TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project

"Support to the integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago" and "GEF ID 5347"

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

GEF Project ID/SMA ID[9]:	**GEF ID 5347/ SMA 26286**		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: N	Global Coordinating Project:	N
	If yes, provide GEF Programme[10] ID:	Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:	FSP
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	UNEP Ecosystems Division GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit	Executing Agency: (*indicate if internally executed*):	*i)* The Royal Society for The Conservation of Nature (RSCN) (since 30 June 2020) *ii)* The Senckenberg Institute (Until 30 June 2020)
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	*Country*[11]*(ies):* Yemen • National Government | EPA, Yemen • Local Government | Governorate of Hadramaut, Yemen • Local Government | Local District Councils Socotra, Yemen	Institution[12] Name/Type: *i)* Bilateral Aid Agency | GIZ, Germany *ii)* Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE/CMEP), UK *iii)* GEF Agency |UNEP/DEPI/TEU *iv)* Foundation | Senckenberg Society for Nature Research, Germany *v)* Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC-UPF), Spain | In-kind | 181,151 CABI	

		vi) La Sapienza University, Rome, Italy *vii)* Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic	
Relevant SDG(s):	Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (14.2 and 14.5) Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss (15.1, 15.3, 15.5, and 15.8)		
MTS (at approval):	MTS 2014-17/ Ecosystem Management		
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference[13] *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR** POW Output(s) number/reference[12] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	*POW Direct Outcome:* *POW Output:* PoW 2018-2019	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference[12] *(applicable for projects approved from 2022):* **OR** POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference[12] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	*MTS 2025 Outcome:* *POW Expected Accomplishment* EA (a) The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels Indicator (i) Increase in the number of countries and transboundary collaboration frameworks that have made progress to monitor and maintain the health and productivity of marine and terrestrial ecosystems Indicator (ii) Increase in the number of countries and transboundary collaboration frameworks that demonstrate enhanced knowledge of the value and role of ecosystem services
Sub-programme:	PoW 2018-2019 Subprogram 3: Healthy and productive ecosystems	Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):	Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
UNEP approval date:	2015-02-23	GEF approval date:	2015-02-22
GEF Operational Programme #:		GEF Strategic Priority:	i) BD 1 (outcome 1.1 and 1.2), ii) BD 2 (outcome 2.3), iii) LD 3 (outcome 3.2)

Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity, Land Degradation			
Expected start date:	2016-02-18		Actual start date:	2016-02-18
Planned completion date:	2020-07-31 The latest revised date for technical completion: 2025-3-31		Actual operational completion date:	2025-09-30
Planned project budget at approval:	GEF grant allocation: $4,854,566			
	Expected co-financing: $15,042,521 *Cash:* *In-kind:* $15,042,521			
	Total Planned Budget: $ 19,897,087			
Actual expenditures reported:	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2024: $ 4,438,728 RSCN: $1,932,263 SGN: $2,506,465			
	Actual co-financing 30 June 2024: $11,719,517 *Cash: NIL* *In-kind:* $11,719,517			
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 June: $16,158,245			
No. of formal project revisions:	N/A		Date of last approved project revision:	N/A
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5		Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	2025-01-27
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation[14] *(required or not required):*	UNEP requirement:	Y/N	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:	2019-04-30
	GEF requirement:	Y/N		
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	2023-12-30		Terminal Evaluation actual date:	2025-05
Coverage - Country(ies):	Republic of Yemen		Coverage - Region(s):	West Asia or Asia Pacific
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A		Status of future project phases:	Under discussion

2. Project Rationale[1]

1. Socotra Archipelago has been ranked among the richest island systems in the world in terms of biodiversity (Miller and Morris 2004; Banfield et al. 2011) and it is a Natural World Heritage Site (WHS)[2]. The archipelago is also characterised by a unique cultural heritage. For instance, the Socotri people speak a unique non-written pre-Islamic language of ancient origin, and their cultural traditions host a wealth of traditional knowledge on the sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity. This consideration was the basis for recent support provided for community-based conservation by the GEF, UNDP and other international donors, and the archipelago now hosts some of the few and outstanding examples of community-based protected areas in the region.
2. The delicate ecological balance between people and nature, underpinning the preservation of the natural and cultural values of the Socotra WHS, and building the basis for the long-term sustainable livelihoods

[2] The Socotra Archipelago WHS is the first natural WHS in Yemen and one of only a few in the Arab Region.

of the local population, is severely threatened and may represent a major loss in terms of globally important biodiversity. The current course is particularly likely to lead to biodiversity loss, land degradation, and the depletion of natural resources, threatening the foundation of nature-based sustainable economic development and endangering the very future of the Archipelago and its people.

