Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking Sectors and Stakeholders for Increased Synergy and Scaling-up GEF ID 5811 / UNEP SMA ID 30071 (2016-2024)



Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

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The evaluator also acknowledges that several stakeholders were not available or were difficult to reach during data collection. This limitation has been transparently reflected in the evaluation findings and ratings.

The evaluator hopes that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the finalisation of the current project, the design of future regional Great Green Wall / Sustainable Land Management enabling interventions, and the continuous improvement of UNEP/GEF evaluation practice.

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Brief consultant biography

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His evaluation practice includes theory-based evaluation, mixed-methods approaches, OECD-DAC criteria, GEF/UN evaluation requirements, stakeholder engagement, qualitative and quantitative evidence triangulation, and evaluative reporting for accountability and learning. He is the founder and director of EvalTech Africa and has served as Team Lead / Senior Evaluation Specialist on multiple assignments in the Sahel and West Africa.

About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language(s): English.

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ABSTRACT: This report presents the Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project "Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking Sectors and Stakeholders for Increased Synergy and Scaling-up" (GEF ID 5811 / UNEP SMA ID 30071), implemented by UNEP and executed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) during 2016–2024. The project aimed to strengthen enabling conditions for the implementation of Sustainable Land Management policies in the Sahel / Great Green Wall countries through enhanced investment, intersectoral coordination and engagement of marginalised groups. The evaluation assessed performance against UNEP/GEF criteria using document review, interviews, written exchanges, remote consultations, and field missions in Burkina Faso and Senegal. The overall project performance rating is Moderately Unsatisfactory. The project was strategically relevant and substantially delivered enabling outputs, particularly on civil society engagement, learning and dialogue. Key limitations concerned delays, uneven country ownership, incomplete financial and co-financing verification, weak evidence of sustained institutional use, and limited evidence that investment dialogue translated into concrete financing outcomes. The evaluation recommends completing the final evidence and financial closure package, strengthening country-level uptake and sustainability planning in future GGW enabling projects, and improving human rights, gender equality and inclusion results monitoring.

Source(s) of Funding by Country: GEF Trust Fund grant and planned co-financing from participating governments and partners in the 11 GGW countries. Final realised co-financing by country should be confirmed through financial closure documentation.

Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type: *(indicate all that apply)*

Foundation/NGO	Yes
Private Sector	
UN Body	Yes
Multilateral Fund	Yes
Environment Fund	Yes

Keywords: Great Green Wall; Sustainable Land Management; Land Degradation; Civil Society; Sahel

Primary data collection period: May to June 2026

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EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE AVAILABLE, WITH THIS REPORT, IN WEDOCS [LINK].

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
APESS	Association for the Promotion of Livestock in the Sahel and Savanna
BRICKS	Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication, and Knowledge Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EOU	Evaluation Office of UNEP
FLEUVE	Front Local Environnemental pour une Union Verte
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGW	Great Green Wall
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LD	Land Degradation
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSP	Medium-Size Project
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NCE	No-Cost Extension
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAGGW	Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PoW	Programme of Work
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBM	Réseau Billital Maroobé
ReSaD	Réseau Sahel Désertification
RToC	Reconstructed Theory of Change
SAWAP	Sahel and West Africa Program
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SLWM	Sustainable Land and Water Management
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WAMIP	World Alliance of Mobile Indigenous Peoples
WAWA	West Africa Women Association
WISP	World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism

Project identification table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP SMA[1] ID:	30071	**Grant ID[2] (if applicable):**	GEF Project ID 5811; GEF Agency Project ID 01286.
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Ecosystems Division; GEF Biodiversity/Land Degradation portfolio.		
Implementing Partners:	UNEP (GEF Agency / Implementing Agency); IUCN (Executing Partner).		
Sources of Funding: **GEF Trust Fund grant and confirmed co-financing.**	*Countries[3]:* Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan.	*Institution[4] Name/Type:* GEF Trust Fund (multilateral environmental fund); UNEP (UN entity); IUCN (international NGO).	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG Target 15.3 - Land Degradation Neutrality.		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2014-2017; MTS 2018-2021; and MTS 2022-2025	**UNEP approval date:**	13 June 2016
POW Output(s) number/reference[7] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	Ecosystem Management (2014-2017) / Healthy and Productive Ecosystems (2018-2021) Nature action (2022-2025)	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference7 (applicable for projects approved pre-2022): LD-4 / Outcomes 4.2.	SP3 (2014-2017) Expected Accomplishments (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
Sub-programme:	Nature Action (formerly Ecosystem Management Subprogramme)	**Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):**	N/A
***Expected* start date:[5]**	July 2016	**Actual start date:[6]**	September 2016
***Planned* completion date:**	December 2021	**Actual operational completion date:**	December 2024
***Planned* project budget[7] at approval:**	*Planned* Core Funding ***Planned* GEF allocation:** US$ 1,726,400		
	Planned Extra-budgetary Funds / planned co-financing: US$12,035,943 Cash: US$11,086,400 In-kind: US$949,543		
	Total Planned Budget: US$ 13,762,343.		

[1] *SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023. Previously, it was referred to as a PIMS ID number.*
[2] *For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.*
[3] *Where applicable, list countries that have provided project funds and/or co-finance.*
[4] *Indicate where funding institutions are any/all the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.*
[5] *Expected/planned dates are listed in the Project Document (ProDoc).*
[6] *Actual start date is the date of project approval by the Division Director.*
[7] *Total budget may include the Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, and 'softly earmarked' funds, etc.*

UNEP SMA[1] ID:	30071	**Grant ID[2] (if applicable):**	GEF Project ID 5811; GEF Agency Project ID 01286.
Secured budget[8]	Secured GEF Grant: US$1,726,400 (approved GEF grant amount). Secured co-financing at approval: US$12,035,943 planned. Final realised co-financing at TE / closure remains to be fully verified against certified financial records.		
	Total planned financing envelope at approval: US$13,762,343. Final secured / realised budget at closure should be confirmed against the final certified financial closure package.		
Actual expenditures reported (cash only):	Latest available implementation reporting indicates GEF grant expenditure/disbursement of US$1,688,416 by June 2024; final certified expenditure at financial closure was not available to the evaluator at the time of drafting.		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2020: US$1,274,787; latest available reported GEF grant expenditure/disbursement by June 2024: US$1,688,416; final closure to confirm.		
First disbursement:	PIR 2022 reports first disbursement on 1 September 2016; this is within nine months of UNEP approval and should be confirmed against final financial records.	***Planned* date of financial closure:**	To be determined following the evaluation completion
No. of formal project revisions:	1 documented revision request (NCE and budget amendment).	**Date of last approved project revision:**	21 May 2020
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	5 no.	**Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:**	July 2021
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation[9] *(required or not required):*	UNEP requirement:	**Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:**	MTR Report dated April 2020
	Donor requirement: Yes		
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	October 2024	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	February 2026 - September 2026
Coverage - Countries:	Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan	**Coverage - Region(s):**	Africa (Sahel-Saharan / Great Green Wall corridor).
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	**Status of future project phases:**	Not evidenced in the reviewed documentation.

[8] From the last project/budget revision.

[9] UNEP projects of four or more years duration require an MTR unless there is an exceptional circumstance. See the Evaluation in the Project Cycle section in the Evaluation Office's operational manual. Donor requirements may vary and should be considered in conjunction with UNEP's requirements.

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) / Global Environment Facility (GEF) project "Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking Sectors and Stakeholders for Increased Synergy and Scaling-up" was implemented by UNEP and executed by IUCN as a regional enabling intervention in support of the Great Green Wall (GGW). The project covered 11 countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sudan. It was approved as a GEF Medium-Size Project (MSP) with a GEF grant of US$1,726,400 and planned co-financing of US$12,035,943.

2. The project was not designed to finance direct land restoration. Its rationale was to strengthen the enabling conditions needed for better Great Green Wall implementation: cross-sector coordination, common monitoring, adaptive learning, civil society engagement, inclusion of marginalised groups, and investment dialogue for Sustainable Land Management (SLM). The objective was greater implementation of SLM policies in the Sahel / GGW countries through enhanced investment, intersectoral coordination, and engagement of marginalised groups.

This evaluation

3. The Terminal Evaluation had two primary purposes: accountability and learning. It assessed project performance against UNEP/GEF evaluation criteria and examined the extent to which project outputs were delivered, outcomes achieved, and longer-term impacts and sustainability are likely. The evaluation used a theory-based approach and reconstructed the project's Theory of Change (ToC) to test causal pathways from outputs to outcomes, intermediate states and likely impact.

4. Data collection combined document review, key informant interviews, written exchanges, remote consultations and country-level data collection in Burkina Faso and Senegal. Field missions were undertaken in Burkina Faso from 4 to 8 May 2026 and in Senegal from 11 to 15 May 2026. Evidence from other countries relied mainly on remote consultations, correspondence and project / partner documentation. The evaluation reviewed project design documents, Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), the Mid-Term Review (MTR), financial records, safeguards documents, communication and outreach tools, workshop reports, training materials, knowledge products and documents shared by stakeholders.

5. The evaluation faced several limitations. These included uneven stakeholder responsiveness, the inability to interview some key informants, institutional turnover, incomplete final financial closure evidence, incomplete co-financing verification, variable availability of final deliverables and participation records, and limited evidence on sustained use, adoption and institutionalisation of some outputs. These limitations were mitigated through triangulation across documentary evidence, stakeholder interviews, remote consultations, field visit findings and written exchanges.

Key findings and performance ratings

6. The project was strategically relevant and addressed real gaps in the Great Green Wall architecture. It responded to the need for stronger coordination, harmonised

monitoring, civil society engagement, inclusion of women and pastoralists, learning, local planning and investment dialogue. Its design was appropriate for an enabling intervention, but ambitious for a medium-size project working across 11 countries and dependent on many partners.

7. The project substantially delivered a broad package of enabling outputs, including indicator-related work, training, knowledge products, CSO and network engagement, learning fora, pastoralism-related dialogue, investment-oriented studies and local planning support. Its strongest contribution was in civil society and network engagement. The indicator pathway was promising, but evidence of routine adoption and use across all participating countries remains incomplete. The investment partnership pathway was the weakest, with limited evidence of concrete investment partnerships, bankable pipelines or sustained financing mechanisms.

8. Financial management supported implementation, and no major evidence of serious non-compliance or irregularity was identified. However, final verification was incomplete, particularly regarding final certified expenditure, realised co-financing, audit evidence, procurement documentation, proof of transfers and reconciled final costs. Efficiency was reduced by implementation delays, partner dependency, COVID-19 disruptions, high transaction costs across 11 countries and uneven stakeholder responsiveness.

9. Monitoring and reporting were adequate for tracking activities, outputs, risks and adaptive management, but weaker for verifying sustained outcome-level change. Evidence was stronger on production and delivery than on use, institutionalisation, influence and differentiated effects. Disaggregated data on gender, stakeholder category, vulnerability and marginalised groups were incomplete, limiting the strength of conclusions on human rights, gender equality and inclusion outcomes.

10. Sustainability is the most fragile performance area. Socio-political and institutional sustainability are plausible where project outputs are embedded in existing GGW institutions, CSO networks and learning processes. However, financial sustainability is weak because post-project financing arrangements, investment partnerships and realised co-financing are insufficiently documented. Overall sustainability is therefore assessed as Moderately Unlikely.

Table 2: Summary of project ratings

Criterion	Rating
Strategic Relevance	Satisfactory
Quality of Project Design	Satisfactory
Nature of External Context	Moderately Unfavourable
Effectiveness	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Financial Management	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Efficiency	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Monitoring and Reporting	Moderately Satisfactory
Sustainability	Moderately Unlikely
Factors Affecting Performance	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**

Conclusions summary

11. Overall, the project performed at a Moderately Unsatisfactory level. Its main achievements were the substantial delivery of enabling outputs, its contribution to strengthening Great Green Wall coordination and monitoring discussions, its support to civil society and network engagement, and its efforts to bring inclusion, pastoralism and investment dialogue more clearly into the Sustainable Land Management agenda. The project was relevant, timely and useful, particularly because it addressed systemic gaps rather than attempting to deliver direct field restoration.

12. The strongest performing aspects were Strategic Relevance, Availability of Outputs, civil society and network engagement, adaptive use of partnerships, and the contribution to learning and dialogue across GGW actors. Comparative weaknesses were apparent in the uneven depth of country engagement, implementation delays, incomplete evidence of sustained institutionalisation, limited verification of actual investment partnerships, incomplete final financial and co-financing evidence, and weak financial sustainability. These limitations outweigh the stronger relevance and output-level performance and explain why the project is assessed as Moderately Unsatisfactory overall.

13. No major negative environmental or social safeguard effects were identified. The project was a low-risk technical assistance intervention and did not finance physical works, infrastructure, land acquisition or direct restoration activities. However, future enabling projects should document consultation quality, feedback mechanisms, inclusion risks and differentiated effects more systematically, particularly when working with women, pastoralists, CSOs and other marginalised groups.

14. The project generated and used several communication, outreach and knowledge-sharing tools, including workshop reports, CSO forum proceedings, pastoralism learning reports, training modules, local planning tools and harmonised results framework materials. These tools demonstrate significant knowledge production and outreach effort. However, evidence of their sustained use, dissemination reach and influence was less complete.

Lessons Learned

15. **Lesson 1:** Regional enabling projects can be highly relevant when they address systemic bottlenecks, but their design must realistically account for the transaction costs of working across many countries and stakeholder categories. The project addressed real coordination, monitoring, participation and investment barriers, but implementation across 11 countries created high coordination costs and uneven country engagement. Similar projects should include stronger country engagement protocols, updated stakeholder tracking systems and realistic assumptions about partner availability.

16. **Lesson 2:** Participation of women, pastoralists, CSOs and other marginalised groups is an important entry point for inclusion, but participation alone is not sufficient evidence of influence or empowerment. The project created useful spaces for visibility and dialogue, but evidence was stronger for participation than for sustained influence, decision-making power or measurable differentiated benefits. Future projects should monitor how participation translates into influence, institutional change and benefits.

17. **Lesson 3:** Investment dialogue and knowledge products can raise awareness, but they are unlikely to generate durable investment outcomes unless linked early to bankable opportunities, financing actors and post-project facilitation. The project supported relevant investment-related studies, training and dialogue, but evidence of concrete financing outcomes remained limited. Future catalytic projects should connect investment dialogue to specific pipelines, financing instruments, local planning outputs and follow-up responsibilities from the design or inception phase.

Recommendations

18. **Recommendation 1:** Complete and archive a final project evidence and financial closure package for accountability, learning and future GGW programming. UNEP and IUCN should consolidate and share a final evidence package including final certified expenditure, actual costs by component or activity where available, realised co-financing by source and type, audit reports and management responses, procurement documentation where applicable, final deliverables, dissemination evidence, and a final stakeholder / participant record.

19. **Recommendation 2:** For future GGW and regional enabling projects, require a country-level uptake and sustainability plan during inception. UNEP and future executing partners should prepare, within the first six months of implementation, a practical uptake plan identifying for each country: responsible focal points, intended users of project tools, expected use of knowledge products, mechanisms for institutionalising indicators or planning outputs, follow-up responsibilities for CSO networks, and minimum evidence required to verify adoption and use.

20. **Recommendation 3:** Strengthen the human rights, gender equality and inclusion results pathway in future GGW enabling projects. UNEP and executing partners should define measurable inclusion indicators that go beyond attendance, including sex- and stakeholder-disaggregated participation, representation of pastoralists and other marginalised groups, evidence of influence on decisions or tools, and documented feedback from participating groups. These indicators should be integrated into the results framework, monitoring plan and PIR reporting from project inception.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Intervention context

21. The Great Green Wall (GGW) is a major pan-African initiative addressing land degradation, desertification, climate vulnerability and rural livelihoods across the Sahel-Saharan region. The project was implemented as a regional enabling intervention covering 11 Great Green Wall countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan. It has strong political visibility and has attracted significant regional and international support. However, implementation has faced persistent challenges, including fragmented coordination, uneven participation, weak monitoring systems, limited engagement of civil society and marginalised groups, and insufficient investment pathways for scaling Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

22. The project was designed to respond to these institutional and systemic gaps. It sought to strengthen the enabling conditions for better GGW implementation rather than finance physical restoration activities directly. This distinction is important: the project's performance must be judged by whether it improved coordination, monitoring, learning, inclusion and investment readiness, not by whether it restored land directly.

23. The project was implemented in a complex regional context characterised by security constraints in parts of the Sahel, COVID-19 disruptions, institutional turnover, uneven country responsiveness and high transaction costs. These factors are assessed in detail under Nature of External Context, Efficiency and Sustainability.

1.2 Institutional context

24. The project was approved by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on 13 June 2016 as a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Medium-Size Project (MSP). It had an expected start date of July 2016 and an actual start date of September 2016. It was originally planned for completion in December 2021, while the actual operational completion date was December 2024. UNEP served as the GEF Implementing Agency and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) served as the Executing Partner. The project was managed under UNEP's Ecosystems Division / GEF Biodiversity-Land Degradation portfolio and was aligned with the Ecosystem Management / Healthy and Productive Ecosystems / Nature Action subprogramme across the relevant UNEP strategic periods.

25. The project underwent a Mid-Term Review in 2020, reported progress through annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs), and submitted a documented no-cost extension (NCE) and budget amendment request dated 21 May 2020. The Terminal Evaluation was conducted during February-September 2026.

1.3 Results Framework

26. The project's latest approved results framework was reflected in the Revised Logframe of September 2020. The results hierarchy below summarises the project objective, reconstructed impact, and intermediate states, outcomes, and outputs

used for this Terminal Evaluation. The reconstruction clarifies results levels without changing the project's goalposts.

Table 3: Summary of project's latest approved results framework (source: Revised Logframe, September 2020 and reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) at Evaluation)

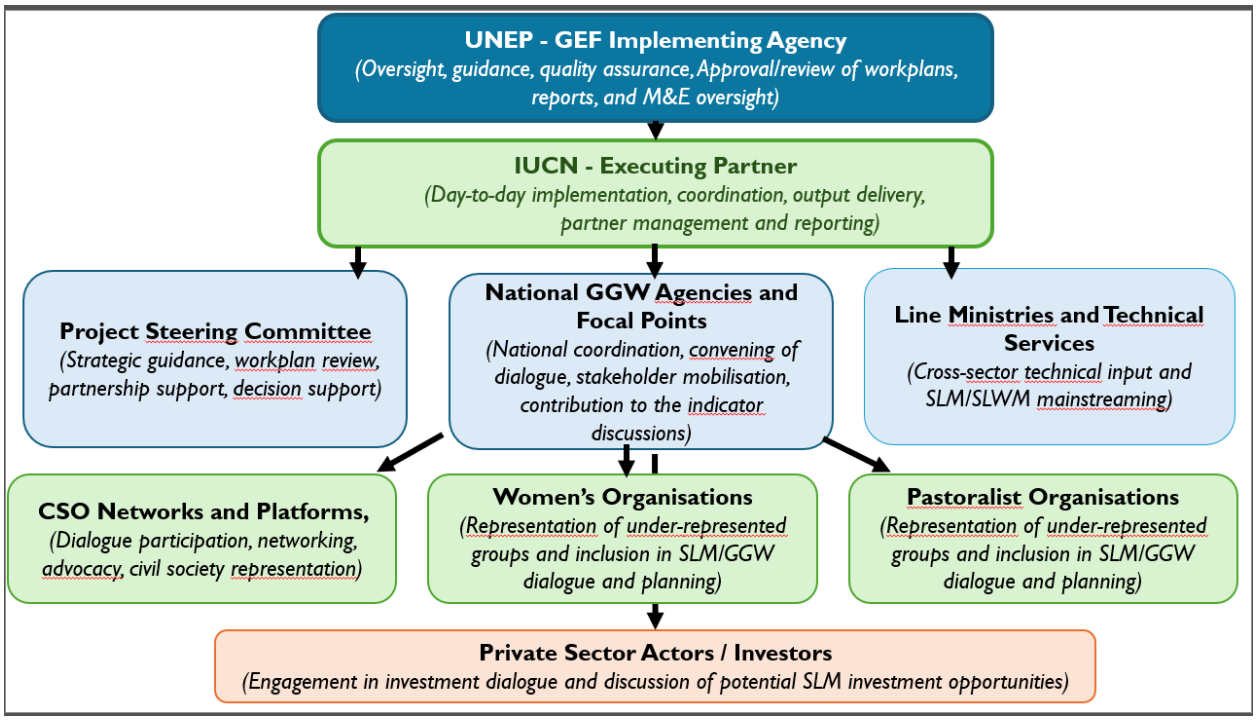
Result Level	Results Statement
Project objective	Greater implementation of policies for Sustainable Land Management in the Sahel / GGW countries through enhanced investment, intersectoral coordination, and engagement of marginalized groups.
Impact (reconstructed)	Improved ecosystem integrity and human well-being in GGW Sahel-Saharan countries through reduced land degradation and strengthened Sustainable Land Management / Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLM/SLWM) implementation.
Intermediate state(s)	IS1: Strengthened policy implementation for SLM/SLWM supported by improved monitoring and reporting. IS2: More inclusive cross-sector coordination, dialogue, and partnerships with stronger engagement of civil society and marginalized groups. IS3: Increased investment orientation and partnership-building for SLM/SLWM scale-up.
Outcome 1	GGW countries adopt a common set of indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring to inform planning and policymaking.
Outcome 2	National governments in GGW countries increasingly establish inclusive mechanisms to engage civil society in GGW and SLM.
Outcome 3	Stakeholders actively promote appropriate investment partnerships to scale up SLM good practices.
Outputs under Outcome 1	**Output 1.1:** multi-sector engagement in SLM/GGW dialogue; Output 1.2: indicator framework and participatory approaches; Output 1.3: learning and awareness-raising publications; Output 1.4: 500 government and NGO representatives trained.
Outputs under Outcome 2	**Output 2.1:** 10 national/regional networks strengthened; Output 2.2: learning fora conducted for 11 countries on engagement of marginalised groups.
Outputs under Outcome 3	**Output 3.1:** training workshops on policy and investment barriers; Output 3.2: guidelines for improved private sector engagement; Output 3.3: improved local planning processes in 30 locations.

1.4 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

27. The project was implemented by IUCN under the oversight of UNEP as GEF Implementing Agency. Strategic guidance was provided by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), while delivery relied on collaboration with national GGW agencies and focal points, line ministries and technical services, civil society networks, women's and pastoralist organisations, and private sector actors engaged in investment dialogue.

28. UNEP was responsible for GEF oversight, guidance, quality assurance, review of workplans and reports, and monitoring and evaluation oversight. IUCN was responsible for day-to-day execution, operational coordination, delivery of outputs, and reporting. The project also involved national GGW institutions, line ministries, CSO networks, regional networks, women's organisations, pastoralist organisations, technical partners, and private sector-related stakeholders.

Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders



29. UNEP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, was expected to provide oversight, strategic guidance, quality assurance, approval and review of workplans and reports, and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) oversight. IUCN, as the Executing Partner, was expected to manage day-to-day implementation, partner coordination, output delivery and reporting. National GGW agencies and focal points were expected to support national coordination, convene dialogue, contribute to indicator discussions and mobilise stakeholders. Line ministries and technical services were expected to provide cross-sector technical input and support mainstreaming of SLM/SLWM. CSO networks, women's organisations and pastoralist organisations were expected to support participation, representation, advocacy and inclusion. Private sector actors and investors were expected to engage in investment dialogue and explore potential SLM investment opportunities.

1.5 Stakeholders

30. The project targeted both duty-bearers and rights-holders. Duty-bearers included UNEP, IUCN, national GGW agencies, line ministries, and regional institutions. Rights-holders and representative organisations included CSOs, pastoralist organisations, women's groups, local land managers, communities, commune-level actors and other potentially marginalised or indirectly affected groups. The project also targeted private sector actors and investors through its investment pathway.

Table 4: Main stakeholder groups

Stakeholder group	Examples	Interest / influence / relevance
Core project actors	UNEP, IUCN, and Project Steering Committee actors	High influence; direct responsibility for design, execution, oversight, and reporting.
National institutional actors	GGW focal points, national agencies, and line ministries	High influence; critical for uptake, coordination, and sustainability.
Regional networks	RBM, ReSaD, WAMIP, WISP, e-GGW, and related platforms	Medium to high influence; important for networking, learning and advocacy.
Civil society organisations	National CSO platforms, SLM, and community-based organisations	Medium influence; strong relevance for participation and local legitimacy.
Women's organisations	WAWA, Tewazone, Women Advancement Initiative, and other women's groups where engaged	High interest, lower formal power; targeted for inclusion and voice.
Pastoralist organisations and mobile groups	Pastoralist networks and marginalized groups affected by land and resource decisions	High interest, variable formal power; central to pastoralism and equity pathway.
Private sector/investors	Business networks, private investors, and finance actors	Potentially high influence; engagement depends on incentives and investable opportunities.
Local land managers / communities / indirect beneficiaries	Local authorities, land users, community representatives, commune-level actors, local development actors and indirect beneficiaries affected by SLM/GGW planning processes	High interest; generally lower formal power; important for assessing local planning, inclusion, ownership, sustainability and the extent to which enabling outputs may benefit or influence local-level SLM implementation.

