Validated Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF Project

"Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods" in COMOROS (GEF 5694)

2017 – 2022

UNEP Climate Change Division

Validation date: July 2025

This report has been prepared by external consultants as part of a Terminal Review, which is a management-led process to assess performance at the project's operational completion. The UNEP Evaluation Office provides templates and tools to support the review process and provides a formal assessment of the quality of the Review report, which is provided within this report's annexed material. In addition, the Evaluation Office formally validates the report by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UNEP Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Head of Branch/Unit: Jessica Troni

Address: Climate Change Adaptation Unit, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 207623794

Email: jessica.troni@un.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluators would like to thank all the individuals and organizations they had the pleasure to engage with, offering their time and views, often on a very short notice and without restriction.

Alexander Forbes, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Task Manager, managed the terminal review and provided the broader context of the project. He was also a valuable direct line for the evaluators whenever documentation or additional information was needed or questions arose, and thus provided good guidance and logistical support to the review team during the terminal review process.

The national project management unit, headed by the Project Coordinator, Mr Gamao Ahmed Ali, and supervised by Mr Youssouf Elamine Mbechezi, Director for the General Directorate for Environment and Forestry (DGEF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Tourism, and National Project Director, were good in supporting the review team, facilitating meetings as well as sharing their experiences and insights. The Project Technical Advisor, Ms. Joana Talafre, was valuable in sharing her experience with the project and being supportive in providing the necessary documentation. All technical experts engaged in the final review provided valuable inputs into each of their areas of expertise, roles, and responsibilities in the project. All members of the Project Steering Committee shared their views and experiences with the project as well as its importance and relevance to the overall national goals and objectives of the country.

The review team was able to visit project sites in Vanadjou, Bahani, Mkazi, Mvouni, Mjoyezi, Dagi, Mremani, Comoni, Kiyo, Hadda villages, accompanied by the Project Coordinator and/or Grande Comore and Anjouan Island Coordinators, which offered detailed insights into the implementation of activities on the ground. At village level, the review team wish to thank all members of the project management committees and the environmental management associations.

All stakeholders, including local communities, farmers, cooperatives, and women's groups are thanked for sharing their views and opinions on the progress, achievements and challenges faced by the project and their recommendations for future projects and programs. The review team hopes that the findings of this final review will support the DGEF, UNEP and all key stakeholders in building future climate change adaptation in Comoros and beyond.

Review Team

Jon Garcia, Senior evaluator, Team leader – Le Groupe Conseil Baastel

Manon Bastin-Héline, Evaluator – Le Groupe Conseil Baastel

Bacar Ahmed Hachim, National consultant – Le Groupe Conseil Baastel

UN Environment Programme

Alexander Forbes, Task Manager

ABOUT THE REVIEW TEAM

Jon Garcia is a development economist specialized in environmental issues. He has spent the last 18 years designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating environmental programmes and projects. Over these years, he has gained expertise in the areas of climate change, especially in adaptation, environmental governance, including policies, laws and regulatory frameworks, environmental impact assessments, environmental economics and sustainable finance, and mainstreaming environment into development planning; natural resource management, covering ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management; as well as urban development.

Manon Bastin-Héline is a biological engineer specialized in conservation and management of natural and forest ecosystems in international contexts. Within Le Groupe Conseil Baastel, she dedicates herself to consultancy missions on environmental topics in developing and emerging countries. Her expertise focuses on design, monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes in the areas of nature conservation, sustainable resource management, ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions for international and bilateral institutions as well as for NGOs.

Bacar Ahmed Hachim is an agronomist engineer having more than 15 years of experience in supporting agricultural and rural development programs, in conjunction with socio-economic study and analysis, impact assessments in the Comoros and more broadly in Africa, under funding from various technical and financial partners and institutions; in particular in the areas of climate-smart agriculture, agricultural entrepreneurship and special horticulture as well as cash crops including organic labelling and certifications.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Explanation
ADDE	Action pour le développement durable et l'environnement
AGE	Associations de Gestion de l'Environnement
CCAU	Climate Change Adaptation Unit
CRDE	Rural Economic Development Centres
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DGEF	General Directorate for Environment and Forests
DGEME	General Directorate of Energy, Mines and Water
DNSAE	National Directorate of Agricultural Strategies and Breeding
DRE	Regional Directorate for Environment
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
FADC	Funds for Supporting and Developing Communities funded by the World Bank
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	geographic information system
INRAPE	National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment
IWM	Integrated Watershed Management
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MamWE	Comorian company for Water and Electricity
MAPETA	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicraft
MPEEIA	Ministry of Ministry of Production, Environment, Energy, Industry and Crafts
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTO	Medium-Term Outcomes
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
P2I	Intersectoral Island Platforms
PC	Project coordinator
PMU	Project Management Unit
POW	Programme of Work
PPG	Participatory Management Plans
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PREFER	Projet de Productivité et résilience des exploitations agricoles familiales
RAF	Financial and Administrative Officer
RF	Results Framework
RGIBV	Resilience and Integrated Management of Watershed
RUTI	Responsible for the Island Technical Units
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SG	General Secretary
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
TR	Terminal Review
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION TABLE[1]

Project Title:	Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods		
Executing Agency:	General Directorate for Environment and Forests (DGEF); Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts; Union of the Comoros		
Project partners:	University of Comoros, National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (INRAPE), National Directorate of Agricultural Strategies and Breeding (DNSAE); National Directorate of Water and Mines. FAO/GoC Country Programme Framework; WB/GoC Social Safety Net Project (FADC) and Japan support to National Action Plan for Forestry Development.		
Geographical Scope:	Africa		
Participating Countries:	Union of the Comoros		
GEF project ID:	5694	**IMIS number*[2]:**	SB-006881
Focal Area(s):	**Climate Change**	**GEF OP #:**	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	Climate Change	**GEF approval date*:**	21 October 2016
UNEP approval date:		**Date of first disbursement*:**	29 May 2017
Actual start date[3]:	26 April 2017	**Planned duration:**	48 months
Intended completion date*:	31 June 2019[4]	**Actual or Expected completion date:**	31 December 2022
Project Type:	Full-size Project	**GEF Allocation*:**	US$ 5,140,000
PPG GEF cost*:	US$ 150,000	**PPG co-financing*:**	
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	US$ 16,480,000	**Total Cost*:**	US$ 21,720,000
Mid-term Review (planned date):	June 2019	**Terminal Review (planned date):**	30 September 2022
Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):	November 2019	**No. of revisions*:**	5
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	1 April 2021	**Date of last Revision*:**	December 2022
Disbursement as of 31 December 2022*:	USD 4,944,100	**Date of planned financial closure*:**	31 April 2021
Date of planned completion[5]*:	1 November 2020	**Actual expenditures reported as of 31 December 2022[6]:**	USD 4,979,803.70
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December 2022:	Est USD 20 million	**Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December *:**	USD 4,652,108.31
Leveraged financing:[7]			

[1] As per the terms of reference of this evaluation.
[2] Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer
[3] Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases were a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.
[4] Including 6 month financial closure period
[5] If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.
[6] Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Task Manager
[7] See above note on co-financing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview of the project

1. The project "Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods" (GEF ID 5694) in the Union of the Comoros was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)/Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) with a grant of USD 5,140,000, to be matched by USD 16,480,000 in co-financing. The project was designed for a planned period of four years, starting in October 2016. Following the mid-term review, a twelve (12) month no-cost extension was approved, bringing the operational completion date to June 2022. The project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), under the Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) of the Nature for Climate Branch of the Ecosystems Division. It was executed by the General Directorate of Environment and Forests (DGEF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicraft (MAPETA) of the Government of Comoros.
2. The main objective of the RGIBV project was to reduce the vulnerability of communities in the Comoros to climate change through the rehabilitation of watersheds and forests and the diversification of adaptive livelihoods. This was to be achieved through the use of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and, in particular, the concept of integrated watershed management (IWM). The project consisted of three components: Component 1 "Enhanced capacity to address climate risks through watershed management"; Component 2 "Resilient watersheds and ecosystem-based adaptation demonstrations"; and Component 3 "Resilient and diversified ecosystem-based livelihoods for local communities".
3. The Project Management Unit was led by a full-time Project Coordinator, who supervised three Island Coordinators and a Financial and Administrative Officer. The PC received technical support from a Chief Technical Advisor and worked with local institutions to implement the project. After the Mid-Term Review, additional staff, including an administrative assistant, a communication officer, an M&E expert, and 15 agricultural technicians, joined the team. A Project Steering Committee, chaired by the DGEF, provided oversight and guidance, meeting twice a year to monitor progress and make management decisions.
4. The project was implemented on the three islands of the archipelago, more specifically in 5 villages per watershed, in Grande Comore island (Mdjoiezi, Mkazi, Mvouni, Vanadjou and Bahani); in Anjouan island (Dagi, Kiyo, Komoni, Mremani and Adda); and in Moheli island (Siri-Ziroudani, Ouanani, Hagnamouda, Hamavouna and Itsamia).

Review objectives and scope

5. This terminal review (TR) was conducted from May to October 2024. The exercise focused on assessing the progress and challenges experienced by the RGIBV project, in line with GEF and UNEP evaluation policies. The review examined if the project stayed on track, identifying challenges and understanding whether the planned activities led to outcomes that could secure long-term impacts. The TR assessed the project's performance along the evaluation criteria: (i) strategic relevance; (ii) nature of the external context; iii) quality of the project design; (iii) effectiveness; (iv) financial management; (v) efficiency; (vi) monitoring and reporting; (vi) sustainability; and (vii) factors affecting project performance. Lessons learned and recommendations were developed for future projects and programs,

aiming to strengthen the implementation and adaptive capacity of the DGEF, UNEP, and other key stakeholders.

6. The review process included an independent and rigorous data collection strategy, using qualitative and quantitative data, triangulated to ensure accuracy and reliability. The evaluators analyzed various project documents, interviewed stakeholders, and conducted site visits on two of the three islands (Grande Comore and Anjouan, 10 villages visited). The field data collection followed up with online consultations. Special attention was given to gender aspects, with women-specific consultations to assess the project's impact on them. Fieldwork revealed preliminary findings discussed with UNEP.
7. Review challenges included difficulty mobilizing stakeholders due to the project's conclusion 18 months prior as well as striking a balance between interviewing men and women in decision-making positions. Despite these limitations, the evaluators concluded that the collected data was sufficient to form a comprehensive overview of the project's performance.

Findings

Strategic relevance

8. The project was well aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and strategic priorities. It supported UNEP's 2014-2017 MTS and POW by focusing on climate change adaptation and contributed significantly to the 2018-2021 MTS. During this period, the project advanced objectives related to national adaptation plans and the health and productivity of ecosystems. It also aligned with the UNEP 2022-2025 MTS, particularly in climate and nature action, contributing to key outcomes like resilience pathways and biodiversity conservation. Additionally, the project aligned with the strategic priorities of the GEF and LDCF, particularly in reducing vulnerability of natural systems, enhancing livelihoods, and strengthening institutional capacities for climate adaptation.
9. The project also addressed global, regional, and national environmental needs, particularly aligning with the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030. It contributed to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land) by rehabilitating watersheds, supporting local communities, and promoting sustainable land management.
10. Challenges in coordination with concurrent initiatives in Comoros were noted, despite efforts to build synergies with past and ongoing projects. Though there were successes, the project faced obstacles in fully leveraging partnerships, cofinancing and ensuring cohesive collaboration.

Nature of the external context

11. The project overcame four external challenges: national elections (2019), climate hazards (2019), COVID-19 (2020-2022) and wildfires (2022) which were managed by temporarily bypassing some non-operational decision-making bodies, adapting work plans or finding innovative solutions to ensure that activities continued.

Quality of the project design

12. The overall rating of the project design is satisfactory. The main strengths were: the solid contextual analysis including comprehensive description of climate change impacts, root

causes, institutional context, and gaps, supported by an inclusive preparation process; the project's strategic relevance aligned with GEF, UNEP, and national priorities; and the clear description of the governance and supervision arrangement. The areas for improvement were defined as follows: the theory of change’s causal pathways and roles of key actors, including gendered groups, were not well described; the results framework relied heavily on means indicators rather than focusing on long-term impact indicators; the original budget was insufficient, underestimating project management costs and necessary staff and inter-island travel costs; there was insufficient capacity assessment of national counterparts after project launch; and the sustainability approach was weak in the early stages of implementation. Furthermore, the project lacked a robust gender analysis and action plan.

Effectiveness

- Over the seven outputs of the logical framework, the TR assessed that one was fully achieved while six were only partially achieved. Overall, the project accomplished significant results including:
- the establishment of geo-referenced information system on the impacts of climate change on watersheds (output 1.1);
- the deployment of a large-scale capacity building program to introduce integrated watershed management (output 1.2);
- the establishment of Island Intersectoral Platforms, the rehabilitation of two Rural Economic Development Centres, the development of five Forest Law Application Decrees (output 1.3);
- the development of watershed participatory management plans and establishment of related watershed committees and fifteen Associations de Gestion de l’Environnement (output 2.1);
- the resilient management of 2737 ha of land through reforestation, restoration, land stabilization, live fencing and the promotion of agroforestry (output 2.2);
- the support to 2700 people to increase their agricultural production (output 3.1);
- and the development of alternative climate-resilient value chains (output 3.2).

These achievements have to be nuanced by the uncertain sustainability of a significant part of the results. Furthermore, some implementation issues delayed and constrained the complete realization of some of the expected outputs, such as the 3500ha of restored land target.

- The project aimed to achieve three outcomes, with mixed success. For Outcome 1, the terminal review (TR) assessed the achievement at 70% due to concerns about the lack of capacity measurement and long-term sustainability of the results. Indeed, while progress was made with training and tools, sustainability issues, like capacity building programme, the discontinuation of multi-sectoral platforms and the accessibility of geo-referenced platform cast doubt on the project's long-term impact. Outcome 2 was partially achieved. TR rated it at 40%, noting a lack of proof of ecosystem restoration and low survival rates (47%) in reforestation efforts. Furthermore, the incomplete understanding of Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) principles, and the limited community ownership of watershed management plans contributed to the average score. Outcome 3 was considered mostly successful (75% by the TR), though there were challenges in long-term adoption of the promoted livelihood practices. Success

was noted in diversified agriculture, but shortcomings in the sustainability of cooperatives and poultry farming were highlighted.

13. In terms of impact, the project successfully reached 28,144 direct beneficiaries, exceeding its target by 194%. Other concrete examples of the project's impact on the ground include:
    - Significant progress was made in watershed and forest management, particularly through training programs. A total of 601 farmers (48% women) received training in IWM, and 156 individuals (85% women) participated in climate-smart livelihood awareness events.
    - Additionally, five Forest Law Application Decrees were developed, although they have not yet been politically adopted and implemented.
    - The project restored 2,737 hectares of deforested or degraded land through reforestation. While this did not meet the target of 3,500 hectares, it demonstrated both environmental and social benefits.

Despite these achievements, some challenges were noted, as certain communities continue to face severe climate hazards. Furthermore, the project interventions only partially addressed the restoration needs identified in watershed management plans, leading to ongoing deforestation and inadequate resource management. In terms of livelihood diversification, the project facilitated climate-resilient agricultural practices. Beneficiaries reported various benefits, including increased water availability from cisterns, improved agricultural production, and an overall increase in income—averaging 3% per crop year for 2,700 farmers. Unintended effects of the project included some community tensions arising from insufficient consideration of shared resources between the Hadda and Mremani villages. On the positive side, the project yielded broader benefits beyond the targeted villages, such as organized markets that provided affordable food during Ramadan. The project is thus assessed as likely to contribute to long-lasting positive changes in the Comoros, aligning with global climate adaptation goals.

Financial management

14. The financial management of the RGIBV project was overseen by the DGEF, with UNEP transferring all disbursements to the project's bank account. The Project Coordinator and Administrative and Financial Officer were responsible for budget management. First delays in disbursement were due to difficulties in finding qualified consultants and structural challenges, such as a lengthy accounting process. Then, a significant financial disruption occurred from March to October 2020, caused by administrative errors, poor financial reporting, and changes in the project's financial team. These issues led to budget inconsistencies and delays, but were eventually resolved with the help of UNEP and based on external audits. The disruptions impacted project operations, including a delay in planting seeds and tree seedlings, and demotivated project staff, leading to a one-year extension. Following this event, the reporting improved thus the project complied with UNEP's financial and audit reporting requirements. Lastly, the project also faced a final financial disruption when UNEP withheld 3% of the budget due to unresolved closure issues with a previous project, further delaying some final activities and payments.
15. Overall, the project underwent five budget revisions, with the majority of the budget allocated to operational activities such as reforestation and livelihood support.
16. The project had a total budget of USD 21,600,000, including planned co-financing of USD 16,480,000 million. Although the exact amount was not evaluated and monitored by the project, the cofinancing promised by the executing agency materialized. On the other hand, while the World Bank exceeded its planned contribution to the project (USD 12

million of co-financing instead of 6 million), co-financing from FAO and Japan was not mobilized, as their projects phased out before the RGIBV launch. Co-financing from the GCF/PNUD, totalling USD 7 million, was an unexpected source of additional cofinancing.

Efficiency

17. The project's efficiency was generally satisfactory, though it faced delays and required a one-year extension. At project completion, Component 1 achieved 73% of its goals, while the achievement of Components 2 and 3 could not be fully assessed. The project stayed within the 5% budget allocation for project management costs.
18. As an example of cost efficiency, the project hired local villagers instead of relying on external technicians, saving on transportation and time. However, delays in distributing seeds and seedlings, especially before planting seasons, negatively impacted agricultural productivity. Some activities, such as establishing phytopharmaceutical cooperatives and poultry farming, did not yield sustainable results, suggesting inefficient use of resources.
19. The project did not fully adhere to the original workplan due to various delays, such as late seedling distribution. Some key activities, like poultry farming, were implemented late, leaving limited time for support. Sequencing was mostly as planned, though reforestation activities were started before finalizing key planning documents to maximize planting seasons. The project extension, caused by external factors (e.g., COVID, elections) and implementation challenges, was necessary, though some delays could have been mitigated with better recruitment strategies and financial management preparation.

Monitoring and reporting

20. The project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan faced several challenges, including budget cuts and operational issues. Initially, the M&E budget was set at 4% of the total project budget but was later reduced to 2%. The M&E plan was updated after a Mid-Term Review to clarify data collection and improve the system, but the results framework remained weak, with indicators focused more on outputs than outcomes. Key objectives, such as reducing vulnerability to climate change, were inadequately measured. Moreover, the project targets were overly ambitious and not realistic given the budget and time frame.
21. As a results, some activities, like restoring 3,500 hectares of watersheds, were only partially achieved. Budget and time constraints affected the implementation of several activities, and an M&E specialist was not hired until after the MTR, which limited the project's ability to track progress effectively.
22. Although the M&E plan was updated, it could not be fully implemented due to time and budget constraints. This led to inconsistencies in reported data, particularly between the final report and the last PIR. Several indicators were reported inaccurately, and some planned surveys were not completed.
23. While the project met basic reporting requirements, including annual reports and audits, delays and gaps in internal reporting were frequent. Reports were at times incomplete, and there were inconsistencies between different reports.

Sustainability

24. The project received strong political support throughout its duration, with involvement from national, regional, and local levels, which helped facilitate implementation. Communities were engaged through participatory methods, resulting in significant buy-in during the project, especially for reforestation and training activities. However, after the project

ended, community commitment weakened, with many activities, like erosion control and tree nurseries, being abandoned. Political actors remained committed to scaling up the project's results, but the long-term financial sustainability depends on securing external funding. Institutional sustainability was also uncertain, as many project-related structures and initiatives, such as geo-referenced systems and training programs, were no longer active at the time of the TR. While the project catalyzed awareness of climate change adaptation, especially in integrated watershed management, many institutional results were not sustained.

25. The project's exit strategy focused on scaling up rather than sustaining results, leaving the implementation of many priority actions vague and uncertain. In addition, it was developed late in the implementation process, resulting in incomplete implementation.

Factors affecting performance

Preparation and Readiness. The project addressed some design weaknesses, including budget adjustments for additional staff and strengthening financial management. However, responses were more reactive than preventive, leading to delays and higher costs.

Quality of Project Management. Implementation by the agency (UNEP) was deemed adequate but was slowed by delayed feedback and financial challenges. Execution by local agencies showed commitment despite challenges, and the Chief Technical Advisor was crucial for continuity.

Stakeholders' participation and cooperation. The project established strong local partnerships with authorities, NGOs, and communities through watershed committees. Island coordinators played a key role in maintaining trust after a 2020 interruption. National actors were involved, but the Regional Environmental Directorates lacked resources for full participation. No major stakeholder engagement issues were noted, except for the need to better include women.

Gender and Human Rights. The project was aligned with UN principles on gender equality. Women represented 46% of beneficiaries and were involved in decision-making, but socio-cultural barriers limited deeper engagement. A solid gender diagnostic and a formal gender action plan were missing.

Environmental and Social Safeguards. The project mostly complied with UNEP safeguards, but issues included the use of invasive plant species and hazardous pesticides. A grievance mechanism was introduced late in the project with no complaint registered.

Country Ownership and Commitment. Government involvement ensured community buy-in, though a stronger gender strategy would have been beneficial.

Communication and Awareness Raising. The project lacked an effective communication strategy early on but improved after a mid-term review. However, the strategy came too late to be fully implemented, and data sharing remains a challenge.

Synthesis of main conclusions

Overall, the project's rate and quality of delivery of activities to achieve outputs and outcomes is deemed Moderately Satisfactory. Whilst the project team, UNEP and the implementation stakeholders were found to be committed, the project experienced several external and

internal challenges that strongly impacted the performance of the project and led to failure to achieve some of its targets. The terminal review has come to the following key conclusions.

Main strengths

Conclusion 1: At project design, the strategy of the project successfully responded to GEF/LDCF, UNEP and national priorities and local needs.

Conclusion 2: More specifically, the IWM approach introduced and promoted by the project was particularly well suited to the context, priorities and needs of the Comoros, as an effective approach for delivering ecosystem-based adaptation.

Conclusion 3: The community-based approach developed by the RGIBV supported community buy-in as well as increased community resilience while demonstrating climate-resilient development.

Conclusion 4: Although not all Outcome and Output targets were met, the project achieved important results that demonstrate that supporting improved watershed management is an effective as an effective approach for ecosystem-based adaptation.

Conclusion 5: Through its large-scale capacity building program, the project raised awareness and knowledge of climate change and adapted resilient solutions at national, regional and local levels.

Conclusion 6: The project achievements can be mainly attributed to the serious commitment of the executing agency, the PMU, the CTA and UNEP supporting staff.

Conclusion 7: The project results are also due to effective work with the island-based structures and supporting the capacity of these structures e.g. CRDE, local municipalities.

Main weaknesses

Conclusion 8: The project's understanding of IWM and EbA principles remained partial, resulting in a partial implementation of the IWM concept and related principles. In this respect, implementation needs to be both strengthened and expanded for future initiatives to adequately address existing and future watershed management needs in the Comoros.

Conclusion 9: Some of the project's targets were not met due to both external factors and an overoptimistic project design considering the available time and budget.

Conclusion 10: The PMU did not mobilise sufficient expertise and undertake sufficient capacity building in the first two years of the project and the budget allocated to the service provided by the CTA was insufficient resulting in significant reporting failure and implementation delays.

Conclusion 11: The monitoring and evaluation plan was weak and the resource to implement it were insufficient, resulting in difficult follow-up of the project's indicator and poor reporting material.

Conclusion 12: Some of the outcomes of the project supported its long-term sustainability, but the lack of an appropriate sustainability strategy for most of the implementation period hampered the long-term sustainability of some of the project's key results.

Conclusion 13: Coordination and synergies with other projects could have been stronger to improve results sustainability and avoid the duplication of efforts between initiatives, especially in the case of tree nurseries.

Conclusion 14: Stronger support for the development of climate-resilient value chains such as vanilla, poultry farming or phytopharma-cosmetics products could have increased the sustainability of the project's results, and enhanced the resilience of the beneficiaries.

Conclusion 15: The project was insufficiently geared to monitor safeguards as well as deploying an integrated gender-responsive approach. As a result, integrated pest management solutions were poorly implemented and the potential for women's participation was been realised.

Lessons learned (LL)

LL 1: Linked to conclusion 8, the project experienced limited implementation of the Integrated Watershed Management concept and related principles. For future programming, the approach must be implemented at the whole watershed level.

LL 2: Also linked to conclusion 8, as the IWM approach has not been sufficiently understood by the project management, it is important for future programming to internalise the IWM approach and ecosystem-based adaptation strategy within the project team at the beginning and to sustain the internalisation across stakeholders during the course of the project implementation.

LL 3: Linked to conclusion 10, an in-depth assessment of the capacity of key national stakeholders to manage an integrated and multi-level donor-funded project involving complex concepts such as IWM, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable forest restoration can help formulate an adapted strategy that resonates with and is supported by national stakeholders on the ground. Re-validating this assessment at the beginning of project can be useful when significant time runs between project design and project start.

LL 4: Also linked to conclusion 10, it is essential that project management capacities are strengthened from the beginning of projects and that consultancy tenders are well anticipated to avoid any delays in project implementation.

LL 5: Linked to conclusion 3, community approaches are key to support community buy-in as well as increased community resilience while demonstrating climate-resilient development.

LL 6: While COVID affected the implementation of project activities due to meeting and travel restrictions at national and international scale, conducting field activities such as live-fencing, climate-smart agriculture or agroforestry, allowed the project to make some progress, not totally putting the project on hold.

LL 7: Linked to conclusion 14 highlighting the limited success in establishing climate-smart value chains, one lesson is that providing strong support to develop climate-resilient value chains through access to seed capital, tailored expertise and/or networks can both increase the sustainability of projects' results and enhance beneficiaries' resilience.

LL 8: Results' sustainability is strengthened by the timely development and implementation of an explicit strategy focusing on that matter addressing risks to the continuity of project results. It can also be further enhanced by effective coordination with other initiatives.

LL 9: Project designs must include adequately costed and staffed M&E systems and gender and safeguards action plans.

LL 10: Linked to conclusions 12 and 13 emphasizing some failures in establishing cooperation with other projects leading to duplication of effort and missed opportunity, the lesson that can be learned is that co-financing is key to achieving development projects' long term objectives but requires proactive coordination.

Recommendations (R)

R 1: For future projects working on IWM as an approach for EbA in Comoros, intensify awareness and capacity building efforts on the IWM approach.

R 2: Further implement the RGIBV sustainability strategy. For future projects in Comoros, develop an exit and sustainability strategy for all project results during the design and implement it from the early stages of the project implementation, developing an action plan by the second year and fully integrating it in the annual workplans and budgets.

R 3: As it underpins the success of the restoration and reforestation strategy, in Comoros, build on the existing and further strengthen the community approach to increase sustainable local benefits.

R 4: For future projects, in Comoros or elsewhere, directly or indirectly increase the PMC and continuously ensure that national and PMU capacities and resources are adapted to the implementation needs.

R 5: For future projects, in Comoros or elsewhere, strengthen M&E and allocate the appropriate resources.

R 6: For future projects in Comoros, include a robust safeguards asnd gender framework.

R 7: For future projects in Comoros, strengthen cooperation with other ongoing projects that can provide co-financing.

Validation

The report has been subject to an independent validation exercise performed by UNEP's Evaluation Office. The performance ratings for the 'Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods' project (GEF ID 5694), set out in the Conclusions and Recommendations section, have been adjusted as a result. The overall project performance is validated at the **Moderately Satisfactory** level. Moreover, the Evaluation Office has found the overall quality of the report to be Satisfactory (see Annex 8).

1.INTRODUCTION

26. The project "Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods" (GEF ID 5694) in the Union of Comoros, subsequently renamed "Resilience through Integrated Watershed Management" (RGIBV by its acronym in French), was approved by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) / Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) for a planned period of four years in October 2016. A twelve (12)months no cost-extension was approved after the Mid-Term Review (MTR) in December 2019. The actual project launch was in April 2017 and the operational completion was in June 2022.
27. It was funded through a USD 5,140,000 grant from the LDCF (administered by the GEF) which was planned to be complemented with USD 16,480,000 of in-kind cofinancing from the Comorian General Directorate of Environment and Forests (DGEF), the National Strategic Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock (DNSAE), the government of Japan and the Community Development Support Fund (FADC).
28. The project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), under the Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) of the Nature for Climate Branch of the Ecosystems Division. It was executed by the DGEF of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicraft (MAPETA) of the Government of Comoros.
29. Funded under the GEF Climate change focal areas, it was designed to directly support the climate change strategic focus of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for the 2014-2017 period and contribute to the achievement of the Climate Change Adaptation Expected Accomplishment in the UNEP Programme of Work (POW) 2016-2017, as well as subsequent MTSs and POWs.
30. As indicated in its Terms of Reference (ToR) (Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of this TR), this Terminal Review (TR) has two primary objectives: i) provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements; and ii) promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among the partners.
31. Due to delays in the financial closure of a former DGEF-UNEP project, this TR has been conducted 18 months after the project's completion. The review thus covered the implementation of the project since its launch in April 2017 until June 2022.
32. The review is primarily targeted to the DGEF, UNEP, the GEF/LDCF, the government partners and the implementation partners involved in the project. The conclusions may also be shared more widely in order to disseminate good practices and lessons learned, for example with other cooperation partners operating in the Comoros or in the least developed countries, involved in climate change adaptation and environmental programs more broadly.

2. Review methods

33. The purpose of this assignment is to conduct the final review of the above-mentioned project. As indicated in the ToR, in line with GEF and UNEP evaluation policies, the review analysed whether the project was on track and identified implementation challenges. It sought to understand if the implementation of activities proceeded as planned and if progress in delivering outputs eventually led to achievements of outcomes and secured long-term impacts. Based on its findings, the TR also concluded on lessons learnt and provided recommendations for future projects and programs, as well as to enhance implementation and adaptive capacities of the DGEF, UNEP and other key technical and financial partners involved in climate change adaptation and environmental protection in the Comoros and beyond.
34. The team managed review bias through rigorous collection of data, always ensuring to cross-check information between relevant stakeholders. Information was thereafter triangulated mixing qualitative and quantitative, recent and past available, objective, reliable and valid information into a data collection matrix used as the basis of the review report writing. The evaluators also drew on the project final report that was developed by the project management unit at the end of the implementation summarizing the project's main achievements and challenges. While attributing performance ratings, the evaluators provided structured argumentation leading to nuanced ratings, highlighting equally the project's successes and weaknesses.
35. The evaluators ensured their independence as they conducted their tasks without undue influence by any party. In this framework, they undertook the data collection with free access to information; and conducted report writing impartially, having the ability to freely express their assessments throughout the entire process.

2.1. Inception phase

36. The aim of this phase was to clearly define the framework and methodology for the terminal review of this project. Appendix 2: Review matrix presents a review matrix which was structured around the nine evaluation criteria to be covered by the review, namely: i) Strategic relevance; ii) Nature of the external context; iii) Quality of the project design; iv) Effectiveness; v) Financial management; vi) Efficiency; vii) Monitoring and reporting; viii) Sustainability; ix) Factors influencing project performance. For each criterion, the matrix identified the evaluation questions and sub-questions, the indicators, the sources of information and the data collection methods. This matrix formed the backbone of the review, from the review of the documentation to the analysis and drafting of the report.
37. Following the kick-off meeting, the review team developed a draft inception report based on a preliminary review of the documentation. UNEP reviewed and approved the final version of the report including annexes, prior to the start of the field mission.

2.2. Documentation review

38. The evaluators went through all available project documentation. Documents reviewed included relevant background documentation, project design documents, baseline analysis, annual workplans and budgets, project revisions, project budget, project reports

(including half-yearly and annual financial and progress reports), minutes of steering committee meetings, relevant scientific studies produced by the project, the mid-term review report, and the project final report. All the data collected during the document review was compiled in a data collection matrix following the structure of the review matrix. A list of the documents examined during the review is presented in Appendix 3: List of the documents examined during the review.

2.3. Interviews and fieldwork

39. The evaluator and the national consultant carried out a field mission in the Comoros from 18 to 26 June 2024. The mission aimed to: (i) conduct interviews with the project's main stakeholders; (ii) meet the project's beneficiary communities in two target islands (Grande Comore and Anjouan); and (iii) carry out field visits to/direct observation in the project's sites.
    - It was acknowledged during the kick-off meeting that the review team would visit only two out of the three islands where the project was implemented. The selection criteria used to choose the second island were: i) safe travel conditions to reach the island; ii) diversity of ecosystems; iii) minimum travel duration. Based on these criteria and following a preliminary discussion with the project team, the review team decided that Grande Comore and Anjouan would be visited, respectively, during five and four days.
    - The agenda was discussed and approved by UNEP and the project partners considering both the proposed list of relevant stakeholders and the logistical constraints. A detailed mission itinerary is presented in Appendix 4: Detailed mission itinerary. Meetings and interviews with stakeholders were conducted based on interview protocols adapted for each type of stakeholder and validated by UNEP, a version of which is provided in Appendix 5: Interview protocols in French. These interviews provided information on stakeholders' perceptions of the project's intervention, following the review criteria.
40. During the in-country mission, the evaluator and the national consultant met institutional stakeholders in Moroni (Grande Comore) and Mustamudu (Anjouan) and visited ten villages targeted by the project, namely Mdjoiezi, Mkazi, Mvouni, Vanadjou and Bahani in Grande Comore and Dagi, Kiyo, Comoni, Mremani and Hadda in Anjouan (see Figure 1).

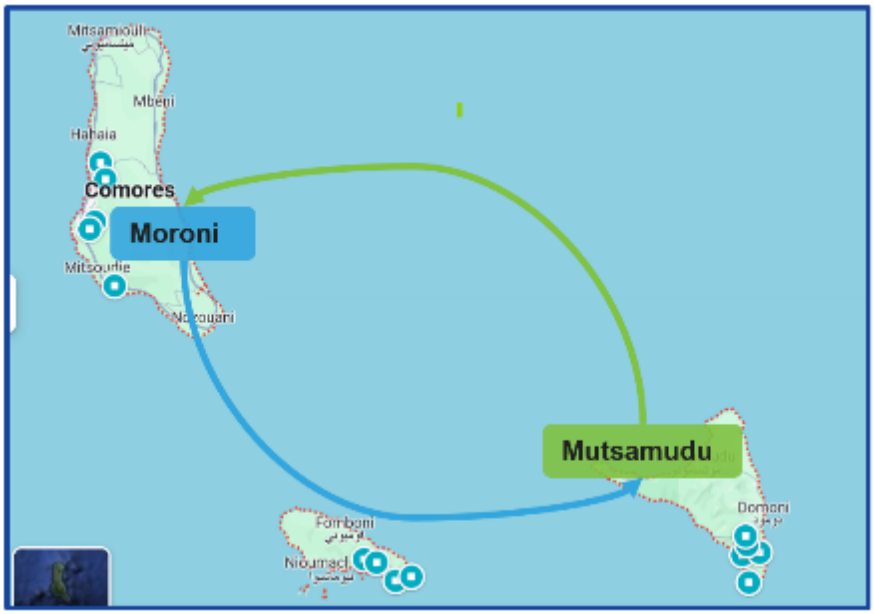

Figure 1: Terminal review field mission itinerary followed by the evaluator and the national consultant. Project implementation sites are identified by blue pins (source: adapted from Google Maps)

41. The data collection included:
    - Focus group with the village representatives, direct and indirect partners and beneficiaries (farmers, mayors, agricultural technicians, village leaders, project management committees, environmental management associations, cooperatives…);
    ➔ *Thirteen mixed focus groups including three women-only focus groups*
    - Individual interviews with project implementation staff or partners (members of the project management unit, national and island institution partners, external consultants);
    ➔ *Eleven individual interviews including one woman*
    - Site visits to assess the project's achievements (ten villages and one rehabilitated CRDE).
    ➔ *Eleven site visits, including direct observation on the project's achievements and the sustainability of investments*
42. Particular attention was paid to identifying woman or groups of women who participated to or benefited from the project in order to have a specific discussion with them. In this respect, the review team carried out specific work with women beneficiaries of the project in three villages. These exchanges were characterized by specific questions linked to their conditions and made it possible to assess i) the extent to which their conditions were taken into account, and ii) the effects achieved by the project on this group.
43. After the fieldwork, the revew team completed the field work through virtual interviews with UNEP's Task Manager, the Chief Technical Advisor,the project Finance Officer and the team of UNEP finance officers.
    ➔ *Three detailed virtual interviews including one woman and one focus group*

44. In total, fourteen focus group were conducted, including three women-only discussions[8]. The evaluators carried out fifteen individual interviews including two women and visited eleven sites. The exhaustive list of people met, and sites visited is provided in Appendix 6: List of people met/interviewed, and sites visited.
45. Throughout this review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report, efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. Data were collected with respect for ethics and human rights issues. All pictures were taken, and other information gathered, after prior informed consent from people, all discussions remained anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UN Standards of Conduct.

2.4. Preliminary findings

46. Following the field mission, on July 10th, 2024, the review team organized an online working session to present and discuss preliminary findings with UNEP and the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA), based on the information collected during the field mission and the documentation reviewed. This allowed that the evaluators had a correct understanding of the situation. It also gave a chance to UNEP and the CTA to provide feedback, clarifications and additional information as necessary.

2.5. Analysis and reporting

47. The TR used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods and both secondary and primary data, which were systematically triangulated to come up with an evidence-based assessment. The analysis aimed to not only use information on the progress in the achievement of each of the project outputs, but also on the context, on the role of the implementing partners, and on the institutional and political changes brought about by the project. The evaluator sought to draw a picture as to whether all the ingredients required to bring lasting changes were in place, and whether any risks has been correctly addressed. In this sense, the evaluators intended to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was, to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance has been as it was, and what prevented, facilitated or could have been done to improve, the achievement of the expected project objectives and their sustainability.
48. In addition to the review questions provided in the review matrix, the TR also aimed to answer the additional Key Strategic Questions (KSQs) provided in the ToR, namely:
    Key Strategic Question 1: (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?
    Key Strategic Questions 2:
    a) Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation:
    What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets?
    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?