3. The main underlying causes, external factors and pressures affecting the Socotra WHS include immigration, uncontrolled infrastructure development, poor governance at local and national level, over-use of the limited available natural resources (both marine and terrestrial) leading to accelerating desertification, soil erosion and land degradation, increased threats to the islands' ecological balance and food security by invasive alien species, insufficient coordination among government entities and donors operating in the Socotra WHS, and last but not least lack of predictable and long-term financing mechanisms to sustain the management of the WHS.

4. The Socotra Biodiversity Project (1997-2002), funded by the GEF and implemented through United Nations, in particular, UNDP developed a national Environmental Protection Authority team and the Socotra Conservation Zoning Plan, working very closely with the Government of Yemen (GoY) on environmental and development issues in general and specifically to support the protection of the Socotra Archipelago. The Socotra Conservation and Development Programme (SCDP) - Phase One (2001-2003) integrated development projects and supported the UNESCO nomination as a World Heritage Site. Phase Two (2004-2008) focused on training national staff and establishing a Decision Support System for sustainable development. The Socotra Governance and Biodiversity Project (2008-ongoing) aims to mainstream biodiversity management in local governance and establish a legal framework for the World Heritage Site management. These projects collectively advanced biodiversity conservation and sustainable development on Socotra Archipelago.

5. However, despite previous efforts from UN/GEF projects, the integrity of the WH site is strongly compromised, in fact more so as a result of increased human impacts during the last decade. The project aims at both decreasing human pressures on the environment as well as increasing local capacity to directly address primary challenges. To accomplish this goal, the project strives to incorporate the knowledge learned both from local projects as well as from comparable case studies in order to ensure community participation and gender-sensitive involvement in project decision-making for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and to pilot sustainable conservation funding mechanisms.

6. The Socotra Archipelago World Heritage Site (WHS) is at a critical point between sustainable development and losing its unique biodiversity. Unlike other islands that missed conservation opportunities, Socotra's recent development poses both threats and opportunities. Socotra has not experienced extinction of its endemic birds, reptiles, and terrestrial molluscs in the last century. By addressing global extinction issues, the project seeks to safeguard Socotra's ecosystems and ensure long-term benefits for local communities.

7. The GEF intervention on Socotra aimed to address issues, gaps, and threats through technical support, capacity development, and barrier-removal actions, building on prior GEF-funded projects and local capacity. The project focuses on biodiversity conservation, management of invasive species, sustainable land management, and enhancing institutional capacities and governance mechanisms. It expects to generate significant Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) and be implemented in coordination with local authorities and stakeholders, complementing ongoing investments.

8. The project contributes to several GEF-5 Focal Area Strategic Objectives, including improved management of protected areas, increased revenue for protected area systems, and better management frameworks for invasive species. Additionally, it supports sustainable forest management, capacity development, and climate change mitigation through integrated strategies for bio-cultural conservation and sustainable use of shrubland and woodland on Socotra.

