Evaluation Office
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

UN environment programme

Common Recommendations from Evaluations of UNEP Projects Funded by the GEF (2020-2022)

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Aim

This is an internal document to summarize common recommendations that were made in project evaluations of UNEP projects funded by the GEF during 2020-22 and, by combining them with findings reflected in performance ratings, make contemporary learning available to the GEF team and UNEP. The focus is on recommendations for implementation. This study will be supported by: a) a separate synthesis of insights into project design across the house (June 2023) and b) a summary of 'best practice' examples on gender from across the house (July 2023).

Methods

1. A total of 31[1] Terminal Evaluation reports, completed during 2020-22[2], were reviewed by an experienced Evaluation Manager and the recommendations collated in an excel spreadsheet against relevant evaluation criteria. *(See Annex 1 for a list of the 9 evaluation criteria UNEP considers. Note that Quality of Project Design is being addressed in a separate study and Nature of External Context does not generate recommendations)*

2. These recommendations were analysed as a group and key elements summarised under relevant themes/ evaluation criteria. *(Note that many recommendations are specific to an individual project and of low relevance to the wider group and so, are not reflected in this study)*

3. Other experienced Evaluation Managers reviewed the summaries and verified them against their experience of managing these evaluation processes.

4. As some learning is reflected in the assignment of a performance rating, rather than in a specific recommendation, findings that have been seen to commonly occur are also included. The source of the insight ('recommendation' or 'criterion learning') is noted.

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1 A total of 39 GEF projects had evaluation processes completed during 2020-22 but 8 of them had project-specific recommendations, the nature of which could not be considered applicable to a broader context

2 The rate at which evaluation processes were completed was slower than average during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic. For GEF funded projects the Evaluation Office completed 17 evaluation reports in 2020; 11 in 2021 and 11 in 2022.

Contents

The material is presented by evaluation criteria, following a sequence from implementation through to results as follows:

Criterion	Sub-criteria
A. Factors Affecting Performance:	i. Preparation and readiness ii. Quality of project management and supervision iii. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation iv. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality v. Environmental, Social and Economic Safeguards (relatively new sub-category, recommendations not provided in this study) vi. Country ownership and drivenness vii. Communication and public awareness
B. Monitoring and Reporting	
C. Financial Management	
D. Efficiency	
E. Strategic Relevance	
F. Effectiveness	i. Provision of outputs ii. Achievement of outcomes iii. Likelihood of Impact
G. Sustainability	

A. Factors Affecting Performance

i. Preparation and readiness

Recommendations



- More thorough capacity assessments are required of the proposed partner organisations at the project design/inception stages to: a) determine the level of capacity of project partners and b) ensure that the capacity and readiness in a given country is sufficient to implement the project effectively within the timeframe of the project.
- Ensure that the local service provision has been properly assessed during project design and is reviewed during project inception.
- Confirm, at project design/inception stages, that the results framework developed during the PPG phase has reliable baselines and specific targets for monitoring of results. In cases where baselines are not available, or not finalized at the time of project approval/ CEO Endorsement, it is recommended to put the baseline as 'not available' and define targets on the basis of/in direct connection to the programmed outputs.
- Where projects have socio-economic change as an outcome, there should be clear documentation of pre- project states.

Criterion Learning



- The Inception Workshop, supported by the Inception Report, is critical for confirming any adjustments to the project design, results and/or partnerships. This is particularly where the implementing country/ies were either not known during project design or changed after CEO Endorsement.
- Lengthy delays are often observed after CEO Endorsement, mainly due to time required to: a) sign MOU/agreements, b) disburse funds and c) recruit project staff at partner level. This could be reflected more accurately in the project duration at proposal/approval stage.

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ii. Quality of project management and supervision

Recommendations



- Review and/or enforce the guidance on storage of key project documentation and ensure it is comprehensive and clear in terms of which key documents must be kept, where they should be kept and who is responsible for their compilation and storage at the end of a project and beyond (i.e. institutionalisation of project memory and documentation). Even in cases where a terminal performance assessment is being carried out long after the project end date, one would expect critical documents to have been stored at an institutional level (e.g. all country progress and annual reports, co-financing reports, all project steering committee reports, contracts with countries, documentation and information regarding in-country implementation, workshop reports, etc.)
- Strengthen the institutionalisation of project memory and documentation. Improve ease of access to project materials and ensure transfer of responsibility for post-project access to project documents and/or learning materials.
- Develop and enforce a staff handover process to enable the subsequent project management (within both the IA and EA) to continue the project in an informed way and without delays. High levels of staff turnover in the project management role are not uncommon as individuals pursue their own career development; also, projects are regularly extended, and staff move on to other opportunities. When staff leave or move, project information should not be leaving with them; there ought to be institutional retainment of critical project information to allow for a smoother transition.
- Improve project reporting for projects that are jointly implemented, ensuring that when UNEP is the lead agency it retains both consolidated and disaggregated data. For example, a project that is co-implemented by UNEP and UNDP may have separate PIRs throughout the project, with each Implementing Agency accounting for its own responsibilities both in terms of project activities as well as financing; this approach makes accountability for, and the evaluation of, the intervention difficult as information is not always consolidated.
- It is recommended that Portfolio Managers should not take on the role of Task Manager as it compromises the quality control mechanisms. Where Portfolio Managers are also Task Managers, this introduces a conflict of interest as there is no independent/second reviewer.

