring, and EU environmental standards do not require national strategies for land degradation. Current EU initiatives are more focused on soil contamination from industrial use than erosion or desertification. UNCCD data requirements are expected to be more demanding with the adoption of quantified indicators such as the Land Degradation Neutrality Index (LDNI). Although Croatia is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, institutional responsibilities have not been defined. For some indicators, there are unresolved data issues - for example, at that time data were not available to calculate all categories of land use in accordance with IPCC guidelines.

101. Although the evaluation agenda did not include a visit to the pilot area or interviews with regional participants, the outputs linked to the third outcome were fully achieved. Ucka National Park was selected among 28 potential sites to apply the DFS model for measuring changes in GHG emissions from controlled forest fires; the selection was based on criteria developed by inter-institutional working groups. The pilot exercise appears to have been well organized:

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<sup>19</sup> There are signs of progress in this respect. The list of biodiversity indicators has been used in national reports to report progress towards 2020 Aichi Targets

Existing data flows were assessed through questionnaires to local institutions. The DFS model was presented at workshops and training events were organized. New data was collected for selected indicators applying the DFS and fed into a website and GIS database. The pilot exercise was successful and validated the model proposed by the project.

102. Under the fourth outcome, a national capacity building program for managing convention data was designed and posted on the CAEN website, although its budgeting and implementation are pending and will ultimately depend on whether the DFS model is adopted.<sup>20</sup> Capacity needs were assessed and a modular program designed to address (i) convention-specific reporting needs, (ii) indicators for monitoring the state of the environment, (iii) methodologies for creating common sets of indicators, (iv) quality assurance and control, (v) the composition of the DFS model, (vi) functional uses of DFS web applications, (vii) organization and time schedules for the training modules, and (viii) relevant documents. The modules are directed at government authorities and public institutions - convention focal points, scientific/professional organizations, universities and NGOs.

### B.3 Kenya

103. In this case both the project document and PIRs use the same outputs and indicators. As with the other two projects, project approval and commencement were delayed and overall implementation was slow. The project's drawn-out pace (it started in early 2009 and there are still pending deliverables) clearly affected continuity and lowered the potential impact of capacity building activities and the pilot environmental planning processes.

**Figure 11**

**Kenya: Project Outcomes, Outputs and Success Indicators**

Outcomes	Outputs	Output Success Indicators
1. Development and implementation of national development projects and programs incorporates the obligations and the principles of four global environmental conventions namely UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and POPs through the application of appropriate environment impact assessment tools and methodologies (EIA and Environment audit guidelines)	1.1 National regulations and guidelines for EIA and EA (environmental audit) that incorporate global environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of global environment issues addressed in the EIA/EA guidelines and procedures</li> <li>- Usefulness of training manual and guidelines as gathered from feedback from users</li> <li>- The extent to which the use of training manuals and guidelines are institutionalized within daily operations of NEMA and other agencies</li> <li>- An information sharing network and - mechanism in place</li> <li>- One annual Work Plan for joint planning joint planning, programming and implementation of MEAs for each year starting with the second year of the project life.</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> The formal adoption of the DFS model and indicators is uncertain at this stage, yet according to CAEN respondents may be viable once the Environmental Indicators portal is operational.

	1.3 Enhanced EIA and audit tools and procedures tested on three sites with the incorporation of Global Environment indicators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 Convention reports per year cleared through the CHM</li> <li>- Improved data and information for globally significant species and habitats as well improved understanding of environmental threats and use of the IIMS for enhanced decision-making system.</li> <li>- Coordinated response to MEAs</li> </ul>
2. Response to the four global environment convention obligations made more coherent, effective and cost-efficient.	<p>2.1. Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) on MEAs established</p> <p>2.2. Harmonized system of data gathering, definition, classification and processing established.</p> <p>2.3. Enhanced Reporting and CHM for the relevant conventions established</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An existing functional information management system</li> <li>- Joint work plan for information gathering in context of the reporting on the 3 MEAs</li> <li>- Focal units for MEAs as well as NEMA and collaborating agencies fully connected through internet</li> <li>- A multi-sector information management committee in place</li> <li>- Protocol/guidelines for data collection, processing and management put in place</li> <li>- Mechanism for coordinated/joint data management in place</li> <li>- One Information management system in place, including a common website for the MEAs</li> <li>- Coordinated response to implementation of MEAs</li> <li>- At least 20 MEA Practitioners (NEMA, MEA focal point staff) trained on reporting and CHM systems</li> <li>- 10 Seminars and training workshops organized for NGO, CBOs and policy/decision makers on MEA related themes.</li> <li>- Kenya experts participate and contribute effectively in the respective COPs and other MEA Committees</li> </ul>

104. Under the first outcome, most of the activities leading to outputs 1.1-1.2 had been completed by the end of the project, although late delivery weakened their combined effect. A key product was the *Environmental Impact Assessment Reviewer's Manual*, which is intended to improve the application of national environmental impact assessment and audit (EIA/EA) regulations that were legislated in 2003 and amended by the Environmental Management and Coordination Act of 2015, and by introducing environmental considerations related to the Rio Convention including Environmentally Significant Areas. The EIA Reviewer's Manual provides a comprehensive overview that covers legislation, policies, technical concepts and steps involved in the actual process (with sub-sections for different sectors).

105. The EIA Manual is accompanied by a briefer guide for community use, and guidelines for the declaration of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs), a gazetted land use category that provides additional conservation safeguards to ecosystems with high biodiversity. EIA



training was given to NEMA staff, environmental focal points from line ministries, national research institutions, local government authorities from the pilot sites, and NGOs.

106. The activities associated with Output 1.2 were implemented in three pilot sites that were very well selected. The Yala wetlands ecosystem and Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area are fragile ecosystems with high biodiversity that face land use conflicts and environmental threats connected with commercial-scale agricultural production, water contamination and wildlife displacement (Yala); and geothermal energy extraction, illegal charcoal production and grasslands degradation (Mt. Suswa). The geothermal energy project has strong backing from central government and will affect the Mt. Suswa crater - *Ol Doinyo Nyoike* – which has unique biodiversity and is sacred to the Maasai clans of Kenya and Tanzania as the point of origin of *Ngai*, the principal deity. This has become a very conflictive issue. In April 2014, a number of Maasai communities from the Rift Valley organized protests against the land concessions that were approved for geothermal extraction inside traditional tribal lands and conservation areas (including Mt. Suswa). The third pilot site – Marula Dam – is the main source of potable water for Machakos City’s 300,000 residents yet is threatened by rapid sedimentation and agrochemical contamination caused by unregulated farming activities within the catchment area, soil erosion on the dam’s shoreline and accumulated solid waste from an adjacent public park. The area is also threatened by rapid urbanization and infrastructure development.

107. Training workshops and pilot planning processes were conducted with local stakeholder associations such as the *Friends of Yala*, the *Mount Suswa Conservancy Management Committee* and the *Marula Dam water resource committee*, with the participation of county-based NEMA officers and government staff. The training provided an overview of EIA guidelines, methods for natural resource valuation and the costing of environmental services, and fed into the design of environmental management plans for each pilot area.

108. This output was partly achieved in relation to the corresponding success criteria. Global issues are addressed in the EIA/EA guidelines, and interviewed respondents from the pilot areas considered the training to be very useful. The guidelines are based on regulations that have been in effect over the past decade, and offer a useful reference for practitioners. However, the training that was implemented in the pilot areas did not appear to have significant effect on local government capacities or commitment, or that of the stakeholder associations with the exception of *Friends of Yala* and officials from Busia’s county government. The country government officials who were interviewed did not convey the level of EIA knowledge or support for the pilot environmental management plans that would have been expected after more than five years of project implementation. This is mostly due to the change of local government officials and staff due to change of administration and arrival of new devolved local governments. While the frequency of training and site



*Mt. Suswa’s crater, biodiversity “hotspot” and abode of Ngai, the Masaai’s supreme deity*

visits by the project team should have been more consistent, the transition from district to county government under the constitutional devolution amendment - and consequent turnover of local government staff - clearly influenced this situation.

109. The capacity of recipient organizations to understand EIA concepts and apply conservation measures was another determining factor. In this respect, the Mt. Suswa Conservancy committee and Marula Dam association do not seem to have internalized the training provided. Turnout and memory were low at the evaluation meetings organized in Narok and Machakos counties. EIA tools were not adequately tested in the pilot areas due to the combination of slow implementation and missed opportunity: The environmental impact assessment conducted for proposed geothermal energy extraction within the Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area happened in advance of project training and the local stakeholders did not fully understand or participate in the public hearings or overall process, despite being the most affected group. The evaluator was told that an environmental license has already been granted to the geothermal development company, which can now commence drilling. This will more than likely lead to further conflict.

120. Nor did the formulation of environmental management plans coincide with the government planning and budgeting cycle. As a result, they were not considered in the five-year County Integrated Development Plans.<sup>21</sup> None of the pilot plans are being implemented at present (with the exception of some activities at Yala) and the printed versions will only be available in April 2016. However, it is expected that NEMA, within its mandate, will continue advocating consideration of the plans in national and county development plans. The EIA and ESA manuals were distributed to various environmental agencies at a workshop, yet more frequent training and follow-up were needed to produce the desired capacity improvements outside of NEMA.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> On a positive note, the *Friends of Yala* have noted agreements to undertake some remedial actions were reached with Busia county government officials and representatives of the Dominion agro-processing complex that operates adjacent to the Yala protected area.

<sup>22</sup> For example, the evaluator was told that the Convention Focal Points (who sit in government ministries) have little knowledge of the project, as opposed to the Convention Desk Officers within NEMA who were cognizant and appreciative of the project's support. Again, personnel turnover has been a contributing factor and only one FP has been present during most of the implementation period.

121. Two of the three outputs planned under the second outcome (2.1 and 2.2) were fully achieved. An integrated information management system (IIMS)<sup>23</sup> has been operational since late 2015. According to the NEMA-based convention desk officers the system facilitates access to data, saves time and reduces the need to attend requests for information that can be accessed online. The public may now directly download environmental statistics, information on MEAs, funding opportunities and other topics. The UNFCCC Desk Officer no longer needs to personally guide each inquiry through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) model, Climate Change Fund guidelines or latest COP. The CBD desk officer uploads data to the portal to inform the CBD Secretariat on progress towards 20 biodiversity targets, rather than reporting periodically. Companies interested in the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) modality have direct access to guidelines and on-going activities. Compliance with international disclosure and transparency regulations require that public notices be issued, which are now handled digitally; the public can give online comments before an environmental license is issued. These benefits provide the convention desk officers with more time for substantive endeavours. NEMA staff and convention desk officers have been trained on how to use the system, which now needs to be disseminated to a broader audience.

*“We can put more information, instead of fighting for limited space on the old website, and we save time from responding to clients. When they come face-to-face it takes time.”*

*- A Convention Desk Officer from NEMA*

122. There were limits to the harmonization of data collection, monitoring and reporting between conventions. There has not been a “coordinated response” to MEAs as envisioned in the work plan, due to differences between the conventions themselves: The variances in terms of data needs, levels of specificity (i.e. the Tier 1-2 data required by UNFCCC), reporting formats and schedules - combined with changing indicators and data requirements *within* each convention – have precluded the “joint planning, programming and implementation of MEAs for each year” that were expected under the first outcome. Nevertheless, NEMA desk officers consider the IIMS to be the project’s most important contribution, with the potential to enhance coordination between conventions through common databases and a clearinghouse function. Furthermore, the project has supported the process of developing a National MEA Strategy led by the Ministry of Environment. The Strategy is expected to ensure the expected coordination between MEAs.

123. The final output (2.3) was not achieved due to inadequate timing and synchronization. The most recent UN Convention reports were drafted between 2014 and 2015, before the new information system became operational. This was an important ‘missed opportunity’ given that the next round of convention reports will take place in 2017, well after the project has finished.

## C. EFFECTIVENESS

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<sup>23</sup> The information system can be accessed at [WWW.MEAS.NEMA.GO.KE](http://WWW.MEAS.NEMA.GO.KE).

124. The three projects shared common backgrounds (Bali Strategic Plan, NCSAs) and objectives that were reflected in their design, i.e. consideration of global environmental issues in development planning, better coordination between MEA focal points, integration of data collection, monitoring and reporting processes. Their effectiveness in achieving these objectives, and the factors contributed to (or limited) their achievement, offer insight into the challenges of implementing the Bali Strategic Plan and a “reality check” regarding the extent to which the Rio Conventions can be integrated at the national level.

125. The evaluation findings indicate that all projects were able to deliver most of the planned outputs. However, project objectives and outcomes were only partially achieved in relation to the key indicators on which “...the project will be monitored and evaluated” according to the standard text.<sup>24</sup>

126. The factors contributing to their limited effectiveness were both logistical and substantive. Expected impacts were undermined by late project starts, recruitment delays, slow procurement and drawn-out implementation processes. There were also changing national contexts and priorities, low baseline capacities within local governments and pilot communities and unrealistic expectations concerning the integration of global convention mechanisms. These factors disrupted the synchronization of project interventions, leading to a series of missed opportunities: The late delivery of key products – information systems, training processes, pilot environmental plans – hindered the achievement of associated outputs and outcomes.<sup>25</sup> There was insufficient time to consolidate or apply capacity improvements within national institutions. Pilot ecosystems planning processes did not feed into the local government planning and budgeting cycle.

### C.1 The Gambia

*Objective 1:* Strengthening the national institutional framework for integrated management of global environmental priorities. *Evaluation Achievement Rating:* Moderately unsatisfactory.

127. The level of achievement of this objective did not meet expectations outlined in the project document. Institutional arrangements were initially strengthened with the creation of the MEA Coordination Committee and MEA Support Unit. However, the Coordination Committee lost momentum as implementation proceeded, meeting once or twice a year (instead of quarterly as initially scheduled). The Committee is not operational and has not met since the project was terminated; its functions appear to be covered by the broader ANR Working Group. The MEA Coordination Committee does not have official status, nor does it have an operating budget. It is presently dormant yet could be re-activated according to demand, for example during peak

<sup>24</sup> Section 1.B “Key Indicators, Assumptions and Risks”

<sup>25</sup> This aspect is analyzed in terms of causal pathways and cross-output linkages in Section A.2 “Theory of Change Revisited”

periods of convention data collection and reporting, or to appraise new projects and policies that are relevant to more than one convention.

128. The MEA Unit continues to operate within NEA but lacks the planned IMS portal that was essential to operationalize the new institutional framework and enhance collaboration between Focal Points. The NEMA website has been improved since the project finished. However the envisioned information system is not functional, nor are convention focal points or other stakeholders outside of NEMA connected. The availability of an information management system at an early stage of implementation would have enabled the project to advance further towards the first objective.

*“I cannot see much difference. The Conventions are still being isolated in isolation.”*

*“Every time I attended a Committee meeting I learned something.”*

*“We were exposed to the Information Management System but then it stopped.”*

*- Government members of the MEA Coordination Committee*

129. The project’s influence on MEA reporting was indirect at best. The MEA Coordination Committee may have influenced the formulation of the 2014 UNCCD, Habitat III and State of the Environment reports,<sup>26</sup> as well as the national poverty reduction strategy. However, many respondents do not perceive advances in coordination or communications between MEA Focal Points, even though the Rio Conventions are managed by departments associated with the Ministry of Environment. The limited communication between focal points is also reflected in parallel initiatives<sup>27</sup> that are unaware of project activities, foregoing opportunities for synergy or replication. There is no evidence of project repercussions on the frequency or timeliness of MEA reporting, or the Gambia’s reputation for environment management amongst donors and stakeholders. Many respondents still consider coordination between MEAs to be a priority need.

*Objective 2: Integrating global environmental issues into divisional level planning and implementation through the application of ecosystem approach. Evaluation Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory*

130. The ecosystems approach to natural resource planning and management was successfully applied in two pilot villages, and training given to the Agriculture, Natural Resource & Environmental (ANRE) sub-committees within the North Bank and South Coast divisional governments. However, there are no indications that this enhanced the integration (or consideration) of environmental concerns within local government plans or programmes. The intended linkages between the ANRE sub-committees and the central ANR Working Group are not operational.