3. Project Results Framework

9. The project aims to prevent the irreversible loss of the unique ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources of the Socotra WHS.
10. The main objective of the project was to Strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities sustainably to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through biodiversity conservation, invasive alien species (IAS) management and sustainable land management (SLM).
11. The project was to achieve its goal and objective through the four components, as per table below:
    - Component 1: Biodiversity conservation and protected area management
    - Component 2: Invasive alien species management
    - Component 3: Sustainable land management/land degradation
    - Component 4: Enabling environment

Table 1 Summary table the project's programmed outputs and expected outcomes by component

Project Objective	**Objective level Indicators**
Strengthen governmental and non-governmental capacities sustainably to manage and protect the Socotra Archipelago WHS through BD conservation, IAS management and SLM.	• Increased capacities for coordinated environmental management and sustainable development. • Number of additional plans and policies that address sustainable development, environmental management and/or PAM, IAS or SLM. • Recommendations for the integration of BD- PAM, IAS and SLM • strategies into an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF).
Component 1 Biodiversity conservation and protected area management	
Outcome 1.1 A BD-PAM strategy is developed, incl. an updated conservation data baseline and a revised Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP).	**Output 1.1.1** The existing PAs and their management are evaluated. **Output 1.1.2** Baseline studies and analyses on BD and PA conducted. **Output 1.1.3** Revision of the Conservation Zoning Plan (CZP).
Outcome 1. 2. The BD-PAM strategy is operational, incl. improved management and expansion of the PA network, and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework (ICMF, see 4.1.3).	**Output 1.2.1** Management plans of existing and new PAs reviewed/developed and implemented. **Output 1.2.2** Special management plans aimed at targeted terrestrial and marine species conservation and resource management developed and implemented.

Component 2 Invasive alien species management	
Outcome 2.1 A community-based management strategy to control IAS in the Socotra WHS is devised, incl. an updated IAS data baseline.	**Output 2.1.1** All existing invasive and potentially invasive species are identified, including their direct or potential impacts on PA and BD management and ecosystem services. **Output 2.1.2** A community-based IAS management strategy is developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks.
Outcome 2.2 The IAS management strategy is operational and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework (ICMF, see 4.1.3).	**Output 2.2.1** Pathways for IAS are identified and measures for priority prevention and control are developed and implemented.
Component 3 Sustainable land management/land degradation	
Outcome 3.1 A community-based strategy for SLM in the Socotra WHS is devised, underpinned by a SLM data baseline.	**Output 3.1.1** Land degradation status and threats of current land management are identified and mapped, including existing or projected impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services. **Output 3.1.2** A community-based SLM strategy developed, incorporating guidelines for policy, legal and institutional frameworks
Outcome 3.2 The SLM management strategy is operational and coordinated with the integrated conservation management framework (ICMF, see 4.1.3).	**Output 3.2.1** Priority sustainable land management measures developed and implemented.
Component 4 Enabling environment	
Outcome 4.1 Institutional, organizational and individual capacities are strengthened to better manage the environment on Socotra.	**Output 4.1.1** A strategic capacity development plan (CDP) for environmental management is prepared. **Output 4.1.2** An ecosystem services framework informs management and sustainable financing schemes. **Output 4.1.3** Recommendations for an integrated conservation management framework (ICMF) for the Socotra WHS are developed (closely linked to the BD-PAM, IAS and SLM strategies and the capacity development plan). **Output 4.1.4** Capacity development measures implemented for key administrative partners. **Output 4.1.5** Special programmes for long-term enhancement of policing and academic capacities planned and launched**.**

	Output 4.1.6 Field schools for community-based environmental management are established and operational.
Outcome 4.2 Information and knowledge supports environmental management.	**Output 4.2.1** An information management strategy is developed. **Output 4.2.2** A communication and awareness strategy is developed. **Output 4.2.3** Results-based project management and M&E is established.
Outcome 4.3 A suite of financing mechanisms sustains the implementation of the Integrated Conservation Management Framework (ICMF) of the Socotra WHS in the long-term.	**Output 4.3.1**[3] A comprehensive Socotra WHS sustainable finance plan is developed. **Output 4.3.2** A Socotra Trust Fund is established. **Output 4.3.3** At least two local income generating mechanisms are developed.

Source: Appendix 04_Log_Frame_after_PRC to Socotra ProDoc_revised_RSCN_final_23052020

[3] These three outputs (output 4.3.1, 4.3.2, and 4.3.3), which represent the work intended to deliver outcome 4, were recorded in PIR 2023 with a comment of *'Not applicable due to the unstable political situation in the island and Yemen in General'* and the three outputs were then not included in the PIR 2024 (August 2024). This gives rise to the questions: how/when these changes were reported internally and to the funding partner; was any adaptive management applied to adjust to these changes and what was the significance of dropping any/all of these outputs in terms of the outcome being achievable etc. According to the project team, the clarification on the final status of output 4.3 will be provided in the PIR covering Jul-Dec 2024.