Criterion Learning



- Clarify and enforce UNEP's interpretation of 'major' and 'minor' amendments to results in a way that is a) consistent with the requirements for PRC-Approved projects and b) can be used to confirm that GEF guidance on the approval of project design/results changes is being followed.
- Require Task Managers to ensure that any amendments (even those not considered 'major') to results, indicators and targets are clearly reported in the PIR reports. This is because the recording of results, including indicators and targets, is often not consistent between the CEO Endorsement (table B Project Framework), Logical Framework (Annex A), Tracking Tool (for GEF-5 and before) and the PIR reports. A great deal of time is lost in confirming the results, indicators and targets prevailing at the end of the project and ensuring that UNEP (for minor) and the GEF (for major) have approved any changes.
- Ensure that the carrying out of supervision missions is being tracked and either a) enforced or b) justified when they do not take place. While the GEF requires an annual supervision mission, if there are valid reasons why such a visit could not take place, this should be recorded.
- For internally executed GEF projects, examples have occurred in which a) the implementing and executing unit are in the same Division (i.e. under the line management of the same Division Director) and b) the named UNEP Project Manager of a PRC-Approved project is the same person as the named GEF Project Manager (i.e. the representative of the Executing Agency), where the GEF grant is contributing to that PRC-Approved project. Both of these instances call into question whether the GEF guidance on firewalls/no conflict of interest, are being adhered to.

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iii. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

Recommendations



- Strengthen the quality of stakeholder analyses during project design (i.e. ensure all groups involved in driving the Theory of Change are identified and their roles made clear, as well as the intended beneficiaries, both direct and indirect). These should be revised during the project inception/mobilisation periods. The absence of critical stakeholders during the project lifetime has a significantly adverse effect on project implementation and sustainability of results.
- Ensure that the stakeholders who should be engaged in the project (i.e. in terms of interest, commitment, knowledge, decision power as well as those who should benefit) are selected on a targeted basis and that the selection criteria are documented and shared. This includes selection criteria for demonstration/implementation sites.
- Highlight the value of the strong involvement of civil society, including community-based and youth organizations, in the implementation of projects that include pilot activities. This is because the aim of a pilot is to demonstrate success such that the results can be shared with others in scaling up and replication processes.
- Engage with the private sector in creative ways, building on their interests in corporate social responsibility (social value approaches), where applicable.

Criterion Learning



- Evaluation Office should amend its tools to require consultants to provide more detail on the stakeholders who have been a) approached to contribute to an evaluation/review and b) who responded during an evaluation/review.

iv. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

Recommendations



- To ensure that gender equality and human rights dimensions are considered during project implementation, it is recommended that these dimensions are included not only in the project design, but also in all work planning, and that appropriate indicators are developed in the project results framework to track their implementation.
- Responsiveness to gender issues, human rights, and vulnerability or marginalization of indigenous groups, should be enhanced and monitored in all projects. Projects often do not integrate specific gender considerations or aspects of human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples into the results framework as per the UN guidelines, even though commitments on the same are frequently made within the project design documents.
- Task Managers should develop/provide guidance on reporting disaggregated data right from the project start. This may include guidelines for reporting statistical data on the number of participants participating in project activities disaggregated by stakeholder type (government, business, academia, NGO), gender, representation of vulnerable groups, representation of human rights groups etc.
- Task Manager to ensure that the project's strategy for ensuring gender equality, participation of vulnerable groups and responsiveness to human rights is clear and shared from the project start.

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Criterion Learning



- Being responsive to human rights and gender may not involve additional costed activities and may, therefore, not be very clear in the workplan or budget. They will, however, need conscious effort and action and so should be noted in any project plans and included in the Theory of Change[3] as either a Driver (if the project document includes commitments on gender equality) or an Assumption (if only the UN commitment to human right holds).

v. Environment, social and economic safeguards

This is a relatively new sub-category and has not yet generated a substantial body of recommendations. The Evaluation Office has designed a tool to assess the monitoring and management of Safeguards Plans (See Annex 2).

Recommendation



- Ensure that assumptions about the 'neutrality' of a project's effect is not forming a basis for concluding, prematurely, that a project would not cause negative effects. For example, whereas the nature of some projects may give little opportunity to influence gender disaggregated approaches, the cause-and-effect dynamics of the project's outcomes may be socially gendered or may bring about human rights risks that such a project must address.

vi. Country ownership and driven-ness

No recommendations specific to this sub-category appeared in this sample of reports.