*“We think that with the [Community Action] Plan we will be able to sell our proposal to the Country government and NGOs”*

*“NEA shows communities that it is possible to start their own development process”*

*- Tumani Tenda village participants*

131. The ANRE sub-committee attached to the North Bank divisional government has little memory of project

es were more the result of personal initiative than the project’s influence. n project and a new US\$ 21 million project that will support ecosystems- by the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

activities, and only two of the original seven members remain. Those who did participate felt the project had lacked presence and that the training provided was useful but insufficient to have effect on local government capacities or practices. Few were informed on the planning process and Community Action Plan that had been piloted in Darsilameh village, less than 50 km. away. Much of the problem is structural: The ANRE sub-committee lacks basic resources (vehicles, petrol, per diem) that are needed to disseminate the ecosystems approach to other villages. Budgetary allocations for environmental conservation are negligible, and interviewed sub-committee members felt that any follow-up to the pilot activities would require external financing.

132. In South Coast, the evaluator was unable to meet with the ANRE sub-committee or other divisional government representatives. The sub-committee had very little participation in the project and did not accompany the village planning process or CAP formulation. As in North Bank, there have also been high turnovers of staff. In both cases, it is likely the more established Technical Advisory Committees will absorb that role of ANRE sub-committees. This may be a logical and inevitable outcome, yet it is also unfortunate given that North Bank and South Coast were the only Divisions in the country to have created ANRE subcommittees, following a national policy directive.

*“This was one of the most important projects in our community so far because it helps me to understand how to develop a plan. I had heard of planning before but before I did not know how to do it.”*

*- A participant from Tumani Tenda village.*

133. The second objective would merit a lower achievement rating were it not for the successful ecosystems planning processes that were piloted in the villages of Darsilamen and Tumani Tenda, and which represent the project’s most important accomplishment. The progress achieved at the village level reflected (i) an effective screening process that led to the selection of motivated and experienced communities with active organizations, (ii) the methodological value of the ecosystems approach and selected PRA tools, and (iii) the quality of the training methods used by the project team and consultants.

134. In both villages, community organizations were appreciative of the pilot process that had taken place and perceived improvements in local planning and resource management capacities. The Community Action Plans (CAPs) are seen both as an expression of local priorities and vision, and as a tool for attracting external support. Village expectations towards the CAPs are high; during the evaluator’s visit, community leaders requested information on funding sources and would like to receive further training on drafting project proposals. Soil conservation and reforestation activities were being implemented. In both cases the CAPs have leveraged additional support from other donors.

135. The pilot processes conducted in Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda validate an approach that has potential for guiding community-driven coastal zone management and climate change adaptation activities, both of which are critical in a country that is low-lying with 50% of its territory susceptible to flooding. Unfortunately, the mechanisms to disseminate the case studies or finance their replication were not in place at the time of the evaluator’s visit - although the

ongoing GEF-funded “Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change” project is reportedly now building on the project’s village level activities and lessons learned.

## C.2 Croatia

*Objective:* Build national capacity for integrated global environmental management through the development of an indicator model and comprehensive Data Flow System. *Achievement Rating:* Moderately Satisfactory

136. The project’s approval was delayed, to the point that CAEN staff members could not recall the project when UNEP notified the agency. Croatia’s accession as a EU member in 2013 brought significant changes to national policies and legislation. There were new environmental regulations to comply with that used new indicators, data and reporting formats. Adjusting to the requirements of the European Environmental Agency (EEA) and Eurostat became more immediate government priorities than integrating the Rio Conventions. The project’s implementation was also affected by the discontinuity of two national project coordinators and the subsequent elimination of the post, the election of a new government, the restructuring of environmental institutions (with CEA evolving into CAEN) and suspension of project activities for almost two years.

*“Before we didn’t talk and there was no inter-ministerial coordination, until so many new obligations came together. The project helped to develop a precedent of dialogue and communication”*

*- UNFCCC Focal Point from Croatia’s Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection*

137. The main outputs were delivered and are available. However, the DFS model was not adopted (as had been envisioned by the key performance indicators listed in the project document) and is not being applied at present; a similar situation occurs with the capacity development programme. The UNFCCC has well-developed data flows in place and is assisted by the national climate change committee. The project developed data flows for 23 environmental indicators drawn from the National List of Indicators, that are compatible with GIS and other databases. The feedback given by CAEN and convention focal points on the DFS was generally positive. In retrospect, the decision to limit the selection of indicators to the National List limited the scope of the exercise. The DFS model was not officially adopted, although there is better coordination between environmental institutions as reflected in the national UNFCCC committee and other working groups that have appeared since Croatia’s EU membership. The project contributed indirectly to some of these developments by creating a precedent of interaction between environmental institutions (as did the NCSA). As noted, there are plans to upload the DFS to the new Environmental Indicators Portal that is under design with EU support and will be operational in 2017. This may encourage broader knowledge and use of the DFS.

138. The DFS for indicators that measure changes in GHG emissions from controlled forest fires were tested and validated in a national park. The data was presented and uploaded to the GIS system. Public awareness activities were conducted in the pilot area that included the

testing of a new public awareness indicator. Training materials were designed, used, and are presently on the CAEN website. However, they have not developed into a national program as was envisioned in the project document. The likelihood of this happening will depend on extent to which the DFS after being uploaded to the new portal.

139. There was little progress in integrating MEA implementation and reporting, for reasons that have more to do with incompatible formats, cycles, indicators, technical definitions and data needs. The final DFS report acknowledged the lack of «stronger connections»<sup>28</sup> between UNFCCC, UNCCD and UNCBD due to:

- Different strategic priorities regarding the fulfilling of obligations towards the Conventions
- Different reporting cycles
- Different reporting formats, subject to periodic modifications
- Different forms of indicators from those found in the national list of indicators (i.e. numerical, spatial, textual/descriptive)
- Limited flows of information between NFPs

*“Why should we be expected to harmonize our reporting and data when the conventions do not work together?”*

*“If you have national data, you can interpret it the ways the conventions require.”*

*- UNFCCC and UNCCD Points from Croatia’s Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection*

140. The Rio Conventions requirements are also different to those of the EU, FAO and other global bodies that require biodiversity-related data on a periodic basis. However, harmonization and horizontal integration between conventions are not priorities for national focal points (nor is the undertaking considered feasible) and attention is focused on EU obligations. The main interest of the convention focal points is the availability of national data sets that is accessible, reliable and facilitates reporting on different indicators. Presently the data used for UNFCCC reporting is more precise (in line with Tier 1/Tier 2 standards) and can be of use to the other conventions and UNCCD in particular.

### C.3 Kenya

*Objective 1:* To strengthen the national environment assessment, monitoring and environmental audit systems through the development and application of enhanced EIA/EA tools, methodologies and processes that integrate Rio convention objectives. *Achievement level:* Moderately Satisfactory.

141. The first objective was only partially reached. The main products (EIA/EA guidelines, publications, training workshops) were produced. However, the combination of slow implementation, inconsistent field presence and at the local level, high staff turnovers and low

<sup>28</sup> DFS : Part 1 (Ekonerg Power Point presentation)

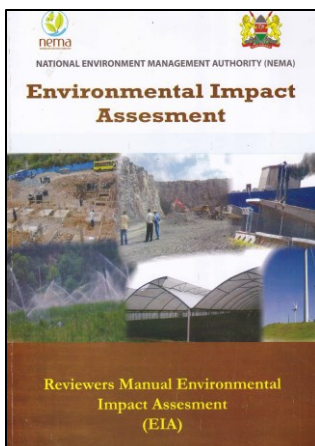


institutional capacities ultimately lowered their collective impact. The project did not have a full-time national project coordinator for most of its lifespan, and was managed by NEMA's Director of Environmental Planning & Research Coordination and a senior technical officer with other work responsibilities. After the project started, a national constitutional amendment re-structured local government jurisdictions from districts to counties, bringing major changes to the existing institutional framework.

142. The staff from NEMA and other agencies that received training improved – or updated – their understanding of EIA and EA guidelines, and are probably better prepared to apply them. They also have useful reference materials to guide them through the various steps of environmental impact assessments. These are important contribution and reinforce NEMA's oversight and coordination roles.

143. Project effectiveness at the county level was inconsistent. Training and exercises in environmental valuation and participatory planning were conducted over a five-year period, culminating in environmental management plans that propose actions to mitigate environmental threats to high-biodiversity “hot spots”. The training materials and methods were well selected, yet the extent to which they strengthened local EIA capabilities or generated an ecosystems vision varies considerably. This was due to differences among institutional partners in capacity and commitment. In Mt. Suswa the training provided does not seem to have made a difference in terms of conservation. Illegal charcoal production continues unchecked despite being identified as major threat by the environmental management plan. During a 3-hour excursion into the Mt. Suswa crater, the evaluator and NEMA staff crossed 6 motorcycles loaded with approximately 500 kg of charcoal – almost 3 tons in the same number of hours - and plumes of smoke could be seen rising across the crater. Most of the (few) local committee members who attended the evaluation meeting were unfamiliar with project's objectives or NEMA's role; an initial feeling of distrust was evident that required clarifications from NEMA's Director of Environmental Planning concerning the project and the motives of our visit. The main concern of local stakeholders is the drilling for geothermal energy that is planned within the crater (which is also the Maasai tribe's main sacred area). This was identified as a threat to conservation within the environment management plan, however the issue is overlooked in the proposed actions.

144. The *Friends of Yala* made better use of the project's training and planning support, which has helped to secure initial agreements on mitigating actions with the Dominion agricultural enterprise. The participation of Busia county government officials in these discussions suggests improved capacity and responsiveness - a situation that was not reflected at the meeting held with Siaya county officials, where high staff turnover, weak internal coordination and political considerations undermine potential gains in EIA capacities or ecosystems awareness. The Marula Dam stakeholder association has not been active since the project terminated, in part due to the departure of key participants and re-structuring of the county government's environmental committee; there was a low turnout at the evaluation meeting.



145. These processes could have been carried further had the pilot plans been incorporated within the five-year County Integrated Development Plans or resources sought from external donors. This did not happen in any of the pilot sites due to synchronization problems – the current plans had already been developed prior to the elaboration of the environmental management plans, which had not been printed at time of the evaluator’s visit. The problem is that unless capacity improvements are applied soon, they will gradually be lost. This could lower local expectations towards future environmental projects. Fortunately, NEMA plans to continue working with the county governments to further sensitize and mainstream conservation issues within the county planning process.

146. Integrated institutional mechanisms to manage global convention issues were partially developed with the Integrated Information Management System that provides a common database, more space to upload information, and clearinghouse functions that could link convention focal points and desk officers. However, attempts to integrate the Rio Conventions face obstacles that have more to do with inconsistencies between the conventions that cannot be resolved by individual countries and need to be considered by the convention Secretariats.

*Objective 2:* To enhance efficiencies and effectiveness in meeting the obligations and requirements of closely related MEAs through the development and implementation of integrated multi-convention information and reporting system. *Achievement rating:* Satisfactory

147. The second objective of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of MEA implementation was largely achieved with the design and operation of an improved information portal that facilitates access to shared databases, manages more information, and could offer a clearinghouse function. The design and operation of the Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) was delayed and is not being used to full potential. A number of environmental institutions and stakeholders still need to be connected, in addition to information uploaded and updated. The IIMS has not been yet been used for any of the UN Convention reports (as had been planned) and will have to wait until 2017 to do so.

148. Yet the system has had an impact within NEMA. The convention desk officers who undertake most of the monitoring and reporting “groundwork” have benefitted from improved access to a common database. There is more space to upload information compared to the previous NEMA web page, and there is better connectivity to other sites and users. It includes a clearinghouse mechanism with data checks that could enable the convention focal points and desk officers to review and comment on reports, papers and other issues of mutual interest. These advantages are likely to enable streamlined and more cost-effective (if not integrated) monitoring and reporting, and have an important knowledge management potential.<sup>29</sup> Although the IIMS

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<sup>29</sup> The Evaluation recommends that the EIA/EA capacity building materials be also put online and offered as a training tool to government staff at central and country levels, with the possibility of expanding into a diploma or certificated course that is available to graduate students and other practitioners as well.

wasn't available during the last round of convention reports,<sup>30</sup> it stands to contribute towards a more “coherent, effective and cost-efficient” response to the global conventions as stated in the second outcome.

149. There are savings in time and effort: Monitoring data that was periodically reported to UNCBD is now accessed online by the convention Secretariat. Interested firms and applicants to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) model can download guidelines and applications without going to a government office. Ad hoc information requests and the time devoted to external inquiries have declined with the IIMS. Convention desk officers are able to devote more time to substantive work.

150. NEMA's convention desk officers do not have major expectations regarding the integration MEA mechanisms and are more interested in the quality and availability of data they can use. They also consider (as did their Croatian colleagues) that this undertaking has little feasibility given the inconsistent (and changing) templates, timelines, indicators, information needs and technical criteria. Aside from integrating the introductory chapters of Rio Convention reports with a common template, there does not seem to be much leeway to influence monitoring or reporting guidelines at the level of individual countries. As noted by the desk officers, convention indicators do not need to be harmonized, provided that the data can be analyzed to address the needs of each convention. The IIMS databases are considered an advance in this respect.

#### **D. SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION**

151. Project sustainability was conditioned by the extent to which the various outputs were achieved, internalized and moved forward by national partners. When this did not happen, the enabling conditions for the post-project continuity and replication of successful initiatives were not in place. Although most outputs were at least partly achieved, time and commitment was lacking for their application. In other cases time and resources were insufficient to disseminate project achievements. Although the ex-post scheduling of this evaluation offered a better opportunity to assess the levels of sustainability and replication, there is little happening on the ground.

##### **D.1 The Gambia**

152. The pilot processes that were conducted in the villages of Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda are being sustained and followed up on. The ecosystems planning processes have triggered several local development activities with new donors. Village Development Councils and other

<sup>30</sup> Although one project output called for the “testing” of the IIS during the preparation of the set of reports were drafted between 2014-2015 before the system was operational. The next Conventions are scheduled in 2017.

*“The project’s success is undoubtedly in the second outcome. The question is how to build on the gains.”*

*“Some of these things should be reflected in the national budget. We have limited resources but we need to establish priorities.”*

*“I’ve often spoken with [NEA’s Director] that we need to reactivate the MEA Committee.”*

*- Government and NGO members of the MEA Committee*

community organizations are implementing soil conservation, mangrove planting, land reclamation, water resource management and forest protection activities with support from UNDP and environmental NGOs.

153. However, the pilot processes have not had repercussion outside the two villages and there are no immediate prospects that they will be replicated elsewhere, in spite of their relevance to climate change adaptation and coastal management. This is partially due to the lack of dissemination – there are parallel initiatives that plan to engage communities on a broader scale – the lack of national funding mechanisms, political commitment, and capacity limitations among country and ward governments. As a result, any expansion of the pilot component is likely to require additional donor funding, which will require a more vigorous dissemination effort on the part of NEA.

154. The MEA Coordination Committee has not been sustained and lost considerable momentum during the latter stages of the implementation process. Although the Committee is considered dormant and can be re-activated if necessary, the ‘critical mass’ of activity needed to justify its continuity is lacking – neither does it have an operating budget - and its intended functions appear to be covered by the ANR Working Group that is chaired by the Minister of Environment. The MEA Support Unit continues to operate within NEMA and manages the agency website, yet is not operating to its full potential because the Information Management System (IMS) was not developed as planned by the contracted firm.

## **D.2 Croatia**

155. The main focus of this project was the development of indicators and data flow systems (DFS) in support of integrated global environmental management. A detailed framework of data flows for 23 environmental indicators was designed and presented. For some of the indicators data flows are still not established; this will require inter-institutional MoUs and, in some cases, government ordinances. While there have been improvements over time in coordination and information sharing among environmental authorities – the creation of the national UNFCCC committee is an outstanding example - the project has not had a direct role in this. Sustainability prospects for the DFS will depend on its inclusion within the planned Environmental Indicators Portal, a three-layer web application with GIS browser that will be operational in 2017.

## **D.3 Kenya**

156. The environmental impact assessment and audit guidelines promoted by the project are in themselves sustainable because they embody national policies that were legislated in 2003 and subsequently amended by the Environmental Management & Coordination Act of 2015. Hence they will continue to be enforced to a greater or lesser extent under the oversight of NEMA. The extent to which EIA or EA guidelines are applied will in turn determine the sustainability of capacity improvements among the central and country government institutions that received training.

157. The capacity building and environmental planning processes that were implemented in the pilot sites do not appear sustainable with the possible exception of the Yala wetlands ecosystem, where some progress was achieved in mitigating identified threats. The *Friends of Yala* community network organization is capable and motivated, and has been assisted by Busia county government officials. However, the sustainability of the pilot environmental plans (and, indirectly, of the ecosystems themselves) will largely depend on their incorporation within country government development plans and the extent to which they are implemented. This has not happened in any of the pilot sites.