4. Executing Arrangements

12. UNEP Ecosystems Division, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, was the GEF Implementing Agency[4] for this project. UNEP was responsible for the overall project oversight and supervision to ensure GEF policies and procedures are adhered to and that the project meets its objectives and achieves expected outcomes. UNEP also monitored the project activities implementation and reviewed and approved the substantive and technical reports and transmitted the financial and progress reports to GEF. All arrangements for the project implementation and coordination were prepared to secure smooth and effective project execution in coordination with all involved stakeholders.
13. The executing agency for the overall project was the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) since 30 June 2020[5], under the guidance and supervision of the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE)/Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The executing agency was responsible for coordinating, managing, and administering the project. For instance, RSCN is responsible for delivery of the project based, activity coordination, communications between stakeholders, technical, financial, and administrative backstopping for day-to-day implementation, and sub-contractor management. RSCN is also responsible to UNEP to ensure that all technical and financial aspects of the project are timely executed and converted into the intended outcomes. The RSCN's Project Manager's responsibilities include coordinating the development of annual work plans, overseeing implementation of all project activities, coordinating monitoring and evaluation activities and reports for UNEP and GEF, and managing the project execution arrangements.
14. The steering committee (PSC) was in charge of providing project oversight and guidance, reviewing and supervising general project progress and the monitoring and evaluation reports.

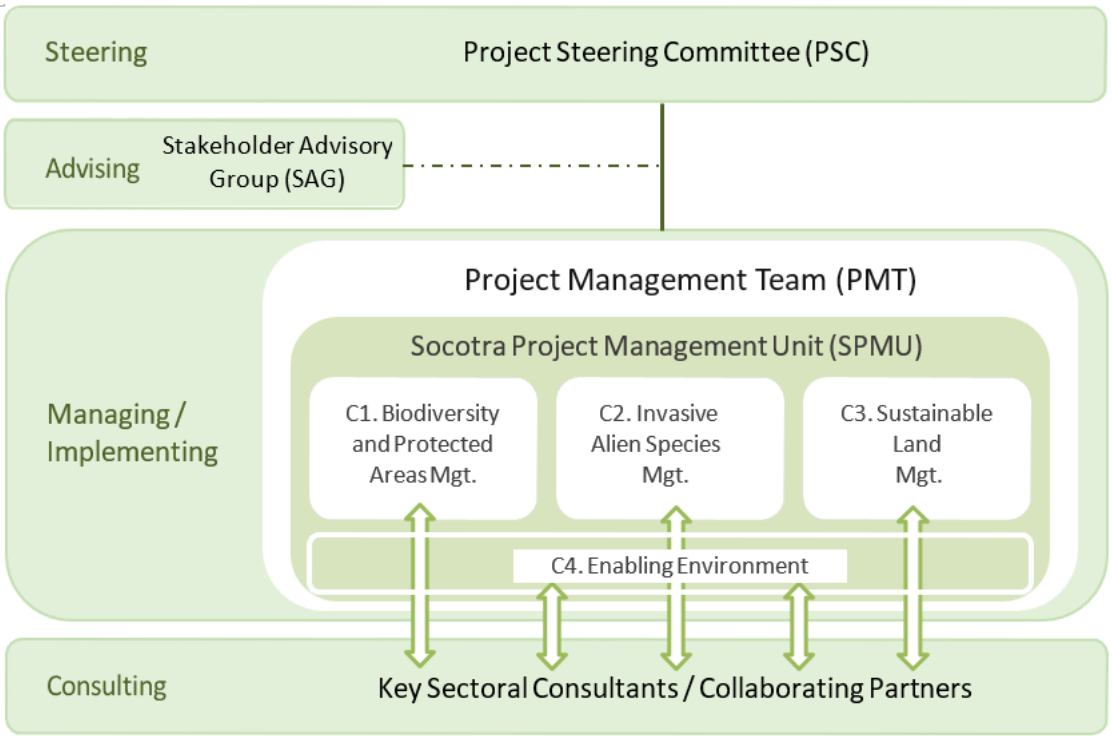


Figure 1 Decision-making Flowchart and Organisational chart (source: Prodoc Appendix 10 Organigram_phase II_revised_RSCN_final_23052020)

[4] Previously, the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation, terrestrial unit was IA

[5] Until 30 June 2020, the Senckenberg Institute form Germany was the executing agency.