1.6 Changes in Design during Implementation

31. The main documented change was the no-cost extension and budget amendment request dated 21 May 2020. This request responded to implementation delays and MTR findings. It extended the Project Cooperation Agreement completion date from 30 June 2020 to 30 June 2022, equivalent to a 24-month no-cost extension. The project's actual operational completion was later reported as December 2024. The extension was justified by delays in activities depending on partner-country action, which created knock-on effects on other activities and increased the staff time required for implementation.

32. The project also adapted operationally through re-prioritisation of high-value activities under IUCN's more direct control, including the common indicator framework, private sector forum, studies/publications and national meetings. COVID-19 also required adaptation through virtual modalities, including online dialogue and e-conference formats.

1.7 Project Financing

33. This MSP was financed through a GEF grant of US$1,726,400. Planned co-financing at approval amounted to US$12,035,943. Together, the GEF grant and planned co-financing represented a total approved financing envelope of US$13,762,343. In Table 5, planned co-financing is therefore distinguished from the total project financing envelope. Final realised co-financing remained incomplete at the time of the Terminal Evaluation and should be verified through the final financial closure package.

Table 5: Project co-finance

Source of co-financing	Type	Investment mobilized?	Amount at CEO (US$)	Amount at MTR / interim evidence	Amount at TE / evidence status
GEF Trust Fund / UNEP project	GEF grant	No	1,726,400	1,274,787 reported expenditures by June 2020	1,688,416 reported expenditure/disbursement by June 2024; final closure to confirm
Participating in governments and partners	Cash co-financing	To be confirmed	11,086,400	3,100,000 actual co-financing reported to date in PIR 2022	To be confirmed / evidence incomplete
Participating in governments and partners	In-kind co-financing	To be confirmed	949,543	Part of the reported co-financing evidence, supporting documentation, is incomplete	To be confirmed / evidence incomplete
Total co-financing	Cash and in-kind	To be confirmed	12,035,943	3,100,000 reported to date in PIR 2022	To be confirmed
Total approved project financing envelope	GEF grant + planned co-financing	N/A	13,762,343	Not applicable	Final closure to confirm

Note: Final co-financing evidence remained incomplete at the time of the Terminal Evaluation and should be verified through the final financial closure package.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

34. In line with UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the evaluation was undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and to determine outcomes and potential impacts, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning.

35. The main target audiences for the evaluation are the UNEP Evaluation Office, the UNEP project team and GEF coordination functions, IUCN as Executing Partner, the GEF, the Pan-African Agency of the Great Green Wall, national GGW institutions, CSO networks and partners involved in future GGW/SLM enabling interventions.

36. The evaluation applied nine UNEP/GEF criteria: Strategic Relevance, Quality of Project Design, Nature of External Context, Effectiveness, Financial Management, Efficiency, Monitoring and Reporting, Sustainability, and Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues. Most criteria are rated on a six-point scale from Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory. Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact use a likelihood scale; Nature of External Context uses a favourability scale. Ratings are weighted to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating, with the greatest weight placed on achievement of outcomes, followed by sustainability.

37. The evaluation also addressed five strategic questions from the Terms of Reference (ToR): implementation of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) recommendations; COVID-19 adaptations and effects; strengthening of regional and national networks through a polycentric approach; integration of pastoralists, women and vulnerable groups; and use of synergies with Building Resilience through Innovation, Communication and Knowledge Services (BRICKS), the Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP), and related initiatives.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 Primary data sources

38. Primary data were collected through semi-structured key informant interviews, written exchanges, telephone follow-up, and in-person consultations during the Burkina Faso and Senegal country visits. The evaluation targeted stakeholders identified in project documentation, the inception-stage stakeholder roster, and subsequent contact lists as having been involved in project design, implementation, supervision, coordination, participation in project-supported activities, or use of project outputs.

39. The main categories of stakeholders targeted included UNEP, IUCN, national Great Green Wall agencies and focal points, line ministries and technical services, civil society organisations, regional and national networks, women's and pastoralist organisations, technical partners, private sector-related actors, and selected stakeholders listed as beneficiaries or participants in project-supported activities. The selection of respondents was purposive and theory-based, with stakeholders selected for their expected ability to provide evidence on one or more of the project's three outcome pathways: common indicators and monitoring, inclusive civil society

engagement, and investment partnerships for Sustainable Land Management scale-up.

40. The evaluation used interview guides structured around the UNEP evaluation criteria, the strategic questions in the Terms of Reference, and the reconstructed Theory of Change. Interviews explored project delivery, stakeholder participation, use of project outputs, contribution to outcomes, implementation constraints, sustainability prospects, gender and inclusion, learning, and recommendations for future GGW-type interventions. Where respondents were not available for full interviews, the evaluator attempted to collect information through shorter telephone exchanges, written responses or follow-up clarification requests.

41. The evaluator made repeated efforts to increase stakeholder participation, including email invitations, reminder emails, telephone calls, WhatsApp follow-up where numbers were available, and requests for referrals from contacted stakeholders. Despite these efforts, the realised respondent base was significantly narrower than the intended stakeholder universe. Several key stakeholders could not be reached because they had retired, changed organisation, moved to other positions, or were no longer reachable through the contact details available in project documentation. In addition, members of the project implementation team could not be interviewed despite multiple follow-ups attempts by email and telephone.

42. A further methodological challenge emerged when some partners or organisations identified in project documentation as beneficiaries or participants stated that they had not participated in project-supported activities, or that they had no direct institutional memory of such participation. These cases were treated carefully. They were not used as confirmation of project delivery or beneficiary experience but were considered as evidence of possible gaps in stakeholder tracking, institutional memory, documentation, or continuity of engagement.

43. These constraints resulted in a significant loss of key informant evidence and reduced the representativeness of the realised sample, particularly for some national partners, intended beneficiaries, women's organisations, private sector actors, local planning stakeholders and some categories of marginalised groups. The evaluation therefore does not claim that the primary data provide a balanced representation of all countries, all partner categories, or all beneficiary groups.

44. Burkina Faso and Senegal were selected for in-person field visits on the basis of purposive and feasibility criteria. The two countries were considered relevant because of their documented links to project-supported activities, the availability of country-level stakeholders during the evaluation period, the feasibility of access within the evaluation timeframe and resources, and their ability to provide complementary evidence on national GGW coordination, civil society engagement, monitoring, local planning and sustainability issues. They were not selected as statistically representative case studies of all 11 participating countries. Evidence from these visits was therefore used to deepen and contextualise the evaluation, while findings for the overall project were triangulated with documentary evidence, remote consultations and written exchanges from other countries.

45. The Burkina Faso and Senegal visits provided useful country-level evidence and helped contextualise the document review. However, the number and diversity of interviews conducted during the visits were below what had initially been expected due to limited stakeholder availability, non-response to meeting requests, and difficulties in confirming whether some listed stakeholders had actually participated

in project-supported activities. The visits therefore strengthened the evidence base, but did not constitute comprehensive country case studies covering all expected stakeholder categories.

46. To mitigate these limitations, the evaluator triangulated primary evidence with project documentation, PIRs, the Mid-Term Review, partner reports, expenditure records, training and workshop documentation, knowledge products, and available deliverables. Where primary confirmation was not available, the report distinguishes clearly between documented outputs, reported participation, verified stakeholder experience, and evidence of sustained use or institutionalisation. The realised sample is therefore treated as a purposive and evidence-oriented sample rather than a statistically representative sample of all project partners and beneficiaries.

Table 6: Evaluation respondents and field visits

Stakeholders – Individuals			**A. Total number involved (M/F)**	**B. Number contacted (M/F)**	**Sample size (% B/A)[10]**	**C. Total number responded Total (M/F)**	**Response rate (% C/B)[11]**
Project Team	**Project Team** (with management responsibilities e.g. Project Management Unit)	Implementing agency	NR: Not Reported	1 (1M/0F)	NR	1 (1M/0F)	
		Executing agency(ies)	**NR**	**NR – at least one contact attempt**	**NR**	**0 (0M/0F)**	**0%**
Beneficiaries	**Direct Beneficiaries:** (e.g. duty bearers, gatekeepers, training participants, etc.)		NR	NR	NR	**9 (8M/1F)**	NR
	Indirect Beneficiaries: (e.g. household members, civil society representatives, group members, etc.)		NR	NR	NR	**3 (2M/1F)**	NR
Stakeholders - Entities			**A. Total number involved**	**B. Number contacted**	**Sample size (% B/A)[12]**	**C. Total number responded**	**Response rate (% C/B)[13]**
Partners	**Project implementing/ executing partners** (receiving project funds)		2	2	100%	1	50%
	Project collaborating/ contributing partners[14] (not receiving project fund)		NR	NR	NR	11 entities	NR

Field Visits	**Region/country/locality[15]**	**A. Total number of sites**	**B. Number of sites visited**	**Sample Size (%B/A)[16]**
	Africa	**11**	2	18.2%

Note: NR = Not Reported, meaning that the information was not available in the documentation reviewed or could not be reliably reconstructed during the evaluation.

[10] Percentage of people involved in the project who were contacted.
[11] Percentage of people contacted who responded.
[12] Percentage of entities involved in the project who were contacted.
[13] Percentage of entities contacted who responded.
[14] Contributing partners may be providing resources as either cash or in-kind inputs (e.g. staff time, office space etc.).
[15] In case of a global project, the unit of analysis is 'region'. In case of a regional or multi-country project, the unit of analysis is 'country'. In case of a single country project, the unit of analysis is 'locality', which could refer to a city, town, village, etc.
[16] Percentage of total number project sites in each region, country or locality that were visited.

2.2.2 Strategies for inclusivity

47. The evaluation attempted to include diverse stakeholder perspectives, including regional actors, national institutions, CSO networks, women's groups, pastoralist organisations, technical partners, and actors linked to local planning and investment dialogue. Outreach used emails, follow-up messages, calls, WhatsApp, where available, and referrals from contacted stakeholders. The evaluation also treated weak responsiveness from some marginalised or under-represented groups as both a methodological limitation and an evaluative observation.

2.2.3 Secondary data sources

48. Secondary sources included the CEO Endorsement Request, MSP approval letter, GEF review sheet, revised logframe, Mid-Term Review, PIRs, formal revision and no-cost extension documentation, financial and expenditure records, implementation arrangements, M&E plan and budget, safeguards checklist, partner reports, training and workshop reports, knowledge products, stakeholder lists and deliverables. A consolidated list of documents consulted is included in Annex III.

2.3 Data Analysis

49. Data analysis combined theory-based contribution analysis, qualitative thematic analysis, and structured evidence mapping. Contribution analysis was used to assess whether project outputs plausibly contributed to reported outcome-level changes. The evaluation did not assume that the existence of an output automatically demonstrated achievement of an outcome. It distinguished between output delivery, reported use, verified adoption, and sustained institutionalisation.

50. Triangulation was applied systematically. Findings were considered stronger where they were supported by multiple independent sources, such as project documents, PIRs, workshop reports, financial records, and stakeholder interviews. Where evidence came from only one source or could not be corroborated, the evaluation treated the finding cautiously.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

51. The evaluation faced several limitations that affected the depth, balance, and representativeness of the primary evidence. The most significant limitation was uneven stakeholder responsiveness (see paras. 41–46). Although the evaluator made repeated contact attempts through email, telephone, and other available channels, several key stakeholders did not respond or could not be reached. This included some actors who had been identified in project documentation or stakeholder lists as important informants for the evaluation.

52. A particularly important limitation was the inability to interview members of the project implementation team despite multiple follow-up attempts. This represented a major loss of institutional memory and reduced the evaluation's ability to verify some implementation processes, management decisions, partner arrangements, delivery challenges, and final status of selected outputs. The limitation was compounded by the time elapsed since the main implementation period. Some potential respondents had retired, changed organisation, moved to other functions, or become unreachable through the contact details available to the evaluation.

53. The evaluation also found that some partners or organisations identified in project documentation as beneficiaries or participants stated that they had not participated in project-supported activities or had no direct institutional memory of such participation. These cases were not treated as confirmation of project delivery or beneficiary experience. Instead, they were considered as indications of possible weaknesses in stakeholder tracking, institutional memory, documentation continuity, or the durability of engagement after project completion.

54. These constraints affected the representativeness of the realised sample. The evaluation was unable to obtain equivalent perspectives across all 11 participating countries and all stakeholder categories. Direct evidence was particularly limited from some national institutions, women's organisations, private sector actors, local planning beneficiaries, project implementation actors and representatives of marginalised groups. As a result, the evaluation does not claim that the realised sample provides a balanced country-by-country or beneficiary-level representation of the full project stakeholder universe.

55. The Burkina Faso and Senegal visits helped strengthen the country-level evidence base and provided useful contextual insights. However, their scope and yield were more limited than expected. Several identified stakeholders were unavailable, did not respond to meeting requests, or could not confirm direct participation in project-supported activities. The country visits, therefore, supported triangulation, but they did not constitute comprehensive country case studies covering all intended stakeholder categories.

56. A second limitation relates to the completeness of documentary evidence. Final financial closure evidence, full co-financing verification, complete audit evidence, comprehensive stakeholder participation data, complete sex-disaggregated data, and some final deliverables were either incomplete, not available, or still required verification at the time of drafting. This affected the depth of analysis under Financial Management, Efficiency, Sustainability, and some aspects of Effectiveness.

57. A third limitation relates to the quality of some interview records and automatic transcripts. Some transcripts were incomplete or of variable quality. Poor-quality transcript segments were not used as stand-alone evidence. Interview evidence was used only where the meaning was sufficiently clear and, where possible, corroborated by other sources.

58. The evaluation mitigated these limitations through systematic triangulation. Available interviews and written exchanges were compared with project documents, PIRs, the Mid-Term Review, no-cost extension documentation, partner reports, financial records, training and workshop documentation, knowledge products, and evidence collected during the Burkina Faso and Senegal visits. Where stakeholder confirmation was unavailable, the report avoids overclaiming and distinguishes between documented outputs, reported participation, verified stakeholder experience, and evidence of sustained use or institutionalisation.

59. Overall, these limitations do not prevent an evidence-based assessment of the project's main performance questions. However, they require a cautious interpretation of outcome achievement, sustainability, stakeholder participation, and beneficiary-level evidence. The evaluation, therefore, gives stronger weight to triangulated evidence and clearly identifies where claims are supported by documentation only, by stakeholder confirmation, or by both.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

60. The evaluation followed UNEG-aligned ethical principles, including independence, impartiality, informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for stakeholders. Participation was voluntary. Stakeholder views are reported in a non-attributable manner unless explicit permission was granted or the information was already part of official documentation. No names are included in the stakeholders consulted annex.

61. The evaluation applied a human rights-based and gender-responsive lens. It assessed the representation and participation of women, pastoralists, CSOs, local land managers, and potentially marginalised groups, and considered whether participation translated into influence and continued engagement. AI-assisted tools were used only for low-risk structuring, language polishing, and consistency checking; AI outputs were not treated as evidence.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

62. The approved project documents and the Revised Logframe of September 2020 provided a results framework, but no standalone Theory of Change diagram was identified among the core design documents reviewed. A Theory of Change at Evaluation was therefore reconstructed by the evaluator during the inception phase, drawing on the CEO Endorsement Request, the Revised Logframe, the Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference, the Mid-Term Review, PIRs, project deliverables, financial and implementation records, and the evidence available at that stage. The reconstructed Theory of Change, including its results hierarchy, causal pathways, drivers and assumptions, was reviewed and approved as part of the final Inception Report. It has consequently been retained as the analytical framework for the Terminal Evaluation.

63. The September 2020 Revised Logframe was treated as the latest approved results framework for the Terminal Evaluation. Based on the documentation available to the evaluator, the revision did not change the overall project objective or the three main outcome pathways. Rather, it refined and clarified parts of the results framework, including the formulation of some indicators, targets and output-level benchmarks used to assess delivery and progress. In particular, the revised logframe provided a clearer basis for assessing the common indicator and monitoring pathway, inclusive civil-society engagement, learning fora, capacity-building, investment dialogue and local planning outputs. A complete change-by-change comparison between the original approved logframe and the September 2020 revised logframe was not available to the evaluator; where specific changes could not be independently verified, the evaluation relies on the revised logframe as the latest approved framework and avoids over-interpreting undocumented changes.

64. The Terminal Evaluation does not introduce a separate or substantially revised Theory of Change. To maintain continuity with the approved Inception Report, the results statements, drivers, assumptions and causal pathways presented in this chapter are based on the inception-stage reconstruction. The tables on the reformulation of results statements and the reformulation or expansion of drivers and assumptions reproduce the distinctions and formulations approved during the inception phase. Any additional clarification introduced at the reporting stage is limited to evidence generated during the evaluation and is explicitly identified as a Terminal Evaluation observation; it does not alter the approved causal logic or move the evaluative “goal posts”.

65. The reconstruction retained the project’s intended results wherever possible and was used only to clarify the hierarchy of results, make implicit causal relationships explicit, and distinguish between outputs, outcomes, intermediate states and long-lasting impact in accordance with UNEP results definitions. In particular, the project objective was positioned as an intermediate condition linking the three project outcomes to longer-term environmental and social change. Similarly, output statements containing terms such as “functional”, “improved” or “established” were interpreted carefully because these terms imply changes in use, quality or institutional performance that require evidence beyond confirmation of delivery.

66. The project is understood in the approved Theory of Change as a regional enabling and catalytic intervention rather than a direct field-restoration project. Its expected contribution to long-term environmental and social change was therefore indirect. The project was expected to strengthen the conditions under which Great Green Wall

countries could implement Sustainable Land Management and Sustainable Land and Water Management policies more effectively. These conditions included improved cross-sector coordination, common monitoring approaches, stronger learning processes, more inclusive participation of civil society and marginalised groups, and improved investment dialogue for SLM scale-up.

67. The Theory of Change diagram retains the approved inception-stage causal framework but has been visually revised at the reporting stage to clarify the direction of causal arrows and harmonise the numbering of Drivers and Assumptions across Figure 2, Table 8 and Section 3.1. This presentation revision does not change the underlying causal logic or move the evaluative goalposts. Evidence collected during the evaluation is used in the subsequent findings sections to assess the extent to which the causal links from outputs to outcomes, intermediate states and long-lasting impact were realised, and whether the approved drivers and assumptions held during implementation.

Table 7: Justification for reformulation of results statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes on the interpretation of the result
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT		
Not explicitly stated as a separate impact-level result in the revised logframe.	**Long-lasting impact:** Improved ecosystem integrity and human well-being in GGW Sahel-Saharan countries through reduced land degradation and strengthened SLM/SLWM implementation.	The project documents focus primarily on institutional and behavioural changes at regional and national levels, including coordination, monitoring, inclusion and investment. The impact statement was reconstructed during the inception phase to articulate the longer-term environmental and social change to which the project was expected to contribute. This approved inception-stage formulation is retained without further revision in the TE Report.
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
Project objective: greater implementation of policies for SLM in the Sahel / GGW countries through enhanced investment, intersectoral coordination and engagement of marginalised groups.	Intermediate State: GGW countries demonstrate strengthened policy implementation for SLM/SLWM in the Sahel, supported by inclusive cross-sector coordination, improved monitoring and reporting, strengthened engagement of civil society and marginalised groups, and increased investment dialogue and partnerships.	The project objective describes a condition situated above the immediate project outcomes and below the expected long-lasting impact. It was therefore treated at inception as an intermediate condition connecting the three outcome pathways to longer-term change. This formulation is retained from the approved IR and does not represent a new TE-stage reformulation.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		

Outcome 1: GGW countries adopt a common set of indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring to inform planning and policymaking.	Outcome 1 retained for the RToC without substantive reformulation.	The statement is consistent with an outcome-level institutional and behavioural change. The TE assesses not only whether the indicators were developed, but also whether they were adopted and used for planning, monitoring and reporting.
Outcome 2: National governments in GGW countries increasingly establish inclusive mechanisms to engage civil society in GGW and SLM.	Outcome 2 retained for the RToC without substantive reformulation.	The statement is consistent with an outcome-level change. The TE assesses whether the mechanisms were established, functional and capable of supporting meaningful participation beyond attendance or formal representation.
Outcome 3: Stakeholders actively promote appropriate investment partnerships to scale up SLM good practices.	Outcome 3 retained for the RToC without substantive reformulation.	The statement is consistent with an outcome-level change. The TE assesses whether investment dialogue progressed towards partnership promotion, financing pathways, concrete collaboration arrangements and follow-up mechanisms.
OUTCOME INDICATORS [*comment if relevant*]		
Project objective indicators: - Number of cross-sector collaboration mechanisms in policy implementation in relation to the GGW - Number of countries that have a functional multi-sectoral coordination mechanism that includes CSOs representatives in consultations - Availability of a cross-sectoral and ecosystem-scale reporting system - Presence of marginalised groups' representatives or structures engaged in policy dialogue and implementation **Outcome 1 indicators:** - Number of countries that have a functional multi-sectoral coordination mechanism that includes CSOs representatives in consultations - Use of goals, indicators, and reporting that demonstrate the dual developmental-environmental impacts of SLM - Number of countries with national mechanisms and a common, defined approach as a result to ensure coordinated implementation	Indicators were retained as progress markers and interpreted according to the relevant results level.	Indicators in the revised logframe refer to coordination mechanisms, use of indicators, reporting systems, participation of marginalised groups, women's representation, investment dialogue and local planning. Several indicators combine existence, functionality and use. The evaluation therefore distinguishes between documented availability, reported uptake and verified institutional use.

(at local, national, regional, and global levels) - Number of Government and NGO representatives participated in regional trainings on environmental economics, valuation of ecosystem goods and services, landscape management approaches, and SLM, and the number of participants **Outcome 2 indicators:** - Number of coordination mechanisms between national and regional networks established and capacitated on SLM dialogue and implementation - Number of countries with marginalized groups represented and/or structures included in GGW dialogue and implementation - Number of women's group representatives in the GGW dialogue and implementation - Presence of sectors considered in environmental and socioeconomic sustainability concerns in the GGW dialogue and action **Outcome 3 indicators:** - Number of countries with awareness-raising events on opportunities for investing in SLM, particularly investments for local land managers, and the capacity to engage the private sector - Evidence of policies reviewed and dialogue sessions to identify and address policy implementation and investment barriers and opportunities - Number of countries where participatory planning exercises at the local level, which include SLM priorities, took place. *(Source: Revised Logframe Annex A, September 2020).*		
OUTPUTS		
Output 1.1: multi-sector engagement in SLM/GGW dialogue; **Output 1.2:** indicator framework and participatory approaches; **Output 1.3:** learning and awareness-raising publications; **Output 1.4:** 500 government and NGO representatives trained.	No substantive reformulation.	Outputs are assessed through evidence of delivery, quality, coverage, dissemination and use. Where output wording implies "functionality" or "improvement", the evaluation treats these as requiring additional evidence beyond delivery.
Output 2.1: 10 national/regional networks strengthened;	Outputs 2.1 and 2.2 retained without substantive reformulation.	Delivery is verified through network-support documentation, meeting and

Output 2.2: learning fora conducted for 11 countries on engagement of marginalised groups.		consultation reports, learning-forum reports, participant records and stakeholder evidence. Evidence of continued network functionality and influence is assessed separately under outcome achievement and sustainability.
Output 3.1: training workshops on policy and investment barriers; **Output 3.2:** guidelines for improved private sector engagement; **Output 3.3:** improved local planning processes in 30 locations.		Outputs are assessed through evidence of workshops, guidelines, studies, dialogue processes and local-planning documents. Their contribution to investment partnerships and scale-up is assessed at outcome level rather than being assumed from output delivery alone.
OUTPUT INDICATORS		
No stand-alone 'output indicators' in the Project document	Output 1.1: 11 country meetings involving government and CSO actors on SLM/GGW dialogue Output 1.2 : Regional workshop to develop the framework of indicators and the use of the indicator framework in 3 pilot countries Output 1.3: translation and dissemination of 4 existing publications, publication of one synthesis study, and communication actions under the BRICKS communication strategy Output 1.4: 2 regional trainings on environmental economics and valuation of ecosystem goods and services and 4 trainings on landscape management approaches and SLM Output 2.1: identification of 5 national CSO networks and support to their participation in dialogue; engagement of 5 regional networks (RBM, ReSaD, WAMIP, WISP, e-GGW network); establishment and continuous updating of the e-GGW network for 11 countries Output 2.2: 1 regional learning forum on policy barriers and marginalized groups' engagement in SLM; publication of a report on policy barriers, marginalized groups and solutions; 1 regional learning forum on sustainable pastoralism, barriers and marginalisation Output 3.1: 4 multi-country trainings on appropriate	Whereas there were no explicit 'output indicators' in the Results Framework of the Project document, the evaluation will assess the delivery of Outputs using the reconstructed indicators as guides (these have been formulated using the Output results statements themselves, as well as Outcome targets/monitoring milestones)

	investment, policy barriers, and private sector engagement. Output 3.2: publication of a study on the environmental economics of SLM and private sector engagement; publication of a study on regional experiences in appropriate investments in sustainable pastoralism. Output 3.3: 1 regional training on local planning processes; support to 5 national partners to integrate SLM into local planning in 30 locations (target 6 locations per country).	