158. Environmental sustainability ultimately rests on the declaration of the Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area and Yala wetlands as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) to ensure more stringent conservation safeguards. None of this has happened thus far, and at both sites there are planned developments in geothermal energy (Mt. Suswa), commercial agriculture and sugar cane processing (Yala) that are likely to move forward unless a more decisive position is assumed by NEA and the country governments to minimize negative impact. The high turnover of government staff at county levels and fragile institutional memories pose additional barriers to post-project continuity and sustainability in general.

#### **E. EFFICIENCY**

160. As mandated for GEF Medium-Size Projects, the initiatives were approved for three (**Croatia**) to four year (**The Gambia** and **Kenya**) periods, which in principle were sufficient to fully achieve the planned outputs and outcomes. However, efficiency was weakened in all cases by extended lapses between design, approval and activation, in addition to slow implementation and procurement, recruitment issues, subcontract problems and (in two of three countries) major changes to national environmental policy and institutional frameworks. All projects began well after they had been designed and approved - a situation influenced by the absence of an operational UNEP Task Manager to move these processes forward. In **Croatia** and **Kenya**, efficiency was additionally influenced by changes to national policy and institutional frameworks, requiring considerable adaptive management.

161. All projects took longer than initially planned and required extensions that were approved by UNEP. The implementation period was extended from 4 to 6 years in **The Gambia** and 3 to 5.5 in **Croatia**. Implementation has been particularly slow in **Kenya**, where the project has been operational since 2008 and is expected to close by June this year. While the national executing agencies were able to complete most planned outputs by the end of the extended project terms, the late delivery of key products – information systems, resource management plans – affected the completion of associated outputs, limiting aggregate impact. Although all projects took longer to implement than expected, none have exceeded the initially approved budgets.

#### **E.1 The Gambia**

162. The Gambia's project was designed in 2006 (after the NCSA exercise), approved in 2008 and activated in 2009, yet became fully operational in 2010 with the recruitment of a national project coordinator. During this time the cost of goods and services increased and there were fluctuations in Gambian-US dollar exchange rates that lowered the project's purchasing power. To an extent, start-up was slow for the right reasons: NEA took the time to inform central government and division-level stakeholders of the project and discuss implementation plans at an Inception Workshop; and the process of screening pilot villages took time before Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda villages were selected. Because these preparatory activities were not conducted in advance of the project's commencement, however, they absorbed part of the approved implementation period. Village-based pilot processes were drawn out yet effective in both pilot sites. However, the project's interactions with divisional governments and ANRE subcommittees tended to lack the consistency that was needed to strengthen their capacity.

163. Two subcontracts were not fulfilled. As a result, key deliverables that were fundamental to enable project impact were neither timely nor satisfactory. The *Centre de Suivi Ecologique* (CSE) had been contracted to develop an Information Management System since the project's design, but lacked the capacity to deliver. After extended discussions and delays, an information system was provided that could not be opened due to software incompatibilities. More than a year after the project's end, the IMS is still not operational (although website development support has been provided through the "Global Climate Change Alliance"). The unavailability of the IMS or its intended clearinghouse functions lowered the project's ability to improve communications between convention focal points and promote integrative mechanisms.

164. Likewise, IUCN's West Africa office was contracted to implement ecosystems-based planning methodologies but didn't have available staff to do so; unfortunately, the option of contracting expertise from IUCN's central office was outside the project budget. The only efficiently delivered subcontract was by ENDA-TM's Energy Program, which provided technical guidance on climate change adaptation strategies for rural areas.

## **E.2 Croatia**

165. There were delays in approval and commencement. When CAEN was informed that the project was approved (two years after being submitted to UNEP) nobody could recall the original proposal. As in the other countries, the delays also led to the partial devaluation of the project budget. By the time the project started, the national context had changed. Croatia was in the process of acceding to EU membership, with new environmental compliance, data and reporting requirements. During this interim period, the government had also adopted a National List of Indicators that was used to derive indicators that were compatible with the global conventions and design data flows. However, this component of the project lost strategic relevance as a result of the more immediate demands associated with EU membership. Some participants felt that if a broader range of indicators had been considered from the onset (and not limited to the National List) the DFS framework might have addressed the Rio conventions to a greater degree, and possibly some of the new EU requirements as well.

166. Two national project coordinators were recruited but discontinued for performance and health reasons; the project was assigned thereafter to a CAEN staff member and assistant (of the environmental monitoring unit) who managed the project efficiently. The first DFS subcontract had to be rescinded due to unsatisfactory performance and was subsequently re-contracted to EKONERG and OIKON with satisfactory results. Project implementation was additionally disrupted by a change of government, the re-organization of government environmental institutions (the Croatian Environment Agency/CEA - the designated executing agency – was restructured as CAEN) and high staff turnover. As a result, activities were suspended for almost two years. Although the Final Project Report was sent to UNEP more than one year ago it hadn't been cleared at the time of the evaluator's visit and the final payment to CAEN was still pending.

*“At one point I thought the project was cursed.”*

*- A CAEN Project Focal Point*

### **E.3 Kenya**

167. This project required the most time and is still open. During the first two years implementation was slow and little progress was achieved. In 2010, UNEP's Division for Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) assigned a Task Manager who guided the project and helped in raising its momentum. The hiring of a full-time project coordinator in 2012 improved delivery and efficiency. However, the project coordinator left in 2014 and management was assumed thereafter by NEMA's Director of Environmental Planning and a senior technical officer, who had to balance the project workload with other responsibilities. Administrative and procurement decisions were very slow because they required approval by NEMA's Board of Directors, which met only twice a year and did not convene between March 2014 and February 2015.

168. The slow pace and delays were not conducive to efficiency. Training and pilot initiatives with community organizations and county governments were not intensive and spread over five years. An economic valuation study of the Yala swamp ecosystem was carried out in 2012, and the planning process completed in 2015; however, the environmental management plan hadn't been printed at the time of the evaluator's visit (printing is scheduled in coming months). The pilot plans were not synchronized with county or national government planning and budgeting cycles, and as a result they are not considered in the five-year County Integrated Development Plans; the next planning cycle starts in 2017 and offers a new opportunity for this to happen. There were procurement delays for the Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) on the part of the UN office in Nairobi. Also due to timing, the opportunity was missed to use the information system for drafting Rio Conventions reports as had been foreseen in the work plan. This will also have to wait until the next reporting cycles in 2017. The information system is not being used to its full potential yet, and other institutions need to be connected.

## **F. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE**

### **F.1 Preparation and Readiness**

169. In addition to the national agencies that were responsible for executing these projects, the preparedness of UNEP influenced projects start-up periods and needs to be considered as well.

170. In the three countries, project approval and activation were slow, with periods of 3-4 years between design, approval and commencement. During this period, national contexts and enabling environments for project implementation changed. Devaluations of national currencies and fluctuating exchange rates lowered the value of project budgets once they were available in Kenya and The Gambia. National policies and institutional frameworks also changed in Kenya and Croatia. UNEP's slow response in approving projects or guiding their activation seemed to reflect a void of ownership brought on by the closure of the DGEF division and transfer of its project portfolio to other Divisions. The ambiguity of this transitional stage was reflected by the absence of a supportive Task Manager until 2010. The new Umoja financial system was also slow and difficult to master, delaying procurements and disbursements. These factors were internal to UNEP, yet influenced the ability of national executing agencies to activate projects and apply the required guidelines.

#### F.1.1 The Gambia

171. The National Environment Agency (NEA) was prepared to assume this project. The capacity building activities in the project's design had been prioritized during the NCSA by various institutions and stakeholders. The Rio Conventions were managed by government departments attached to the Ministry of Environment, which facilitated communication. There were already inter-institutional mechanisms in place with the Agriculture & Natural Resource (ANR) Working Group, out of which the MEA Coordination Committee was created. The project built on national decentralization policies that called for Community Action Plans and the creation of similar Agriculture, Natural Resource & Environment (ANRE) subcommittees within divisional government. At local levels, Village Development Councils and community organizations connected local stakeholders and provided suitable counterparts for the project's pilot activities.

172. However, the two ANRE sub-committees that the project worked with were not prepared to fully participate in the project or benefit from it. There were (and still are) capacity and budget constraints that restrict their level of activity. There have also been high staff turnovers that weakened the effect of training activities. The ANREs did not accompany or document the planning processes that were piloted in the two villages, and are not in a position to disseminate, fund or otherwise replicate these experiences.

173. Two contracted institutions (CSE and IUCN's West Africa Office) were unprepared to deliver the products and services outlined in their contracts. The former failed to deliver the Information Management System that was expected, and submitted a flawed product towards the end of the project. In the case of IUCN, the regional office did not have staff that was needed, and other consultants were hired instead.



### F.1.2 Croatia

174. The Croatian Agency for Environment and Nature (CAEN) was prepared to execute the project, having coordination and oversight mandates that enabled it to manage inter-institutional processes. The agency was later restructured into CAEN, staff changed and institutional memory was lost, yet the newly-assigned focal points were able to quickly assume the project's management. Other participating agencies – the Meteorological and Hydrological Service, the Forestry Directorate (under the Ministry of Agriculture) and State Bureau of Statistics – were established with high capacity levels, enabling their effective participation. The two firms that were contracted to design the DFS framework (EKONERG and OIKON) were experienced in environmental data management and systems design.

175. However, institutional readiness to participate fully in the project was affected by Croatia's accession to the EU, followed by a change of government, restructuring of the public environmental sector,<sup>31</sup> high staff turnover (CAEN had three directors during the project's lifetime). Project implementation was suspended for almost two years. EU membership brought a new set of environmental compliance/reporting requirements that shifted national priorities. The project's relevance was affected by changing national contexts and priorities. The discontinuity of both project coordinators and re-assignment of management functions to CAEN staff with additional work responsibilities may also have influenced preparedness levels.

### F.1.3 Kenya

176. NEMA was well selected as the national executing agency, having mandates that include oversight, coordination and ensuring compliance with environmental policies. It has a national network with representation in all county governments. This arrangement offered direct access to local government and facilitated communications. The UN convention desk officers who are based at NEMA are responsible operationally for monitoring and reporting and do most of the groundwork. NEMA's is a semi-autonomous government agency that is able to execute donor-funded projects and can manage external budgets. The project was directly managed by senior NEMA staff for most of its duration; national ownership was reinforced yet the execution process did not have the continuity or intensity that was needed. The hiring of a project coordinator took longer than expected; the person left for health reasons two years later and wasn't replaced. Project execution was thereafter assigned to the NEMA Director of Environmental Planning & Research Coordination and a senior technical officer, adding management responsibilities to their existing workload. Implementation was exceedingly slow due to the lack of a full-time project team rather than technical or managerial capacities within NEMA.

177. The preparation and readiness of local governments were affected by a constitutional amendment that grouped divisional territories and administration under new county governments.

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<sup>31</sup> This has also had positive effects. Following the reorganization, all UN Convention focal points - - were located within the Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection. UNFCCC and UNCCD are managed by the Ministry's Sector for Atmosphere, Sea and Soil while UNCBD is assigned to the Sector for Nature Protection.

The restructuring of local government and high staff turnover weakened project coordination and the impact that had been expected. This has restricted the ability of county governments to participate fully in project activities, benefit from the training that was offered or retain capacity improvements.

178. Levels of preparedness varied among stakeholder organizations in the pilot areas. The *Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area* management committee does not seem to have internalized the training received or be ready to apply EIA guidelines. It is very much a rural “grassroots” Maasai organization and several of its members do not communicate in English or Kiswahili. Their attention is fully focused on the threat of geothermal energy drilling within the crater area (which includes the Maasai’s main sacred site), an issue that is recognized but not addressed by the environmental management plan. The water resource committee for Marula Dam lost several members and had to liaise with a newly constituted environmental committee within the county government; continuity and momentum were lost and the conditions for moving the plan forward are not in place. Conversely, the *Friends of Yala* entered the project with a stronger commitment and understanding of local environmental issues,<sup>32</sup> and benefited from the project’s training and planning support. This has helped them to implement some that are proposed in the plan.

## **F.2 Project Implementation and Management**

179. In all cases the national executing agencies were well selected in terms of their mandates, technical capacities and institutional links. However, they were unable to provide the consistency or momentum that was needed to reach the expected outcomes. This was most evident when full-time coordinators and support staff weren’t in place and projects were managed internally by government staff with other work responsibilities. Project extensions were needed to enable national executing agencies to deliver the planned outputs. All projects had steering or coordination committees that met (in some cases with declining frequency) and assisted institutional contacts yet did not appear to play a decisive role in project management or oversight.

### **F.2.1 The Gambia**

180. The implementation approach was well designed, combining horizontal and vertical processes. The project sought to integrate convention mechanisms through the MEA Coordination Committee and an information management system, and by strengthening links between central and divisional government levels via the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and ANRE sub-committees. NEA consulted with other stakeholders during the project’s design and at an inception workshop after its approval. Good work was done at the village level - technically, methodologically – and ecosystems-based planning processes were successfully conducted. The pilot experiences have served to validate community-driven

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<sup>32</sup> An indicator of readiness is that the *Friends of Yala* initiated contact with the project to seek support.

approaches that can be applied for local climate change adaptation and natural resource management, and should be of national policy interest.

181. A capable national coordinator managed the project with the support of NEA's Executive Director and technical staff. The project was well managed in programmatic and administrative terms, yet the pace of implementation was slow and there was insufficient interaction with local government. A larger full-time project team would have made a difference, although the available financial resources and absorptive capacity of local governments were also limiting factors.

#### F.2.2 Croatia

182. The implementation approach combined the use of indicator data flows to streamline convention monitoring and reporting, and the on-site testing and validation of a DFS model with the participation of regional and academic institutions. Both components had strong capacity building components.

183. Several externalities affected project management: Croatia's EU membership brought new environmental indicators, data collection and reporting needs. The public environmental sector was restructured with changes to the project's executing agency and institutional framework. This ultimately benefited the project with the merging of the Department of Nature Protection (previously under the Ministry of Culture) and Ministry of Environment. The two national coordinators hired to manage the project left after brief periods and were not replaced. These factors make it difficult to assess overall management performance. The main merit is that the CAEN focal points were able to assume management responsibilities quickly and efficiently, and deliver most outputs by the end of the project.

#### F.2.3 Kenya

184. The implementation strategy also worked at different levels and supported institutional coordination, capacity building and on-the-ground pilot processes. Training workshops on environmental impact assessments (EIA) and environmental audits (EA) were organized for central and country government staff with environmental responsibilities. The training given to community-based organizations at the pilot sites fed into an ecosystem planning processes and the design of environmental management plans.

185. Management performance varied between 2012-2014, when an externally recruited national coordinator led the project, and the remaining period when the project was assigned to NEMA staff. In general, implementation has been slow although the pace improved with a fully dedicated project coordinator. The NEMA Director of Environmental Planning and senior technical officer who have since managed the project are technically and hierarchically well placed to assume the responsibility, but have not been able to devote their full attention to the project due to other work demands. The absence of a full-time project team contributed to a drawn-out implementation process that has required extensions.

### F.3 Stakeholder Participation, Cooperation and Partnerships

186. All of the project objectives aimed to enhance cooperation between the national MEA focal institutions through the integration of information management, monitoring and reporting. The three projects were designed to address issues prioritized by National Self-Capacity Assessments (NCSAs) that were inter-institutional in scope and involved consultations with different groups of stakeholders. Many of the planned outputs and outcomes reflected points of consensus on capacity needs that emerged from the NCSAs. During implementation, UNEP and the national executing agencies encouraged institutional participation at different levels, which was necessary to move project initiatives forward and encourage their appropriation by national partners. Shortly after project commencement in **The Gambia**, NEA organized an inception workshop that was attended by the main participants; the approved project was presented, the work plans reviewed and institutional responsibilities agreed on.

187. In **The Gambia** and **Kenya**, cooperation between convention focal points and relevant institutions largely depended on information management systems that weren't delivered in The Gambia (where NEA continues to work with UNEP to attain a fully functional system) and became operational at a late stage of project implementation in Kenya. Data flow systems were designed in **Croatia** to articulate institutional cooperation around the Rio Conventions, but they have not been officially adopted by government and aren't being applied.