5. Project Cost and Financing

15. The total estimated project cost at revised budget was a total of $20,297,087 ($4,854,566 from GEF funding and $15,442,521 from co-finance *in-kind) over a 8-year period. Table 2 shows the detailed budget of co-financing by sources.

Table 2 Overall project budget

	Project preparation	**Planned Project budget**	**Secured Project budget**	**Total**
GEF financing	**$150,000**	**$4,854,566**		**$5,004,566**
Co-financing	**$51,000**	**$15,042,521**		**$15,093,521**
Total	**$201,000**	**$19,897,087**		**$20,098,087**

(SOURCE: Socotra ProDoc_revised_RSCN_final_23052020)

Table 3 Details of Project co-financing

	USD	**%**
Cost to the GEF Trust Fund	**4,854,566**	**24.40**
Co-financing	**15,042,521**	**75.60**
Cash	0	0
In-kind		
GIZ, Germany	7,500,000	37.69
EPA, Yemen	4,500,000	22.62
Royal Botanic Graden Edinburgh (RBGE/CEMP), UK	1,015,000	5.10
Senckenberg Society for Nature Research, Germany [6]	200,000	1.01
Local District Councils Socotra	500,000	2.51
Governorate of Hadramaut, Yemen	500,000	2.51
UNEP/DEPI/TEU	300,000	1.51
Institute of Evolutionary Biology (CSIC-UPF), Spain	181,151	0.91
CABI	150,000	0.75
Le Sapnienza University, Rome, Italy	116,370	0.58
Mendel University, Brno, Czech Republic	80,000	0.40
Sub-total	**15,042,521**	**75.60**
Total	**19,897,087**	**100**

(Source: 01-15-15_CEO_Endorsement_Request_with_corrected)

6. Implementation Issues

16. According to the PIR 2024, upon the request of the initial executing agency, Senckenberg institute (Germany), the contract has been terminated, and the new EA has been nominated by the Ministry of Water and Environment of the Republic of Yemen and changed to the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature after the midterm review (Jordan).

[6] Since 2020, the executing agency is the royal society for the conservation of nature (RSCN)

17. During the project implementation, several no-cost extensions were due to a change of the EA, political changes inside of the country and requests from the EA to allocate sufficient time for the project's activities implementation (please see below the history of no-costs extension and EA changes). The latest no-cost extension was made until 31 March 2025 to enable the Executing Agency to organize the closing workshop of the project.

Table 4 Summary of the revisions/amendments

Version	Type	Signed/Approved by UNEP	Entry Into Force (last signature Date)	Agreement Expiry Date	Main changes introduced in this revision
Amendment	Extension of agreement with EA	2020-02-24	2020-02-29	2020-05-31	no-cost extension
Amendment	Extension of agreement with EA	2020-05-28	2020-05-28	2020-07-31	no-cost extension
Change of the executing agency	Revision	2020-07-22	2020-07-23	2023-12-31	change of the executing agency
Amendment	Extension			2024-12-31	no-cost extension
Amendment	Extension			2025-03-31	no-cost extension

Source: PIR 2024 and the project team

18. The mid-term review of the "Support to the Integrated Program for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Socotra Archipelago" identified several key issues. One major concern was the limited capacity of local institutions to effectively manage and protect the archipelago's biodiversity. Additionally, the review highlighted the challenges posed by invasive species and the need for more robust strategies to combat them. The report also pointed out the insufficient community engagement and awareness regarding conservation efforts, which hindered the project's progress