Table 8: Justification for reformulation/expansion of drivers and assumptions

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation and/or consultant's explanatory notes
DRIVERS		
Driver 1: There is a genuine commitment from lead GGW agencies to share responsibility for the GGW with other sectors.	Driver 1: Sustained commitment by lead GGW agencies and relevant sectors to share responsibility for GGW implementation, including willingness to engage in cross-sector coordination and reporting.	This driver supports the transition from outputs related to coordination, indicator development, learning and capacity-building to Outcome 1 on the adoption and use of common indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring.
Driver 2: Inclusion-related barrier identified in the project design: limited formal representation of women, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups.	Driver 2: Enabling conditions exist for meaningful participation of women, pastoralists and other vulnerable or marginalised groups in GGW dialogue, planning and implementation.	This driver supports the transition from network strengthening, CSO engagement and learning fora to Outcome 2 on inclusive mechanisms for civil society engagement.
ASSUMPTIONS		
Assumption 1: Willingness of established GGW partners and agencies to open to actors representing marginalised groups.	Assumption 1: Institutions and established partners remain willing to open participation and decision-making spaces to actors representing marginalised groups.	This assumption underpins the inclusion pathway. It was tested through evidence on participation, representation, sustained engagement and influence of civil society, women's organisations, pastoralist groups and other marginalised stakeholders.
Assumption 2: Innovative investment pathways to capitalise on multifunctionality exist in all countries.	Assumption 2: Innovative investment pathways to capitalise on multifunctionality exist in all participating countries.	This assumption supports the investment pathway. It was tested through evidence on investment dialogue, private-sector engagement, local planning outputs, financing opportunities and the existence or absence of concrete investment partnerships.

68. To ensure consistency across the reconstructed Theory of Change, Table 8 lists all formal Drivers and Assumptions retained for the Terminal Evaluation. These are the same Drivers and Assumptions used in Figure 2 and in the narrative causal pathway analysis in Section 3.1. Other factors discussed in the report, such as stakeholder responsiveness, institutional continuity, financing conditions, security constraints or country ownership, are treated as contextual or evaluative conditions influencing performance, but they are not presented as additional formal Drivers or Assumptions unless explicitly listed in this table.

69. Note: Table 8 lists all formal Drivers and Assumptions retained in the reconstructed Theory of Change. The same numbering is used in Figure 2 and Section 3.1. Other implementation factors discussed in the report are analysed as contextual factors affecting performance, not as additional formal Drivers or Assumptions.

3.1 Causal pathways

70. The reconstructed ToC identifies three mutually reinforcing causal pathways. The **first pathway** links adaptive management, multi-sector engagement, common indicators, knowledge products and training to stronger evidence-informed planning and cross-sector monitoring. This pathway is coherent and central to the project's enabling role. However, it depends on a critical transition from producing an indicator framework to having the framework adopted, used and institutionalised by national and regional institutions. For this reason, the evaluation distinguishes between the availability of indicator-related outputs and evidence of routine use for planning, reporting or policymaking.

71. The **second pathway** links network strengthening, CSO engagement and learning fora to more inclusive mechanisms for civil society participation in GGW and SLM processes. This pathway is central to the project's added value because it addresses the under-representation of CSOs, women, pastoralists and other marginalised groups in GGW dialogue. Human rights, gender equality and inclusion are therefore treated not as peripheral themes, but as part of the project's causal logic. The evaluation distinguishes between participation, representation and influence. Attendance at meetings is considered weaker evidence than sustained engagement, documented influence on decisions, or continued involvement in national and regional GGW processes.

72. The **third pathway** links training on policy and investment barriers, guidance for private sector engagement and local planning support to stronger investment orientation and partnership-building for SLM scale-up. This is the most ambitious pathway because moving from dialogue and capacity development to actual investment partnerships depends on factors largely outside the project's direct control. These include investor appetite, availability of finance, existence of bankable SLM opportunities, credibility of local planning outputs, policy incentives and continued facilitation after project closure. The evaluation therefore treats investment events and studies as output-level or contribution evidence, while concrete financing agreements or sustained partnerships would represent stronger outcome-level evidence.

3.1.1 Causal Pathway 1: Cross-sector monitoring and evidence-informed planning

73. Causal Pathway 1 explains how the project's outputs on multi-sector engagement, indicator development, learning products and training were expected to contribute to Outcome 1: the adoption of a common set of indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring to inform planning and policy-making. The pathway assumes that producing tools and convening dialogue is not sufficient on its own. For these outputs to lead to outcome-level change, national and regional GGW actors needed to recognise the usefulness of the common indicators, participate in their development or validation, and apply them in planning, monitoring or reporting processes.

74. The main formal driver supporting this pathway is Driver 1: sustained commitment by lead GGW agencies and relevant sectors to share responsibility for GGW

implementation, including willingness to engage in cross-sector coordination and reporting. This driver is critical because adoption of common indicators depends on cooperation across institutions that may have different mandates, reporting systems and incentives.

75. No separate formal assumption is assigned to Causal Pathway 1 in Table 8 or Figure 2. However, the evaluation tested important evaluative conditions related to this pathway, including whether the indicator framework was relevant, credible, usable, understood by stakeholders, and likely to be institutionally applied. These conditions are analysed as part of the contribution assessment, but they are not introduced as new formal assumptions or new goalposts for judging the project.

76. Where Driver 1 was present and the indicator-related outputs were considered useful, the project could plausibly contribute to stronger cross-sector monitoring, better evidence-informed planning and improved coordination for SLM/SLWM implementation. Where commitment, uptake or institutional use were weak, the pathway remained incomplete, even if the indicator framework and related activities had been delivered.

77. No additional formal driver was identified for this pathway in the approved Inception Report; other enabling conditions are therefore treated as contextual factors rather than as additional ToC drivers.

3.1.2 Causal Pathway 2: Participation, diversity, and equity through strengthened networks and inclusive mechanisms

78. Causal Pathway 2 explains how outputs focused on strengthening national and regional networks, including the e-GGW network (**Output 2.1**), and convening learning fora on barriers to the engagement of marginalised groups (**Output 2.2**) were expected to support more inclusive mechanisms for civil society participation and dialogue on GGW and SLM issues. The causal logic is that stronger networks, more structured dialogue spaces, and greater recognition of participation barriers would improve the voice, visibility, and influence of marginalised stakeholders in GGW-related processes (**Outcome 2**).

79. **Driver 2** influencing Pathway 2 is the existence of enabling conditions for meaningful participation of women, pastoralists and other vulnerable or marginalised groups in GGW dialogue, planning and implementation. Organisational strength and continued engagement of civil-society and network actors are treated as contextual factors, not as additional formal drivers.

80. **Assumption 1** for Pathway 2 is that institutions and established partners remain willing to open participation and decision-making spaces to actors representing marginalised groups. The evaluation tested whether participation translated into sustained engagement and influence; these are evaluative considerations rather than additional formal assumptions.

81. If Driver 2 is present and Assumption 1 holds, Outcome 2 is expected to contribute to Intermediate State 2, defined as more inclusive civil society participation, and greater consideration of equity and human rights dimensions in GGW implementation. Intermediate State 2 is expected to support longer-term impact by helping ensure that SLM/SLWM policy implementation is not only technically strengthened, but also socially inclusive, locally grounded, and therefore more likely to be sustained over time.

3.1.3 Causal Pathway 3: Investment partnerships and scaling-up

82. Causal Pathway 3 explains how outputs related to training on policy and investment barriers and opportunities (**Output 3.1**), guidelines for improved private sector engagement (**Output 3.2**), and strengthened participatory local planning processes in target locations (**Output 3.3**) were expected to support Outcome 3: stakeholders actively promoting appropriate investment partnerships to scale up SLM good practices. The logic of this pathway is that improved understanding of investment constraints and opportunities, together with better guidance and stronger local planning processes, would enable stakeholders to identify, promote, and engage in more appropriate financing and partnership arrangements for SLM scaling.

83. **No separate formal driver** was identified for Pathway 3 among the two drivers retained in the approved Inception Report. Stakeholder interest, financing conditions and potential synergies with BRICKS and SAWAP are therefore assessed as contextual factors influencing the investment pathway, not as additional formal drivers.

84. **Assumption 2** for Pathway 3 is that innovative investment pathways to capitalise on multifunctionality exist in all participating countries. The evaluation tested this assumption through evidence on investor interest, financing opportunities, partnership-building and the credibility of local planning outputs, without introducing additional formal assumptions.

85. If the relevant contextual factors are favourable and Assumption 2 holds, Outcome 3 is expected to contribute to **Intermediate State 3**, defined as stronger investment-oriented collaboration, more operational local planning processes, and increased capacity to mobilise and align resources for SLM scaling. Intermediate State 3 is expected to support longer-term impact by helping move GGW implementation from policy commitment and pilot engagement toward broader operational uptake, replication, and sustainability.

3.1.4 Interlinkages across pathways, intermediate states, and impact

86. The three pathways are not intended to operate in isolation. Pathway 1 provides the evidence base, coordination mechanisms, and technical tools that can also support more inclusive decision-making under Pathway 2 and more credible investment prioritisation under Pathway 3. Pathway 2 improves the inclusiveness, legitimacy, and responsiveness of governance and planning processes, thereby reinforcing both cross-sector coordination and investment relevance. Pathway 3 provides a route through which planning, participation, and policy support can translate into practical scaling and sustained implementation. In this sense, Intermediate State 1, Intermediate State 2, and Intermediate State 3 are mutually reinforcing.

87. Taken together, these three intermediate states are expected to create a stronger enabling environment for more effective and inclusive implementation of SLM/SLWM policies and practices in GGW countries. The combined effect of stronger evidence-informed coordination, more inclusive governance, and more operational investment partnerships is expected to support the project's **longer-term Impact**, namely improved implementation and scale-up of SLM/SLWM policies and associated environmental and development benefits in GGW countries.

88. The evaluation will test and triangulate the RToC with particular attention to: the extent to which the indicator framework was adopted and used for planning and

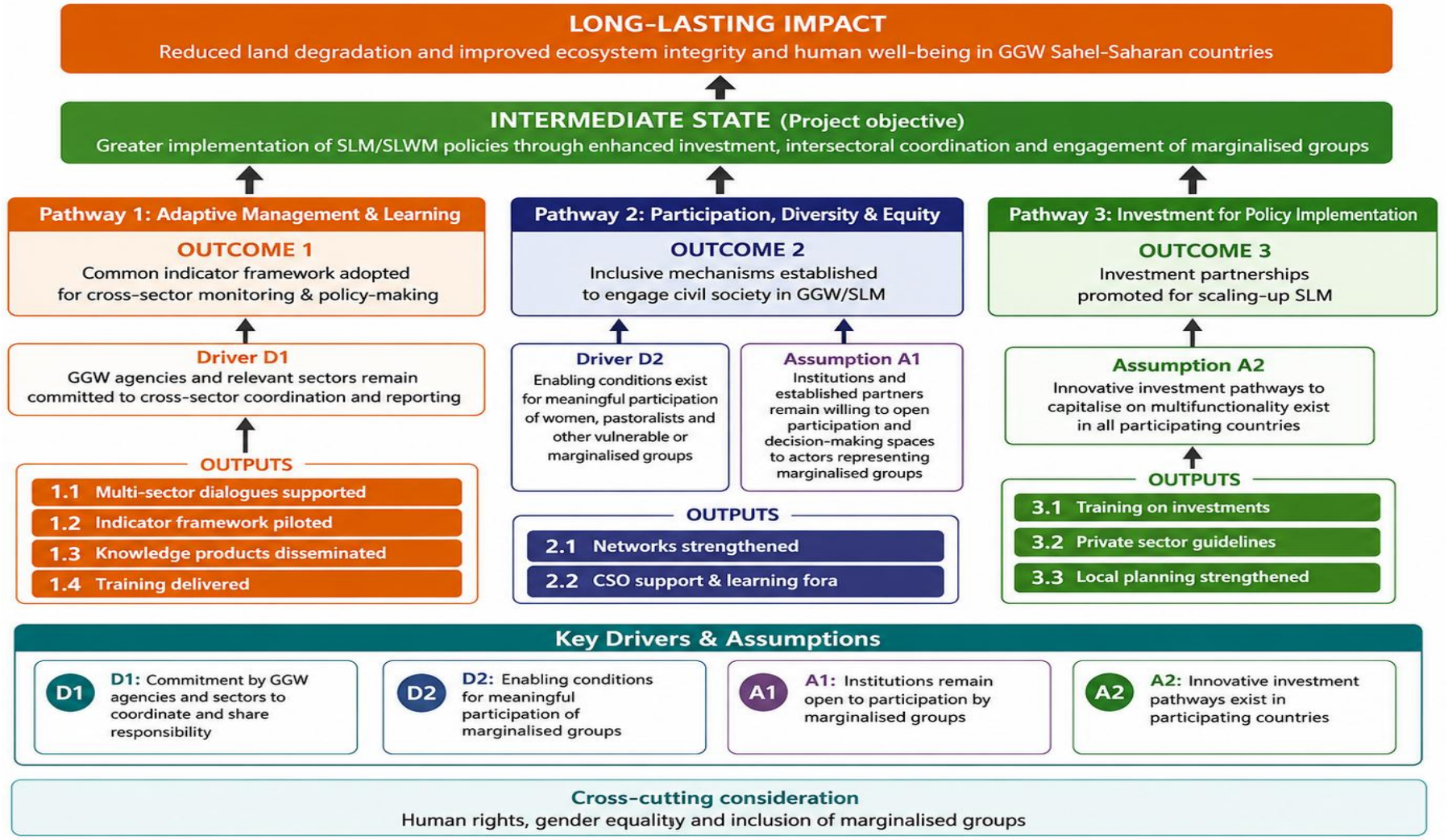
reporting; whether strengthened networks and inclusive mechanisms translated into meaningful participation and influence of women, pastoralists, and other disadvantaged groups, including associated well-being effects, aligned with ToR Strategic Question 4; the extent to which investment dialogue and partnerships materialised and supported scaling under Outcome 3; how MTR recommendations and COVID-19 adaptations shaped implementation pathways; and the extent and contribution of BRICKS and SAWAP synergies to outcomes and sustainability.

3.2 Main insights from the ToC reconstruction

89. The ToC reconstruction highlighted four important considerations for the evaluation. First, the project's comparative value lay in its enabling and catalytic role: it sought to strengthen institutional systems, relationships, monitoring tools, capacities and dialogue rather than directly deliver field-level restoration. Second, the project's causal logic was plausible but depended on several drivers and assumptions, including partner responsiveness, institutional continuity, meaningful participation, continued use of project-supported tools and the availability of post-project financing. Third, the three causal pathways—monitoring and coordination, civil society engagement, and investment partnerships—were expected to jointly contribute to the strengthened implementation of SLM/SLWM policies. The evaluation therefore examined the evidence supporting each causal link and the conditions under which the expected changes did or did not occur. Fourth, the assessment of inclusion considered whether the participation of women, pastoralists and other marginalised groups translated into meaningful engagement and influence, rather than being limited to attendance at project activities.

90. These considerations shaped the evaluation approach. For each causal pathway, the evaluation assessed the sequence from output delivery to uptake, institutional application, outcome-level change and contribution to the identified intermediate state. It examined whether the expected drivers were present, whether the assumptions held, and whether alternative contextual or institutional factors influenced the observed results. Human rights, gender equality, and social inclusion were treated as integral elements of the causal logic, particularly within the pathway relating to civil society engagement. The approved Theory of Change at Evaluation, presented below, was used throughout the report to organise evidence, test causal relationships and assess the project's contribution to outcomes, intermediate states and the likelihood of long-lasting impact.

Figure 2: Theory of Change at evaluation



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS[17]

4.1 Strategic Relevance

91. The evaluator finds that the project was strategically relevant at design and remained relevant during implementation. The project addressed a clear regional need within the Great Green Wall: strengthening the enabling conditions for Sustainable Land Management policy implementation through better coordination, stronger monitoring, more inclusive stakeholder engagement, and improved investment dialogue. The project was not designed as a direct land restoration intervention. Its relevance is therefore assessed against its intended enabling function: supporting the systems, tools, networks, and dialogue processes needed to improve the implementation and scaling-up of SLM in the GGW countries.

4.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW, and Strategic Priorities

Table 9: Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP's mandate and thematic priorities	Level of alignment
MTS (2014–2017)18 MTS 2018–2021; MTS 2022–2025	The project contributed to the UNEP subprogramme for Ecosystem Management (2014-2017) / Healthy and Productive Ecosystems (2018-2021) Nature Action (2022-2025) through cross-sector monitoring, SLM knowledge, institutional learning, stakeholder engagement and support to terrestrial ecosystem governance.	Full
Programme of Work: Ecosystem Management / Healthy and Productive Ecosystems / Nature Action	The project supported monitoring, collaboration and capacity development for terrestrial ecosystem health and productivity, particularly through SLM-related indicators, learning and cross-sector engagement.	Full
Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[19]	The project supported capacity-building through training, knowledge products, learning fora, indicator-related tools and technical dialogue on SLM, monitoring and investment barriers.	Partial
South-South Cooperation[19]	The project promoted regional learning, CSO networking, GGW country dialogue and exchange among Sahel-Saharan countries around SLM, monitoring, civil society participation and investment dialogue.	Partial

[17] Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion.
[18] Refer to the MTS under which the project was approved.
[19] If applicable.

Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Table 10: Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment
GEF Land Degradation focal area / LD-4 Adaptive Management and Learning	The project was approved under the GEF Land Degradation focal area and directly addressed adaptive management, SLM knowledge, monitoring, learning, capacity development and policy implementation.	Full
GEF enabling and catalytic role	The project sought to strengthen the enabling environment for SLM, support scaling-up, promote partnerships and leverage co-financing and wider GGW-related initiatives.	Full
GEF emphasis on stakeholder engagement and knowledge management	The project's focus on CSO networks, women's and pastoralist organisations, learning products, platforms and regional exchange was consistent with GEF expectations for stakeholder engagement and knowledge sharing.	Partial
GEF Core Indicators	The project did not report quantified Core Indicator achievements because it was an enabling intervention and did not directly finance restoration, improved land management at scale or direct beneficiary-level outcomes. However, it indirectly contributed to conditions relevant to GEF Core Indicators 3, 4 and 11 through monitoring, capacity-building, civil society engagement, local planning and investment-readiness work.	Partial / indirect

92. Although the project did not report quantified achievements against GEF Core Indicators, its enabling and catalytic work indirectly contributed to conditions relevant to several GEF result areas. In particular, the project supported the enabling environment for land restoration and improved landscape management through capacity-building, common indicator and monitoring work, civil society engagement, learning products, local planning support and investment-readiness activities. These contributions are relevant to the logic of GEF Core Indicator 3 on area of land restored, Core Indicator 4 on area of landscapes under improved practices, and Core Indicator 11 on direct beneficiaries. However, because the project did not directly finance restoration activities or generate verified hectare-based or beneficiary-count results, no quantified Core Indicator values are reported in this evaluation.

4.1.2 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities

Table 11: Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities	Level of Alignment *Full, partial, or not at all*
SDG Target 15.3 – Land Degradation Neutrality	The project directly addressed land degradation, dryland resilience, SLM policy implementation, and monitoring in GGW countries.	Full
UNCCD and desertification / drylands agenda	The project supported GGW countries in addressing desertification, land degradation, dryland vulnerability, and the need for improved SLM governance.	Full

Great Green Wall Initiative	The project directly responded to GGW coordination, monitoring, inclusion, learning, and investment gaps. It was designed to strengthen the institutional and social conditions for more effective GGW implementation.	Full
National GGW and SLM priorities	The project supported national mechanisms, CSO engagement, indicator discussions, local planning and SLM capacity. However, practical uptake varied by country depending on institutional responsiveness and ownership.	Partial

4.1.3 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

Table 12: Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	**Complementarity** *(including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)*	**Level of Alignment**
BRICKS	Complementarity through knowledge exchange, monitoring, communication and South-South learning within the wider GGW ecosystem.	Partial
SAWAP	The project was positioned within the broader Sahel and West Africa Program context and supported cross-country GGW learning, monitoring and coordination.	Partial
Front Local Environnemental pour une Union Verte (FLEUVE)	Strong complementarity on local planning, CSO engagement and integration of SLM into local development processes. FLEUVE-related tools and activities were relevant to the project's local planning and capacity-building pathway.	Full
Action Against Desertification and other GGW-linked initiatives	Potential complementarity around restoration, landscape approaches and overlapping GGW actors. The project's enabling role could support coherence with these initiatives, although evidence of systematic operational collaboration is more limited.	Partial

93. The project made a relevant contribution to UNEP's, GEF's and GGW countries' planned results by addressing systemic barriers that were constraining GGW implementation. Its contribution was strongest in areas where an enabling project could realistically add value: strengthening dialogue, promoting common monitoring approaches, supporting civil society and network engagement, producing learning materials, and raising attention to investment barriers and opportunities. These contributions were aligned with UNEP's environmental governance and ecosystem management mandate, GEF's Land Degradation and adaptive management priorities, and the GGW's need for stronger coordination and learning across countries.

94. The magnitude of the project's contribution should, however, be interpreted in relation to its scale and design. The project was a Medium-Size Project with a modest GEF grant and a large regional scope. It was not expected to deliver direct restoration outcomes, but to strengthen the enabling environment for SLM implementation. From this perspective, its strategic relevance was high. The main limitation is that strong strategic alignment did not automatically generate uniform country ownership, sustained institutional uptake or comparable engagement across all 11 participating countries. This issue is assessed further under Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability.

Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity *[max. two]*

95. **Finding statement 1:** The project's strategic relevance was strongest where it addressed systemic barriers in the GGW architecture, particularly weak coordination,

fragmented monitoring, limited civil society participation and insufficient investment readiness, rather than isolated technical problems.

96. **Finding statement 2:** The project was well aligned with UNEP, GEF, SDG, UNCCD and GGW priorities, but high strategic relevance did not translate into equally strong uptake and ownership across all participating countries.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Satisfactory

Rating for Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

Rating for Alignment to GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Satisfactory

Rating for Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities: Satisfactory

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Satisfactory

4.2 Quality of Project Design

Table 13: Summary of quality of project design assessment ratings

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	Summary Assessment
A	Project Preparation	4	The project was based on a relevant problem analysis and responded to clear systemic barriers affecting GGW implementation, including weak coordination, limited monitoring, insufficient civil society engagement and low investment readiness. However, the complexity of implementation across 11 countries was partly underestimated.
B	Risk identification and Safeguards	4	Safeguards screening was conducted during preparation and the design recognised inclusion and participation issues. However, the risk analysis and operational mitigation measures could have been stronger, particularly regarding stakeholder responsiveness, institutional turnover, country ownership and continuity of engagement.
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	5	Governance and supervision arrangements were clearly articulated, with UNEP as GEF Implementing Agency, IUCN as Executing Partner, and a Project Steering Committee intended to provide strategic guidance and review.
D	Partnerships	4	The partnership approach was relevant to the project's regional enabling role and relied on national GGW institutions, CSO networks, women's and pastoralist organisations, and technical partners. However, the design assumed a level of partner availability, responsiveness and continuity that was not fully mitigated through operational arrangements.
E	Strategic Relevance	5	The project was strongly aligned with the GGW agenda, GEF Land Degradation priorities, UNEP's ecosystem and nature-related mandates, SDG 15.3 and the wider UNCCD drylands agenda.
F	Logical Framework and Causality	4	The results logic was generally coherent and appropriate for an enabling intervention. However, some outputs were phrased as end-states and several indicators combined existence, functionality, adoption and use, which reduced the clarity and usability of the results framework and required clarification through the reconstructed Theory of Change.
G	Financial Planning	5	The project had a clear financing envelope and a budgeted M&E plan. However, the design could have better anticipated the risks associated with co-financing verification, partner-dependent delivery and financial sustainability after project completion.
H	Efficiency	4	The design anticipated the use of partnerships, regional events and synergies to improve efficiency. However, the transaction costs of

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	Summary Assessment
			coordinating 11 countries, multiple partners and several thematic workstreams were underestimated.
I	Monitoring	5	The project included a structured M&E architecture, reporting provisions, PIRs, Steering Committee meetings, a Mid-Term Review and a Terminal Evaluation. These arrangements provided a sound basis for monitoring implementation and learning.
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	4	The design had a strong implicit catalytic logic, especially through tools, networks, learning products, indicator frameworks and investment dialogue. However, exit arrangements, post-project financing pathways and institutionalisation mechanisms were not sufficiently explicit.
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	Learning, communication and outreach were central to the design, including knowledge products, training, regional exchange, CSO networking and dissemination activities.
	Total (Weighted) Score:	***4.38***	***Satisfactory.*** *(Full analysis in the Inception Report, available from the Evaluation Office)*

97. The project design was generally sound and appropriate for a regional enabling intervention supporting the Great Green Wall. Its main strengths were its strong strategic relevance, coherent focus on systemic barriers, clear UNEP/IUCN implementation architecture, structured M&E arrangements, and strong emphasis on learning, communication, networking and capacity development. The design correctly identified that weak cross-sector coordination, fragmented monitoring, limited inclusion of civil society and marginalised groups, and insufficient investment dialogue were constraining more effective implementation of SLM/GGW priorities.

98. The main design weaknesses related to operational realism and the clarity and usability of the results framework. The design was ambitious for a Medium-Size Project covering 11 countries and multiple stakeholder categories. It underestimated the transaction costs of regional coordination, partner responsiveness risks, institutional turnover and the difficulty of sustaining engagement after project support. Some results statements and indicators also combined delivery, functionality, adoption and use, which reduced the clarity of the results framework and required clarification through the reconstructed Theory of Change. Sustainability, exit arrangements and post-project financing pathways were present in the catalytic logic, but were not sufficiently explicit or operationally secured in the design.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory

4.3 Nature of the External Context

99. The project was implemented in a moderately unfavourable external context. Its regional scope across 11 Great Green Wall countries created both a strong justification for the intervention and a high level of operational complexity. The project was designed to address fragmentation in GGW-related institutional arrangements, initiatives, stakeholder platforms and financing streams. It also sought to respond to weak coordination between national GGW agencies, line ministries, CSO networks, regional partners and technical or financial actors involved in SLM/GGW implementation. In addition, monitoring systems for SLM and GGW results were uneven across countries, with variable capacities, different reporting practices and limited harmonisation of indicators, data flows and evidence on land

management results. These same contextual weaknesses affected implementation, as the project depended heavily on national focal points, line ministries, CSO networks, regional partners and technical institutions to convene meetings, validate tools, participate in dialogue, provide evidence and sustain engagement. Responsiveness varied across countries, and this affected the timeliness, depth and consistency of implementation.

100. COVID-19 had a significant negative effect on travel, in-person meetings, national consultations, stakeholder mobilisation and the sequencing of some activities. These effects were not country-specific but affected the wider regional implementation environment and contributed to delays in activities requiring cross-country dialogue, partner mobilisation and validation processes. Security conditions are also treated in this evaluation as regional contextual risks affecting parts of the Sahel and the broader operating environment for GGW-related work. The evaluation does not attribute specific security-related effects to individual countries unless supported by the available evidence. Institutional turnover further weakened continuity, as some focal points and partner representatives changed positions, retired or became difficult to reach during or after implementation. In addition, uneven responsiveness across countries and stakeholder categories affected the project's ability to convene actors, verify outputs, sustain engagement and document outcome-level change.

101. **Finding statement on External Context:** The same fragmentation, weak coordination and uneven country responsiveness that justified the project also constrained its implementation and reduced the strength of evidence on sustained uptake across countries.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Unfavourable

4.4 Effectiveness

102. Effectiveness is assessed against the reconstructed Theory of Change, which presents the project as an enabling and catalytic intervention rather than a direct restoration project. The analysis therefore examines whether the project delivered its planned output package and whether these outputs credibly contributed to three outcome pathways: common indicators and cross-sector monitoring; inclusive civil society engagement; and investment partnerships for SLM scale-up. The evidence indicates that the project substantially delivered its planned outputs, but that the transition from outputs to outcomes was uneven. Documentary evidence is strongest for activities, deliverables, training, knowledge products, meetings and network engagement. Evidence is weaker for sustained institutional use, formal adoption, beneficiary-level influence and concrete investment partnerships[20].

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

103. Assessment approach: For each output, the narrative assessment compares the available evidence with the practical performance indicators/benchmarks shown in the first column. The delivery category reflects the extent to which the benchmarked output package was demonstrably produced; evidence of uptake, institutional use and sustainability is assessed separately under achievement of outcomes.

Table 14: Availability of outputs

Outputs	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1.1.: Governmental and non-governmental actors actively engaged in SLM/GGW dialogue at different levels **Indicators and Targets:** Not specified	Against the benchmark of 11 country meetings and functional multi-sector engagement, the available evidence confirms that national alliance and coordination processes were supported in several countries and that CSOs participated in some of these processes. However, the evaluation could not verify the complete 11-country meeting package or consistent evidence of functional engagement across all participating countries. Functionality and continuity are assessed separately under outcome achievement. The performance benchmark was therefore only partially verified. ***Level of delivery: Partially delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020; Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks; PIRs; Mid-Term Review; country meeting records; stakeholder consultations; Burkina Faso and Senegal country-level evidence; project deliverables.

[20] *Project documents did not specify stand-alone output-level performance indicators. Consistent with Table 7 and the approved Inception Report, the evaluation assessed outputs using the Revised Logframe output statements themselves and the associated targets, key deliverables and monitoring milestones set out in Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks. These are used as practical output-verification benchmarks and do not constitute a revision of the approved results framework*

Outputs	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1.2.: A framework of indicators and participatory approaches is established by partners for greater understanding and monitoring of landscape-system dynamics and the linkages between livelihood and conservation objectives **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** One regional workshop to develop the indicator framework and implementation/use of the framework in three pilot countries.	Against the benchmark of a regional framework-development workshop and implementation in three pilot countries, the project developed an indicator framework and supported dialogue on monitoring environmental and development benefits in GGW contexts. However, the evidence reviewed did not provide sufficiently complete confirmation of implementation and use in all three planned pilot countries. Routine institutional use is assessed under Outcome 1. The performance benchmark was therefore partially verified. *Level of delivery*: ***Partially delivered***	PIRs; revised logframe; indicator framework documentation; stakeholder consultations; country-level discussions.
Output 1.3. Learning and awareness-raising publications are developed and endorsed by at least five countries through a participatory process and disseminated to improve understanding and monitoring of landscape-system dynamics and the linkages between livelihood and conservation objectives **Indicators and Targets:** Translation and dissemination of four existing publications; publication of one synthesis study endorsed by at least five countries; and implementation of communication actions under the BRICKS communication strategy.	Against the benchmarks of four translated and disseminated publications, one synthesis study endorsed by at least five countries and related communication actions, the project produced or supported several learning and awareness products on SLM, landscape dynamics, environmental economics, pastoralism, private-sector engagement and the GGW. However, the documentation reviewed did not consistently confirm the final status, endorsement and dissemination of the complete planned publication package. The performance benchmarks were therefore only partially verified. *Level of delivery:* ***Partially delivered***	PIRs; knowledge management reports; project deliverables; publications; stakeholder consultations.

Outputs	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 1.4. 500 Government and NGO representatives trained in the use and interpretation of appropriate tools, including Total Economic Valuation of ecosystem goods and services **Indicators and Targets:** Not specified in Prodoc	The project exceeded the numerical training target. More than 600 government, NGO, and local CSO representatives from most participating countries were reportedly reached through training and learning activities, compared with the target of 500. Against the performance benchmarks of six planned training events and 500 representatives trained, the FY2019 PIR reported that more than 600 representatives from governments, NGOs and local-level CSOs from 10 of the 11 participating countries took part in regional and national trainings, fora and GGW dialogues. This cumulative figure was reproduced in the 2020 Mid-Term Review and again in the 2024 PIR. The target of 500 participants is embedded in the Output 1.4 statement in the Revised Logframe of September 2020, while the two regional trainings and four landscape-management/SLM trainings are specified in Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks. On the basis of these documented figures, the quantitative delivery benchmark was met and exceeded. Evidence of post-training application and complete sex- or vulnerability-disaggregated data remains limited, but these issues concern quality, inclusion and outcome-level use rather than the availability of the output. *Level of delivery:* ***Fully delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020 (Output 1.4 target of 500); Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks (two regional trainings and four landscape-management/SLM trainings); PIR FY2019, Output 1.4, p. 16 (more than 600 participants from 10 of 11 countries); Mid-Term Review 2020, p. 29 (same reported figure and satisfactory progress assessment); PIR 2024, p. 21 (same cumulative figure); training reports and available participant records.
Output 2.1. 10 networks strengthened at national and regional levels and increased engagement of civil society, especially organisations representing marginalised groups, in government consultations and dialogue on the Great Green Wall and other SLM issues in all countries **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** Ten networks strengthened, including identification/support of five national CSO networks, engagement of five regional networks and establishment/continuous updating of the e-GGW network for 11 countries.	Against the benchmark of ten strengthened national and regional networks, project reporting indicates that more than ten networks and more than 60 CSOs or CSO networks were engaged, and an online civil-society platform was launched. The numerical and organisational delivery benchmarks were therefore met. Continued network activity and influence on decision-making are assessed separately under outcomes and sustainability. *Level of delivery:* ***Fully delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020; Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks; PIRs; SOS Sahel/platform evidence; partner reports; stakeholder consultations; network-related documentation

Outputs	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
Output 2.2. Learning fora are conducted to address challenges related to the engagement of marginalised groups in SLM **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** One regional learning forum on policy barriers and marginalised groups' engagement in SLM, with a related report; and one regional learning forum on sustainable pastoralism, barriers and marginalisation, involving the participating countries.	Against the benchmark of two regional learning fora and their related knowledge products, the evidence confirms delivery of learning processes addressing policy barriers, civil-society engagement, pastoralism and marginalisation. The planned learning-forum package was delivered. Evidence on dissemination, follow-up and influence on national mechanisms is less complete, but these issues are assessed under outcome achievement rather than output availability. *Level of delivery:* ***Fully delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020; Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks; PIRs; forum reports; partner documents; knowledge products; stakeholder consultations.
Output 3.1.: Training workshops for 11 countries to strengthen the capacity of government, non-government and private-sector actors to identify and address policy implementation and investment barriers and opportunities **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** Four multi-country training events on appropriate investment, policy implementation barriers and private-sector engagement, targeting participation from the 11 countries.	Against the benchmark of four multi-country training and dialogue events, project records document the planned capacity-building package on policy and investment barriers, including multi-country activities and a private-investment e-conference. The delivery benchmark was met. Evidence of subsequent action by investors or policymakers is assessed under Outcome 3 and does not reduce the assessment of output availability. *Level of delivery:* ***Fully delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020; Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks; PIRs; training records; e-conference documentation; investment-related reports; stakeholder consultations.
Output 3.2.: A set of guidelines for improved private-sector engagement, including recognition of the role of local land managers as private investors and identification of	Against the benchmark of a guideline package and two related studies, the project developed studies and guidance relevant to private-sector engagement, investment dialogue, environmental economics and sustainable pastoralism. However, the evaluation could not consistently verify the final publication, dissemination and accessibility of the complete planned package. The performance benchmark was therefore partially verified.	PIRs; knowledge products; investment studies; project deliverables; stakeholder consultations.

Outputs	Narrative Assessment	Sources of Information/Evidence
suitable enabling and asset investments **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** A set of private-sector engagement guidelines; one study on the environmental economics of SLM and private-sector engagement; and one study on regional experiences in appropriate investment in sustainable pastoralism.	*Level of delivery:* ***Partially delivered***	
Output 3.3.: Local planning processes are improved in 30 locations through better participation of different stakeholder groups and sectors and greater capacity of those groups to articulate SLM priorities and benefits **Performance indicator(s)/benchmark(s) used for assessment:** One regional training on local-planning processes and support to five national partners to integrate SLM into local planning in 30 locations, with a target of six locations per country.	Against the benchmark of one regional training, support to five national partners and improved local-planning processes in 30 locations, the project implemented training-of-trainers and local-planning support activities in selected countries. However, the evaluation could not verify complete support to all five national partners or the production and use of improved planning outputs in all 30 targeted locations. The performance benchmark was therefore partially verified. *Level of delivery:* ***Partially delivered***	Revised Logframe, September 2020; Annex I on Key Deliverables and Benchmarks; PIRs; FLEUVE/local-planning documentation; training reports; stakeholder consultations; Burkina Faso and Senegal country-level evidence.

104. Overall, the project substantially delivered its planned output package. The strongest evidence of output delivery relates to training, knowledge products, CSO/network engagement, learning fora, indicator-related work, investment dialogue, and local planning support. The project's outputs were relevant to the needs identified in the Theory of Change and broadly useful for an enabling project. They helped create spaces for dialogue, produced tools and knowledge, strengthened selected networks, and supported awareness of investment barriers.

105. The main qualification is that delivery evidence is stronger than evidence of quality, utility, and sustained use. Several outputs were documented as completed or largely completed, but the evaluation could not always verify dissemination reach, beneficiary uptake, functionality of mechanisms, application of training, or continuity of use after project support. In addition, stakeholder responsiveness during the evaluation was uneven, and some listed beneficiaries or partners could not confirm direct participation. These limitations do not negate output delivery, but they require a cautious assessment of the extent to which outputs are translated into durable institutional or behavioural change.

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

4.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

106. The project made a meaningful contribution to its intended outcomes, but outcome achievement was uneven and less strongly evidenced than output availability. This is consistent with the enabling nature of the project. The causal pathway required outputs to be adopted, used, institutionalised and sustained by national and regional actors. The evidence shows credible contribution to dialogue, networking, awareness and selected tools, but less conclusive evidence of routine use, sustained institutional mechanisms or concrete investment partnerships.

Table 15: Achievement of project outcomes

Outcome 1: GGW countries adopt a common set of indicators for cross-sectoral monitoring to inform planning and policymaking	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	The project developed an indicator framework and supported discussions in selected countries. The work was relevant to the need for improved monitoring of landscape dynamics, SLM benefits and linkages between livelihoods and conservation objectives.
Sources of Information /Evidence:	PIRs; revised logframe; indicator documentation; project deliverables; country consultations; stakeholder interviews; Burkina Faso and Senegal field evidence
Narrative Assessment:	The project created an important foundation for common monitoring and contributed to the GGW monitoring conversation. Its contribution is credible at the level of framework development, awareness and selected consultations. However, outcome-level achievement requires evidence of adoption and use. This evidence is partial. The evaluation therefore considers the outcome partially rather than fully achieved.
Level of Achievement:	*Partially achieved*

Outcome 2: National governments increasingly establish inclusive mechanisms to engage civil society in GGW and SLM	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	The project supported CSO networks, learning fora, a civil society platform, and the engagement of organisations representing women, pastoralists, and other marginalised groups. More than 10 networks and more than 60 CSOs or CSO networks were reportedly engaged. Evidence also indicates that pastoralist and women's organisations gained visibility in project-supported dialogue.
Sources of Information /Evidence:	PIRs; partner reports; SOS Sahel/platform evidence; learning forum documentation; stakeholder consultations; country-level evidence from Burkina Faso and Senegal.
Narrative Assessment:	The project credibly contributed to increased participation and visibility of civil-society organisations and groups representing women, pastoralists and other marginalised stakeholders in GGW/SLM dialogue. Project-supported networks, learning fora and the civil-society platform provided relevant opportunities for representation, exchange and engagement. However, the evidence is stronger for participation and representation than for the establishment of consistently functional and institutionalised government mechanisms or for sustained influence on planning and decision-making. In addition, incomplete disaggregated data and limited evidence from some participating countries constrain verification of the scale, depth and durability of the changes.
Level of Achievement:	*Partially achieved*

Outcome 3: Stakeholders actively promote appropriate investment partnerships to scale up SLM good practices	
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	The project delivered training on policy and investment barriers, supported studies/guidelines and organised investment dialogue, including a private investment e-conference. Local planning support also contributed to investment readiness. However, evidence of concrete investment partnerships, financing agreements, bankable SLM pipelines or sustained mechanisms remains limited.
Sources of Information /Evidence:	PIRs; training reports; investment-related studies; e-conference documentation; local planning evidence; stakeholder consultations.
Narrative Assessment:	The project made a relevant contribution to awareness, dialogue and investment orientation. It helped clarify barriers and opportunities, but the transition from dialogue to actual investment partnerships was weakly evidenced. This pathway depended on factors beyond project control, including investor interest, availability of finance, bankable opportunities and continued facilitation after project closure.
Level of Achievement:	*Partially achieved*

107. Overall, the project partially achieved its three intended outcomes. Under Outcome 1, the project established relevant foundations for common monitoring through the development of an indicator framework and associated consultations, but evidence of systematic adoption, routine institutional use and application in planning and policymaking across participating countries remained incomplete. Under Outcome 2, the project contributed to increased participation, visibility and networking of civil-society organisations and groups representing women, pastoralists and other marginalised stakeholders. However, evidence was stronger for participation and representation than for the establishment of consistently functional government mechanisms or sustained influence on decision-making. Under Outcome 3, the project supported investment dialogue, capacity-building and investment-readiness activities, but evidence of concrete partnerships, mobilised financing or sustained

follow-up by investors and public institutions was limited. All three outcomes are therefore assessed as Partially achieved.

108. The project's effects on differentiated stakeholder groups were generally positive but limited in depth and demonstrable durability. Women's organisations, pastoralist groups, civil-society networks and other non-state actors were explicitly included in the project logic and participated in project-supported activities and dialogue processes. This contributed to greater visibility of inclusion, pastoralism and civil-society participation within GGW and SLM discussions. Nevertheless, the available evidence was insufficient to conclude that participation consistently translated into sustained influence over government planning and decision-making, institutionalised representation, or measurable socio-economic benefits beyond participation, networking, learning and visibility. Incomplete sex-disaggregated and vulnerability-disaggregated data further constrained the assessment.

109. No evidence of significant unintended negative socio-economic or environmental effects was identified through the documents reviewed and stakeholder consultations. However, the limited availability of systematic, disaggregated and longitudinal evidence means that differentiated and unintended effects could not be assessed comprehensively. The evaluation therefore does not interpret the absence of documented negative effects as conclusive evidence that no such effects occurred.

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

110. The project has a plausible but not assured pathway to impact. Its intended long-lasting impact was improved ecosystem integrity and human well-being in GGW Sahel-Saharan countries through reduced land degradation and strengthened implementation of SLM/SLWM. Given that the project was an enabling intervention, impact was expected to occur indirectly through improved monitoring, stronger coordination, more inclusive participation and better investment orientation. The project contributed to these enabling conditions, but the likelihood of impact depends on whether national institutions, GGW structures, CSO networks and investment actors continue to use, apply and finance the outputs after project closure.

Table 16: Likelihood of impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers supporting transition from Outputs to Outcomes	Partially in place	**D1** was partly in place for the monitoring pathway, as GGW agencies and relevant sectors engaged in indicator and coordination work, but evidence of sustained adoption and routine use remained incomplete. **D2** was partly in place for the inclusion pathway, as women, pastoralists, CSOs and other marginalised groups were engaged, but enabling conditions for sustained influence varied.
Assumptions supporting transition from Outputs to Outcomes	Partially hold	No formal assumption was assigned to Pathway 1. **A1** partly held for Pathway 2, as some institutions opened participation spaces, but sustained decision-making influence was not fully evidenced.

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
		A2 only partly held for Pathway 3, as investment dialogue occurred but concrete investment pathways and partnerships remained weakly evidenced.
Drivers/assumptions supporting transition from Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially in place / partially hold	No additional formal Drivers or Assumptions were defined for this transition beyond **D1, D2, A1** and **A2.** The assessment therefore considers whether these conditions continued to support progress towards the three Intermediate States, while treating country ownership, institutional continuity, stakeholder responsiveness and financing as contextual factors rather than new formal ToC conditions.
Drivers / assumptions supporting transition from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially in place / partially hold	The ToC does not introduce additional numbered Drivers or Assumptions for the transition from Intermediate States to long-lasting impact. Progress depends on whether the conditions linked to **D1, D2, A1 and A2** are sustained, and on contextual factors such as continued political commitment, institutional use, financing and network continuity.
Proportion of **Project Outcomes** fully or partially achieved	Partially achieved	All three project outcomes were partially achieved; none was fully achieved.
Proportion of **Intermediate States** achieved	All three Intermediate States began to emerge, but none was fully achieved	**Intermediate State 1** – Strengthened SLM/SLWM policy implementation supported by improved monitoring and reporting: this began to emerge through the development of the common indicator framework, related consultations and increased attention to integrated monitoring. However, evidence of routine institutional use, country-wide adoption and systematic application in planning and policymaking remained limited. **Intermediate State 2** – More inclusive cross-sector coordination, dialogue and partnerships, with stronger engagement of civil society and marginalised groups: this partially emerged through strengthened CSO networks, learning fora, the civil-society platform and increased participation of women's and pastoralist organisations. Nevertheless, evidence of consistently functional coordination mechanisms and sustained influence on government decision-making was incomplete. **Intermediate State 3** – Increased investment orientation and partnership-building for SLM/SLWM scale-up: this emerged only to a limited extent through investment-related training, dialogue, studies and local-planning support. The evaluation found insufficient evidence of concrete investment partnerships, mobilised financing or sustained institutional follow-up. Overall, all three Intermediate States showed early or partial signs of emergence, but none was fully achieved or sufficiently institutionalised to ensure progression towards long-lasting impact.

111. Evidence from the three causal pathways indicates that the project established relevant foundations for longer-term change, but that the transition from project outcomes to the three Intermediate States remained incomplete. Under the monitoring and reporting pathway, the common indicator framework and related consultations created a basis for improved cross-sectoral monitoring, but evidence of systematic adoption, routine institutional use and application in planning and

policymaking remained limited. Under the inclusion and civil-society engagement pathway, the project increased the participation and visibility of CSOs, women's organisations, pastoralist groups and other marginalised stakeholders; however, evidence that this participation translated into institutionalised representation or sustained influence on government decision-making was incomplete. Under the investment pathway, the project supported training, studies, dialogue and local-planning processes, but there was limited evidence of concrete investment partnerships, mobilised financing or durable follow-up mechanisms.

112. All three Intermediate States identified in the approved Theory of Change therefore showed some early or partial signs of emergence, but none was fully achieved or sufficiently institutionalised. The project strengthened enabling conditions for improved SLM/SLWM policy implementation, more inclusive coordination and increased investment orientation. Nevertheless, the continuation of these changes depends on post-project conditions that were only partially in place at project closure, including sustained national ownership, routine use of monitoring tools, continued activity of civil-society networks, institutionalisation of inclusive coordination mechanisms, partner follow-up and access to investment finance. Given the partial achievement of all three outcomes, the early-stage emergence of the Intermediate States and the uncertainty surrounding the principal drivers and assumptions required for further progress, the likelihood of impact is assessed as Moderately Unlikely.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness*:*

113. **Finding statement 1:** The project delivered a substantial proportion of its planned enabling outputs and produced relevant tools, training, networks and knowledge products. However, most outputs were only partially verified against their complete performance benchmarks, and evidence of dissemination, coverage, quality and sustained use was uneven.

114. **Finding statement 2:** All three project outcomes were partially achieved. The project created foundations for common monitoring, more inclusive civil-society engagement and investment dialogue, but evidence of systematic institutional adoption, sustained influence on decision-making and outcome-level behavioural change remained incomplete.

115. **Finding statement 3:** The three Intermediate States began to emerge to different extents, but none was fully achieved or institutionalised. In particular, the investment pathway showed limited evidence of progression from training, dialogue and studies to concrete partnerships, mobilised financing or durable investment mechanisms. This, together with uncertainties regarding national ownership, institutional continuity and continued use of project-supported outputs, reduces the likelihood that the project's results will progress towards long-lasting impact.

Rating for Effectiveness: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Likelihood of Impact (Use 'Likely' scale): Moderately Unlikely

4.5 Financial Management

116. Financial management is assessed against two dimensions: adherence to UNEP/GEF financial policies and procedures, and completeness of project financial information. The project had a clear approved financing envelope at design, consisting of a GEF grant of US$1,726,400 and planned co-financing of US$12,035,943, for a total planned budget of US$13,762,343. This financing structure was consistent with the project's enabling and catalytic role, as a relatively modest GEF grant was expected to support broader GGW implementation through partnerships, co-financing and complementary actions. However, it also created a high dependency on partner contributions, reliable co-financing documentation, and final expenditure verification.

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

117. The evaluation did not identify evidence of major non-compliance with UNEP/GEF financial policies and procedures. The project was approved through the GEF Medium-Size Project process, implemented under UNEP oversight, and executed by IUCN. The available evidence indicates that the project operated with an approved budget, annual PIR reporting, expenditure reporting, Steering Committee oversight, and a documented no-cost extension and budget amendment process. The design also included provisions for financial reporting, audits, co-financing reports, and expenditure monitoring.

118. The first disbursement was reported in the PIR 2022 as having taken place on 1 September 2016, following project approval on 13 June 2016. On this basis, the first disbursement appears to have been made within nine months of UNEP/GEF approval. The date is therefore reported on the basis of the PIR; independent certified transfer documentation was not available to the evaluation. No major procurement concern was identified in the documents reviewed, but procurement documentation was not sufficiently complete for the evaluation to provide a strong independent assessment of procurement compliance.

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

119. The main weakness under Financial Management relates to the completeness of financial information available to the evaluation. The evaluation reviewed project budget information, co-financing tables at design, expenditure reporting, PIR financial data, the no-cost extension and budget amendment request, and available financial templates or records. These documents were sufficient to understand the approved financing envelope, broad expenditure trends and the role of budget revision in supporting implementation. However, they were not sufficient to fully verify actual final project costs by activity, final certified expenditure at financial closure, full co-financing delivery, audit findings and management responses, or complete fund transfer and procurement documentation.

120. Co-financing verification was the most important evidence gap. The project design relied heavily on expected co-financing, including cash and in-kind contributions, to support a broad regional enabling agenda. However, the evaluation did not have sufficient final certified evidence to confirm the full amount, source, timing and nature of actual co-financing realised. Available reporting suggests that co-financing evidence remained incomplete and that verified co-financing was below the planned level, but the evaluation cannot provide a fully reconciled final co-financing

assessment without the final closure package. This affects the strength of the analysis under Financial Management, Efficiency and Sustainability.