Criterion Learning

- In a study on the relationship between project design and effectiveness (Biennial Synthesis Report, 2018-19, see Annex 3), it was apparent that country ownership and driven-ness may be a factor that overcomes project design weaknesses to still achieve high levels of effectiveness.

vii. Communication and public awareness

Recommendation



- Projects should ensure that they integrate a methodical communication strategy with a specific budget allocation for its implementation. This is because despite projects often producing high-quality studies, maps, plans, models and tools etc, these communication products are not always available to the intended audiences and/or the general public.
- For programmatic synergy, it is important to develop internal information exchange strategies between projects (e.g. at Sub-programme levels, or among smaller thematic groups). Learning that may be of importance across programmes is being lost due to inadequate communication and/or systems thinking across the institution.
- Case studies are a powerful tool for creating awareness and promoting replication and/or scale up of results. Consider including within the design of a project's case study, a "how to design and scale-up" guidance for interested parties to follow.

3 The Evaluation Office is already requiring consultants to incorporate an 'equality' Driver/Assumption in the reconstructed TOCs produced during an evaluation process.

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- Communicate as soon as possible to stakeholders, inside and outside the sphere of the project, the main results of the project. Share key lessons from project implementation as factsheets to facilitate the uptake and share them as part of the wider UNEP network and among policymakers.

Criterion Learning



- The realistic timing of developing communication products within the project implementation timeframe requires more attention and their role within the Theory of Change adjusted accordingly. Communication and knowledge sharing products are often produced in the latter stages of the project and are then either not disseminated or cannot play the catalytic/ awareness raising role intended in the TOC.
- The continued provision or use of communication products or platforms (e.g. websites, database etc) needs to be considered on a regular basis within project exit strategies (e.g. where communications materials will be housed, how they will be updated, what will happen to a project website etc)

B. Monitoring and Reporting (Monitoring for results /causality)

Recommendation



- Highlight to Task Managers the potential utility of the PIR report as a tool to reflect on the ways in which the planned outputs are integrally generating the anticipated outcomes. Although the PIR reporting format is adequate for the purpose of recording the project's progress, the way in which this template is used for reporting can often resemble a listing of activities and outputs, without consideration of their contribution in the Theory of Change. Even where project documentation is exhaustive, it can be difficult to extract information on a project's contribution towards results.
- Extend project reporting beyond that of deliverables and milestones, to include learnings and outcomes, including from less successful as well as more successful project elements.
- Monitor and report in a more granular, cumulative (rather than just incremental) manner, with specific details that relate activities and outputs directly to the outcome indicators mentioned in the project's results framework.
- Ensure that the narrative in monitoring reports displays evidence and comprehension of the ways in which programmed outputs are driving the envisaged outcomes (i.e. better articulation of the causal linkages), as well as how the project is being managed adaptively to achieve the outcomes.
- Identify practical and innovative ways to obtain evidence for attributing results to the project through feedback from beneficiaries on project performance. For example, greater use should be made of: photographic material as a means to record progress or change, social mobilization events and important meetings; interviews or quotes from key stakeholders /beneficiaries as a means to obtain feedback and corroborate results; meeting minutes or notes (that identify attendants) as a clear 'means of verification' for decisions taken, information shared, and feedback, requests or suggestions received.

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Criterion Learning

- Whereas reporting is a descriptive process (what has happened), monitoring should a) track progress against workplans, indicators and targets and b) frequently result in adaptive management. More awareness that monitoring is a comparison between what has happened vs what was planned, is needed.
- Baseline data is often non-existent, incomplete or recorded in a way that does not support a pre- and post-project comparison against key project performance indicators. This area of knowledge would benefit from further training, with which the Evaluation Office could assist.

C. Financial Management

Recommendation

Financial reporting

- Harmonise the financial reporting templates between GEF and UNEP to allow for more consistent financial reporting against project outcomes and/or components. The GEF and the Evaluation Office of UNEP require financial reporting against Outcomes or components, however, UNEP financial reporting template does not always allow for this breakdown, making it difficult to assess the correlation between project expenditure and expected outcomes, at the evaluation stage.
- Improve guidance for/ compliance with audit requirements for GEF projects, including the ones under National implementation modality.

Management of co-finance resources

- It is typical in GEF projects for project partners to pledge in-kind support because GEF requires a certain amount of co-financing in their project proposals (up to a certain minimum ratio), meant to secure ownership of the executing and implementing agencies and recipient countries. Experiences however indicate a need to develop protocols on managing project co-finance due to insufficient clarity on the definitions, methods for estimation (at design and implementation), standard procedures for monitoring and reporting of co-financing.
- Co-finance accounting and reporting should be a meaningful exercise. Making co-finance contributions visible has two beneficial aspects: (i) it develops a narrative that reflects the incremental nature of the GEF investment and the sustainability of project results; (ii) indicates which co-financier supports which project results; and (iii) highlights the strengths and/or areas of interest of individual co-financiers, especially when these involve the private sector.
- GEF and UNEP should establish concise guidelines that provide clarity and consistency with regard to how projects should manage both cash and in-kind co-finance resources (valuing, budgeting, verifying, reporting, etc.). A template for accounting for co-financed resources, that requires more information about how it has been calculated and on what basis, should be provided as part of project preparation.
- GEF during its CEO Review should question co-finance resources which appear unrealistic or not directly related to the GEF project workplan and delivery. Specific questions could be provided for which answers must be given.
- To increase the accountability of project partners, GEF should require proof of in-kind contributions, given that these types of commitments influence the GEF's decision-making when project funding decisions are made.
- Co-finance commitments at project approval need to be followed through with co-finance reports signed by each institution concerned. Countries should be required to report on both cash and in-kind contributions with supporting narrative as to how these have contributed towards the objectives of the project.