19. To address these issues, the review recommended strengthening institutional capacities through targeted training and resource allocation. It also suggested implementing comprehensive invasive species management plans and enhancing community involvement by conducting awareness campaigns and fostering local stewardship. Furthermore, the report emphasized the importance of integrating conservation efforts with sustainable development initiatives to ensure long-term success.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

(Apart from section 9, where you could insert up to 5 strategic questions that are in addition to the evaluation criteria, this section is standard and does not need to be revised for each project)

7. Objective of the Evaluation

20. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[7] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[8] the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and main project partners such as Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

21. Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.
22. The "Why?" Question. As this is a Terminal Evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "why?" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.
23. Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to attribute any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the contribution made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A credible association between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.
24. Communicating evaluation results. A key aim of the Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant(s) should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the Main Evaluation Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding

[7] https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114

[8] https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752

the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an Evaluation Brief or interactive presentation.

9. Key Strategic Questions

25. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the strategic questions listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE

    Q1: To what extent has the project contributed to improving unique biodiversity conservation and strengthening protected areas management in the Socotra Archipelago? Were the protected areas management plans elaborated?

    Q2: How effective have the project interventions been in strengthening the capacity of local government/institutions to manage and protect the archipelago's biodiversity and management?

    Q3: To what extent have the monitoring, inventory and management of invasive alien species (IAS) been improved with support from the project's activities and interventions?

    Q4: To what extent have the awareness campaigns and community involvement initiatives been in fostering local stewardship and participation in conservation efforts? What strategies can be employed to enhance community engagement and support?

    Q5: In terms of integrating conservation efforts with sustainable land management/land degradation initiatives, how effectively has the project initiated the alignment of conservation goals with the socio-economic needs of the local population to ensure long-term success?

    Q6: To what extent has the project performance been affected by the integration / absence of gender considerations during project implementation?

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

    a. Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:

    What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided11).

    b. Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation:

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

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

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

    d. Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards:

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

e. Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

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

10. Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Strategic Relevance

28. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Evaluation will include an assessment of the project's relevance in relation to UNEP's mandate and its alignment with UNEP's policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy[9] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[10] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

The Evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated

[9] *UNEP's Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as POW Outcomes and POW Direct Outcomes of the Sub-programmes. https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents.*

[10] *http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm*

environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF), national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[11]

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[12], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

29. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[13] should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

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

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

C. Nature of External Context

30. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[14]). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability

[11] *This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.*

[12] *A project's inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.*

[13] In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.

14 Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs[15]

The Evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision[16]

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[17]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[18] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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[15] *Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)*

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

[17] *An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries (UNEP, 2023).*

[18] All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design. In the case of projects pre-dating 2016 the intervention logic is often represented in a logical framework and a TOC will need to be constructed in the inception stage of the evaluation.

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

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

The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[19] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

E. Financial Management

31. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, completeness of financial information and communication between financial and project management staff. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation will assess the level of

[19] *The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.*

communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

32. Under the efficiency criterion the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.
33. Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.
34. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[20] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.
35. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[21] results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

[20] *Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.*
[21] *SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.*

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities) in project activities. It will also consider the quality of the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

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

iii. Project Reporting

UNEP has a centralised project information management system[22] in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

H. Sustainability

37. Sustainability[23] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action

[22] Prior to 2022 it was the Project Information Management System (PIMS) and from 2022 UNEP has the Integrated Planning Monitoring and Reporting (IPMR) solution.

[23] *As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)*

may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project's outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

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

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

In some cases 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects[24], it may refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within

[24] For GEF funded projects, a rating will be provided for the Project Management and Supervision of each of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. The two ratings will be aggregated to provided an overall rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision

changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

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

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

Within this human rights context, the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account and the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment [25] . In particular, the Evaluation will consider to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

Note that the project's effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) should be included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there is no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic is made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[26] were met to: review risk ratings on a regular basis; monitor

[25] The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

[26] For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

project implementation for possible safeguard issues; respond (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and report on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

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

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long-lasting impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gendered and marginalised groups.