[8] Total for the mixed focus groups, 154 people including 58 women and 96 men.
Total for the women-only focus-groups, 23 women. More details are provided in Appendix 6.

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?

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?

49. The main results and conclusions of this TR will be presented through an online session to UNEP, the CTA and the national counterparts, including the PMU, the DGEF and other relevant stakeholders.

2.6. Review ratings

50. The review used the UNEP standard rating guidelines and provided individual ratings for the evaluation criteria described in Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of this TR.

2.7. Review limitations

51. The organisation of the field mission was at times challenging as the project ended eighteen months before and it was therefore difficult to mobilise people around this past initiative, especially within institutions. This factor, on the one hand, affected the evaluators' ability to witness the results of the project when it ended, which is quite problematic since no results verification exercise was conducted. On the other hand, it allowed a better assessment of the sustainability of the project's results.
52. It has also been difficult to strike a balance between interviewing men and women in decision-making positions, as women are rare in decision-making positions in Comorian institutions and organisations. Overall, the information collected is sufficient. The evaluators consider that the available documents, the sample of sites visited, and the focus groups and interviews conducted provide an appropriate overview of the different aspects of the project, including the different situations in the field.

3. THE PROJECT

3.1. Context

3.1.1. Project problem statement and justification for the intervention

53. Located at the northern entrance of the Mozambique Channel between Madagascar and the Eastern coast of Africa, the Union of the Comoros is an archipelago state composed of three volcanic islands (Grande Comore, Mohéli and Anjouan) and classified as a Least Developed Country. Its location makes it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, cyclones and other related extreme weather events. In 2016, the country ranked 159th on the Human Development Index, comprising 46% of the population living in absolute poverty. In fact, around 70% of the population live in rural areas from small-scale agriculture, mostly dependant on natural resources for their livelihoods. Moreover, for many decades, unsustainable agricultural practices (culture on bare and sloping ground) and the lack of alternatives to firewood - resulting in the deforestation of natural forests - have put severe pressure on ecosystems, especially on land and watershed forests. The burden of these practices increases decades after decades as economic opportunities outside the exploitation of natural resources are scarce and the population continues to grow. In fact, the density in the Comoros is among the highest in Africa, with approximately 394.9 people per km² in 2013.
54. Rural livelihoods are further complicated by the country's increasing exposure to the impacts of climate change: sea level rise, increased temperatures, shortening of the rainy season, increased frequency of heavy rainfall and flooding, reduction in river flow and water availability. These impacts are not being adequately addressed due to limited capacity and resources at national and community level to implement effective adaptation measures, in particular in the field of the freshwater management. Increasing climate change, superimposed on existing anthropogenic practices, therefore constantly accentuates soil impoverishment, increases the risk of landslides and mudflows while threatening water and food security, economic growth and the livelihoods of communities across the Union of the Comoros.
55. For these reasons, the main objective of the RGIBV project was to reduce the vulnerability of communities in the Comoros to climate change through the rehabilitation of watersheds and forests and the diversification of adaptive livelihoods. This was to be achieved through the use of Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and, in particular, the concept of integrated watershed management (IWM). The project consisted of three components:
    - Component 1: Enhanced capacity to address climate risks through watershed management;
    - Component 2: Resilient watersheds and ecosystem-based adaptation demonstrations;
    - Component 3: Resilient and diversified ecosystem-based livelihoods for local communities.
56. As presented in Figure 2, the project was implemented on the three islands of the archipelago, more specifically in 5 villages per watershed (one per island, three in total)

which were identified during the project preparation phase as particularly degraded and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change:

- Grande Comore island: Mdjoiezi, Mkazi, Mvouni, Pvanadjou Vanadjou and Bahani villages;
- Anjouan island: Dagi, Kiyo, Komoni, Mremani and Adda villages;
- Moheli island: Siri-Ziroudani, Ouanani, Hagnamouda, Hamavouna and Itsamia villages.

Figure 2: Map of Comoros showing locations of project's implementation sites (source: adapted from Google Maps)

3.1.2. External challenges faced by the project

57. The external challenges faced by the project were of four types (listed in chronological order): national elections, climate hazards, COVID and wildfires.

National elections

58. In 2019, Comorian presidential elections were held in March to elect the President of the Union of the Comoros. Incumbent President Azali Assoumani was re-elected in the first round with 60.7% of the vote. Against this background, the General Secretary (SG) of the MAPETA changed, causing some transitional delays as the SG was also the chair of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). During this transition period, the PMU managed to move forward focusing on activities that did not require PSC decisions.

Climate hazards

59. A key challenge for the project has been climate hazards, which resulted, in 2019, in below-average rainfall to support reforestation activities. In particular, rainfall was insufficient to fill two water cisterns built by the project to support nursery production and grow tree seedlings. To cope with this situation, the project purchased water and filled the two cisterns, thereby sustaining the nursery production ahead of the next rainy season. The project also faced drought episodes. In this respect, climate variability was also taken into account through the selection of climate-resilient tree and crop species identified by the project's technical partners with support from previous projects.

60. In the same year (2019), Cyclone Kenneth hit the country. While the impact on the project was minor (slight delays in planting schedules), the event served to highlight environmental risks and the importance of ecosystem-based adaptation through integrated watershed management as an approach to building resilience in a changing climate. This verifies the first assumption of the theory of change 'A1. no extreme climate event will affect project activities', as the cyclone slightly affected project progress, but its impact was not substantial – it could have been more damaging.

COVID pandemic (Key strategic question 1[9])

61. In 2020, the COVID health crisis broke out worldwide. In the Union of the Comoros, the official number of cases remained low throughout the pandemic. Nevertheless, the project was affected by the suspension of large group meetings, restrictions on travel between and within islands, the closure of international borders and interruptions in shipping and purchases from affected countries. All these elements impacted and delayed the implementation of the project activities. To cope with the situation, the project adopted a risk management plan; reviewed the work plan and activities to explore alternative implementation arrangements, such as holding PMU meetings virtually and focusing on field activities such as EbA; maximising the use of village-based units to provide inputs under the guidance of the PMU; or holding more meetings with smaller groups. This management avoided bringing the project to a complete halt. As per the Project Implementation Report 2022, the pandemic continued to affect the project activities until early 2022. The disruption caused by COVID was one of the reasons why the project accumulated significant delays which justified the request for a no-cost extension.

Wildfires

62. In 2022, in Vanadjou (Grande Comore), a wildfire was deliberately started by a community member who wanted to cultivate in or near an area reforested by the project. The village management committee and the RUTI immediately mediated the issue. It was then agreed that the project would reforest 50% of the loss, while the guilty villager would reforest the remaining 50% on his own.

[9] Key strategic question 1: (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

3.2. Results framework

63. The project was built on an overarching objective that was expected to be reached by achieving three outcomes. The project's Results Framework (RF) was modified following the MTR conducted in 2019. The project outputs, expected outcomes and long-term impacts used for this TR were the updated ones, presented in Table 1.
64. Overall, the architecture of the logical framework was consistent with the main objective of the project: the combination of outputs fed into the expected outcomes which were theoretically likely to contribute to the country's increased resilience to climate change. As noted in the table below, the main weakness of the project's results framework was the predominance of means or output indicators rather than results indicators, which would have been necessary to assess the long-term impact and transformational potential of the project among stakeholders and at all levels of implementation (national, island and local)[10].
65. Apart from the one commented below, most indicators were Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely (SMART). Regarding gender considerations, while some of the project activities were specifically targeting women, only some of the indicators and targets were broken down by gender.

Table 1 : Project outputs, expected outcomes, main objective, related indicators and targets commented (source: TR ToR, translated and commented by the TR team)

Outcome / *Outputs*	**Indicator**	**Target**	**Terminal Review comments**
Project objective: Strengthen resilience to climate change in Comoros through watershed and forest rehabilitation, and diversification of income sources	**Total number of direct project beneficiaries**	**14,498**	Target is not broken down by gender. No specific indicator to assess the contribution of the project to increase the country's resilience to CC.
1. Technical and institutional capacities are strengthened at national and local levels for resilient, integrated watershed management	**Number of local and national civil servants and local community members with the technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy, by the end of the project**	**150 people in total on the 3 islands, with the technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy, of whom at least 40% are women**	In practice, only the number of people attending training sessions was counted rather than effectively measuring the increase in capacity.
1.1 Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on Comorian forests and watersheds	*Availability of an operational geo-referenced information system on the impacts of climate change on the main watersheds, using climate data, by the end of the project*	*An operational geo-referenced information system at national level, by the end of the project*	-
1.2 Training is provided to introduce integrated watershed management into public policy as an adaptation strategy	*Number of people trained in integrated watershed management at the end of the project*	*150 people in total on the 3 islands, trained in integrated watershed management, including at least 40% women, at the end of the project*	-

[10] Output indicators refer to the results of a specific activity or set of activities. Outcome indicators refer to the impact created by an output or a set of outputs.

Outcome / *Outputs*	**Indicator**	**Target**	**Terminal Review comments**
R 1.3 A cross-sectoral strategy and platform for sustaining and replicating climate-focused integrated watershed management is developed and institutionalized	*A governance and scaling-up strategy is developed and launched*	*By the end of the project, scaling-up of IWM elements is initiated through modification of the legislative and institutional framework*	Ambitious but quite vague result indicator.
2. Watersheds and sub-watersheds in project areas are rehabilitated and sustainably managed	**Number of hectares (linear km) of watersheds under improved management**	**3500 ha in total of watersheds are restored and sustainably managed**	It could have been great to have an impact indicator linked to the health of watersheds such as the water quality, availability or the soil water retention capacity.
2.1. Management plans are adopted by communities and watersheds are placed under collaborative management	*Number of villages adopting a watershed restoration and collaborative management plan and an implementation mechanism, involving watershed management committees*	*At least 5 villages in each island adopt a watershed restoration and collaborative management plan and commitments made to support implementation of the plans*	-
2.2 3,500 ha of targeted basins are restored through reforestation, conservation and erosion control measures	a. 3,500 ha or km under resilient agroforestry management, conservation and erosion control, broken down by type of management and site b. Number of local reforestation training courses for climate risk management c. Number of hectares of spring heads reforested in Anjouan and Mohéli, at the end of the project d. Number of hectares of degraded land restored, in the 3 islands, at the end of the project e. Number of linear meters of riverbanks stabilized on Anjouan and Mohéli, at the end of the project f. Number of hectares subject to live fencing, on the 3 islands, at the end of the project g. Number of hectares of farms stabilized with anti-erosion lines, on the 3 islands, at the end of the project h. Number of hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems i. Number of hectares of "other" reforestation (land with no degradation issues, no significant hydrological function, no ecological sensitivity)	a. 3500 ha in total, including 400 on Ngazidja, 250 on Anjouan, 200 on Mohéli, per year for 4 years b. 75 local reforestation training courses (including 25 in Ngazidja, 25 in Anjouan and 25 in Mohéli) will be organized during the project period c. 600 ha of spring heads will be reforested during the project period (including 400 ha in Anjouan and 200 ha in Mohéli) d. 1100 ha of restored degraded land (including 800 ha in Ngazidja, 300 ha in Anjouan and 200 ha in Mohéli) will be reforested by the end of the project. e. 1,200 linear m of riverbanks stabilized (including 800 m in Anjouan and 400 m in Mohéli) f. 1,500 hectares (i.e. 3,720,000 cuttings) divided into 800 ha (i.e. 1,984,000 cuttings for Ngazidja, 400ha (i.e. 99,2000 cuttings for Anjouan and 300 ha (i.e. 744,000 cuttings for Mohéli) will be planted with hedges g. 800 agricultural ha stabilized with anti-erosion lines (i.e. 2,976,000 splinters of *Poaceae* stumps) divided into 200 ha (i.e. 744,000) for Ngazidja and 300 ha (i.e. 1116,000) for Anjouan and 300ha (i.e. 1,116,000) for Mohéli will be stabilized with anti-erosion lines based on splinters of *Poaceae* stumps h. Hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems	a. Same sub-indicator as the Outcome 2 indicator. d. No indicator following the tree survival rate. h. Target surface is not defined. i. Target is not broken down by island. Moreover, the aim of this kind of reforestation activity is unclear.

Outcome / *Outputs*	**Indicator**	**Target**	**Terminal Review comments**
		i. 200 hectares of "other" reforestation (land not at risk of degradation, with no significant hydrological function or ecological sensitivity)	
3. Communities deploy a range of resilience-based livelihood strategies in project areas	**Number of farmers in target areas practicing diversified agriculture based on IWM, agroforestry)**	**1000 people, of whom at least 500 are women, practicing diversified agriculture based on IWM**	
3.1 Project communities benefit from resilient agroforestry with a sustained increase in agricultural production	*a. Change in agricultural production for key commodities, broken down by commodity annually* *b. Number of local training courses in live fencing and agroforestry for soil protection and fertilization* *c. Number of beneficiaries receiving coaching through CRDE* *d. Number of farmers trained by CEP on each island*	*a. On average, a 5% annual increase in production for each of the main productions at each site.* *b. 75 local training courses in live fencing (including 25 in Ngazidja, 25 in Anjouan and 25 in Mohéli) will be organized during the project.* *c. –* *d. 15 key farmer field schools operational at project sites*	a. Ambitious indicator and target. Demanding data collection process. c. Target is not defined. d. Indicator and target are not consistent with each other. The indicator refers to number of people while the target considers number of demonstration plots.
3.2 Innovative, climate-resilient value chains are adopted in project communities	*Number of people adopting new livelihood strategies, by the end of the project*	*At least 1000 people adopt new livelihood strategies by the end of the project*	Target is not broken down by gender.

66. As the project was approved prior to GEF-7, the project design did not identify its contributions to GEF core indicators. During the implementation, links were made with the GEF strategic priorities and core indicators. Table 2 summarizes the said project's correspondence.

Table 2: Identification of the RGIBV's contributions to GEF strategic priorities and core indicators

GEF performance framework during implementation	**RGIBV LDCF/GEF project**
Strategic priorities/targets (As per Project Implementation Report PIR 2018)	
CCA-1, Outcome 1.1: "Vulnerability of physical assets and natural systems reduced"	Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) interventions within Component 2: i) implement watershed rehabilitation and management plans through an integrated approach; ii) contribute to increasing water availability through anti-erosion and anti-flooding measures, and iii) establish community conservation zones.
CCA-1, Outcome 1.2: "Livelihoods and sources of income of vulnerable populations diversified and strengthened"	Within Component 3: i) promote resilient and alternative EBA livelihoods for rural communities, focusing on agroforestry and including zero-grazing small stock production; ii) collect and review traditional knowledge to develop pharmaco-cosmetic plant-based products.
CCA-2, Outcome 2.3: "Institutional and technical capacities and human skills strengthened to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation strategies and measures"	Under Component 1: i) provide strengthened knowledge, information and tools for resilient watershed management, such as the development of watershed maps, a geo-referenced information system on climate change impacts for major watersheds or sub-catchments; ii) introduce participatory watershed management as a climate resilient strategy through training; iii) establish an island-based intersectoral platform to develop an upscaling strategy for the resilient integrated watershed management practices; iv) develop policy briefs in order to make sure that technical staff are fully versed in integrated

GEF performance framework during implementation	RGIBV LDCF/GEF project
	watershed management as a resilience building activity; v) collaborate with INRAPE and universities and training institutes to deliver courses on climate change, climate risk management and watershed management; and vi) develop mechanisms for securing access to land in order to ensure farmers with sustained revenues.
GEF Core indicators (as per PIR 2021 onwards)	
Total number of direct beneficiaries (male and female)	1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt ecosystem-based climate livelihoods 1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt climate proof and innovative livelihood strategies
Area of land managed for climate resilience	3,500 ha of watersheds are rehabilitated across the three islands
Total number of policies/plans that will mainstream climate resilience	15 participatory management plans will be developed as a basis for IWM at local level
Total number of people trained (male and female)	100 people (50% women) will be trained by end of project

3.3. Stakeholders

67. Many organizations and groups were involved in and/or affected by the project. The exhaustive list of stakeholders is provided in Table 3. It was updated based on the analysis conducted by the mid-term review, the TR field mission and a review of the documentation available.
68. Those who were most closely involved in the implementation of the project or its components are identified as "main partners" and generally had a high level of involvement and interest in the project. The organizations identified below as "partners" are organizations that did not directly manage the project but whose collaboration was necessary for specific activities and for whom the project was of strategic interest. This was particularly the case for several government national and local institutions whose responsibilities fell within the scope of the project and who were involved in certain activities.
69. Many community organizations and beneficiaries are categorized as 'low power/high interest', as they may not had been involved in the management of the project, but they had significant involvement in its operational implementation.

Table 3: RGIBV project stakeholders' analysis

Organization	Type	Role in the project	Level of power	Level of interest
Main partners				
PMU	Project ad-hoc stakeholder	Project implementation	High	High
CTA	Project ad-hoc stakeholder	Project implementation	High	High

Organization	Type	Role in the project	Level of power	Level of interest
Island Coordinators (RUTI) and agricultural technicians	Project ad-hoc stakeholder	Project implementation	Moderate	High
UNEP	International organisation	Implementing agency	High	High
PSC	Project ad-hoc stakeholder	Project supervision and guidance	High	High
DGEF	Government	Executing agency	High	High
Partners				
DNSAE	Government	Partner and member of the PSC	High	High
DGEME	Government	Partner and member of the PSC	Moderate	High
Island-level institutions	Local government	Local implementation partner and member of the PSC	Moderate	High
National Institute of Agronomic, Fisheries and Environmental Research (INRAPE)	Research institute	Partner and member of the PSC	Moderate	High
Société comorienne de l'eau et de l'électricité (MamWE)	National service provider	Partner	Moderate	Moderate
Assistance aux initiatives innovantes pour la protection de l'Environnement aux Comores (AIPEC) in Grande Comore	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	Partner	Low	High
Mhachiricho in Mohéli	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	Partner	Low	High
Action Comores Aide in Anjouan	Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	Partner	Low	High
Action pour le développement durable et l'environnement (ADDE)	NGO	Partner	Low	High
Comoros University	University	Partner	Low	High
National Horticultural Center	Research institute	Partner	Low	High

Organization	Type	Role in the project	Level of power	Level of interest
Beneficiaries				
Union des comités d'eau d'Anjouan	Local institution	Beneficiaries	Low	Low
Union des comités d'eau de Mohéli	Local institution	Beneficiaries	Low	Low
Village project management committees	PMU at local level	Beneficiaries	Moderate	High
Associations de gestion environnementale	NGO	Beneficiaries	Low	High
Farmers, cooperatives	Individuals or organisation representatives	Beneficiaries	Low	High

3.4. Project implementation structure and partners

70. UNEP was the GEF Implementing Agency responsible for project implementation. The Climate Change Adaptation Unit of the Nature for Climate Branch of the Ecosystems Division was the responsible UNEP entity.
71. The DGEF of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts (MAPETA)[11] was the national executing agency. The DGEF also worked closely with MAPETA's National Strategic Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock (DNSAE) and the Ministry of Production, Environment, Energy, Industry and Crafts (MPEEIA), in particular the General Directorate of Energy, Mines and Water (DGEME), which is the entity responsible for water management and sanitation.
72. As per the project document, the Project Management Unit (PMU) was composed of a full-time Project Coordinator (PC), recruited by the DGEF for the duration of the project. The PC piloted and supervised the work conducted by three Island Coordinators (RUTI, by its initials in French) and the Financial and Administrative Officer (RAF). The PC was supported by a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) that provided technical guidance on the implementation throughout the project. The project collaborated with island-level institutions (Rural Economic Development Centres, CRDE) that supported the local implementation of the project.
73. In practice, an administrative and financial assistant, a communication officer, an M&E expert as well as 15 local agricultural technicians (five per island) joined the PMU after the MTR.
74. A Project Steering Committee, established at the outset of the project, guided the overall implementation, in particular in terms of monitoring and evaluation. This committee met twice a year and was responsible for overseeing the project implementation, providing

[11] The former Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and the Environment in charge of Energy, Industry and Handicrafts (MAPIEEA) changed its name to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (MAPE) and then the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts (MAPETA) during the project's implementation.

guidance and making management decisions whenever required. It was chaired by the DGEF. The PC served as a secretary. The composition was as follows:

- UNEP task manager
- PMU, including RUTIs
- National government representatives:
    - DGEF (co-chair)
    - DNSAE
    - MAPETA (co-chair), including an M&E officer
    - DGEME
- National Institute of Agronomic, Fisheries and Environmental Research (INRAPE)
- Islands public institutions representatives:
    - Rural Economic Development Centres (CRDE)
    - Environment managers
- Partner project coordinators including Projet de Productivité et résilience des exploitations agricoles familiales (PREFER).

75. Later during the implementation, once intersectoral island platforms (P2I) and watershed committees were in place, these structures got directly involved in the implementation, with P2Is serving as PSC at the island level and watershed committees acting as the interface between the PMU, the environmental management associations and the beneficiaries at village level.
76. The project operational implementation structure is presented in Figure 3.

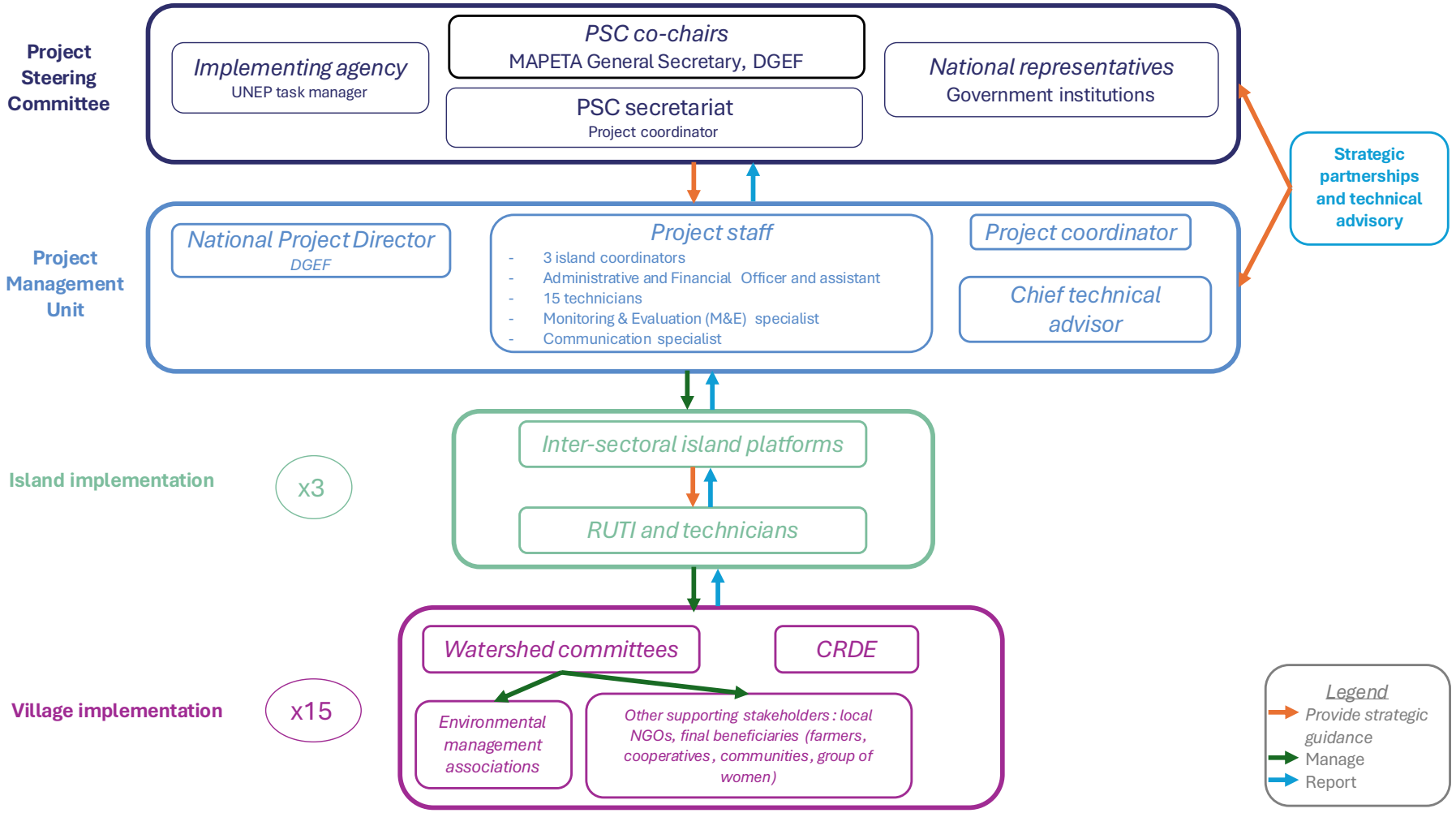

Figure 3 : Project implementation structure and partners (source: Baastel)

3.5. Changes in design during implementation

77. The project has undergone several key changes during the implementation.

a. The unplanned rehabilitation of two Rural Centres for Economic Development in Dzahadjou and Serehini (Grande Comore)

During the first year of implementation, the PMU, with the approval of the PSC, decided that the project would support the rehabilitation of two Rural Centres for Economic Development (CRDE) in Grande Comore. CRDEs are multi-sectoral centres established by MAPETA to provide technical assistance to farmers, local institutions and community members through trainings, information sessions and distribution of inputs. By rehabilitating the Dzahadjou and Serehini CRDEs, the project both i) contributed to the national effort to re-establish local rural services and ii) prepared the subsequent use of these premises as platforms supporting the deployment of project activities in villages.

b. The organization of a national symposium on reforestation best practices

Before the launch of the reforestation activities, the project organized a national symposium on best practices for reforestation in August 2018. The idea was to build on previous reforestation experiences in the Comoros to prepare a national reforestation strategy that would be used as a guidance for the reforestation activities supported by the project.

78. An independent MTR of the project was conducted during the last quarter of 2019 to assess the project's performance in terms of implementation since its operational inception in April 2017. The aim was also to evaluate the match between the project's targets and their achievement to that date. This mid-term review made a number of recommendations, which were:

- Recommendation 1. Strengthen the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system;
- Recommendation 2. Develop and implement a replication strategy and a knowledge management plan;
- Recommendation 3. Keep in mind the quality of the products and not only the quantity;
- Recommendation 4. Strengthen financial monitoring;
- Recommendation 5. Develop and implement an exit strategy.

These recommendations were presented to all the stakeholders involved in implementing the project (UNEP, chief technical advisor, project team, members of the project steering committee). A plan for implementing the recommendations was drawn up, showing the progress in implementing these recommendations and assigning responsibilities for subsequent stages. Following the presentation of this plan, several additional changes were undertaken.

c. Additional project staff

The original plan (prodoc) was to involve technicians from the Regional Directorate for the Environment (DRE) to support RUTI's activities on the ground. In practice, this regional staff happened to have very low capacities to back the RUTI's. In particular, they had no means of transport and no equipment for the field work. In this context, the project hired fifteen local agricultural technicians directly based in the villages to support the RUTIs in disseminating the approaches promoted by the project (soil conservation techniques, climate-smart agriculture, banana plant propagation…). A communication specialist and an M&E expert also joined the PMU to strengthen the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2.

d. Revision of the results framework

A major revision of the results framework was undertaken to strengthen the consistency between output and outcome levels. The revision also led to the reformulation of outcome indicators to better capture the impact of the project on the ground and to ensure that they would be measurable at the end of the project.

e. Twelve months no-cost extension

The project faced both external factors (Cyclone Kenneth and the COVID-19 pandemic) and internal implementation challenges (difficulties in recruiting qualified experts and funding interruption in 2020), which resulted in the need to extend the project duration by the approval of a 12-month no-cost extension.

3.6. Project financing

79. The total budget for this project was USD US 21,620,000, including USD 5,140,000 from the GEF and USD 16,480,000 of cofinancing from the Comorian General Directorate of Environment and Forests (DGEF), the National Strategic Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock (DNSAE), the government of Japan through the DGEF and the Funds for Supporting and Developing Communities funded by the World Bank (FADC). The total project expenditure as of 31 December 2022 was USD 5,140,000. The planned budget, the final expenditure per component and the expenditure ratio are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: RGIBV planned costs and actual expenditure per component (amounts in USD)

Component/sub-component/output	Estimated cost at design	Actual Cost/ expenditure	Expenditure ratio (actual/planned)
Component 1 / Outcome 1	781,473	543,838	70%
Component 2 / Outcome 2	1,850,710	1,887,862	102%
Component 3 / Outcome 3	2,062,816	2,342,600	114%
M&E	200,000	120,701	60%
PMC	245,000	245,000	100%
TOTAL	5,140,000	5,140,000	100%

80. The planned and the actual co-financing reported by the project are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5: RGIBV planned and actual co-financing received by the project[12]

Source of co-financing	Amount planned	Actual co-financing reported
DGEF - Cash (Japan)[13] - In-kind	 200,000 280,000	Cofinancing materialized but precise figure not available in the PIRs.
DNSAE (FAO)[14]	10,000,000	-
FADC	6,000,000	12,000,000

[12] Actual co-financing expenditure reported is limited to information provided in annual PIRs. The project did not submit to the evaluation team specific co-financing expenditure reporting.
[13] The Japanese project support to the Department of Environment and Forest's National Forestry Action Plan ended prior to the effective start of the project.
[14] FAO Country Programme Framework (2014-2019) ended as the project effectively started in mid-2018.

Source of co-financing	Amount planned	Actual co-financing reported
GCF[15]	-	7,000,000

[15] GCF/PNUD (FP094) "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands" started in 2018 for a planned period of 8 years.

4. THEORY OF CHANGE

81. The Theory of Change (ToC) diagram developed in the project document (Prodoc) presented the expected outputs, outcomes, the main objective and the intermediate states leading to the final impact of the project. The drivers and assumptions were also detailed, but the diagram did not present elements of the problem statement or barriers to implementing adaptation measures in the national context at the time.
82. The ToC was reconstructed for the mid-term review (see Figure 4) incorporating elements of the situation analysis including the climate risks and the anthropogenic threats. Overall, the revision maintained the structure of the original strategy, based on 3 outcomes and 7 outputs, some of which were rephrased. Although it was not presented as such, the final impact required additional contributions from other initiatives for its full achievement, hence the need for coordinated and complementary adaptation actions by projects executed by DGEF and other government institutions and their partners, some of which are co-financing projects to RGIBV.
83. Outcomes referred to specific changes in capacity, knowledge, resources, skills, abilities and environmental health.
84. Project Outputs supposedly address the underlying barriers to scaling up adaptation action in the Comoros. In this respect, Barrier 1 'Limited capacities' and Barrier 3 'Insufficient education and awareness raising' seemed appropriate. However, Barrier 2 'Degradation of the watershed' was more a problem statement element and Barrier 4 'An inefficient management of the energy industry' was not directly addressed by the project strategy.
85. The Assumptions and Drivers were also updated in the revised ToC. In general, the assumptions and drivers seemed adequate, except Assumption 4 on land tenure which was more of a driver. Another shortcoming was that Assumption 2 was not linked to the project outputs on the diagram.
86. Overall, the reconstructed ToC presented in Figure 4 lacked the description of Adaptation Pathways detailing the relationships between Outputs and Outcomes. In addition, the diagram only presented the project's contributions towards the final impact of the project without relating, beyond the sphere of influence of the project, to potential medium-term outcomes.
87. Finally, the needs of different groups (vulnerable, gender groups, those living with disabilities, etc.) were never reflected in any of the project ToCs.
88. The TR team developed a revised version of the ToC incorporating the above-identified shortcomings. The updated diagram is presented in Figure 5.

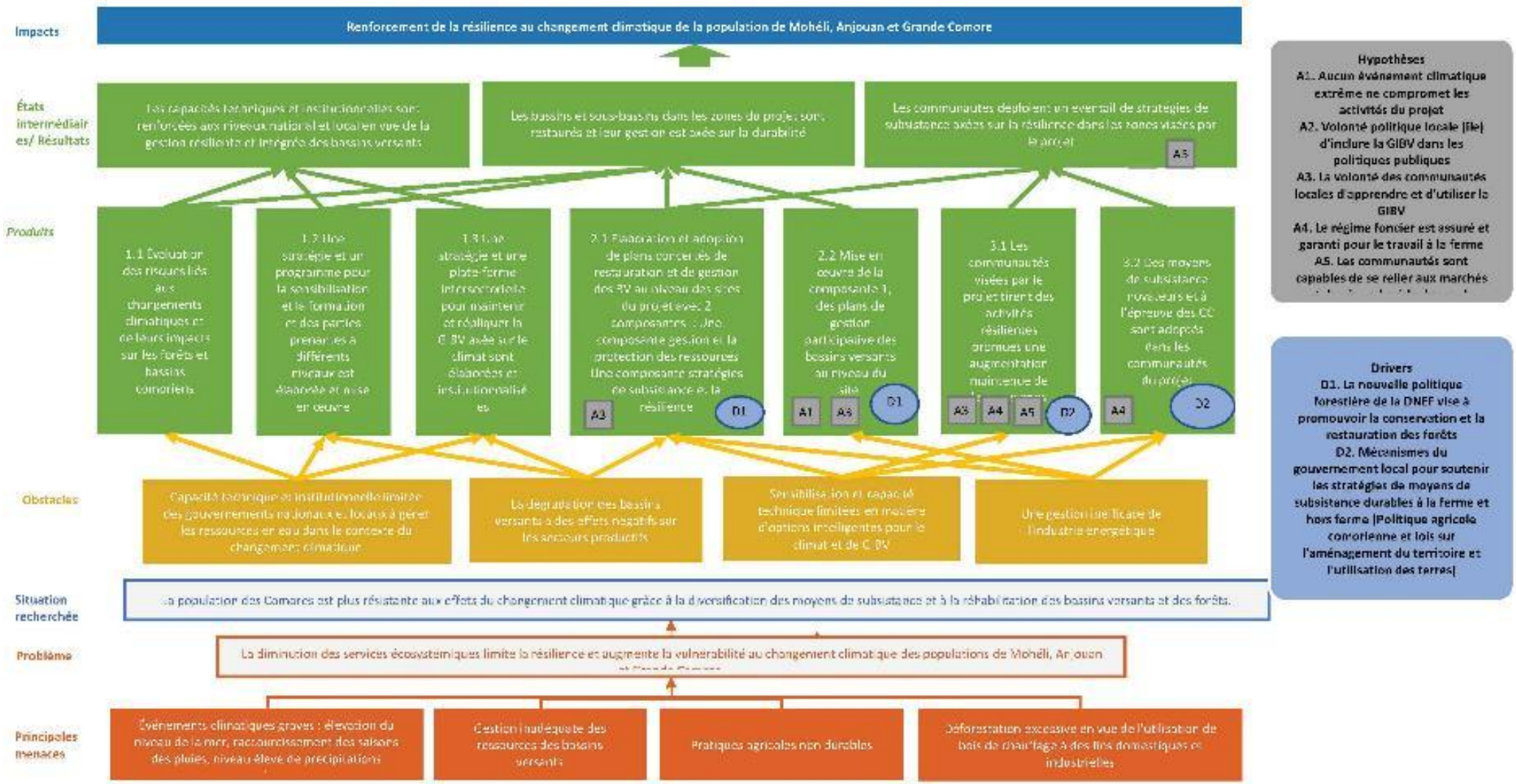

Figure 4: RGIBV reconstructed theory of change (source: RGIBV mid-term review)

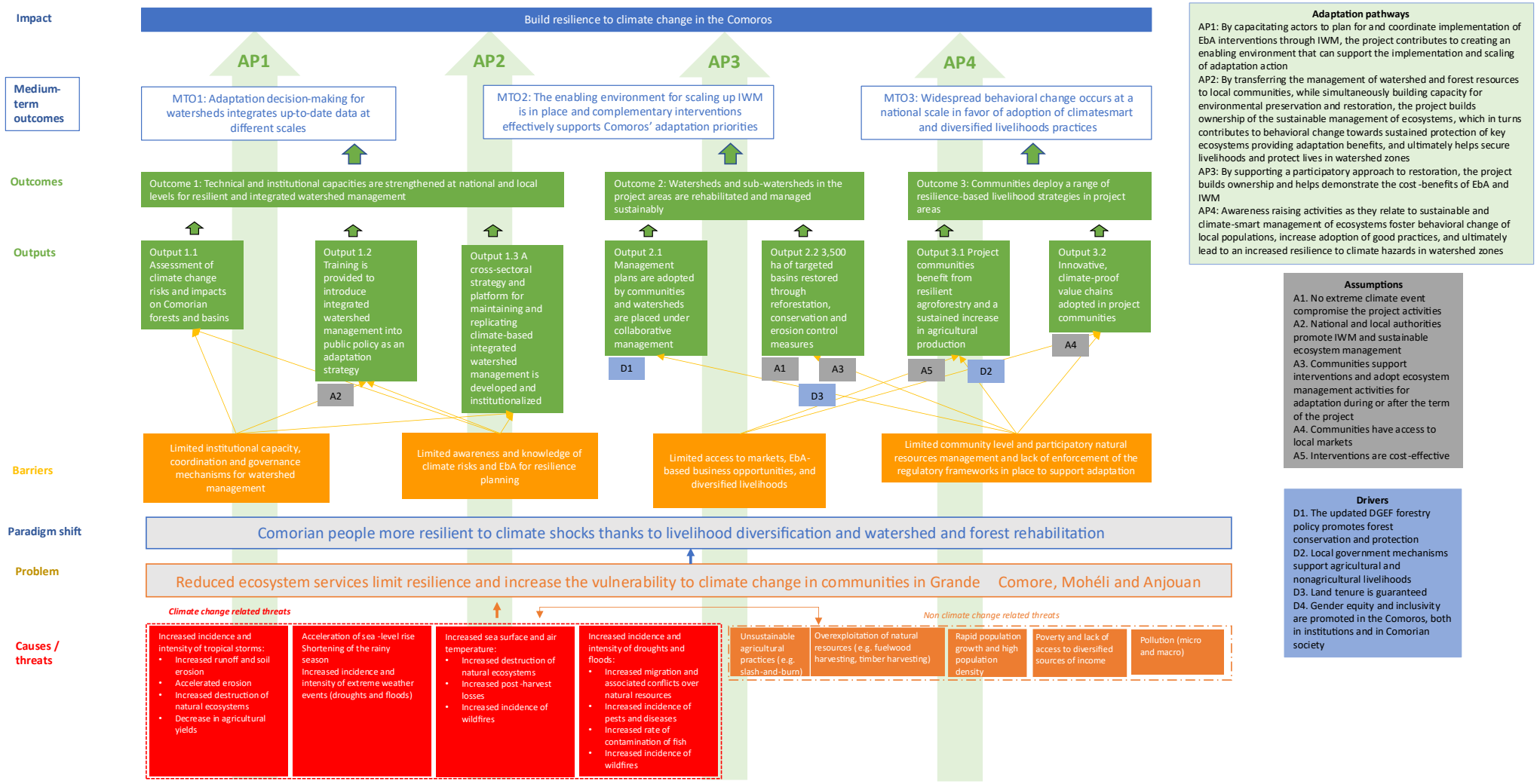

Figure 5: RGIBV ToC reconstructed by the TR team (source: Baastel)

89. The updated ToC (Figure 5) is premised on the fact that healthy watersheds and related forest ecosystems can provide valuable protective, regulating and productive ecosystem services that can reinforce local climate resilience and reduce the vulnerability of communities who rely on them. Likewise, restoring and maintaining ecosystem health requires the reduction or removal of pressures that exacerbate ecosystem fragility and undermine their ability to recover from climate shocks.
90. The project main objective remains the Prodoc's overarching goal to "Build resilience to climate change in the Comoros".
91. Through both the project and other initiatives, Medium-Term Outcomes (MTO) could be achieved:
    - MTO1. Adaptation decision-making for watersheds integrates up-to-date data at different scales covering the whole Comorian territory;
    - MTO2. The enabling environment for scaling up IWM is in place and complementary interventions effectively supports Comoros' adaptation priorities;
    - MTO3. Widespread behavioral change occurs at a national scale in favor of adoption of climate-smart and diversified livelihoods practices.
92. The barriers identified to the effective planning and implementation of adaptation actions to yield transformational change in watershed areas in the Comoros were:
    - Limited institutional capacity, coordination and governance mechanisms for watershed management;
    - Limited awareness and knowledge of climate risks and EbA for resilience planning;
    - Limited access to markets, EbA-based business opportunities, and diversified livelihoods;
    - Limited community level and participatory natural resources management and lack of enforcement of the regulatory frameworks in place to support adaptation.
93. To help lower the barriers to adaptation, contribute to the MTO and main objective, the project implemented a mix of interventions that targeted identified vulnerable watershed ecosystems and the communities that were directly dependent on them. The project's three interlinked outcomes were defined as below:
    - Outcome 1. Technical and institutional capacities are strengthened at national and local levels for resilient, integrated watershed management;
    - Outcome 2. Watersheds and sub-watersheds in project areas are rehabilitated and sustainably managed;
    - Outcome 3. Communities deploy a range of resilience-based livelihood strategies in project areas.
94. The ToC could therefore be expressed through 4 adaptation pathways:
    - AP1. By capacitating actors to plan for and coordinate implementation of EbA interventions through IWM, the project contributes to creating an enabling environment that can support the implementation and scaling up of adaptation action;
    - AP2. By transferring the management of watershed and forest resources to local communities, while simultaneously building capacity for environmental preservation and restoration, the project builds ownership of the sustainable management of ecosystems, which in turns contributes to behavioral change towards sustained protection of key ecosystems providing adaptation benefits, and ultimately helps secure livelihoods and protect lives in watershed zones;
    - AP3. By supporting a participatory approach to restoration, the project builds ownership and helps demonstrate the cost-benefits of EbA and IWM;

- AP4. Awareness raising activities as they relate to sustainable and climate-smart management of ecosystems foster behavioral change of local populations, increase adoption of good practices, and ultimately lead to an increased resilience to climate hazards in watershed zones.

95. The ToC makes the following assumptions[16] as conditions to the achievement of outcomes from the outputs, and the achievement of medium outcomes and main objective:
    - A1. No extreme climate event compromises the project activities;
    - A2. National and local authorities promote IWM and sustainable ecosystem management;
    - A3. Communities support interventions and adopt ecosystem management activities for adaptation during or after the term of the project;
    - A4. Communities have access to local markets;
    - A5. Interventions are cost-effective.
96. The ToC also identifies several key drivers as follows:
    - D1. The updated DGEF forestry policy promotes forest conservation and protection;
    - D2. Local government mechanisms support agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods;
    - D3. Land tenure is guaranteed;
    - D4. Gender equity and inclusivity are promoted in the Comoros, both in institutions and in Comorian society.

[16] Comments on the validity of these assumptions can be found in section 3.1.2. External challenges faced by the project and 5. Review findings.

5.REVIEW FINDINGS

5.1. Strategic Relevance

To what extent was the project aligned with UNEP's medium-term strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities?

97. Though UNEP's strategies have changed and evolved over the years, the project continuously supported UNEP strategic priorities through its contributions to:
    - UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2014-2017 and UNEP Programme of Work 2016-2017;
    - UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2018-2021 and UNEP Programme of Work 2018-2019 and POW 2020-2021;
    - UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2022-2025 and UNEP Programme of Work 2022-2023.
98. At project launch, the intervention directly supported the climate change strategic focus of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the 2014-2017 period, and the achievement of the climate change adaptation Expected Accomplishment in the UNEP Programme of Work 2016-2017.
99. The UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2018-2021 was the MTS that the project supported the most, as its duration covered 4 out of the 5 years of implementation. More specifically, the project contributed to:
    - The Climate Change Subprogramme 1 through its inputs to the objectives (a) "Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation"[17] and (b) "Number of countries with approved projects under different funds for adaptation";
    - The Health and Productive Ecosystems Subprogram 3 via its contributions to the objective (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"[18].
100. The project was also aligned with two of the key MTS 2022-2025 areas of action: 'Climate Action' and 'Nature Action', which are supported by seven sub-programmes. Across these sub-programmes, the RGIBV project contributed to several 2025 outcomes as listed in Table 6.

[17] Related subindicator (iii): "Increase in the number of countries that are ready to access or that have accessed climate change adaptation finance to implement adaptation plans" and (iii) Number of countries with approved projects under different funds for adaptation

[18] Related subindicator (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"

Table 6: UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 supported by the RGIBV

MTS 2022-2025 Sub-programme category	MTS Subprogrammes	MTS 2025 Outcomes
Thematic	Climate action	Outcome 1: Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways
		Outcome 2: Countries and stakeholders have increased capacity, finance and access to technologies to deliver on the adaptation and mitigation goals
	Nature action	Outcome 1: An economically and socially sustainable pathway for halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity is established
		Outcome 2: Sustainable management of nature is adopted and implemented in development frameworks
		Outcome 3: Nature conservation and restoration are enhanced
Foundational	Science-policy, Environmental governance	

101. The project was anchored in several of the Expected Accomplishment of the UNEP PoW 2018-2019 and PoW 2020-2021 as they were the same as the objectives of the priority areas of the MTS 2018-2021. Within the framework of the PoW 2022-2023, the project was aligned with the Strategic objective 1: "Climate stability"[19] and the Strategic Objective 2: "Living in harmony with nature"[20].

Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities: Highly Satisfactory

To what extent was the project aligned with the strategic priorities of the GEF and the LDCF?

102. At project design, the project was in line with the strategy of the GEF/LDCF climate change adaptation focal area. In particular, the project responded to:
- CCA-1, Outcome 1.1: "Vulnerability of physical assets and natural systems reduced";
- CCA-1, Outcome 1.2: "Livelihoods and sources of income of vulnerable populations diversified and strengthened";

[19] Contributions through indicators : (i) Number of national, subnational and private-sector actors that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support; (ii) Amounts provided and mobilized in $ per year in relation to the continued existing collective mobilization goal of the $100 billion commitment through to 2025 with UNEP support; (iv) Positive shift in public opinion, attitudes and actions in support of climate action as a result of UNEP action

[20] Contributions through indicators : (i) Number of national or subnational entities that, with UNEP support, adopt integrated approaches to address environmental and social issues and/or tools for valuing, monitoring and sustainably managing biodiversity and (iii) Number of countries and national, regional and subnational authorities and entities that incorporate, with UNEP support, biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches into development and sectoral plans, policies and processes for the sustainable management and/or restoration of terrestrial, freshwater and marine areas.

- CCA-2, Outcome 2.3: "Institutional and technical capacities and human skills strengthened to identify, prioritize, implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation strategies and measures".

103. Later during the implementation, the project further demonstrated its contributions to the GEF-7 core indicators, associating Indicative expected Results adapted from the project results framework as presented in Table 7.

Table 7: GEF-7 core indicators and corresponding RGIBV indicative expected results

GEF-7 core indicator	Indicative expected Results adapted from the RGIBV results framework
GEF core indicator 1: Total number of direct beneficiaries (male and female)	2,000 people, of which 1,000 are women: i) 1000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt ecosystem-based climate livelihoods; ii)1,000 people, of which 500 are women, are adopting climate-proof and innovative livelihoods strategies
GEF core indicator 2: Area of land managed for climate resilience	3,500 ha of watersheds are rehabilitated across the three islands
GEF core indicator 3: Total number of policies/plans that will mainstream climate resilience	1 geo-referenced information system is operational and 15 participatory land management plans developed
GEF core indicator 4: Total number of people trained (male and female)	150 people (50% women) will be trained by end of project.

Alignment to GEF/LDCF strategic priorities: Highly Satisfactory

To what extent did the project meet global, regional, national and sub-national environmental needs and priorities?

104. The RGIBV project is strongly aligned with the global adaptation and development priorities as mentioned in the Paris Agreement and the Agenda 2030.

105. When looking at the Paris Agreement, article 7 emphasizes the importance of enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change with the aim to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems, in particular in developing countries such as the Union of Comoros. Article 8 focuses on the necessity of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Among the areas of cooperation and facilitation to enhance understanding, action and support is 'Resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems', which the overall project approach perfectly contributes to.

106. The same holds true for Agenda 2030. Table 8 summarizes two relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and elaborates which targets the project has contributed to. These are SDGs 13 and 15.

Table 8: Sustainable Development Goals relevant for the RGIBV project

SDG	Indicator	Project
SDG 13: Climate action	Indicator 13.b.1 Number of LDCs and SIDs that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities	The Project focused on supporting the Union of the Comoros to climate-proof its important watersheds through ecosystem-based adaptation to sustain life-supporting ecosystem services for the people of the Comoros, in particular women, youth and marginalized communities.
	Indicator 13.3.2. Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions	The project supported the DGEF and key stakeholders at national and island level to increase awareness and capacity on climate change adaptation through integrated watershed management as an ecosystem-based adaptation approach.
SDG 15: Life on land	Indicator 15.3.1. Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area	The project targeted to rehabilitate 3,500 ha of watersheds in project sites on three islands, and to sustainably manage 4,000 ha of watersheds.
	Indicator 15.a.1. Official development assistance and public expenditure on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.	The project provided support to communities, local authorities and national institutions to implement ecosystem-based adaptation approaches in integrated watershed management initiatives on three islands to strengthen climate resilience. In doing so, it promoted the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.

107. The project document established the project alignment with i) national laws, policies and plans related to the overall development of the country (Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2019); as well as ii) environment (National Environment Policy or the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation of Biodiversity 2011-2020) and climate change strategic documentation (National Adaptation Programme of Action and Nation Adaptation Plan under development at project design); and iii) sectoral policy frameworks (Forest Policy, Agricultural Policy and Water Act). The project was particularly well aligned with the updated Water Act, which revision in 2015 integrated the promotion of integrated watershed management.

108. The consultations conducted within the framework of this evaluation confirmed that the project also greatly supported the achievement of more recent national strategic priorities,

including the new Emerging Comoros Plan 2020-2030, the updated Nationally Determined Contributions or the National Agricultural Investment Plan 2020-2024.

109. At community level, the project responded to the main climate threats mentioned in the project document and confirmed by the TR interviewees: increased incidence and intensity of droughts and floods leading to increased runoff and soil erosion resulting in soil impoverishment, decrease in agricultural yields and destruction of infrastructures.

Figure 6: Highly eroded spring head in Mvouni, Grande Comore (left) and seasonal water source bed that used to be permanent in Kiyo, Anjouan (right) (source: Baastel)

110. Although communities do not systematically interpret extreme climate events as climate change, the TR consultation revealed that the project document successfully identified the main climate hazards and related consequences faced by Comorian rural populations: high winds, seasonality of water sources that used to be permanent, difficulties in supplying drinking and irrigation water, shift in crop calendar (see Figure 6).

111. In parallel, the project proposed relevant solutions to the socio-economic issues faced by local communities in remote areas: lack of alternatives to firewood; insufficient technical knowledge of how to cultivate on steep land; low agricultural yields due to poor quality of seedlings and inappropriate soil preparation; crop pests; poverty and food insecurity.

Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities: Highly Satisfactory

To what extent did the project take account of other concurrent or planned initiatives on the same themes in Comoros, and developed synergies with them?

112. The RGIBV project emanated from an earlier GEF-LDCF project (UNDP-UNEP/GEF-LDCF/DGEF "Adapting water resource management in the Comoros to expected climate change (ACCE)", total budget USD 13,056,318 (2011-2016)) aimed at adapting water resources management in the Comoros in the context of climate change. It was implemented by the DGEF through a joint execution by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (supervising the water distribution and the sanitation component) and

UNEP (overseeing the water resource management and watershed protection component). The RGIBV project document was based on the lessons learned from the ACCE project, which also resulted in another DGEF project funded by the Green Climate Fund and implemented by UNDP, "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands", total budget USD 60,800,000 (2019-2027).

113. Although the prodoc identified some projects that would be implemented concurrently to the RGIBV and would represent cofinancing, two of them were already phased out when the project's activities started: the Japanese project support to the DGEF and the FAO Country Programme Framework.

114. Nevertheless, the project occasionally established collaborations and bonds with other regional and national projects, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Past, current and future projects with which the RGIBV has developed synergies

Project	Synergies with the RGIBV project
Past	
UNDP-UNEP/GEF-LDCF/DGEF "Adapting water resource management in the Comoros to expected climate change (ACCE)" (2011-2016)	The RGIBV was built on the lessons learnt from this ACCE project.
UNOPS/DGEF "Integrated Water Resource and Wastewater Management in Atlantic and Indian Ocean Small Island Developing States (GIRE)" (2012-2020)	The GIRE project implemented an integrated management and watershed protection programme for the Mutsamudu river in the Anjouan basin. The project has also developed a National Integrated Water Resource Management plan. The RGIBV used their experience with cisterns, in particular they consulted the community agreement mechanism established for cisterns maintenance.
Concurrent	
UNDP/GEF/DGEF "Development of a National Network of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas Representative of the Comoros Unique Natural Heritage and Co-managed with Local Village Communities (RENAP)" (2016-2021)	UNDP lent GPS for the mapping activities carried out at the beginning of the RGIBV project. RENAP also provided agents during the reforestation campaigns organised by the RGIBV project in at least two villages (Vanadjou and Bahani). Synergies were found facilitating the RGIBV intersectoral island platforms. Indeed, the platforms served as PSC at the island level for both projects as these events brought together the same actors.
UNDP/GCF/DGEF "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands" (2019-2027)	The RGIBV project organised numerous meetings and tried to create synergies with the UNDP/GCF project, sometimes without the expected success. The UNDP/GCF project used the mapping done by the RGIBV, to identify its intervention areas. The UNDP/GCF also drew inspiration from the reforestation strategy and the community approach developed by the RGIBV project. Two shortcomings in the collaboration were: i) the sharing of the RGIBV PGP, which did not result in the UNDP/GCF selecting the proposed reforestation priority areas; ii) the

Project	Synergies with the RGIBV project
	refusal to use the RGIBV nursery seedlings for the UNDP/GCF reforestation activities.
UNDP/GEF/MAPETA "Strengthening of Multisector and Decentralised Environmental Management and Coordination to Achieve the Objectives of the Rio Conventions in the Union of Comoros (ANCAR II)" (2017-2023)	The RGIBV and ANCAR II took over the development of legal regulations (decrees) related to the application of the forestry law. The needed decrees were divided between the two projects.
World Bank/MAPETA "Integrated Development and Competitiveness Project (PIDC)" (2019-2024)	As the PIDC also planned to rehabilitate Rural Development Centres, the two projects coordinated to coherently distribute the effort between the two initiatives.
Planned initiatives	
AFD/MAPETA "Support for export industries and rural development in the Union of the Comoros (AFIDEV)" (2021-2027)	After the rehabilitation of the CRDE by the RGIBV project in Grande Comore, the AFIDEV project supported the use and management of the rehabilitated premises.

115. In terms of coordinating bodies, the PSC acted as a platform that brought together a number of relevant actors and allowed information about the project to be disseminated and synergies with other projects to be created. As the General Secretary of MAPETA chaired each project implemented under the Ministry, he was responsible for communication and coordination between projects. At the island level, the Regional Directorate of the Environment (DRE) organised monthly meetings for all the projects under its management to present and discuss their monthly work plans.

116. In practice, the consultations conducted within the framework of this terminal review revealed that these mechanisms were not sufficient to ensure efficient communication and coordination between projects. In particular, it was pointed out that there was a lack of overall management and supervision of all the projects implemented by the Ministry. Interviewees regretted the absence of an overarching authority capable of directing coordination and collaboration between the various projects implemented by different organizations at national level.

Complementarity with relevant existing interventions: Moderately Satisfactory

5.2. Nature of the external context

What external factors influenced the project's performance? Were they adequately taken into account?

117. As described in section 3.1.2, four main external factors affected the project's performance: national elections, climate hazards, COVID and an intentional wildfire. The PMU managed these difficulties by temporarily bypassing some non-operational decision-making bodies, adapting its work plans or finding innovative solutions to ensure that activities continued.

Nature of the external context: Moderately favourable

5.3. Quality of the project design

The full assessment of the project design quality is detailed in the UNEP Template for the assessment of project design quality (see

118. Appendix 7: Quality of project design). A summary of the ratings is presented in Table 10.

Table 10 : Quality of project design rating summary

SECTION	RATING
Operating Context	Satisfactory
Project Preparation	Highly Satisfactory
Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory
Intended Results and Causality	Moderately Satisfactory
Logical Framework and Monitoring	Moderately Satisfactory
Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Satisfactory
Partnerships	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Learning, Communication and Outreach	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Financial Planning / Budgeting	Moderately Satisfactory
Efficiency	Satisfactory
Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Satisfactory
Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Moderately Satisfactory
Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Unsatisfactory
General score	**Satisfactory**

5.3.1. Main strengths

119. The project document adequately described and analysed the context that justified the intervention as well as appropriately anticipated the unusually challenging operational factors that were likely to negatively affect project performance. The problem statement included a comprehensive context analysis, description of climate change (current and future impacts), root causes and barriers, institutional and policy context, baseline analysis and gaps based on an inclusive and participatory project preparation process.

120. Although links with other projects could have been more detailed, the strategic relevance was adequately described. Moreover, the RGIBV project was in line with GEF and UNEP requirements and strategic priorities, as well as with national and local priorities at the moment the Prodoc was prepared.

121. The design proposed a comprehensive, clear and appropriate governance and supervision arrangement which was then strengthened after the MTR.

5.3.2. Areas of improvements

122. Overall, the proposed approach to address the problem was comprehensive, as it included in a balanced way: i) policy and governance actions; ii) scientific, technical and societal capacity building; and iii) climate change adaptation delivery actions. However, causal pathways were insufficiently described in the project document. Similarly, none of the theory of change diagrams used during the implementation described the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups.
123. Regarding the results framework, the main issue was the predominance of means indicators rather than results indicators, which would have been necessary to assess the long-term impact and transformational potential of the project among stakeholders and at all levels of implementation (national, island and local).
124. A major shortcoming of the original budget was the inadequate project management costs, which only allowed for the recruitment of the project coordinator, the RAF and the RUTIs, when more staff were needed (at least agricultural technicians, communication officer, M&E specialist). In addition, the budget did not include sufficient funds for inter-island travel, which was in practice critical in a context of an archipelago project. However, this might have been due to GEF's restricting policies regarding PMC. It is also possible that the costs for agricultural technicians and other activity focused human resources were not sufficiently factored in the activity budget and in the implementation plans.
125. One important weakness of the project design was the lack of capacity assessment of the national partners prior the launch of the implementation.
126. Another shortcoming was the absence of a robust sustainability approach which negatively impacted the first half of the project.
127. Finally, the TR rated the project using the Gender Marker Score 1 as gender was partially mainstreamed in the project document, but it did not include a proper gender analysis and action plan.

Quality of Project Design: Satisfactory

5.4. Effectiveness

5.4.1. Availability of outputs

Did the project succeed in producing the products indicated in the ProDoc (quality and quantity)? What are the reasons behind the success or shortcomings?

128. Based on the last version of the RF developed after the MTR, the project had seven outputs divided over three outcomes (see next section). According to the documentation available (PIR2022 and final report – a results verification exercise was not conducted as

it was not budgeted for this project[21]), at the end of the project, in 2022, for five of the seven outputs, the final target was achieved. The other two outputs partially achieved their final target. The achievement of the output targets has been assessed in the light of the TR consultations and the field mission, in 2024. For some of the outputs, the assessment may differ. Indeed, from the evaluators' perspective, only one output (14%) was 100% achieved, while the other remaining six (86%) were partially achieved. Table 11 provides an overview of the project's output achievements from both the project documentation and the evaluators' perspectives.

Table 11: Summary of the RGIBV outputs achievement based on the project documentation and the evaluators' observations

Output	Project assessment	Terminal review assessment	Comments
1.1. Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on Comorian forests and watersheds	100% achieved	50% achieved	Website still reachable but data not accessible for unknown reasons at the time of the TR.
1.2. Training is provided to introduce integrated watershed management into public policy as an adaptation strategy	100% achieved	100% achieved	Project's assessment consistent with the TR observations.
1.3. A cross-sectoral strategy and platform for sustaining and replicating climate-focused integrated watershed management is developed and institutionalized	100% achieved	70% achieved	P2I active during the implementation but not institutionalized as targeted in the output formulation. Decrees technically validated but not politically adopted.
2.1. Management plans are adopted by communities and watersheds are placed under collaborative management	100% achieved	40% achieved	PPG developed and adopted but process not fully understood by the beneficiaries. Documents no longer in use at the time of the TR. Most AGEs no longer active at the time of the TR.
2.2. 3,500 ha of targeted basins are restored through reforestation, conservation and erosion control measures	80% achieved	60-70%	The evaluator was not able to visit all restored reforestation areas and farms but based on the evidence seen in the sites, the evaluator was able to make a judgement.
3.1. Project communities benefit from resilient agroforestry with a sustained increase in agricultural production	100% achieved	50-60%	The opinion of the evaluator is based on what was observed during the field mission and what stakeholders informed the evaluator.

[21] UNEP's position of conducting external results verification exercises for its climate change adaptation projects was introduced in 2021, after the design and launch of this project.

Output	Project assessment	Terminal review assessment	Comments
3.2. Innovative, climate-resilient value chains are adopted in project communities	75% achieved	30%	Only a minority of beneficiaries managed to develop the poultry farming No concrete support to benefit from the high-valued products promoted by the project. Most of the cooperatives visited during the TR field mission were almost or completely inactive.

129. The first **output 1.1** under Outcome 1 was defined as shown in the following insert. It was rated 100% achieved at the end of the project (2022), although only partially achieved if 2024 is considered (50%).

Output 1.1: Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on Comorian forests and watersheds

Indicator: Availability of an operational geo-referenced information system on the impacts of climate change on the main watersheds, using climate data, by the end of the project

Target: An operational geo-referenced information system at national level, by the end of the project

130. First, a team of external consultants, supported by the MAPETA's Geographic Information System (GIS) department, produced watershed and forest maps identifying land use and priority restoration sites, based on known climate scenarios. This included trainings for regional GIS directorates (50 people) to enable them to later update the data and continue mapping activities. To broaden the scope of its dissemination, the information produced was then transferred to a geo-referenced web data portal (Arc GIS, hosted on a foreign server, ESRI)[22]. The data was updated and supplemented on an ongoing basis over the course of the project (last update in 2022). As an example, a complementary activity of mapping farmers' plots was carried out in Grande Comore and Moheli in 2021. Unfortunately, although the platform was to be updated and maintained by the Ministry's GIS department, at the time of the TR, for unknown reasons, it was no longer possible to access the project data, likely because the Ministry has not paid the annual fee to ESRI.

131. **Output 1.2** was characterized as presented below. According to both the project documentation and the TR observation, the target was 100% met and even significantly exceeded.

Output 1.2: Training is provided to introduce integrated watershed management into public policy as an adaptation strategy

[22] Link : https://environement.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html.

Indicator: Number of people trained in integrated watershed management at the end of the project

Target: 150 people in total on the 3 islands trained in integrated watershed management, including at least 40% women, at the end of the project

132. According to the project's final report, 577 (68% women) managers from institutions (central, regional and CRDE) responsible for agriculture, environment and water management were trained in various aspects of integrated watershed management. To achieve this, the project recruited a team of international and national experts. They were responsible for developing training and awareness-raising materials for different target groups. In 2018, three training and sensitization sessions were organized in the three islands involving the vice-presidency in charge of production and environment, regional directorates and CRDEs. The project further delivered trainings and awareness raising events on integrated water management and ecosystem-based adaptation in 2019.

133. Starting from 2019, the project also supported the development of a diploma course aimed at strengthening the capacities of 75 CRDE technicians at the national level (i.e. training of trainers) who were then to contribute to the popularization of agricultural techniques and natural resource management for resilience to climate change. After numerous delays, the training of twelve trainers finally took place in July 2021. Seventy-five technicians of CRDEs were then designated, in consultation with regional authorities, to be trained by the trainers. In Grande Comore, the training gathered 25 technicians from the seven CRDEs of the island in the national center of Horticulture of Mvouni. In Anjouan, 25 technicians from the five CRDEs of the island benefited from this training in the CRDE of Mremani. In Moheli Island, the training was organized in the CRDE of Fomboni with 25 technicians from the five CRDEs. 42% of all trainees were women. The theoretical courses lasted four months, complemented by two months of practical work respectively from August to November 2021 and January to February 2022. The course was implemented by the DGEF in collaboration with the DNSAE, the INRAPE and the National Directorate of Technical Education.

134. While it was expected that the diploma programme would provide trainings certificates at the end of the course, it was not the case. The graduating ceremony did not happen due to insufficient availability of funds at the end of the project (see next section). Similarly, it was planned that the programme would continue to be disseminated after the end of the project but at the time of the TR it was no longer in running.

135. The **output 1.3** under the first component was assessed as follows. According to the PIR2022, it was 100% achieved. However, based on the TR observations, the target was only 70% achieved as P2I were active during the implementation but not institutionalized as targeted in the output formulation and the decrees developed were technically validated but not politically adopted.

Output 1.3: A cross-sectoral strategy and platform for sustaining and replicating climate-focused integrated watershed management is developed and institutionalized

Indicator: A governance and scaling-up strategy is developed and launched

Target: By the end of the project, scaling-up of IWM elements is initiated through modification of the legislative and institutional framework

136. One of the first achievements of the project was the establishment of three Island Intersectoral Platforms (P2I), which were operational by the end of the first year of implementation. The three P2Is comprised island-representatives from various sectors such as water, land, agriculture, livestock, and environment. Their purpose was to ensure local government supervision and uptake of project activities and approaches. They worked to guide the implementation of the project, to collect lessons learned and ensure communication and coordination with other projects and institutions. These meetings were organised and facilitated by the RUTIs every three months. These events were used to present and validate the project work plans for the next three months with all island stakeholders. The platforms were also responsible for the development of an exit and scaling-up strategy which was annexed to the project's final report. As a project management tool, they proved useful in ensuring close coordination between different sectoral and island-based institutions in the implementation of project activities and coordination with other interventions. However, these platforms were not institutionalized and sustained in the long term as they were no longer operational at the time of the TR.

137. As described in section 3.5, the project financed the rehabilitation of two CRDEs (Dzahadjou, see Figure 7 and Serehini), which was not originally foreseen in the Prodoc. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Land Development and Town Planning originally established these multi-sectoral centres in each region to provide technical support to farmers, local institutions and community members through training, information sessions and distribution of inputs, and demonstrate best practices through agricultural demonstration plots and animal husbandry demonstration. They also provide a platform for projects, such as the RGIBV, to carry out their activities and offer opportunities to sustain project interventions after the project's end. The rehabilitation of both centres was completed in early 2019, allowing them to be used for the project's field activities.

Figure 7: Dzahadjou-Itsandra rehabilitated CRDE (source: Baastel)

138. Following the MTR, a new activity was added to create stronger linkages with policies. The project therefore supported the development of five Forest Law Application Decrees, which were required for the implementation of integrated watershed management at the national level. The proposed decrees aim at:
- setting the conditions for the management of state-owned forests;
- setting the terms of organization and operation of the regional committee on forestry and sustainable development;
- establishing a special protection regime for soils with slopes of less than 35%;
- setting the terms and content of a forestry inventory;
- defining measures to prevent forest fires.

139. A two-day workshop was held to present and discuss the five proposed regulations with a wide range of stakeholders, including the legal adviser from the President's office, the chairman of the National Assembly's environmental committee, and representatives from island administrations, municipalities, civil society and development partners. These decrees are now technically validated but, according to some of the TR interviewees, they are not yet adopted and implemented -although the project can influence it, this is beyond its control.

140. The target for the **output 2.1** under the outcome 2 was 100% met, according to the project documentation. This rating was not corroborated by the TR observations (target 40% reached) as there have been limited understanding and very little use of the PGP developed; and most of the established AGEs were not operational anymore at the time of the TR field mission.

Output 2.1: Management plans are adopted by communities and watersheds are placed under collaborative management

Indicator: Number of villages adopting a watershed restoration and collaborative management plan and an implementation mechanism, involving watershed management committees

Target: At least 5 villages in each island adopt a watershed restoration and collaborative management plan and commitments made to support implementation of the plans

141. The three main results for this output are: i) the organisation of a national symposium on reforestation; ii) the development of 15 participatory management plans (PPG); and iii) the associated establishment of 15 watershed committees and 15 Associations de Gestion de l'Environnement (AGE).

142. Given the modest success of past reforestation initiatives in the country, it was considered necessary to organise a national symposium on best practices in reforestation. The aim of this event was to collect lessons learned from past projects in order to develop a national reforestation strategy to be implemented by the RGIBV project. This process started during the first six months of the project. It was supported by a national consultant. The symposium was held in August 2018 and brought together various stakeholders, including the DGEF, the University of the Comoros, INRAPE, DREs, national and island authorities, mayors, village leaders, environmental and civil society organisations. The reforestation strategy was then finalised in December 2018. The main recommendation that emerged from this process was to combine reforestation with a broad community approach. In fact, to maximise the success of the reforestation activities, it was concluded that communities must be consulted and involved in every step of the way: selecting the tree species to be planted from a list of resilient, endemic and endangered and/or commercially valuable species; choosing the conditions and organising their involvement in the project (how many hours? what day? what salary?); identifying the reforestation sites; being responsible for monitoring and maintaining the plants. It was also acknowledged that they must benefit from this type of initiative: strengthening their skills in relevant areas and increasing their income (for example, from the production and selling of seedlings).

143. Five national consultants were recruited to design and implement participatory management plans with local communities in the 15 project sites. They were supported by three national NGOs[23] (one per island). This process was complemented by a baseline study to define the structural and functional characteristics of the households and farms targeted by the project, as well as their socio-economic and climatic vulnerabilities. The evaluators were told that this process took longer than expected as rural communities were not used to this type of exercise. In addition, the consultants and the project team had to manage the expectations raised by this process. Indeed, as the project worked in remote and poor areas, the demands were many and often beyond the scope of the project. While the initiative aimed to capture all community needs and priorities through the development of these PGP, it had a limited budget and had to prioritise adaptation measures (rather

[23] Assistance aux initiatives innovantes pour la protection de l'Environnement aux Comores (AIPEC) in Grande Comore, MHACHIRICHO in Mohéli et Action Comores in Anjouan

than, for example, building a road or a school), which may have initially led to frustration and to a temporary loss of interest in the project. After extensive consultation and explanation of the purpose of the process, these documents were finally approved by all communities and used to design the project's interventions during implementation.

144. Nevertheless, at the moment the TR was conducted, the consultation indicated that some communities had not yet completely understood the interest of such a document, as not all their demands had been met. In fact, the TR consultations revealed that the planning process (and related tools) is not a common exercise for the municipalities. Indeed, at the municipal level, most municipalities do not have formal development plans. Local authorities are therefore unfamiliar with this type of document, which may explain the low level of understanding of this practice. As a consequence, in all the villages visited, it seems that so far PGPs have been used very little (i.e. by other donors/investors) except by the RGIBV project. These elements justify the evaluators rating in Table 11.

145. In parallel, the project established watershed management committees whose role was to guide the choice of tree to be produced, and income generating activities to be developed, monitor project interventions, mediate potential conflicts and communicate information from project management to local communities. The project also formalised fifteen AGEs responsible for implementing the PGPs through the production of the seedlings needed for the reforestation activities. These AGEs were mostly composed of women (70%). The consultations associated with this TR revealed a very high level of satisfaction with the proposed participatory implementation arrangement. However, as explained later in this report, the activities of AGEs were very limited at the time of the TR, as they almost completely stopped producing seedlings finding no market to sell their production which confirms the relevance of the fourth assumption of the ToC 'A4. Communities have access to local markets'.

146. As per the last revision of the RF, the indicator related to **output 2.2** was divided into nine sub-indicators and targets which, for some of them, were exceeded and others only partially achieved. Overall, the output is considered 80% achieved in the project documentation however from the evaluator's assessment of documentations, discussions with stakeholders and visual observation of sites visited, the review assesses the rate of achievement at between 60% and 70%.

Output 2.2: 3,500 ha of targeted basins are restored through reforestation, conservation and erosion control measures

Indicators:

a. 3,500 ha or km under resilient agroforestry management, conservation and erosion control, broken down by type of management and site
b. Number of local reforestation training courses for climate risk management
c. Number of hectares of spring heads reforested in Anjouan and Mohéli, at the end of the project
d. Number of hectares of degraded land restored, in the 3 islands, at the end of the project
e. Number of linear meters of riverbanks stabilized on Anjouan and Mohéli, at the end of the project
f. Number of hectares subject to live fencing, on the 3 islands, at the end of the project

g. Number of hectares of farms stabilized with anti-erosion lines, on the 3 islands, at the end of the project
h. Number of hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems
i. Number of hectares of "other" reforestation (land with no degradation issues, no significant hydrological function, no ecological sensitivity)

Targets:

a. 3500 ha in total, including 400 on Ngazidja, 250 on Anjouan, 200 on Mohéli, per year for 4 years
b. 75 local reforestation training courses (including 25 in Ngazidja, 25 in Anjouan and 25 in Mohéli) will be organized during the project period
c. 600 ha of spring heads will be reforested during the project period (including 400 ha in Anjouan and 200 ha in Mohéli)
d. 1100 ha of restored degraded land (including 800 ha in Ngazidja, 300 ha in Anjouan and 200 ha in Mohéli) will be reforested by the end of the project
e. 1,200 linear m of riverbanks stabilized (including 800 m in Anjouan and 400 m in Mohéli)
f. 1,500 hectares (i.e. 3,720,000 cuttings) divided into 800 ha (i.e. 1,984,000 cuttings for Ngazidja, 400ha (i.e. 99,2000 cuttings for Anjouan and 300 ha (i.e. 744,000 cuttings for Mohéli) will be planted with hedges
g. 800 agricultural ha stabilized with anti-erosion lines (i.e. 2,976,000 splinters of ***Poaceae*** stumps) divided into 200 ha (i.e. 744,000) for Ngazidja and 300 ha (i.e. 1116,000) for Anjouan and 300ha (i.e. 1,116,000) for Mohéli will be stabilized with anti-erosion lines based on splinters of ***Poaceae*** stumps
h. Hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems
i. 200 hectares of "other" reforestation (land not at risk of degradation, with no significant hydrological function or ecological sensitivity)

147. A summary of the progress achieved for each sub-indicator is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Progress achieved under the output 2.2

Indicator	Target	Achievement by end of the project
a.	3,500 ha	2737 ha under resilient management (78%)
b.	75 local reforestation training courses	56 local reforestation training courses (75%)
c.	600 ha of spring heads reforested	337 ha of spring heads reforested (56%)
d.	1100 ha of restored degraded land	949 ha of degraded land restored (86%)
e.	1,200 linear m of riverbanks stabilized	4.1 linear km of riverbanks stabilized (341%)
f.	1,500 hectares subject to live fencing	1788 ha subject to live fencing (119%)

Indicator	Target	Achievement by end of the project
g.	800 agricultural ha stabilized with anti-erosion lines	360 agricultural ha stabilized with anti-erosion lines (45%)
h.	Hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems	Number ha of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems. (0%) It is noted that the indicator did not have a quantitative target. The project did not report any quantitative information against this indicator.
i.	200 hectares of "other" reforestation	0 ha of "other" reforestation (0%)

148. Once the PGPs had been validated and the priority restoration areas identified, the project signed agreements with AGEs to produce seedlings. The purpose of these agreements was to clarify the terms of the contract: the species to be produced in the nurseries, the number of seedlings, the number of hectares to be reforested, the prices for the different categories of seedlings (type, size and quality), and the protection, monitoring and surveillance of the reforestation sites.