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- Raise the visibility of partner contributions, by documenting at a more detailed level, their co-finance contributions towards project activities. It is important to show how organizations, institutions, governments and other national/local stakeholders actively support projects with their finances, time, human resources, and logistics (including synergies created with other national initiatives). This could also help to raise the interest of new donors to support the sustainability/durability of results following project closure

Criterion Learning



- Large amounts are recorded in GEF projects as 'co-finance'. The differentiation between cash co-finance and in-kind co-finance is important and both need to be accounted for. While cash co-finance can be proven through financial transaction documents, in-kind co-finance is more complex and requires further guidance in terms of definitions, means of valuation, recording provision and validation.

D. Efficiency

Recommendations



- Match the project time frame and budget (at design) to the activities that were planned to be implemented more realistically. Unjustified[4] no-cost extensions of GEF projects is quite common where budget amounts and/or time allocated for certain project components is insufficient to meet country needs.
- The resource mobilization strategy and the requested budget should always be aligned with the ambition of the project to be implemented. Unrealistic resource mobilization results in a situation where either the project outcomes are not ambitious enough to fully utilize the allocated budget, or the costing of project work is not accurate.
- Acknowledge the challenges (and long timeframes) inherent in adopting national policy, legislation and regulations. Projects that require the adoption of new policies and/or enactment of legislation should preferably be phased/ staggered, such that more practical implementation targets could be defined and executed within a 'normal' project period.
- [Projects that involve a combination of on ground activities, research activities and policy development] Consideration should be given to phasing/staggering the intervention (7-10 years is recommended), with funds provided in phases and dependent on outcomes. This would provide more effective opportunity to see the actual uptake by national governments (e.g. evidence of policy adoption and operationalization) and by communities (e.g. evidence of project incentives being utilized).
- [Projects that involve several stakeholders and/or that are under a national implementation modality] Provide sufficient time in the project design to allow for direct engagement at the national levels to heighten awareness and provide greater opportunities for the preparation and adoption of policies, legislation and regulations.
- [Biodiversity conservation projects] Ensure longer project duration of at least five years, with three to four years of on-site activities, to allow institutional building on the ground. Where project timeframes are constrained to 4 years, the expected accomplishments, number of countries, partners and/or scope of the project should be realistic and consistent with the available time and budget.

4 In some instances unpredicted external factors (e.g. civil strife) many interrupt project delivery and, in such cases, a no cost extension may be justified.

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Criterion Learning



- No cost extensions are often caused by delays in the start-up of the project and a more realistic estimate of the time needed could avoid some of them. It is noted that a 'no cost' extension has a substantial cost to both the IA and EA as the project support costs cannot be increased although the implementing timeframe has been extended.
- The sign off mechanism by UNEP for no costs extensions is not very visible or accessible during evaluation. Clearer guidance on who may approve a GEF project extension and what documentation should be available would be appreciated.

E. Strategic Relevance

No recommendations specific to this criterion appeared in this sample of reports.

Criterion Learning



- The Evaluation Office needs to raise awareness that this criterion includes a sub-category on 'complementarity', which is aligned with the most recent OECD-DAC criterion 'Coherence'. It refers to 'how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[5], 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' (Evaluation Office Terms of Reference).
- Commitments on collaboration/sharing of information with other projects made within the project design documents are assessed under either the sub-category 'Complementarity' (if referring to design/inception phase) or 'Efficiency' (if referring to implementation phase).

F. Effectiveness

i. Availability of outputs

Recommendations



- Review the logical frameworks at project design to ensure that it reflects what the project really intends to deliver. This applies to instances where certain project activities are found to be ineffective in contributing to the desired outcomes.
- Ensure coherence between project components, and when necessary, review and adjust the results during implementation. Even where programmed activities are completed, there are instances where there is no clear indication that all of the planned Outputs have achieved/will achieve the intended Outcomes.
- Project Management should, based on feedback from the project's monitoring system, intensify efforts towards those Outputs that are deemed most critical to producing the causal changes needed to achieve Impact (i.e. adopt a more results-oriented approach)

5 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.

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Criterion Learning

- The Evaluation Office needs to raise awareness that under 'Availability of Outputs' evaluation consultants are required to assess:
  - Programme outputs being made available to the target users/beneficiaries
  - Timeliness of provision
  - Quality/utility of the outputs to identified users
- There are instances where outcome statements are formulated either without a verb or with a verb that does not reflect uptake, application or adoption of outputs (as per UNEP definitions and international standards). For example, improved understanding, shared knowledge, an item developed etc are output level verbs. Outcome level verbs denote action such as adopted, capacity demonstrated, an item used etc. In addition, the Evaluation Office still finds indicators associated with outcomes that replicate project outputs. This is having to be adjusted through the reconstruction of the TOC.

ii. Achievement of outcomes

Recommendations

- Weak project designs that fail to capture the uptake/adoption/application of project Outputs, cannot effectively assess the project progress towards achieving its expected Outcomes. This transition needs to be supported with complete and robust monitoring systems.

Criterion Learning

- Outcome statements are not formulated in a way that is consistent with UNEP's Definitions of Results[6]. Greater attention to the use of appropriate verbs which reflect action or uptake would be a great step forwards. Such verbs could include: demonstrated, adopted, applied, replicated, endorsed etc. They should reflect action by an intended user.

iii. Likelihood of Impact

No recommendations specific to this sub-category appeared in this sample of reports.

Criterion Learning

- The Evaluation Office needs to raise awareness that the Likelihood of Impact is assessed using a decision-making tree that considers the extent to which:
  - outcomes have been achieved
  - assumptions and drivers are being seen to 'hold' (i.e. are contributing to the project's results emerging or developing)
- The project objective is not a results statement per se, but rather describes the projects intentions (strategic, developmental etc). It is reflected across the TOC, typically at project outcome, intermediate state and/or impact levels.

6 The definition of a project outcome is universally understood as the uptake or adoption of outputs. UNEP formalized its own articulation of the definition of a project outcome, along with other results terminology, in 2019.

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G. Sustainability (Sustainability of project results)

Recommendations



- Projects often lack mechanisms or budget for monitoring results beyond the [funded] implementation period. Where no clear exit strategy has been developed, there will also be no clear process for the replication and/or upscaling of the intervention. Even in cases where a project has demonstrated to a certain degree that higher-level / longer-term Outcomes have been/are likely to be achieved, the momentum can only be sustained if there is an exit strategy that allows for replication/upscale to other parts of the country/region.
- Improve connections between the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and other formal committees during the project and encourage scheduled post-project engagement where possible (e.g. through the MoUs/TORs for those who will sit on such committees). This is because national governments often struggle to provide continued support and guidance after a project has finished. PSCs also rarely meet post-project.
- (Similar to above) Pay attention in exit strategies to the establishment or integration of the steering committee into relevant existing structures after project end. Where possible, it is important to ensure that the project National Steering Committees are incorporated into existing relevant national structures, or - if such a structure does not exist - to encourage such a structure to be established.

Criterion Learning



- Very few projects have exit strategies. The template for PRC-Approved Projects requires an exit strategy, but it appears (as at May 2023) that the GEF project proposal templates do not require one. UNEP is still strongly advised to require exit strategies within GEF project designs.

H. Other Topics

Recommendations



- Enabling Activities (EA) can also benefit from the use of a Theory of Change (TOC) in their design and implementation, even when the budget is below one million US dollars. These investments can, and are bringing, transformative changes on the ground (especially when they fill a critical gap) that may not be formally captured or communicated, due to the way their implementation, causal changes and results are being monitored. Applying the TOC approach would enable project management to identify and set up systems to monitor those higher-level results to which EAs are contributing.

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Annex 1: UNEP Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria
A. Strategic Relevance 1. Alignment to UNEP's MTS, POW and strategic priorities 2. Alignment to Donor/Partner strategic priorities 3. Relevance to regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities 4. Complementarity with relevant existing interventions
B. Quality of Project Design
C. Nature of External Context
D. Effectiveness 1. Availability of outputs 2. Achievement of project outcomes 3. Likelihood of impact
E. Financial Management 1 Adherence to UNEP's policies and procedures 2 Completeness of project financial information 3 Communication between finance and project management staff
F. Efficiency
G. Monitoring and Reporting 1. Monitoring design and budgeting 2. Monitoring of project implementation 3. Project reporting
H. Sustainability 1. Socio-political sustainability 2. Financial sustainability 3. Institutional sustainability
I. Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues 1. Preparation and readiness 2. Quality of project management and supervision 2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency: 2.2 Partners/Executing Agency: 3. Stakeholders participation and cooperation 4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality 5. Environmental and social safeguards 6. Country ownership and driven-ness 7. Communication and public awareness
Overall Project Rating

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ANNEX 2: GEF funded Projects Contributing to this Study

Evaluation Completed in 2020 (16/17):

1331 - Demonstrating Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability of Environmentally Sound and Locally Appropriate Alternatives to DDT for Malaria Vector Control in Africa

2095 - Sustainable Management of the Water Resources of the La Plata Basin with Respect to the Effects of Climate Variability and Change

2546 - Demonstration of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT and Strengthening of National Vector Control Capabilities in Middle East and North Africa (DDT MENA)

2597 - Cogen for Africa

3349 - Establishment of Efficient and Effective Data Collection And Reporting Procedures for Evaluating the Continued need of DDT for Disease Vector Control - Global

3403 - Kalahari-Namib Project: Enhancing Decision-Making Through Interactive Environmental Learning and Action in the Molopo-Nossob River Basin in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa

3801 - Strengthening the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions (India)

4091 - Capacity Building for Access and Benefit Sharing and Conservation and Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plants (Ethiopia)

4141 - Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones of Tanzania LDL (4C44)

Implementation of Concrete Adaptation Measures to Reduce Vulnerability of Livelihoods and Economy of Coastal Communities of Tanzania - AFB (2G48)

4512 - Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center

4930 - Enhancing the Conservation Effectiveness of Seagrass Ecosystems Supporting Globally Significant Populations of Dugongs Across the Indian And Pacific Ocean Basins

4937 - Strengthening Law Enforcement Capabilities to Combat Wildlife Crime for Conservation and Sustainable Use of Species in South Africa (target: Rhinoceros)

4948 - Technology Needs Assessment Phase II - TNA

5683 - Assisting Non-LDC Developing Countries with Country-Driven Processes To Advance National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

5774 - Advancing the Nagoya Protocol in Countries of the Caribbean Region

5776 - Supply Change: Securing Food, Sustaining Forests

Project evaluations that were reviewed but did not generate any recommendations of relevance to other projects:

5150 - Delivering the Transition to Energy Efficient Lighting in Chile (Filed in 2020 Reports)

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Evaluations Completed in 2021 (7/11):

3722 - Improving Brazilian Capacity to Conserve and Use Biodiversity Through Information Management and Use - SibbR

4066 - Pacific POPs Release Reduction Through Improved Management of Solid And Hazardous Wastes

4139 - Market Transformation For Energy Efficient Lighting in Morocco

5409 - Development of a Plan for Global Monitoring of Human Exposure to and Environmental Concentrations of Mercury

5648 - Global Project On the Implementation of Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTRs) as a tool for POPs Reporting, Dissemination and Awareness Raising for Belarus, Cambodia, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Moldova and Peru

5662 - Defining and Demonstrating Best Practices for Exchange of Information on Chemicals in Textile Products

5698 - Sustainable Land Management and Climate Change Mitigation Co-Benefits" (SLM-CC)

Project evaluations that were reviewed but did not generate any recommendations of relevance to other projects:

4022 - Implementation Of National Biosafety Framework of Bangladesh (Filed in 2021 Reports)

3348 - POPs Monitoring, Reporting and Information Dissemination Using Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTR I) (Filed in 2021 Reports)

3646 - Implementation Of National Biosafety Framework for Lesotho (Filed in 2021 Reports)

9675 - Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) Global Coordination Platform (Filed in 2021 Reports)

Evaluations Completed in 2022 (8/11):

3808 - Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use for Improved Human Nutrition and Well-Being

5237 - Enabling South Africa to Prepare Its Third National Communication (3NC) and Biennial Update Report to the UNFCCC ("South Africa (TNC, BUR1, BUR2 and BUR3)

4150 - Mainstreaming Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Use in Sri Lankan Agro-Ecosystems for Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change

4259 - The GEF Earth Fund: Conservation Agreements Private Partnership Platform (CAPPP)

4934 - Enhancing Capacity Knowledge and Technology Support to Build Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Developing Countries (EbA South)

5201 - Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE): Conserving Earth's Most Irreplaceable Sites for Endangered Biodiversity

5615 - Building Capacity for LDCS to Participate Effectively in Intergovernmental Climate Change Processes (LDC Negotiators)

9817 - (associated with 9823, 9824, 9822, 9832) Support to Eligible Parties to Produce the Sixth National Report to

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the CBD 6NR Includes five CBD 6NR projects: - Pacific (GEF 9823),- Africa-1 (GEF 9817), - Africa-2 (GEF 9824), Europe, CIS and Mongolia (GEF 9822), Global (GEF 9832)

Project evaluations that were reviewed but did not generate any recommendations of relevance to other projects:

4167 - LGGE Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Buildings in Jamaica (Filed in 2022 Reports)

4171 - Energy for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Buildings (Filed in 2022 Reports)

5825 - Applying Landscape and Sustainable Land Management (L-SLM) for Mitigating Land Degradation and Contributing to Poverty Reduction in Rural Areas" – Georgia (Filed in 2022 Reports)

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Annex 3: Excerpt From Biennial Synthesis Report, 2018-19

3.3.1. Relationship between Quality of Project Design and Effectiveness Ratings

84. UNEP's interest lies in strengthening its results. From an evaluation perspective this means, in the first instance, improving performance ratings against Effectiveness criteria, especially in the achievement of outcomes. A member of the evaluation team undertook a study into whether the quality of project design (as reflected in the ratings awarded by evaluation consultants during the evaluation process) could be said to influence Effectiveness ratings (both at an overall level and also at the levels of outputs, outcomes and the likelihood of impact).

85. The study found, based on a sample of 49 project evaluations carried out in 2018 and 2019, that there was no statistical correlation between quality of design and any aspect of effectiveness. What this suggests is that there are several factors influencing effectiveness and that the quality of project design is not, on its own, a strong enough factor to determine the level of effectiveness.

86. Although no statistical correlation could be found, frequency patterns show that the predictive power of quality of project design ratings is stronger in relation to outputs and gradually weakens in relation to the likelihood of impact (i.e. in 86% of cases ratings at output level are the same or better than the quality of project design rating; in 82% of cases the ratings at outcome level are the same or better than the quality of project design rating and for the likelihood of impact, 71%).

87. In order to gain further insight into other influential factors the study looked at exceptional cases, particularly those few where the rating for the quality of project design was low but ratings for effectiveness were relatively high and vice versa. It found that political will and country ownership are critical factors. In one case where the project design lacked a complete logical framework, had no theory of change, no stakeholder analysis etc. the government was a strong driving force throughout the project and strong results were achieved. On the other hand, a project with a solid design failed to realise the expected level of effectiveness largely because the project's ambitions were a poor match for the country's capacity and there was instability among, and a lack of coherent support from, government parties.

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Annex 4: Assessment of Planning and Management of Environmental and Social Safeguards[7] by the Evaluand[8]

Objectives:

i. To assess sufficiency in planning for [Environmental and Social] Safeguards during project design

ii. To assess management responsiveness to Environmental and Social Risks during project implementation

Part I

To be completed at the Evaluation Inception Report stage

Step 1: Identification of Safeguard Standards deemed relevant to the project

Safeguard Standards (SS) deemed relevant to the project	Identified at project design[9] Y/N	Identified at project implementation[10] Y/N	Identified at evaluation Y/N	Notes
SS 1: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Sustainable Natural Resource Management	N			
SS 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks	Y	Y		
SS 3: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency			Y	
SS 4: Community Health, Safety and Security	N			
SS 5: Cultural Heritage				
SS 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement				
SS 7: Indigenous Peoples				
SS 8: Labour and working conditions				

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7 GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards was approved in 2018 (updated in 2019), for identifying and addressing environmental and social risks and impacts in GEF-financed projects and programs. UNEP established its safeguard policy in early 2015 and operationalized it in 2017. In UNEP, the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) helps to promote human well-being and the protection of the environment. UNEP screens and categorizes proposed programme and project activities using the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF), introduced in 2019, to identify potential environmental and social risks and impacts. The ESSF was revised in 2020; subsequently, tools, templates, guidance notes and reference materials have been developed.

8 Project/ Programme under Evaluation

9 E.g. Project document, CEO Endorsement, etc.

10 E.g. GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Mid-term Review, etc.

Step 2: Identification of Risks under each Safeguard Standard deemed relevant to the project

Risks should be identified only for those Safeguards Standards identified with 'Y' in any of the columns in Step 1 above.

All other Safeguard Standards tables should be deleted at this point.

SS 1: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Sustainable Natural Resource Management

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
1.1	conversion or degradation of habitats (including modified habitat, natural habitat and critical natural habitat) or losses and threats to biodiversity and/or ecosystems and ecosystem services?				
1.2	adverse impacts specifically to habitats that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or recognized as protected by traditional local communities and/or authoritative sources (e.g. National Park, Nature Conservancy, Indigenous Community Conserved Area, (ICCA); etc.)?				
1.3	conversion or degradation of habitats that are identified by authoritative sources for their high conservation and biodiversity value?				
1.4	activities that are not legally permitted or are inconsistent with any officially recognized management plans for the area?				
1.5	risks to endangered species (e.g. reduction, encroachment on habitat)?				
1.6	activities that may result in soil erosion, deterioration and/or land degradation?				
1.7	reduced quality or quantity of ground water or water in rivers, ponds, lakes, other wetlands?				
1.8	reforestation, plantation development and/or forest harvesting?				
1.9	support for agricultural production, animal/fish production and harvesting				
1.10	introduction or utilization of any invasive alien species of flora and fauna, whether accidental or intentional?				
1.11	handling or utilization of genetically modified organisms?				
1.12	collection and utilization of genetic resources?				

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SS 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
2.1	improving resilience against potential climate change impact beyond the project intervention period?	Y			
2.2	areas that are now or are projected to be subject to natural hazards such as extreme temperatures, earthquakes, extreme precipitation and flooding, landslides, droughts, severe winds, sea level rise, storm surges, tsunami or volcanic eruptions in the next 30 years?	Y			
2.3	outputs and outcomes sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change (e.g. changes in precipitation, temperature, salinity, extreme events)?		Y		
2.4	local communities vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and disaster risks (e.g. considering level of exposure and adaptive capacity)?				
2.5	increases of greenhouse gas emissions, black carbon emissions or other drivers of climate change?				
2.6	Carbon sequestration and reduction of greenhouse emissions, resource-efficient and low carbon development, other measures for mitigating climate change?				

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SS 3: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
3.1	the release of pollutants to the environment due to routine or non-routine circumstances with the potential for adverse local, regional, and/or transboundary impacts?				
3.2	the generation of waste (both hazardous and non-hazardous)?	N	N	Y	
3.3	the manufacture, trade, release, and/or use of hazardous materials and/or chemicals?				
3.4	the use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs? (e.g. DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the Montreal Protocol, Minamata Convention, Basel Convention, Rotterdam Convention, Stockholm Convention)?				
3.5	the application of pesticides or fertilizers that may have a negative effect on the environment (including non-target species) or human health?				
3.6	significant consumption of energy, water, or other material inputs?				

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SS 4: Community Health, Safety and Security

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
4.1	the design, construction, operation and/or decommissioning of structural elements such as new buildings or structures (including those accessed by the public)?				
4.2	air pollution, noise, vibration, traffic, physical hazards, water runoff?				
4.3	exposure to water-borne or other vector-borne diseases (e.g. temporary breeding habitats), communicable or noncommunicable diseases?				
4.4	adverse impacts on natural resources and/or ecosystem services relevant to the communities' health and safety (e.g. food, surface water purification, natural buffers from flooding)?				
4.5	transport, storage use and/ or disposal of hazardous or dangerous materials (e.g. fuel, explosives, other chemicals that may cause an emergency event)?				
4.6	engagement of security personnel to support project activities (e.g. protection of property or personnel, patrolling of protected areas)?				
4.7	an influx of workers to the project area or security personnel (e.g. police, military, other)?				

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SS 5: Cultural Heritage

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
5.1	activities adjacent to or within a Cultural Heritage site?				
5.2	adverse impacts to sites, structures or objects with historical, cultural, artistic, traditional or religious values or to intangible forms of cultural heritage (e.g. knowledge, innovations, practices)?				
5.3	utilization of Cultural Heritage for commercial or other purposes (e.g. use of objects, practices, traditional knowledge, tourism)?				
5.4	alterations to landscapes and natural features with cultural significance?				
5.5	significant land clearing, demolitions, excavations, flooding?				
5.6	identification and protection of cultural heritage sites or intangible forms of cultural heritage?				

SS 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
6.1	full or partial physical displacement or relocation of people (whether temporary or permanent)?				
6.2	economic displacement (e.g. loss of assets or access to assets affecting for example crops, businesses, income generation sources)?				
6.2	involuntary restrictions on land/ water use that deny a community the use of resources to which they have traditional or recognizable use rights?				
6.3	risk of forced evictions?				
6.4	changes in land tenure arrangements, including communal and/or customary/traditional land tenure patterns (including temporary/permanent loss of land)?				

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SS 7: Indigenous Peoples

Did the project involve or affect:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
7.1	areas where indigenous peoples are present, or uncontacted or isolated indigenous peoples inhabit or where it is believed these peoples may inhabit?				
7.2	activities located on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?				
7.3	impacts to the human rights of indigenous peoples or to the lands, territories and resources claimed by them?				
7.4	the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?				
7.5	adverse effects on the development priorities, decision making mechanisms, and forms of self-government of indigenous peoples as defined by them?				
7.6	risks to the traditional livelihoods, physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples?				
7.7	impacts on the Cultural Heritage of indigenous peoples, including through the commercialization or use of their traditional knowledge and practices?				

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SS 8: Labour and working conditions (SRIF 2020)

Did the project involve or lead to:		Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
8.1	working conditions that do not meet national labour laws or international commitments (e.g. ILO conventions)?				
8.2	the use of forced labour and child labour?				
8.3	occupational health and safety risks (including violence and harassment)?				
8.4	the increase of local or regional unemployment?				
8.5	suppliers of goods and services who may have high risk of significant safety issues related to their own workers?				
8.6	unequal working opportunities and conditions for women and men				

PART II.

To be included in the main Evaluation Report

Step 3a: Evidence of mitigative measures by project management[11] for Environmental and Social Risks identified at project design and/or during implementation

Only relevant Safeguard Standard Risks identified with 'Y' in Step 2 above should be assessed

All other risks should be deleted at this point.

Identified Safeguard Standards Risks	Mitigation / avoidance/ management approach	Supporting documentation12
2.1		
2.2		
2.3		

11 For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. In that case, no separate management plan is necessary. Instead, the project document demonstrates safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

12 E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

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Step 3b: Observed Environmental and Social Risks that were overlooked at project design and/or during project implementation

Unidentified Safeguard Standards Risks	Consequence of Risk to the Project	Justification (source of information)
3.2		

Step 4: Overall assessment

Sufficiency in planning for Safeguard Standards and associated risks during project design:
Responsiveness (evidence of mitigative measures by project management) to Environmental and Social Risks identified during project implementation:
Negative effects from unidentified Environmental and Social Risks[13]:

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13 Refer to table 3b above

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