188. Steering and coordination committees were formed in each country, yet they did not play substantive roles and their involvement tended to decline over time. These committees offered opportunities for participation and partnership that were not fully used. The frequency of meetings often declined, and oversight functions were replaced by a more passive role that nevertheless did assist institutional coordination. This tendency was influenced by what one Gambian respondent called "task force fatigue:" Senior government staff devote considerable time to attending project committee or working group meetings, which reduce the time available for core work. Hence participation in the MEA project committees was sometimes viewed as more of an obligation than an opportunity. In

In **Croatia**, convention focal points and other institutional stakeholders participated in thematic working groups to design data flow systems for environmental indicators. However, sustaining stakeholder participation has been challenging given the restructuring of government institutions and suspension of project activities for an extended period.

189. All project contained pilot components that involved local government and community organizations in ecosystems planning activities, the formulation of environmental management plans for areas with high-biodiversity, and the testing of MEA data flow models. National executing agencies and project teams were generally very open to stakeholder participation and pilot planning exercises conducted in **The Gambia** and **Kenya** applied PRA methods and other

*"We have reservations about attending project monitoring meetings. Please give us something that is relevant to rural people living in the forest ecosystem."*

*"If you want to avoid the real issues, then create a committee."*

*- Interviewed project participants in Croatia*

tools for group analysis. By working with Village Councils and community-based organizations the project was able to ensure the inclusion of women and the elderly in these processes. The environmental management plans that resulted from the pilot processes were locally driven to a considerable degree. Opportunities and mechanisms for participation were available, and levels of actual participation were determined more by the capacity and commitment of the targeted institution or stakeholder group. At the local government level, the **Gambian** project supported ANRE sub-committees in order to strengthen the integration of global environmental issues at divisional levels; in **Kenya** efforts were made to encourage participation and ownership of county governments in pilot conservation initiatives.

190. Trust building is essential to interact effectively with traditional rural communities, and local participation was determined in part by the methodology used and the rapport developed with the project team. This contributed to positive results in the pilot villages of **The Gambia** and with the *Friends of Yala* community organization in **Kenya**. Conversely, the Mt. Suswa conservation committee did not appear to fully understand the role of the project and questioned NEMA's position in relation to planned geothermal energy development within the crater. These perceptions may have discouraged their full participation in the project: The evaluation meeting organized at the Mt. Suswa pilot site was sparsely attended; most of the local committee members were not communicative and there was an initial sense of distrust that required explanations from NEMA's Director of Environmental Planning before the meeting could proceed. The NEMA focal point and UNEP Task Manager were barred from entering the Mt. Suswa conservancy area by local residents as late as 2015, because they were thought to be working for the geothermal energy project.

#### **F.4 Communication and Public Awareness**

191. Environmental awareness was promoted in all projects through training, public events, information management and local environmental planning exercises. In **The Gambia** and **Kenya**, enhanced awareness of global environmental issues was both an expected outcome and capacity indicator. There were greater advances in public awareness in the pilot initiatives conducted with community organizations. Local organizations in the villages of Darsalani and Tumani Tenda, as well as the *Friends of Yala*, perceive strengthened environmental awareness and management capacities as a result of the ecosystems planning and EIA training. Enhanced awareness has encouraged mangrove planting, soil protection and better control of salt mining activities. Unfortunately, the pilot initiatives have not been communicated to a broader range of government agencies and donors, restricting the likelihood of replication in both countries. In **Croatia**, public awareness activities were implemented with the demonstration of DFS indicators in Ucka National Park. According to a project report, "...Local stakeholders are aware of benefits of using indicator model in planning and monitoring the state of environment and nature in the area of the nature park".<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> PIR Report : July 2014, pg. 10

192. There was comparatively less impact on awareness at central and local government levels. This was influenced by the absence of an information management system in **The Gambia** and the late availability of the IIMS in **Kenya**; whereas the data flow systems designed in **Croatia** but have not been adopted. On the other hand, many government participants were already informed of the conventions and several were involved in their country implementation. The inter-institutional working groups and steering committees did not meet with the frequency needed to have an impact on awareness. However, there were improved communication between MEA focal points during the drafting of the 2014 UNCCD and State of the Environment reports in **The Gambia**; and several institutions broadened their network in **Croatia**. The projects played an indirect role in these cases.

193. In **The Gambia** and **Kenya** there was limited effect on local government awareness. A more consistent project presence and greater interaction was needed for this to happen. Contributing factors included low institutional capacities, high personnel turnover and insufficient budgets to apply the training received. A positive exception was the cooperation given by Busia county government to the *Friends of Yala* in **Kenya**, which suggested a higher level of awareness and commitment to the conservation of the Yala ecosystem.

#### **F.5 Country ownership and driven-ness**

194. National ownership was high. The three projects were country-driven from their design, which built on national capacity self-assessments (NCSAs). They addressed needs that had been validated by government environmental agencies and other stakeholders. **The Gambia's** National Environmental Agency encouraged ownership by sharing the project proposal with the ANR working group, and by organizing an inception workshop after it was approved.

195. All projects were executed by government environmental agencies that met their co-financing obligations. Project steering committees supported coordination and communications. The levels of government responsibility were high: In two of three countries (**Kenya** and **Croatia**) the projects were managed internally by the national executing agencies without externally- recruited staff. Kenya's NEMA advanced funds to the project to expedite the purchase a server for the new information portal. However, the gains in ownership were accompanied by slow implementation. The change of government and restructuring of public environmental institutions was followed by the suspension of project activities for almost two years. Delivery was slow in **The Gambia** and Kenya as well.<sup>34</sup>

196. Locally based pilot initiatives in **The Gambia** and **Kenya** were very much user driven and owned, culminating in the formulation of environmental management plans that convey local perceptions and priorities. Ownership is also reflected in the continuity and gradual implementation of activities from the plan in the two pilot villages of **The Gambia**. The extent

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<sup>34</sup> However, slow implementation was also an indicator of national "driven-ness" in the sense that the prevailing institutional dynamics determined the pace of implementation. To an extent, project implementation processes were more authentic than had they been driven by full-time external expertise.

to which the pilot processes were driven by the community organization or local government varied, and was influenced by recipient capacities, local government commitment and the discontinuity of counterpart staff. There were limits to local ownership when ecosystem conservation needs were at odds with strategic national interests. Geothermal drilling in the Mt. Suswa area was prioritized as the main threat to biodiversity and sacred Masaaï lands, yet was downplayed in the pilot environment management plan. Local government ownership in **The Gambia** and **Kenya** was generally low with the possible exception of Busia county government officials. None of the partner country governments have included the pilot environmental management plans or components thereof in their development plans or budgets.

## **F.6 Financial Planning and Management**

197. The three projects were affected by late starts and slow implementation, and required extensions beyond the approved period. Projects were approved on average two years after being submitted to UNEP, by which time the approved budgets were devalued when converted to national currency. Purchasing power was lowered. The IT equipment that was needed to establish an integrated MEA information management system in **Kenya** had shifted to newer and costlier technologies by the time project funds were available. Fluctuations in **Croatia** kuna – U.S. dollar exchange rates during project implementation led to problems in reconciling expenditure figures for specific activities.

198. Although the three projects took longer than planned, all were executed within the approved budget. Funds were directly managed by the national executing agencies. The proper standards were applied in terms of transparency and reporting guidelines, and project audits were conducted annually. Co-financing requirements were met and issues of financial mismanagement or transparency were not raised during the evaluation.

199. National executing agencies were unfamiliar with UNEP's reporting formats and had initial difficulties that in some cases delayed initial disbursements of project funds. However, adequate training and coaching were conducted by UNEP to national executing agencies which helped improve the reporting process, even though delays in reporting continued to be an issue particularly for Kenya and The Gambia projects. Delays were aggravated by the new *Umoja* financial-administrative system that was applied by UNEP, which has required time to become operational (and is still slow). The purchase of a server and other equipment needed for **Kenya's** information management system were held up and NEA was obliged to advance the funds. In **Croatia**, CAEN is waiting for the final project payment more than one year after submitting the final report.

200. Slow implementation and financial delivery were influenced by staff turnover, cumbersome administrative processes and delayed decision-making by national government partners. In **Kenya**, all NEMA expenditures required the approval of its Board of Directors, which met twice a year and didn't convene for a year between 2014-15. Aside from the delays

incurred, the Board had to be re-briefed on the project's background at every meeting because interaction with the project was too infrequent. National execution was so slow that in 2014 UNEP decided to transfer a lump sum to NEMA in order to close the project. However the project remains open and the printing of the pilot environmental management plans are still pending. UNEP's final payment to NEMA has been delayed by the late submission of the final report. In **Croatia** the CAEN project focal point and assistant had to assume the project's financial management without the benefit of institutional memory, files or earlier exposure after the second project coordinator departed. This was done efficiently.

201. UNEP's ability to guide national executing agencies through administrative requirements and delivery shortcomings was very important. This was a form of adaptive management: Project extensions were granted when needed, within the approved budgets. **Croatia** made three separate extension requests to UNEP. Budgets were revised periodically and unspent funds re-programmed to subsequent years. Finance and administrative staff in the three countries were grateful to UNEP's Task Manager and Financial Management Officer for their patience and flexibility with the slow execution.

#### **F.7 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping**

202. As implementing agency, UNEP has a critical role in supervising, overseeing and providing technical guidance to projects. Much of this is done via the Task Manager and Fund Manager. Their involvement is important to ensure that management and administrative guidelines are understood, that projects are executed in a timely manner, and that the expected performance standards are met.

203. This guidance is essential during the project's inception phase, yet was missing during the first year or two after project approval. UNEP had little presence or communication with national executing agencies during this period, which slowed the inception process. CAEN staff in **Croatia** could not recall the project when notified its approval, two years after it was submitted. Government focal points and administrators were unfamiliar with budgetary and reporting guidelines, which were in a state of transition with the new Umoja system. Administrative processes and procurements were delayed as the new system gradually became operational.

204. At this stage, the guidance of the Task Manager is critical in determining how project implementation develops. However, a stable Task Manager was assigned to the projects in 2010 (two years after the three project were approved). The transfer of GEF-funded projects from D-GEF to other UNEP divisions may have influenced this situation, causing a transitory gap in ownership. According to the national project focal points, the backstopping support provided by the Task Manager, Fund Manager and UNEP in general was satisfactory from 2010 onwards. The Task Manager intervened when

*"Communication is key, and my counterparts at UNEP were very helpful."*

*- Mohamed Denton, NEA Finance Director*

*"UNEP was very helpful when we had questions"*

*- Hana Mesic, CAEN project focal point*



requested to resolve some of the problems that affected project implementation, i.e. the information management system that was contracted for **The Gambia** but not delivered; requests for project extensions. Adequate guidance was given to NEA's new Financial Manager, who was able to assume administrative responsibilities without difficulty. The Task Manager visited each project on at least one occasion, with more frequent visits to of **Kenya's** project which is located in Nairobi.

205. As mentioned earlier, national focal points expressed their appreciation of UNEP's flexibility and patience with the slow implementation and delivery. Project extensions were requested and approved for the three countries – more than once in Kenya and Croatia – and project coordinators were able to transfer funds between budget lines as needed, within the approved total. However, there have been extended delays in disbursing the final project payment to **Croatia's** CAEN, although the project finished (and the final project report was submitted) more than a year ago. There appear to have been delays on both sides, as UNEP Task Manager has noted that CAEN submitted the final report almost one year after the termination

## **G. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

206. The technical guidance and backstopping that was provided by the UNEP Task Manager as of 2010 was generally *ad hoc* and did not follow a formal monitoring plan. Project reports (PIRs, Half-yearly progress reports) were submitted, sometimes with delays that in turn held up budget advances to the national executing agency. Reporting in general was realistic and addressed progress towards outputs and outcomes in a satisfactory manner.

207. Funds were allocated for external mid-term evaluations that did not materialize. Instead the Task Manager visited the projects to consult with national partners and discuss problems affecting implementation. The evaluator agrees that external mid-stage evaluations were not necessary for projects of this size and complexity, and that most of the funds allocated for this purpose were better used elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> However, the lack of documentation<sup>36</sup> or notes resulting from the missions does not shed light on their utility or contribution to the project.

## **III. CONCLUSIONS<sup>37</sup>**

***Conclusion 1: The contributions of the three projects to improved implementation of the Rio Conventions were partial and below expectation in relation to the planned outcomes and performance indicators.***

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<sup>35</sup> Most of the issues raised at the mid-point stage tend to be operational, and it is premature to expect impact. Instead of hiring independent consultants, mid-term evaluations could be more useful and cost-effective if conducted "in house" with the national project team and Task Manager, and facilitated/documented by the focal point from UNEP Evaluation Unit.

<sup>36</sup> Which were requested from the Task Manager.

<sup>37</sup> Most of the conclusions address the "key questions" for the evaluation that are listed in the Terms of Reference.

209. The project facilitated communications between convention focal points in all countries. However, improved implementation depended to a large extent on the availability of integrated information management systems that did not materialize in **The Gambia** and were late in **Kenya**; likewise, the data flow systems designed in **Croatia** have not been applied. Expected impacts were also undermined by late project starts, slow implementation, changing national priorities and the turnover of government staff. Projects were affected by successive changes to national contexts that included accession to the EU with new environmental data and reporting requirements (**Croatia**), the restructuring of local government and public environmental institutions (**Croatia** and **Kenya**), and the suspension of project activities over an extended period (**Croatia**). Training was given on EIA, environmental data flows and other relevant topics, yet often lacked the consistency needed to influence institutional practices. In **Kenya**, the integrated information management system was not made available in time to feed into convention reporting cycles, while **Croatia's** government has not yet adopted the data flow system model although there are plans to upload the DFS to a new environmental indicators portal in 2017. **Croatia's** DFS model is considered to be of high quality and may still be used. However, the project's contribution to improved convention coordination and implementation were indirect at best, although the project and preceding NCSA were among Croatia's first experiences in environmental inter-institutional collaboration.

210. There have been tangible improvements in convention data collection and monitoring within **Kenya's** National Environmental Management Agency (NEMA). This is attributed to the new information management portal that has been operational since 2015. Although the system was late in being installed and missed the last reporting cycle, convention desk officers are benefiting from improved access to a broader database, more space to upload information and a clearinghouse mechanism. The new system is cost-effective because clients can directly access online information and guidelines; the UNCBD Secretariat can now directly download national biodiversity data that was previously collected for monitoring purposes.

211. This did not happen in **The Gambia** due to the lack of an information system that was essential to operationalize data sharing, coordination and collaboration between conventions. The project did facilitate feedback in the drafting of the 2014 UNCCD and State of the Environment reports. However, the MEA Coordination Committee did not develop the momentum or work dynamic needed to have impact on convention implementation, and has not met since the project finished. The project's main contribution to the Rio Conventions was the validation of the ecosystems approach to natural resource planning and management, which was successfully piloted in two villages, has relevance for community-based climate change adaptation and for biodiversity conservation on a national scale. However, the experiences and lessons generated from the Gambia project are generally positive and have a high learning value; they will undoubtedly contribute to more effective results in the future as NEA continues to work towards the replication of successful pilot initiatives with a greater involvement by divisional governments.

***Conclusion 2: The harmonizing of monitoring and reporting mechanisms was hindered by inconsistent indicators, guidelines and reporting cycles between the Rio Conventions, rather than country capacity or coordination issues.***

212. The three projects aimed to integrate convention implementation through the harmonization of indicators, data collection and analysis, and reporting. This approach mistakenly assumed that the high levels of fragmentation and discoordination between conventions were essentially a national issue. In practice, attempts to integrate the Rio Conventions have met with practical difficulties that had more to do with internal inconsistencies that cannot be bridged by individual countries and need to be considered at Secretariat levels. Moreover, convention indicators and data requirements are periodically updated and any harmonization effort would require continual re-visiting.

213. In **Croatia**, only one of 23 environmental indicators developed for the DFS was found to be relevant to the three main Rio Conventions. National focal points did not have major expectations regarding the integration of convention mechanisms, and are more interested in the quality and accessibility of data. In this context, the main advance towards integration occurred in **Kenya** where convention desk officers benefit from improved access to an integrated and expanded data base that facilitates their work and is cost-effective. NEMA's new information management system is expected to enable better coordination between desk officers, focal points and other stakeholders during the next convention reporting cycles.

***Conclusion 3: The three projects established new frameworks for institutional coordination and collaboration. However, these have not had significant effect on convention implementation.***

214. The inter-institutional committees that were created by the projects have clearly facilitated coordination on project-related matters, yet did not develop the consistency and momentum needed to have a significant effect on convention implementation or management. To an extent, the committees were affected by what one participant referred to as “task force fatigue”, as government officials tend to devote a considerable share of their working hours to project-related meetings. As noted, coordination was more effective when supporting information systems and integrated databases were in place.