149. Then AGEs set up nurseries and started producing seedlings. Although there were no seedlings mature enough to be sowed for the first planting season, reforestation activities still took place as the project purchased plants from local suppliers. As described in section 3.1.2, during the first planting season two nurseries experienced problems with water availability due to unfavourable local climate conditions. In this context, the project had to purchase water to fill the cisterns built by the project. Except for these two villages, the AGEs were operational and autonomous throughout the project implementation leading to the production of: forest trees, endemic trees, fast growing trees, and fruit trees. One example of fast-growing tree used is *Leucaena* which is known for its ability to spread and propagate. It is generally planted to combat soil erosion, for its nitrogen-fixing and fertilising action, and as a shade tree and windbreak. In total, the project supported the acquisition of 1,539,299 plant seedlings from 15 community nurseries in the 15 project sites. At the time the TR took place, most of these nurseries were no longer in use as most of the AGEs found no buyers for their surplus plants other than the project.

150. The AGEs were also responsible to produce live fencing material. Indeed, in exchange for seed distribution, the project required beneficiaries' fields to be planted with living hedging and landscaped with soil conservation bund lines. Within this framework, living fences were installed on 1788 ha of land. The project mostly promoted *Glyricidia* cuttings (see Figure 8) which is an exotic fast-growing tree, traditionally used to create hedges but also to produce fodder, to shade crops or break winds. As a leguminous, the tree has positive soil fertilising properties through its roots and by using its leaves as compost. These many benefits were confirmed by the project beneficiaries interviewed during the TR field mission.

Figure 8: *Glyricidia* plantation on formerly barren land in Vanadjou, Grande Comore (source: Baastel)

151. Reforestation campaigns to restore and protect spring heads, stream banks, degraded lands and training on anti-erosive techniques were organized in 2018, 2019. The project then stopped for 6 months in 2020 due to a cash flow challenges (see next section 5.5). Finally, rehabilitation and reforestation work accelerated in 2021 and 2022 across all 15 project sites to meet the project targets. However, the reforestation target could not be met due mainly to insufficient project funding to compensate beneficiaries to produce seedlings and live fencing material. Regarding spring heads, some of it were cultivated by farmers who were reluctant to stop farming in land immediately adjacent to springs. The project thus promoted agroforestry and anti-erosive lines in these particularly critical zones resulting in significant ha of agricultural plots converted to agroforestry systems. In total, 2737ha were restored including 949ha of land reforested (example provided in Figure 9) and 1788ha landscaped with living hedges and anti-erosive techniques.

Figure 9: Land reforested by the project in Vanadjou, Grande Comore (source: Baastel)

152. A shortcoming in the project monitoring plan was the lack of an indicator on survival rate of the planted seedlings, and its regular monitoring. This variable was evaluated only once in 2022. According to the latest PIR, reforestation survival rates on communal land were estimated at an average of 47%, based on assessments by the project team and community members[24]. The report also notes that there were considerable differences from site to site due to variations in rainfall and soils, competition from other plants, damage from small ruminants, fire and, to a lesser extent, human cutting.

153. The **output 3.1** under the third outcome was divided into four sub-indicators and targets. According to the last PIR, this output was completely achieved. The opinion of the evaluator is based on what was observed during the field mission and what stakeholders informed the evaluator as detailed in the paragraphs below. Based on these elements, the level of achievement is rated at between 50% and 60%.

Output 3.1: Project communities benefit from resilient agroforestry with a sustained increase in agricultural production

Indicators:

a. Change in agricultural production for key commodities, broken down by commodity annually
b. Number of local training courses in live fencing and agroforestry for soil protection and fertilization

[24] The project supported ADEs to distribute and plant seedlings within the community and in the watersheds areas without stipulating a requirement for the ADEs to capture detailed location of distribution and plantings, and monitoring survival rates.

c. Number of beneficiaries receiving coaching through CRDE
d. Number of farmers trained by CEP on each island

Targets:

a. On average, a 5% annual increase in production for each of the main productions at each site
b. 75 local training courses in embocagement (including 25 in Ngazidja, 25 in Anjouan and 25 in Mohéli) will be organized during the project
c. –
d. 15 demonstration plots operational at project sites

154. A summary of the progress achieved for each sub-indicator is presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Progress achieved under the output 3.1

Indicator and target	Achievement
a.	2700 farmers have seen their income increase by 3% per harvest year over the 3 crop years supported by the RGIBV project (-%)
b.	56 local training courses in live fencing (74%)
c.	75 beneficiaries receiving coaching through CRDE
d.	4 demonstration plots (26%)

155. The main objective of this output was to improve the beneficiaries' livelihoods. To this end, the project helped farmers to increase their agricultural production through i) the construction of cisterns; ii) the distribution of improved and resilient seedlings; and iii) crop pest control assistance.

156. During the first year of implementation, the project built fifteen (one per village) water harvesting and storage cisterns which perfectly responded to one of the major and most common climate-related issue faced by rural communities: the limited water availability for irrigation and sometimes even for drinking water. In this respect, beneficiaries unanimously praised the benefits brought about by the construction of the cisterns. Most of them even requested the project to build more. The infrastructures therefore not only served the project's objectives, but also provided tangible long-term benefits to the communities, as all cisterns were still in use at the time of the TR. These structures were thus an important factor in the communities' buy-in for the project activities.

157. As explained above, the project distributed seeds in exchange for beneficiaries to fence their fields. Once this requirement was met, the first distribution started for the 2019-2020 planting season, followed by a second and a third respectively in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In total, the project reached 2090 beneficiaries (56% and 44% women) through the distribution of food seedlings (cassava cuttings, plantain rhizomes, bags of tarot) and

homestead vegetable farming (lettuce, cabbage, peppers, carrot, onion, potato) and other materials for agricultural production. Within this framework, INRAPE supported the selection and purchase of climate-resilient and adapted seeds.

158. The project developed a strategy for the multiplication of plantain rhizomes through the construction of seedling banks in all project sites as well, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Plantain seedling bank in Mjoyezi, Grande Comore (source: Baastel)

159. In parallel, the beneficiaries were trained (56 trainings) in soil preparation, living hedges and agroforestry for soil conservation and fertilisation. Demonstrations were achieved either in their own fields or in community demonstration plots set up by the RUTIs, the agricultural technicians and the CRDEs. In this respect, there may be an inconsistency in the number of demonstration plots finally implemented as the project's final report indicates only four demonstration plots, but the evaluators were able to visit more than four during the field mission (at least 5 visiting only 2 out of the three islands). Finally, the project organized training in seed management and harvest conservation.

160. Overall, project beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the opportunities provided by the project to practice a more diversified and climate-resilient agriculture, though many of them regretted that some seeds arrived late for several planting seasons which affected their productivity. These events can be explained by several factors: late deliveries due to the global COVID outbreak or cash flow difficulties encountered by the project.

161. While indicator 3.1.a aims at measuring an increase in production, the result reported in the final report is inconsistent as it relates to an increase in income. Therefore, it was not possible for the evaluators to assess this indicator. The increase in income resulting from the project's activities should be highlighted though.

162. Finally, to address one of the community's main concerns about emerging crop and animal pests, the project worked with the National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (INRAPE) to: i) identify the most important pests in crop and livestock production in three villages targeted by the project; ii) develop integrated management solutions; iii) train some beneficiaries in their implementation; iv) distribute phytosanitary products to address the most pressing emergencies, thus ensuring community buy-in to project interventions. The scope of the trainings was, however, limited, since only RUTIs, technicians and a few watershed committee members were able to attend these events.

163. The **output 3.2** under Outcome 3 was defined as presented in the following insert. According to the last 2022 PIR, it was 75% achieved at the end of the project. However, in the final report, the number of people identified as "supported in adopting activities to use pharma-cosmetic plants as ecosystem-based livelihood strategies" is 230, which does not represent 75% of the targeted 1000 people. Furthermore, the project supported more than the pharma-cosmetic cooperatives, hence the data provided is incomplete as it does not take into account the support to other climate-resilient value chains such as poultry farming or ginger. Given these elements, the evaluators cannot corroborate the rating provided in the project documentation and rate the level of achievement at 30%.

Output 3.2: Innovative, climate-resilient value chains are adopted in project communities

Indicator: Number of people adopting new livelihood strategies, by the end of the project

Target: At least 1000 people adopt new livelihood strategies by the end of the project

164. Within the framework of this output, the project first recruited consultants to conduct an analysis of the most commercially and environmentally valuable value chains that the project could support in the project areas. The study revealed that the products most widely grown because of their socio-economic importance as well as for their resilience to environmental conditions were: banana, manioc, sweet potato, potato, taro, tomato, carrot, maize, vanilla and other spices (turmeric, ginger and cardamom). Although the communities requested the development of all categories of livestock, only poultry farming was selected as a new climate resilient value chain following the recommendation of the MAPETA. Examples of the project's support are presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11 : Vanilla vine wrapped around *Glyricia* cuttings (left), poultry farming (right) supported by the RGIBV project (source: Baastel)

165. The project supported AGEs to develop income diversification activities among the list of products identified in the study. For agroforestry, AGEs selected plots to grow ginger (a species well adapted to growing under forest cover and with many therapeutic benefits). Poultry, horticulture and spices (vanilla, ginger, pepper and turmeric) were then the most sought-after activities, especially by women.

166. Despite high demand, as the activity was implemented during the last year of the project, the RGIBV only funded the start of a fewpoultry exploitations. In addition, the

evaluators found that the success of maintaining this activity varied from village-to-village. Indeed, some communities encountered considerable difficulties in sustaining their rearing after the end of the project. In fact, it was acknowledged by the AGEs that the project would build the chicken house, provide 200 chicks, food and veterinary care for the first 6 months of rearing. Then the beneficiaries have the responsibility to sustain the chicks until the animal reached maturity (about one year). According to TR consultations, this contract does not seem to have been understood by all beneficiaries. While a minority of beneficiaries perfectly managed to develop the activity (increasing the number of hens, building incubators, expanding premises, using manure to fertilise their plantations), others partially or completely lost all the animal for various reasons (poor feeding, diseases, lack of veterinary care, theft). In any case, it seems that the project did not provide sufficient support for this activity, partly because animal husbandry was not necessarily the core business of the project, and most importantly because the activity came at the end of the initiative hence the project did not have time to set up the appropriate support.

- In the case of high value-added products such as vanilla, producers were only provided with seedlings. Indeed, the project was not able to help the beneficiaries to develop and thus benefit from a larger part of this profitable value chain. As an example, one kilo of green vanilla bean was sold five euros by one of the TR interviewees, while dried vanilla can be found in Europe at more the 800 euros per kilos meaning that the value-added does not at all benefit the producers. From the evaluators' perspective, this may be an area for improvement in future projects.

167. As part of the project's livelihood diversification efforts, INRAPE helped to identify Comorian plants that could have phytopharmaceutical applications and characterise their active substances. Based on this work and supported by an international consultant, a national cooperative for the development and marketing of pharma-cosmetic plant-based product cooperative called Maadini Ya Komore was established in the 15 project sites. Beneficiaries benefited from three training sessions learning how to identify, harvest, process and package the plants as well as hygiene standards (90 members, 80% of whom were women). Members were assisted in developing business plans and the project built and equipped fifteen production and processing sites for the cooperatives. Its mission was to add value to aromatic and medicinal plants exclusively from the Comoros, creating a sustainable dynamic and jobs in fifteen 15 vulnerable rural villages.

168. Unfortunately, most of the cooperatives visited during the TR field mission were almost or completely inactive. This can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, the implementation of this activity took longer than expected and some of the organisations were not mature enough to be operational at the end of the project. Secondly, even if some of them were formalised and motivated, the cooperatives had difficulties in finding markets and commercial outlets for their products. In fact, at the beginning of the project, the PMU identified a company that was interested in buying the cooperative's pharmaceutical-cosmetic products for export. However, the collaboration remained unsuccessful as this company went bankrupt before the end of the project. Other avenues for resale were considered thereafter, but none of these have yet come to fruition so far.

Availability of outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

5.4.2. Achievement of project outcomes

To what extent the expected effects of the project were achieved? How did the products contribute to the effects of the project?

169. The project had three outcomes: according to PIR 2022 outcomes 1 and 3 are assessed as achieved, while outcomes 2 is assessed as partially achieved. The following Table 14 summarizes the project achievement ratings according to the documentation available and provides the TR assessment.

Table 14: Summary of the RGIBV outcome achievement based on the project documentation and the evaluators observations

Outcome	Project assessment	Terminal review assessment	Comments
Outcome 1. Technical and institutional capacities are strengthened at national and local levels for resilient, integrated watershed management	100%	70%	No proper measure of the capacity increase. Long-term sustainability of the geo-referenced platform, the P2Is, the diploma course, the application decrees is uncertain.
Outcome 2. Watersheds and sub-watersheds in project areas are rehabilitated and sustainably managed	88%	40%	Confused understanding of the IWM principles. No proper measure of the rehabilitation of the ecosystem. 47% survival rate in the reforestation activities. Most AGEs inactive after the project. Low community ownership of the PGPs.
Outcome 3. Communities deploy a range of resilience-based livelihood strategies in project areas	100%	75%	No proper measure of the long-term adoption of climate resilient livelihoods. Phyto-pharmaceutical cooperatives not active during the TR field visit. Mixed results for the poultry sector.

170. **Outcome 1** concerns the technical and institutional capacities of national and local stakeholders for resilient and integrated watershed management. The related indicator and target are presented in the following insert. Although the last PIR assessed this outcome as 100% achieved, the evaluator rating is lower as presented in Table 14, for the reasons explained below.

Outcome 1: Technical and institutional capacities are strengthened at national and local levels for resilient, integrated watershed management

Indicator: Number of local and national civil servants and local community members with the technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy, by the end of the project

Target: 150 people in total on the 3 islands, with the technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy, of whom at least 40% are women

171. The indicator and target for this outcome are almost the same as for Output 1.2, except that for outcome 2 the target is an increase in "technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy", rather than the number of people who have received IWM training throughout the project.

172. To the evaluator's knowledge, there was no evaluation of these capacities when the baseline was established. Later in the implementation, an assessment was planned in the project monitoring plan developed after the MTR, to evaluate the sought increase in capacities, but this assessment was not conducted. Nevertheless, the evaluators witnessed relatively strong technical and institutional capacities at both national and local levels around climate change, ecosystem-based adaptation, integrated watershed management, ecosystem restoration and resilient livelihoods. Therefore, while it is not possible to technically confirm that capacity was strengthened, this can be assumed, assuming a lower initial capacity.

173. In this respect, it can be argued that the three outputs contributed significantly to the achievement of the outcome. First, the trainings and diploma course provided to national and regional authorities, CRDEs and local communities (in total 577 government staff, of which 68% women and more than 1000 farmers) had the advantage of introducing and popularising the concept of integrated watershed management, which was new in the Comoros. At the time of the TR, this diploma course had never been mobilized again since the RGIBV.

174. The regular meetings of the island's multisectoral platforms (P2I) helped to maintain the momentum on the concept and kept all relevant stakeholders informed of the project's approach and progresses. Later in the implementation, IWM was further institutionalised through the development of forest law application decrees. Furthermore, the associated planning and decision-making is now supported by the mapping data produced and disseminated through the geo-referenced information system published on a public online platform. At the same time, the evaluators noted the efforts made by the project management to seize every opportunity to build the country's capacity in these areas, combining the expertise and complementarity of national technical staff or consultants to international experts whenever possible.

175. In practice, the long-term sustainability of these achievements remains however uncertain. On the one hand, the island's multisectoral platforms never met again after the project ended. Additionally, the application decrees developed under the project had still not been adopted and the data gathered on the geo-referenced information system was no longer accessible at the time of this TR. On the other hand, although the concept does not seem to be fully mastered by all the stakeholders targeted by the project, the concept and its tools continue to spread within the Comorian institutions, as many projects are now or will be in the future applying its principles in different locations in the country (statement further exemplified in Section 5.8 Sustainability, paragraph 248).

176. **Outcome 2** deals with concrete watershed management and restoration. The achievement of this outcome is defined by the number of hectares of watersheds under improved management (see following insert). According to the latest data available (PIR2022 and final report), this outcome was partially achieved. The evaluators assessment corroborates the partial achievement of this outcome. Considering the elements detailed above, the TR achievement rating is 40%.

Outcome 2: Watersheds and sub-watersheds in project areas are rehabilitated and sustainably managed

Indicator: Number of hectares (linear km) of watersheds under improved management

Target: 3500 ha in total of watersheds are restored and sustainably managed

177. Under Outcome 2, the project made significant progress in the restoration, rehabilitation and sustainable management of watersheds (2737 ha restored, see output 2.2). Reforestation campaigns and a move towards diversified agroforestry have been demonstrated, with some significant results in terms of increasing community income sources and reducing local climate risks to people and watersheds. According to the latest available data, 47% of the trees planted survived, which could be improved, but 90% of the living hedges were still alive at the end of the project. This can be explained by the fact that the reforestation areas are mostly communal land, while the fenced areas are private and therefore maintained (see Figure 12).

178. However, the evaluators note that although the project carried out restoration activities on a significant area of land, there is no evidence that the ecosystem has been restored. Indeed, as explained in sections 3.2 and 5.7, the RF did not include indicators to measure the effective restoration of watershed health. In practice, the TR revealed that some communities continue to face serious climate hazards, as illustrated in paragraph 193, which describes the mudslides and floods experienced by the Mjoyezi community in 2023 (post-project).

Figure 12: *Glyridia* fencing private fields in Bahani, Grande Comore (left) and Hadda, Anjouan (right) (source: Baastel)

179. On the other hand, the community approach to seedling production was very successful and resulted in a unanimous community buy-in. However, the activity was under-budgeted. Another adverse effect of this approach is that when the project ended, tree production and reforestation ceased because AGEs could not find new markets.

180. Regarding the sustainability of watershed and sub-watershed management, one of the main observations of this TR is the incomplete application of IWM principles. In fact, IWM is defined as the process of managing human activities and natural resources on a watershed basis, taking into account social, economic and environmental issues, local community interests and issues such as the impacts of development and climate change. Within this framework, to the reviewers' understanding, PGPs should have been developed at the landscape level rather than at the village level. As an example, the project developed two PGPs: one in Hadda which is administratively responsible for the local spring head; and one for the village of Mremani which stocks up into the same river downstream. While both villages had their PGPs, conflicts arose during the project as the Hadda community didn't want to stop cultivating on spring head banks and Mremani community reaped the consequences in terms of soil erosion, run-off and flooding. Applying IWM principles in this case would have meant developing a joint watershed management plan, taking into account the priorities and needs of both Hadda and Mremani. The same can be said for the Watershed Management Committees, which were more of a project management tool than a watershed management committee in itself.

181. In addition, in theory, the P2Is should have played the role of linking PGPs and coordination between villages. However, the platform was used more as a project management tool for communication, information and planning than for the management of watersheds and water resources. In this context, sustainable management as targeted for this outcome is even more uncertain as, according to the TR consultations, the communities have taken very little ownership of the PGPs and the platforms have not met since the end of the project.

182. The achievement of **Outcome 3** is determined by the number of people practicing diversified climate resilient agriculture focused on soil conservation and agroforestry in support of IWM. According to the last PIR, the target was achieved: 2090 beneficiaries (including 919 women) were supported to develop resilient and diversified agriculture focused on soil conservation and agroforestry in support of IWM. However, the evaluators would like to draw attention to the fact that supporting livelihood diversification does not mean that communities will adopt these practices in the long term. In fact, there were no indicators in the RF to measure the long-term adoption of resilience-based livelihood strategies. In this regard, the review team observed some successes but also some shortcomings in the adoption of proposed activities.

Outcome 3: Communities deploy a range of resilience-based livelihood strategies in project areas

Indicator: Number of farmers in target areas practicing diversified agriculture based on IWM and agroforestry

Target: 1000 people, of whom at least 500 are women, practicing diversified agriculture based on IWM

183. Through the implementation of outcome 3, the project promoted agriculture production and income diversification at both individual (output 3.1) and community level via support provided to AGEs (output 3.2).

184. First, a key lesson from the project staff interviews was that the project's reforestation and restoration strategy would never have been as successful if the project had not supported communities in their livelihoods. In this respect, the construction of 15 water harvesting and storage cisterns and the distribution of resilient seedlings and other materials for agricultural production were much appreciated by the communities and helped to create a climate of trust and motivation.

185. In this respect, the final report shows that 2,700 farmers increased their income by 3% per crop year over the three planting seasons supported by the RGIBV project. Of these, 1092 farmers benefited from technical training in resilient agricultural practices; 2302 received support in the form of cuttings and planting material to develop their plots, combat erosion and improve soil conservation; and 2090 farmers received support for diversified and improved seeds for market and food crops. Phyto-pharmaceutical women-led cooperatives created around one hundred jobs and 211 people received support to develop the ginger and poultry sectors. While the sustainable adoption of market and food crops was confirmed in many visits during the TR field mission, the observation is much more nuanced in the case of the phytopharmaceutical cooperatives and the poultry sector.

186. As a conclusion, although the poultry and cooperative experiences were not as successful as expected (see paragraphs from 167 to 171), Outcome 3 managed to demonstrate viable climate resilient agriculture practices that have begun to show economic and food security benefits for project beneficiaries (see next section on impacts). However, as outlined in the previous section, the sustainability of these activities was not demonstrated.

Achievement of project outcomes: Moderately satisfactory

5.4.3. Likelihood of impacts

To what extent did the project produce the expected impacts? What was its likely contribution to improving the living conditions of Comoros communities despite the effects of climate change?

187. The main objective of the RGIBV project was to reduce the vulnerability of communities in the Comoros to climate change through the rehabilitation of watersheds and forests and the diversification of adaptive livelihoods.

188. Overall, the project helped to put in place important building blocks to strengthen the resilience of Comorian watershed and forest communities and to showcase climate resilient development. In total, the project reached 28,144 direct beneficiaries in the 15 selected villages which largely exceeded the direct beneficiaries target of 14,498 (194%).

189. In terms of watershed and forest rehabilitation, the project has made significant progress in improving watershed management through both training and implementation of integrated watershed management principles. Throughout the project, trainings were developed and delivered on climate risk management, resilient integrated watershed management, resilient afforestation, sustainable crop production and sustainable livestock production. These trainings targeted a wide range of stakeholders, including managers

from institutions responsible for agriculture, environment and water management. The project also strengthened the capacity of farmers and communities. As a result, 601 farmers (48% women) were trained in integrated watershed management and 156 people (85% women) participated to awareness raising events on climate-smart livelihoods on the three islands. This capacity building programme thus enabled the dissemination of IWM principles to various stakeholders and even beyond the scope of the project.

190. Overall, the project's training, intersectoral coordination and studies have helped to raise awareness about the potential of integrated watershed management to be considered as a viable ecosystem-based adaptation approach among the government Comoros and its partners. Indeed, by combining long-term natural resource conservation initiatives, such as soil and water conservation measures, with short-term livelihood activities to help communities meet their needs, IWM has great potential to unlock ecosystem-based adaptation benefits such as reduced surface runoff, improved moisture and increased crop productivity.

191. Although not yet politically adopted, the project has supported the development of five Forest Law Application Decrees that have been technically validated. Furthermore, at the time of the TR, concepts were being developed to replicate the approach in other watersheds and to follow the same community approach. In this perspective, efforts will be needed to ensure a full understanding and correct implementation of the tools involved, in particular to ensure that the scale of intervention and planning is the catchment level.

192. From the field perspective, the project intervention promoted the restoration of 2737 ha of deforested or degraded land. Although the target of 3500ha was not achieved, the project demonstrated how reforestation activities can both reduce climate risk and increase community capacity and income. In this respect, the project struck an interesting balance between the environmental and social benefits of reforestation through the planting of common forest species, fast-growing species, endemic and endangered species, and fruit tree species. While the survival rate could have been greater, some impressive results have been achieved on degraded communal lands. In Moheli, topsoil was restored by planting *Acacia auriculiformis* (a leguminous) on two sites that had been completely stripped of vegetation. Similarly, in Vanadjou, reforestation was carried out on lava flows using *Gliricidia* cuttings, with spectacular results.

193. On the other hand, while the TR confirmed the environmental and social benefits brought by the approach, it also highlighted the strong need to pursue efforts beyond the project grant. Indeed, as explained earlier in this report, the project interventions only partially covered the restoration needs identified in the PGPs. In this context, some communities continue to suffer from dramatic climatic hazards. For example, the village of Mjoyezi experienced tragic rainfall events in 2023. Following a major landslide, the lower part of the village was flooded, resulting in significant agricultural losses and damage to houses (see Figure 13). In the same area, the community reported that a recently constructed road was already severely degraded due to repeated and uncontrolled run-off and landslides. The same communities also lamented the lack of alternatives to deforestation, leading villagers to continue their destructive activities, further exacerbating the impacts of climate change.

Figure 13 : Landslide and mudflow in Mjoyezi, Grande Comore (source: Baastel)

194. With respect to livelihood diversification, the project assisted rural communities in adapting and diversifying their livelihoods while mainstreaming climate-resilient agriculture and climate risk management. Within this framework, farmers received trainings to improve their land management practices such as minimal land clearing, terracing, pre-planting preparation, anti-erosion measures, and sustainable tree/plant/crop/livestock associations. Further practical trainings were delivered in demonstration plots and nurseries (banana and taro seed multiplication). The project also provided inputs such as seeds (cash crops, food crops and market gardening), plant material (fodder) and phytosanitary products. Finally, the project supported AGEs in developing climate-resilient value-added products such as ginger, spices and poultry and established pharma-cosmetic cooperatives.

195. According to the TR consultations, the benefits perceived by the rural communities were manifold:

- The construction of cisterns led to increased water availability for dozens of households around these infrastructures;
- The fencing of fields allowed soil fertilisation while protecting against livestock grazing, leading to increased agricultural production, reduced food insecurity and diversified household diets;
- The distribution of climate-resilient seeds also contributed to the increase in production, which allowed for increased income through the sale of surplus production on markets. In fact, as a result of the project intervention, 2,700 farmers saw their incomes increase by 3% per crop year over the three crop years supported by the project;
- The production of tree seedlings and fencing material provided additional income as well.

196. Most beneficiaries, especially women, were grateful for being able to meet their household and family needs, especially their children's one (health and schooling). Others reported that they had been able to invest, purchasing other assets: goats, cows, land, buildings, thus confirming that diversification has led to greater resilience among farmers.

Likelihood of impact: Likely

5.4.4. Unintended effects

To what extent has the project produced unexpected effects or impacts?

Unexpected negative effect

197. While most of the impacts observed were expected, the evaluators identified one event where the project may have caused disagreement between communities in the case of Hadda-Mremani (context described in paragraph 180). Indeed, the project planned reforestation needs and priorities on a village-by-village basis, with in this case, insufficient consideration given to the sharing of the water resource between the two localities. In this context, Mremani, which often suffers from extreme run-off and uncontrolled floodings, insisted that the spring head (located in the Hadda administrative division) be restored and that farmers stop cultivating these areas. This demand was not sufficiently considered by the Hadda community, leading to tensions between the two villages. The problem was solved by the intervention of the RUTI, which was however not able to convince Hadda's farmers to stop cultivating but promoted agroforestry instead.

Unexpected positive impact

198. From a broader perspective, the project benefited beyond the 15 villages targeted, as some of the AGEs worked with the Union of Chambers of Agriculture and the CRDEs to organise a 30-day market during Ramadan. These markets, which only proposed food prices set by the government, aimed to facilitate access to food for everyone during this festive month.

5.4.5. Likelihood of contribution to long-lasting changes

To what extent is the project likely to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes expected by the SDG or UNEP/GEF strategic priorities (Key strategic question 2.a[25])?

199. By supporting the reduction of the vulnerability of communities in the Comoros to climate change through the rehabilitation of watersheds and forests and the diversification of adaptive livelihoods, the project will directly contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and UNEP/GEF strategic priorities as summarized in Table 15.

[25] Key strategic question 2. a) What was the performance at the project's completion against GEF Core Indicator Targets?

Table 15 : RGIBV contributions to long-lasting changes including SDG and UNEP/GEF priorities

Global framework	Main targets addressed	Project contributions
SDG 13 SDG 1 SDG 2 SDG 15	• Target 13.1 'Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries' • Target 13.2 'Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning' • Target 13.3 'Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning' • Target 13.b 'Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities'	• Capacity building program on IWM • Production of updated data to assess and address climate vulnerabilities • Development of forest laws application decree • Elaboration of watershed management plans • Support to livelihood diversification
UNEP MTS 2018-2021	• Climate Change Subprogramme 1 objectives (a) "Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation"12 and (b) "Number of countries with approved projects under different funds for adaptation" • Health and Productive Ecosystems Subprogram 3 via objective (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"	• RGIBV funded by the GEF, and future IWM concept notes and projects submitted to the Adaptation Fund and the Agence Française de Developpement • Reforestation/afforestation activities to restore forests and watersheds
GEF core indicators	• Target 1 '1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt ecosystem-based climate livelihoods' and '1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt climate proof and innovative livelihood strategies' • Target 2 '3,500 ha of watersheds are rehabilitated across the three islands'	• 2090 beneficiaries received seeds and other materials for agricultural production • 2737 ha restored including 949ha of land reforested and 1788ha landscaped with living hedges and anti-erosive techniques

Global framework	Main targets addressed	Project contributions
	• Target 3 '15 participatory management plans will be developed as a basis for IWM at local level' • Target 4 '100 people (50% women) will be trained by end of project'	• 15 participatory management plans developed • 577 (68% women) managers from institutions responsible for agriculture, environment and water management trained in various aspects of watershed integrated management

5.5. Financial management

200. The DGEF was responsible for the direct execution of the project, meaning that UNEP transferred all disbursements to the directorate project bank account, to which only the Project Director and the directorate Administrative and Financial Officer were signatories. Within this framework, the Project Coordinator and the Administrative and Financial Officer (RAF) were responsible for budget management for the three islands. Likewise, they had no power of attorney and no access to the account balance. The RUTIs, on the other hand, didn't have an island budget and were not in charge of project planning and overall budget management. They were only responsible for transferring bills from suppliers and partners to the project management national level.

Was the rate of disbursement consistent with the work plan, the duration of the installation and the products delivered? Were there any financial issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project results?

201. As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the actual disbursement rate was not in line with the planned work plan. In fact, several events affected the timeliness of disbursements and expenditures. Some of these were external and therefore uncontrollable (see section 3.1.2), while others were endogenous to the implementation.

Table 16: RGIBV financial information, per planned year (top), per extended year (middle), cumulative (bottom)

	2017			2018			2019			2020		
	Planned		Percentage	Planned		Percentage	Planned		Percentage	Planned		Percentage
	Prodoc	Actual	Over the prodoc	Prodoc	Actual	Over the prodoc	Prodoc	Actual	Over the prodoc	Prodoc	Actual	Over Prodoc
Component 1	$ 162 700	$ 28 827	18%	$ 210 441	$ 196 772	94%	$ 204 041	$ 106 563	52%	204291	$ 55 986	0,274051573
Component 2	$ 174 167	$ 142 840	82%	$ 491 113	$ 235 913	48%	$ 669 115	$ 600 651	90%	516315	$ 189 407	0,366843729
Component 3	$ 71 101	$ 23 694	33%	$ 1 083 276	$ 400 235	37%	$ 833 401	$ 1 027 446	123%	75038	$ 220 950	2,944504118
M&E	$ 45 000	$ -	0%	$ 20 000	$ 12 012	60%	$ 55 000	$ 12 200		80000		
PMC	$ 61 250	$ 24 415	40%	$ 61 250	$ 67 808	111%	$ 61 250	$ 45 946	75%	61250	$ 33 755	0,551098776
Total	$ 514 218	$ 219 776	43%	$ 1 866 080	$ 912 741	49%	$1 822 807	$ 1 792 807	98%	$ 936 894	$ 500 098	0,533782573

	2021			2022		
	Planned		Percentage	Planned		Percentage
	Prodoc	Actual	Over Prodoc	Prodoc	Actual	Over Prodoc
Component 1		$ 103 339			$ 52 350	
Component 2		$ 451 928			$ 267 123	
Component 3		$ 596 123			$ 74 152	
M&E		$ 42 284			$ 54 204	
PMC		$ 46 722			$ 26 354	
Total	$ -	$1 240 396		$ -	$ 474 182	

	Cumulative				
	Planned			Percentage	
	Prodoc	Revision	Actual	Over the prodoc	Of the total budget
Component 1	$ 781 473	$ -	$ 543 838	70%	11%
Component 2	$ 1 850 710	$ -	$ 1 887 862	102%	37%
Component 3	$ 2 062 816	$ -	$ 2 342 600	114%	46%
M&E	$ 200 000	$ -	$ 120 700	60%	2%
PMC	$ 245 000	$ -	$ 245 000	100%	5%
Total	$ 5 139 999	$ -	$ 5 140 000	100%	100%

202. One of the first reasons for the delays in disbursement, especially at the beginning of the project, was the difficulty in finding qualified consultants to support the implementation of the activities. Another structural challenge was the long accounting circuit from the field execution to the DGEF at the national level, as described in the previous paragraph.

203. Later in the implementation, the project experienced a six-month financial disruption from March to October 2020 due to administrative deficiencies, errors in financial reporting, and procedural failures that were not adequately addressed although they were mentioned in several financial audits (fiscal year 2017, 2018, and 2019). The TR team identified two main explanations for this.

- Between the start of the project in 2017 and the identification of the financial errors in 2019, there were three different RAFs for the project. This factor did not allow for continuity in financial management, nor did it facilitate capacity building of those holding this position;
- Financial and technical capacities within the DGEF and the project team were insufficiently assessed and strengthened during project preparation and after each recruitment. For example, the TR interviewees identified several critical deficiencies in the financial tools and equipment provided to the project team: no accounting software to facilitate the day-to-day financial management and budget monitoring, or outdated DGEF procedures manuals.

204. In this context, the RAFs exercised inadequate financial control and budgetary monitoring, resulting in over- and underspending on certain budget lines and resulted in submission of incomplete and inconsistent quarterly expenditure reports, which led to the preventive suspension of the transfer of funds by UNEP.

205. Several measures were taken to address this situation. The CTA was seriously involved in resolving this issue by assisting the PMU in addressing the audit recommendations, clarifying the expenditures incurred and subsequently revising the remaining budget. In parallel, UNEP, including the Task Manager and the UNEP Finance Officer, provided a two-day capacity building training to the RAF and the project coordinator.

206. The issue was resolved, with all funds accounted for and validated by the 2019 external audit. Subsequently, improvements were made to the project and DGEF financial management systems through additional guidance, financial reports supported by bank statements and reconciliations, and the recruitment of a financial expert to provide training in accordance with the audit recommendations. These included: daily bank journals submitted to the project coordinator and CTA for monthly review; increased systematisation of soft and hard filing systems for financial management; a system for vouchers and receipts; the establishment of a petty cash and a system for managing cars, holidays, and per diems; and the application of the Ministry's own documented and approved rules of procedure. The resolution of this event is a demonstration of sound management by UNEP to ensure its policies and procedures were applied and adhered to.

207. Although financial reporting improved significantly after this event, the disruption had serious consequences on the project implementation. Firstly, it severely affected the motivation of the project staff, as none of the team members (project coordinator, CTA, RUTIs) received their salaries for six months, including those most involved in the resolution. It also had a negative impact on the confidence of beneficiaries, project partners and suppliers in the project. In this respect, the RUTIs in the field worked hard to manage impatience and maintain momentum. More practically, it delayed the distribution

of seeds and the planting of tree seedlings for the 2020-2021 planting season, which, according to the TR interviewees, had notable impacts on both agricultural production and the survival of the reforested trees. In view of the accumulated delays, the project was extended by a year.

208. The project experienced another financial disruption at the end of the project in relation to the UNEP final payment, which normally represents 5% of the total budget and is due to be credited before closure, once all project documentation has been transferred to the executing agency and UNEP. In the RGIBV case, the final payment was 3% and it was suspended even though all project documents had been submitted. In fact, UNEP and DGEF had not properly closed a past project "Adapting water resource management in the Comoros to expected climate change (ACCE)", which was operationally completed in 2016. UNEP therefore decided to hold the RGIBV final payment until both projects were in line with its project closure requirements. This event further delayed and even cancelled some of the final activities (poultry development, CRDE staff certificate ceremony) and payments (agricultural technicians' salaries). This also explains why the TR of this project occurred almost one year and a half after its operational completion.

209. In total, the project experienced 5 budget revisions. The budget was revised according to the planned activities. That is, according to the fifth and last budget revision, Component 1 constituted 11 percent of the USD 5,140,000 that makes up the project cost, Component 2 made up 37 percent, Component 3 accounted for 46 percent while M&E and project management respectively costs amounted 2 and 5 percent. This budget weighting against activities is adequate since the larger part of operational activities (reforestation and support to diversifying livelihoods) were budgeted under Component 2 and 3.

Was co-financing mobilised as planned? What measures were taken to monitor it, and how effective were they?

210. The total budget for this project was USD US 21,620,000 including USD 16,480,000 of planned cofinancing, see Table 17.

Table 17 : RGIBV planned and actual co-financing mobilized by the project

Source of cofinancing	Amount planned (USD)	Actual co-financing mobilized[26] in USD	in percentage
Comorian General Directorate of Environment and Forests (DGEF) - In-kind - Government of Japan	280,000 200,000	Cofinancing materialized but precise figure not available in the PIRs 0	0%
National Strategic Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock (DNSAE) through the FAO Country Program	10,000,000	0	0%
Funds for Supporting and Developing Communities funded by the World Bank	6,000,000	12,000,000	200%

[26] Actual co-financing expenditure reported is limited to information provided in annual PIRs. The project did not submit to the evaluation team specific co-financing expenditure reporting.

Source of cofinancing	Amount planned (USD)	Actual co-financing mobilized[26] in USD	in percentage
GCF/PNUD (FP094) "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands"	-	7,000,000	

211. The in-kind support promised by the DGEF materialized through the form of office spaces, operational costs and logistical support, financial supervision and time of senior and technical staff for the implementation of the project. However, so far the corresponding amount mobilized was not made available to the evaluators.

212. As explained in section 3.6, the FAO Country Programme Framework (2014-2019) ended as the project effectively started in mid-2018. Similarly, the Japanese support to the Department of Environment and Forest's National Forestry Action Plan ended prior to the effective start of the project. On the other hand, although it took longer than expected, the World Bank funded Social Safety Net Project (FADC) was extended to a second phase and expanded to include COVID-19 emergency support which represented a USD 12 million co-financing for the RGIBV project.

213. The PMU tried several times to identify ongoing and planned initiatives that could constitute co-financing sources for the RGIBV project. However the only unplanned co-financing (USD 7,000,000) received during implementation was from the GCF/PNUD (FP094) "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands" which started in 2018 for a planned period of 8 years.

Did the project comply with UNEP's financial and/or audit reporting requirements and timetable, including the quality and timeliness of reports?

214. The project complied with UNEP financial policies and rules and applicable audit policies. Audit reports were carried out consistently from 2017 - 2022. Based on the last Financial Statement, delivered in 2022 by an external third party, the overall financial reports were assessed as adequate and fairly represented the financial situation of the project in conformity with the Project Cooperation Agreement concluded between the DGEF and UNEP.

Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures: Moderately Satisfactory

Did the project provide complete and timely financial information and reports?

215. As extensively described in paragraph 203, the project encountered difficulties in providing complete and accurate financial information. Once this issue was solved and preventive measures were implemented, the reporting quality improved.

Completeness of project financial information: Moderately Satisfactory

Was there effective, transparent and comprehensive communication between the Fund Management Officer and project manager?

216. Communication between the UNEP Finance Officer and the PMU was effective, transparent and comprehensive. The communication barrier between English and French

was overcome by the translation provided as needed by the Task Manager, who was bilingual.

Communication between finance and project management staff: Satisfactory

5.6. Efficiency

To what extent were the results achieved cost-effectively?

217. Despite the delays which resulted in the extension of the project duration, the project cost effectiveness looks acceptable based on the TR assessment (see Table 18). As explained above, the project has made headways in every project output despite failing in reaching some its end-of-project targets. At project completion, component 1 progress reached 73 percent on average with significant achievements on all outputs. Outputs' achievement under Component 2 and Component 3 could not be calculated as par of the outputs could not be assessed by the evaluators. That being said, the TR stresses the importance to not only look at the project physical achievement in a quantitative perspective but also to the quality and sustainability of the outputs delivered. In this respect, issues (tree mortality and the limited sustainability of certain results) have been raised in Chapter 4.3.2 and will be further discussed in Chapter 5.8.

218. As presented in the following table, the PMC% stayed within the original budget and represented 5% of the total budget as requested by GEF policies.

Table 18: Implementation progress against budget allocation by component

Component	Percentage of total budget (BR5)	Output implementation progress as per the TR assessment
Component 1	11%	1.1.: 50%; 1.2: 100%; 1.3: 70%
Component 2	37%	2.1: 40%; 2.2: -
Component 3	46%	3.1: -; 3.2: -
M&E	2%	
PMC	5%	

How and to what extent did the project improve its efficiency in terms of costs and deadlines?

219. The review team has few examples of how and to what extent the project improved its efficiency. In terms of costs, one positive example can be described: as the budget did not include transportation for the agricultural technicians supporting project implementation in the field, the project recruited skilled villagers to save on transport costs. This also reduced RUTI's travel time to the remote villages, allowing them to devote more time to other tasks. In terms of timelines, one factor that had a positive impact on project efficiency was that, with the exception of the RAF, the main implementing actors remained the same throughout implementation: director, coordinator, RUTIs, CTA and task manager, which allowed for continuity in project management. Another element of efficiency in meeting the deadlines was i) the purchase of tree seedlings and the filling of water cisterns to ensure the start of reforestation and restoration activities during the first planting season, and then

ii) the accelerated implementation of the project activities, resulting in an evolution from less than 2% achievement of the 3500ha target after the MTR (end of 2019) to 80% at the project operational closure in June 2022.

220. On the other hand, it was reported to the evaluators on several occasions that the project did not distribute seeds and seedlings at the right time before the planting season. This led to a reduction in agricultural productivity and, in the worst case, to the loss of these products because the planting season had already passed. At the same time, some of the activities that required significant budget contributions did not result in sustainable assets for the beneficiaries. For example, while the creation of women-led phytopharmaceutical cooperatives required a lot of rare and costly expertise, this activity is now at a standstill because no markets have been found to sell the products. Similarly, the success rate for setting up poultry activities remains quite low. These three examples illustrate cases where the project did not optimise its resources and time.

Were the timetable and sequence of activities carried out as planned?

221. Overall, the project activities were not implemented according to the original workplan, as delays occurred throughout the implementation. As a result, the project did not manage to distribute seedlings before several planting seasons, which affected agricultural production. Indeed, one planting season was completely missed in 2020 while seedlings arrived late for the 2021-2022 planting season due to COVID-induced supply delays (reported at least for banana and potatoes). Similarly, the development of poultry farming came late in the implementation, which left limited time to provide sufficient support to the beneficiaries.

222. In terms of sequencing, the project followed the work plan foreseen in the Prodoc, except for a few activities:

- The project established the P2Is in the first six months instead of in the middle of the second year of implementation;
- The development and validation of the PGPs took longer than expected, therefore the PMU decided to start reforestation and restoration activities before the documents were finalised, in order to maximise the number of planting seasons available to the project.

Could the delays and extensions to the project have been avoided? What were their effects on the project?

223. Although it is debatable whether extensions could have been avoided, it is clear that estimations in the project document and yearly workplans were overly optimistic and too ambitious. The initially four-year (48 months) project became a five-year (63 months[27]) project, extending its implementation period by 31%.

224. Overall, delays were caused by (i) unforeseen events outside the scope of the project (COVID, elections) and (ii) implementation issues described in the previous sections (difficulties in finding suitably qualified experts and financial management challenges). While delays caused by external factors could hardly been avoided, the recruitment of consultants could have been advertised more frequently and on more platforms. Similarly,

[27] April 2017 until June 2022.

national financial management capacity could have been better assessed and prepared to avoid the breakdown observed and described in section 5.5.

Efficiency: Moderately satisfactory

5.7. Monitoring and reporting

Was the monitoring plan well-designed and sufficient to monitor results and track progress in achieving project outputs and outcomes?

225. The project document included a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan, which was annexed to the main body of the report but not made available to the review team. Based on the first version of the budget, the project allocated USD 200,000 to implement the M&E plan, which was approximately 4% of the total budget. This is considered low. Later in implementation, as the budget was revised, less funds were allocated to M&E, bringing the final M&E budget to US 120,000 which corresponds to 2% of the total budget. This decision to reduce the M&E budget was described during the TR consultations as counterproductive. Until the end of 2019, the project coordinator ensured the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation plan. Following the MTR recommendations, the project then hired a monitoring and evaluation officer which, in terms of budget, was charged to a non-M&E consultancy budget line. This consultant updated the M&E plan to: make the overall M&E system more explicit, produce a new version of the RF, clarify the data collection methodology, and present the data management and dissemination strategy. The updated M&E plan also detailed the human, material and financial needs for its implementation.

226. The review team analysed the updated results framework. In general, it is considered to be moderately satisfactory. As noted in Table 1, the main weakness of the project's results framework was the predominance of means rather than results indicators, especially for high-level results. Although the MTR identified this shortcoming[28], the revision only partially addressed this critical issue. This can be observed in the following:

- The main objective of the project, which relates to reduced vulnerability to climate change, is only assessed through the number of direct beneficiaries involved in the project which was not informed by a proper vulnerability assessment;
- Outcome 1, which aims to strengthen capacity, measures the number of people who are able to plan and implement IWM without, in practice, any concrete assessment of these capacities and their evolution;
- Outcome 2 aims to rehabilitate and sustainably manage watersheds, while it is only linked to a quantitative indicator measuring the number of hectares subjected to restoration activities. Qualitative indicators measuring soil fertilization, water quality and availability or at least monitoring tree survival over time and their diversity would have been more relevant;

[28] MTR statement according to PIR2020: "outcome 1, 2 and 3 indicators, and corresponding output indicators do not sufficiently capture quality and effective changes / results expected from the project. For instance, an indicator concerning water quality and supply as a measure of the state of the watershed would supplement the indicator on number of hectares reforested."

- Outcome 3 refers to the number of farmers sustainably practicing diversified agriculture, while the indicator only refers to the number of beneficiaries of project activities under this component.

227. An indicator numerically assessing the increased water availability brough by the construction of cisterns would have also been interesting to support national investments and future projects.

Were the targets initially set for the project realistic?

228. The project was over-ambitious as the objectives were overall unrealistic within the available budget and time frame. For example, the idea of supporting communities to participate in restoration activities was in itself a good approach. However, the objectives set by the project did not take sufficient account of the available budget. Indeed, several elements had to be dropped or were not achieved during implementation:
    - The target of '3,500 ha of watersheds sustainably managed and restored by the end of the project' was only 78% achieved, as well as the targets associated to the outputs 1.1 and 1.3 as detailed in section 5.4;
    - Activity 1.2.5 'Develop mechanisms to secure access to land, including through the application of the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Land Tenure Systems' under Output 1.2 was not implemented;
    - Activity 3.1.3 'Analyse and address phytosanitary constraints to production, including pests and parasites affecting crops and livestock' was implemented, but, due to budget constraints, results were disseminated sporadically to a small number of stakeholders, which in practice limited the scope of this activity.

229. Furthermore, an M&E specialist was not originally budgeted. The project would have benefited from having an M&E specialist from the beginning, rather than after the MTR. The payment of this contract could have been covered by the M&E budget, of which only 60% was spent by the end of the project.

230. In addition to budgetary reasons, the original schedule was also overly optimistic, resulting in a longer project duration. There were external contextual factors that contributed to the delays experienced, but on the other hand a better estimate had to be made from the project design onwards. As an example, too little time was allowed for the development and operationalisation of livelihood diversification activities, including the women-led phytopharmaceutical cooperatives and poultry farming.

Monitoring design and budgeting: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Was the monitoring plan operational and effective in tracking results and progress towards objectives?

231. According to TR consultations, the updated M&E plan could not be fully implemented due to time and budget constraints. In this context, several indicators were reported incorrectly or not at all at the end of the project (see Table 19). In this respect, there are significant inconsistencies between the last PIR 2022, which was supposed to cover the end of project operations until June 2022, and the project's final report, which was finalised in November 2022. According to the project management, the last PIR did not benefit from the detailed reporting compiled in the Final Project report. As a consequence, the data provided in the final report should be considered as the most updated and accurate one regarding the project's achievements.

Table 19: Expected results, indicators and effective results commented by the TR

Expected result/Indicator	Effective result as per PIR2022	Effective result as per final report	TR comment
Outcome 1 / Number of local and national civil servants and local community members with the technical and institutional capacity to plan and implement integrated watershed management as an adaptation strategy, by the end of the project	577 managers from institutions responsible for agriculture, environment and water management were trained in various aspects of watershed integrated management	Same as PIR2022	No assessment of the increased capacities although it was planned through a survey in the updated M&E plan.
Outcome 2 / Number of hectares (linear km) of watersheds under improved management	The cumulative number of hectares of rehabilitated and sustainably managed watersheds and sub-catchments in the project areas is estimated at 3,097 ha which corresponds to a realization rate of 88% against the end of project target.	2737 ha have been restored and are under participatory management in the project areas	No measure of the concrete effects of the rehabilitation in terms of water quality and availability, soil fertility, biodiversity or water absorption capacity.
Output 2.2 / Sub-indicators: Number of local reforestation training courses for climate risk management Number of hectares of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems Number of hectares of "other" reforestation (land with no degradation issues, no significant hydrological function, no ecological sensitivity)	? local reforestation training courses ? ha of agricultural plots converted from monoculture to agroforestry systems 0 ha of "other" reforestation	Same as PIR2022	Information not found in the project documentation. Information not found in the project documentation. Not informed in the project documentation.
Outcome 3 / Number of farmers in target areas practicing diversified agriculture based on IWM	2090 beneficiaries (including 919 women) were supported to develop resilient and diversified agriculture based on IWM principles	Same as PIR2022	
Output 3.1 / Sub-indicators: Change in agricultural production for key commodities, broken down by commodity annually Number of beneficiaries receiving coaching through CRDE Number of farmers trained by CEP on each island	By the end of the project, the project has reached a total of approximately 1,000 farmers through training and provision of farming inputs and assistance. ? beneficiaries receiving coaching through CRDE 4 demonstration plots	2700 farmers have seen their income increase by 3% per harvest year over the 3 crop years supported by the RGIBV project - -	Data provided is not consistent with the indicator. 75 people, according to TR consultations. Information to be verified as more CEP were visited during the TR field visits.

Expected result/Indicator	Effective result as per PIR2022	Effective result as per final report	TR comment
Output 3.2 / Number of people adopting new livelihood strategies, by the end of the project	No figure provided.	230 supported in adopting activities to use pharma-cosmetic plants as ecosystem-based livelihood strategies	The data provided in the final report is incomplete as it does not take into account the support to other climate-resilient value chains such as poultry farming or ginger.

232. On the other hand, the monitoring plan was executed as planned regarding the yearly audits and independent MTR and terminal review. Yearly audits on project management and reporting were carried out between 2017 - 2022. The MTR was conducted in 2019 and the terminal review in 2024. The Task Manager undertook annual monitoring missions as this is part of the monitoring plan, along with PSC meetings. The project team also carried out multiple visits over the lifetime of the project. Likewise, no plan was defined and annual workplans did not detail which visits would be carried out at what times. Visits were rather done on an ad-hoc basis. A similar issue concerns the supervision of the implementing agencies: to the evaluators' knowledge, no supervision plan was drafted.

Monitoring of project implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

What was the performance at the project's completion against GEF Core Indicator Targets?

233. This question has already been addressed in section 5.4.5.

Did the project comply with the timetable and requirements for progress documentation and monitoring reports, including the quality and timeliness of reports?

234. All PIR reports were prepared and submitted, and PSC minutes, and audits were produced. The final report attempts to be an analytical report with report of data collected against the project's indicators.

235. However, the project did not fully comply with its reporting requirements and did not provide qualitative reports on time. On several occasions the project failed to deliver its financial and activity reports and to meet deadlines. As examples, this was reported by the task manager in the PIRs 2019 "Reports have generally been complete although delayed" and 2020 "There is need for an improvement in the timely preparation of reports and ensuring that they are complete." Other occasions can be summarised as follows:

- Management letters[29] (from the third-party audits) carried out report a failure to submit periodic and qualitative financial reports on time;
- Of the two planned surveys (Outcome 2 and 3), only one was carried out for which the information provided is not consistent with the planned indicator (as explained in Table 19);
- A PIR was developed for each year, but no quarterly progress reports (required by the first version of the monitoring plan) were provided to the review team. Some of the PIR report the need to improve the timely preparation and circulation of reports and to ensure that they were complete. In addition, details of field follow-up activities were not

[29] Only 2018 and 2019 were made available to the evaluators.

systematically included in RUTI's periodic reports, as notified in audit management letters.

236. The quality of reporting has sometimes been inadequate. While the last PIR provided details of annual progress at both output and outcome levels, the evaluators could not find consistency with the project's final report. Indeed, this critical document is not structured around the project results framework and therefore provides confusing information about the final results. Furthermore, the evaluators found it difficult to clearly identify which beneficiaries were credited for the achievement of which results. In this context, there is a significant risk that beneficiaries may have been double counted in the final results.

Project reporting: Moderately Unsatisfactory

5.8. Sustainability

To what extent do political and social factors supported the development and continuity of the project's results?

237. Overall, the project enjoyed continuous support from all political actors directly or indirectly involved in the project, from the national government, MAPETA and DGEF to the regional directorate of environment and agriculture, CRDEs, mayors and village leaders. To the knowledge of the evaluators, all of them facilitated the project intervention through political support and positive influence in their respective spheres.

238. The project maintained this commitment and trust over time by communicating project results and planning through project steering committees (national level), intersectoral island platform (island level) and watershed committees (village level).

239. From the community perspective, the project was also highly successful in securing community buy-in and support for project activities and results during implementation. Collaboration was facilitated by the project's preparatory work, which included participatory collection and mapping of community needs and priorities: cistern construction, selection of tree species of interest, choice of type of support for agricultural and livelihood diversification activities, identification of priority degraded lands. In this context, beneficiaries were committed to participating in training, project management, reforestation and restoration activities. The evaluators are particularly keen to highlight the commitment of beneficiaries to reforestation activities, as very little experience of uprooting and destruction was reported. As a consequence, there seems to be an increase understanding and consciousness of the importance to maintain the forest cover in the areas of intervention. The evaluators were, for example, able to witness the sustainable transformation of former arable and pasture spring head lands into agroforestry fields free of livestock activities. This must be tempered by the fact that communities still have limited alternatives to woodfuel as a source of energy, forcing most of them to further degrade woody biomass and neighbouring forests through woodfuel collection and harvesting.

How committed are the political and social players to the project and its results?

240. At the time of the TR consultations, 18 months after project closure, political players continued to be committed to the project, its results and, more broadly, its replication and scale-up within future projects in the country (see paragraph 248).

241. On the other hand, at the time of the TR field visit, the commitment to maintaining project benefits at community level appeared heterogeneous. In a minority of cases, the project beneficiaries were making efforts to continue and maintain the project results: maintaining living hedges and trees, continuing tree nursery activities or expanding poultry rearing. In most cases, however, beneficiaries were involved during implementation, but their commitment declined after project completion. A year and a half later, there were numerous examples of their limited investment in the sustainability of the results:
    - The erosion control lines, which are a high-intensity operation to maintain, were almost never renewed and were starting to disappear at the time of the TR field visit;
    - The seedling and cutting bank approach that the project tried to implement, contractually engaging beneficiaries to share a portion of their production with other farmers in the year following project support, never worked;
    - As none of the AGEs found markets for their tree production, reforestation activities were abandoned in almost all villages, as were the infrastructures provided by the project for this purpose (see Figure 14);
    - While most of the 15 cisterns were still in use and recognised as very useful in each village, a small proportion of villages established a user contribution system to ensure their long-term maintenance. Over the 10 villages visited during the TR field mission, only four implemented such user contribution system.
242. In most villages, watershed committees and AGEs were still operational, as members could be easily mobilised for TR consultations, but were mostly inactive with regard to the prerogatives entrusted to them by the project. However, all assured that they would be available and motivated to participate in a new project.

Figure 14: Unmaintained anti-erosive line and hedge in Mkazi (left) and abandoned nursery in Vanadjou (right), Grande Comore (source: Baastel)

Socio-political sustainability: Moderately Likely

To what extent are the results of the project dependent on additional financial resources?

243. The DGEF and more broadly MAPETA is the main entity responsible for the sustainability of the project results. However, despite its commitment, the institution lacks resources and means. In the current situation, the project is therefore entirely dependent on additional external funding to continue and expand its approach and related activities.

Future projects planned in the Comoros and funded by international partners are presented in paragraph 248. Their approval of some of them is likely but will likely take some time.

Financial sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

To what extent does the project depend on institutional factors?

244. To a lesser extent, the sustainability of the project results is also strongly dependent on institutional factors. Indeed, during implementation, all institutional actors contributed their time and expertise to participate in the project activities and management events, while communicating the project's progress and challenges as needed. The situation is quite different now that the project has been completed. In this context, although an exit and scale-up strategy was designed, many of the project's institutional assets were not maintained at the time of the TR, including:
- The online geo-referenced information system, that was supposed to be maintained by the DGEF-GIS department, was not accessible – it cannot be accessed until DGEF pays ESRF annual fee;
- The diploma course developed by the project to train CRDEs technicians on IWM and ecosystem-based adaptation has not been repeated;
- The intersectoral island platforms never met again since the end of the project;
- PGPs were used almost only within the framework of the project and their implementation by watershed committees stopped once it ended;
- The AGEs stopped their tree seedling production activities as they experienced difficulties in finding buyers for seedlings other than the RGIBV project.

To what extent the project succeeded in strengthening the country's institutional capacities?

245. The project aimed to build institutional capacity at national and local levels for resilient, integrated watershed management through the establishment of the online geo-referenced information system (Output 1.1); the implementation of a large-scale training programme (Output 1.2); and the establishment of the inter-sectoral island platforms (Output 1.3). While this TR comments on the moderate sustainability of the results achieved under Outputs 1.1 and 1.3, the evaluators highlight the significant potential for revitalising these structures by the Ministry or future projects.

246. Regarding the output 1.2, as per the project final report and PIRs, training targets were met and exceeded through the training of 577 managers from institutions responsible for agriculture, environment and water management in various aspects of watershed integrated management. Among them, the capacities of 75 CRDE technicians were strengthened. They are now ready to contribute in their intervention zone to the popularization of the IWM concept as an ecosystem-based adaptation strategy and related principles, agricultural techniques and natural resource management for resilience to climate change. As explained above, the project did not manage to formally assess the increase in capacities, but, from the evaluators' perception, the IWM concept and principles as an ecosystem-based adaptation strategy are now introduced, although not completely mastered in every institution that partnered the project.

247. Similarly to what was said in the previous paragraph, although the diploma course is no longer in use, the training material could easily be remobilized by voluntary CRDEs or

other structures. This would enable to further disseminate its content and increase the understanding and application of IWM as an ecosystem-based adaptation strategy and climate-smart agriculture among local technical staff and indirectly to rural communities.

Did the project act as a catalyst for action to adapt to climate change? Has it promoted the replication or scaling up of certain activities?

248. The project made a significant contribution to catalysing action on climate change adaptation in the Comoros. First, the TR team observed a general awareness and understanding about the emergency to address climate change among institutional actors at national, regional and local levels. This was coupled with a willingness to develop and implement a relevant adaptation agenda for the country, particularly in the area of integrated watershed management (IWM). In this respect, the project contributed to highlighting the importance of addressing and prioritising water management and environmental protection in the Comoros, although IWM principles have been partially implemented within the RGIBV (see section 5.4.2). In this context, the concept continues to be disseminated within the Comorian administration, policies, institutions and partners:
    - The Nationally Determined Contribution 2021-2030 promotes the dissemination and adoption of the principle of integrated water resources management as a priority adaptation measure;
    - It was reported[30] that the future National Adaptation Plan being developed under a planned GCF Readiness project will incorporate IWM principles;
    - The 2020-2025 programming strategy of the International Fund for Agricultural Development includes 'the need for erosion control measures in watersheds and production areas' as a selection criterion for priority interventions;
    - According to the TR interviews, UNDP has submitted a concept note to the Adaptation Fund and the African Development Bank proposing to replicate and scale up the RGIBV approach in other locations in the country;
    - In June 2024, the Global Environment Facility's LDCF approved a multi-country programme of more than US$36 million to strengthen climate resilience and promote inclusive, green economic development. In Comoros, the proposed project will focus on ensuring a safe and resilient water supply;
    - From July 2024, the French Development Agency will implement the Ulanga mali project, which identified IWM as a relevant approach for the implementation of Mohéli territorial development scheme.
249. The project also shared the national reforestation strategy used, for example, in the implementation of the UNDP/GCF/DGEF "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands".
250. While the replication and scaling-up of the project at national level seems assured, the picture at community level is more mixed. In general, the TR consultations revealed that farming communities rarely explain their daily difficulties as a consequence of climate change. As a result, they continue to prioritise their socio-economic priorities without recognising the need for adaptation. For example, reforestation activities did not continue after the end of the project in most of the villages as soon as the project stopped providing contributions for the tree production. Similarly, many of the project's institutional assets

[30] The draft was not made available to the evaluators.

were not sustained, raising questions about their long-term relevance and/or sustainability. In this context, with a view to scaling up, the project's approach needs to be reviewed and adapted to address and improve the long-term sustainability of project results.

How effective were the exit strategies of the project?

251. The Prodoc did not include an exit strategy. However, with support from P2Is, the project developed an Exit and Scale-up strategy that was annexed to the project's final report and thus finalized in November 2022.

252. The document is divided into four sections aimed at describing the priority actions to ensure the sustainability and scaling up of the project's results in different areas:

i) Policy
- Integrate IWM into climate change policies, strategies and reports (National Communication, NDC, NAP);
- Share watershed maps with municipal and community authorities to create inter-administrative links between communities sharing the same watershed or sub-watershed;
- Communicate land use bylaws and forest and natural resource use regulations through regular awareness-raising campaigns;
- Continue to collect, maintain and widely disseminate land use data in the geo-referenced database;
- Prepare an IWM policy or plan in line with the national decentralisation policy.

ii) Institutional
- Establish Watershed Management Committees on each island as a permanent institution (following the adoption of an IWM policy);
- Conduct further IWM training for government and CRDE managers;
- Establish a permanent ecosystem indicator monitoring function within the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which would also be fed by community monitoring;
- Commit to providing CRDEs with permanent material, financial and human resources as part of the national development budget;
- Establish a project management and monitoring unit within MAPETA with the best management skills to improve project efficiency and transparency and create synergies between projects.

iii) Community
- Document the economic benefits of the various interventions to support scaling-up of the project's achievements;
- Encourage the emergence of a better organised private sector in agricultural value chains and the green economy;
- Continue to engage with women and build their confidence in business creation;
- Develop more rigorous approaches to the distribution/support of agricultural inputs.

iv) Other
- Develop further initiatives with development partners to finance adaptation, in particular through the GCF, the GEF and other available funds;
- Mobilise strong, verifiable co-financing for all initiatives, including from the private sector.

253. In the view of the evaluators, this strategy is more focused on scaling up the approach than on the sustainability of the project's results. Indeed, only a few priority actions (highlighted in yellow) could be implemented on the basis of the project's achievements. For the remaining activities, although they would require significant investment by the government or its partners, all appear to be relevant.

254. Several shortcomings of this document are that: i) none of these actions were assigned to a responsible person/body, ii) staggered over time, nor iii) costed with identified funding sources, leaving the modalities of implementation of this document vague and its concrete operationalisation uncertain. Another weakness is the timing for the production of this document which arrived in the latest stages of the implementation. This may have prevented a large-scale appropriation of its objectives.

255. On the implementation side, the sustainability priority actions were not, to the knowledge of the evaluators, achieved. On the other hand, only some of the identified scaling up priority actions were underway or planned at the time of this TR (highlighted in cyan), including integrating IWM into policies or develop further initiatives to finance adaptation. The remainder, neither highlighted in yellow nor in cyan, was not planned or in the process of being realised.

Institutional sustainability: Moderately likely

5.9. Factors affecting performance

5.9.1. Preparation and readiness

Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design or to respond to changes that had occurred between project approval, funding and project mobilisation?

256. The project addressed some of the design weaknesses. Examples of actions taken are presented below:

- To address the challenges associated with the GEF limit of 5% on project management costs, the PMU reviewed and adjusted the budget to allow for the integration of additional project consultants including local agricultural technicians, the Communication expert and the M&E specialist;
- Following the financial management and reporting challenges and disbursement disruption, UNEP strengthened the capacity of the PC and RAF. Within this framework, the project implemented numerous financial monitoring and administrative measures, which allowed the project to improve its management performance in the last two years of implementation;
- Following the MTR recommendation, the project's M&E plan was updated. In particular, the RF was modified to better capture the qualitative and effective changes and results expected from the project. As described in section 5.7, this revision did not fully address the weaknesses identified in the MTR and the M&E plan was only partially implemented.

257. In general, these measures were taken in response to implementation issues rather than in a preventative manner or after a proper assessment of the Comoros' readiness for

this project. This led to significant implementation delays and additional operating costs as the project was extended for an additional year.

Preparation and readiness: Moderately Satisfactory

5.9.2. Quality of project management

What was the quality of project implementation by the implementing agencies?

258. The quality of project implementation by the implementing agency was assessed as adequate by project stakeholders. The support provided by UNEP was considered relevant and appropriate, although feedback was sometimes slow.

259. A major shortcoming that emerged from the TR interviews was the lack of assessment of the technical and institutional capacity of the executing agency and the PMU at the start of the project, which led to major financial management and reporting challenges and significant delays in implementation. Another factor cited by the TR interviewees as limiting the resolution of the financial management and reporting challenges was the suspension of disbursements from UNEP. This led to a six-month delayed disbursement of salary payments, which affected the entire project staff during that period, including those most involved in the reconciliation process (RAF, PC, CTA).

Quality of project management and supervision (UNEP/Implementing Agency): Satisfactory

What was the quality of project execution by the executing agencies?

260. The project was implemented through a direct execution and co-financed by the DGEF which resulted in strong ownership and commitment from the directorate and more specifically from the project director.

261. With respect to the PMU, with the exception of the RAF, all project staff remained the same throughout implementation, which facilitated continuity in the implementation approach. All project partners interviewed during the TR consultation praised the continued commitment and dedication of the project staff despite the difficulties encountered.

262. The Chief Technical Advisor also played a crucial role in implementation, as her in-depth knowledge of Comorian institutions and culture helped in providing relevant and solid support for project decision-making, planning, monitoring and reporting over time. However, her commitment was restrained by the limited budget allocated to the service she provided.

Quality of project management and supervision (Partners/Executing Agency): Satisfactory

How effective was the collaboration between the institutions responsible for implementing the project?

263. According to the TR consultations, the project successfully collaborated with DNSAE as well as island-level representations of the MAPETA (DRE and DRA) and the INRAPE.

5.9.3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

To what extent were the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project?

264. The project established effective partnerships for project implementation at the local level. Local authorities, AGEs, NGOs and beneficiaries were all involved in some way. Communication with local communities and beneficiaries was ensured through watershed committees composed of notables and influential villagers. These were also involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project. Consultations during the field missions for this TR confirmed that local communities in the project areas were actively involved in the project and felt that the project was responsive to their needs. Overall, the local communities were very supportive of the project activities. In this respect, RUTIs conducted remarkable work in maintaining contact, communication and trust throughout the implementation and despite the difficulties encountered. In particular, they successfully manage to re-establish trust and confidence in the project by community members and local stakeholders following the project interruption in 2020. Overall, this confirms the validity of the third assumption of the ToC 'A3. Communities support interventions and adopt ecosystem management activities for adaptation during or after the term of the project'.

265. From an institutional perspective, the overall multidisciplinary involvement of national and regional actors was ensured through the PSC and P2Is. Although the evaluators were not able to interact with representatives of this institution, cooperation with INRAPE was also described as useful and fluid.

266. There was room for further involvement of the Regional Environmental Directorates. While the Prodoc initially planned to mobilise staff from the DREs to support the RUTIs in the day-to-day implementation of the project, the PMU had to modify the proposed arrangement as these staff did not have capacities, transport and equipment for field work. In this context, they could not be involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project activities in the villages, which would have made sense in terms of further building regional capacities.

What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR (Key strategic question 2.b)?

267. Apart from the inclusion of women (see next section), the MTR did not mention any challenges in terms of stakeholder engagement in the project.

Stakeholders' participation and cooperation: Satisfactory

5.9.4. Gender and human rights

To what extent did the project adhere to United Nations and UNEP policies on human rights and gender equality, including the human rights-based approach (HRBA) ?

268. Overall, the RGIBV project was aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights, Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNEP's policy guidance on gender and human rights. These principles were supported by:
    - 577 people, including 68% of women, benefiting from training on integrated watershed management and ecosystem-based adaptation across the three islands;
    - 2,090 farmers, including 44% of women, receiving support to adapt and diversify their livelihoods (training and seed distribution);
    - 1200 people, including 52% of women, participating in awareness-raising campaigns on climate-smart agricultural practices and ecosystem-based income diversification;
    - 70% of nursery workers producing cuttings and seedlings being women;
    - 100% of phytopharmaceutical cooperative members being women.
269. Overall, 46% of project beneficiaries were women.

What gender-sensitive measures were implemented? Were they implemented as planned? What were the actual results in terms of gender? (Key strategic question 2.b)

270. The project document did not include a proper gender action plan based on a solid gender situation analysis. Although the development of such a plan was recommended in the MTR, in practice, the project's gender strategy was based on a limited number of gender-related activities as described in the Prodoc (see Table 20).

Table 20: RGIBV's prodoc gender responsive measures commented by the TR team

Proposed gender responsive measure	TR comment
Gender equity will be promoted in each activity.	Implemented.
Women participation in the project activities will be monitored during project implementation. The project has established gender-related indicators and targets.	After the MTR, the RF was updated to develop and monitor more gender-related indicators. However, as commented in Table 1, some of them remained aggregated.
Women perspectives on the use of watersheds and priorities will be ascertained in separate meetings as well through equal representation in joint planning meetings.	Although the evaluators did not have access to this level of detail, it was reported that women were involved in the development of the PGPs and that they were represented in the village watershed committees.
Women will be supported in the cultivation, preparation and commercialization of natural medicinal and cosmetic products, and the raising of poultry and small stock. Particular attention will also be given to the establishment and strengthening of women's producer groups.	Implemented through Component 3. The corresponding results is moderately satisfying as the cooperatives were never operational thus limiting the women scope of this part of the strategy.

271. According to the TR consultations, gender equality and women's participation in project activities was a priority for the PMU during implementation. Women's aspirations and needs were captured through the development of PGPs. They were also largely involved

in the extensive capacity building programme developed by the project, despite the fact that women are a minority in Comorian institutions. Women were the main beneficiaries of income diversification activities and training, including the establishment of phytopharmaceutical cooperatives.

272. From the perspective of the women interviewed during the TR consultations, all were satisfied with the project activities and benefits. They felt that the conditions for their participation were met, partly due to the planification of the project activities on Saturdays and Sundays, which allowed mothers to leave their kids with their grown-up children while these were not in school. They stated that greater participation could have been achieved through more intensive communication about the project activities directly targeted to women.

273. However, several PIRs highlighted the need to involve women more explicitly in project decision-making and planning. In this respect, participation in watershed committees would have been a great opportunity for women to do so. However, gender parity in watershed committees remained below target in most villages. At the local level, although communication efforts were significant, the project sometimes encountered difficulties in getting women interested in the interventions.

274. Among the reasons given by the project stakeholders, one of the most prominent is the socio-cultural barrier, as PIR 2022 explains: "In Comorian society, women play a minor role in decision-making (they do not decide on their own what crops to grow on their farms, for example)". In Vanadjou (Grande Comore), women are not allowed by their husbands to leave the house to engage in agricultural or income-generating activities.

275. While this case is not a generality, Comorian women tend to censor themselves when it comes to taking on responsibility, as this could have important consequences for their households, couples and family life.

276. These elements highlight the importance of having a better understanding of the living conditions of women in project's intervention areas. This could have been achieved through a thorough gender diagnosis that would have helped inform an appropriate gender action plan.

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality: Moderately satisfactory

5.9.5. Environmental and social guarantees (ESS)

Did the project comply with UNEP's Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) requirements in terms of reviewing, monitoring and responding to these risks?

277. Overall, the project complied with the UNEP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework. To ensure compliance, the project screened activities using the UNEP Screening Risk Identification Form.

278. Nevertheless, the evaluators identified three exceptions to which they would like to draw attention:

- While the benefits of planting the fast-growing Glyricidia were recognised by all project stakeholders, it should be noted that this is an exotic, invasive specie that can threaten biodiversity, particularly in forest environments. When this issue was raised during the TR consultation, the PMU explained that the species was mainly introduced in agricultural areas, which could be confirmed by the evaluators. In this

environment, the spread of the species is controlled as farmers maintain their hedges. However, the evaluator observed that the specie had also been used for reforestation in remote areas, making it more difficult to control its spread and should be monitored with greater attention;

- Some of the plastic bags used to grow seedlings in the nurseries remained in the reforestation areas after planting, creating waste and polluting the environment;
- As part of the activities to fight against crop and animal pests, the project distributed phytosanitary products to the beneficiaries. While the quantity and number of distributions could not be estimated by the evaluators, two of the products were identified as:
    - Deltamethrin, an insecticide classified as highly toxic to humans and aquatic organisms, with long-term adverse effects[31];
    - Mancozebe, a fungicide banned in the European Union from 2021, allergenic, carcinogenic, reproductive and organ toxic which may pose high risks to birds, mammals, non-target arthropods and soil macro-organisms[32]

279. By definition, the use of these in-organic phytosanitary products is therefore incompatible with the ecosystem-based approach promoted by the project and should be avoided in future projects, and only organic phytosanitary (pesticides and herbicides) should be used.

280. During the last year of implementation, a grievance mechanism was developed and made available to the public through posters and notices. DGEF reported that no grievances were raised following the introduction of the grievance mechanism. It should be noted, however, that this document was developed late in the implementation, meaning that there was no formal means of complaining about the project during the first four years of implementation.

To what extent did the project help to reduce UNEP's environmental footprint?

281. The evaluators have no examples of UNEP reducing its ecological footprint through the project.

What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval (Key strategic question 2.d)?

282. Overall, the project implemented all management measures planned under the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval. This assessment was later updated to add

[31] Institut national de recherche et de sécurité pour la prévention des accidents du travail et des maladies professionnelles (INRS). 2007. Base de données fiches toxicologiques Deltaméthrine. URL : https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.inrs.fr/dms/ficheTox/FicheFicheTox/FICHETOX_193-1/FicheTox_193.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjxkLnixPmHAxWrUqQEHUJhAm4QFnoECBcQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3dqIsqCdEbljoM62HFtrof

[32] Institut national de recherche et de sécurité pour la prévention des accidents du travail et des maladies professionnelles (INRS). 2023. Base de données fiches toxicologiques Mancozèbe. URL : https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.inrs.fr/dms/ficheTox/FicheFicheTox/FICHETOX_277-1/FicheTox_277.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwixzaK4xfmHAxWOTqQEHZ_tMrwQFnoECBMQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3uF5RP2lWL4edS4jCqbsEl

the construction of water storage cisterns and the rehabilitation of the CRDE. These infrastructures were built in accordance with environmental impact requirements and had a minimal footprint, using all local materials.

Environmental and social safeguards: Moderately satisfactory

5.9.6. Country ownership and commitment

Was the level of involvement of government/public sector representatives sufficient to ensure ownership of project outputs and outcomes and representation of all marginalised groups and genders?

283. The commitment and ownership of national, regional and local government structures and decentralised services was sufficient to ensure social buy-in and community involvement which confirms the validity of the second assumption of the ToC 'A2. National and local authorities promote IWM and sustainable ecosystem management'. As explained above, the project's gender approach could have been strengthened and its implementation facilitated by the implementation of a proper gender action plan, the presence of a gender expert in the PMU, or at least by the existence of a gender focal point within MAPETA, which does not currently exist.

Country ownership and driven-ness: Satisfactory

5.9.7. Communication and awareness raising

Did the project develop and implement a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan? How effective were these? What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach (Key strategic question 2.e)?

284. The Prodoc included a short Public Awareness, Communications and Mainstreaming Strategy that was partially implemented during the first half of the project. During the first 3 years of implementation, several PIRs identified shortcomings in knowledge management, documenting and sharing project approaches, experiences and lessons learned which were undermining the project's ability to ensure sustainability and replicability.

285. Following the MTR recommendation, the project decided to strengthen its communication approach through the recruitment of a communication expert and the development of a communication strategy. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation activities were thus accelerated by the PMU with support from members of the P2I during the last year of implementation through the implementation of the communication strategy, the deployment of various public relations activities such as posters, workshops, collection of testimonials, development of case studies and the elaboration of the project final report. The knowledge products delivered within this framework are listed below:

- The DGEF online geo-referenced platform[33], where all project documentation was published (maps, a framework on IWM, 15 participatory watershed management plans, technical feasibility studies for developing phytopharmaceuticals and phyto-cosmetics and agriculture product value chains etc);
- The CRDE diploma course on integrated watershed management (IWM) and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA);
- Manuals for nursery management;
- The project final report;
- The project also provided inputs into broader studies such as the Ecosystem-based Adaptation barriers survey[34] published on UNEP's website.

286. The project also produced or had been covered by several communication elements:
- Posters and banners;
- UNEP produced articles on the project that appear on its website as well as the GEF website:
    - UNEP website[35]. (2018). "Where there used be so much there so little": the challenge of climate change in the Comoros;
    - UNEP website[36]. (2018). "When the rain comes: fighting climate change with forecasting in the Comoros";
    - UNEP website[37]. (2018). Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Comoros;
    - Youtube video[38]. (2018). Climate Action in the Comoros;
- The New York Times[39]. (2020). 'There's No More Water': Climate Change on a Drying Island.

287. The terminal review did not manage to interview the project communication expert. This is a shortcoming as the communication strategy could not be discussed in depth. Overall, the TR interviewees considered the communication strategy to be adequate, although probably too ambitious, as it was developed at the beginning of the last year of the project and therefore couldn't be fully implemented. In this context, the project stakeholders qualified the project communication over time as insufficient and regretted that this staff was not included in the PMU from the beginning of the project.

To what extent did communication and knowledge management help to raise awareness of the project and its approach among stakeholders and the public?

288. Despite limited human, financial and technical resources to implement an effective and visible communication strategy, the project has made significant progress in popularising the IWM concept as an ecosystem-based adaptation approach and raising awareness of climate change and the need for adaptation. However, the long-term sustainability of the

[33] URL : https://environement.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html
[34] URL : https://www.unep.org/gan/what-we-do/gathering-evidence-eba-barriers
[35] URL : https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/where-there-used-be-so-much-there-so-little-challenge-climate-change-comoros
[36] UR: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/when-rain-comes-fighting-climate-change-forecasting-comoros
[37] URL: https://www.unep.org/ecosystem-based-adaptation-comoros
[38] URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sK5VfDEWEew
[39] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/africa/comoros-climate-change-rivers.html

knowledge products developed is threatened by the current unavailability of the data published on the project's geo-referenced online platform.

Communication and public awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

6.CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Conclusions

6.1.1. Main strengths

Conclusion 1: At project design, the strategy of the project successfully responded to GEF/LDCF, UNEP and national priorities and local needs.

289. One of the main strengths of this project was its strategic relevance to the GEF, UNEP, national priorities and local needs, lying on the appropriateness of the proposed strategy with regards to the intervention proposed. Indeed, at project design, the proposed action plan was justified by a solid situational analysis of the geographical, environmental and socio-economic context and related dynamics. The proposed strategy was integrated, and it promoted ecosystem-based adaptation though the IWM approach.

Conclusion 2: More specifically, the IWM approach introduced and promoted by the project was particularly well suited to the context, priorities and needs of the Comoros, as an effective approach for delivering ecosystem-based adaptation.

290. The RGIBV project made a significant contribution to the Comoros' climate change adaptation framework by introducing the concept and principles of integrated watershed management to relevant stakeholders and development partners (see paragraph 248). This management framework was particularly well suited to the Comorian context, as water resources management, land management (i.e. safeguarding soils for sustainable agricultural production) and forest conservation are among the country's most pressing priorities. The mainstreaming of the approach supported by the project was successful, leading both to the institutionalisation of the approach in laws and policies, and to the use of the concept in other ongoing or future projects. IWM is a particularly effective approach for delivering ecosystem-based adaptation benefits including reduced surface runoff, improved moisture and increased crop productivity as it combines long-term natural resource conservation initiatives, with short-term livelihood activities to help communities meet their needs (see paragraph 190).

Conclusion 3: The community-based approach developed by the RGIBV supported community buy_in as well as increased community resilience while demonstrating climate-resilient development.

291. The balance struck between environmental and social considerations at project design enabled the project to implement an approach that was perceived as fair and motivating by the beneficiaries. Indeed, during the first phases of implementation, the project placed a strong emphasis on gathering and prioritising the needs and aspirations of the communities, both in terms of sustaining ecosystem services and livelihoods in a changing climate. As an example, the construction of harvesting and storage cisterns provided tangible long-term benefits to the communities. This resulted in strong community buy-in and support for the overall project approach and outcomes during implementation. The impact on communities was important as their agricultural production and revenues

increased as a result of water harvesting, soil conservation measures, establishing live hedging, plantings of agroforestry trees and crops, and climate-resilient crops, which demonstrated the potential of climate-resilient development.

Conclusion 4: Although not all Outcome and Output targets were met, the project achieved important results that demonstrate that support improved watershed management is an effective approach for ecosystem-based adaptation.

292. The RGIBV has greatly contributed to improving watershed management by:
- Producing watershed and forest maps, identifying land use and priority restoration sites in 3 watersheds and publishing the data on an online geo-referenced information system;
- Establishing three Island Intersectoral Platforms to engage island representatives from different sectors in watershed management and keeping them informed of project planning and progress;
- Developing forest law application decrees (yet to be adopted and implemented);
- Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry and island staff (e.g. CRDE, etc.);
- Developing a national reforestation strategy based on best practices and lessons learned from previous initiatives, the implementation of which has been highly successful in terms of local buy-in;
- Elaborating fifteen village-level watershed management plans, identifying community needs and priorities and key adaptation measures to be put in place;
- Conducting restoration activities and improving the management of 2737 ha of land through afforestation, reforestation, erosion control, live fencing and the promotion of agroforestry;
- Supporting 2700 farmers and local associations to benefit from improved climate-resilient livelihoods;
- 1092 farmers benefiting from technical training in resilient agricultural practices, 2302 receiving support in the form of cuttings and planting material to develop their plots, combat erosion and improve soil conservation.

Conclusion 5: Through its large-scale capacity building program, the project raised awareness and knowledge of climate change and adapted resilient solutions at national, regional and local levels.

293. Besides popularising the IWM concept itself, the project succeeded in raising awareness and knowledge of climate change in general, highlighting the important link between forest cover and water resources. In terms of capacity building, the RGIBV project organised several training sessions for national and regional authorities, but also for various other stakeholders and actors such as CRDEs and local communities (see paragraphs 132 and 133) which arguably increased the capacity of all the trainees involved.

Conclusion 6: The project achievements can be mainly attributed to the serious commitment of the executing agency, the PMU, the CTA and UNEP supporting staff.

294. These major achievements can be mainly attributed to the serious commitment of the executing agency, the PMU, the RUTIs, the CTA and UNEP supporting staff. Indeed, the PMU was open to remarks and willing to learn and improve, resulting in enhanced management capacities over time. In this context, while budget execution was slower and

output delivery was lower than expected, the project management, in particular financial management, improved throughout implementation. In this respect, UNEP and the DGEF applied reactive and adaptive management in response to the financial challenges faced by the project.

295. Furthermore, the project management seized every opportunity to build the country's capacity in different areas always trying to combine the expertise and complementarity of national technical staff or consultants to international experts whenever possible.

Conclusion 7: The project results are also due to effective work with the island-based structures and supporting the capacity of these structures e.g. CRDE, local municipalities.

296. The project achievements are also explained by the work conducted with island-based structures, such as CRDEs and local authorities, and the support given to their capacities. In particular, the project rehabilitated two CRDEs and trained 75 technicians through the capacity building programme implemented under Component 1. At the village level, local authorities such as mayors and opinion leaders have been very supportive of the project approach participating in watershed management committees and supporting community buy-in.

6.1.2. Main weaknesses

Conclusion 8: The project's understanding of IWM and EbA principles remained partial, resulting in a partial implementation of the IWM concept and related principles. In this respect, implementation needs to be both strengthened and expanded for future initiatives to adequately address existing and future watershed management needs in the Comoros..

297. As detailed in paragraph 177 and 180, although there was a high level of ownership of the IWM concept at all project levels and among all stakeholders, the approach partially respected the IWM principles in practice. Indeed, the watershed scale was not sufficiently exploited in the implementation of the IWM approach. In fact, the village-level planning process should have been complemented by a whole watershed or sub-watershed level of planning. Equipped with a proper watershed management plan, the inter-sectoral island platforms should have been an implementing actor, serving as an interface and mediating the interests of all actors involved in the said watershed management. In this respect, the PMU's understanding of the approach may have been inadequate, insufficiently monitored and reinforced throughout implementation. This was further compounded by the low degree of familiarity with and understanding of planning processes at community and even at municipality level (see paragraph 119).

298. In addition, the review highlighted the strong need to pursue adaptation efforts beyond the project grant. Indeed, as explained earlier in this report, the project interventions only partially covered the restoration needs identified in the PGPs. In this context, some communities continue to suffer from dramatic climatic hazards that will have to be addressed in future programming.

Conclusion 9: Some of the project's targets were not met due to both external factors and an overoptimistic project design considering the available time and budget.

299. The project faced implementation challenges that led to the partial achievement of the objectives set at project design and the extension of the project duration. On the one hand, this can be attributed to external factors such as national elections or the COVID pandemic, both of which affected project implementation and decision-making. On the other hand, from an operational point of view, the non-achievement of the objectives can be explained also by the unrealistic budgeting and time planning with regards to the expected targets. Setting up tree nurseries requires at least one year for seedlings to be ready to be planted, assuming constant supply of water. Plantings take place once a year, during the rainy season. If the supply of seedlings is missed before the onset of the rains (or agricultural season), one project year is missed out, which has a big consequence on a four year project. The timetable was also over-ambitious considering the national context, capacities and the resources allocated to project management. The budget design neither considered potential economic shocks nor was sufficient to cover the compensation scheme set up for the production of trees. In this case, costs of inputs increased with COVID compared to when the budget was prepared in 2016.

Conclusion 10: The PMU did not mobilise sufficient expertise and undertake sufficient capacity building in the first two years of the project and the budget allocated to the service provided by the CTA was insufficient resulting in significant reporting failures and implementation delays.

300. At project start, the national and PMU capacities were insufficiently assessed and then strengthened throughout implementation. In this respect, the project management unit lacked human resources as well as financial and technical capacities, at least during the first two years of implementation. This situation was further compounded by the difficulty in finding qualified consultants to support the implementation of the activities. Moreover, the multi-island configuration and the remoteness of the areas of intervention was insufficiently taken into account while budgeting the project staff and travel costs between islands. After the MTR, an M&E specialist, a communication expert as well as fifteen agricultural technicians joined the PMU.

301. The Chief Technical Advisor played a crucial role in implementation providing relevant and solid support for project decision-making, planning, monitoring and reporting over time. However, her commitment was restrained by the limited budget allocated to the service she provided.

Conclusion 11: The monitoring and evaluation plan was weak and the resource to implement it were insufficient, resulting in difficult follow-up of the project's indicator and poor reporting material.

302. Following the MTR's identification of M&E deficiencies, the project hired an M&E specialist to enhance the M&E plan and strengthen its implementation. Although the results framework was updated, the plan remained weak, over-ambitious and incompletely implemented. Overall, the M&E framework was only partially able to capture the impacts of the project, as it focused on means rather than results indicators. Furthermore, despite the recruitment of the M&E specialist, which was charged to a non-M&E consultancy budget line, the resources allocated to project monitoring and the quality of the reports produced remained low. In this sense, the decision to reduce the M&E budget from USD

200,000 to USD 120,000 was counterproductive. Finally, the cofinancing monitoring and reporting was insufficient throughout implementation.

Conclusion 12: Some of the outcomes of the project supported its long-term sustainability, but the lack of an appropriate sustainability strategy for most of the implementation period hampered the long-term sustainability of some of the project's key results.

One and a half year after the project's completion, the long-term sustainability of many of the assets established and produced by the project is mixed and uncertain. In fact, while visible results on the ground and increased awareness of and understanding by stakeholders on IWM/EbA contribute to long-term sustainability, the main watershed management organs (P2Is, watershed committees and AGEs) and related tools (online geo-referenced information system and PGPs) have largely been abandoned by both institutional and community stakeholders as the project came to an end. Similarly, some of the livelihood diversification activities (women-led phytopharmaceutical cooperatives, much of the poultry production, tree seedling nurseries) did not survive the end of the project. A root cause of the project outcomes ending up in an environment that could not sustain them, can be traced back to the project design phase, as the Prodoc did not include an adequate exit and sustainability strategy. This was further exacerbated by the absence of sufficiently factoring in sustainability at the time of putting in place the activities and elaborating a solid exit and sustainability strategy earlier in the project implementation with clearly assigned, phased and costed measures. This was further compounded by the limited coordination with other interventions and the limited value chain approach deployed during project implementation.

Conclusion 13: Coordination and synergies with other projects could have been stronger to improve results sustainability and avoid the duplication of efforts between initiatives, especially in the case of tree nurseries.

303. While the project was successfully linked to some relevant initiatives, coordination and collaboration was insufficient with some key initiatives, as discussed in section 5.1. This was, specifically, the UNDP/GCF/DGEF "Ensuring climate resilient water supplies in the Comoros Islands", which did not prioritize the restoration areas identified by the RGIBV project and decided not to buy tree nursery production from RGIBV support community nurseries at the end of the RGIBV project. Related to this, the project was not sufficiently proactive in engaging and managing co-financing programmes and projects, and reporting on co-financing. The insufficient collaboration between projects might be explained by the absence of a formal coordination mechanism within the GEF EA (e.g DGEF in MAPETA).

Conclusion 14: Stronger support for the development of climate-resilient value chains such as vanilla, poultry farming or phytopharma-cosmetics products could have increased the sustainability of the project's results, and enhanced the resilience of the beneficiaries.

304. Under Component 3, the project supported the development of innovative income-generating activities outside the traditional livelihoods of the beneficiaries. In this context, the project promoted food crops, spices, poultry and the processing of NTFPs into phyto-pharma-cosmetics products. However, the review found that the benefits and potential for sustainable adoption of such value chains have been limited by the insufficient value chain

approach developed by the project. As presented in paragraph 166, - and 168, the success of maintaining poultry farming activities and the phyto-pharmaceutical cooperative was mixed. Furthermore, in the case of high value-added products such as vanilla, producers were only provided with seedlings as the project was not able to help the beneficiaries to develop and thus benefit from a larger part of this profitable value chain. In fact, the scope of the intervention was restricted by the tight budget and insufficient time allocated to these livelihood diversification activities, which would have required as much specific expertise (e.g vanilla value chain expert, poultry farming and veterinary care expert, phyto-pharma-cosmetics products business developer) as the number of value chains supported.

Conclusion 15: The project was insufficiently geared to monitor safeguards as well as deploying an integrated gender-responsive approach. As a result, integrated pest management solutions were poorly implemented and the potential for women's participation was been realised.

305. Another shortcoming of the project was the limited monitoring of environmental and social safeguards, based on a weak safeguards plan submitted at CEO approval. In this context, the project distributed phytosanitary products to control crop pests as an emergency solution requested by the communities. On the other hand, the scope of the integrated pest management solutions developed by INRAPE was limited as it was only disseminated to a restricted number of persons due to budget constraints (see paragraphs 162 and 228).

306. In addition, the PMU prioritised gender equality and women's participation in activities capturing their aspirations and needs through the development of PGPs, involving them in the extensive capacity building programme. In this respect, part of them felt that the conditions for their participation were met, partly due to the planification of the project activities on Saturdays and Sundays, which allowed mothers to leave their kids with their grown-up children while these were not in school. For others, the implementation experienced difficulties in securing their participation and commitment, particularly in decision-making mainly due to cultural barriers that could not be overcome and a lack of communication about the project activities. This could have been mitigated by carrying out a thorough gender diagnostic and implementing the associated gender action plan, which would have necessitated dedicated resources and staff time.

6.1.3. Review ratings

The

307. Table 21 below provides a summary of the finding discussed in section 5. This overall rating has been calculated using UNEP's Weighted Ratings Table. The overall rating is Moderately Satisfactory.

UNEP Evaluation Office Validation of Performance Ratings:

The UNEP Evaluation Office formally quality assesses (see Annex 8) management led Terminal Review reports and validates the performance ratings therein by ensuring that the performance judgments made are consistent with evidence presented in the Review report and in-line with the performance standards set out for independent evaluations.

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

– That what is being assessed is the contents of the report and the extent to which it makes a consistent and justifiable case for the performance ratings it records.

- That the consultant has, within the report, presented all the evidence that was made available to them.

- That the Review has been based on a robust Theory of Change, reconstructed where necessary, which reflects UNEP's definitions at all levels of results.

- That the project team and key stakeholders have already reviewed a draft version of the report and provided substantive comments and made factual corrections to the Review Consultant, who has responded to them. The Evaluation Office assumes, therefore, that it has received the Final (revised) version of the report.

In this instance the Evaluation Office finds that the Report quality is Satisfactory and validates the overall project performance rating at the **'Moderately Satisfactory'** level.

Table 21: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Strategic Relevance	**Answering priorities defined at all levels, the project was highly relevant. Coherence was acceptable, with room for further coordination with other initiatives.**	**Highly Satisfactory**	**The rating is validated.**	**HS**
Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities	Very much aligned to the different UNEP MTSs and PoWs.	Highly Satisfactory	The rating is validated (see also Table 15)	HS
Alignment with GEF/LDCF priorities	Project objectives directly aligned with main GEF priorities.	Highly Satisfactory	The rating is validated (see also Table 15)	HS
Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Strong alignment with priorities of Paris Agreement and the Agenda 2030. Strong alignment with Emerging Comoros Plan 2020-2030 and updated NDC, as well as other important policies which identify forest preservation and watershed management as obvious and efficient contributors for climate change adaptation.	Highly Satisfactory	The rating is validated	HS
Complementarity with relevant existing interventions	The project found some synergies with other ongoing initiatives, but coordination was insufficient.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated	MS
Nature of External Context	**The national elections and covid-19 pandemic hindered the project without stopping it completely.**	**Moderately favourable**	**The rating is validated**	**MF**
Quality of Project Design	**A comprehensive situation analysis resulting in relevant interventions areas and thematic. Weakness of the results framework and insufficient project management costs, at least in part due to GEF policies.**	**Satisfactory**	The EOU validates the rating with some reservation as Intended Results and Causality and Logical Framework and Monitoring, critical elements in the project design, are both rated as Moderately Satisfactory. Paragraph 11 in the Executive Summary reads less positively than the section in the main body of the report.	**S**
Effectiveness	**The project managed to strengthen the human and technical capacities of the Comoros institutions and local stakeholders although the restoration activities related target was only partially achieved.**	**Moderately Satisfactory**	**The rating is validated**	**MS**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Delivery of outputs	14% of outputs were achieved, while 43% were partially achieved. The achievement of the remaining 43% could not be assessed by the evaluators.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated. The EOU assesses the achievement of outputs at the MS level partly because some of the output statements have outcome level ambitions (e.g. institutionalised and adopted) and also due to the high level of direct beneficiary satisfaction.	MS
Achievement of direct outcomes	The three outcomes were partially achieved.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Likelihood of impact	The impacts on Comoros institutions and local communities were perceived as significant although major climate threats continue to threaten livelihoods, particularly at the village level.	Likely	The rating is adjusted to Moderately Likely as the Terminal Review found several of the project's deliverables no longer functioning at the time of the TR (e.g. the platform, para 129; the AGE's, para 139; the PGPs, para 143 and the seedlings, para 145). See also para 241 for limited long lasting effects.	ML
Financial Management	**Overall, financial management encountered difficulties in providing timely and complete information during the first half of the implementation. The situation improved following the implementation of various measures.**	**Satisfactory**	**The rating is validated.**	**S**
Compliance to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Difficulties in providing complete and timely financial and administrative reports as well as monitoring co-financing. The situation has improved thanks to UNEP and DGEF adaptive management.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Completeness of project financial information	Audit reports and financial statements were carried out by external third parties as requested. The reports flagged some administrative and financial shortcomings that were insufficiently considered during the first half of the implementation. Substantial improvements were made and subsequent audit reports reflected the improvements made.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Communication between finance and project management staff	Communication was transparent and comprehensive.	Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	S

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Efficiency	**The project cost-effectiveness was acceptable in terms of output delivery however improvement could have been achieved to ensure results sustainability over time.**	**Moderately Satisfactory**	The rating is validated.	MS
Monitoring and Reporting	**The design and implementation of the monitoring plan faced limitations while the reporting was substandard.**	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**	**The rating is validated.**	**MU**
Monitoring design and budgeting	A monitoring plan was developed though only allocated with a low budget that was even reduced throughout the implementation. Weak results framework and unrealistic targets.	Moderately unsatisfactory	The rating is adjusted to reflect the fact that the indicators selected were more relevant to means, reach and outputs rather than results even though EbA is a familiar area of work for UNEP.	U
Monitoring of project implementation	Inconsistencies between reports but overall respect of the monitoring plan.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is adjusted to reflect the fact that the monitoring received reduced funds and was infrequent, therefore unable to consistently support adaptive management.	MU
Project reporting	Apart from the PIRs, the project did not fully comply with all its reporting requirements, often failing to provide qualitative reports on time. The quality of reporting was also low.	Moderately unsatisfactory	The rating is validated.	MU
Sustainability	**Although some encouraging sustainability signs can be observed, several factors continue to hinder the long-term sustainability of the project results.**	Moderately Unlikely	**The rating is validated.**	MU
Socio-political sustainability	Continuous political support and community buy-in during implementation only partially resulted in sustained commitment to maintain the project results at local level.	Moderately likely	The rating is validated.	ML
Financial sustainability	The lack of resources of the DGEF greatly undermines sustainability. Efforts are done to find a follow-up project, yet the process is long and uncertain.	Moderately Unlikely	The rating is validated.	MU

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating	Justification for any ratings' changes due to validation (to be completed by the UNEP Evaluation Office – EOU)	EOU Validated Rating
Institutional sustainability	Many of the institutional assets created by the project were no longer in use at the time of the TR. However, the project did support the preparation of five Forest Law Application Decrees which are not yet politically adopted. Several projects are currently under preparation, without a clear vision of what is to come and when.	Moderately likely	The rating is validated.	ML
Factors affecting performance		**Satisfactory**	**The rating is validated.**	**S**
Readiness	The project addressed some of the design weaknesses mostly in response to implementation issues which led to implementation delays and additional costs..	Moderately satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Quality of project management	Motivation and engagement from all project implementation partners.	Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	S
Stakeholder engagement	Stakeholders participated actively in the project.	Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	S
Gender and human rights	Efforts were done to prioritize women involvement throughout project implementation. However, the project lacked a proper gender action plan.	Moderately satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Environmental and social safeguards	The project took the necessary measures to be in compliance with UNEP's ESS requirements. However, the TR revealed some environmental risks that were insufficiently managed.	Moderately satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Country ownership and commitment	Adequate commitment from national, regional and local government structures and decentralised services.	Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	S
Communication	The project was insufficiently effective in producing communication and knowledge products throughout the implementation due to the absence of a communication strategy during the first half of the implementation and its incomplete implementation in later stage.	Moderately Satisfactory	The rating is validated.	MS
Overall rating		**Moderately Satisfactory**	**The rating is validated**	**MS**

6.2. Lessons learned

Lesson learned 1: The project experienced limited implementation of the Integrated Watershed Management concept and related principles. For future programming, the approach must be implemented at the whole watershed level.

308. IWM is defined as the process of managing human activities and natural resources on a watershed basis, taking into account social, economic and environmental issues, the interests of local communities and issues such as the impacts of development and climate change. Within this framework, planning, management and monitoring must be carried out at the watershed level, using a landscape approach to link both ecosystems and stakeholders' interests. While sub-watershed levels of planning and monitoring can exist, the IWM approach must include an overarching level of coordination, planning and management at the whole watershed scale.

309. In addition, more IWM needs to be implemented in the Comoros, as some communities are still subject to dramatic climatic hazards such as floods and mudslides.

Lesson learned 2: As the IWM approach has not been sufficiently understood by the project management, lit is important to internalise the IWM approach and ecosystem-based adaptation strategy within the project team at the beginning and to sustain the internalisation across stakeholders during the course of the project implementation.

310. The RGIBV progress has made significant progress in the introduction and mainstreaming of the IWM concept as an ecosystem-based adaptation approach across institutions and stakeholders. Overall, the project successfully raised the awareness about the link between water resources, land resources and forest ecosystems, which is a notable achievement. This resulted in the incorporation of these notions in key law and policy documents in the country as well as inspiring future projects and programs. However, in practice, the review revealed that the IWM principles have been partially implemented by the PMU (See lesson learned No. 1). The lesson that needs to be drawn from this is that when implementing IWM projects, it is important to ensure that the capacities of the project team are sufficiently raised on the related concept, approaches, and tools as well as across project implementation partners and collaborators. This helps ensure the building of the capacities of other project stakeholders on IWM and the more likely delivery of sustainable climate change adaptation benefits based on improved watershed and forest management.

Lesson learned 3: An in-depth assessment of the capacity of key national stakeholders to manage an integrated and multi-level donor-funded project involving complex concepts such as IWM, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable forest restoration can help formulate an adapted strategy that resonates with and is supported by national stakeholders on the ground. Re-validating this assessment at the beginning of project can be useful when significant time runs between project design and project start.

This TR confirmed the incomplete understanding about the IWM concept among project stakeholders. This can be explained by a lack of understanding about the IWM concept prior to the implementation start that the project insufficiently managed to overcome. This could have been better anticipated and mitigated by assessing in-depth the main project stakeholders' abilities to manage such an integrated and multi-level project including complex concepts such as IWM as an approach for ecosystem-based adaptation, climate-smart agriculture, land management and sustainable forest restoration, before the project start, and then re-validated at the project.

Lesson learned 4: It is essential that project management capacities are strengthened from the beginning of projects and that consultancy tenders are well anticipated to avoid any delays in project implementation.

311. National staff may find UNEP and GEF procedures complex and cumbersome. In this respect, UNEP strengthened the capacity building provided to the executing entity after discovering major administrative and financial problems. It could have been more useful to organize a continued capacity building support throughout the project, especially when some PMU members changed (as it was the case for the RAFs).
312. As recruiting qualified experts can represent a challenge, it is important to anticipate consultancy tenders well and to study proposals quickly to avoid capacity gaps and delays in project implementation.

Lesson learned 5: Community approaches are key to EbA implementation.

313. As extensively explained above, community engagement and consultation – from the very beginning of the project to the final implementation of the activities – led to a strong local commitment to implement. In this respect, identifying and addressing their most pressing needs at the start of the project (e.g. building water harvesting structures for instance) has been a key component of community trust and participation in the project activities. The successful implementation of EbA interventions can also be attributed to the serious support provided by CRDEs, which provided dedicated and skilled staff as well as time and resources to the project, as well as the engagement of RUTIs.

Lesson learned 6: In pandemic times, focusing on field activities such as EbA avoids bringing the project to a complete halt.

314. During the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the activities of the project were stalled due to meeting and travel restrictions at national and international scale. One of the solutions that was found to overcome this issue and avoid the project coming to a complete halt, was to focus on EbA interventions. Indeed, these activities could be pushed forward as they were involving local authorities and local communities in outdoor activities where COVID-related risks were limited.

Lesson learned 7: Providing strong support to develop climate-resilient value chains through access to seed capital, tailored expertise and/or networks can both increase the sustainability of projects' results and enhance beneficiaries' resilience.

315. Developing climate-resilient value chains is key to diversifying income and building community resilience. To do this, projects need to identify value chains and thoroughly assess their viability and sustainability. This must be done both by supporting their development at community level and by ensuring that a market is available to sell them. If the expertise is not available in the PMU, the project could consider working with other initiatives or increasing private sector involvement.

Lesson learned 8: Results' sustainability is strengthened by the timely development and implementation of a sound sustainability strategy and can be further enhanced by effective coordination with other initiatives.

316. In order to ensure the sustainability of EbA outcomes and impacts, projects need to develop and implement sound sustainability strategies in a timely manner, including concrete, assigned, time-phased and costed actions with identified funding sources. Moreover, sustainability should be strengthened in the design and in the planning of all activities from year 1. Furthermore, while developing successful EbA activities that are common between EbA initiatives, projects must increase efforts to collaborate, pool expertise and trained manpower to maintain community momentum, ensure continuity of EbA activities over time, and avoid duplication of expenditure and effort.

Lesson learned 9: Project designs must include adequately costed and staffed M&E systems and gender and safeguards action plans.

317. Adequate project management capacity and resources are critical to ensure that project implementation and monitoring are smooth, timely and on budget. Beyond the day-to-day implementation of activities, a dedicated M&E system, supported by dedicated staff, needs to be developed, costed and implemented from the outset of the project. In this sense, the M&E plan should be sufficiently resourced (staff and funds) at the design and during implementation, planning a full-time monitoring and reporting (M&R) officer in the PMU. Similarly, as gender and safeguards are crucial components of EbA projects, their management needs to be planned and budgeted for.

Lesson learned 10: Co-financing is key to achieve development projects' long term objectives but requires proactive coordination.

318. Whilst two co-financing projects had ended by the end of the project, the project did not sufficiently link with co-financing programmes that could contribute to achieving the project's long-term objectives such as maintaining the three nurseries, probably because its importance was not sufficiently internalised by the project. PMUs need proactive efforts to mobilize co-financing. They should also provide detailed and regular reporting on co-finance expenditure.

Lesson learned 11: In the context of a four year project there is a risk of committing to a policy and/or regulatory amendment which approval is beyond the control of the executing agency and lies with the legislative bodies or the head of government.

319. Targeting the 'institutionalisation' (i.e. adoption and implementation) of laws and regulations in a four-year project design exposes the latter to failure in achieving the related objective, as the expected outcome is largely beyond the control of the project.

Lesson learned 12: At the project design stage, restoration objectives must be set based on a realistic budget and schedule.

320. Achieving ambitious restoration goals through community-based EbA in tropical and developing countries requires: 1- taking into account the critical planting pattern imposed by a single (or two) rainy seasons per year, recognising that once a season is missed, projects will have to wait at least 6 months to restart planting activities; 2. recognising that global or regional economic shocks can significantly change the price of certain commodities and thus have a significant impacts on a project budget; 3. appropriately integrating compensation schemes for tree production into project design to both ensure community buy-in and effective ecosystem restoration.

6.3. Recommendations

Among other sources, this TR was informed by the project final report developed during the second semester of 2022. As the report also resulted in a list of recommendations, the common recommendations between the TR and the final report are highlighted in **green** (ex: **PFR-R**…) in the table Table 22.

Table 22: RGIBV terminal review's recommendations

Recommendations	Timing	Responsibility
Recommendation 1: For future projects working on IWM as an approach for EbA in the Comoros[40], intensify awareness and capacity building efforts on the IWM approach. The following sub-recommendations should be taken into account: R1a- Assess and build EbA and IWM capacity as needed to strengthen the full understanding of the approaches. Strengthen efforts to mainstream planning among all stakeholders. (**PFR-R7**) R1b- Ensure that the IWM approach is implemented using the whole watershed level of management and planning. Target more watersheds as dramatic climate hazards become more and more frequent in the Comoros. R1c- Institutionalise IWM implementation bodies that transcend administrative divisions, involve all relevant stakeholders to allow communication, especially between projects and	ASAP	DGEF/UNEP

[40] In general, this recommendation is relevant to projects working on IWM in other countries.

Recommendations	Timing	Responsibility
municipalities. Where possible, build on/revitalise the RGIBV institutional arrangements, as most stakeholders and implementing partners were keen to be involved in future initiatives. (PFR-R1) R1d- Continue to implement the successful national reforestation strategy and associated community approach. (PFR-R5 and PFR-R8)		
Recommendation 2: Further implement the RGIBV sustainability strategy. For future projects in the Comoros[41], develop an exit and sustainability strategy in the design and implement it from the early stages of the project implementation, developing an action plan by the second year and fully integrating it in the annual workplans and budgets. R2a- Continue and accelerate the implementation of the recommendations formulated in the RGIBV project exit and sustainability strategy. R2b- For future projects, develop and implement an exit and sustainability strategy in the design and implement it from the early stages of project implementation, developing an action plan by the second year and fully integrating it in the annual workplans and budgets. This will ensure that each stakeholder is aware of and responsible for the sustainability of the project results. When developing the sustainability strategy, build on the RGIBV approach: - Make sure that every recommendation is assigned to a responsible person/body, staggered over time, costed and that funding sources are identified and mobilized; - Ensure that any infrastructure (cisterns and nurseries) built by the project is maintained, including management groups that have a mechanism to fund maintenance; - Introduce the seedling and cuttings nursery approach from the first year, while procuring seedlings from other sources/suppliers as seedlings in the nurseries mature and are ready for planting during the second year, to effectively implement the solidarity approach during the implementation period (PFR-R3); - Contact ESRI to make the geo-reference online platform accessible and disseminate it existence within the Ministry, DGEF and its partners; - Revitalise the IWM/EbA course;	ASAP and for future project designs	DGEF/UNEP

[41] In general, this recommendation is relevant to projects working on IWM in other countries.

Recommendations	Timing	Responsibility
- Revive and institutionalize P2Is; - Further support the adoption and implementation of the draft Forest Law Application Decrees. - and strengthen their long-term sustainability.		
Recommendation 3: As it underpins the success of the restoration and reforestation strategy, in the Comoros[42], strengthen the community approach to increase sustainable local benefits. R3a- Construct additional rain water harvesting cisterns and ensure that local management and maintenance structures are in place during and after the end of the project. R3b- Strengthen the value chain approach while developing cash crop production, NTFPs and alternative sources of income. To this end, create synergies with existing projects and involve relevant and suitably experienced experts and stakeholders, and importantly from the private sector. (**PFR-R6**) R3c- When developing activities that are new to the beneficiaries, ensure that they are provided with sufficient support to sustain their activities beyond the life of the project. For example, poultry development needs to be accompanied by training in basic veterinary care. R3d- Building on the RGIBV project, disseminate more widely the integrated pest management solutions developed by INRAPE.	For future project designs	DGEF/UNEP
Recommendation 4: For future projects, in Comoros or elsewhere, directly or indirectly increase the PMC and continuously ensure that national and PMU capacities and resources are adapted to the implementation needs. (**PFR-R9**) R4a- Establish a PMU team with at least: one Coordinator, one RAF, three RUTIs, one M&E officer, one Communication officer, a Gender and Safeguards officer and one Local Technician per village. Given the constraints established for PMC by GEF and other vertical funds' policies, the financing should be partially from the PMC for essential PM functions, while all other posts should be financed by the activity budget line. These additional posts should be sufficiently budgeted in the activity budget.	For future project designs	UNEP

[42] In general, this recommendation is relevant to projects working on income generating activities in other countries.

Recommendations	Timing	Responsibility
R4b- Increase the number of days of the CTA support. Again, this may involve budgeting this support through component related activities. R4c- Make sure that inter-island travel costs are sufficient to ensure project monitoring and supervision. Again, this may involve budgeting this support through component related activities. R4d- Assess and strengthen the national and PMU capacity and resources over time. For financial management, ensure that UNEP reporting requirements are understood and mastered. Provide the staff with early training and appropriate equipment and software. R4e- When experiencing major implementation issues and financial disruption, explore ways of maintaining project staff salaries, at least for those the most involved in resolving the problems. R4f- Anticipate external consultancy tenders well in advance and to study proposals quickly to avoid any capacity gaps and implementation delays.		
Recommendation 5: For future projects, in Comoros or elsewhere, strengthen M&E and learning systems and allocate the appropriate resources. R5a- Include a dedicated M&E officer in the PMU and ensure appropriate resources are allocated to implement the M&E plan. R5b- Design a proper M&E and learning system plan from the project launch and consistently implement it. Where sub-indicators need to be set, ensure that they are monitored in project implementation reports. R5c – Develop a RF that: - Captures the impacts of the project, particularly at the level of the main objective and the outcomes. Assess their measurability by establishing the baseline. Focus on results and quality indicators (e.g. survival rates) rather than means indicators; - Set EbA restauration targets and related timelines that are consistent with: o Tropical and developing contexts, considering the cultural pattern imposed by the rainy seasonsand the potential local impacts of economic shocks at global or regional level;	For future project designs	DGEF/UNEP

Recommendations	Timing	Responsibility
○ The available budget, taking into account the establishment of compensation schemes for tree production at community level. R5d- Develop a strong cofinancing plan including periodic and formal reporting of co-financing expenditure contributing to achieving the project's objectives.		
Recommendation 6: For future projects in the Comoros[43], include a robust environment and social safeguards and gender framework. R6a- Include a dedicated gender and safeguards officer in the PMU and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to implement the related plans. This support may need to be budgeted through component related activities. R6b- Develop and implement a safeguards plan that, for instance, prohibits the use of non-organic pesticides and manages the production of waste in the nurseries. R6c- Conduct a gender diagnostic during project design and develop a Gender Action Plan to be ready at the start of the project. R6d- Ensure that communication about project activities reaches women effectively. R6d- Ensure that women are adequately represented in the PMU. R6e- Consider the possibility of appointing a gender focal point within the Ministry. He/she would be responsible for ensuring gender mainstreaming both in form (parity) and content, by including this cross-cutting issue in all projects of the Ministry portfolio.	For future project designs	DGEF/UNEP
Recommendation 7: For future projects in the Comoros[44], strengthen cooperation with other ongoing projects that can provide co-financing. R7a- During project design, ensure that co-financing is concurrent with project implementation, especially if delays are observed during the instruction of the project. R7b- Increase collaboration between projects to find synergies and build the sustainability of the projects' results. R7c- Consider establishing a formal project portfolio coordination mechanism within the Ministry.	For future project designs	DGEF/UNEP

[43] In general, this recommendation is relevant to projects in other countries.
[44] In general, this recommendation is relevant to projects in other countries.

7.ANNEXES

7.1. Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of this TR

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Review of the UNEP/GEF project "Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods " (Comoros) and "GEF ID 5694"

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP Sub-programme:	**Climate Action**	**UNEP Division/Branch:**	**Ecosystem Div/Nature for Climate Branch/Climate Change Adaptation Unit**
Expected Accomplishment(s):	**(a) Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation**	**Programme of Work Output(s):**	**(ii) Increase in the number of countries that have technical capacity to integrate ecosystem-based management into national adaptation plans**
SDG(s) and indicator(s)	**SDG 13: Climate Action Targets 13.1, 13.2, 13.3 & 13.b. Contributes to SDG 2: target 2.4 and SDG 6 targets 6.5, 6.6 and 6.b;**		
GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7[45])			
Dates of previous project phases:	ACCE Project:	**Status of future project phases:**	LDCF PIF & AF Concept note under development
Project Title:	Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods		
Executing Agency:	General Directorate for Environment and Forests (DGEF), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts, Union of the Comoros		
Project partners:	University of Comoros, National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (INRAPE), National Directorate of Agricultural Strategies and Breeding (DNSAE); National Directorate of Water and Mines. FAO/GoC Country Programme Framework; WB/GoC Social Safety		

[45] This does not apply to Enabling Activities

	Net Project (FADC) and Japan support to National Action Plan for Forestry Development.		
Geographical Scope:	Africa		
Participating Countries:	Union of the Comoros		
GEF project ID:	5694	**IMIS number*[46]:**	SB-006881
Focal Area(s):	**Climate Change**	**GEF OP #:**	
GEF Strategic Priority/Objective:	Climate Change	**GEF approval date*:**	21 October 2016
UNEP approval date:		**Date of first disbursement*:**	29 May 2017
Actual start date[47]:	26 April 2017	**Planned duration:**	48 months
Intended completion date*:	31 June 2019[48]	**Actual or Expected completion date:**	30 June 2022
Project Type:	Full-size Project	**GEF Allocation*:**	US$ 5,140,000
PPG GEF cost*:	US$ 150,000	**PPG co-financing*:**	
Expected MSP/FSP Co-financing*:	US$ 16,480,000	**Total Cost*:**	US$ 21,720,000
Mid-term Review/eval. (planned date):	June 2019	**Terminal review (planned date):**	30 September 2022
Mid-term Review/eval. (actual date):	November 2019	**No. of revisions*:**	3
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	1 April 2021	**Date of last Revision*:**	December 2022
Disbursement as of 31 December 2022*:	USD 4,944,100	**Date of planned financial closure*:**	31 March 2024
Date of planned completion[49]*:	31 March 2023	**Actual expenditures reported as of 31 December 2022[50]:**	USD 4,979,803.70
Total co-financing realized as of 31 December 2022:	Est USD 20 million	**Actual expenditures entered in IMIS as of 31 December *:**	USD 4,652,108.31
Leveraged financing:[51]			

Project Rationale[52]

Classified among the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Comoros is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a gross national income per capita of US$ 840 and an annual GDP growth of 3.5% in 2014. Additionally, the population density is among the highest in Africa, with approximately 394.90 people per km2 in 2013 and population growth rate of 2.4% in 2014. Furthermore, the Comoros has high levels of poverty (45.5%) and a chronic economic deficit, and is considered a highly indebted poor country.

[46] Fields with an * sign (in yellow) should be filled by the Fund Management Officer
[47] Only if different from first disbursement date, e.g., in cases were a long time elapsed between first disbursement and recruitment of project manager.
[48] Including 6 month financial closure period
[49] If there was a "Completion Revision" please use the date of the revision.
[50] Information to be provided by Executing Agency/Task Manager
[51] See above note on co-financing
[52] Grey =Info to be added

The Comoros archipelago is made up of four islands: Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan, Mohéli and Mayotte. At present, the sovereignty of the Union of the Comoros (hereafter referred to as 'the Comoros') is maintained in practice by all but Mayotte. Climate change is likely to adversely affect the Comoros with impacts such as i) changes in rainfall levels and patterns and the subsequent shortening of rainy seasons; ii) increased temperatures; iii) sea level rise (and subsequent salinization of critical coastal aquifers as a result of salt water intrusion); and iv) an increased frequency of climatic hazards (such as tropical cyclones, droughts, episodes of heavy rainfall and flooding). Exacerbating these climate change impacts are the inherent environmental vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including small land area, susceptibility to natural disasters, geographical isolation, limited natural resources and sensitive ecosystems. This, superimposed on existing anthropogenic practices such as the quickening pace of deforestation rates for agricultural production, threatens water security, food security, economic growth and the livelihoods of communities within the Union of the Comoros.

Comorian communities, autonomous islands' governments, and the national government presently lack the technical capacity, management capacity, physical resources and financial resources to cope with water resources management in the context of worsening climatic conditions. At the same time, the degradation of watersheds has long-term impacts on all productive sectors, leading to an exponential increase in vulnerability throughout the rural and urban landscapes in Comoros. This project will seek to address the vulnerability of communities in the Comoros to the impacts of climate change, in particular due to the rapid degradation of watersheds and river basins in all three islands, which threatens livelihoods of communities that depend on healthy watersheds. The goal of the project is to build resilience to climate change in the Comoros by rehabilitating watersheds and forests and diversifying adaptive livelihoods, using integrated watershed management as an adaptive strategy.

Project Results Framework

[Present the project objective(s), components, outputs, outcomes and long-lasting impacts, as per the Project Document (i.e. the results framework). Include the Theory of Change diagram, where available. Use tables as appropriate.]

The project will build the resilience of Comorian communities to climate change through the rehabilitation of degraded watersheds through reforestation using resilient species that can adapt to climate and environmental change, the implementation of anti-erosive measures, and the establishment of community conservation zones. The project will also develop technical and institutional capacity for sustainable forest and watershed management as an adaptive strategy at the national and local levels. To ensure long-term sustainability of the watershed rehabilitation, the project will promote the development of alternative and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas that will contribute to ensuring diversified and resilient livelihoods with minimal impact on ecosystem services.

Through these interventions, the project will lead to the following outcomes:

- Strengthened technical and institutional capacity for resilient integrated watershed management at the national and local levels
- Rehabilitated and sustainably managed watersheds and sub-catchments in the project areas
- A diversified array of resilient livelihood strategies deployed by communities in the project areas

The Theory of Change was re-constituted during the Mid-Term Review (Dec 2019) and is found in Annex 1 (French version only available). The indicators and targets contained in the results framework were modified following the Mid-Term Review (Dec 2019) and is found in Annex 2.

The project interventions will take place both at the national level as well as on one site per island, each representing one watershed, composed of several villages of which five in each watershed will participate in the project:

- Grande Comore (Ngazidja) island: Mdjoiezi, Mkazi, Nvouni (Mvouni), Pvanadjou (Vanadjou) and Bahani villages are located in the central area of the island within the Séréhini watershed uniting three regions involved in agriculture, fishing, tourism, handicrafts and trade namely:
    - Bambao region, where the capital of the Union of Comoros, Moroni is located,
    - Hambou region, and
    - Itsandra region.
- Anjouan (Nzwani) island: Daji (Dagi), Kiyo, Komoni, Mremani and Adda villages are located within the Nyumakele watershed in the Mremani region (southern area of the island).
- Moheli (Mwali) island: Siri-Ziroudani, Wanani (Ouanani), Hagnamouda, Hamavouna and Itsamia villages are located within the Mibani watershed in the Djando region (southern area of the island).

This project will benefit a total of 38,306 direct beneficiaries in the 15 selected villages.

This project will contribute to strengthening climate resilience through the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches and their integration in key sectoral and national development strategies and policies. It will hence directly support the climate change strategic focus of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the 2014-2017 period, and the achievement of the climate change adaptation Expected Accomplishment in the UNEP Programme of Work 2016-2017.

Executing Arrangements

UNEP is the GEF Implementing Agency. The Climate Change Adaptation Unit of the Nature for Climate Branch of the Ecosystems Division is the responsible UNEP entity.

The Project was executed through the Directorate General for Environment and Forests (DGEF) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts.[53] A Project Management Unit (PMU), headed by the Project Coordinator, was established in 2017 at the project start. The PMU is comprised of a Project Finance and Administrative Officer (RAF) and a Project assistant. The PMU was supplemented three island-based project technical officers (Responsable de l'Unité Technique Insulaire (du projet) - RUTI) and by a Communication and Knowledge Management officer in 2020. The National Project Director is the Director General of the Directorate for Environment and Forests, and who is also the GEF National Operational Focal Point.

Project Cost and Financing

The project total budget is USD 21,720,000 over 48 months (four years). It comprises of GEF LDCF USD 5,140,000 and USD 16,480,000 of in-kind co-financing. As at 31 December 2022, the project's expenditure was USD 4,979,803.70.

[53] The name of the Ministry changed several times during the project period. At the time of the PIF/Prodoc it was the Ministry of Production, Environment, Energy, Industry and Handicrafts. By the end of the project, it is the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handcrafts.

Implementation Issues

Overall, the project implementation has largely been on track although there have been some implementation issues that occurred during project implementation:

- Challenges to secure relevant experienced service providers / consultants to carry out project activities.
- Slow project start-up with low capacity and unexpected changes in the project management team in 2017 and early 2018.
- Challenges to adhering to UNEP project financial management systems and reporting cycles which delayed project activities, and general workplan timelines.
- Extreme weather events such as the cyclone Kenneth which hit Grande Comoros on 24 April 2019 which disrupted field activities on the island and the project management unit in Moroni.
- Covid-19 and associated sanitation and travel measures which affected implementation between Q2 2020 and Q1 2021.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

Objective of the Review

In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[54] and the UNEP Programme Manual[55], the Terminal Review (TR) is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Review has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the Directorate General for Environment and Forests of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts. Therefore, the Review will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for future phases of the project and UNEP's engagement in the Comoros, where applicable.

Key Review principles

Review findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Review Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

The "Why?" Question. As this is a Terminal Review and follow-up projects are planned, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "why?" question should be at the front of the consultant(s)' minds all through the review exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) need to go beyond the assessment of "what" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "why" the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association: In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for reviews. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of

[54] https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies
[55] https://wecollaborate.unep.org

causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

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

Key Strategic Questions

In addition to the review criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Review will address the **strategic questions**[56] listed below (no more than 3 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 TR:

Q1: (Where relevant) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes affect the project's performance?

Q2: 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 provided[57]).

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*

[56] The strategic questions should not duplicate questions that will be addressed under the standard review criteria described in section 10.
[57] This does not apply to Enabling Activities

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)*

Review Criteria

All review criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the review criteria. The set of review criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. See Annex 4 on review criteria.

Annex 3 of these Terms of Reference provides a table with a list of various tools, templates and guidelines that can help Review Consultant(s) to follow a thorough review process that meets all of UNEP's needs.

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. *Alignment to the UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy[58] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities*

The Review should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[59] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

Donor strategic priorities will vary across interventions. The Review will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example,

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

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

instances of 'softly-earmarked' funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

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

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

iv. *Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence*[60]

An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[61], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Review will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include work within UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the review inception phase. Ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Review Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[62] should be entered in the final review ratings table (as item B) in the Main Review Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the Main Review Report.

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

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

C. Nature of External Context

[60] This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.
[61] 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.
[62] In some instances, based on data collected during the review process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Review Report.

At review inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[63]). This rating is entered in the final review ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an *Unfavourable* or *Highly Unfavourable* external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Review Consultant and Task Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs[64]

The Review will assess the project's success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any formal modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality by undertaking representative surveys in the project sites (See Section 3) and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Review will briefly explain the reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs available and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision[65]

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes[66]

The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[67] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used to show where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Review should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and

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

[64] Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019).

[65] For GEF funded projects 'project management and supervision' will refer to the project management performance of the Executing Agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP, as Implementing Agency.

[66] Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

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

magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

The Review will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be 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 Review will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[68] 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 Review will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

[68] 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 and public awareness

E. Financial Management

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

Under the efficiency criterion the Review will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Review will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Review will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

The Review will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[69] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

[69] Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART[70] results towards the achievement of the project's outputs and outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Review will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Review will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed, where applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

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

iii. Project Reporting

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

H. Sustainability

[70] SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

Sustainability[71] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of direct outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

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

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

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

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

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

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

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

The Review will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Review will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[72].

The report should present the extent to which the intervention, following an adequate gender analysis at design stage, has implemented the identified actions and/or applied adaptive management to ensure that Gender Equality and Human Rights are adequately taken into account. In particular the Review will consider to what extent project, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) in

[72]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

mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Review will confirm whether UNEP requirements[73] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and r*eport* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are reviewed above under Quality of Project Design).

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

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

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

[73] 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.

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

Section 3. REVIEW APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

a) A **desk review** of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia national and sectoral policies and plans, for instance the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2022), National Climate Change Policy (2015), National Forest Policy and regulations, national development plan (Comores Emergent 2030);
- 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 annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIR) and Tracking Tool, Final Report, etc.;
- Project deliverables (e.g. publications, assessments etc): see website
- Mid-Term Review of the project (2019);
- Evaluations/Reviews of similar projects.

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

- UNEP Task Manager (TM)
- Project Manager (PM)
- National Project Director (NPM)
- Chief Technical Advisor (CTA)
- Project Management Team (PMU)
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO)
- UNEP Adaptation GEF Portfolio Manager and Climate Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate.
- Project partners including: Directorate for Environment and Forests; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment, Tourism and Handicrafts; University of Comoros; National Institute for Research in Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment (INRAPE); National Directorate of Agricultural Strategies and Breeding (DNSAE); National Directorate of Water and Mines; and UN agencies (UNDP, FAO, etc.).
- Relevant resource persons, including national project consultants.
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

c) **Surveys**

- Use remote sensing and GIS applications to verify project results in project sites on the three islands.
- Beneficiary surveys (i.e. household and/or individual questionnaires, focused group discussions, etc.) to verify and assess project activities and results.

d) **Field visits**

- Project sites in Grande Comore (Ngazidja) island; Anjouan (Nzwani) island: and Moheli (Mwali) island to assess project activities and results with project beneficiaries and stakeholders.

e) **Other data collection tools**

- To be proposed by the Review consultant in the inception report (if any).

Review Deliverables and Review Procedures

The Review Consultant will prepare:

Inception Report: (English and French) (see Annex 3 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes and Annex 5 on Inception Report structure) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, review framework and a tentative review schedule.

Preliminary Findings Note: (French) typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings.

Draft and Final Review Report: (English and French) containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the review findings organised by review criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table (See Annex 6 for guidance on the Final report structure).

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

Review of the Draft Review Report. The Review Consultant will submit a draft report to the Task Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. The Task Manager will then forward the revised draft report to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Task Manager for consolidation. The Task Manager will provide all comments to the Review Consultant for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

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

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

The Review Consultant

The Review Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Task Manager (Alex Forbes), in consultation with the UNEP Fund Management Officer (Bwiza Wameyo-Odemba), the UNEP Portfolio Manager and Head of the Climate Change Adaptation Unit (Jessica Troni), the UNEP Head of the Nature for Climate Branch (Mirey Atallah) and the Climate Action Sub-programme Coordinator (Niklas Hagelberg).

The Review Consultant will liaise with the Task Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Review. It is, however, the consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Review as efficiently and independently as possible.

The Review Consultant will be hired over a period of 4 months [2 May 2024 to 30 August 2024] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of ecosystem-based adaptation is desired. 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 fluency in oral and written French is required. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with a field mission to the Comoros.

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

Schedule of the Review

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Review.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Review

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Inception Report (in English and French)	24 May 2024
Review Mission	3 June to 11 June 2024
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	From assignment start to end of review mission.
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	21 June 2024
Draft Review Report to Task Manager (and Project Manager)	8 August 2024
Draft Review Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	1 September 2024
Final Review Report	15 September 2024
Final Review Report shared with all respondents	18 September 2024

Contractual Arrangements

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

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

Schedule of Payment:

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

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

The consultant may be provided with access to UNEP's information management systems (e.g. PIMS, Anubis, SharePoint, etc.) and, if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the Review Report.

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

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

7.2. Appendix 2: Review matrix

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
A. Strategic relevance				
1. Alignment with UNEP's strategic priorities	- To what extent was the project aligned with UNEP's medium-term strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities?	- Level of alignment between the project and UNEP's medium-term strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities	- ProDoc and project planning documents - UNEP's medium-term strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities when the project was approved and during implementation	- Documentary review
2. Alignment with GEF and LDCF strategic priorities	- To what extent was the project aligned with the strategic priorities of the GEF and the LDCF?	- Level of alignment between the project and the GEF and LDCF strategies	- ProDoc and project planning documents - GEF-6 and LDCF strategies	- Documentary review
3. Alignment with international, regional, national and sub-national environmental needs and priorities	To what extent did the project meet global, regional, national and sub-national environmental needs and priorities?	- Level of alignment of the project with existing international (SDGs, Agenda 2030) and regional objectives (national strategies, regional agreements) - Level of alignment between the project and national and local development plans, poverty reduction strategies, climate change strategies and other environmental agreements. - Level of alignment between the project and local needs and priorities.	- ProDoc and project planning documents - International, regional, national and sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, climate change strategies, other environmental agreements - Government partners - UNEP staff and project stakeholders	- Documentary review - Interviews
4. Complementarity with other concurrent or planned initiatives	- To what extent did the project take account of other concurrent or planned initiatives on the same themes in Comoros, and	- The extent to which the project complements other existing or planned initiatives.	- ProDoc and project planning documents - Documents describing other projects and initiatives relating to adaptation measures in Comoros - Government partners	- Documentary review - Interviews

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	developed synergies with them?	- Existence of communication mechanisms and coordination with other initiatives - Examples of specific synergies	- UNEP staff and other implementing agencies	
B. Nature of the external context				
5. External factors	- What external factors influenced the project's performance? Were they adequately taken into account?	- Examples and evidence of external factors - Extent to which planning documents anticipated or reflected the risks/externalities faced by the project during its implementation	- ProDoc and project planning documents, progress reports - Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PSC meetings, UNEP missions - Government partners, beneficiaries (communities, local authorities, community associations)	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group
C. Effectiveness				
6. Outputs	- Did the project succeed in producing the products indicated in the ProDoc (quality and quantity)? What are the reasons behind the success or shortcomings?	- Level of achievement of expected outputs - Performance to produce outcomes - Quality of products delivered - Level of usefulness and ownership for/by the target beneficiaries	- Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Progress and monitoring reports - Technical reports, training reports - UNEP staff - PMU - MTR - Local implementing partners - Local stakeholders - Direct observation	- Documentary review - Interviews - Field visits
7. Achieving outcomes	- To what extent the expected effects of the project were achieved? How did the products contribute to the effects of the project?	- Level of progress towards achieving effects as formulated in the theory of change - Level of contribution of the project to achieving the expected effects	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - MTR report - PMU, responsible for UNEP and CTA - Local implementing partners - Local stakeholders - Government stakeholders, technical staff - Direct observation - Beneficiaries targeted by the project	- Documentary review - Interviews - Field visits - Discussion group

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
			- PSC minutes	
8. Likelihood of impact	- To what extent did the project produce the expected impacts? What was its likely contribution to improving the living conditions of Comoros communities despite the effects of climate change?	- Level of validity and realization of the hypotheses and drivers identified between the result and the level of impact of the theory of change - Evidence and extent of obstacles or favourable conditions for achieving impact indicators	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - PMU, responsible for UNEP and CTA - Local implementation partners - Local stakeholders - MTR - Government stakeholders - Technical staff - Direct observation - PSC minutes	- Documentary review - Interviews - Site visit
	To what extent has the project produced unexpected negative effects or impacts?	- Nature and likelihood of undesirable or anticipated adverse environmental, social and economic effects of the project	- Project planning documents - Monitoring and reporting documents, mid-term evaluation - PSC minutes - UNEP TM, PC - Government stakeholders (at all levels) - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group - Direct observation
	To what extent is the project likely to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes expected by the SDG or UNEP/GEF strategic priorities?	- Level of achievement of SDGs, UNEP and the GEF strategic priorities	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - PMU, responsible for UNEP and CTA - Local implementation partners - Local stakeholders - MTR - Government stakeholders - Technical staff - Direct observation - PSC minutes - UNEP's medium-term strategy, Programme of Work (POW) and strategic priorities when the project was approved - GEF-6 and LDCF strategies	- Documentary review
D. Financial management				

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
11. Disbursement	- Was the rate of disbursement consistent with the work plan, the duration of the installation and the products delivered? Were there any financial issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project results? - Was co-financing mobilised as planned? What measures were taken to monitor it, and how effective were they?	- Level of financial implementation (by year and by component) - Level of difference between planned and actual co-financing - Nature of measures taken to monitor co-financing and barriers encountered	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual reports) - Financial reports/audit documents (quarterly and annual reports) - MTR report - Head of UNEP, Head of Finance and CTA - GEF/UNEP reporting requirements	- Documentary review - Interviews
12. Compliance with UNEP's financial policies and procedures and completeness of financial information	- Did the project comply with UNEP's financial and/or audit reporting requirements and timetable, including the quality and timeliness of reports? - Did the project provide complete and timely financial information and reports?	- Proof of compliance with UNEP financial policies and procedures - Completeness of financial information	- Financial reports/audit documents (quarterly and annual reports) - Head of UNEP, Head of Finance and CTA - GEF/UNEP reporting requirements	- Documentary review - Interviews
13. Communication between the Financial Management Officer and the Project Management Officer	- Was there effective, transparent and comprehensive communication between the Fund Management Officer and project manager?	- Means and level of communication between staff responsible for financial management and those responsible for project management. - Quality of information transmitted	- Financial reports/audit documents (quarterly and annual reports) - Head of UNEP, Head of Finance and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews
E. Efficiency				
14. Cost effectiveness	- To what extent were the results achieved cost-effectively?	- Level of alignment between planned and incurred implementation costs and nature of discrepancies	- Financial reports/audit documents (quarterly and annual reports) - Progress reports and mid-term evaluation - Head of UNEP and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	- How and to what extent did the project improve its efficiency in terms of costs and deadlines **?**	- Evidence of the use of financially sound practices to maximise results within the budget and timescale agreed by the project - Quality and speed of procurement and recruitment procedures - Evidence that the project creates synergies with existing or previous initiatives, programmes or institutions.		
15. Meeting deadlines	- Were the timetable and sequence of activities carried out as planned? - Could the delays and extensions to the project have been avoided? What were their effects on the project?	- Timetable and sequence of results in relation to the work plan - Causes and total delays (in months) caused by implementation bottlenecks - Effects of deadlines on the project	- Project planning and reporting documents - Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PPC meetings - Head of UNEP, CTA and PMU - National, regional and local governments - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group
F. Monitoring and reporting				
17. Monitoring and budget design	- Was the monitoring plan well-designed and sufficient to monitor results and track progress in achieving project outputs and outcomes? - Were the targets initially set for the project realistic?	- Level of use of SMART indicators - Existence and capacity of : • Basic study • Performance measurement/logical framework ; • Methodology ; • Roles and responsibilities ; • Budget and timetable/work plan - Changes made to project targets and nature of justifications	- Planning documents - Basic report - MTR - Follow-up documents - PMU, responsible for UNEP and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews
18. Monitoring project implementation	- Was the monitoring plan operational and effective in	- Level of robustness of the monitoring and evaluation plan	- Planning documents	- Documentary review - Interviews

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	tracking results and progress towards objectives? - What was the performance at the project's completion against GEF Core Indicator Targets?	- Level of funding for the monitoring and evaluation plan - Evidence of the collection of relevant, high-quality reference data - Evidence of the collection of monitoring data from disaggregated groups (including gender, vulnerable and marginalised groups) as part of activities - Level of quality of the information generated by the monitoring system and evidence of the use of the information to adapt and improve project implementation, achievement of results and sustainability. - Proportion of monitoring budget implemented compared to planned monitoring budget - Performance at project completion against Core Indicator Targets	- Minutes of planning meetings/review procedures - Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual reports) - Monitoring and evaluation strategy and procedures - PMU, UNEP TM - Local implementation staff, partners - Technical staff - GEF-6 performance indicators	
19. Reporting	- Did the project comply with the timetable and requirements for progress documentation and monitoring reports, including the quality and timeliness of reports?	- Types and quality of reporting documents submitted a) correctly and b) on time - Evidence of the measures put in place to address the risks and impacts identified - Proof of the effectiveness of these measures	- Monitoring and reporting documents - UNEP TM, PC - UNEP reporting requirements	- Documentary review - Interviews
G. Sustainability				
20. Socio-political sustainability	- To what extent do political and social factors supported the development and continuity of the project's results?	- Level of involvement of political and social players in implementing the project - Degree of influence of political and social factors on project results	- Monitoring and reporting document - UNEP TM, PC and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	- How committed are the political and social players to the project and its results?			
21. Financial sustainability	- To what extent are the results of the project dependent on additional financial resources?	- Level of dependence between project results and future additional funding	- Monitoring and reporting document - UNEP TM, PC and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews
22. Institutional sustainability	- To what extent does the project depend on institutional factors? - To what extent the project succeeded in strengthening the country's institutional capacities?	- Level of dependence between project results and institutional factors - Degree of institutional capacity building via the project	- Monitoring and reporting document - UNEP TM, PC and CTA	- Documentary review - Interviews
23. Scalability and replicability	Did the project act as a catalyst for action to adapt to climate change? Has it promoted the replication or scaling up of certain activities?	- Elements favourable to a catalytic effect, scaling up or replication in the context of the theory of change - Examples of elements that have resulted from a catalytic effect, replication or scaling up of project activities.	- Monitoring and reporting documents, mid-term evaluation - Exit strategy - PSC minutes - PNUE TM, PC, CTA - Government stakeholders (at all levels) - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group - Direct observation
24. Exit strategy	- How effective were the exit strategies of the project**?**	- Existence and quality of an exit strategy - Level of implementation of the exit strategy - Partnerships to be developed or strengthened to support sustainability and scaling up	- Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Exit strategy - PNUE TM, PC, CTA - National, regional and local governments - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Site visit
H. Factors influencing project performance and cross-cutting issues				
24. Preparation	- Were appropriate measures taken to address weaknesses in the project design or to respond to changes that had occurred	- Proof of adjustments made during the start-up phase - Proof of confirmation of the capacity of the partners	- Project planning documents - Monitoring and reporting documents, mid-term evaluation - PSC minutes, UNEP mission - UNEP TM, PC	- Documentary review - Interviews

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	between project approval, funding and project mobilisation?	- Number and types of partnership agreements, staffing arrangements and financial agreements	- Government stakeholders (all levels)	
25. Quality of project management	- What was the quality of project implementation by the implementing agencies? - What was the quality of project execution by the executing agencies? - How effective was the collaboration between the institutions responsible for implementing the project?	- Quality of supervision of implementing and executing agencies, respectively. - Perception of the quality of project management by key stakeholders and partners	- Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PSC meetings - UNEP TM, PC - National, regional and local governments - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group
26. Stakeholder engagement	- To what extent were the relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the project ? What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR?	- Extent and quality of interaction/exchanges between project implementers and local partners - Number, type and quality of mechanisms implemented to promote stakeholder participation at each stage of project design, implementation and monitoring and to ensure inclusiveness. - Number and level of participants in workshops (particularly women) - Perceived use of local skills, experience and knowledge	- Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PSC meetings - Stakeholder engagement plan - UNEP TM, PC - National, regional and local governments - Stakeholders and local communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group
27. Gender and human rights	- To what extent did the project adhere to United Nations and UNEP policies on human rights and gender equality, including the human rights-based approach (HRBA)?	- Degree of adherence to the UN's human rights-based approach and UNEP's gender equality policies. - Number and quality of measures in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project that address:	- Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PPC meetings - UNEP Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment - UNEP TM, PC - National, regional and local governments	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	- What gender-sensitive measures were implemented? Were they implemented as planned? What were the actual results in terms of gender?	• Possible inequalities between men and women in terms of access to and control over natural resources. • The role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental change and in protecting the environment. - Effectiveness of gender-sensitive measures	- Stakeholders and local communities	
28. Environmental and social guarantees (ESS)	- Did the project comply with UNEP's Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) requirements in terms of reviewing, monitoring and responding to these risks? - To what extent did the project help to reduce UNEP's environmental footprint? - What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval?	- Proof of the project's compliance with social and environmental safeguards (review, monitoring and response) - Consistency of the safeguard plan with the results framework and risks. - Level of implementation of the ESS plan - Responsiveness of the ESS plan to changes in context and knowledge.	- Project document - Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - PIR - Progress and monitoring reports, minutes of PSC meetings - UNEP TM, PC - Local stakeholders and communities	- Documentary review - Interviews - Discussion group
29. Country ownership and commitment	- Was the level of involvement of government/public sector representatives sufficient to ensure ownership of project outputs and outcomes and representation of all	- Number and types of government and public sector agency representatives attending workshops and involved in implementation (including CPP) - Number and types of regulations, policies or other government	- Government partners - Local partners responsible for implementation - Project monitoring and reporting information (workshop summaries, lists of participants, actions to be taken, etc.) - PMU and PSC	- Documentary review - Interviews - Site visit

Review criteria	Review question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
	marginalised groups and genders?	initiatives (existing, newly enacted or amended) that support the project's outputs and outcomes. - Proportion of a) representatives; b) government initiatives that represent the needs and interests of women and marginalised groups. - Perceived level of integration of climate change adaptation and EbA into policies and potential gaps		
30. Communication and awareness-raising	- Did the project develop and implement a communication strategy and a knowledge management plan? How effective were these? What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach? - To what extent did communication and knowledge management help to raise awareness of the project and its approach among stakeholders and the public?	- Existence of a communication strategy and knowledge management plan - Level of implementation of communication strategy and knowledge management plan - Communication and knowledge management deliverables - Level of stakeholder awareness of project results and activities	- Project planning documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Progress and monitoring reports, mid-term evaluation, minutes of PSC meetings - UNEP TM, PC	- Documentary review - Interviews

7.3. Appendix 3: List of the documents examined during the review

Category	Type of document	Comment
Project design	Project document/funding proposal/CEO endorsement request	+ updated RF in English
	Budget	+ budgeted co-financing by source
	Risk assessment and management plan	
	Social and Environmental Safeguards plan	
	Grievance mechanism	
	Any official strategy revision request to the initial theory of change	
Financial	Cash advance requests	
	Quarterly expenditure reports	
	Annual Audit reports	
	Budget revisions	
	Cofinancing monitoring (received and expected)	
	Project documentation from cofinancing projects	
Reporting	Quarterly progress reports	
	Half yearly progress reports	
	Annual progress implementation reports	PIR 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 + final implementation report
	Mid-term review/evaluation	
	Technical report, field visit and mission reports from PMU, at national and sub-national level	
	Technical report, field visit and mission reports from Chief Technical Advisor	
	Monitoring reports produced by project stakeholders/partners	
	Minutes of meetings from Project steering committee	
	Minutes of meetings from national and district level workshops	
	Minutes of meetings from National and regional level strategic meetings	
Contractual	Project Cooperation agreement between the donor, the accredited/implementing entity and the executing agency	
	Call for proposals for project positions and consultancies	
	TORs of consultants/subcontractors	

Category	Type of document	Comment
	Contractual agreement with other local, national and regional organizations/individuals	
	Cofinancing agreement, if relevant	
Workplan and procurement plans	Annual workplans	
	Procurement plans	
Project outputs	Baseline assessment and feasibility study	
	Reports, studies	Faisabilité pharma/cosmétique
	Communication materials: online, numerical and physical products	+ Communication and knowledge management strategy

7.4. Appendix 4: Detailed mission itinerary

321. It was acknowledged during the kick off meeting that the evaluation team would visit only two out of the three islands where the project was implemented. The evaluator and the national consultant traveled to the second island by plane.

322. The selection criteria for the second island were: i) safe travel conditions to reach the island; ii) diversity of ecosystems; iii) minimum travel duration between islands.

323. Based on these criteria and following a preliminary discussion with the project team, the evaluation team decided that Grande Comore and Anjouan will be visited. Five villages were visited in each island:

- Grande Comore (Ngazidja) island comprising Mdjoiezi, Mkazi, Nvouni (Mvouni), Pvanadjou (Vanadjou) and Bahani villages;
- Anjouan (Nzwani) island including Daji (Dagi), Kiyo, Komoni, Mremani and Adda villages.

The mission itinerary was as follows:

Date	Agenda	Team
Monday 17 June 2024	Afternoon: arrival in Comoros	Manon
Tuesday 18 June 2024	All day: Field visits in Grande Comore (Vanadjou and Bahani)	Manon and Hachim
Wednesday 19 June 2024	All day: Field visits in Grande Comore (Mkazi, Mvouni, Mdjoiezi)	Manon and Hachim
Thusday 21 June 2024	All day: Institutional meetings in Moroni	Manon and Hachim
Friday 22 June 2024	Morning: flight to Anjouan Afternoon: arrival in Anjouan	Manon and Hachim
Saturday 22 June 2024	All day: Field visits in Anjouan (Dagi, Mremani)	Manon and Hachim
Sunday 23 June 2024	All day: Field visits in Anjouan (Comoni, Kiyo, and Hadda)	Manon and Hachim
Monday 24 June 2024	All day: Institutional meetings in Mustamudu	
Tuesday 25 June 2024	Morning: flight to Grand Comore (delayed) Afternoon: arrival in Moroni	Manon and Hachim
Wednesday 26 June 2024	Morning: Institutional meetings in Moroni Evening: flight back to France	Manon

7.5. Appendix 5: Interview protocols in French

Critères d'évaluation	Question	PNUE et UGP	Partenaires de mise en œuvre	Partenaires institutionnels	Autres agences/ Autres projets	Bénéficiaires du projet
A. Pertinence stratégique						
Alignement sur les priorités et les besoins environnementaux internationaux, régionaux, nationaux et infranationaux	Dans quelle mesure le projet répondait-il aux priorités et aux besoins environnementaux mondiaux, régionaux, nationaux et infranationaux ? Dans quelle mesure le projet répondait-il aux priorités et aux besoins de la communauté en termes d'adaptation au changement climatique ?	X	X	X		X
Complémentarité avec d'autres initiatives en cours ou futures	Dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il tenu compte d'autres initiatives concomitantes ou futures sur les mêmes thèmes aux Comores et a-t-il cherché à développer des synergies entre elles ? En quoi ce projet etait-il différent ou complémentaire des autres ?	X	X	X	X	
B. Nature du contexte						
Facteurs externes	- Quels sont les facteurs externes qui ont influencé les résultats du projet ? Ont-ils été pris en compte de manière adéquate ?	X	X			
324.**C. Efficacité**						
Produits	- Le projet a-t-il réussi à produire les résultats attendus et à atteindre les objectifs fixés dans le ProDoc ? Sont-ils conformes à ce qui était initialement prévu par le projet et aux recommandations de l'évaluation à mi-parcours ? Dans quelle mesure ces produits étaient-ils utiles et appropriés pour les bénéficiaires ? Quelles sont les leçons à tirer des succès et des échecs ?	X	X	X		X
Résultats	- Dans quelle mesure les résultats attendus ont-ils été atteints ? Dans quelle mesure contribuent-il à l’atteinte de l’impact du projet ?					

Critères d'évaluation	Question	PNUE et UGP	Partenaires de mise en œuvre	Partenaires institutionnels	Autres agences/ Autres projets	Bénéficiaires du projet
	Quels sont les avantages observés en termes d'adaptation au changement climatique (pour les institutions, les moyens de subsistance, les écosystèmes et les effets de la sécheresse) ? Dans quelle mesure le projet y a-t-il contribué ?					
Probabilité d'impact	- Quel pourrait être l'impact du projet sur la société Comorienne ? Quelle est la probabilité que cela se produise ? Quels sont les facteurs en jeu ?	X	X	X		X
	- Le projet a-t-il eu des effets négatifs imprévus sur le plan environnemental, social ou économique ?	X	X	X		X
	- Dans quelle mesure le projet peut-il contribuer à l’atteinte d’objectifs globaux tels que les ODD ?	X	X	X		X
325. **D. Gestion financière**						
Décaissement	- Le taux de décaissement a-t-il été cohérent avec le plan de travail, la durée de la mise en œuvre et les résultats obtenus ? Quels ont été les défis rencontrés en matière de gestion financière ? - L'effet de levier des fonds (cofinancement) a-t-il été atteint comme prévu ? Quels ont été les mécanismes mis en place pour assurer le suivi des cofinancements ? - Le projet a-t-il respecté les exigences et le calendrier du PNUE en matière de rapports financiers et/ou d'audit, y compris en ce qui concerne la qualité et la ponctualité des rapports ?	X				
Communication entre le responsable de la gestion financière et le responsable de la gestion de projet	- Y a-t-il eu une communication efficace et transparente entre le gestionnaire de projet PNUE et le responsable financier ?	X				
326. **E.** Efficacité						

Critères d'évaluation	Question	PNUE et UGP	Partenaires de mise en œuvre	Partenaires institutionnels	Autres agences/ Autres projets	Bénéficiaires du projet
Rapport coût-efficacité	- Dans quelle mesure les résultats sont-ils obtenus de manière rentable ? - Comment et dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il amélioré son efficacité au cours du projet en termes de coûts et de délais ?	X	X			
Respect des délais	- Le calendrier et la séquence des activités ont-ils été réalisés comme prévu ? - Les retards et les extensions du projet auraient-elles pu être évitées ? Quels ont été leurs impacts sur le projet ?	X	X			
327. **F. Suivi et rapportage**						
Conception et mise en œuvre du suivi et de la budgétisation	- Le plan de suivi etait-il bien conçu et suffisant pour contrôler les résultats et suivre les progrès accomplis dans la réalisation des produits et des résultats du projet ? Les cibles fixées étaient-elles réalistes ? - Le plan de suivi était-il opérationnel et efficace pour suivre les résultats et les progrès accomplis dans la réalisation des objectifs ? Quels ont été les résultats obtenus à la fin du projet par rapport aux objectifs des Core indicators du FEM ?	X	X			
Rapportage	- Le projet a-t-il respecté le calendrier et les exigences en matière de documentation sur l'état d'avancement et de rapports de suivi, y compris en ce qui concerne la qualité et la ponctualité des rapports ?	X	X			
328. **G. Durabilité**						
Durabilité sociopolitique	- Dans quelle mesure les facteurs politiques et sociaux soutenaient-ils le développement et la continuité des résultats du projet ? - Quel a été le degré d'engagement des acteurs politiques et sociaux à l'égard du projet et de ses résultats ?	X	X	X	X	

Critères d'évaluation	Question	PNUE et UGP	Partenaires de mise en œuvre	Partenaires institutionnels	Autres agences/ Autres projets	Bénéficiaires du projet
Viabilité financière	- Dans quelle mesure les résultats du projet dépendaient-ils de ressources financières supplémentaires ?	X	X	X		
Durabilité institutionnelle	- Dans quelle mesure le projet dépendait-il de facteurs institutionnels ? - Dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il permis de renforcer les capacités institutionnelles du pays ?	X	X	X		
Mise à l’échelle et reproductibilité	- Les activités, les démonstrations et/ou les techniques ont-elles été reproduites à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur du projet, au niveau national ou international ? - Le projet a-t-il promu la réplication de ses activités et résultats ?	X	X	X	X	X
Stratégie de sortie	- Quelle a été l'efficacité des stratégies de sortie du projet et des approches de phasage ?	X	X	X	X	X
H. Facteurs influençant la performance des projets et questions transversales						
Préparation	- Des mesures appropriées ont-elles été prises pour remédier aux faiblesses de la conception du projet ou pour répondre aux changements survenus entre l'approbation du projet, son financement et sa mobilisation ?	X	X	x		
Qualité de la gestion des projets	- Quelle a été la qualité de la mise en œuvre des projets par l’agence de mise en œuvre ? - Quelle a été la qualité de l'exécution des projets par l’agence d'exécution ? - Quelle a été l'efficacité de la collaboration entre les institutions responsables de la mise en œuvre du projet ?	X	X	X		
Engagement des parties prenantes	- Dans quelle mesure les parties prenantes concernées ont-elles été impliquées dans la mise en œuvre et le suivi du projet (en particulier depuis l'examen à mi-parcours) ? Quels ont été les défis concernant l’engagement des parties prenantes au cours du projet et notamment depuis la revue à mi-parcours?	X	X	X	X	

Critères d'évaluation	Question	PNUE et UGP	Partenaires de mise en œuvre	Partenaires institutionnels	Autres agences/ Autres projets	Bénéficiaires du projet
Genre et droits de l'homme	- Dans quelle mesure la conception et le suivi du projet ont-ils pris en compte les priorités de UNEP en matière de Genre et de droits humains ? Dans quelle mesure la conception et le suivi du projet ont-ils pris en compte les droits de l'homme, l'inégalité et la différenciation entre les sexes et leur impact sur l'adaptation au changement climatique ? - Quelles sont les mesures sensibles à la dimension de genre qui ont été mises en œuvre ? Ont-elles été mises en œuvre comme prévu ? Quels ont été les résultats réels en termes de lutte contre les inégalités ?	X	X	X		X
Sauvegardes environnementales et sociales (ESS)	- Dans quelle mesure la conception et le suivi du projet ont-ils pris en compte les priorités de UNEP en matière de Sauvegardes environnementales et sociales (ESS)? Dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il contribué à réduire l'empreinte environnementale du PNUE ? - Le plan de Sauvegardes environnementales et sociales (ESS) était-il cohérent avec les produits/résultats du projet et les risques identifiés ? - Quels sont les progrès réalisés dans la mise en œuvre des mesures de gestion par rapport au plan de sauvegarde soumis à l'approbation du projet ? Des conclusions concernant l'efficacité des mesures ou des enseignements ont-ils été tirés pour faire face aux risques identifiés ?	X	X			
Appropriation et engagement du pays	- Le niveau d'implication des représentants du gouvernement/du secteur public était-il suffisant pour garantir l'appropriation des produits et des résultats du projet et la représentation de tous les groupes marginalisés et de tous les sexes ?	X	X	X		X
Communication et sensibilisation	- Un plan de communication et de gestion des connaissances a-t-il été mis en œuvre comme prévu ? Prévoyait-il des mécanismes de communication externe efficaces ? Quels ont été les défis rencontrés en matière de gestion et diffusion de la connaissance produite par le projet ? - Dans quelle mesure la communication et la gestion des connaissances ont-elles contribué à sensibiliser les parties prenantes et le grand public au projet et à son approche ?	X	X	X	X	X

7.6. Appendix 6: List of people met/interviewed, and sites visited

Focus groups

Location	Number of person	Type of stakeholders consulted
Vanadjou	Total: 16 including 5 women and 11 men	Beneficiaries (men and women), farmers, watershed committee members, mayors, agricultural technicians, village leaders, phyto-pharmaceutical cooperatives, AGEs
Bahani	Total: 5 including 5 men	
Mkazi	Total: 7 including 7 men	
Mvouni	Total mix: 10 including 4 women and 6 men Total women-only: 4	
Mjoyezi	Total: 10 including 10 men	
Daji	Total: 16 including 12 women and 4 men Total women-only: 12	
Comoni	Total: 36 including 7 women and 29 men Total women-only: 7	
Kiyo	Total: 16 including 14 women and 2 men	
Mremani	Total: 31 including 11 women and 20 men	
Mustamudu – Regional Environment Directorate team - SADJAT BOURHANE - HALIFA AHMED ABDOU - BARAKA ATTOUMANI - NAIDA AHMED ABDALLAH - AYOUBA MOHAMED	Total: 4 including 3 women and 1 man	
UNEP financial officers - Virtual - SHARON KEROSI - DAVID OCHOLLA - LINDA CHEMUTAI CHOGE	Total: 3 including 2 women and 1 man	

Individual interviews

Name	Position	Location
ABDOU ZAKI	RUTI – Grande Comore	Moroni
ELAMINE YOUSSOUF MBACHEZI	Director of the DGEF	Moroni
MAOULIDA ALHAMIDI	DRE – Grande Comore	Moroni
FOUAD MOHAMED	Director od the DNSAE	Moroni
SAINDOU KASSIM	RUTI - Anjouan	Mutsamudu
AHMED ALI GAMAO	PC	Mutsamudu
ANLAOUDDINE ABDOU	M&E expert	Moroni
IMRANE MIFTAHOU	DRA Anjouan	Mutsamudu
ABDILLAHI ALI	DRA Grande Comore	Moroni
ISMAEL BACHIROU	Chief of Staff to the Minister	Moroni
KARIMA MOUSSA	CRDE director of Mremani	Mremani
FORBES ALEXANDER	Task manager	Virtual
JOANA TALAFRE	CTA	Virtual
ABDOUL-OIHAB IBRAHIM	RAF	Virtual

Field visit with project beneficiaries

Visit type	Location
Culture fields, nurseries, poultry houses, cisterns and demonstration plots	Vanadjou, Bahani, Mkazi, Daji, Comoni
Spring heads	Mkazi, Mremani, Kiyo, Hadda
Rehabilitated CRDE	Dzahadjou
Recent important flood damages	Mjoyezi

7.7. Appendix 7: Quality of project design

A.	Operating Context		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	Section Rating: *(see footnote 2)*
1	Does the project document identify any unusually challenging operational factors that are likely to negatively affect project performance?	i)Ongoing/high likelihood of conflict?	**Yes**	Demographic growth leading to pressure on lands are identified as a source of conflicts between communities.	**S**
		ii)Ongoing/high likelihood of natural disaster?	**Yes/No**	Due to their geographical location and climate conditions, Comoros islands are prone to natural disasters such as extreme precipitation events, high winds, volcanic eruptions or earthquakes. Probability of occurrence underestimated.	
		iii)Ongoing/high likelihood of change in national government?	**Yes**	Political and institutional instability are identified as root causes of the Problem Statement. The Comorian institutional framework is qualified as "complex" although no concrete example of the said complexity is given.	
B.	**Project Preparation**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
2	Does the project document entail clear and adequate problem and situation analyses?		**Yes**	Adequate problem statement structure including: extensive context analysis, climate change description (current and future impacts), root causes and barriers, institutional & policy context, baseline analysis and gaps	**HS**
3	Does the project document include a clear and adequate stakeholder analysis, including by gender/minority groupings or indigenous peoples?		**Yes**	The project document incudes a clear an adequate stakeholder analysis identifying women as major players in natural resource management, also no proper gender analysis was conducted. The project plans to put a strong emphasis on ensuring that women are consulted and involved in project activities. Details are also given on the participation of youth and elderly.	
4	*If yes to Q3:* Does the project document provide a description of stakeholder consultation/participation during project design process? *(If yes, were any key groups overlooked: government, private sector, civil society, gendered groups and those who will potentially be negatively affected)*		**Yes**	According to section 2.5 of the project document: 1 inception workshop, a consultation mission and 1 validation workshop soliciting all project's stakeholders.	

A.	Operating Context		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	Section Rating: *(see footnote 2)*
5	Does the project document identify concerns with respect to human rights, including in relation to sustainable development? (e.g. integrated approach to human/natural systems; gender perspectives, rights of indigenous people).		**No**	N/A	
C	**Strategic Relevance**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
6	Is the project document clear in terms of its alignment and relevance to:	i) UNEP MTS, PoW and Strategic Priorities (including Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation)	**No**	UNEP Medium-Term Strategy for the 2014-2017 and UNEP Programme of Work 2016-2017 are mentioned in the project document summary without further detail about the degree of alignment. No mention of Bali Strategic Plan and South-South Cooperation.	**S**
		ii) GEF/Donor strategic priorities	**Yes**	The project document clearly describes the correspondence between the project's strategy and GEF/LDCF/SCCF Focal Area Objectives.	
		iii) Regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities?	**Yes**	The project is consistent with national priorities and plans, including for the most important: - The Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (PRGS, 2010-2015) - The Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (2015-2019) - The Forest Policy's (2010) and the Priority Action Plan for Forestry Development (PAPDF, 2011-2015) - The National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) (2006), NAP under preparation when the project was designed - The Agricultural Policy - The National Environment Policy (NEP) and the Environmental Action Plan (EAP) - The National Strategy and Action Plan for the Conservation of Biodiversity 2011-2020 - The National Action Plan to Combat Desertification (NAP)	

A.	Operating Context		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	Section Rating: *(see footnote 2)*
				- The Water Act (1994)	
		iv. Complementarity with other interventions	**Yes**	The ProDoc mentions other projects funded/implemented by other agencies (the Agricultural Value Chain Development Program funded by the IFAD, Green Climate Fund Readiness Programme) and baseline projects (FAO Country Programming Framework, Comoros Social Safety Net Project of the World Bank) with some indications on complementarity/continuity between the projects.	
D	**Intended Results and Causality**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
7	Are the causal pathways from project outputs (Availability of goods and services to intended beneficiaries) through outcomes (changes in stakeholder behaviour) towards impacts (long lasting, collective change of state) clearly and convincingly described in either the logframe or the TOC? *(NOTE if there is no TOC in the project design documents a reconstructed TOC at Review Inception will be needed)*		**Yes**	The theory of change was revised following the MTR. Causal pathways are described in the TR updated version.	**MS**
8	Are impact drivers and assumptions clearly described for each key causal pathway?		**Yes/No**	Impact drivers and assumptions are detailed only for some of the causal pathways (under component 2 and 3)	
9	Are the roles of key actors and stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, clearly described for each key causal pathway?		**No**		
10	Are the outcomes realistic with respect to the timeframe and scale of the intervention?		**Yes/No**	Outcomes 1 et 3 are realistic however, for outcome 2 it might be a bit ambitious to assume that watersheds can be fully restored within the the project timeframe.	
E	**Logical Framework and Monitoring**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
11	Does the logical framework …	i)Capture the key elements of the Theory of Change/ intervention logic for the project?	**Yes**	The main weakness of the project's results framework was the predominance of means indicators rather than results indicators, which would have been be necessary to assess the long-term impact and transformational potential of the	**MS**
		ii)Have appropriate and 'SMART' results at output level?	**Yes**		

A.	Operating Context		YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	Section Rating: *(see footnote 2)*
		iii)Have appropriate and 'SMART' results at outcome level?	**Yes**	project among stakeholders and at all level of implementation (national, island and local).	
		iv)Reflect the project's scope of work and ambitions?	**Yes**		
12	Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?		**Yes**	Baseline information were defined based on a baseline study finalized in September 2018.	
13	Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outputs and outcomes?		**Yes/No**	Targets were mainly defined except for indicators 1.3; 2.2; 3.1 (see Table 1 of the Inception report of this terminal review).	
14	Are the milestones in the monitoring plan appropriate and sufficient to track progress and foster management towards outputs and outcomes?		**Yes**	The monitoring plan is based on mid-term and end-of-term targets which are appropriate milestones for a planned 4 years project.	
15	Have responsibilities for monitoring activities been made clear?		**Yes**	See Appendix 7 & 8 of the project document. Later during the implementation, the project hired a M&E specialist and developed a monitoring plan, following the recommendations of the MTR.	
16	Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress ?		**Yes**	See Appendix 7 of the project document. The budget included M&E budget lines for punctual evaluations/audits but not for the hiring of an M&E specialist.	
17	Is the workplan clear, adequate and realistic? *(e.g. Adequate time between capacity building and take up etc)*		**Yes**	See Appendix 5 of the project document.	
F	**Governance and Supervision Arrangements**		**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
18	Is the project governance and supervision model comprehensive, clear and appropriate? *(Steering Committee, partner consultations etc.)*		**Yes**	The description of the governance arrangement described in the project document is clear and appropriate. After the MTR, the project completed the implementation team with the hiring of a M&E specialist and a communication and knowledge management officer at national level. Fifteen local technician officer were recruited to support the implementation of project's activities in every villages.	**S**
19	Are roles and responsibilities within UNEP clearly defined? *(If there are no stated responsibilities for UNEP Regional*		**Yes**	Involvement of UNEP through a TM, in coordination with a project steering committee and a project team that has been recruited (CTA, project coordinator etc).	

A.	**Operating Context**	**YES/NO**	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
	Offices, note where Regional Offices should be consulted prior to, and during, the evaluation)			
G	**Partnerships**	YES/NO	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
20	Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed? *(CHECK if partner capacity was assessed during inception/mobilisation where partners were either not known or changed after project design approval)*	**No**	No real analysis of the stakeholders capacities.	**MU**
21	Are the roles and responsibilities of external partners properly specified and appropriate to their capacities?	**No**	Responsibilities described but not accordingly to their capacities.	
H	**Learning, Communication and Outreach**	YES/NO	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
22	Does the project have a clear and adequate knowledge management approach?	**No**	Not at project design. The communication and knowledge management specialist developed a dedicated strategy following the MTR.	**MU**
23	Has the project identified appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders, including gendered/minority groups, during the project life? *If yes, do the plans build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks used by key stakeholders?*	**Yes/No**	The communication strategy identifies appropriate methods for communication with key stakeholders such as: decision-makers, community representatives, civil society organizations or technical and financial partners. However, it didn't developed proper channel for gendered/minority groups.	
24	Are plans in place for dissemination of results and lesson sharing at the end of the project? *If yes, do they build on an analysis of existing communication channels and networks?*	**Yes**	The project established an online information-sharing platform, which was no more accessible when the TR was conducted. The implementation of the communication strategy also resulted in the development of communication medias and knowledge sharing events among stakeholders.	
I	**Financial Planning / Budgeting**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
25	Are the budgets / financial planning adequate at design stage? *(coherence of the budget, do figures add up etc.)*	**No**	One major shortcoming of the original budget as the insufficient project management costs which only allowed for the recruitment of the project coordinator, the RAF and	**MS**

A.	**Operating Context**	**YES/NO**	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
			the RUTIs. In addition, this budget comprised insufficient budget amount dedicated to the travel costs between islands, which were significant for an archipelago project.	
26	Is the resource mobilization strategy reasonable/realistic? *(E.g. If the expectations are over-ambitious the delivery of the project outcomes may be undermined or if under-ambitious may lead to repeated no cost extensions)*	**Yes**	See Appendix 1 of the project document.	
J	**Efficiency**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
27	Has the project been appropriately designed/adapted in relation to the duration and/or levels of secured funding?	**No**	There is no justification on the budget allocation and the duration of the project - it is difficult to know whether a specific analysis has been done on this ratio given the capacities of the partners.	**S**
28	Does the project design make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	**Yes**	Lessons learned from the first ACCE/LDCF project and from many other baseline projects. In addition, extensive consultations have been organised during the design phase.	
29	Does the project document refer to any value for money strategies (i.e. increasing economy, efficiency and/or cost-effectiveness)?	**Yes**	Cost-effectiveness tentatively demonstrated in the prodoc. EbA cost effectiveness proven based on the literature available. Cost analyses conducted for Activity 2.2.2 and the Component 3.	
30	Has the project been extended beyond its original end date? *(If yes, explore the reasons for delays and no-cost extensions during the evaluation)*	**Yes**	1 year no cost extension - (initial duration : 4 years vs. 5years+ year implementation in total) mainly due to cyclone Keneth (2019), financial breakdown and COVID-19 outbreak (2020)	
K	**Risk identification and Social Safeguards**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
31	Are risks appropriately identified in both the TOC/logic framework and the risk table? *(If no, include key assumptions in reconstructed TOC at Evaluation Inception)*	**Yes**	Risk analysis and risk management measures detailed in the Prodoc. Climate hazard probability might have been underestimated.	**S**

A.	**Operating Context**	**YES/NO**	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:** *(see footnote 2)*
			Key assumptions identified in the reconstructed ToC.	
32	Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified and is the mitigation strategy adequate*? (consider unintended impacts)*	**Yes**	Potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of the project identified in Annex M of the Prodoc 'Checklist for Environment and Social Safeguards'.	
33	Does the project have adequate mechanisms to reduce its negative environmental foot-print? *(including in relation to project management and work implemented by UNEP partners)*	**Yes**	No negative environmental footprint anticipated. The project was expected to deliver only positive impact on the environment.	
L	**Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
34	Did the design address any/all of the following: socio-political, financial, institutional and environmental sustainability issues?	**Yes/no**	Yes, but not in detail in the prodoc.	**MS**
35	Was there a credible sustainability strategy and/or appropriate exit strategy at design stage?	**No**	Following a recommendation of the MTR, the project developed an exit and scale-up strategy at the end of the project (see final implementation report).	
36	Does the project design present strategies to promote/support scaling up, replication and/or catalytic action? *(if yes, capture this feature in the reconstructed TOC at Review Inception)*	**No**	Following a recommendation of the MTR, the project developed an exit and scale-up strategy at the end of the project (see final implementation report).	
M	**Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps**	**YES/NO**	**Comments/Implications for the review design** *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	**Section Rating:**
37	Were recommendations made by the PRC adopted in the final project design? If no, what were the critical issues raised by PRC that were not addressed.	**No**	The GEF secretariat recommended to: - elaborate on specific ways the project will seek coordination with the ongoing in country NAP process - dedicate a component for knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation - develop the specificity on the activities designed around women's specific needs, capacities, knowledge and social roles - detail the collaboration with the other ongoing GEF projects	**U**

A.	Operating Context	YES/NO	Comments/Implications for the review design *(e.g. questions, TOC assumptions and drivers, methods and approaches, key respondents etc)*	Section Rating: *(see footnote 2)*
			- clarify indicators to ensure that the project capture its high-level impacts. These recommendations have not been taken into account to any great extent.	
38	Were there any critical issues not flagged by PRC? If yes, what were they?)	**No**		**No rating applicable.**
N	**Gender Marker Score**	**SCORE**	**Comments**	**No rating applicable.**
39	What is the Gender Marker Score applied by UNEP during project approval? *(This applies for projects approved from 2017 onwards)* UNEP Gender Scoring: **0 = gender blind:** Gender relevance is evident but not at all reflected in the project document. **1 = gender partially mainstreamed:** Gender is reflected in the context, implementation, logframe, **or** the budget. **2a = gender well mainstreamed throughout:** Gender is reflected in the context, implementation, logframe, **and** the budget. **2b = targeted action on gender:** (to advance gender equity): the principle purpose of the project is to advance gender equality. **n/a = gender is not considered applicable:** A gender analysis reveals that the project does not have direct interactions with, and/or impacts on, people. Therefore, gender is considered not applicable.	1	*Reflections on whether the gender score appears appropriate.* Gender scoring: 1 Short gender analysis in the problem statement. Women consultation during PPG. Gender equity promoted in the project activities. Gender-related targets established only for certain indicators.	

7.8. Appendix 8: Quality Assessment of the Report

Review Title: Building Climate Resilience through Rehabilitated Watersheds, Forests and Adaptive Livelihoods in Comoros

Consultant: Jon Garcia et al., Baastel

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

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary Purpose: acts as a stand alone and accurate summary of the main review product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the review object • clear summary of the review objectives and scope • overall review rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the review ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic review questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: Most elements are covered, although, significantly, no summary of the ratings table is given, not reference to where the full table can be found. There is no explicit answer to the strategic question from the TOR (a few indications are provided on how the project responded to COVID) and Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: This 'summaries' of the strengths and weaknesses are substantial and longer than an Executive Summary warrants. The ratings, as presented in the context of the Executive Summary, appear more positive than the text. (e.g. Project Design, Effectiveness) and may mislead the reader (especially without the full set of ratings being presented here). For example, para 12 discusses impact but refers to indicators of reach, training and participation – these are not impact level results. The recommendations refer to 'future work in Comoros' but no indication is given on whether a) UNEP is planning any future work there or b) if there is work in a similar context where the recommendations can be actioned. Without either of these, the recommendations are not actionable.	4
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section Purpose: introduces/situates the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the review itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc)	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: The Evaluation Office of UNEP notes the high value of in kind co-finance (USD 16,480,000) provided to support this USD 5m GEF grant. The PRC approval date is not given here, nor in the Project Identification Table. GEF approval is indicated as	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the review (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been reviewed/evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the review and the key intended audience for the findings.	Oct 2026 and para 30 records the project launch in April 2017. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section is concise.	
Quality of the 'Review Methods' Section Purpose: provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of review methods, demonstrates the credibility of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of review data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) • number and type of respondents *(see table template)* • selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation • methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) • details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) • methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) • review limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) • ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. *'Throughout the review process and in the compilation of the Final Review Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.*	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The EOU table showing the sample size for different groups and response rates is not provided (i.e. table of number and type of respondents) There is no explicit ethics statement. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Para 49 is ambiguous on whether the team used the EOU Criteria Ratings Description Matrix, which aims to ensure performance ratings are assigned consistently by consultants. They refer to 'UNEP standard rating guidelines' The EOU notes that the Terminal Review included site visits to two of the implementing islands. Selection criteria for the two are given. The methods include substantial engagement with communities and appropriate methods of consulting women.	4
Quality of the 'Project' Section Purpose: describes and verifies key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are covered.	3.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
To include: • *Context:* overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses) • *Results framework*: summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • *Stakeholders:* description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics • *Project implementation structure and partners:* description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners • *Changes in design during implementation:* any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order • *Project financing:* completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	More detail was needed on the co-finance from FADC (USD 12m). It is identified as coming from the Funds for Supporting and Developing Countries funded by the World Bank but no detailed information is provided in Table 5. The USD 10m from DNSAE/FAO is identified as being the FAO country programme (2014-19) and the GCF USD 7m identified as another project. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The reader may be confused if comparing paras 66, which suggests the weaknesses in the RF continued throughout the project and para 77 d, which suggests that outcome indicators were reformulated (presumably after the MTR) The EOU notes that the outcome statements were reformulated in the TOC in Figure 5, reconstructed for the Terminal Review. Both the GEF and UNEP require TOC reconstructions to ensure that assessments of the performance of all projects can be appropriately compared. The two additional, unplanned activities are noted (para 76) – rehabilitation of two Rural Centres for Economic Development and organisation of a national symposium on reforestation best practices. However, they would need to support the adaptation pathways to make a positive contribution to results.	
Quality of the Theory of Change Purpose: to set out the TOC at Review in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include: • description of how the *TOC at Review*[74] was designed (who was involved etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Figure 4, the reconstructed TOC at MTR is not legible so cannot be compared with Figure 5, the reconstructed TOC at Terminal Review. It is therefore not possible to see if the TR team actually strengthened the articulation of the pathways between Outputs and Outcomes (as indicated in para 85)	3.5

[74] During the Inception Phase of the review process a *TOC at Review Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the review process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Review*.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• identification of key actors in the change process • summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. *The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'*. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Review report.	UNEP Evaluation Office does not use the term Medium Term Outcomes and assumes these are the same as 'Intermediate States'	
Quality of Key Findings within the Report <u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. <u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. <u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual review criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. **A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand.** In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report presents a range of evidence types including from field observations, interviews, FGDs and document review. It combines quantitative and qualitative data to support its analysis. The findings and performance ratings are consistent within the report and generally in keeping with the Ratings Criteria Descriptions Matrix. The consultant could, however, have reviewed this document a bit more closely. While there are no explicit findings statements, the conclusions, lessons and recommendations represent a solid body of learning that can be adopted in similar future work.	6
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: • Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities • Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities • Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities • Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* This section assesses the project's strategic relevance against the four sub-categories. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The EOU Criteria Ratings Description Matrix (Ratings Matrix) asks consultants to also consider the contribution of projects to these sub-categories. Some footnotes refer to the POW indicators, although these count 'reach' rather than impact. More could have been considered in Table 7 where the actual people adopting actions could have been reported against the expectations.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
during inception/mobilisation[75]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.		
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section Purpose: to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* This section summarises the strengths and weaknesses of the design Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Para 11 in the Executive Summary on the quality of project design, reads more negatively than the main body of the report. The rating of Satisfactory is generous given that the results framework, causality and monitoring are all rated Moderately Satisfactory.	3.5
Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section Purpose: to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[76]), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* This is also discussed in section 3.1.2 in the description of the project. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The EOU notes that national elections, following a known cycle is not unexpected external factor and the climate hazards are part of the justification for the project. COIVD 19 and the wildfire in a village in Grande Comore were unexpected external factors. It is noted that a small cyclone (Kenneth, 2019) hit during the project but apparently only with a minor impact on the project.	4
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section **(i) Availability of Outputs:** Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report provides a detailed analysis of performance at the output level, including consideration of the achievement of indicator targets.	6

[75] 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.

[76] Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).		
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: Purpose: to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The report provides a detailed and thoughtful analysis of the achievement of project outcomes. The section provides useful insights for learning, which should be adopted by UNEP.	6
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: Purpose: to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown • an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents • explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* This section presents a discussion of impact in relation to the objective of the project. It includes a discussion of unintended negative effects but does not adopt the preferred approach of the EOU i.e. providing a discussion of how the assumptions and drivers played out and supported the progression of results from outcome to impact levels.	4.5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used • *communication* between financial and project management staff	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* All elements are addressed, including some detail on co-finance. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The EOU table on financial management is not presented.	4
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include: • time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* The section considers all the requested elements. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):*	4
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: • quality of the monitoring design and budgeting *(including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.)* • quality of monitoring of project implementation *(including use of monitoring data for adaptive management)* • quality of project reporting *(e.g. PIMS and donor reports)* \	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The section discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the monitoring and reporting but is generous in the assignment of performance ratings. Ecosystem based approaches are a common part of UNEP's work and the indicators should have been directed towards assessing results and not just reach. In addition, monitoring is only useful if carried out regularly and in real time to support adaptive management.	4
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level). Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* This section presents interesting discussions of this important topic. It	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
• financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	includes a discussion of the exist and scale up strategy.	
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the review report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: • preparation and readiness • quality of project management and supervision[77] • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: All elements adequately addressed. Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: This section provides deeper insight into these cross-cutting factors.	6
Quality of the Conclusions Section **(i) Conclusions Narrative:** Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the performance of the evaluand as a whole, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the review process. To include: • compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project • clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report *(coverage/omissions)*: Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The report concludes with an interesting, integrated discussion of the project's performance, strengths and weaknesses. It provides insights into how the achievements were arrived at and why limitations to the project's effects persisted.	6
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses)*: The lessons are relevant for application in a similar context.	5

[77] In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: • are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit review findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) • briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful • do not duplicate recommendations		
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results. Consider how well the recommendations achieve the following: • are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when • include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions • represent a measurable performance target in order that the UNEP Unit/Branch can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: **(i)** In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. **(ii)** Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* The recommendations are addressed to future project work in the Comoros while it is not made clear if UNEP has plans for a future project. Without such a future project it is not clear how the recommendations can be actioned. Ideally, a future project where these recommendations could be taken up would have been identified within the report. Alternatively the recommendations could have been directed towards UNEP's project partners for application in projects being implemented by other agencies.	3.5
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation **(i) Structure and completeness of the report:** To what extent does the report follow the UNEP Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report *(coverage/omissions):* Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):* Several annexes, required in UNEP's standard Management-Led Terminal Reviews were not included. The most essential one was developed as part of the validation process.	4
(ii) Writing and formatting:	Final report *(strengths/weaknesses):*	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Review Report Rating
Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	The report is clearly written , including tables and supported with photos.	
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**4.7**

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

7.9. Appendix 9: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Project Title and Reference No.:

Contact Person (TM/PM):

	PLANS			
RECOMMENDATIONS	**ACCEPTED (YES/NO/PARTIALLY)**	**WHAT WILL BE DONE?**	**EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE**	**REPONSIBLE OFFICER/ UNIT/ DIVISION/ AGENCY**

7.10. Appendix 10: GEF PORTAL INPUTS

The following table contains text to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. **It will be drawn from the Review 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 X: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[78], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[79]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)* GEF core indicators Target 1 '1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt ecosystem-based climate livelihoods' and '1,000 people, of which 500 are women, adopt climate proof and innovative livelihood strategies' Target 2 '3,500 ha of watersheds are rehabilitated across the three islands' Target 3 '15 participatory management plans will be developed as a basis for IWM at local level' Target 4 '100 people (50% women) will be trained by end of project' • 2090 beneficiaries received seeds and other materials for agricultural production • 2737 ha restored including 949ha of land reforested and 1788ha landscaped with living hedges and anti-erosive techniques • 15 participatory management plans developed • 577 (68% women) managers from institutions responsible for agriculture, environment and water management trained in various aspects of watershed integrated management
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)* The project established strong local partnerships with authorities, NGOs, and communities through watershed committees. Island coordinators played a key role in maintaining trust after a 2020 interruption. National actors were involved, but the Regional Environmental Directorates lacked resources for full participation. No major stakeholder engagement issues were noted, except for the need to better include women.
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*

[78] 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)

[79] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)* The project was aligned with UN principles on gender equality. Women represented 46% of beneficiaries and were involved in decision-making, but socio-cultural barriers limited deeper engagement. A solid gender diagnostic and a formal gender action plan were missing.
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)* The project mostly complied with UNEP safeguards, but issues included the use of invasive plant species and hazardous pesticides. A grievance mechanism was introduced late in the project with no complaint registered.
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)* The Prodoc included a short Public Awareness, Communications and Mainstreaming Strategy that was partially implemented during the first half of the project. During the first 3 years of implementation, several PIRs identified shortcomings in knowledge management, documenting and sharing project approaches, experiences and lessons learned which were undermining the project's ability to ensure sustainability and replicability. Following the MTR recommendation, the project decided to strengthen its communication approach through the recruitment of a communication expert and the development of a communication strategy. Knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation activities were thus accelerated by the PMU with support from members of the P2I during the last year of implementation through the implementation of the communication strategy, the deployment of various public relations activities such as posters, workshops, collection of testimonials, development of case studies and the elaboration of the project final report. The knowledge products delivered within this framework are listed below: - The DGEF online geo-referenced platform[80], where all project documentation was published (maps, a framework on IWM, 15 participatory watershed management plans, technical feasibility studies for developing phytopharmaceuticals and phyto-cosmetics and agriculture product value chains etc); - The CRDE diploma course on integrated watershed management (IWM) and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA); - Manuals for nursery management; - The project final report; - The project also provided inputs into broader studies such as the Ecosystem-based Adaptation barriers survey[81] published on UNEP's website.

[80] URL : https://environement.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html
[81] URL : https://www.unep.org/gan/what-we-do/gathering-evidence-eba-barriers

The project also produced or had been covered by several communication elements:

- Posters and banners;
- UNEP produced articles on the project that appear on its website as well as the GEF website:
  - UNEP website[82]. (2018). "Where there used be so much there so little": the challenge of climate change in the Comoros;
  - UNEP website[83]. (2018). "When the rain comes: fighting climate change with forecasting in the Comoros";
  - UNEP website[84]. (2018). Ecosystem-based Adaptation in the Comoros;
  - Youtube video[85]. (2018). Climate Action in the Comoros;
- The New York Times[86]. (2020). 'There's No More Water': Climate Change on a Drying Island.

The terminal review did not manage to interview the project communication expert. This is a shortcoming as the communication strategy could not be discussed in depth. Overall, the TR interviewees considered the communication strategy to be adequate, although probably too ambitious, as it was developed at the beginning of the last year of the project and therefore couldn't be fully implemented. In this context, the project stakeholders qualified the project communication over time as insufficient and regretted that this staff was not included in the PMU from the beginning of the project.

Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?

Response:

Effectiveness

Over the seven outputs of the logical framework, the TR assessed that one was fully achieved while six were only partially achieved. Overall, the project accomplished significant results including:

- the establishment of geo-referenced information system on the impacts of climate change on watersheds (output 1.1);
- the deployment of a large-scale capacity building program to introduce integrated watershed management (output 1.2);
- the establishment of Island Intersectoral Platforms, the rehabilitation of two Rural Economic Development Centres, the development of five Forest Law Application Decrees (output 1.3);
- the development of watershed participatory management plans and establishment of related watershed committees and fifteen Associations de Gestion de l'Environnement (output 2.1);
- the resilient management of 2737 ha of land through reforestation, restoration, land stabilization, live fencing and the promotion of agroforestry (output 2.2);
- the support to 2700 people to increase their agricultural production (output 3.1);
- and the development of alternative climate-resilient value chains (output 3.2).

These achievements have to be nuanced by the uncertain sustainability of a significant part of the results. Furthermore, some implementation issues delayed and constrained the complete realization of some of the expected outputs, such as the 3500ha of restored land target.

- The project aimed to achieve three outcomes, with mixed success. For Outcome 1, the terminal review (TR) assessed the achievement at 70% due to concerns about the lack of capacity measurement and long-term sustainability of the results. Indeed, while progress was made with training and tools, sustainability issues, like capacity building programme, the

[82] URL : https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/where-there-used-be-so-much-there-so-little-challenge-climate-change-comoros
[83] UR: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/when-rain-comes-fighting-climate-change-forecasting-comoros
[84] URL: https://www.unep.org/ecosystem-based-adaptation-comoros
[85] URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sK5VfDEWEew
[86] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/world/africa/comoros-climate-change-rivers.html

discontinuation of multi-sectoral platforms and the accessibility of geo-referenced platform cast doubt on the project's long-term impact. Outcome 2 was partially achieved. TR rated it at 40%, noting a lack of proof of ecosystem restoration and low survival rates (47%) in reforestation efforts. Furthermore, the incomplete understanding of Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) principles, and the limited community ownership of watershed management plans contributed to the average score. Outcome 3 was considered mostly successful (75% by the TR), though there were challenges in long-term adoption of the promoted livelihood practices. Success was noted in diversified agriculture, but shortcomings in the sustainability of cooperatives and poultry farming were highlighted.

In terms of impact, the project successfully reached 28,144 direct beneficiaries, exceeding its target by 194%. Other concrete examples of the project's impact on the ground include:

- Significant progress was made in watershed and forest management, particularly through training programs. A total of 601 farmers (48% women) received training in IWM, and 156 individuals (85% women) participated in climate-smart livelihood awareness events.

Additionally, five Forest Law Application Decrees were developed, although they have not yet been politically adopted and implemented.

- The project restored 2,737 hectares of deforested or degraded land through reforestation. While this did not meet the target of 3,500 hectares, it demonstrated both environmental and social benefits.