Table 17: Financial management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:		**Moderately Satisfactory**	The project was approved through the GEF Medium-Size Project process and implemented under UNEP oversight, with IUCN as the Executing Partner. The evidence reviewed included the approved budget, PIR financial reporting, expenditure information, the Mid-Term Review, Steering Committee documentation and the no-cost extension/budget amendment request. No documented evidence of a major financial irregularity or serious non-compliance was identified. However, the assessment is constrained by the absence of complete audit, procurement and final financial-closure documentation.
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence[21] to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		No	No specific case of major non-compliance was identified in the records available to the evaluation. This finding should not be interpreted as full verification of compliance because the complete audit package, procurement files and certified financial-closure documentation were not provided.
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	The project was approved on 13 June 2016 and PIR 2022 reports the first disbursement date as 1 September 2016, which is within nine months of approval. This finding is based on PIR reporting because independent certified transfer documentation was not available to the evaluation.
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed? *(where applicable)*		Not verifiable from the documentation provided	No specific procurement irregularity was identified in the available records. However, the complete procurement files—including approved requisition documents, source-selection plans and supporting procurement records—were not provided. The evaluation could therefore not independently verify compliance with the applicable procurement procedures.
Completeness of project financial information[22]:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		**Moderately Unsatisfactory**	The financial information provided was sufficient to understand the approved financing envelope, broad expenditure reporting and the existence of budget revisions. However, the evaluation did not receive a complete final financial-closure package, fully reconciled actual costs by activity or component, complete evidence of realised co-financing, complete audit reports, complete proof of fund transfers or complete procurement files.
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes Provided	The approved project documents provide the planned GEF grant and co-financing envelope, including the GEF grant of US$1,726,400 and planned co-financing of US$12,035,943. Cost information is available at the design by component / broad budget categories.

[21] *If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.*
[22] *See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.*

B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes Provided	A documented no-cost extension and budget amendment request was available. The Inception Report records one documented revision request, with the last approved project revision dated 21 May 2020.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Not fully provided	Project implementation arrangements and some partnership documentation were available, but the full set of relevant legal agreements was not provided to the evaluation.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Not fully provided	PIRs and expenditure-related records contained aggregate disbursement and expenditure information. However, complete proof of individual fund transfers was not provided.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Not fully provided	Planned co-financing was documented at design, but complete certified evidence of realised cash and in-kind co-financing—by source, amount, timing and type—was not provided. Consequently, the actual level of co-financing could not be fully reconciled or verified.
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Partial available	PIRs and expenditure-related documents provide useful expenditure information, including reported expenditure figures during implementation. However, a complete final reconciled expenditure report by activity, component and closure status was not fully available to the evaluator at the time of drafting.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses *(where applicable)*	Partial provided	The project design included an audit requirement, but complete audit reports and management responses were not fully available to the evaluator.
H.	Procure documents[23], including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan *(where applicable)*	Not fully provided	Some procurement-related information was available, but complete procurement files, approved requisitions, source-selection plans, and supporting records were not provided.
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	Partial available	Additional relevant information reviewed included PIR financial data, expenditure-related records, budget revision / NCE documentation, project design budget tables and co-financing information. However, final certified financial closure evidence remains incomplete.
Overall rating		**Moderately Unsatisfactory**	**Financial management appears to have been adequate to support implementation, and no major irregularity was identified. The rating is moderated by important gaps in final financial closure, complete co-financing verification, audit evidence, procurement documentation, proof of transfers and fully reconciled actual project costs.**

[23] *Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.*

Findings Statements on Financial Management:

121. **Finding statement 1:** Financial management was adequate to support project implementation, with no major evidence of financial irregularity or serious non-compliance identified in the documents reviewed.

122. **Finding statement 2:** The main weakness relates to the incomplete availability of final verification evidence, particularly for realised co-financing, certified financial closure, audit documentation, procurement files, proof of fund transfers and fully reconciled actual project costs by activity or component.

Rating for Financial Management: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures: *Moderately Satisfactory*

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: *Moderately Unsatisfactory*

4.6 Efficiency

123. The project was moderately efficient in the use of available resources, partnerships and existing platforms. As a Medium-Size Project with a GEF grant of US$1,726,400, it was expected to play an enabling and catalytic role rather than finance direct restoration activities. The project used a partnership-based delivery model involving UNEP, IUCN, national GGW agencies, regional platforms, CSO networks, women's and pastoralist organisations, and technical partners. This approach was appropriate and cost-effective in principle because it allowed the project to build on existing institutions, networks, knowledge initiatives and regional GGW processes rather than establish parallel structures.

124. The project also made efficient use of regional meetings, learning events, training activities, knowledge products, CSO platforms and virtual modalities. These approaches helped deliver a substantial output package despite the modest GEF grant and the wide geographic scope. The use of virtual modalities, including online dialogue and investment-related events, also helped reduce travel needs and contributed to lowering the project's carbon footprint. However, virtual approaches did not fully replace the value of in-person engagement, especially for national mobilisation, local planning, inclusion of marginalised groups, and verification of the use and quality of project outputs.

125. Efficiency was weakened mainly by timeliness. The project took substantially longer than planned, reflecting the complexity of coordinating activities across 11 GGW countries and multiple partner categories. Delays were linked to COVID-19 restrictions, partner-dependent activities, uneven national responsiveness, institutional turnover, slow progress in convening national alliance meetings, and the high transaction costs associated with regional coordination. The project adapted through a no-cost extension, budget amendment, re-prioritisation of high-value remaining activities and increased use of virtual modalities. These measures were appropriate and helped protect delivery, but they did not fully offset delays or the reduced efficiency caused by prolonged implementation. The project was therefore efficient enough to deliver most planned outputs, but not sufficiently timely or streamlined to warrant a higher rating.

Table 18: Project extension

Type of project extension (cost/no-cost)	Duration (# months)	Reason for no-cost extension
No-cost extension and budget amendment	24 months, based on the extension of the PCA completion date from 30 June 2020 to 30 June 2022. The project's actual operational completion was later reported as December 2024.	The extension responded to delayed partner-dependent activities, implementation constraints identified through the Mid-Term Review, COVID-19 disruptions, slow country-level mobilisation, and the need to complete high-value remaining activities, including the indicator framework, national alliance meetings, learning products, private sector engagement activities, studies/publications and local planning support.

Findings Statements on Efficiency:

126. **Finding statement 1:** The project leveraged existing GGW structures, regional platforms, civil-society networks, technical partnerships, knowledge products and virtual delivery modalities to extend its regional reach and reduce some implementation and transaction costs relative to establishing entirely new delivery mechanisms.

127. **Finding statement 2:** These operational efficiencies were substantially offset by prolonged implementation delays, uneven partner responsiveness, complex coordination across 11 countries and the need for a no-cost extension and budget amendment. Although the extension did not increase the GEF grant, it generated additional management, coordination and staff-time costs and delayed the conversion of outputs into sustained outcome-level results.

128. **Finding statement 3:** The project ultimately delivered a significant package of enabling activities and products, but not within the initially planned timeframe and with uneven completeness and uptake. Considering the delays, extended implementation period and additional coordination burden, efficiency is assessed as Moderately Unsatisfactory.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

129. The project had a structured monitoring design and implemented the main GEF/UNEP monitoring requirements. Monitoring arrangements included annual Project Implementation Reviews, Steering Committee oversight, reporting by the Executing Partner, a Mid-Term Review and this Terminal Evaluation. These processes provided a reasonable basis for tracking activity implementation, identifying delays and informing adaptive management. The Mid-Term Review, in particular, helped identify implementation bottlenecks and contributed to the decision to adjust the implementation schedule through a no-cost extension and budget amendment.

130. Monitoring was strongest at the activity and output levels. It provided useful information on meetings, trainings, knowledge products, learning events, networks, publications and other planned deliverables. However, it was less robust for assessing the quality, use, functionality and sustainability of those outputs. The monitoring system did not consistently generate sufficient evidence on whether indicator frameworks were routinely used, whether civil society mechanisms became institutionalised, whether marginalised groups gained influence beyond participation, or whether investment dialogue translated into concrete partnerships. Disaggregated monitoring data, including by sex, stakeholder category, vulnerability status and country, were also incomplete. This limited the evaluation's ability to assess differentiated effects on women, pastoralists, persons with disabilities and other marginalised or vulnerable groups.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

131. Project reporting was generally adequate for reconstructing the implementation history of the project. The PIRs, Mid-Term Review, and available partner reports provided useful information on progress, delays, risks, stakeholder engagement, safeguards, knowledge management, co-financing, and delivery of major outputs. Reporting also helped document adaptive responses to implementation constraints, including COVID-19 disruptions, partner-dependent delays, and the use of virtual modalities to maintain implementation momentum.

132. However, reporting remained more descriptive than analytical in several areas. It was generally stronger in recording activities delivered than in demonstrating uptake, institutionalisation, sustained use, and contribution to outcomes. National-level reporting was uneven, and evidence was not always sufficient to verify the depth of country ownership, the functionality of coordination mechanisms, the use of project-supported tools, or the influence of women's, pastoralist and civil society organisations in decision-making. Reporting on gender, human rights and marginalised groups was relevant but not sufficiently systematic, especially in relation to disaggregated data and evidence of influence. As a result, project reporting supported accountability and oversight, but provided a weaker basis for verifying longer-term outcome-level change.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting*:*

133. **Finding statement 1:** Monitoring and reporting were adequate for tracking implementation progress, deliverables, delays and adaptive management, but less adequate for verifying sustained use, institutionalisation and outcome-level change.

134. **Finding statement 2:** Weaknesses in country-level evidence, disaggregated data and reporting on the influence of marginalised groups limited the strength of claims on inclusion, ownership and sustainability.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

135. Socio-political sustainability is assessed as Moderately Likely. The Great Green Wall remains a politically visible and regionally important agenda, and the issues addressed by the project continue to be relevant for participating countries: cross-sector coordination, monitoring of SLM/GGW results, civil society engagement, pastoralism, inclusion of women and marginalised groups, and investment readiness. The project's alignment with national and regional GGW priorities increases the likelihood that some of its benefits can be maintained, particularly where national GGW agencies, focal points, CSO networks and regional actors remain active and interested in using the knowledge, networks and dialogue spaces supported by the project.

136. However, socio-political sustainability is not rated higher because ownership and responsiveness were uneven across countries and stakeholder categories. The evaluation found that some intended partners and beneficiaries could not confirm participation or had limited institutional memory of the project. Stakeholder turnover, retirement of some key informants, changes in institutional affiliation, security constraints in parts of the Sahel and uneven national engagement reduce the likelihood that all project-supported results will be carried forward consistently. The most promising socio-political sustainability pathway is civil society and network engagement, but even there, the evidence is stronger for participation and visibility than for sustained influence in decision-making.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability

137. Financial sustainability is assessed as Moderately Unlikely. This is the weakest sustainability dimension. The project created enabling conditions for investment dialogue and SLM scale-up, but there is limited verified evidence that these efforts translated into durable financing mechanisms, concrete investment partnerships, bankable pipelines, or secured post-project resources. The project's GEF grant was modest and catalytic by design, but the broader continuation of results depended on partner resources, co-financing, national budgets, private sector interest and follow-up financing after project closure. These conditions were only partially evidenced.

138. The incompleteness of final co-financing verification and financial closure evidence further weakens confidence in financial sustainability. Although the project produced investment-related studies, training, guidance and dialogue events, the available evidence does not sufficiently demonstrate that these outputs led to sustained investment commitments or operational financing pathways. Financial sustainability is therefore the main reason why overall sustainability is rated lower than socio-political and institutional sustainability. Without dedicated follow-up financing, several outputs may remain as useful knowledge products or past dialogue experiences rather than evolve into sustained investment mechanisms or scaled SLM implementation.

139. No stand-alone operational exit strategy or post-project financing plan was identified among the documents reviewed. Sustainability was therefore embedded mainly in the project's catalytic logic, through expected uptake by GGW institutions, CSO networks, national partners and investment actors, rather than through a documented exit plan with clear handover arrangements, financing commitments or follow-up responsibilities. This weakens the assessment of financial sustainability.

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

140. Institutional sustainability is assessed as Moderately Likely. The project worked through existing institutions, including UNEP, IUCN, national GGW agencies and focal points, line ministries, CSO networks, regional platforms and technical partners. This approach increased the likelihood that some results could continue beyond project closure because the project did not rely entirely on newly created stand-alone structures. The indicator framework, knowledge products, training outputs, learning fora, CSO networks and local planning support may continue to have value where they are absorbed by GGW institutions, national coordination mechanisms, regional platforms or civil society networks.

141. However, institutional sustainability remains only moderately likely because evidence of routine use, formal institutionalisation and long-term maintenance is incomplete. The evaluation could not fully verify whether indicator tools were systematically integrated into national reporting systems, whether inclusive mechanisms remained active, or whether local planning outputs continued to guide investment decisions. Staff turnover, uneven documentation, weak handover evidence and the limited availability of some implementation actors also affected institutional memory. The project therefore created institutional assets and relationships, but the degree to which these are embedded in regular institutional practice varies across countries and outcome pathways.

Findings Statements on Sustainability*:*

142. **Finding statement 1:** Sustainability prospects are strongest where project benefits are embedded in existing GGW structures, CSO networks, learning products and regional dialogue processes.

143. **Finding statement 2:** Financial sustainability is the weakest dimension because post-project financing, verified co-financing, concrete investment partnerships and durable financing mechanisms are not sufficiently evidenced.

144. **Finding statement 3:** Institutional sustainability is possible in selected areas, but it is constrained by uneven country ownership, weak evidence of routine use, staff turnover and incomplete institutionalisation of project-supported tools and mechanisms.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Moderately Likely

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

4.9.1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

145. UNEP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, provided the formal supervision framework for the project, including approval and review processes, PIR reporting, MTR oversight, support to the no-cost extension and budget amendment process, and commissioning of the Terminal Evaluation. These supervision functions helped

maintain alignment with GEF and UNEP requirements and supported adaptive management when implementation delays became evident.

146. UNEP supervision is assessed as broadly adequate, but with some limitations. Stronger early escalation and follow-up could have been applied to country engagement risks, co-financing verification, completeness of final financial evidence, and the generation of outcome-level evidence. The supervision system ensured that the project continued to move forward, but it did not fully resolve weaknesses in stakeholder responsiveness, institutional uptake, financial documentation and evidence of sustained use.

4.9.1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

147. IUCN, as Executing Partner, was responsible for day-to-day coordination, delivery of outputs, partner management and reporting. The evidence indicates that IUCN and its partners delivered a substantial package of outputs across the three project components, including knowledge products, trainings, dialogue events, network engagement, indicator-related work, learning fora, investment-related studies and local planning support. The project also adapted to implementation constraints through virtual modalities, re-prioritisation of activities and extension of the implementation period.

148. The quality of execution was nevertheless affected by partner dependency, uneven country responsiveness, implementation delays and incomplete consolidation of final evidence. The project implementation team could not be interviewed during the Terminal Evaluation despite repeated follow-up attempts, which limited the evaluator's ability to verify management decisions, operational constraints and the final status of some deliverables. Overall, execution was sufficient to deliver most outputs, but less strong in ensuring timely delivery, systematic documentation, sustained country engagement and outcome-level verification.

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

149. Stakeholder participation was central to the project's design and one of its more visible contributions. The project engaged national GGW agencies and focal points, line ministries, CSO networks, women's organisations, pastoralist organisations, technical partners and private sector-related actors. Through trainings, learning fora, dialogue processes and network support, the project created opportunities for actors beyond government institutions to participate in SLM/GGW discussions.

150. However, participation and cooperation were uneven across countries and stakeholder categories. Some stakeholders were active and benefited from networking and learning opportunities, while others were difficult to reach or could not confirm direct participation. During the Terminal Evaluation, some partners identified in project documentation as beneficiaries or participants reported that they had not participated in project-supported activities or had no institutional memory of such participation. This points to weaknesses in stakeholder tracking, continuity of engagement and documentation. The evidence is therefore stronger for participation and visibility than for sustained cooperation, ownership or influence.

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

151. The project had a clear human rights and gender equality intent. It explicitly sought to increase the engagement of civil society, women, pastoralists and other

marginalised groups in GGW and SLM dialogue. This was relevant because these groups are often under-represented in policy, planning and investment discussions, despite being directly affected by land degradation, natural resource management decisions and dryland livelihood vulnerability. The project's inclusion focus was therefore well aligned with its Theory of Change.

152. The main limitation is that inclusion was not operationalised through a sufficiently detailed strategy, systematic disaggregated monitoring or strong evidence of influence. Women's organisations, pastoralist groups and CSO networks were represented in some project-supported activities, and this contributed to visibility and dialogue. However, the evaluation did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that these groups gained sustained decision-making influence or measurable benefits beyond participation, networking and awareness. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality is therefore assessed positively, but not at the highest level.

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

153. The project was a low-risk technical assistance and enabling intervention. It did not involve direct physical works, infrastructure development or large-scale field restoration activities that would normally generate significant environmental or social safeguard risks. No major safeguard incident, grievance or unintended negative environmental or social effect was identified through the documents reviewed or stakeholder evidence available to the evaluation.

154. Safeguards considerations were nevertheless relevant because the project addressed participation, inclusion, pastoralism and marginalised groups. The main weakness was not the presence of major safeguard harm, but the limited operational documentation on consultation quality, grievance handling, monitoring of inclusion risks and differentiated effects on vulnerable groups. The project's safeguard performance is therefore assessed as satisfactory overall, while recognising that inclusion monitoring could have been stronger.

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

155. Country ownership was supported at design and implementation levels by the project's alignment with national Great Green Wall and Sustainable Land Management priorities and by its reliance on national GGW agencies, focal points, line ministries and existing dialogue mechanisms. The project addressed issues that remained relevant to participating countries, including cross-sector coordination, monitoring and reporting, civil-society participation, local planning, pastoralism and investment readiness. Where national institutions actively participated, the project used and reinforced existing structures rather than establishing parallel implementation mechanisms.

156. However, the depth of country ownership and driven-ness varied across the 11 participating countries. Available evidence confirms participation by national institutions and stakeholders in project-supported meetings, training, network activities and dialogue processes, but it does not demonstrate equivalent levels of national leadership, institutional adoption or continued use of project-supported tools and mechanisms across all countries. Evidence of routine use of the common indicator framework, institutionalisation of inclusive coordination mechanisms and sustained follow-up to investment and local-planning activities remained incomplete

157. Country ownership was therefore stronger in relation to the project's relevance and participation in implementation than in relation to post-project institutionalisation and sustained national use of results. Institutional turnover, uneven responsiveness of focal points and partners, incomplete country-level documentation and limited institutional memory also constrained both continuity and the evaluation's ability to verify country-driven follow-up. On this basis, country ownership is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory, reflecting strong strategic alignment and meaningful engagement in several countries, but uneven ownership and institutional uptake across the full regional portfolio.

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

158. Communication and public awareness were important elements of the project design and implementation. The project produced knowledge products, supported publications, organised learning events, promoted CSO networking and used regional dialogue spaces to raise awareness on SLM, pastoralism, monitoring, investment barriers and GGW implementation challenges. These communication activities were relevant to the project's enabling role and contributed to learning and visibility.

159. The main limitation is that evidence of dissemination reach, uptake and influence remained incomplete. The evaluation found stronger evidence that knowledge products and communication activities were produced than evidence that they were widely used, institutionalised or influential in decision-making. Communication and public awareness therefore contributed positively to the project, but their sustained effects could not be fully verified.

160. No stand-alone project-specific communication strategy was identified among the documents reviewed. However, communication and outreach were implemented through several channels and products, including knowledge products, workshop reports, learning events, CSO platforms, publications, training materials and, where relevant, BRICKS-related communication channels. This indicates that communication activities were implemented, but not guided by a clearly documented project-specific communication strategy with defined audiences, dissemination targets, responsibilities and uptake monitoring.

Findings Statements on Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues*:*

161. **Finding statement 1:** Project management and supervision supported delivery and adaptive management, but did not fully resolve weaknesses in country engagement, financial verification, final evidence consolidation and outcome-level monitoring.

162. **Finding statement 2:** Stakeholder participation and inclusion were central strengths of the project, but evidence was stronger for participation and visibility than for sustained influence, ownership or decision-making power.

163. **Finding statement 3:** The project's low-risk technical assistance nature limited safeguard exposure, but monitoring of consultation quality, inclusion risks and differentiated effects could have been stronger.

164. **Finding statement 4:** Country ownership and communication were relevant but uneven, with stronger evidence of alignment and output production than of sustained uptake across all participating countries.

165.

Rating for Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Stakeholders' Participation and Cooperation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Satisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Satisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

166. Overall, the project performed at a Moderately Unsatisfactory level. The project was strategically relevant and well aligned with UNEP, GEF, SDG, UNCCD and Great Green Wall priorities. Its enabling and catalytic logic was appropriate to the institutional challenges affecting GGW and SLM implementation, and it delivered a substantial proportion of its planned tools, training activities, networks, dialogue processes and knowledge products. However, these strengths did not translate consistently into verified outcome-level change. All three project outcomes were only partially achieved, the three Intermediate States showed early or partial signs of emergence but were not fully institutionalised, and the conditions required for progression towards long-lasting impact remained uncertain.

167. The project's principal achievements included the development and discussion of a common indicator framework for cross-sectoral monitoring; the delivery of training, learning fora and knowledge products; support to national and regional civil-society networks; the creation of dialogue opportunities involving women's organisations, pastoralist groups and other marginalised stakeholders; and investment-related studies, training and local-planning support. These achievements were relevant because the project addressed systemic constraints in the GGW implementation architecture, including weak coordination, fragmented monitoring, limited civil-society participation and insufficient investment dialogue.

168. The project's partnership-based delivery model and use of existing GGW institutions, national agencies, regional platforms and civil-society networks helped extend its geographic and institutional reach. UNEP provided project supervision, IUCN served as the Executing Partner, and national GGW agencies, line ministries, civil-society organisations, women's and pastoralist organisations and technical partners contributed to implementation. The use of existing structures and virtual delivery modalities generated some operational efficiencies. Nevertheless, implementation was affected by uneven partner responsiveness, complex coordination across 11 countries, significant delays and the need for a no-cost extension and budget amendment. These constraints increased management and coordination demands and delayed the progression from output delivery to sustained results.

169. The project demonstrated a relevant catalytic approach by linking monitoring, inclusive participation and investment dialogue within a single regional intervention. Its expected added value lay not in direct field-level restoration, but in strengthening the enabling conditions for improved SLM/GGW implementation through monitoring tools, dialogue platforms, civil-society networks, knowledge products, capacity-building, local-planning support and investment-readiness activities. However, this causal logic was ambitious for a medium-sized project operating across 11 countries and depended heavily on national ownership, institutional continuity, partner follow-up, sustained use of project-supported outputs and the availability of post-project financing.

170. The project delivered a substantial proportion of its planned enabling outputs, but most were only partially verified against their complete performance benchmarks. Evidence was generally stronger to produce tools, activities and knowledge products than for their dissemination, consistent country coverage, institutional uptake and

sustained use. The Availability of Outputs is therefore assessed as Moderately Satisfactory, rather than Satisfactory.

171. All three project outcomes were Partially achieved. Under Outcome 1, the project established a foundation for common monitoring, but evidence of systematic adoption and routine institutional use of the indicator framework remained incomplete. Under Outcome 2, civil-society organisations and groups representing women, pastoralists and other marginalised stakeholders gained greater visibility and opportunities for participation, but evidence of institutionalised representation and sustained influence on government decision-making was limited. Under Outcome 3, the project supported investment dialogue, studies, training and local-planning processes, but there was insufficient evidence of concrete investment partnerships, mobilised financing or durable investment mechanisms. Achievement of Project Outcomes is therefore rated Moderately Unsatisfactory.

172. The three Intermediate States identified in the approved Theory of Change began to emerge, but none was fully achieved or sufficiently institutionalised. Foundations for improved monitoring and reporting were established; more inclusive dialogue and civil-society engagement were supported; and initial investment orientation and partnership-building activities were undertaken. However, routine use of monitoring tools, consistently functional inclusive coordination mechanisms, sustained influence of marginalised groups and concrete investment follow-up were not adequately demonstrated. Given these limitations and the partial status of the required drivers and assumptions, the Likelihood of Impact is assessed as Moderately Unlikely

173. The sustainability of project results is also assessed as Moderately Unlikely. Continued political commitment to the Great Green Wall, the use of existing institutions and networks and the continued relevance of several knowledge products provide a basis for some continuation. Nevertheless, sustainability is weakened by uneven country ownership, incomplete institutionalisation and handover, limited evidence of continued use of project-supported tools, uncertain post-project financing, incomplete investment follow-up and insufficient evidence that inclusive participation has been embedded in national decision-making mechanisms.

174. No significant unintended negative environmental or social effects were identified through the documents reviewed and stakeholder consultations. The project was primarily a technical-assistance and enabling intervention and did not finance major physical works likely to generate substantial safeguard risks. However, the absence of systematic, disaggregated and longitudinal data limits the comprehensiveness of this conclusion. Future projects with explicit commitments to women, pastoralists, civil-society organisations and other marginalised groups should incorporate stronger sex- and vulnerability-disaggregated monitoring and clearer measures of whether participation translates into influence, institutional change and measurable benefits.

175. The project's contribution to capacity-building, South-South Cooperation and equality was positive but uneven. Capacity-building was supported through training, learning fora, knowledge products and exchanges among government, NGO and civil-society actors. South-South Cooperation was promoted through regional learning, cross-country dialogue and networking among GGW stakeholders. Equality considerations were reflected in the project's engagement of women's organisations, pastoralist groups and civil-society networks. Nevertheless, evidence was stronger for

participation, visibility, learning and networking than for sustained empowerment, institutional influence or differentiated socio-economic benefits.

176. The project contributes relevant lessons to the wider body of work on GGW implementation, dryland governance, SLM policy implementation, regional environmental cooperation and civil-society engagement. It confirms that technical tools and knowledge products alone are insufficient to generate sustained SLM scale-up. Such interventions also require clearly defined institutional uptake pathways, strong national leadership, stable coordination mechanisms, continued financing and credible arrangements for translating participation and investment dialogue into decisions and concrete action. Regional enabling projects should therefore adopt realistic assumptions regarding partner responsiveness, country ownership, institutional continuity and post-project financing, and should establish stronger mechanisms for verifying the transition from outputs to outcomes and long-lasting impact.

5.2 Responses to Key Strategic Questions

177. **Q1. To what extent, and in what ways, were the Mid-Term Review (MTR) recommendations implemented?** The project partially implemented the Mid-Term Review recommendations. It adapted its implementation strategy by reprioritising remaining activities, extending the implementation period and increasing the use of virtual delivery and consultation modalities. These measures supported continued delivery and enabled completion of a substantial proportion of the planned activities. However, they did not fully resolve the delays, uneven partner responsiveness, country-level coordination challenges, incomplete evidence consolidation and weaknesses in verifying institutional uptake and sustained outcome-level change.

178. **Q2. What adaptations were made due to COVID-19, and how might these changes have affected project performance?** COVID-19 affected travel, face-to-face consultations, national meetings, stakeholder mobilisation and the sequencing of activities dependent on national and regional partners. The project responded by using virtual meetings, remote training and other implementation adjustments. These adaptations were appropriate and enabled implementation to continue. Nevertheless, virtual delivery reduced the depth of some consultations and networking processes, while pandemic-related disruption contributed to delays and increased the difficulty of verifying country-level uptake, institutional use and sustained engagement.

179. **Q3. At the regional level, how successfully did the project strengthen networks/networking and bring in new partners into the GGW initiative through the intended polycentric approach?** The project made a credible contribution to strengthening civil-society networks, regional platforms and dialogue among government and non-government actors. Its polycentric approach was relevant because implementation of the Great Green Wall depends on collaboration across countries, sectors and institutional levels. The project reportedly engaged more than ten networks and more than 60 CSOs or CSO networks and supported an online civil-society platform. However, evidence of continued network activity, institutionalised collaboration and sustained influence on national and regional decision-making remained incomplete. The contribution was therefore important but not sufficiently durable or consistently evidenced across the participating countries.

180. **Q4. To what extent did the project succeed in integrating pastoralists, women, and groups with specific vulnerabilities in the implementation and up-scaling of Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLWM), addressing socio-economic inequalities/imbalances in land-use systems, and improving the well-being of these groups?** The project had a relevant and visible inclusion objective and supported the participation of women's organisations, pastoralist groups, civil-society networks and other non-state actors in project-supported dialogue and learning activities. It contributed to greater visibility of pastoralism, gender equality and civil-society participation within GGW and SLM discussions. However, evidence was stronger for attendance, participation, networking and visibility than for sustained influence on decisions, institutionalised representation or measurable improvements in well-being. Incomplete sex- and vulnerability-disaggregated data also limited the assessment of differentiated benefits.

181. **Q5. Given linkages with Building Resilience through Innovation Communication and Knowledge Services (BRICKS) and Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP), to what extent were opportunities for synergy and collaboration used to improve the achievement of outcomes and the likelihood of sustainability?** The project was strategically complementary to BRICKS, SAWAP, FLEUVE and other GGW-related initiatives through its focus on monitoring, knowledge exchange, civil-society engagement, local planning and investment dialogue. These linkages reinforced the relevance of the project within the wider GGW institutional ecosystem. Nevertheless, evidence of systematic operational collaboration, joint implementation arrangements, shared monitoring mechanisms and sustained post-project coordination was incomplete. Synergies were therefore clearer in the design and strategic logic than in consistently documented operational results.

182. The table below summarises the ratings and findings presented in Chapter 4. Following the incorporation of the review comments and the application of UNEP Tool #05, the revised ratings produce an **Overall Project Performance rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory**.

Table 19: Summary of project findings and ratings

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance	The project was highly relevant to GGW, UNEP, GEF, SDG 15.3, UNCCD and national SLM priorities. Its regional catalytic MSP approach addressed systemic barriers relating to coordination, monitoring, inclusion and investment dialogue.	**Satisfactory**
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Strong alignment with UNEP priorities relating to ecosystems, nature, capacity development and regional environmental cooperation.	**Satisfactory**
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	Strong alignment with the GEF Land Degradation focal area and priorities relating to integrated landscape management, learning and institutional capacity.	**Satisfactory**
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Strong alignment with SDG 15.3, UNCCD, the GGW Initiative and national SLM priorities, although country-level uptake and ownership varied.	**Satisfactory**
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence	Relevant complementarity with BRICKS, SAWAP, FLEUVE and other GGW-linked initiatives, although systematic operational collaboration and sustained joint mechanisms were not fully evidenced.	**Satisfactory**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Quality of Project Design	The design was relevant and coherent for a regional catalytic MSP but ambitious for a project covering 11 countries and several outcome pathways. The clarity of the results framework, sustainability planning, partner-risk mitigation and arrangements for institutional uptake could have been stronger.	**Satisfactory**
Nature of External Context	COVID-19, security constraints in parts of the Sahel, institutional turnover, uneven country responsiveness and partner-dependent delays created a moderately unfavourable implementation context.	**Moderately Unfavourable**
Effectiveness	A substantial proportion of the planned outputs was delivered, but most were only partially verified against their complete performance benchmarks. All three outcomes were partially achieved, and none of the three Intermediate States was fully achieved or sufficiently institutionalised.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
1. Availability of outputs	The project delivered relevant training, knowledge products, indicator-related work, civil-society networking, learning fora and investment-dialogue activities. However, complete delivery, dissemination, country coverage and documentation were not consistently verified for most output packages.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2. Achievement of project outcomes	All three outcomes were partially achieved. Evidence of systematic adoption of monitoring tools, institutionalised inclusive mechanisms, sustained influence and concrete investment partnerships remained incomplete.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
3. Likelihood of impact (use 'likely' scale)	All three Intermediate States showed early or partial signs of emergence, but none was fully achieved. The principal drivers and assumptions required for progression to long-lasting impact were only partially in place.	**Moderately Unlikely**
Financial Management	Financial management supported implementation, and no major irregularity was identified. However, final financial closure, realised co-financing, audit evidence, transfer documentation, procurement records and final reconciled costs were incomplete or not provided.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	No documented evidence of major non-compliance was identified, although complete verification was constrained by missing final audit, procurement and closure documentation.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2. Completeness of project financial information	Design and implementation-stage financial information was available, but final certified closure, realised co-financing, transfer evidence, audit reports and complete procurement files were not fully available.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
Efficiency	Existing institutions, partnerships, networks and virtual delivery generated some operational efficiencies. These were outweighed by substantial delays, complex coordination across 11 countries, uneven partner responsiveness, a prolonged no-cost extension and additional unstated institutional and staff-time costs.	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**
Monitoring and Reporting	Monitoring and reporting were adequate for tracking implementation activities and output delivery but weaker for verifying uptake, institutionalisation, differentiated effects and sustained outcome-level change.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
1. Monitoring of project implementation	PIRs, the MTR, Steering Committee reporting and adaptive-management processes were in place, but monitoring focused more strongly on activities and delivery than on institutional use and outcome achievement.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2. Project reporting	Reporting provided useful implementation information but was often descriptive, with uneven country-level, sex-disaggregated and vulnerability-disaggregated evidence.	**Moderately Satisfactory**

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Sustainability (use 'likely' scale)	Selected networks, institutional relationships and knowledge products may continue, but sustainability was not adequately secured because of uneven country ownership, incomplete institutionalisation and weak post-project financing arrangements.	**Moderately Unlikely**
1. Socio-political sustainability	The GGW remains politically relevant, but national ownership, partner responsiveness and institutional commitment varied across countries.	**Moderately Likely**
2. Financial sustainability	Post-project financing was unclear, realised co-financing was incompletely verified and investment-related activities did not produce sufficiently evidenced durable financing mechanisms.	**Moderately Unlikely**
3. Institutional sustainability	Some institutional assets and networks may continue, but routine use of monitoring tools, formal institutionalisation and sustained national follow-up were not consistently demonstrated.	**Moderately Likely**
Factors Affecting Performance	Project management, participation, inclusion, safeguards, ownership and communication were generally adequate, but uneven country responsiveness, documentation gaps and limited institutional uptake moderated performance.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
1. Quality of project management and supervision	UNEP provided oversight and adaptive-management support, with some limitations in verification, escalation and final evidence consolidation.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:	UNEP provided core oversight and adaptive management support, with some limitations in escalation and verification.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:	IUCN delivered a substantial output package, but execution was affected by delays, partner dependency, uneven country engagement and incomplete final evidence.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Participation was central to implementation, particularly for CSOs and networks, but was uneven across countries and stronger for attendance and visibility than for sustained influence.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	The project demonstrated a relevant inclusion intent and involved women's, pastoralist and civil-society organisations, but disaggregated monitoring and evidence of influence or differentiated benefits were limited.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
4. Environmental and social safeguards	This was a low-risk technical-assistance intervention, and no significant safeguard incidents were identified. Nevertheless, inclusion risks and differentiated effects could have been monitored more systematically.	**Satisfactory**
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was aligned with national GGW priorities and worked through existing institutions, but national leadership, institutional adoption and continued use of results varied across countries.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
6. Communication and public awareness	Knowledge products and communication activities were relevant, but dissemination reach, accessibility, continued use and influence were not fully verified.	**Moderately Satisfactory**
Overall Project Performance Rating	**Strategic relevance and delivery of useful outputs were important strengths. However, partial achievement of all three outcomes, incomplete emergence of the Intermediate States, weak likelihood of impact, delays, incomplete financial information and uncertain sustainability outweigh the stronger output-level performance under UNEP's weighted rating methodology.**	**Moderately Unsatisfactory**

5.3 Lessons Learned

Lesson Learned #1:	**Regional enabling projects can be highly relevant when they address systemic bottlenecks, but their design must realistically account for the transaction costs of working across many countries and stakeholder categories.**
Context/comment:	The project was strategically relevant because it addressed weak coordination, fragmented monitoring, limited civil society engagement and insufficient investment dialogue in the GGW architecture. However, implementation across 11 countries created high coordination costs, uneven country responsiveness and difficulties in sustaining engagement. Similar regional enabling projects should include stronger country engagement protocols, updated stakeholder tracking systems, realistic assumptions about partner availability, and resources for follow-up beyond regional events.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 21–23, 97–101, 123–128 and 155–157.

Lesson Learned #2:	**Participation of women, pastoralists, CSOs and other marginalised groups is an important entry point for inclusion, but participation alone is not sufficient evidence of influence or empowerment.**
Context/comment:	The project created spaces for civil society, women's organisations and pastoralist groups to participate in GGW/SLM dialogue. This was a positive contribution. However, the evaluation found stronger evidence of participation and visibility than of sustained influence, decision-making power or measurable differentiated benefits. Future projects should define, monitor and report the pathway from participation to influence, using disaggregated data and evidence of how marginalised groups shape decisions, tools, plans or investment priorities.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 30, 47, 60–61, 78–81, 107–109, 151–152 and 179.

Lesson Learned #3:	**Investment dialogue and knowledge products can raise awareness, but they are unlikely to generate durable investment outcomes unless linked early to bankable opportunities, financing actors and post-project facilitation.**
Context/comment:	The project supported studies, guidance, training and dialogue on private sector engagement and investment barriers. These were relevant outputs, but evidence of concrete investment partnerships, financing agreements or sustained mechanisms remained limited. Future catalytic projects should connect investment dialogue to specific pipelines, local planning outputs, financing instruments and follow-up responsibilities from the design or inception phase.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 82–85, 107, 110–112, 137–139 and 180.

5.4 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	**Complete, consolidate and archive the project's final evidence and financial-closure package for accountability, institutional learning and future GGW programming. UNEP, in coordination with IUCN, should consolidate and archive a final package containing, to the extent available: final certified expenditure information; actual costs by component or activity; realised co-financing by source and type; audit reports and management responses; relevant procurement documentation; evidence of fund transfers; final technical deliverables; evidence of dissemination; and a consolidated stakeholder and participant record.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The evaluation found that financial management supported implementation, but the evidence required for final verification was incomplete. Gaps concerned financial closure, verification of realised co-financing, procurement records, audit documentation, evidence of fund transfers, final expenditure reconciliation and evidence of the dissemination or use of some outputs. These gaps reduced the strength of the evaluation's conclusions regarding Financial Management, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 33, 56, 116–122, 123–128, 137–139 and 158–160.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Ecosystems Division/GEF Portfolio institutional records custodian as lead, in coordination with the relevant current UNEP financial-management and portfolio-support functions and IUCN institutional records and finance functions.
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Within three months of completion of the Terminal Evaluation review process.

Recommendation #2:	**For future GGW and regional enabling projects, require a country-level uptake and sustainability plan during inception**. **The plan should identify, for each participating country: responsible national focal points and institutions; intended users of project tools and knowledge products; the expected institutional use of those products; mechanisms for integrating indicators, monitoring systems or planning outputs into existing national processes; responsibilities for sustaining CSO and stakeholder networks; post-project follow-up arrangements; and the minimum evidence required to verify adoption, continued use and institutionalisation. The uptake and sustainability plan should be completed within the first six months of implementation, endorsed by the relevant national and project partners, and reviewed and updated annually through PIRs, Steering Committee processes and other project reporting mechanisms.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project delivered numerous tools, activities and knowledge products, but evidence of sustained use, institutionalisation and country ownership was uneven. In several cases, stakeholders could not confirm their participation or demonstrate continued institutional use of project-supported outputs. This weakened verification of outcome achievement,

	Intermediate State emergence and sustainability. Future regional projects therefore require clearer arrangements for moving from output delivery to national adoption, routine use, institutional continuity and post-project follow-up.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 21–30, 97–98, 107–112, 135–141 and 155–157.
Priority Level:	High
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Ecosystems Division/GEF Portfolio as lead, in coordination with the relevant UNEP project-design and quality-assurance functions. Future Executing Partners, national GGW agencies and designated country focal points should support preparation, endorsement, implementation and annual updating of the plan.
Proposed implementation time-frame:	For future relevant GGW and regional enabling projects, the country-level uptake and sustainability plan should then be integrated into project design and inception processes and completed within the first six months of project implementation.

Recommendation #3:	**Strengthen the human rights, gender equality and inclusion results pathway in future GGW enabling projects. UNEP and executing partners should define measurable inclusion indicators that go beyond attendance, including sex- and stakeholder-disaggregated participation, representation of pastoralists and other marginalised groups, evidence of influence on decisions or tools, and documented feedback from participating groups. These indicators should be integrated into the results framework, monitoring plan, and PIR reporting from project inception.**
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project had a relevant inclusion intent and engaged CSOs, women's organisations and pastoralist groups. However, evidence was stronger for participation and visibility than for influence, empowerment, or differentiated benefits. Disaggregated monitoring data were incomplete, limiting the ability to assess human rights and gender equality results.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	Paras. 30, 47, 60–61, 78–81, 107–109, 151–152 and 179.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Task Manager, UNEP gender / safeguards focal points
Proposed implementation time-frame:	For future relevant GGW enabling projects, inclusion indicators, monitoring tools and reporting requirements should be integrated into project design and inception processes and finalised during the first six months of implementation.

ANNEX I. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The evaluation framework guided data collection, analysis and triangulation during the Terminal Evaluation. It was structured around the UNEP evaluation criteria, the reconstructed Theory of Change at Evaluation, the project results framework and the strategic questions included in the Terms of Reference. The framework was used flexibly to guide document review, key informant interviews, country consultations, financial review and synthesis of findings.

Evaluation criterion/area	Key evaluation questions	Sub-questions / lines of inquiry	Main indicators/evidence sought	Main sources of information	Data collection and analysis methods
Strategic Relevance	To what extent was the project relevant to UNEP, GEF, GGW, global, regional and national priorities?	Was the project aligned with UNEP MTS, PoW and strategic priorities? Was it aligned with GEF Land Degradation and adaptive management priorities? Was it relevant to SDG 15.3, UNCCD, the GGW Initiative and national SLM/GGW priorities? Was the project coherent with BRICKS, SAWAP, FLEUVE and other GGW-related initiatives?	Evidence of alignment with UNEP, GEF, SDG, UNCCD and GGW priorities; consistency with national GGW and SLM needs; complementarity and absence of duplication with other initiatives.	CEO Endorsement Request; project document; revised logframe; UNEP and GEF strategic documents; PIRs; MTR; GGW and UNCCD-related documents; stakeholder interviews.	Document review; strategic alignment analysis; stakeholder interviews; triangulation with project design and implementation evidence.
Quality of Project Design	Was the project design technically sound, realistic and supported by a clear results framework?	Did the design identify the right problems and barriers? Were the results logic, indicators, governance, partnerships, risks, sustainability and M&E arrangements adequate? Were assumptions realistic for an 11-country regional enabling project?	Project Design Quality score; clarity of causal logic; relevance of outputs and outcomes; adequacy of risk analysis; strength of governance, partnerships, M&E, financial planning and sustainability provisions.	Project document; CEO Endorsement Request; revised logframe; Inception Report; PDQ assessment; MTR; PIRs.	Project Design Quality assessment; ToC reconstruction; review of logframe, assumptions, risks and implementation arrangements.
Nature of External Context	How did external conditions affect project performance?	How did COVID-19, security conditions, political or institutional changes, partner responsiveness and regional complexity affect implementation? Were adaptations appropriate?	Evidence of delays, disruptions, security constraints, travel restrictions, stakeholder availability, institutional turnover, no-cost extension and adaptive measures.	PIRs; MTR; no-cost extension documentation; stakeholder interviews; country consultations; project reports.	Context analysis; comparison of planned and actual implementation; triangulation of documentary and stakeholder evidence.

Effectiveness – Availability of Outputs	To what extent were planned outputs delivered?	Were outputs 1.1–3.3 delivered as planned? Were outputs timely, complete, useful and of acceptable quality? Were outputs disseminated and accessible to intended users?	Delivery status of outputs; training numbers; knowledge products; indicator framework; CSO platforms; learning fora; investment studies; local planning outputs; evidence of dissemination and use.	PIRs; MTR; project deliverables; training reports; workshop documentation; knowledge products; stakeholder interviews; country consultations.	Output verification; document review; triangulation with stakeholder evidence; assessment of delivery, quality, timeliness and utility.
Effectiveness – Achievement of Outcomes	To what extent did the project achieve its intended outcomes?	Did GGW countries adopt or use a common set of indicators? Were inclusive mechanisms established or strengthened for CSO engagement? Did stakeholders promote investment partnerships for SLM scale-up? What differentiated effects were observed for women, pastoralists, CSOs and marginalised groups?	Evidence of adoption and use of indicator framework; functioning inclusive mechanisms; CSO and network engagement; women's and pastoralist participation; investment dialogue; concrete partnerships; institutionalisation and sustained use.	Revised logframe; PIRs; MTR; indicator documents; partner reports; stakeholder interviews; Burkina Faso and Senegal consultations; project deliverables.	Contribution analysis using reconstructed ToC; triangulation; comparison between documented outputs, reported uptake and verified use.
Effectiveness – Likelihood of Impact	How likely is the project to contribute to long-lasting impact?	Are drivers and assumptions in place to move from outputs to outcomes, intermediate states and impact? Which pathways are strongest or weakest? Are there unintended positive or negative effects?	Status of drivers and assumptions; proportion of outcomes achieved; evidence of intermediate states; institutional use; network continuity; financing prospects; unintended effects.	ToC at Evaluation; PIRs; MTR; stakeholder interviews; sustainability evidence; financial and co-financing information.	Likelihood of Impact analysis; ToC-based assessment; synthesis of drivers, assumptions, outcomes and sustainability evidence.
Financial Management	Was financial management adequate and compliant, and was financial information complete?	Was the project implemented in accordance with UNEP/GEF financial policies and procedures? Was first disbursement timely? Were budget revisions documented? Were final costs, co-financing, audits, fund transfers and procurement records available?	Approved budget; GEF grant and co-financing; expenditure reporting; budget revisions; no-cost extension; first disbursement; audit evidence; procurement evidence; co-financing	CEO Endorsement Request; budget tables; PIRs; expenditure reports; co-financing documentation; NCE/budget amendment request; financial records; audit/procurement	Financial document review; completeness assessment; verification of available budget, expenditure and co-financing evidence.

			verification; final closure status.	documents where available.	
Efficiency	Were resources used efficiently and was implementation timely?	Did the project use partnerships, existing institutions and regional platforms cost-effectively? Were delays justified and managed? What was the effect of the no-cost extension? Did virtual modalities reduce costs and carbon footprint?	Planned versus actual timeline; extension duration; cost-effectiveness of partnerships; use of existing networks; virtual modalities; delays; transaction costs; delivery relative to GEF grant.	PIRs; MTR; NCE documentation; workplans; stakeholder interviews; project reports; financial information.	Timeline analysis; review of delivery efficiency; assessment of delays, adaptive management and resource use.
Monitoring and Reporting	Were monitoring and reporting systems adequate for oversight, learning and adaptive management?	Did monitoring track activities, outputs, outcomes and risks? Was monitoring data used for adaptive management? Did reporting include gender, safeguards and marginalised groups? Was reporting analytical enough to verify outcomes?	PIR quality; MTR use; Steering Committee reporting; risk reporting; gender and stakeholder-disaggregated data; evidence of adaptive management; reporting on use, institutionalisation and outcomes.	PIRs; MTR; project reports; Steering Committee documentation; interview evidence; monitoring records.	Review of M&E and reporting documents; assessment of monitoring use for adaptive management; evidence-gap analysis.
Sustainability – Socio-political	Are project benefits likely to be sustained politically and socially?	Does the GGW agenda remain relevant? Is there continued stakeholder interest and ownership? Are CSO networks and marginalised groups likely to remain engaged?	Continued political relevance; stakeholder ownership; network continuity; national commitment; participation and influence of CSOs, women and pastoralists.	Stakeholder interviews; country consultations; PIRs; project reports; national and regional GGW documentation.	Sustainability analysis; triangulation of ownership, relevance and stakeholder engagement evidence.
Sustainability – Financial	Are project benefits likely to be financially sustained?	Are post-project financing mechanisms in place? Were investment partnerships established? Was co-financing realised and documented? Are local planning outputs linked to financing?	Evidence of post-project financing; realised co-financing; investment partnerships; bankable opportunities; financing mechanisms; follow-up by investors or public institutions.	Financial records; co-financing documentation; investment studies; PIRs; stakeholder interviews; local planning documents.	Financial sustainability assessment; review of co-financing and investment evidence; triangulation with stakeholder feedback.

Sustainability – Institutional	Are project benefits likely to be institutionally sustained?	Were project outputs institutionalised? Are indicator tools, networks, platforms and planning outputs embedded in existing institutions? Is there evidence of routine use?	Institutionalisation of tools; routine use of indicators; continued network activity; integration into GGW structures; handover and ownership evidence.	Project deliverables; stakeholder interviews; national consultations; PIRs; MTR; partner reports.	Institutional sustainability analysis; assessment of adoption, use and continuity evidence.
Project Management and Supervision	How did project management and supervision affect performance?	Did UNEP provide adequate oversight and adaptive management? Did IUCN and partners manage delivery effectively? Were delays, risks and evidence gaps adequately addressed?	Quality of supervision; execution performance; timeliness; adaptive management; partner coordination; evidence consolidation; responsiveness to risks.	PIRs; MTR; project reports; NCE documentation; stakeholder interviews; evaluation evidence.	Management performance analysis; triangulation of document and stakeholder evidence.
Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation	How effective was stakeholder participation and cooperation?	Were relevant stakeholders engaged? Was participation meaningful and sustained? Were national institutions, CSOs, women's organisations, pastoralists and private sector actors adequately involved?	Number and categories of stakeholders engaged; quality of participation; continuity of engagement; stakeholder feedback; evidence of cooperation and influence.	Stakeholder interviews; project reports; training/workshop records; CSO platform evidence; country consultations.	Stakeholder mapping; interview analysis; participation and cooperation assessment.
Human Rights and Gender Equality	How responsive was the project to human rights, gender equality and inclusion?	Were women, pastoralists, CSOs and marginalised groups included in the project logic and activities? Was inclusion monitored? Did participation translate into influence or benefits?	Inclusion in ToC and results framework; participation of women and pastoralist organisations; disaggregated data; evidence of influence; attention to vulnerable or marginalised groups.	Project documents; revised logframe; PIRs; partner reports; stakeholder interviews; learning forum documentation.	HRGE analysis; review of disaggregated evidence; triangulation with stakeholder feedback.
Environmental and Social Safeguards	Were safeguards adequately planned, monitored and managed?	Were environmental and social risks identified? Were there any negative unintended effects? Were consultation, grievance and inclusion risks documented?	Safeguard screening; risk mitigation; safeguard incidents; grievance evidence; consultation quality; low-risk nature of intervention.	Safeguards documentation; project design; PIRs; stakeholder interviews; annexed safeguards assessment.	Safeguards review; assessment of unintended effects; triangulation with stakeholder evidence.
Country Ownership and Driven-ness	To what extent was the project country-	Were national GGW agencies and focal points engaged? Did countries adopt or use outputs? Was	National engagement; country-level responsiveness; adoption	Country consultations; stakeholder interviews; PIRs; national meeting	Country ownership assessment; comparative

	owned and demand-driven?	ownership consistent across the 11 countries?	and use of outputs; evidence of institutional memory; national alignment and ownership.	documentation; project reports.	analysis of country-level evidence.
Communication and Public Awareness	How effective were communication, learning and outreach activities?	Were knowledge products developed and disseminated? Did communication support awareness, learning and uptake? Was dissemination reach verified?	Knowledge products; publications; learning events; platforms; dissemination evidence; stakeholder awareness and reported use.	Knowledge products; PIRs; communications documentation; stakeholder interviews; project deliverables.	Communication and outreach review; triangulation of production, dissemination and use evidence.
Strategic Question 1 – MTR recommendations	To what extent were Mid-Term Review recommendations implemented?	Did the project adapt after the MTR? Were remaining activities re-prioritised? Did MTR follow-up improve delivery?	Evidence of implementation adjustments; NCE and budget amendment; re-prioritised activities; delivery of remaining outputs.	MTR; PIRs; NCE documentation; project reports; stakeholder evidence.	Review of MTR recommendations and follow-up evidence.
Strategic Question 2 – COVID-19	How did COVID-19 affect implementation and how did the project adapt?	Which activities were delayed or modified? Were virtual modalities effective? What effects did COVID-19 have on participation and timeliness?	Evidence of COVID-related delays; virtual activities; adaptations; remaining implementation constraints.	PIRs; MTR; project reports; stakeholder interviews.	Context and adaptive management analysis.
Strategic Question 3 – Networks / polycentric approach	What was the value of networks and a polycentric approach?	Did networks strengthen participation, learning and coordination? Did they continue beyond activities?	CSO networks; regional platforms; online platform; evidence of continued engagement and influence.	Partner reports; platform evidence; stakeholder interviews; PIRs.	Network contribution analysis.
Strategic Question 4 – Pastoralists, women and vulnerable groups	How were pastoralists, women and vulnerable groups integrated?	Were they represented? Did they influence dialogue or decisions? Were differentiated effects monitored?	Participation of women's and pastoralist organisations; learning fora; disaggregated data; evidence of influence.	Project documents; PIRs; partner reports; stakeholder interviews; learning fora documentation.	HRGE and inclusion analysis.
Strategic Question 5 – Synergy with BRICKS / SAWAP and other initiatives	To what extent did the project create synergy with BRICKS, SAWAP, FLEUVE and other GGW initiatives?	Were there complementarities, coordination or shared learning? Was duplication avoided?	Evidence of complementarity; joint learning; use of existing platforms; overlap or duplication; operational collaboration.	Project documents; PIRs; MTR; stakeholder interviews; GGW-related initiative documents.	Coherence and complementarity analysis.

ANNEX II. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Stakeholders consulted during the evaluation

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
UNEP Evaluation Office	Evaluation Manager	Evaluation management, quality assurance, guidance on Terminal Evaluation process and review of deliverables	Female
UNEP / GEF Portfolio, Ecosystems Division	Task Manager / Project Supervisor	GEF Implementing Agency oversight, project supervision, strategic guidance and implementation follow-up	Male
National Great Green Wall Agency – Senegal	Senior official / national focal point	National GGW coordination, contribution to country-level evidence, project relevance and implementation context	Female
National Great Green Wall Agency – Senegal	Monitoring / results officer	Contribution to evidence on GGW indicators, harmonised results, monitoring and reporting issues	Male
National Great Green Wall Agency – Burkina Faso	National coordinator / technical officer	Country-level GGW coordination, implementation context, stakeholder engagement and national ownership evidence	Male
Ministry / Technical Service in charge of Environment and SLM – Burkina Faso	Technical officer	Cross-sector technical input on SLM/GGW implementation, coordination and national institutional context	Male
National Great Green Wall Agency – Nigeria	National focal point / technical coordinator	Country-level evidence on GGW implementation, achievements, challenges, lessons learned and perspectives	Male
Civil society network / platform involved in GGW or SLM	CSO representative / network focal point	Evidence on civil society participation, networking, advocacy, inclusion and stakeholder engagement	Male
Women's organisation / women-led CSO involved in SLM or GGW dialogue	Representative	Evidence on women's participation, inclusion, representation and barriers to influence in GGW/SLM processes	Female
Pastoralist organisation / pastoralism-focused CSO	Representative / technical focal point	Evidence on pastoralism, marginalised group engagement, local priorities and inclusion in GGW/SLM dialogue	Male
Regional or national NGO / technical partner involved in GGW-related activities	Programme officer / technical specialist	Evidence on project-supported activities, CSO engagement, learning fora, knowledge products and partner coordination	Male

Organisation	Position	Role in the project	Gender
Local planning actor / commune-level technical service	Local development or planning officer	Evidence on local planning processes, SLM integration, investment readiness, and local-level ownership	Male
Private sector or investment-dialogue actor	Representative / investment dialogue participant	Evidence on investment barriers, private sector engagement and potential SLM investment opportunities	Male
Project-related knowledge / training participant institution	Training or programme participant	Evidence on training, use of tools, knowledge products, learning and capacity-building outputs	Male

ANNEX III. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Project planning and reporting documents

- Terms of Reference – Terminal Evaluation of GEF 5811 "Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking sectors and stakeholders for increased synergy and scaling-up".
- GEF CEO Endorsement Request for the project "Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking sectors and stakeholders for increased synergy and scaling-up".
- GEF Secretariat Review Sheet.
- GEF CEO MSP Approval Letter, 13 June 2016.
- Project Information Form and PPG Request documentation.
- GGW baseline study.
- PPG activities report.
- MSP Approval Letter.
- Revised Logframe, September 2020.
- Annex G – M&E Budget and Work Plan.
- Annex H – Project Implementation Arrangements.
- Annex I – Key Deliverables and Benchmarks.
- Annex M – Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist.
- Annex J – GEF Land Degradation Tracking Tool.
- Appendix 4 – Contact Details / correspondence list.
- Appendix 6 – Procurement Plan.
- Appendix 10 – Half-Yearly Progress Report.
- Appendix 12 – Final Report, status to be confirmed.
- No-Cost Extension and budget amendment request to UNEP.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2018.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2019.
- Project Implementation Review – 2020 UNEP Regional.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2021.
- Project Implementation Review – 2021 UNEP Regional.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2022.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2023.
- Project Implementation Review – FY2024.
- Project Implementation Review – UNEP 2024 version.
- GEF-LD 5811 PIR, 2022.
- GEF-BD 5811 PIR, 2023.
- Project Implementation Report PIR – UNEP 2024 compiled version.
- Quarterly expenditure and unliquidated obligations statements covering implementation up to June 2020.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2017.

- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – July to September 2017.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – October to December 2017.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2018.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – April to June 2018.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – July to September 2018.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – October to December 2018.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2019.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – April to June 2019.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2020.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – April to June 2020.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – October to December 2020.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2021.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – April to June 2021.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – July to September 2021.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – October to December 2021.
- Quarterly Expenditure Statement – January to March 2022.
- Annex F-1 – Detailed GEF Budget Template.
- Annex F-2 – Detailed Co-finance Budget Template.
- Appendix 13 – Quarterly Expenditures and Unliquidated Obligations.
- Appendix 14 – Co-finance Report.
- Appendix 9B – Cash Advance Request Template.
- Appendix 8A – Non-Expendable Equipment Inventory.
- Appendix 8A – Non-Expendable Equipment Inventory, October 2021 update.
- Equipment Inventory PDF export.
- Appendix 8B – Equipment Transfer Letter.
- Co-financing letters and related co-financing documentation.
- Stakeholder contact lists and correspondence records used for interview planning and follow-up.
- Email exchanges related to interview requests, reminders and stakeholder availability.
- Documentation shared by national GGW actors and stakeholders during or after consultations.
- Meeting notes from preparatory discussions and stakeholder exchanges.
- Available country-level documentation from Burkina Faso and Senegal consultations.
- Notes from telephone follow-up and written stakeholder responses.
- Evaluation correspondence with UNEP Evaluation Office and project-related stakeholders.

Project outputs – Overall

- Project deliverables and benchmark documentation.
- Workshop reports, French and English versions.
- Workshop participants lists.
- List of identified organisations.

- List of potential partners.
- Project knowledge products and communication materials.
- Training reports and workshop documentation.
- Partner reports and stakeholder-shared documentation.
- Great Green Wall Accelerator / UNCCD / PAGGW. The Great Green Wall Accelerator Harmonized Results Management Framework, GGW Observatory Capacity Building Workshop, Ouagadougou, 27–29 May 2024.
- GGWA Harmonised Results Management Framework, 27 May version.
- Project documentation on learning, knowledge management, stakeholder engagement, civil society platforms, local planning and investment dialogue.

Project outputs work package 1: Cross-sector coordination, common indicators, monitoring and learning

- Revised Logframe, September 2020.
- Annex I – Key Deliverables and Benchmarks.
- Documentation on the common indicator framework and participatory approaches.
- Indicator-related documentation and monitoring framework materials.
- GGW Accelerator / UNCCD / PAGGW. The Great Green Wall Accelerator Harmonized Results Management Framework, GGW Observatory Capacity Building Workshop, Ouagadougou, 27–29 May 2024.
- GGWA Harmonised Results Management Framework, 27 May version.
- CARI / FLEUVE. Module de form'action des collectivités locales au montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres – Principes et démarche.
- CARI / FLEUVE. Module de form'action des collectivités locales au montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres – Fiches supports.
- CARI / ReSaD / RADDO / Drynet. Guide de montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres.
- ReSaD / CARI / ENDA Énergie. Rapport final de la rencontre régionale : intégrer la Gestion Durable des Terres dans la planification territoriale et accompagner les communes à sa mise en œuvre, Saly, Senegal, 12–15 December 2017.
- Relevant PIR sections on indicator development, cross-sectoral monitoring, learning and knowledge products.
- Relevant MTR sections on monitoring, coordination and project progress.

Project outputs work package 2: Civil society engagement, networks, women, pastoralists, and marginalised groups

- CARI / SPONG / ReSaD. Actes du Forum Initiative Grande Muraille Verte et Société Civile : Accélérer la mise en œuvre de la GMV – Quel rôle pour les OSC ?, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 24–26 July 2018.
- ReSaD / CARI. Rapport final de la rencontre régionale sur le pastoralisme dans l'IGMVSS : le rôle des pasteurs dans la gestion durable des terres et des paysages en particulier en zone transfrontalière, Nouakchott, Mauritania, 29 November–1 December 2017.
- ReSaD / CARI. Rapport final de la rencontre régionale sur le pastoralisme dans l'IGMVSS : le rôle des pasteurs dans la gestion durable des terres et des paysages en particulier en zone transfrontalière, Niamey, Niger, 26–28 March 2018.

- Documentation on CSO networks and platforms.
- SOS Sahel / civil society platform documentation, where available.
- Learning forum documentation on marginalised groups, pastoralism and barriers to civil society engagement.
- Relevant PIR sections on civil society engagement, networks, women's organisations, pastoralists and marginalised groups.
- Relevant stakeholder consultation notes and written exchanges on CSO participation, pastoralist engagement and inclusion.
- Documentation shared by civil society and network actors during the evaluation.

Project outputs work package 3: Investment dialogue, private sector engagement and local planning for SLM scale-up

- Documentation on training related to policy and investment barriers to scaling up SLM.
- Documentation on private sector engagement, investment dialogue and related e-conference activities.
- Studies and guidance documents on private sector engagement and SLM investment opportunities.
- CARI / ReSaD / RADDO / Drynet. Guide de montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres.
- CARI / FLEUVE. Module de form'action des collectivités locales au montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres – Principes et démarche.
- CARI / FLEUVE. Module de form'action des collectivités locales au montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres – Fiches supports.
- FLEUVE. Rapport de la form'action au montage de projet de Gestion Durable des Terres de la commune de Tikaré, Burkina Faso, 17–22 April 2017.
- FLEUVE. Rapport de la form'action de la commune de Dori sur le montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres, 5–7 and 10–12 July 2018.
- FLEUVE. Rapport de formation de formateurs à l'utilisation du module de form'action des collectivités locales au montage de projets de Gestion Durable des Terres, Ziniaré, Burkina Faso, 1–3 February 2018.
- Local planning documentation and reports linked to FLEUVE and SLM integration in local development processes.
- Relevant PIR sections on investment dialogue, private sector engagement, training, local planning and scale-up.
- Stakeholder-shared evidence on local planning, commune-level capacity building and project development for SLM.

Project outputs work package 4: Project management, monitoring, financial management, communication and safeguards

- Annex G – M&E Budget and Work Plan.
- Annex H – Project Implementation Arrangements.
- Annex M – Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist.
- Appendix 6 – Procurement Plan.
- Appendix 10 – Half-Yearly Progress Report.
- Appendix 12 – Final Report, status to be confirmed.

- Annex F-1 – Detailed GEF Budget Template.
- Annex F-2 – Detailed Co-finance Budget Template.
- Appendix 13 – Quarterly Expenditures and Unliquidated Obligations.
- Appendix 14 – Co-finance Report.
- Appendix 8A – Non-Expendable Equipment Inventory.
- Appendix 8B – Equipment Transfer Letter.
- No-Cost Extension and budget amendment request to UNEP.
- PIRs FY2018–FY2024.
- MTR Report, 2020.
- Stakeholder correspondence, follow-up emails and interview scheduling records.
- Communication and outreach materials, where available.
- Safeguards, risk and stakeholder engagement information included in PIRs and project reports.

Previous evaluations

- Mid-Term Review Report, 2020.
- Mid-Term Review – UNEP Regional Land Degradation MSP Great Green Wall, 2020.
- Terminal Evaluation Inception Report.
- Project Design Quality Assessment completed during the inception phase.
- PDQ Weighted Ratings file.
- Theory of Change at Evaluation and related inception-stage working files.
- Evaluation Framework developed during the inception phase.
- Stakeholder Analysis Table developed during the inception phase.
- Planned Stakeholder Engagement and Field Visits Table.
- Terminal Evaluation Main Report working files.

Reference documents

- UNEP Evaluation Office. Terminal Evaluation Overview of Evaluation Tools.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. List of Documents for Evaluation.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Evaluation Criteria.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Criteria Weighted Ratings Table.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Evaluation Methodology Guidance.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Inception Report Template.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Main Report Template.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Quality of Project Design Table.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. PDQ Weighted Ratings Tool.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Stakeholder Analysis Guidance.
- UNEP Evaluation Office. Gender Methods Guidance.

- UNEP Evaluation Office. Safeguards Assessment Template.
- UNCCD and Great Green Wall-related reference documentation.
- SDG Target 15.3 and Land Degradation Neutrality reference materials.
- GEF Land Degradation focal area and adaptive management guidance.
- UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work documents relevant to the project period.
- Great Green Wall Accelerator-related reference materials.
- National and regional GGW / SLM documentation shared by stakeholders during the evaluation.
- Categorised bibliography prepared for the evaluation.

ANNEX IV. EVALUATION ITINERARY

The itinerary below summarises the main evaluation activities up to the submission of the Terminal Evaluation Report. It is organised by evaluation phase and deliverable. Detailed information is provided for the field missions undertaken in Burkina Faso and Senegal. Individual names are not included, in accordance with UNEP Evaluation Office guidance.

Evaluation phase / deliverable	Period	Location / modality	Main activities	Stakeholders consulted / functions met	Output / status
Evaluation start-up and inception preparation	February–March 2026	Remote	Initial exchanges with UNEP Evaluation Office and UNEP Task Manager; review of ToR; request and review of project documentation; preparation of methodology, evaluation matrix, stakeholder mapping and workplan.	UNEP Evaluation Manager; UNEP Task Manager / Project Supervisor; project documentation holders.	Inception Report prepared and submitted.
Inception phase consultations	March–April 2026	Remote	Clarification of evaluation scope, project logic, documentation gaps, stakeholder list, field mission planning and data collection approach.	UNEP Evaluation Office; UNEP Task Manager; project-related technical and administrative focal points.	Evaluation methodology, Theory of Change, stakeholder mapping and data collection plan refined.
Documentary review and evidence mapping	March–June 2026	Remote / desk-based	Review of project design, PIRs, MTR, revised logframe, financial records, safeguards documentation, project deliverables, workshop reports, training materials, knowledge products and stakeholder-shared documents.	Not applicable; desk review of available documentation.	Evidence base consolidated for field visits, interviews and report writing.
Field mission – Burkina Faso	4–8 May 2026	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Country-level consultations on project relevance, GGW coordination, stakeholder engagement, SLM, CSO participation, local planning, project outputs, implementation challenges and sustainability.	National GGW coordination structure: national coordinator / technical officer; ministry or technical service responsible for environment, SLM and GGW-related issues: technical officer / sector specialist; civil society network or	Burkina Faso field evidence collected. The mission contributed to verification of country ownership, CSO engagement, local planning and implementation context, but the number and diversity

Evaluation phase / deliverable	Period	Location / modality	Main activities	Stakeholders consulted / functions met	Output / status
				NGO involved in GGW / SLM: CSO representative / programme officer; local planning or SLM capacity-building actor: technical specialist / local development actor.	of realised interviews were lower than expected due to stakeholder availability and responsiveness constraints.
Field mission – Senegal	11–15 May 2026	Dakar, Senegal	Country-level consultations on GGW implementation, monitoring, harmonised results framework, stakeholder engagement, institutional ownership, inclusion, learning products and sustainability prospects.	National GGW coordination structure: senior official / national focal point; national GGW monitoring / results management function: monitoring or results officer; civil society or technical partner involved in GGW / SLM / local planning: programme officer / technical specialist; women's organisation or women-led civil society actor involved in SLM / GGW dialogue: representative / programme focal point.	Senegal field evidence collected. The mission contributed to verification of monitoring, harmonised results, national ownership, CSO and women's participation, but coverage was constrained by limited stakeholder availability and response.
Remote consultations with other project countries and stakeholder groups	May–June 2026	Remote: telephone, online meetings, written exchanges	Follow-up with national GGW focal points, CSOs, pastoralist-related actors, private sector or investment-dialogue actors, and documentation holders in other project countries.	National GGW focal points / technical officers; CSO representatives / network focal points; pastoralist organisation or pastoralism-focused CSO representatives; private sector or investment-dialogue participants; technical documentation holders.	Additional evidence collected where stakeholders responded. Several contacts could not be reached or did not provide substantive information, contributing to the evaluation limitations.
Follow-up correspondence and evidence verification	May–June 2026	Remote / email / telephone	Follow-up requests for interviews, missing documentation, clarification of outputs, financial information, co-financing evidence, stakeholder participation and dissemination evidence.	UNEP Task Manager; project-related focal points; national and regional stakeholders; documentation holders.	Evidence gaps clarified where possible. Remaining gaps were reflected in the methodology, limitations, findings and ratings.

Evaluation phase / deliverable	Period	Location / modality	Main activities	Stakeholders consulted / functions met	Output / status
Preliminary analysis and emerging findings	June 2026	Remote / desk-based	Triangulation of documentary evidence, interview findings, field visit findings and stakeholder comments; assessment against UNEP criteria; preparation of preliminary findings.	UNEP Evaluation Office and relevant project stakeholders through written exchanges / review channels.	Preliminary findings prepared and used to inform the Terminal Evaluation Report.
Terminal Evaluation Report preparation and submission	June 2026	Remote / desk-based	Preparation of the Terminal Evaluation Report, including findings, ratings, conclusions, lessons learned, recommendations and annexes.	UNEP Evaluation Office and UNEP Task Manager through report submission and review process.	Terminal Evaluation Report submitted for review.

Note: Field missions were undertaken in Burkina Faso and Senegal. Remote consultations and follow-up correspondence were used to collect evidence from other project countries and stakeholder groups. Stakeholders contacted but not interviewed, or who did not provide substantive information, are not listed as consultations in this annex and are addressed under the evaluation limitations.

ANNEX V. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS ASSESSMENT

ESS PLANNING AT PROJECT DESIGN	
List any ESS issues identified at project design (e.g. SS 1.7, SS 2.3, etc.)[24]	**No significant negative environmental or social safeguard issues were identified at the project design.** The Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist classified most location-related issues as not applicable and environmental impact questions as "No". The project was designed as a technical assistance / enabling intervention focused on coordination, monitoring, capacity-building, stakeholder engagement, civil society participation, inclusion and investment dialogue, rather than physical works or direct restoration investments. The main safeguard-relevant issues were social and positive in nature: respect for human rights, participation of marginalised groups, including pastoralists and other vulnerable groups, and support to better land and water use. No specific negative ESS standard code was identified as triggered in the documentation reviewed.
For any ESS issues identified at project design, were mitigation strategies developed (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	**Partially / Not applicable.** Since no significant negative ESS risks were identified, no detailed ESS mitigation plan was required. However, the project design incorporated safeguard-relevant measures through its participatory approach, inclusion of civil society, attention to women, pastoralists and marginalised groups, and support to multi-stakeholder dialogue around GGW and SLM. These measures functioned more as positive social inclusion measures than as mitigation measures for identified negative risks.
Were any gaps in ESS issues identified at the evaluation inception phase (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	**Yes.** The evaluation inception phase identified that the project was low risk and did not involve physical works, but also noted evidence gaps in relation to the quality of consultation processes, grievance or feedback mechanisms, sex- and stakeholder-disaggregated monitoring, differentiated effects for women, pastoralists and other marginalised groups, and the extent to which participation translated into influence or benefits. These gaps did not indicate unmanaged major ESS risks, but they limited the evaluation's ability to assess the depth and quality of inclusion outcomes.

ESS MONITORING AT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Is there evidence that the potential emergence of ESS issues was actively monitored during project implementation (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	**Yes, but at a proportionate and limited level.** ESS issues were monitored mainly through PIR risk reporting, project progress reporting, stakeholder engagement reporting and safeguards-related sections in implementation reports. The PIRs classified overall project risk as low in later implementation years and reported that the project consisted of soft activities with no anticipated safeguard issues. The project also monitored broader implementation risks linked to stakeholder engagement, participation of marginalised groups, pastoralist/farmer tensions, security conditions, national ownership and private sector engagement.

[24] *Select from the list of Environmental and Social Safeguards Risks in Table 1 of the template (tool 14, Safeguards Assessment Template).*

Is there a justification for the absence of ESS monitoring (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe[25])	**Yes, partially.** The absence of a stand-alone, detailed ESS monitoring system is partly justified by the project's low-risk technical assistance nature. The project did not finance civil works, infrastructure, direct land restoration works, resettlement, land acquisition, protected area restrictions, or activities likely to generate significant direct environmental or social harm. However, given the project's focus on women, pastoralists, CSOs and marginalised groups, stronger monitoring of consultation quality, inclusion risks, differentiated participation and feedback mechanisms would have strengthened accountability and learning.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIVENESS DURING PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION	
Identify the ESS issues/events triggered by the project.	**No** major negative ESS issue or safeguard event was identified as triggered by the project. The safeguard-relevant issues observed during implementation related mainly to social inclusion, stakeholder participation, country ownership, engagement of women, pastoralists and civil society organisations, and the need to ensure that marginalised groups were meaningfully represented in GGW and SLM dialogue. Broader contextual risks included security constraints, institutional turnover, uneven stakeholder responsiveness and possible farmer–pastoralist tensions in some countries, but these were contextual and implementation risks rather than direct negative safeguard impacts caused by the project.
Describe consequences of ESS issues/events during project implementation.	**Since no major negative ESS event was identified, no direct adverse environmental or social consequences were documented.** The main consequence of the identified inclusion-related gaps was evaluative rather than operational: the project could demonstrate participation and visibility of civil society, women's organisations and pastoralist actors, but had weaker evidence on sustained influence, empowerment, differentiated benefits and institutionalised feedback.
Describe the management response and identify supporting documentation.,	**Management response was mainly embedded in the project's implementation approach.** The project supported CSO engagement, learning fora, pastoralism-related dialogue, national alliance meetings, capacity-building, knowledge products and platforms intended to strengthen participation and visibility of non-state actors. The project also used adaptive management to respond to implementation constraints, including delayed activities, COVID-19 restrictions and uneven stakeholder availability. Supporting documentation includes the Environmental and Social Safeguards Checklist, PIR risk and safeguards sections, stakeholder engagement documentation, workshop reports, learning fora reports, CSO platform evidence, and project knowledge products.
Were negative ESS effects offset by management response (Y/N)? (If yes, briefly describe)	**Not applicable.** No major negative ESS effects caused by the project were identified. Management responses were therefore not required to offset negative effects. However, the project's inclusion and participation measures contributed positively to social safeguard objectives. Future similar projects should strengthen documentation of participation quality, grievance or feedback mechanisms, sex- and stakeholder-disaggregated data, and evidence of how marginalised groups influence decisions.

[25] *For instance, during COVID, access to the field may have been restricted*

ANNEX VI. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

The project used a range of communication, outreach, learning and knowledge-sharing tools to disseminate project messages, support stakeholder engagement and promote learning around the Great Green Wall, Sustainable Land Management, civil society participation, pastoralism, local planning and investment-related dialogue. The tools listed below are based on documentation reviewed during the evaluation, including project documents, PIRs, workshop reports, training materials and stakeholder-shared documentation.

Communication / outreach tool	Purpose / content	Target audience	Evidence reviewed / status
Regional workshop reports	Documentation of regional exchanges, discussions, recommendations and lessons related to Sustainable Land Management, territorial planning, civil society engagement and GGW implementation.	National GGW agencies, ministries, local authorities, CSOs, technical partners and regional GGW stakeholders.	Available. Several workshop reports were reviewed, including regional workshop documentation on SLM integration into territorial planning and GGW-related dialogue.
Great Green Wall and Civil Society Forum proceedings	Communication and outreach tool documenting the role of civil society organisations in accelerating GGW implementation, including presentations, group work, recommendations and stakeholder dialogue.	Civil society organisations, national GGW agencies, regional institutions, development partners and technical organisations.	Available. The Forum proceedings from Ouagadougou were reviewed and used as evidence on CSO engagement and networking.
Pastoralism and GGW learning reports	Reports from regional learning events on the role of pastoralists in Sustainable Land Management, transboundary pastoralism, governance of pastoral resources and pastoralism as an opportunity for GGW implementation.	Pastoralist organisations, CSOs, national GGW actors, ministries, technical services and regional networks.	Available. Reports from regional events in Nouakchott and Niamey were reviewed and used as evidence on pastoralism, inclusion and learning.
Training modules on Sustainable Land Management project development	Training materials designed to support local authorities and partners in developing projects on Sustainable Land Management, including principles, methodology, support sheets, case studies and facilitation tools.	Local authorities, municipal officials, technical services, trainers, NGOs and local development actors.	Available. FLEUVE / CARI form'action modules and support sheets were reviewed.
Guide on developing Sustainable Land Management projects	Practical guide supporting the design, planning, budgeting, partnership building and communication of SLM projects.	Local authorities, CSOs, technical partners, trainers and project developers.	Available. The guide was reviewed as a communication and capacity-building product.
Training-of-trainers reports	Reports documenting the preparation of national trainer pools to use and	Trainers, national partner organisations, local	Available. Training-of-trainers documentation

Communication / outreach tool	Purpose / content	Target audience	Evidence reviewed / status
	adapt the SLM project development module with local authorities and territorial actors.	development support structures and CSO networks.	from Burkina Faso was reviewed.
Form' action reports from local authorities	Reports documenting practical capacity-building processes with communes on SLM project development, including diagnostic work, project structuring, stakeholder analysis, budgeting and planning.	Commune-level authorities, local technical services, NGOs, trainers and national GGW stakeholders.	Available. Reports from Burkina Faso, including Tikaré and Dori, were reviewed.
Online / platform-based civil society engagement tools	Tools and platforms intended to connect civil society actors, strengthen knowledge sharing and improve communication among GGW stakeholders.	CSOs, networks, GGW partners, national agencies and regional stakeholders.	Partially available. The evaluation reviewed documentary evidence of platform-related activities, but evidence on continued use and reach was limited.
Knowledge products and publications	Technical and learning products developed to support common understanding of SLM, GGW implementation, pastoralism, CSO participation, local planning and investment barriers.	GGW stakeholders, policy actors, technical partners, civil society organisations and development partners.	Available in part. Several knowledge products were reviewed, but final dissemination reach and uptake were not consistently documented.
Harmonised results management framework materials	Communication and technical materials supporting harmonised results monitoring under the Great Green Wall Accelerator and related observatory capacity-building processes.	GGW national agencies, regional institutions, monitoring specialists, technical partners and development partners.	Available. The GGW Accelerator Harmonized Results Management Framework materials shared during the evaluation were reviewed.
Preliminary findings presentation for the Terminal Evaluation	Presentation of emerging evaluation findings, preliminary conclusions and issues for discussion during the evaluation process.	UNEP Evaluation Office, UNEP Task Manager, project stakeholders and review participants.	Available / to be appended or linked if the final presentation file is retained as an evaluation communication product.

Note: The availability of communication and outreach tools was stronger than the evidence of their sustained use, dissemination reach and influence. The evaluation therefore treats these tools as evidence of communication, outreach and knowledge production, while noting that evidence on post-event uptake and continued use was incomplete.

ANNEX VII. GEF PORTAL INPUTS

Table 20: GEF Portal Inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[26], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[27]).

Response: The project was approved under GEF-6 and was designed as a regional technical assistance / enabling intervention under the Land Degradation focal area, with a focus on adaptive management, monitoring, coordination, stakeholder engagement, inclusion and investment dialogue. No GEF-7 Core Indicator targets were defined at CEO Endorsement, and the PIRs report GEF Core and Sub-Indicators as N/A / NULL. The evaluation therefore does not report verified hectares restored, landscapes under improved practices, greenhouse gas mitigation or direct beneficiary totals as formal GEF Core Indicator achievements. Retrospectively, the project contributed indirectly to the conditions for improved SLM implementation through indicator work, capacity-building, knowledge products, CSO network strengthening, pastoralism and inclusion dialogue, and investment-oriented outputs. However, these achievements cannot be translated into quantified Core Indicator values without overclaiming. Report references: paras. 13, 72, 82–95, 143–146 and 147–157.

Core Indicators at CEO Endorsement	**Targets**	**Actual / Achievement**
GEF Core Indicators / Sub-Indicators	**Not defined at CEO Endorsement; PIRs reported Core Indicators as N/A / NULL.**	No formal GEF Core Indicator achievement is reported. The project was enabling and did not directly finance restoration, protected areas, greenhouse gas mitigation or field-level SLM implementation.
Retrospective Core Indicator 3 – Area of land restored	**Not targeted.**	Not applicable / not quantified. The project did not directly implement land restoration activities.
Retrospective Core Indicator 4 – Area of landscapes under improved practices	**Not targeted as a quantified hectare-based Core Indicator.**	Not quantified. The project supported enabling conditions for improved SLM through monitoring, planning, learning and stakeholder engagement, but did not generate verified hectare-based outcomes.
Retrospective Core Indicator 11 – Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender	**Not targeted as a formal GEF Core Indicator. The project included an output target of 500 government and NGO representatives trained.**	The project exceeded the training target, with more than 600 representatives reportedly trained. However, this is treated as an output-level capacity-building achievement, not as a verified GEF Core Indicator beneficiary total. Sex-disaggregated and stakeholder-disaggregated beneficiary evidence was incomplete.

[26] 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)

[27] This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

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: Stakeholder engagement was central to the project design and remained one of its most visible contributions. Following the MTR, the project continued to support national and regional dialogue, CSO networks, learning events, national alliance meetings, pastoralism-related dialogue, and the engagement of women's organisations and other marginalised groups. The project also contributed to strengthening the visibility of non-state actors in GGW processes, including through CSO platforms and regional exchanges. However, engagement was uneven across countries and stakeholder categories. COVID-19, security constraints, institutional turnover, changing focal points, stakeholder non-responsiveness and limited institutional memory affected continuity and verification. During the Terminal Evaluation, some listed stakeholders could not confirm participation or had no institutional memory of the project. Overall, the project made a meaningful contribution to stakeholder participation and networking, but evidence was stronger for participation and visibility than for sustained influence, formalised cooperation or long-term ownership. Report references: paras. 18–27, 86–88, 131–134 and 147–157.

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

Response: The project had a relevant gender and inclusion intent. It explicitly sought to engage women, pastoralists, civil society organisations and other marginalised or vulnerable groups in GGW and SLM dialogue. Completed measures included the inclusion of women's organisations and pastoralist-related actors in dialogue spaces, support to CSO networks, learning fora addressing barriers faced by marginalised groups, and attention to inclusion in stakeholder engagement. PIR evidence also indicates that pastoralist networks and women's groups were engaged in GGW discussions. However, the project did not provide sufficient evidence of a fully operationalised gender results pathway, systematic gender-disaggregated monitoring, or measurable changes in women's influence, decision-making power or differentiated benefits. The evaluation therefore concludes that gender-responsive measures were relevant and partially implemented, but actual gender results are more clearly evidenced at the level of participation and visibility than at the level of sustained influence or empowerment. Report references: paras. 10, 21–23, 58–61, 86–89, 133–136 and 155–156.

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.

Response: The project was a low-risk technical assistance and enabling intervention. It did not finance physical works, direct restoration activities, infrastructure or activities likely to generate significant environmental or social safeguard risks. No major environmental or social safeguard incidents were identified by the evaluation. Safeguard management was mainly addressed through the project's participatory approach, stakeholder engagement, risk monitoring and reporting. The latest PIR evidence reported a low risk rating. The evaluation finds that safeguard management was broadly adequate for the type of intervention. The main limitation was that documentation on consultation quality, grievance mechanisms, inclusion risks and differentiated effects for marginalised groups was not sufficiently detailed. The main lesson is that even low-risk enabling projects should document stakeholder consultation quality, inclusion risks and feedback mechanisms more systematically, particularly when working with women, pastoralists and marginalised groups. Report references: paras. 40–41, 133–136, 144–145 and 155.

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: Knowledge management and learning were important features of the project. The project supported indicator-related work, training, learning and awareness-raising publications, regional events, CSO platforms, pastoralism dialogue, SLM-related knowledge products, local planning tools and investment-oriented studies. Knowledge products and outputs were presented in GGW-related fora, and adaptive management was used to respond to implementation delays, including through reprioritisation, a no-cost extension, budget amendment and increased use of virtual modalities during COVID-19. The project therefore generated a significant enabling knowledge package. However, the evidence base is stronger on production and delivery than on dissemination reach, sustained use, uptake and institutionalisation. Some final deliverables, dissemination records and use evidence were incomplete or could not be fully verified. The main challenge was moving from knowledge production and event-based learning to routine use by national institutions, CSO networks and investment actors. Report references: paras. 82–85, 140–146 and 147–157.
Question: *What are the main findings of the evaluation?*
Response: The overall performance of the project is rated Moderately Unsatisfactory. The project was strategically relevant and addressed real gaps in the Great Green Wall agenda, particularly weak coordination, fragmented monitoring, limited civil society engagement and insufficient investment readiness for Sustainable Land Management. The project design was coherent and appropriate for an enabling intervention, but it underestimated the complexity of implementation across 11 countries. The project delivered a substantial proportion of its planned outputs, including indicator work, knowledge products, training, CSO network strengthening, pastoralism and inclusion dialogue, investment-related studies and local planning support. Outcome achievement was uneven, with all three outcomes assessed as partially achieved. The strongest area was civil society and network engagement; the indicator pathway established useful foundations but was not fully institutionalised; and the investment partnership pathway was weaker, with limited evidence of concrete financing outcomes. Efficiency was affected by delays, COVID-19, partner dependency and high coordination costs. Financial management supported implementation, but final financial closure, co-financing verification and some audit/procurement evidence were incomplete. Monitoring and reporting were useful for tracking activities and outputs, but weaker for verifying sustained use, institutionalisation, influence and differentiated benefits. Sustainability is the most fragile area, especially financial sustainability. The likelihood of impact is plausible but not assured and depends on continued institutional use, financing, network activity and country ownership. Report references: paras. 71–163.

ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Alioune Alpha Mamadou WATT
Profession	Independent Consultant; Senior Evaluation Specialist; Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Specialist; PMP-certified Project Management Professional since 2015; Founder and Director of EvalTech Africa
Nationality	Senegalese
Country experience	West and Central Africa: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda.
Education	DEA in Geography, with specialisation in Management of Tropical Environments, Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar, Senegal, 2006. Project Management Professional certification PMP, since 2015.

Short biography

Mr. Alioune Alpha Mamadou WATT is an independent consultant and Senior Evaluation Specialist with more than 19 years of professional experience, including over 12 years in evaluation, monitoring, learning, project management and applied research. He is PMP-certified since 2015.

He is the Founder and Director of EvalTech Africa, a Senegal-based consulting practice providing services in evaluation, monitoring and learning, project management, results-based management, capacity strengthening, data systems, applied research and strategic advisory support to development partners, public institutions and civil society organisations.

He has led and contributed to evaluations, studies and technical assistance assignments for international organisations, bilateral and multilateral donors, government institutions, NGOs and development programmes. His work covers agriculture, food security, nutrition, resilience, Sustainable Land Management, climate change adaptation, natural resource governance, WASH, education, decentralisation, gender equality, social inclusion, migration, energy and local development.

Mr. WATT has strong experience in mixed-methods evaluation, theory-based evaluation, OECD-DAC criteria, Theory of Change reconstruction, results-based management, stakeholder analysis, qualitative and quantitative data collection, participatory approaches, and the assessment of cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, inclusion and environmental sustainability.

He is also a lecturer in Monitoring and Evaluation, GIS, Project Management, and PMI standards, supporting undergraduate and graduate-level training on project planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, geospatial analysis, and results-based management.

Key specialties and capabilities cover:

- Terminal, mid-term, final and impact-oriented evaluations of development projects and programmes.
- Evaluation design, inception reporting, evaluation frameworks and Theory of Change reconstruction.
- OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and UNEP/GEF evaluation approaches.
- Results-Based Management, logical frameworks, performance indicators and monitoring systems.

- Project management, including PMP-based planning, implementation oversight, risk management, stakeholder management and performance monitoring.
- Teaching and capacity strengthening in Monitoring and Evaluation, GIS, Project Management and PMI standards.
- Mixed-methods research, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, surveys, case studies and document review.
- Sustainable Land Management, land degradation, drylands, climate resilience and Great Green Wall-related interventions.
- Agriculture, food security, nutrition, resilience and rural livelihoods.
- Gender equality, human rights, inclusion of marginalised groups and participatory approaches.
- Data collection and analysis using tools such as Kobo/ODK, Survey Solutions, Excel, SPSS, Stata, NVivo and QGIS.
- Report writing, synthesis, strategic recommendations and presentation of evaluation findings.

Selected assignments and experiences

- Terminal Evaluation Consultant for the UNEP/GEF project “Closing the Gaps in Great Green Wall: Linking sectors and stakeholders for increased synergy and scaling-up”.
- Team Leader / Senior Evaluation Specialist for evaluations and studies in agriculture, food security, resilience, governance, education, WASH, climate and natural resource management.
- Evaluation and MEL assignments for organisations and partners including USAID, FAO, WFP, AfDB, AICS/OMVS, JICA, AFD, European Union / Enabel, UNFPA, WaterAid, Save the Children and other development actors.
- Evaluations and research assignments involving mixed methods approaches, stakeholder engagement, field data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and participatory validation.
- Technical support to project design, monitoring systems, results frameworks, evaluation matrices, and data collection tools.
- Lecturer at ESMT Dakar in Monitoring and Evaluation, GIS, Project Management and PMI standards for undergraduate and graduate students.

ANNEX IX. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant's efforts and skills.

Report Quality Criteria	**UNEP Evaluation Office Comments**	**Final Report Rating**
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the ***Executive Summary*** act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: • a clear summary of the evaluation object • evaluation objectives, scope and methodology • the overall project evaluation rating • a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) • summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete and includes most of the required elements. Key strategic questions are not explicitly addressed here. Strengths/weaknesses: The Executive Summary provides a concise narrative of the project review, in a well-balanced manner. It enables readers to understand the main substance of the project's performance. Although the responses to the key strategic questions are not explicitly addressed in the Executive Summary, it is noted that they are covered in depth under Section 5.2	5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the ***key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand***? Consider how well the report presents: • an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address • timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) • geographic coverage (regions/countries) • total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources • implementing and funding partners • institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • implementation structure with diagram • UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) • summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) • stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) • substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	Coverage/omissions: All required elements are adequately addressed Strengths/weaknesses: The introduction is well presented, covering the required information in sufficient detail. It provides a clear description of the evaluand and its parameters, stakeholders, significant changes, funding sources and budget.	6
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change	Assessment	

3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the ***evaluation methodology***? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: • statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings • data collection methods and information sources • justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) • criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited • number and types of respondents *(including in a table broken down by gender)* • strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate • methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) • data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) • data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) • evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) • consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: It clearly presents the main data collection methods and sources, including the rationale for their selection. Gender and ethical considerations are discussed, including efforts to increase stakeholder engagement at the local level. A table summarising the respondents' sample is included and is disaggregated by male/female. Methods used to verify and analyse data have been adequately explained. Limitations to the evaluation and ethical considerations have also been discussed. The limitations have however adversely affected the depth with which the methods initially planned for this evaluation could practically be applied.	5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the ***Theory of Change***, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (*narratively and diagrammatically)?* Consider how well the report presents: • whether the project design included a TOC • how the *TOC at Evaluation*[28] was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) • confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (*including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.)* • articulation of causal pathways • identification of drivers and assumptions • identification of key actors in the change process	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete; it includes a TOC narrative, TOC diagram, and comparison table. Strengths/weaknesses: The narrative provides an explanation for each reconstruction/reformulation of results that have been introduced at Review. The causal pathways have been clearly described. The narrative includes the description of Drivers and Assumptions influencing the causal pathways. The TOC diagram is consistent with the reconstructed TOC summarised in Table 7 'Justification for reformulation of results statements'	6

[28] *During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a TOC at Evaluation 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 evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the TOC at Evaluation.*

Section D: Evidence and Analysis	Assessment	
5. Is the report based on ***sufficient and adequate data*** and ***clear and credible evidence***? Consider how well the report presents: • sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report • evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc) • evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source • gaps in data are explained and justified • data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	The evidence presented in the review is consistent throughout the report, appear to be credible, and they adequately support the assessment of project performance. Gaps in data are identified where relevant, and the implications of limitations on the assessment are discussed where appropriate.	5
6. Does the report include ***rigorous analysis*** and ***logical findings***? Consider the extent to which the findings are: • supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented • logical, clear and coherent • aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix • aligned with the evaluation framework • more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way • balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	The analyses and findings presented in the report are in alignment with the UNEP evaluation criteria matrix, ToC-based approach, and balanced reporting of strengths and weaknesses in project implementation. Limitations to data collection and triangulation of evidence have affected the extent to which the evaluation could offer a rigorous analysis.	5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project ***Strategic Relevance*** with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: • 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 during inception/mobilisation[29]), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	Coverage/omissions: The report adequately covers all the required dimensions of relevance Strengths/weaknesses: The report presents a comprehensive analysis of the project's alignment with UNEP MTS/POW, donor and partner priorities, national and regional priorities, and complementarity with existing interventions.	6
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the ***Quality of Project Design***, based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete; it presents a summary of project design covering both its main strengths and weaknesses. Strengths/weaknesses:	***NOT RATED**

[29] *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.*

	The quality of project design has been analysed in depth, to include ratings, and an analysis of the main strengths and weaknesses of the design. A table showing the calculation of the overall design score is also presented.	
Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the ***Nature of the External Context*** under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval[30]), and how they affected performance?	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a description of the operational complexity in the project implementation region, as well as the COVID-19 Pandemic which occurred during the project's lifespan.	***NOT RATED**
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Availability of Outputs*** to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made 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).	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: This section is clear and evidence based. Each output has been assessed in depth, providing useful insights of the outputs delivered. Indicators and targets have been assessed appropriately. The review could have benefited from the inclusion of an assessment of positive or negative effects to disadvantaged groups (by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation). Limitations also affected the rigour with which the utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries could be confirmed.	5.5
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the ***Achievement of Outcomes***, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • 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	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review provides a satisfactory and evidence-based assessment of Outcome achievement. Contribution, association and/or attribution of outcome level changes are adequately supported. The analysis compares the scale of outcomes versus the performance indicators.	5.5

[30] 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.

• 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).	Constraints to outcome achievement are also discussed. The limited availability of systematic, disaggregated and longitudinal evidence means that differentiated and unintended effects could not be assessed comprehensively.	
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to ***Likelihood of Impact***? Consider how well the report presents: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes • an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents • 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).	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete and thorough. Strengths/weaknesses: A clear and evidence-based assessment of the likelihood of impact is provided in detail. The analysis is consistent with the TOC and includes an assessment of Assumptions, Drivers and Intermediate States in a clear ana systematic manner. Ratings for the sub-criterion is consistent with findings presented.	6
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Financial Management*** and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • *completeness* of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	Coverage/omissions: The section covers all the required sub-categories. Strengths/weaknesses: The required dimensions of financial management have been assessed and the findings summarised; the 'financial management' table has been included within the section to support the findings. Unavailability of some relevant documented evidence has however affected the rigour with which this criterion so=could be assessed.	5.5
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under ***Efficiency***? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	Coverage/omissions: The section is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The review discusses synergies and leveraging with relevant partners. It also discusses the implications of delays and extensions on project costs and achievement of results.	6

13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's ***Monitoring and Reporting***? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of *monitoring of project implementation* (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of *project reporting* (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	Coverage/omissions: The section covers the required sub-categories. Strengths/weaknesses: The report provides a clear and well-reasoned assessment the project's monitoring and reporting performance. Sufficient evidence has been provided to support the assessment and ratings.	6
14. Does the report 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 • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	Coverage/omissions: All the sub-categories of sustainability are covered. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment of the sustainability of results is clear, well-reasoned and supported with relevant examples. The review provides useful insights into the likelihood of the continuation of project results and identifies some of the risks that have the potential to adversely affect sustainability. The key stakeholders that are needed to support sustainability have also been discussed.	6
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the ***Factors Affecting Performance***, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? *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 report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision[31] • 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	Coverage/omissions: All the factors affecting performance have been presented in stand-alone subsections in this chapter. Strengths/weaknesses: The assessment of factors affecting performance is clear, and consistent with the findings presented in the report.	6

[31] 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.

Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
16. Do the ***Conclusions*** present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	Coverage/omissions: The report includes conclusions, responses to the key strategic questions, and a summary the performance ratings Strengths/weaknesses: The section provides an overview of both the achievements and limitations of project performance in achieving its results. The conclusions are consistent with the findings reported under the various criteria. Gender and human rights issues are mentioned. Lessons learned are clear, well-reasoned, and anchored on actual findings presented in the report. The responses to the Key Strategic Review Questions are clear and also consistent with the findings presented throughout the report.	6
17. Does the report present ***Recommendations*** 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: • are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions • 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 Evaluation Office 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	Coverage/omissions: The review includes recommendations. Strengths/weaknesses: The recommendations are clearly presented, identifying various proposed actions to remedy the problem/challenge described, as well as the proposed responsible agents and implementation timeframes. They are logically connected to the findings presented in the report. Human rights and gender issues are also included among the recommendations. Most of the recommendations require a phase 2 project for implementation; the report aptly proposes that the future projects of a similar nature should follow-up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations.	5

recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.		
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report ***well-structured and complete***? Does it: • follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines • include all required sections and annexes, as applicable • not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report ***present*** information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: • in clear and accessible language • largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors • in an adequate and professional tone • with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	Coverage/omissions: The report is complete. Strengths/weaknesses: The report is well-structured and for the most part adequately meets the UNEP Evaluation Office formatting guidelines. It marginally exceeds the recommended report length. The report is well written and uses clear and professional language and tone. Tables and diagrams have been used to support the review where appropriate.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING		**5.6 Highly Satisfactory**

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion, with half-point increments allowed (e.g., 3.5 or 4.5). Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall rating is based on a simple average of the ratings for each criterion.

* This criterion was not rated to avoid giving it disproportionate weight in calculating the overall score, as this section is typically brief. The remaining criteria are comprehensive and substantial enough to provide a balanced and meaningful overall rating for the report.

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1–6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.
2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.

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

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	**Y**	
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?	**Y**	
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?		**N**

6. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?		**N**
7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?		**N**
8. Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	**Y**	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		
9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?		
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	**Y**	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	**Y**	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	**Y**	
Transparency and commenting:		
13. Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	**Y**	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	**Y**	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	**Y**	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	**Y**	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	**Y**	
Financial Resources:		
18. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	**Y**	
19. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	**Y**	
Timeliness:		
20. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)		**N**
21. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	**Y**	
22. Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	**Y**	

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

Evaluation Process Criterion Number	**Evaluation Office Comments**
5,6,7, 20	The greatest limitation to this evaluation exercise, including the delay in launching it, was the difficulty in accessing project records and stakeholder contacts from the project team.