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

39. The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

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

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia [Request for CEO endorsement and associated attachments, project document, Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and its associated amendments];
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
- Project deliverables in the logframe: [e.g. baseline datasets, number of management committees, strategy documents, information management and awareness strategies, data sharing agreement between key stakeholders, Socotra WHS trust Fund, strategic capacity development plan for environmental management, etc.];
- Mid-Term Review or Mid-Term Evaluation of the project;
- Evaluations/reviews of similar projects.

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

- UNEP Task Managers (TM) including former managers if needed;
- Project management team, including the Project Manager within the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and the Senckenberg Institute ;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
- Project partners (e.g. Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) / Environment Protection Authority (EPA)
- , including donors/co-financing partners;
- Relevant resource persons;
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations, communities, etc).
- Beneficiaries

(c) **Surveys** [where appropriate]

(d) Country Mission (Socotra Archipelago, Yemen)

(e) **Other data collection methods and tools** as necessary (e.g. GIS data analysis)

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

40. The Evaluation Team will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.

- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

41. **An Evaluation Brief (Max 2 page)** for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

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

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

44. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a quality assessment of the first draft of the Main Evaluation Report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the Evaluation Consultant(s). The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

45. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a Recommendations Implementation Plan in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 12 months.

12. The Evaluation Team/Evaluation Consultant

46. For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of a Principal Evaluator and one Evaluation Specialist who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, Su Jin PAK, in consultation with the UNEP Task Managers, Johan Robinson, and Lesya Nikolayeva, Fund Management Officer, George Saddimah, and the Sub-programme Coordinators, Marieta Sakalian. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

47. The Principal evaluator be hired over a period of 8 months [September 2025 to April 2026] and should have the following:

    i) a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable;

    ii) a minimum of 10 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach;

iii) and a good/broad understanding of conservation of local/traditional ileus, conservation and sustainable development and management is desired;

iv) English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in knowledge of **Arabic** is desirable;

v) Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP, and environment related organizations is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with no field visits.

48. The Evaluation Specialist will be hired over a period of three (3) months [September to November 2025] and should have the following:

i) a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable;

ii) a minimum of four (4) years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes, collecting data (field visits, interviews, focus group discussions, etc) and using a Theory of Change approach;

iii) and a good/broad understanding of conservation of local/traditional ileus, conservation and sustainable development and management is desired.

iv) Previous working experience in Socotra and Yemen is desirable. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat.

v) For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English and Arabic is a requirement.

vi) The consultant should be locally based.

vii) Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be with field visits to the project sites.

49. Specific Responsibilities for Principal evaluator:

The Principal Evaluator will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, for overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables.

i) Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

ii) Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners, and project stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure the independence of the Evaluation and the confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered ;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress, and;

- Supervise the evaluation specialist by providing guidance and training for the data collection and field visits, including daily check-ups and quality assurance, where necessary

iii) Reporting phase, including:

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

iv) Managing relations, including:

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

50. Specific Responsibilities for the Evaluation Specialist:

The Evaluation Specialist will make substantive and high-quality contributions to the evaluation process and outputs, liaising with the Principal Evaluator. Both consultants will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

v) Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- contribute to drafting the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, considering the context of the project country;
- contribute to preparing the evaluation framework;
- contribute to developing the desk review and interview protocols;
- contribute to drafting the survey protocols, considering the context of the project country (if relevant);
- participate in developing and presenting criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the field visit schedule, and;
- contribute to the preparation of the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

vi) Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected project sites, interview project partners and stakeholders in person, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and the confidentiality of evaluation interviews, and;
- regularly report back to the Principal evaluator on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered.

vii) Reporting phase, including:

- Participate in drafting the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Principal evaluator on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager , and;
- Support the principal evaluator to prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection.

viii) Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence.

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

51. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	16.06.2025
Inception Report	16.07.2025
Evaluation Country Mission	21.07.2025-25.07.2025
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	21.07.2025 -25.07.2025
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	29.07.2025
Draft Report shared with evaluation manager and peer reviewer	15.08.2025
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	02.09.2025
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	22.09.2025
Final Report and evaluation briefs	12.10. 2025
Final Report shared with all respondents	November 2025

14. Contractual Arrangements

52. Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a "fees only" basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP /UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.
53. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

Schedule of Payment for the [Evaluation Consultant/Principal Evaluator]:

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per Guidance Note)	**30%**
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report and portfolio briefs (as per Guidance Note)	**30%**
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report and portfolio briefs (as per Report Template)	**40%**

54. Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.
55. The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g PIMS, Anubis, Sharepoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.
56. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.
57. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants' fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard[27].