215. The functions of **The Gambia's** MEA Coordination Committee overlapped with those of the existing ANR Working Group. Committee meetings declined over time and there have been none since the project terminated more than one year ago. The committee did facilitate communication between focal points for the 2014 UNCCD and State of the Environment reports, yet lacked the consistency to have a broader effect or influence core practices. A similar situation happened with the ANRE sub-committees that were created within the Technical Advisory Committees of division government, which have had a high staff turnover.

216. Working groups for the specific conventions assisted the design of data flow systems (DFS) in **Croatia**, but were not intended to continue beyond the DFS process. The focus of the project was on information flows for convention indicators; institutional coordination was

expected to develop around data flows rather than committees. The data flow model for one of the indicators was field tested and validated. However, the DFS was not formally adopted and the project has had little direct effect on convention implementation or monitoring. Coordination has improved in cases where data flows are already operational – for example, **Croatia's** Climate Change committee connects institutions that provide information for the national communications.

217. There has been an impact on data collection and management in **Kenya**, where convention desk officers at NEMA use common databases and upload more information to a broader user network with the Integrated Information Management system (IIMS). The IIMS has a clearinghouse mechanism that can be used to systematize feedback between focal points, desk officers and other stakeholders during convention monitoring and reporting cycles. However, the project had little influence on coordination outside of NEMA. There was limited interaction with the ministry-based convention focal points,<sup>38</sup> there had been staff changes and only one of three focal points had participated in project activities. With the exception of the *Friends of Yala*, partner organizations have not been particularly active in promoting the pilot environmental management plans, and none were included within the county development plans or budgets. Likewise, efforts to strengthen MEA awareness and EIA capacities within county government were undercut by staff turnover, slow implementation and an inconsistent project presence.

***Conclusion 4: National environmental strategies were supported through pilot EIA initiatives at sub-national and community levels that were validated and can be replicated on a wider scale.***

218. Although their objectives were focused on convention focal point institutions within central government, project contributions to national environmental strategies was most evident in some of the pilot initiatives that validated the ecosystems approach to local development planning.

219. In **The Gambia**, village-based planning processes successfully demonstrated UNEP's "ecosystems approach" to natural resource management, leading to the formulation of Community Action Plans and implementation of several activities. These experiences can be replicated on a wider scale, in support of environmental conservation and decentralization strategies, and climate change adaptation projects. This did not happen with the ANRE subcommittees or Technical Advisory Committees due to high staff turnover, low capacity retention and limited operational budgets.

220. In **Croatia**, the methodological value of the DFS model was recognized by CAEN and other government agencies, although its adoption is pending. Data flow systems were tested in a national park to measure changes in GHG emissions from controlled forest fires. The pilot exercise encompassed on-site data collection and processing by relevant institutions, combined with capacity building and awareness raising activities. This led to the validation of the DFS model and its viability for application on a broader scale with other indicators.

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<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that the NEMA desk officers are responsible for most of the operational work related to the Rio Conventions, while the officially designated focal points play a more political or representational role.

221. Pilot environmental planning initiatives with local government, community organizations and stakeholder associations were implemented around three recognized biodiversity «hot spots» in **Kenya**. Although the approval and implementation of environmental plans are pending, as case studies they could contribute to national EIA policies and support the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), a recently-introduced conservation category that carries more stringent environmental safeguards and is connected to the national GIS database.

***Conclusion 5: The project interventions have contributed to enabling national environments for sustained, cost efficient and long-term impact. However, the government commitment and policy decisions that are needed to make full use of these contributions are lacking.***

222. Most of the project activities have lacked continuity and follow-up. The MEA Coordination Committee in **The Gambia** has not met in over a year and is considered dormant; this is not a negative finding and merely indicates that there doesn't seem to be need for a permanent committee outside of the conventions monitoring and reporting calendars. The pilot processes that were conducted in two villages are being sustained locally and activities have been implemented, yet these experiences have not been replicated nor have they had effect on national policy, despite their relevance to local climate change adaptation and natural resource management in general. The training given to the divisional ANRE sub-committees lacked the consistency that was needed to internalize concepts and apply ecosystems approaches.

223. Project interventions in **Croatia** were superseded by a changing national context brought on by EU membership (with new environmental compliance, data and reporting requirements), the restructuring of the public environmental sector, a change of government and suspension of project activities. Although the DFS model has the potential for a sustained impact, it is not operational and this will depend on its inclusion within new environmental indicators portal that will be operational in 2017.

224. In **Kenya**, training and publications on environmental impact assessment and audits have helped reinforce awareness of existing national policies that were legislated in 2003 and subsequently amended in 2015 under the Environmental Management and Coordination Act. They have contributed to improve conditions for EIA enforcement under the oversight of NEMA. The retention of EIA/EA awareness and capacity will depend on the extent to which EIAs are applied by the institutions that received training.

225. Although there was discontinuity and the local environmental plans are not being implemented, the local pilot processes offer models that can be mainstreamed to encourage community-based environmental management on a broader scale. They can also support national policy by contributing to the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in these and other threatened ecosystems. However, the pilot environmental management plans must first be approved and incorporated within county and national government development plans in order to demonstrate a tangible impact and enhance conditions for their sustainability and replication.

***Conclusion 6: Project implementation was affected in all cases by late starts, slow implementation and/or changing national contexts.***

226. These are issues that affect all projects to a degree, but were more strongly felt by these projects, particularly in the case of the Kenya and Croatia. There were four-year lapses between project design, approval and activation. Project budgets in Croatia and The Gambia were partly devalued by changes in currency exchange rates between the project's formulation and approval. There were delayed processing of procurement requests resulting from the new financial management system (Umoja) that was introduced in Nairobi. Slow project approval and start-up were influenced the transfer of these projects between UNEP Divisions and initial absence of a Task Manager to move these processes forward.

227. In Kenya and Croatia, changes in governance frameworks and environmental compliance needs weakened project coordination and the consistency of the implementation process. Project implementation in Croatia coincided with the EU accession process, which had not been considered in the project's design two years earlier. National environmental indicators, data and reporting were revised to comply with the European Environmental Agency and Eurostat. Meeting EU standards assumed a level of government priority that overrode the project's focus on the Rio Conventions. There were internal issues as well: None of two project coordinators lasted very long. The government changed, institutions were restructured and there were high staff turnovers. Implementation was suspended for almost two years, after which CAEN staff assumed the project's management. The project was extended on three occasions and implementation took 2.5 years longer than expected.

228. **Kenya's** project has been the slowest in implementation and delivery, and has remained open since 2008 (it will terminate in June 2016). Shortly after its approval, a constitutional amendment re-structured the local governance framework by grouping districts under new county governments. The institutional arrangements the project's pilot component was built around were drastically modified. This was accompanied by high rates of staff turnover that weakened coordination and capacity building efforts. There was very little project activity during the first two years and the recruitment of the project coordinator took longer than expected. All administrative decisions and expenditures required approval by NEMA's governing board, which met twice yearly and failed to convene for almost an entire year between 2014-15. The hiring of a full time project coordinator helped to move implementation forward between 2012 and 2014, after which the coordinator left her post and was not replaced. Since then the project has been managed by NEMA's Director of Environmental Planning & Research Coordination and a senior technical officer.

229. **The Gambia's** project did not have to adjust to these changes. Yet implementation was also slow and the project took six years to finish instead of four. A major setback was the absence of the information management system that would have broadened opportunities for coordination between convention focal points, environmental institutions and other stakeholders. Capacity improvements within participating ANRE sub-committees and divisional governments

were undermined by high staff turnovers and the lack of resources to apply or disseminate the knowledge acquired.

#### **IV. LESSONS LEARNED**

***Lesson 1: The expectation of harmonizing Rio Convention monitoring, reporting and management practices needs to be adjusted and re-focused. Each Convention sets (and periodically modifies) its own indicators and formats, with limited compatibility across conventions. National governments and environmental focal points have very little margin to adjust them.***

230. Attempts to harmonize or integrate the monitoring, reporting and implementation of the Rio Conventions faced barriers that had more to do with inconsistencies between the conventions than national capacity or coordination constraints. Moreover, the indicators and data needs of the conventions are not static and change over time. The projects found recurrent inconsistencies between conventions in terms of indicators (and types of indicators), technical criteria, reporting guidelines and timeframes; there is very little to build on aside from integrating databases or having common introductions in convention reports (which would not make a difference). While remedial actions are needed at different levels, any future process must necessarily engage the Convention Secretariats in order to build synergies from within.

***Lesson 2: Future efforts to integrate Rio Convention mechanisms should focus on the Conventions themselves and engage their Secretariats in an over-arching review process.***

231. The limited room for maneuver that countries faced when trying to build linkages for convention monitoring, implementation and reporting prevented several project outcomes from being fully achieved. The inconsistencies among indicators, technical definitions, reporting cycles, templates and timeframes – in addition to changing requirements within each convention – limit the scope for in-country collaboration beyond sharing common databases or drafting common introductory chapters to the national reports. There needs to be an in-depth review of country guidelines and data requirements across the main conventions, to identify areas that are compatible and can be streamlined. Any modifications to the existing mechanisms will have to be introduced through the Rio Conventions themselves, with the Secretariats serving as the main partners.

***Lesson 3: National focal points are more interested in the quality and availability of data that can be adjusted to different indicators or reporting formats, than in the integration of Convention mechanisms that they cannot influence.***

232. One of the early lessons learned by the three projects, and particularly those in Croatia and Kenya, is that the different convention data, indicators, technical definitions, reporting templates and timeframes cannot be harmonized at the country level. Hence key project components were based on flawed assumptions. Yet national convention focal points and desk officers were already aware of the issue and did not harbor high expectations in this respect.

Their chief concern is having access to expanded databases that can be interpreted according to the indicators and evolving information needs of each convention. Another recognized benefit is the time and cost that can be saved by enabling public access to online information and guidelines, and direct access by Secretariats to relevant data.

***Lesson 4: The timing and sequencing of project outputs is essential to maximize their cumulative effect and achieve expected outcomes. Although the three projects ultimately delivered most of their planned outputs, the intended outcomes were only partially reached.***

233. This was caused by deficiencies in the timing and sequence of outputs, and weak connections between the production of outputs and their adoption and application, as envisioned by project outcomes. For example, the early availability of integrated MEA information systems was critical to enable greater coordination between convention focal points, while the design of pilot environmental management plans needed to be synchronized with government planning and budgeting cycles in order to be implemented. Delays and other problems in their delivery disrupted the progression of outputs that was needed to reach the outcomes and generate the expected impacts (in accordance with the key indicators).

234. This situation also reflected weaknesses in project design. Many outputs were centered on the design of coordination mechanisms, proposed data flow models and scheduling of training activities. Project responsibilities focused on the *production* of outputs, whereas the outcomes and their success indicators assumed their *adoption* and *application* at institutional or systemic levels. As a result, the outcomes envisioned were largely outside the projects' attributions. Data flow systems and pilot environmental management plans were designed but are not operational; ecosystems planning and EIA processes were successfully demonstrated at pilot sites yet have not been replicated or had effect at policy levels. Project work plans should have included outputs or activities to disseminate and promote results at decision-making levels; or alternatively adjusted outcome expectations to more realistic scenarios.

***Lesson 5: Data flows and reporting mechanisms are comparatively more developed for the UNFCCC than the other Rio Conferences, and offer working models that can guide future coordination efforts.***

235. National UNFCCC focal points manage more developed levels of institutional coordination and data flows, and are supported in this by national committees that facilitate data. In addition, UNFCCC data and reporting requirements are generally more stringent (i.e. tier 1-2 levels) than those of the other conventions. In view of the limited impact and continuity of the project-created committees, it may make more sense to build on UNFCCC models that are already in place and working, in a manner that is not detrimental to the visibility of the other conventions.

***Lesson 6: Information management systems are more essential to support coordination and synergy between convention focal points, than establishing new committees or working groups that lose momentum after the project has finished.***



236. Project experiences of **The Gambia** and **Kenya** underscore the importance of having integrated information systems with clearinghouse mechanisms that connect focal points, environmental institutions and other stakeholders. The early availability of information systems proved to be essential in enabling information sharing and communications at operational levels, and feeding these into convention monitoring and reporting. The absence of the IMS in **The Gambia** severely restricted progress towards an integrated framework, while the installation of **Kenya's** IIMS has generated tangible benefits that are appreciated by convention desk officers.

***Lesson 7: Coordination modalities that relied on inter-institutional committees and meetings have tended to lose momentum over time, with limited effect on convention implementation or reporting.***

237. This is a reflection of demand and not performance. Committees may be more useful if they are activated when needed, i.e. during convention reporting cycles, and not on a permanent basis. The absorptive capacity of national institutions deserves greater consideration in project design; government partners often devote a significant amount of time to attending sundry project-related meetings, leading to what one participant called “task force fatigue.” When competing work demands overlap, attending steering committee meetings or being in a working group can be viewed more as an obligation (or burden) than opportunity. In such situations, online information systems that facilitate communications without requiring physical presence may offer a more user-friendly and effective option.

***Lesson 8: Capacity building can be more effective and sustainable over time if training modules are uploaded to information portals and offered online.***

238. This is a lesson validated by the experience of other GEF-UNEP projects.<sup>39</sup> Capacity building activities directed at local governments in **Kenya** and **The Gambia** were weakened by staff turnover, low institutional memory, internal budget constraints and the intermittency of training events. Capacities that aren't applied will gradually diminish, and training workshops would need to be repeated over time (and trainers trained) to cope with staff turnovers and other changes. A complementary and more cost-effective approach would have incorporated the various training modules to the information systems these projects sought to develop, and offered them online to government staff, NGOs and university programs in order to sustain capacities and provide professional incentive (i.e. awarding certificates or diplomas).

***Lesson 9: Develop integrated information systems in advance of project implementation to ensure their availability at an early stage.***

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<sup>39</sup> For example, the digitalization and online availability of the biosafety training program that had been offered at the national university under UNDP-GEF project “Development of mechanisms to strengthen the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol in Guatemala.”

239. The availability (or absence) of functional information systems connecting convention focal points and environmental institutions played a decisive role in cooperation and data sharing. For this reason, the completion of an operational information management and clearinghouse system is the most immediate “next step” that needs to be taken by NEA in **The Gambia**, and for which there is continued cooperation with UNEP. Integrated information portals are an essential enabling mechanism that must be in place to enable the achievement of other outputs and outcomes that are connected through causal pathways. Project design should earmark the time needed to contract, design and install the portals and data systems in advance of project commencement so that they can be fully used during the implementation period. Information systems should be designed and contracted during the PDF stage so that they are operational once (or shortly after) the project begins. Their design can be expedited by building on existing templates that serve similar functions – for example, NEMA’s integrated information management system - or adapting other data management frameworks, i.e. national biosafety information systems and clearinghouses.

***Lesson 10: Training and planning activities in rural communities need to be accompanied by the implementation of selected pilot activities to create momentum, meet local expectations and sustain commitment, and demonstrate the value of capacity building.***

240. When communities were able to make the transition from planning to implementing some activities, as happened with both pilot villages in **The Gambia** and the *Friends of Yala* community organization in **Kenya**, there was greater appreciation of the training support and commitment to the pilot plans. The momentum that was generated has led or is leading to new cooperation opportunities. Whereas pilot processes that did not generate any concrete activity tended to lose continuity and valued their plans to a less extent. To avoid this, budget provisions or agreements with small grants projects need to be secured at an early stage in order to implement selected activities and demonstrate the value of sustainable resource management.

***Lesson 11: UNEP’s responsiveness and guidance are essential to help projects move forward, particularly during the inception stage.***

241. This is stating the obvious, yet there were illustrative “before and after” situations that affected the three projects. By the time projects were approved, national contexts and government staff had changed. Executing agencies were unfamiliar with UNEP financial management or reporting guidelines, and in one country with the project itself. UNEP guidance was essential at this time yet largely absent, in part because the three projects had recently been transferred between technical divisions, which created a lag in ownership. National implementation was initially very slow and UNEP was not responsive to this situation until a Task Manager was assigned in 2010, after which the level of supervision and backstopping improved considerably.

***Lesson 12: Ex-post evaluations offer greater insight into overall project performance, sustainability and government commitment, with the trade-offs of declining institutional memory and less availability of national stakeholders.***

242. There are pros and cons between scheduling final evaluations when projects are still operational, and after they have been closed. In the case of this evaluation, two of three projects had finished more than one year before the evaluation took place. Key respondents that included project coordinators and convention focal points were no longer available and memories of project activities were often fragile. On the other hand, the evaluation gained a deeper appreciation of overall impact, sustainability and government commitment that is would not have been possible had activities still been under implementation and dependent on external funding. Although the evaluation was scheduled a bit late, it validated the notion of scheduling final evaluations shortly after the project has terminated and not when it is in “full swing.”

***Lesson 13: The indicators used to measure the achievement of expected outcomes were often based on external assumptions outside the project’s control. This is a general design problem that makes projects more vulnerable to assessments of underperformance.***

243. Most of the planned outputs were delivered and many were of high quality, yet project impacts were often below expectations. This apparent dichotomy was caused by the gap between project outputs, which focused on the design and production of deliverables, and the ‘key’ outcome indicators that assumed their adoption and application (requiring government decisions outside the project’s attributions). Therefore, performance tended to fall short because the outputs did not directly lead to their corresponding outcomes, which were partly driven by external factors.

***Lesson 14: Future capacity building and planning initiatives should include a small grant sub-component or secure early finding to implement selected from pilot plans.***

244. Workshops and training sessions are not always part of community reality and the time devoted to attending meetings or participating in discussions has an opportunity cost for local residents. Capacity building as presented by these projects was often a new concept for community members, whose expectations were centered on more tangible material support, as was the case in some of the pilot community organizations in **Kenya** and **The Gambia**. Projects need to earmark funds in their design for local demonstration projects that implement the local action plans. There is also an opportunity to seek a partnership with the GEF Small Grants or other instances that fund small-scale local projects.

***Lesson 15: UNEP project appraisals should ensure that project outputs are connected according to their linkages and lead to their expected outcomes. To assist this, Theory of Change analysis needs should be required at the design stage and incorporated to the project documents.***

252. A related aspect is the importance of ensuring that outputs are sequentially linked to maximize their cumulative effect. There are higher-order outputs that are fundamental to enable the achievement of other outputs that are connected along the impact pathways. As a result, their timing and sequencing are strategic to bringing out the full potential of these projects. Project appraisals need to ensure that the output sequencing and linkages are in place, by requiring that the Theory of Change analysis be applied to the results framework at the design stage, to identify the causal pathways and program outputs accordingly. The evaluator was informed that this has been a required guideline since 2010, yet ToC analysis is rarely included in project documents.

***Lesson 16: Ensure that institutions or firms proposed for project subcontracts have the means to deliver the goods or services that are needed, during project appraisals.***

253. The performance of the project in **The Gambia** was affected by the failure of a contracted firm to provide a functional information system that could be used to connect MEA focal points; another contractor did not have regional staff with the required expertise. The project in Croatia replaced the firm that was initially contracted to design the DFS after its contract expired, due to performance. In both cases the entities involved had been identified years in advance of the projects' approvals. The UNEP divisions or national partners should provide evidence to the appraisal committees that the proposed contractors are in a position to deliver satisfactorily.

***Lesson 17: Projects that are executed internally by national executing agencies need to consider financial remuneration for assigned support staff, in compensation for the added workload and to encourage better commitment and performance.***

247. There is a recurrent trade-off between high ownership and slow delivery when projects are fully assumed by national executing agencies and execution responsibilities are assigned to internal staff. The issue of offering some form of remuneration or supplemental payment to assigned government staff was raised during the evaluation visits and in some cases should be considered at the design stage to encourage motivation and performance in some cases. This may not appear to encourage sustainability after the project and budget are closed, and neither is the usual option of hiring an external team to work in the executing agency for a transitory period.<sup>40</sup>

***Lesson 18: External mid-term evaluations should not necessarily be required for GEF MSPs (in line with GEF requirements), and can be replaced by internal reviews facilitated by the Task Manager with the participation of the UNEP Evaluation Focal Point.***

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<sup>40</sup> The UNEP Task Manager has correctly noted that national executing agencies also must ensure that incentives are available for assigned staff to encourage commitment and effective performance, particularly if there is an internal decision not to hire (or re-hire as in the case of Kenya and Croatia) an external coordinator.

248. Country missions, group meetings and a consensus on the way forward are often what is needed at project mid-points, when the focus is generally on internal operational issues better known to the direct participants. There are budgetary savings in using UNEP staff, i.e. the Task Manager or an Evaluation Office focal point, to facilitate project evaluation meetings, in comparison with hiring external evaluators.

***Lesson 19: Require an assessment of the preparedness of implementing UNEP technical divisions during project appraisals, as a criterion for project approval.***

250. The responsiveness and guidance that is provided by the Task Manager and implementing technical division to national executing agencies is fundamental to get projects moving in the right direction, in particular during the inception stages. This was lacking for the first two years of project implementation, largely due to transfer of projects between divisions that created a void in ownership and accountability, reflected in the absence of a Task Manager. The readiness of technical divisions to assume project oversight and technical guidance responsibilities needs to be screened in advance of project approval and start-up. One option is to include this issue during the project appraisal reviews that are conducted for all proposals for quality assurance.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Recommendations**

***Recommendation 1: Require national executing agencies to hold inception workshops when there are extended gaps – for example, more than one year - between project design and approval.***

245. There was a two-year gap on average between the submission and approval of the projects, during which budgets were devalued and national contexts changed. There was a need to re-socialize the projects and make adjustments to their design, work plans and budgets, as an exercise of adaptive management. Yet the only project that hold an inception workshop was **The Gambia's**, which helped in organizing project implementation. Inception workshops should be required in all cases where project approval takes more than one year, and included in the project budget. The time and cost of bringing the NEA and main stakeholders together and ensure a common understanding and vision, is likely to pay off in terms of better coordination and efficiency.

***Recommendation 2: Upload training modules to the MEA information management systems or NEA websites and offer them online.***

246. Investments in capacity building depreciate rapidly over time when the acquired knowledge is not applied or there are high turnovers of staff in target institutions. After projects terminate, external resources and expertise are no longer available and the continuity of capacity building activities tend to decline over time and are not replicated. This has been a constraint in

working with local government institutions in particular. In the cases of **Kenya** and **The Gambia** – and as general UNEP-GEF project policy – the training modules and documents that were developed by these projects should be uploaded to the MEA information systems and offered online. This should be built into the project design and budget. Over time, online training is more cost-effective than organizing successive workshops or re-training instructors, although both approaches are compatible and connectivity issues need to be considered. If training modules in EIA, EA, ecosystems planning or indicator data flows are offered as an incentive for in-service advancement within government or as a diploma course (as was done with Guatemala’s biosafety training program), they are likely to have broader impact. The DFS training program that was designed in **Croatia** is already posted on the CAEN website, and should be uploaded to the new Environmental Indicators Portal once it is operational to encourage wider dissemination and utilization.

***Recommendation 3: Final evaluations should be scheduled after implementation, yet before institutional memory fades.***

249. The experience of the country evaluations indicate that future evaluations should be scheduled approximately 6 months after the project’s termination, when feasible. This will enable the evaluator to gain a better sense of project impact and sustainability, and the commitment of national stakeholders to move processes forward. The report describes the trade-offs of scheduling final evaluations before or after the project has terminated. Impact and continuity cannot be properly assessed when implementation is ongoing and processes are dependent on external funding. On the other hand, if evaluations are scheduled too far after the project’s termination, institutional memory diminishes and key respondents move on and aren’t available. The programming of final evaluations within six months after the project’s finish should allow sufficient time for the consolidation and transfer of results, without excessive turnover within partner institutions or or loss of memory.

***Recommendation 4: UNEP project appraisals must ensure that performance indicators are realistic and within the projects ability to influence.***

251. A paradoxical finding of the evaluation was that projects delivered most outputs by the end of their terms, yet fell short of achieving the expected outcomes or objectives. The project documents include key performance indicators for outcomes that are intended to guide evaluations, as indicated in the text. However, these indicators often assume that project deliverables have been approved and are being used, which often require institutional agreements and budget decisions that are outside project attributions. Therefore the projects fell short of fully achieving their intended outcomes; data flow systems are not being used, information systems are pending and pilot plans have not been approved and are not being implemented. It is important that success criteria for project outcomes be realistic and achievable through the realization of associated outputs. This aspect needs to be scrutinized within the implementing divisions and by project appraisal committees before project approvals are recommended.

***Recommendation 5: Follow-up GEF-UNEP assistance is needed to finalize and consolidate incomplete processes in The Gambia and Kenya.<sup>41</sup> However, further assistance should be contingent on a demonstrated government commitment to implement the country-level recommendations that are listed below.***

254. The successful demonstration of ecosystems-based planning, EIA/EA tools and environmental management plans has not had an effect on national policies, nor have they been documented or replicated elsewhere as was foreseen in the project work plans. Government resources are lacking to replicate these processes on a meaningful scale, and the mainstreaming of these approaches are dependent on donor funding. The demonstration value of some of the approaches that were used merit further GEF-UNEP support; however, there needs to be a stronger national commitment to facilitate this process and inform government policy levels (and other donors as well). New proposals should be considered for funding under GEF 7, based on the level of government commitment and follow-up to these projects in the immediate future. The GEF Small Grants Programme should be a partner in this endeavor, to assist the replication of pilot EIA and community planning initiatives.

#### **SPECIFIC COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

##### **The Gambia:**

255. Follow-up activities must be implemented to create the enabling conditions for better coordination, and to consolidate project deliverables that were not completed. These need to be managed by NEA in consultation with the convention focal points, in order to demonstrate national commitment and encourage the mobilization of additional funding under GEF 7.

***Recommendation 6: The most immediate post-project priority is to have an operational information management system and portal within NEA that connects focal points and other convention stakeholders, as envisioned in the project's design.***

256. There have been advances in developing the NEA website over the past year with the support of a GEF project; however, it needs to be expanded functionally to include integrated databases, clearinghouse services and other tools to facilitate interaction among Rio Convention focal points and other interested parties during the convention monitoring and reporting cycles. The Kenya project has advanced farther with its information systems and NEMA has shown interest in sharing their experience; the IIMS offers a working model that can be adjusted by NEA. There is also the sub-regional SOE program for integrated environmental assessment and data bases in West Africa, which provides an opportunity to develop convention information system that are aligned regionally.

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<sup>41</sup> As a EU member, Croatia is no longer eligible for GEF funding.

***Recommendation 7: Another immediate priority is the need to disseminate and replicate the ecosystems planning approach that was successfully demonstrated in two pilot villages, on a wider scale.***

257. This should also be supervised by NEA and pursue two channels: Organizing site visits and documentation to inform larger-scale ongoing conservation and climate change projects (funded by the Green Conservation Fund, the EU and GEF) of the pilot processes implemented in Tumani Tenda and Darsalani villages. These projects have community-based components with similar objectives and can benefit from a validated capacity building approach that raises local capacities and generates action plans. Replications may be more cost-effective if executed on an area-based scale rather than with individual villages, and involve the Multi-disciplinary Facilitation Teams that work under the TACs and provide direct extension services to villages. The GEF-Small Grants Programme operates in the Gambia and should be approached to support the replication of the pilot processes.

***Recommendation 8: National funding mechanisms should be explored to support community-based conservation and sustainable resource management.***

258. Alternatives need to be considered in consultation with a wide range of institutions and stakeholders. This includes exploring the feasibility an environmental tax to visiting tourists, who already pay entry visas that fund tourism promotional campaigns (public sector employees have a symbolic amount deducted from their salaries for environmental activities). Tourism is The Gambia's second source of foreign exchange, and many beaches, reserves and traditional village camps visited by tourists are threatened by coastal erosion, which affects more than 50% of the national territory. Earmarking of a small amount from each entry visa for sustainable community development or environmental conservation could go a long way in leveraging funds for community-based activities that lead to climate change resilience. There are existing corporate responsibility initiatives that can be expanded to provide partial funding for conservation activities; an option that needs to be considered by the government.

***Recommendation 9: Retain the MEA Coordination Committee as an ad hoc group and activate it according to the demands of the convention monitoring and reporting cycles.***

259. The project's experience has shown that there is not a need for a permanent coordination committee that holds quarterly meetings. The MEA committee, which has not met in over a year, is dormant but could be effective if activated during convention reporting cycles, and more so if supported by an integrated information system. This form of operation is envisioned by NEA.

**Croatia:**

***Recommendation 10: CAEN should adjust the DFS to present needs and promote its application through the Environmental Indicators portal that will become operational in 2017.***



260. Croatia is a recent EU member that is fully committed to complying with EU environmental standards, data management and reporting. It no longer qualifies for GEF assistance and the main pending activity is to encourage the updating of the DFS model to present circumstances and its utilization by the Ministry of Environment & Nature Protection and environmental institutions. The main vehicle for achieving this will be uploading the DFS and capacity building modules to the new EI portal that is being developed by the Ministry with EU support. This is already planned by CAEN and will hopefully be realized next year.

**Kenya:**

***Recommendation 11: The most immediate priority is that NEMA assists the approval and implementation of the environmental management plans that were designed for the pilot sites.***

261. This is necessary not only to generate tangible effects and meet local expectation. It is an essential step to demonstrate the value of the capacity building and planning approach that was used, in order to justify further funding for its replication in other high-biodiversity areas that are under threat. NEMA needs to ensure that priority actions of these plans are incorporated and budgeted within the next cycle of 5-year county integrated development plans. This would also send a stronger policy signal and strengthen the viability of further funding to replicate the process on a broader scale. NEMA should consider the possibility of entering into partnership with the GEF Small Grants Program, which has representation in Nairobi, to replicate the EIA/EA processes and environmental master plans in other biodiversity “hot spots.”

***Recommendation 12: NEMA and country governments should facilitate the involvement of affected stakeholder organizations in EIAs for geothermal drilling at Mt. Suswa, and agricultural expansion and sugar cane processing in the Yala wetlands.***

262. The best way to make use of the training received is to apply it, and more so if it contributes to a larger objective. This is pending with the Mt. Suswa Conservancy Area stakeholders committee, which was unable to participate effectively in the EIA process that was recently held and led to the authorization for geothermal drilling. Although an opportunity was missed, it is important that the process be re-visited to ensure that local views are included. Likewise, the proposed expansion of cultivated area and operation of a sugar cane processing facility in the vicinity of the Yala protected area should also undergo EIAs. Both cases offer an opportunity for NEMA to ensure the participation of the partner stakeholder organizations in actual EIA processes, with the possibility of mitigating some of the negative environmental impacts. This could include restricting drilling to areas outside the Mt. Suswa crater, and requiring adequate treatment and drainage arrangements to discharge effluents and maintain ecological corridors that connect Yala’s wetland areas and are used by wildlife.

***Recommendation 18: NEMA should consider the designation of pilot sites as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) when justified to raise environmental safeguards.***

263. All of the pilot sites are strategically important in terms of biodiversity, water resources, livelihoods and/or cultural value, yet face immediate threats from incompatible land uses and actual/planned resource extraction. NEMA is in a position to encourage their designation as Environmentally Sensitive Areas to ensure suitable levels of environmental protection and ensure a more balanced development pattern. The pilot environmental management plans can readily be adapted into ESA management plans and responsibilities assigned accordingly. The process of establishing ESAs and ensuring their sustainable management could potentially provide NEMA with a new project concept (and stronger case for seeking additional funding).

## **ANNEXES**

## **Annex 1**

### **PROJECT RATINGS**

The following tables present the ratings given by the evaluator to the project, based on the evaluation criteria applied in this report.

## THE GAMBIA

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
<b>A. Strategic relevance</b>	The project's design addressed capacity building priorities identified by the NCSA and supported the Bali Strategic Plan. The Community Action Plans that were drafted in two pilot villages are relevant to local development and conservation needs.	HS
<b>B. Achievement of outputs</b>	MEA Coordination Committee and Unit were established and pilot processes implemented. However, the Information Management System was not available when needed, and the product submitted was flawed. The project has had little influence at divisional government levels. Ecosystems planning processes were successfully piloted in two villages and generated tangible results.	MS
<b>C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results</b>	The project had little impact on MEA management due to inconsistent meetings of the MEA Coordination Committee and lack of an operational integrated information system. Global conventions were not integrated into divisional planning and implementation due to low local government capacities, staff turnover and intermittent project presence. The ecosystems planning processes piloted in two villages were successful and have strengthened local environmental management, yet have not been replicated or influenced policy thus far.	MU
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	New institutional framework was created through the MEA Coordination Committee but lost momentum and is presently dormant. Global environmental issues do not appear to be internalized by divisional governments due to staff turnover and a drawn out training process that lacked the consistency needed to have impact.	MU
2. Likelihood of impact	The MEA Coordination Committee is dormant yet can be reactivated during convention reporting cycles. The information system is gradually being improved with support from a EU project. The pilot planning activities have generated local impact in the two pilot villages, yet there are no immediate prospects for replication on a broader scale.	ML

3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	Conservation capacities have been enhanced in the pilot villages. However, this is highly localized and multiplier effects on a national scale are lacking. The project had little influence on Gambia's capacities to contributing to the conservation of and dealing with global environmental management. The declining momentum of the MEA Coordination Committee and lack of an integrated information system were contributing factors.	MU
<b>D. Sustainability and replication</b>	More than one year after the project's termination, the MEA CC is not meeting and the planned IMS is not operational. There has been follow-up support in the two pilot villages, which is indicative of sustainability, yet these case studies have not been replicated.	U
1. Financial	The MEA CC did not receive an operating budget and divisional governments are under-budgeted to support environmental initiatives. The pilot villages have been able to leverage additional funding from UNDP and NGOs.	MU
2. Socio-political	The MEA CC is not operational and the project has not had a noticeable impact on environmental policy. At the local level, the Community Action Plans are contributing to sustainable development processes.	MU
3. Institutional framework	The MEA CC is not operational. The MEA Unit continues to exist. The ANRE subcommittees were affected by staff turnover, and there is limited institutional memory and capacity retention at divisional government levels.	MU
4. Environmental	There are indications of environmental sustainability in the two pilot villages where ecosystems planning was demonstrated.	ML
5. Catalytic role and replication	The processes supported by the project do not appear to have influenced broader environmental or developmental issues; nor has the ecosystems approach been replicated.	U
<b>E. Efficiency</b>	Implementation was slow and the project required an extension. However, most outputs were delivered by the end of the project, within the approved budget. The approach and methodologies applied in the pilot villages were effective.	MS
<b>F. Factors affecting project performance</b>	See text and ratings below.	
1. Preparation and readiness	The project was designed in consultation with key partners, and the pilot villages were carefully selected. Pilot activities benefitted from capable and motivated community organizations. The NEA organized an Inception Workshop soon after the project's approval. Divisional ANRE subcommittees were not prepared to internalize and apply the capacity building support provided by the project.	S
2. Project implementation and management	The project was well managed by NEA and the project coordinator. Most outputs were fully delivered by the end of the project. Stakeholders were consulted at different stages of the project cycle.	S

3. Stakeholders participation and public awareness	Pilot planning processes under the second outcome were community-driven and have raised local awareness – both on the importance of sustainable natural resource management and the importance of capacity building.	S
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was designed to address national capacity priorities and supported country ownership of global conventions through the MEA Coordination Committee. The pilot initiatives were locally driven to a high degree.	HS
5. Financial planning and management	Financial audits were conducted with no controversial findings. Unspent budgets were revised and re-programmed as needed. The project was implemented within the approved budget. Procurements were initially delayed by the new Umoja system.	S
7. Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring reports were submitted and the TM visited the project on more than one occasion. A Mid-term Evaluation was programmed and not implemented; instead, the TM facilitated internal evaluation meetings. However, supporting documentation is lacking and NEA was unable to recall the MTE.	MU
a. M&E Design	A satisfactory monitoring plan was designed and is in the project document.	S
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	An adequate M&E budget was included in the project document.	S
c. M&E Plan Implementation	Plan was not implemented. Monitoring by UNEP was largely ad hoc yet responsive to country needs.	U
<b>Overall Project Rating</b>	The project did not achieve the expected impact levels foreseen by its key indicators, due to factors that were often outside the project's immediate control. There were examples of information sharing between convention focal points but core practices and mechanisms do not appear to have been affected. The lack of an integrated information system and clearinghouse mechanism were determining factors. The most successful project initiatives were the pilot training and planning processes conducted in two villages, which have generated tangible benefits for local residents. However, these experiences were not replicated nor have they influenced policy. The project did not have an impact at divisional government levels due to limited local government capacities and high staff turnover.	MU

## CROATIA

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
<b>A. Strategic relevance</b>	The project 's design addressed capacity building priorities identified by the NCSA. The need for MEA coordination was underscored by the broad range of Croatian environmental institutions involved with the conventions.	HS
<b>B. Achievement of outputs</b>	Most outputs were fully delivered over the project span. However the DFS has not been adopted yet and therefore the institutional responsibilities and data/information management protocols (output 2.2-2.3) were not realized.	S
<b>C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results</b>	The project has had little impact in establishing integrated MEA management because the DFS isn't being applied, and because the inconsistencies between the Rio Conventions in indicators, definitions, formats and timelines undermined efforts towards their integration (only one out of 23 adopted indicators was found to compatible with the three main conventions). Effectiveness was also affected by Croatia's entry to the EU, bringing new and more urgent environmental compliance and reporting needs that re-focused government priorities, institutional changes and discontinuous implementation.	MU
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	The DFS was designed but has not been established. In terms of outcome indicators, it is not used by the relevant institutions, nor has it saved costs. Environmental indicators were drawn from the National List of Indicators for the three main Rio Conferences, yet only a few can be used by more than one conference. There have been advances in institutional communications that are more the result of institutional integration and the UNFCCC in the case of the national climate change committee.	MU
2. Likelihood of impact	Impact will depend on whether the DFS model is adopted after it is incorporated to the new Environmental Indicators Portal in 2017, and the implementation of capacity building modules that were designed and uploaded to the CAEN website.	ML
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	The immediate objective of developing the DFS model was met, yet this has not had an impact on integrated global environmental management. The DFS has been adopted or applied as envisioned in the outcome indicators, although external factors outside the project's control have influenced this.	MS
<b>D. Sustainability and replication</b>	The DFS and other project deliverables need to be adopted and utilized before their sustainability can be considered.	U
1. Financial	There are no allocations for the DFS at present.	U
2. Socio-political	Further pilot tests of the indicators and DFS model in the field are not planned.	U
3. Institutional framework	The DFS and other deliverables need to be adopted and utilized before their sustainability can be considered. There are plans to upload the DFS to the new Environmental Indicators Portal in 2017, which could have an impact.	MU
4. Environmental	Same as above.	ML

5. Catalytic role and replication	The DFS and processes supported by the project do not appear to have influenced broader environmental management; nor has it been replicated.	U
<b>E. Efficiency</b>	Implementation was discontinuous and affected by institutional restructuring, a change of government and suspension of activities for an extended period. Nevertheless, outputs were delivered within the approved budget and efficiency improved with assignment of a CAEN focal point and assistant to manage the project from 2014 onwards.	MS
<b>F. Factors affecting project performance</b>		
1. Preparation and readiness	The government executing institution was prepared to execute the project in terms of institutional capacity. However, CEA/CAENs preparation and readiness were weakened by institutional and policy changes that weakened government commitment and ownership.	S
2. Project implementation and management	The project was well managed by CAEN once institutional changes were established and project activities resumed.	S
3. Stakeholders participation and public awareness	There was a project steering committee and working groups were created to assist the design of indicators and data flows. The successful pilot testing of the DFS model in a national park included a public awareness activities.	S
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was designed to address national capacity priorities and supported country ownership of global conventions through CEA/CAEN. The environmental indicators of the DFS model were drawn from the National List of Indicators.	HS
5. Financial planning and management	Financial audits were conducted with no controversial findings. Unspent budgets were revised and re-programmed as needed. The project was implemented within the approved budget. Procurements were initially delayed by the new Umoja system. The final payment to the project has been pending for more than one year.	S
6. UNEP supervision and backstopping	Project inception and start-up were weakened by the absence of a Task Manager until 2010. Thereafter, the assigned TM was supportive of the project and visited it on more than one occasion.	MS
7. Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring reports were submitted and the TM visited the project. A Mid-term Evaluation was programmed and not implemented; instead, the TM facilitated internal evaluation meetings. However, supporting documentation is lacking and NEA was unable to recall the MTE.	MU
a. M&E Design	A satisfactory monitoring plan was designed and is in the project document.	S
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	An adequate M&E budget was included in the project document.	S
c. M&E Plan Implementation	Plan was not implemented. Monitoring by UNEP was ad hoc yet responsive to country needs.	MU
<b>Overall Project Rating</b>	The project did not have the expected level of impact in relation to several key indicators. Outputs were delivered but the DFS model and indicators were not adopted nor are they being applied (although data is collected for convention reporting with varying levels of institutional collaboration). To a large extent this was influenced by external factors – the new requirements of Croatia’s EU membership, institutional restructuring and personnel	MS



	turnover, the suspension of activities and inconsistencies between the Rio Conventions that cannot be resolved by countries. The pilot testing of the DFS was successfully conducted, and a capacity building programme has been uploaded to the CAEN website, yet is not being applied.	
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## KENYA

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Rating
<b>A. Strategic relevance</b>	Project design addressed capacity building priorities identified by the NCSA and focused pilot activities on high-biodiversity ecosystems that are under threat.	HS
<b>B. Achievement of outputs</b>	Most outputs were fully delivered over the project span with the exception of enhanced reporting and clearinghouse mechanisms (2.3) which has not been tested. However, the slow implementation and late delivery of many outputs undermined their aggregate effect.	MS
<b>C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results</b>	EIA/EA training and publications are likely to have indirectly strengthened national environment assessment, monitoring and environmental audit systems, at least within NEM which has a national oversight role. This was not the case at more decentralized levels due to the restructuring of the local government framework and consequent staff turnovers. Tools were successfully applied at pilot sites, leading to environmental management plans that have not been implemented or replicated thus far. An integrated information and reporting system was developed that facilitates the work of convention desk officers, is cost-effective and has a clearinghouse mechanism.	MS
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	Outcomes were partially achieved. The project did not develop the consistency or momentum needed to incorporate UNCBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and POPs principles in national development plans, through EIA methods. The pilot plans were developed but not incorporated within local or national development plans, and for the most part are not being implemented with the exception of isolated activities in Yala. The pilot processes were not synchronized with government planning and budgeting cycles, leading to several missed opportunities. Beyond the training and guided exercises at pilot sites, there is not evidence of expanded use of EIA/EA tools that incorporate MEAs. The new integrated information system offers a potentially more effective and cost-efficient response to convention obligations. However, it has not influenced convention reporting or national policy decisions because due to its delayed availability.	MS
2. Likelihood of impact	Impact will depend on the adoption and implementation of the pilot environmental management plans, the declaration of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in threatened high-biodiversity ecosystems, and a more systematic and coordinated application of EIA guidelines at country levels.	ML

3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	The project has strengthened yet not noticeably enhanced Kenya's ability to address global environmental issues through coordinated and integrated implementation of respective multi-lateral environmental agreement, outside the common databases available in the integrated information system. This is largely influenced by inconsistencies between conventions that cannot be resolved by countries.	MS
<b>D. Sustainability and replication</b>	The training modules and publications are potentially sustainable and can be uploaded to the new information system. The pilot environmental management plans are not being implemented, but are relevant and could be included within the next country planning and budget cycle in 2017.	MS
1. Financial	There are no allocations to sustain project initiatives at present.	U
2. Socio-political	The pilot environmental management plans need to be approved and implemented, with a greater commitment from county governments.	U
3. Institutional framework	Same as above. The integrated information management system has the potential to raise and sustain the level of institutional collaboration and information sharing around the Rio Conventions.	ML
4. Environmental	The pilot environmental management plans address threats to ecosystems with high biodiversity, and would be environmentally sustainable if applied.	ML
5. Catalytic role and replication	The pilot processes have not had a catalytic role because they have not led to implementation (with the exception of some activities in Yala); nor are they being replicated in other locations. The information system is sustainable and has the potential to catalyse institutional cooperation and information sharing, as it is already doing within NEMA.	U
E. Efficiency	Implementation was discontinuous and drawn out over time. The project has been open since 2009 and still needs to print the pilot management plans. Project decisions within NEMA were often very slow and had to be cleared by a Board of Directors that only met twice year. There were also procurement and disbursement delays resulting from the new Umoja financial management system. Efficiency was weakened by the lack of full-time project personnel during most of the implementation period. However, most of the planned outputs were ultimately delivered within the approved budget.	MU
<b>F. Factors affecting project performance</b>		
1. Preparation and readiness	NEMA was prepared to execute the project in terms of institutional capacity. However, it was not ready to provide the consistency and momentum that were needed, when project management was assigned to internal staff who had other work responsibilities. The lack of a full time project coordinator for most of the implementation period affected NEMA's responsiveness. At decentralized levels, preparation and readiness were adversely affected by the re-structuring of the local government, high staff turnovers and the low capacity of some of the community organizations.	MS
2. Project implementation and management	The project was well-designed and managed by technically capable senior NEMA staff. The implementation strategy was clearly articulated and combined interventions at central government, county and ecosystem	MS

	levels. However, project decisions and overall implementation have been excessively slow and verticalized, requiring Board of Directors approval for purchases and disbursements.	
3. Stakeholders participation and public awareness	The pilot processes were largely driven by local stakeholder organizations and included public awareness components.	S
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was designed to address environmental coordination priorities that were identified by the NCSA. The pilot sites were extremely well selected given their environmental relevance and conservation-land use conflicts. In some cases, national government interests have prevailed over those of the targeted stakeholders, i.e. geothermal energy extraction, large-scale agricultural investments.	HS
<b>5. Financial planning and management</b>	Financial expenditures by NEMA were often delayed because they required approval by the Board of Directors, which met infrequently. There were also administrative delays caused by the new Umoja system. Financial audits were conducted with no controversial findings. Unspent budgets were revised and re-programmed as needed. The project was implemented within the approved budget.	MS
<b>6. UNEP supervision and backstopping</b>	Project inception and start-up were weakened by the absence of a Task Manager until 2010. Thereafter, the assigned TM was supportive of the project and visited it on more than one occasion.	MS
<b>7. Monitoring and evaluation</b>	Monitoring reports were submitted and the TM visited the project. A Mid-term Evaluation was programmed and not implemented; instead, the TM facilitated internal evaluation meetings. However, supporting documentation is lacking and there is little recall on the part of NEMA.	MU
a. M&E Design	A satisfactory monitoring plan was designed and is in the project document.	S
b. Budgeting/ funding for M&E activities	An adequate M&E budget was included in the project document.	S
c. M&E Plan Implementation	Plan was not implemented. Monitoring by UNEP was ad hoc yet responsive to country needs.	MU
<b>Overall Project Rating</b>	The project has improved MEA management and cooperation through the integrated information management system. This is the main achievement and rationale for the rating assigned. Training on EIA and EA were provided and extended to the pilot sites, yet they have not been applied nor have they enhanced the sustainable management of the target areas.	MS

**Rating Scale:**

HS: *Highly Satisfactory*

S: *Satisfactory*

MS: *Moderately satisfactory*

MU: *Moderately unsatisfactory*

U: *Unsatisfactory*

HU: *Highly unsatisfactory*

HL: *Highly Likely*

L: *Likely*

ML: *Moderately Likely*

MU: *Moderately Unlikely*

UL: *Unlikely*

HU: *Highly Unlikely*

**Annex 2**

**PROJECT COSTS AND CO-FINANCING TABLES**

**The Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels**

**Project Costs**

<b>Component/sub-component/output</b>	<b>Estimated cost at design</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)</b>
Outcome 1: Integrated Institutional Framework established	199,200	199,200	1.0
Outcome 2: Global environment integrated into divisional level development	188,500	188,500	1.0
Project management budget/cost	105,300	105,300	1,0

**Co-financing**

<b>Co financing (Type/Source)</b>	<b>UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Government (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Other* (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)</b>
	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
- Grants	493	493					493	493	493
- Loans									
- Credits									
- Equity investments									
- In-kind support			168	168			493	493	168

**Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia**

**Project Costs**

<b>Component/sub-component/output</b>	<b>Estimated cost at design</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)</b>
Outcome 1: An enhanced EIS that incorporates SMART indicator sets covering global environmental concerns	315,000	315,000	1.0
Outcome 2: A cooperative institutional framework (DFS) that increases information accessibility and reduces redundancy in data collection	55,000	55,000	1.0
Outcome 3: Indicator system and institutional DFS piloted in area with demonstrated convention inter-linkages and complex institutional set-up	157,000	157,000	1,0
Outcome 4: A sustainable national capacity building program for the management of convention data	116,000	116,000	1.0
Project management budget/cost	311,000	311,000	1.0 *

\* Part of the project coordinator budget was re-allocated for workshops and other expenses. The corresponding budget revision was not provided.

**Co-financing**

<b>Co financing (Type/Source)</b>	<b>UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Government (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Other* (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)</b>
	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
- Grants	477	477					477	477	453,900 *
- Loans									
- Credits									
- Equity investments									
- In-kind support			477	477					477

- Final project payment by UNEP to CAEN is pending on acceptance of final report. Information regarding the exact amount to be paid – approximately US\$ 23,100 - was not provided.

### **Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya**

#### **Project Costs**

<b>Component/sub-component/output</b>	<b>Estimated cost at design</b>	<b>Actual Cost</b>	<b>Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)</b>
EIA	280.500	280.500	1.0
Integrated Information system and reporting	243,000	243,000	1.0
Project management	241,000	241,000	1.0 *

\* A portion of the project coordinator budget line was re-allocated for workshops and other expenses. The corresponding budget revision was not provided.

#### **Co-financing**

<b>Co financing (Type/Source)</b>	<b>UNEP own Financing (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Government (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Other* (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total (US\$1,000)</b>		<b>Total Disbursed (US\$1,000)</b>
	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Actual</b>	
- Grants	487.5	487.5					487.5	487.5	487.5*
- Loans									
- Credits									
- Equity investments									
- In-kind support			277	277					477

\* Entire grant has been disbursed to NEMA, of which a balance of approximately US\$ 20,000 remains to pay for printing of pilot environmental management plans and miscellaneous expenditures.

## Annex 4

### PERSONS INTERVIEWED

#### UNEP

Adamou Bouhari, Task Manager            adamou.bouhari@unep.org  
Shakira Khawaja, FMO                    shakira.khawaja@unep.org

#### The Gambia

Osman Sowe, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment  
Aleiu Nyang, National Project Coordinator  
Mohamed Denton, Finance Director NEA  
Ndey Bakurin, Executive Director NEA            [ndeyb@hotmail.com](mailto:ndeyb@hotmail.com), ndeyb@gamnet.gm  
Ajie Kinteh, Senior Program Officer NEA  
Lamin Janju, Regional Program Officer NEA  
Donald Sock, Training Consultant  
Amadou Darboe, Regional Livestock Officer  
Ebon Janha, Regional Forestry Officer  
Bubupateh Biallo, Coordinator Early Warning Systems project  
Omar Ngum, Senior Planner, Dept. of Community Development  
Suleiyman Gaye, Principal Economist – Direct Aid Coordination, Dept. of Planning  
Sambou Nget, Director of Forestry/UNCCD NFP  
Lamin Kessama, Director Parks & Wildlife Dept.  
Kawsu Jammeh, Parks & Wildlife Dept.  
Ablie Sawo, Parks and Wildlife Dept.

#### *Community of Darsilameh:*

Maisalou Jammeh  
Aja Kassama  
Lang Fafana  
Keloba Fafana  
Ngamara Touray  
Lamin Manneh  
Karafa Manneh  
Lang Conteh  
Fahurama Susso  
Omar Touray  
Badasu Fafana  
Bakary Fafana

*Community of Tumani Tenda:*

Patou Sammeh  
Musa Sanyang  
Isatou Sarju  
Naffie Sanyang  
Arakey Janju  
Jarra Sanyang  
Modu Sanyang  
Ebrina Sanyang

**Croatia**

Rene Vukelic, Acting Director CAEN [rene.vukelic@azo.hr](mailto:rene.vukelic@azo.hr)  
Hana Mesic, Project Focal Point, Environmental Monitoring Div. CAEN [hana.mesic@azo.hr](mailto:hana.mesic@azo.hr)  
Irena Vrdoljak, Project Assistant, Environmental Monitoring Div. CAEN [irena.vrdoljak@azo.hr](mailto:irena.vrdoljak@azo.hr)  
Andreja Steinberger, UNCCD Focal Point, CAEN [andreja.steinberger@azo.hr](mailto:andreja.steinberger@azo.hr)  
Zeljko Crnojevic, UNCCD Focal Point, CAEN [zeljko.crnojevic@azo.hr](mailto:zeljko.crnojevic@azo.hr)  
Dino Kriznjak, UNFCCC Focal Point, CAEN [dino.kriznjak@azo.hr](mailto:dino.kriznjak@azo.hr)  
Tatjana Obucijna, UNFCCC Focal Point, CAEN [tatjana.obucijna@azo.hr](mailto:tatjana.obucijna@azo.hr)  
Vlatka Palcic, UNFCCC Focal Point, MENP [vlaska.palcic@mzopi.hr](mailto:vlaska.palcic@mzopi.hr)  
Mira Zovko, Environmental Indicators, CAEN [miro.zovko@azo.hr](mailto:miro.zovko@azo.hr)  
Delfa Rados, EKONERG [delfa.rados@ekonerg.hr](mailto:delfa.rados@ekonerg.hr)  
Hrvoje Jozinovic [hrvoje.jozinovic@ekonerg.hr](mailto:hrvoje.jozinovic@ekonerg.hr)  
Alen Berta, OIKON [aberta@oikon.hr](mailto:aberta@oikon.hr)  
Goran Gregurovic, Forestry Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture [goran.gregurovic@mps.hr](mailto:goran.gregurovic@mps.hr)  
Aleksandar Zugic, Steering Committee member, Bureau of Statistics [zugica@dzs.hr](mailto:zugica@dzs.hr)  
Gordana Bogdanovic, Senior Advisor on Environment, Bureau of Statistics [bogdanovic@dzs.hr](mailto:bogdanovic@dzs.hr)  
Ana Kobaslic, UNCBD Focal Point, MENP [ana.kobaslic@mzojp.hr](mailto:ana.kobaslic@mzojp.hr)  
Ramona Topic, UNCBD Focal Point, CAEN [Ramona.topic@dzzp.hr](mailto:Ramona.topic@dzzp.hr)  
Gordana Kolacko, UNCBD Focal Point, CAEN [gordana.kolacko@azo.hr](mailto:gordana.kolacko@azo.hr)

**Kenya**

Prof. Geoffrey Wahungy, Director General NEMA  
Dr. Kennedy Ondimu, Director Environmental Planning & Research, NEMA  
[kondimu@nema.go.ke](mailto:kondimu@nema.go.ke)  
Paul Nguru, Senior Technical Officer, NEMA, [muirunguru@yahoo.com](mailto:muirunguru@yahoo.com)  
Wilson Busienie, Principal Research Officer, NEMA  
Joyce Imende, CBD desk officer, NEMA  
Diana Mobagi, Senior Research Officer, NEMA  
Joseph Masinde, Environmental Education Information Officer, NEMA  
Moses Olaka, Environmental Education Information Officer (intern), NEMA



*Machakos:*

John Masila Ngilu, Water Resources Management Association, Machakos  
Jacinta Simba, Country Agriculture Dept., Machakos County Government  
Shadrack Mutule, NEMA officer, Machakos County Government  
Eunice Mueke, Administrator Dept. of Lands, Machakos County Government

Winfred Mutiso, Dept. of Lands, Machakos County Government  
John Ngiru, Procurement Officer, Machakos County Government  
Dorcas Kholo, Internal Auditor, Dept. of Lands, Machakos County Government

*Narok:*

Nyamalo Nkumun, County Officer Narok  
Jitani Atiaslu, Narok Country Office  
Ishmael Nkuku, Mt. Suswa Conservation Committee  
James Nkuito, Mt. Suswa Conservation Committee  
Daniel Torris, Mt. Suswa Conservation Committee  
Munsa Kakugi, Mt. Suswa Conservation Committee

*Busia:*

Emanuel Mayamba, Chairman, Friends of Yala  
Habib Namali, Director, Friends of Yala  
Jesca Jonai, Friends of Yala  
Catherine Nasirumbi, Friends of Yala  
Jesca Jonai, Friends of Yala  
Richard Koko, Friends of Yala  
Dennis Chiranse, Environmental officer, Busia County Government  
James Weru, Forestry Officer, Busia County Government

*Siaya:*

Maurice Oburo, Livestock Deptl, Siaya County Government  
Peter Kimwele, Fisheries Dept., Siaya County Government  
Jeconia Kimwele, Lands Dept., Siaya County Government  
Samson Odweri, NEMA Officer, Siaya County Government  
Mabriel Odwong, Environmental Officer, Siaya County Government  
Isaac Muyendo, Agriculture Officer, Siaya County Government  
Andrew Sol, Kenya Forest Service, Siaya  
Augustine Atunga, Kenya Wildlife Service, Siaya

## Annex 5

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#### **The Gambia**

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- “Republic of The Gambia: State of the Environment Report” (2010)
- “Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia”: Project Document (2006)
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- “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”: Project Implementation Review (PIR) – 2013-2014
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- “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”: Workshop to prepare Guidelines and Tools for Devolution of Responsibilities – the MSP Project” (NEA, 2012)
- “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”: PRA Orientation of Stakeholders at Pilot Sites of Darsilameh and Tumani Tenda (NEA, 2010)
- “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”: Training Workshop on Conflict Management, Communications and Knowledge-Sharing for National Focal Points of the Three Conventions” (NEA, 2010)
- “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”: Workshop on Regional Decentralization of Responsibilities for Global Environmental Mandates to Divisional Committees (NEA, 2013)

#### **Croatia**

“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia” – Project Document (2008)

“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia” – Final Report (CAEN, 2015)

“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia” – Financial Report (CAEN, 2015)

“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia” – Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2013-2014/

“Final Meeting of the Project Steering Committee” (translated notes, CAEN 2016)

“Power Pint presentations on Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification and Land Degradation (CAEN, 2016)

“Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia: Contribution to Croatian Environmental Indicator System” (CAEN, 2016)

## **Kenya**

“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya”: Project Document (2008)

“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya”: Project Implementation Review (PIR) – 2013-2014/2014-2015

“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya: Maruba Dam Environmental Management Plan” (NEMA, 2015)

“Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya: Economic Valuation of Yala Swamp as a Trans-boundary Resource” (NEMA, no date)

“Enhanced Regulatory & Information Systems for Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements Project: Project Progress Report “- Power Point (NEMA, 2016)

“Stakeholder Workshop for Validation of Yala Swamp Ecosystem Management Plan” (NEMA, 2015)

“Yala Wetland Integrated Management Plan - Draft” (NEMA, 2015)

“NEMA – Sensitization Workshop for Busia and Siaya Counties Executive Committees on Environmental Legislation, Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Audit” (2014)

“Workshop on Hands-On Training for Systems Users and MEA Practitioners on Reporting” (NEMA, 2015)

“NEMA Training Workshop: Evaluation Questionnaire (no date)

**Other Documents:**

Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (United Nations, 2004)

## Annex 6: UNEP Evaluation Quality Assessment

Evaluation Title:

Evaluation of the Projects: “Gambia – Adoption of Ecosystem Approach for Integrated Implementation of MEAs at National and Divisional Levels”, “Data Flow System and Indicators to Enhance Integrated Management of Global Environmental Issues in Croatia”, “Enhanced Regulatory and Information Systems for Integrated Implementation of MEAs in Kenya”

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. The quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to the evaluation consultants.

The quality of both the draft and final evaluation report is assessed and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Draft Report Rating	Final Report Rating
<b>Substantive report quality criteria</b>			
A. <b>Quality of the Executive Summary:</b> Does the executive summary present the main findings of the report for each evaluation criterion and a good summary of recommendations and lessons learned? (Executive Summary not required for zero draft)	<b>Final report:</b> Good summary		5
B. <b>Project context and project description:</b> Does the report present an up-to-date description of the socio-economic, political, institutional and environmental context of the project, including the issues that the project is trying to address, their root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being? Are any changes since the time of project design highlighted? Is all essential information about the project clearly presented in the report (objectives, target groups, institutional arrangements, budget, changes in design since approval etc.)?	<b>Draft report:</b> Good overview, changes described and precise presentation of key points. <b>Final report:</b> Same as above	5	5

<p>C. <b>Strategic relevance:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of strategic relevance of the intervention in terms of relevance of the project to global, regional and national environmental issues and needs, and UNEP strategies and programmes?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Very good analysis based on info provided by EOU and TM <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>D. <b>Achievement of outputs:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of outputs delivered by the intervention (including their quality)?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Detailed assessment <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>E. <b>Presentation of Theory of Change:</b> Is the Theory of Change of the intervention clearly presented? Are causal pathways logical and complete (including drivers, assumptions and key actors)?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> ToC reconstruction of good quality, developed for each project <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>F. <b>Effectiveness - Attainment of project objectives and results:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the achievement of the relevant outcomes and project objectives?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Yes, good assessment <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>G. <b>Sustainability and replication:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned and evidence-based assessment of sustainability of outcomes and replication / catalytic effects?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Yes all dimensions considered <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>H. <b>Efficiency:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency? Does the report present any comparison with similar interventions?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Yes, but no comparisons <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5

<p>I. <b>Factors affecting project performance:</b> Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of all factors affecting project performance? In particular, does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used; and an assessment of the quality of the project M&amp;E system and its use for project management?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Good analysis <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>J. <b>Quality of the conclusions:</b> Do the conclusions highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project, and connect those in a compelling story line?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Conclusions highlight key points <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5
<p>K. <b>Quality and utility of the recommendations:</b> Are recommendations based on explicit evaluation findings? Do recommendations specify the actions necessary to correct existing conditions or improve operations ('who?' 'what?' 'where?' 'when?'). Can they be implemented?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> R need refining and targeting <b>Final report:</b> Some R moved to LL, remaining ones are to the point and divided into general and country level</p>	5	6
<p>L. <b>Quality and utility of the lessons:</b> Are lessons based on explicit evaluation findings? Do they suggest prescriptive action? Do they specify in which contexts they are applicable?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Lessons are useful <b>Final report:</b> LL refined</p>	5	5
<b>Report structure quality criteria</b>			
<p>M. <b>Structure and clarity of the report:</b> Does the report structure follow EO guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included?</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Very good structure <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	6	6
<p>N. <b>Evaluation methods and information sources:</b> Are evaluation methods and information sources clearly described? Are data collection</p>	<p><b>Draft report:</b> Yes good description <b>Final report:</b> Same as above</p>	5	5

methods, the triangulation / verification approach, details of stakeholder consultations provided? Are the limitations of evaluation methods and information sources described?			
O. <b>Quality of writing:</b> Was the report well written? (clear English language and grammar)	<b>Draft report:</b> Good writing style <b>Final report:</b> Same as above	5	5
P. <b>Report formatting:</b> Does the report follow EO guidelines using headings, numbered paragraphs etc.	<b>Draft report:</b> Yes well layouted and formatted report <b>Final report:</b> Difficulties opening/downloading due to size but overall fine	6	6
<b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b>		5.1	5.2

The quality of the evaluation process is assessed at the end of the evaluation and rated against the following criteria:

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments		Rating
<b>Evaluation process quality criteria</b>			
Q. <b>Preparation:</b> Was the evaluation budget agreed and approved by the EO? Was inception report delivered and approved prior to commencing any travel?	Yes, but problems in the organisation of travel due to insufficient budget allocation in Umoja (travel had to be cancelled)		4
R. <b>Timeliness:</b> Was a TE initiated within the period of six months before or after project completion? Was an MTE initiated within a six month period prior to the project's mid-point? Were all deadlines set in the ToR respected?	No, unclear why TM did not submit projects for evaluation earlier, some delays in the delivery of the report from the consultant's side and delays in receiving comments from the TM		4
S. <b>Project's support:</b> Did the project make available all required documents? Was adequate support provided to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	To some extent, with a lot of intervention from EOU to 1) obtain documents (e.g. via OfO) and 2) encourage logistical support for the visits		4
T. <b>Recommendations:</b> Was an implementation plan for the evaluation recommendations	Yes		5



prepared? Was the implementation plan adequately communicated to the project?			
U. <b>Quality assurance:</b> Was the evaluation peer-reviewed? Was the quality of the draft report checked by the evaluation manager and peer reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments? Did EO complete an assessment of the quality of the final report?	Yes		4
V. <b>Transparency:</b> Were the draft ToR and evaluation report circulated to all key stakeholders for comments? Was the draft evaluation report sent directly to EO? Were all comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the EO and did EO share all comments with the commentators? Did the evaluator(s) prepare a response to all comments?	Yes, with repeated reminders to ensure comments from all 3 countries before finalisation		4
W. <b>Participatory approach:</b> Was close communication to the EO and project maintained throughout the evaluation? Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately communicated?	Yes, to the extent possible due to TM availability		4
X. <b>Independence:</b> Was the final selection of the evaluator(s) made by EO? Were possible conflicts of interest of the selected evaluator(s) appraised?	Yes		4
<b>OVERALL PROCESS RATING:4</b>			

Rating system for quality of evaluation reports

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.