[27] This may include contract cancellation in-line with prevailing UN Secretariat rules.

Annex 1: Tools, Templates and Guidance Notes for use in the Evaluation

The tools, templates and guidance notes listed in the table below, and available from the Evaluation Manager, are intended to help Evaluation Managers and Evaluation Consultants to produce evaluation products that are consistent with each other, and which can be compiled into a biennial Evaluation Synthesis Report. The biennial summary is used to provide an overview of progress to UN Environment and the UN Environmental Assembly.

This suite of documents is also intended to make the evaluation process as transparent as possible so that all those involved in the process can participate on an informed basis. It is recognised that the evaluation needs of projects and portfolio vary and adjustments may be necessary so that the purpose of the evaluation process (broadly, accountability and lesson learning), can be met. Such adjustments should be decided between the Evaluation Manager and the Evaluation Consultants in order to produce evaluation reports that are both useful to project implementers and that produce credible findings.

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link below and use those versions throughout the Evaluation.

INDEPENDENT EVALUATION TOOLS AND TEMPLATES - Evaluation Office of UNEP - Global Site

List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:

Terminal Evaluation Essential Tools

00 Evaluation Tools 05.05.25.docx
01 UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions_December 2023.pdf
02 List of Documents for Evaluation 05.05.25.docx
03 Evaluation Criteria 05.05.25.docx
04 Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix 05.05.25.docx
05 Weighted Ratings Table 15.05.25.xlsx
06 Evaluation Methodology Guidance 05.05.25.docx

Terminal Evaluation Inception Report

07 Project Identification Table 05.05.25.docx
08 Inception Report Template 05.05.25.docx
09 TOC Reformulation Justification Table 05.05.25.docx
10 Quality of Project Design Table 05.05.25.docx
11 Quality of Project Design Weighted Ratings Tool 05.05.25.xlsx
12 Stakeholder Analysis Guidance 31.01.24.doc
13 Gender Methods Guidance 31.01.24.docx
14 Safeguards Assessment Template 15.05.25.docx

Terminal Evaluation Main Evaluation Report

15 Preliminary Findings Tables 05.05.25.docx
16 GEF Evaluation Main Report Template 05.05.25.docx
17 NonGEF Evaluation Main Report Template 05.05.25.docx
18 Respondents Table 05.05.25.docx
19 Financial Tables 05.05.25.docx
20 Strategic Relevance Tables 05.05.25.docx
21 Outputs Table 05.05.25.docx
22 Outcomes Table 05.05.25.docx
23 Impact Table 05.05.25.docx
24 Likelihood of Impact Flow Chart 31.01.24.xlsm
25 Recommendations Quality Guidance 15.05.25.docx
26 Recs and Lessons Learned Tables 05.05.25.docx
27 GEF Portal Annex Template 31.01.24.docx
28 Quality Of Eval Report FINAL ONLY 31.01.2024 FOR USE BY UNEP.docx

Terminal Evaluation Process Guidance

Process 1_Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants 31.01.2024.docx
Process 2_Template for Attestation Letter 31.01.2024.docx
Process 3_Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form 31.01.2024.docx
Process 4_Guidelines for Field Work During Coronavirus 31.01.2024.docx
Process 5_Evaluation Consultants Team Roles 31.01.2024.docx
Process 6_Template for Reference Checks 31.01.2024.docx
Process 7_Letter of Introduction for Visa Applications Template 31.01.2024.docx

Annex : GEF Portal Inputs

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Evaluation Report, either as copied or summarised text.** In each case, references should be provided for the paragraphs and pages of the report from which the responses have been copied or summarised.

Table II: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[28], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[29]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)*
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality)*
Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Environmental and Social Safeguards)
Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Communication and Public Awareness)*
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response:

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

[29] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities