

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project

Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone [GEF ID 4634].

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1: Project Summary

GEF Project ID/SMA ID¹:	GEF 4634 : Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.		
Implementing Agency (UNEP Division/Branch/Unit):	UN Environment Programme Ecosystems Division ² , GEF Biodiversity and Land Degradation Unit, Biodiversity and Land Branch	Executing Agency:	UNEP Regional Office for Europe, Vienna Office
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	Country³(ies): Ukraine	Institution⁴ Name/Type: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) of Ukraine United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	
Relevant SDG(s):	Goal 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.		
MTS (at approval): UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017			
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	POW Direct Outcome: Indicators	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome:
	POW Output:		POW Expected Accomplishment: POW 2022-2023 Thematic Subprogramme 2: Nature Action Outcomes 2B and 2C POW 2018-2019 Subprogramme 3: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems, EA (a) the health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sector and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national international level MTS 2014-2017 Ecosystem Management EA1: Increased use is made of the ecosystem approach in countries, with a view to maintaining ecosystem services and the sustainable

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.

² Formerly, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI)

³ Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

⁴ Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund.

			productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems; Environmental Governance EA2: The capacity of countries to develop and enforce laws and strengthen institutions to achieve internationally agreed environmental objectives and goals and comply with related obligations is enhanced.
Sub-programme:	Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	Programme Coordination Project:	N/A
UNEP approval date:	25 November 2014	GEF approval date:	12 December 2014
GEF Operational Programme #:	GEF-5	GEF Strategic Priority:	BD1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems CCM-5: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of land use, land-use change, and forestry LD-3: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape
Project type:	Full-size Project	Focal Area(s):	Biodiversity Climate Change Land Degradation
Expected start date:	26 February 2015	Actual start date:	16 March 2015
Planned completion date:	31 December 2018	Actual operational completion date:	30 June 2024
Planned total project budget at approval:	US\$ 33,203,955	Actual total expenditures reported as of [30 June 2023]:	US\$
GEF grant allocation:	US\$ 4,863,955	GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2023]:	US\$ 4,006,758
Expected Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	Cash: US\$ 17,390,000 In-kind: US\$ 10,950,000	Secured Medium-Size Project/Full-Size Project co-financing:	Cash: US\$ In-kind: US\$
No. of formal project revisions:	n/a	Date of last approved project revision:	n/a
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	4	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	December 2023
Mid-term Review/Evaluation (planned date):	September 2020	Mid-term Review/Evaluation (actual date):	March 2020
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):		Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	December 2024
Coverage - Country(ies):	Ukraine	Coverage - Region(s):	Europe
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	Design of a new project was ongoing at the time of the Terminal Evaluation.

2. Project Rationale

1. On 26 April 1986, an operating crew at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant complex tested whether Reactor No. 4 turbines could produce enough energy to keep coolant pumps running until an emergency diesel generator could be activated in case of an external power loss. But seven seconds later, a surge created a chemical explosion that released nearly 520 dangerous radionuclides into the atmosphere. The force of the explosion spread contamination over large parts of the Soviet Union, now the territories of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. In an attempt to quell the fire and prevent further substantial release of fission products, boron and sand were poured on the reactor from the air. In addition, the damaged unit was entombed in a temporary concrete sarcophagus. Nonetheless, even though a number of other control measures were undertaken at and in the vicinity of the plant site, including removal and burial of a highly contaminated pine forest of approximately 2.5 sq. km. (called the "Red Forest" because of radiation effects on radiation sensitive pines), large quantities of radioactive contamination were released into the atmosphere, which spread over much of western Russia and Europe. Eventually much of this contaminated forest was uprooted and buried. And while some Chernobyl radiation was detectable thousands of kilometers from the accident, the most severely impacted areas were those in the immediate area of the site, and most particularly areas immediately to the west in Belarus, which absorbed seventy percent of the radioactive fallout, and where 3,600 towns and villages and some 2.5 million people were affected. According to official reports, thirty-one people died immediately and 600,000 "liquidators," involved in fire-fighting and clean-up operations, were exposed to high doses of radiation.

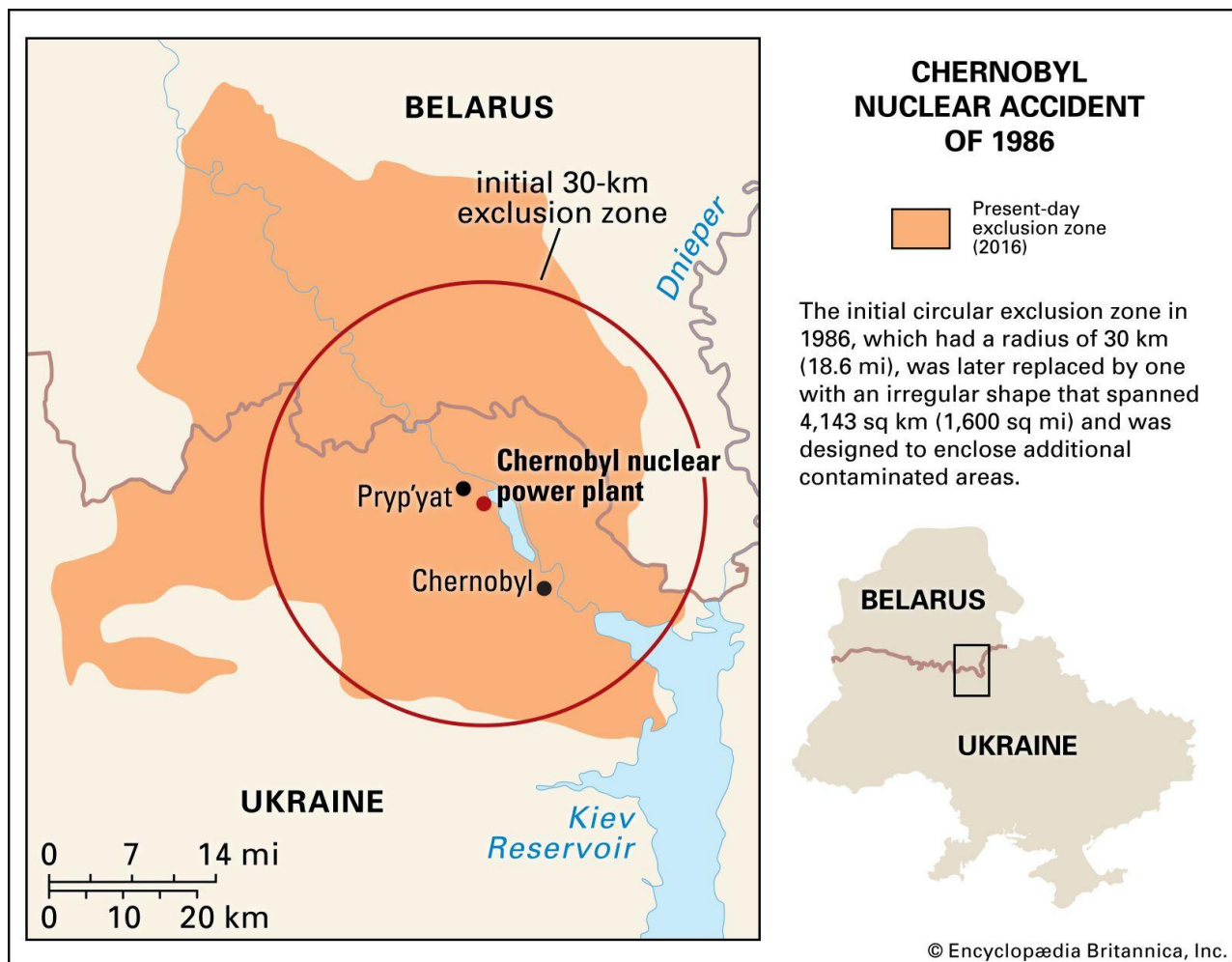


Figure 1: [Map](#) of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ).

2. According to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)⁵ the population evacuated from the most heavily contaminated areas numbered approximately 116,000 in 1986, and another 220,000 people in subsequent years. Prip'yat, the town near Chernobyl where most of the workers at the plant lived before the 1986 disaster, was evacuated within several days because of severe

⁵ [UNSCEAR \(2008\)](#) Sources and Effects of Ionizing Radiation: United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation Report to the General Assembly with Scientific Annexes VOLUME II Scientific Annexes C, D and E Page 82

radiological contamination. As a result of the accident, a contaminated zone with a 30-kilometer (19-mile) radius around the Chernobyl plant was established. The initial circular exclusion zone was later replaced by one with an irregular shape as illustrated in Figure 1 above. Access to this area, commonly referred to as the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ) remains prohibited, except for persons requiring official access to the plant and to the immediate area for evaluating and dealing with the consequences of the accident and operation of the undamaged units. Prior to the accident, approximately 40% of the current 2,600 km² ChEZ was under cultivation and produced grain, forage crops, potatoes, and dairy and meat products. The remaining 60% was forested, or otherwise characterized by high productivity and biodiversity. The evacuation and abandonment of supporting infrastructure, across some 6,000 km² in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, took place in a matter of days. As a consequence, ecological systems over much of the abandoned landscape, which had undergone man-induced transformations during hundreds of years, were suddenly devoid of human population and its effects, and were subject to natural processes. Only infrastructure necessary to access the Chernobyl NPP (including the cooling pond), the city of Chernobyl, and the main roads for delivery of personnel and cargo to them have been maintained.

3. In 2006, during a [conference](#) organized by Ukraine and held in Kyiv to mark 20 years after the Chernobyl accident, the overall long-term development of the Exclusion Zone for the next hundred years and more was envisaged to be associated with the following activities:

- a) Construction and operation of the **New Safe Confinement (NSC)** and relevant engineering infrastructure;
- b) **De-fueling, decommissioning and dismantling of Units 1, 2 and 3** of the nuclear power plant and the Shelter;
- c) **Construction of facilities for processing and management of radioactive waste**, in particular a deep geological repository for high-activity and long-lived radioactive material;
- d) Development of **natural reserves** in the area that remains closed to human habitation;
- e) Maintenance of **environmental monitoring** and **research** activities.

4. Construction of a concrete sarcophagus covering the destroyed Chernobyl Unit 4 was started in May 1986 and completed by Soviet authorities six months later in November. It was quickly built as a temporary “fix” to channel remaining radiation from the reactor through air filters before being released into the environment. After several years, uncertainties about the actual condition of the sarcophagus, primarily due to the high radiation environment, began to emerge. In 1997, the countries of the G-7, the European Commission and Ukraine agreed that a multilateral funding mechanism be established to help Ukraine transform the existing sarcophagus into a stable and environmentally safe system through the Chernobyl Shelter Implementation Plan. The Chernobyl Shelter Fund was established to finance the Plan. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) was entrusted with managing the Fund. The Plan was intended to protect the personnel, population and environment from the threat of the very large inventory of radioactive material contained within the existing sarcophagus for many decades. First, the existing sarcophagus was stabilized and eventually replaced with a new safe shelter (confinement). The new shelter construction started in late 2006 with a design that was to include an arch-shaped steel structure, which would slide across the existing sarcophagus via rails. This new structure ([Chernobyl's New Safe Confinement](#)) was completed in 2016 and is designed to remain functional for 100 years.

5. In Ukraine, the 2,600 km² Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was established by law and resulted in a special form of governance based on lands within the zone being characterized as radioactively hazardous, taken out of circulation, and separated from the surrounding territories. In summary, the primary objective in the Ukraine ChEZ was the prevention of human exposures within the zone and radioactivity carry-over outside of the zone. In the area adjacent to the ChEZ in Republic of Belarus, downwind of the accident, the 2,150 km² “Polesky State Radiation Ecological Reserve” was established, with a principal emphasis being the conduct of environmental and research activities in the context of an ecological reserve. Unlike the objectives in Belarus, the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources was initially not considered among the objectives for the establishment of the Ukraine ChEZ. However, the sudden and quasi-total protection status of the vast territory, the absence of human population, the low level of anthropogenic impact on nature, and the effort to allow the natural recovery of the ecosystems without human intervention provided a de-facto large conservation area for biodiversity and natural resources. The ChEZ is enclosed along its perimeter and equipped with checkpoints. Access to, and all types of activities within ChEZ are subject to regulation and control, although recently the government has been allowing a limited number of escorted tours in the zone and to the plant site. The current ChEZ (2,600 sq. km.), together with the Polesky State Radiation Ecological Reserve in Belarus, forms a natural and geographical system with a total area of 4,750 sq. km. The “Drevlyansky” Nature Reserve (308.73 sq. km.), established in 2008 in the adjoining territory of the Zhytomir region of Ukraine, makes possible consideration of a vast Protected Area Network in and around the ChEZ with a combined area of over 5,000 sq. km.

6. The principal threats to biodiversity and other values in the ChEZ, and their root causes, include:
 - i. Human induced and naturally occurring wildfires;
 - ii. Limited information on ecosystem health and natural recovery processes occurring in the ChEZ;
 - iii. Unauthorized human access, unauthorized and illegal harvesting of natural resources;
 - iv. Lack of human and financial resources;
 - v. Lack of adequate legislation – i.e. explicitly identifying biodiversity conservation, nature conservation and carbon sequestration as new principal objectives for the ChEZ; and
 - vi. Managing competing demands - general lack planning for biodiversity protection, climate change mitigation and land degradation: the potential for inadequate policies that lead to a diminution of ChEZ natural resources at the expense of extant and growing amount of biodiversity.
7. At project design, the under-funded and under-staffed Chernobyl Center neither had an environmental mandate, nor maintained a formal working relationship with the Polessky Nature Reserve in Belarus. It had a limited research programme and its funding levels would continue to restrict both the extent and scope of its research related work in the ChEZ. Similarly, at project design there was no other organization mandated to undertake the kind and scope of the assessments that would be needed to meet the project objective. Examples of gaps in research include:
 - i. The persisting radioactivity levels within the zone had not been fully studied, and thus their effects on human health and biodiversity are not fully understood and mitigated;
 - ii. The management of radioactive waste that still exists within the core area will continue to accumulate, and the continuing accumulation will be safely stored;
 - iii. The lack of appropriate monitoring programs for radiation levels across the wider ChEZ needs to be addressed;
 - iv. The need to mitigate the risk of forest fires (that could lead to radioactive fall-out through smoke) needs to be addressed in a manner consistent with maintenance of existing and growing biodiversity richness and the objective of maximizing ecosystem services. At present fire detection does not cover whole territory of forest lands of the ChEZ, and to the extent that it does it is not in digitized format;
 - v. The need to undertake, and continue to update, assessments of overall forest health and extent of species diversity and composition;
 - vi. The role of local communities that were displaced from the area and now live in neighbouring territories, as well as the role of the few illegal settlers still living within the ChEZ need to be addressed on an ongoing basis; and
 - vii. The substantial amount of research that has been undertaken in the zone, over many years, needs to be collected, synthesized, a gap analysis undertaken, and a research agenda for the future developed and implemented.
8. The Conserving, Enhancing and Managing Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone project was therefore designed and implemented to contribute to addressing the above gaps while contributing to the long-term development of the Exclusion Zone mentioned above.

3. Project Results Framework

9. The project results framework is built around three components summarized below. The detailed project result framework forms Annex 3: Project Results Framework of this document.

Component 1 aimed to improve monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the ChEZ. It was expected to result in creation of a Research and Environmental Protection Center, which would take the lead in efforts to collect and synthesize existing research, undertake a gap analysis, and develop and implement a research program consistent with the establishment and management of a full protected area network in the ChEZ.

Component 2 would result in the establishment and management of a full-protected area. Within the ChEZ this would be accomplished by a biosphere reserve designation.

Component 3 aimed to capture lessons learned, field-testing and dissemination of results. The communication process of this Component would also include traditional scientific publications to demonstrate the credibility and applicability of project results.

Table 2: Summary Results Framework⁶

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: Enhanced Conservation, and Management of Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in Forest and non-Forest Lands in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ), in Ukraine.		
Components	Outcomes	Outputs
Component 1: Establishment of a Research and Environmental Protection Center.	Outcome 1: Improved monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the ChEZ.	1.1 The REPC established and fully functional;
		1.2 Comprehensive assessment of the current state and trends of natural ecosystems in the ChEZ
		1.3 Assessment of the status of ecosystem services and their values and enhancement of carbon benefits in terms meeting LLUCF targets in the ChEZ.
Component 2: Establishment and Management of a Full Protected Area Network	Outcome 2: Improved management of natural resources and carbon stocks within and around the ChEZ.	2.1 Formal designation of the ChEZ as Biosphere Reserve for enhancing conservation and management of carbon stocks;
		2.2 Measures developed to ensure financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs
Component 3: Learning, Field Testing and Dissemination	Outcome 3: Increased availability and access to critical information needed for decision-making for effective sustainable management of the ChEZ.	3.1 A set of lessons learned and practical recommendations on habitat rehabilitation, carbon stocks management and biodiversity conservation developed and published;
		3.2 Knowledge sharing at national and international level and Training programme field tested and available for replication.

10. The project responds to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) priorities BD-1: Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas, CCM-5 LULUCF: Good management practices in LULUCF adopted both within the forestland and in the wider landscape and LD-3: Good management practices in the wider landscape demonstrated and adopted by relevant economic sectors. The project contributes to sub-programme 3: Nature Action of the UNEP Programme of Work and to Sustainable Development Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

4. Executing Arrangements

11. The project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and **implemented** by the **UNEP Ecosystems Division** [referred to as Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI) at project design]. As the GEF Implementing Agency, the UNEP Ecosystems Division was expected to provide: overall coordination of the activities of national, and any international partners; technical and scientific expertise and enhancement of regional and international cooperation. The UNEP Ecosystems Division was also responsible for the overall project supervision to ensure consistency with UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and its Programme of Work (PoW), GEF and UNEP policies and procedures and provide guidance on linkages with related UNEP and GEF-funded activities.

12. The **UNEP Regional Office for Europe (UNEP-ROE)** in close collaboration with the **Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)**, the Agency responsible for the management of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, was the Project **Executing Agency**. UNEP-ROE was responsible for the overall execution of the project and was expected to provide appropriate support and technical expertise as required by the MENR and project partners. UNEP-ROE was also expected to assign its Regional Coordinator for projects and activities in Eastern Europe (as cash contribution to the project) to act as **Project Director** and lead the overall project execution.

13. A full-time **National Project Manager** was appointed by UNEP-ROE to be in charge of all aspects of project implementation at national level, lead the project team and coordinate with Government stakeholders to ensure the delivery of the expected project outputs.

14. A Project **Management Unit (PMU)** was established in Kiev, Ukraine under the overall supervision of the UNEP Project Director and the direct supervision of the National Project Manager. The core PMU staff were expected to work in tandem with designated staff of the MENR, the Agency for Management of the Exclusion Zone, the Chernobyl Research Center, staff other relevant government ministries and agencies, and researchers and research institutions at national and international level. Further, the PMU would be assisted by the UNEP Ecosystems Division, through several of its units/branches, including the UNEP Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU - Nairobi) and its Forest team; the GEF BD/LD/BS Unit (Nairobi) and the Ecosystem Services Economics Unit (ESE - Nairobi) in project execution.

⁶ As per the Request for CEO endorsement dated 14 August 2017.

15. The **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**: The PSC was responsible for:
- Providing advice and guidance to the project at policy level based on evaluation of progress and achievements reported from project partners via the PMU;
 - Ensuring synergy between project activities and national, regional and international partner activities to minimize overlap and maximize mutual benefits arising from project and partner activities through coordination of the roles of the organizations they represent; and
 - Ensuring that strategic decision-making is made with due consideration of the project's activities and objectives.
16. The **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** comprised of national, regional and international scientists and other technical experts. The Project Manager was expected to select members of the TAC in consultation with the SC Chair (MNRE), and report on the activities of the TAC to the Project Steering Committee. The role of the Committee was to provide scientific and technical advice to the project and also maintain continuous contact with scientific and other technical stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels.

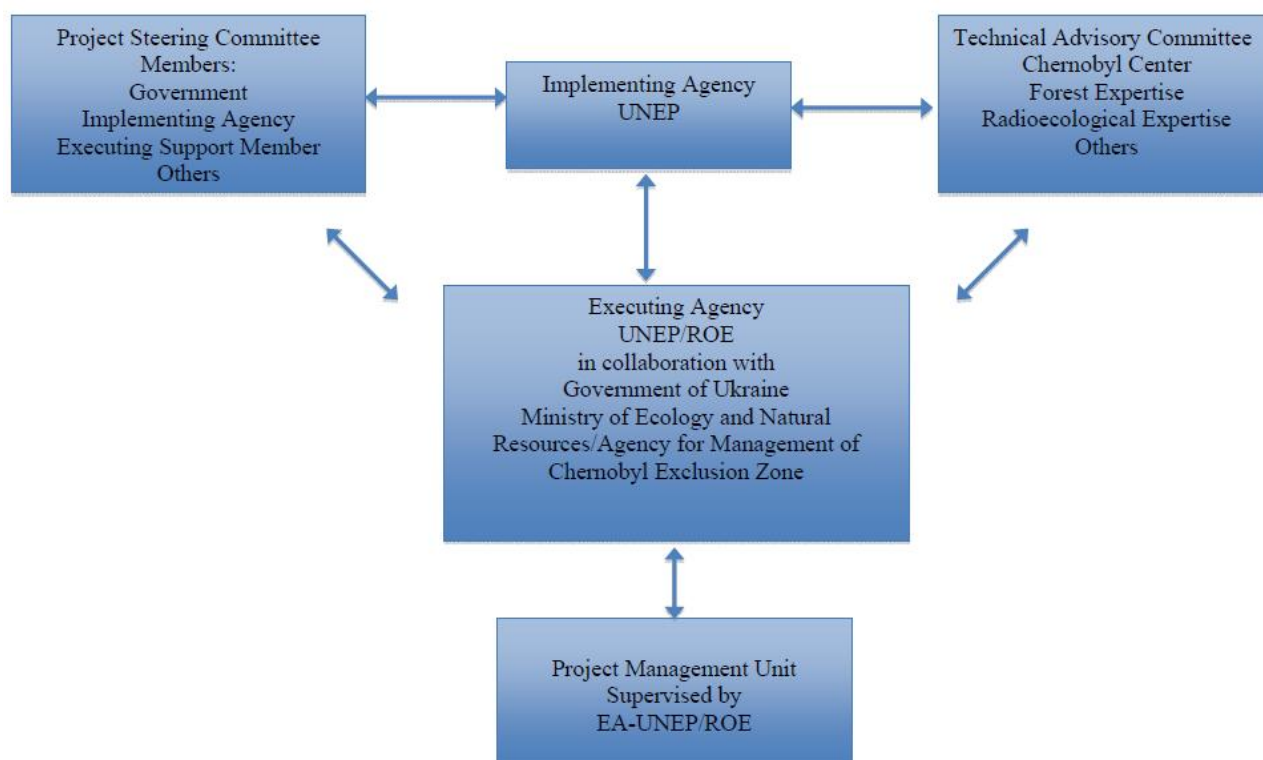


Figure 2: Project Implementation Structure

5. Project Cost and Financing

17. The total project budget at project design and approval was **US\$ 33,203,955** and comprised of **US\$ 4,863,955** GEF financing and **US\$ 28,340,000** co-financing (cash US\$ 17,390,000, In-kind US\$ 10,950,000). Details are tabulated below.

Table 3: Total Project Budget⁷

Project Component	Grant Type	Expected Outcomes	Trust Fund	Grant Amount (\$)	Confirmed Co-financing (\$)	Total (US\$)
1. Establishment of a Research and Environmental Protection Center	TA	Improved monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the ChEZ.	GEFTF	1,621,000	9,640,000	11,261,000
2. Establishment and Management	TA	Improved management of natural resources and carbon	GEFTF	1,854,000	7,640,000	9,494,000

⁷ Extract from the Request for CEO endorsement dated 14 August 2017.

Project Component	Grant Type	Expected Outcomes	Trust Fund	Grant Amount (\$)	Confirmed Co-financing (\$)	Total (US\$)
of a Full Protected Area Network		stocks within and around the ChEZ.				
3. Learning, Field Testing and	TA	Increased availability and access to critical information needed for decision-making for effective sustainable management of the ChEZ.	GEFTF	669,757	5,240,000	5,909,757
4. Monitoring and Evaluation and knowledge management	TA	The evaluation of the progress made to achieve the project objectives and outcomes are evaluated and the lessons learned and future implementations are facilitated.	GEFTF	476,000	2,680,000	3,156,000
Sub Total				4,620,757	25,200,000	29,820,757
Project Management Cost (PMC)			GEFTF	243,198	3,140,000	3,383,198
Total project costs				4,863,955	28,340,000	33,203,955

Table 4: Sources of confirmed project co-financing⁸

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier (source)	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing Amount (\$)
National Government	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine	Cash	17,300,000
		In-kind	10,700,000
GEF Agency	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Cash	70,000
		In-kind	230,000
Others	Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)	Cash	20,000
		In-kind	20,000
Sub Total		Cash	17,390,000
		In-kind	10,950,000
Total Co-financing			28,340,000

6. Implementation Issues

18. A mid-term review of the project completed in March 2020 rated the project “Moderately Satisfactory”. However, project effectiveness was rated “Moderately Satisfactory” on account of slow progress of project execution due to political instability in Ukraine which also affected staffing of the project by the Government of Ukraine.

19. Four amendments to the project were undertaken during the life of the project as tabulated below.

Table 5: Project Amendments

#	Date of execution	Reason(s) for Amendment
1	9 April 2019	○ No cost extension with a technical closure by 31 December 2020 and a financial closure by 31 December 2021.
2	19 July 2021	○ No cost extension with a technical closure by 31 December 2021 and a financial closure by 31 December 2022.
3	7 July 2023	○ To establish the conditions for the execution of the project. ○ No cost extension with a technical closure by 30 June 2024 and a financial closure by 31 December 2024 to enable the executing agency complete pending activities.
4	22 October 2024	○ No cost extension with a technical closure by 31 December 2024 and a financial closure by 30 June 2025.

⁸ Extract from the Request for CEO endorsement dated 25 November 2014.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

20. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁹ and the UNEP Programme Manual¹⁰, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the executing partners. Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

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

22. **The “Why?” Question.** As this is a Terminal Evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

23. **Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association:** In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

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

9. Key Strategic Questions

25. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE.

⁹ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

¹⁰ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

Question 1: In what ways, and to what extent, were the recommendations from the Mid Term Review actioned upon? To what extent did project implementation incorporate lessons learned from previous interventions?

Question 2: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might any changes have affected the project's performance?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Strategic Relevance

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

i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy¹² (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

¹¹ This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

¹² UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP's programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP's thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

29. The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building¹³ (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

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

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

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

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence¹⁴

32. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization¹⁵, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

33. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating¹⁶ should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

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

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

¹³ <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

¹⁴ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project's design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.

- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

C. Nature of External Context

34. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval¹⁷). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. Effectiveness

i. Availability of Outputs¹⁸

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision¹⁹

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes²⁰

36. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed²¹ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

¹⁷ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

¹⁸ Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behaviour, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

²¹ All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of 'reconstruction' needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds), and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

- Communication and public awareness

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

39. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role²² or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

E. Financial Management

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

²² The terms *catalytic effect*, *scaling up* and *replication* are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. *Catalytic effect* is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. *Scaling up* and *Replication* require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. *Scaling up* suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while *Replication* suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

F. Efficiency

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

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

44. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities²³ with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

45. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of 'no cost extensions', such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

47. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART²⁴ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

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

²³ Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

²⁴ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

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

iii. Project Reporting

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

H. Sustainability

51. Sustainability²⁵ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. Socio-political Sustainability

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

ii. Financial Sustainability

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

iii. Institutional Sustainability

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

²⁵ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

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

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

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

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

56. In some cases, 'project management and supervision' may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects²⁶, it may refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

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

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

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

60. The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment²⁷.

²⁶ For GEF funded projects, a rating will be provided for the Project Management and Supervision of each of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. The two ratings will be aggregated to provide an overall rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision

²⁷The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents,

61. In particular the Evaluation will consider to what extent project-implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

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

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

64. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements²⁸ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

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

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

68. The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated

operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

²⁸ For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

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

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia [Request for CEO endorsement and associated attachments, Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and its associated amendments].
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), grant agreements, the logical framework and its budget.
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, steering committee meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool, project Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data etc.
- Project deliverables.
- Mid-Term Review of the project.

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

- UNEP Task Manager (TM).
- The Executing Agency [UNEP Europe Office]
- Project management team.
- Steering Committee members
- Technical Advisory Committee
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO).
- Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate.
- Project partners.
 - Global Fire Monitoring Center
- Participating country institutions and civil society organisations
 - Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) of Ukraine
 - State Agency for ChEZ (Kyiv, Chornobyl)
 - State Agency of Ukraine for Exclusion Zone Management (SAUEZM)
 - Chornobyl Radiation and Ecological Biosphere Reserve Office
 - Chornobyl Center for Nuclear Safety, Radioactive Waste and Radioecology
 - State Environmental Investment Agency
 - State Forestry Resources Agency
 - Kyiv oblast State Administration
- Other relevant resource persons / institutions.
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as academia, research institutions, and think tanks).
 - National University of Life and Environmental Sciences
 - Academy of Sciences of Ukraine
 - Institute of Agricultural Radiology of the National University of Life and Environmental Sciences (Kyiv)
 - Zhytomyr Agroecological University

(c) Field visits [not required]

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

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

72. The Evaluation Team will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically, in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.
- An **Evaluation Brief**, (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and key evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

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

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

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

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

12. The Evaluation Team

77. For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of a Principal Evaluator and one Evaluation Specialist who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager [Stephen Baguma] in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager [Ersin Esen], Project Manager [Mahir Aliyev], Fund Management Officer [George Saddimbah] the Sub-programme Coordinator for Nature action [Marieta Sakalian] and Environmental Governance [Yassin Ahmed]. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

78. The Principal Evaluator will be hired over a period of six (6) months [January 2025 to June 2025] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of eight (8) years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of protected areas management is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in oral and written Ukrainian is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with no field visits.

79. The Evaluation Specialist will be hired over a period of six (6) months [January 2025 to June 2025] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of eight (6) years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of protected areas management is desired. Previous working experience in Ukraine and in the ChEZ is desirable. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in oral and written Ukrainian is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with field visits to the project sites.

80. Specific Responsibilities for Principal Evaluator:

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

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

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

- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluand and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

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

81. Specific Responsibilities for the Evaluation Specialist:

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

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

Reporting phase, including:

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

Managing relations, including:

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

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 6: Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	August 2024
Inception Report	February 2025
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	March 2025
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	April 2025
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	May 2025
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	May 2025
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	June 2025
Final Report	June 2025
Final Report shared with all respondents	June 2025

14. Contractual Arrangements

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

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

Table 7: Schedule of Payment for the Principal Evaluator

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	40%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Report Template</i>)	30%

Table 8: Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Guidance Note</i>)	40%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report (<i>as per Report Template</i>)	30%

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

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

86. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

87. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants’ fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard²⁹.

²⁹ This may include contract cancellation in-line with prevailing UN Secretariat rules.

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

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

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

90. **ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS:** As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link provided by the Evaluation Manager during the Inception Phase and use those versions throughout the Evaluation.

Table 9: List of tools, templates and guidance notes available

Document #	Name
1	00_Tools Description and Mapping (Word file)
2	00a_UNEP Glossary Results Definitions (PDF file)
3	00b_List of Documents Needed for Evaluations (Word file)
4	01_Evaluation Criteria (Word file)
5	02_Criterion Rating Descriptions Matrix (Word file)
6	03_Evaluation Ratings Table ONLY (Word file)
7	04_Weighed Ratings Table (Excel file)
8	05_Project Identification Table ONLY (Word file)
9	06_Inception Report Structure and Contents (Word file)
10	07_Main Evaluation Report Structure and Contents (Word file)
11	08_TOC Reformulation Justification Table ONLY (Word file)
12	09_Quality of Project Design Assessment (Word file)
13	09a Quality of Project Design Assessment Template.xlsx (Excel file)
14	10_Stakeholder Analysis Guidance Note (Word file)
15	11_Gender Methods Note for Consultants (Word file)
16	12_Safeguards Methods Note for Consultants (Word file)
17	13_Use of Theory of Change in Project Evaluations (Word file)
18	14_Financial Tables (Word file)
19	15_Likelihood of Impact.xlsm (Excel file)
20	15a_Likelihood of impact Test Case (Excel file)
21	16_Recommendations Quality Guidance Note (Word file)
22	16a_In Report Template Presenting Recommendations and Lesson Learned (Word file)
23	17_TE-MTE GEF Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Evaluation Report (Word file)
24	18_TE-MTE Non GEF Cover Page Prelims and Style Sheet Main Evaluation Report (Word file)
25	19_Quality of Evaluation Report Assessment FINAL ONLY (Word file)
26	20_Evaluation Methodology Structure (Word file)
27	21_GEF Portal Annex Template (Word file)
28	Process 1_Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants (Word file)
29	Process 2_Template for Attestation Letter (Word file)
30	Process 3_Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form (Word file)
31	Process 4_Guidelines for Field Work During Coronavirus (Word file)
32	Process 5_Evaluation Consultants Team Roles (Word file)
33	Process 6_Template for Reference Checks (Word file)

Annex 2: GEF Portal Inputs

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

Table II: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7 ³⁰ , these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided ³¹).
Response: <i>(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)</i>
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? <i>(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</i>
Response: <i>(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)</i>
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? <i>(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)</i>
Response: <i>(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality)</i>
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. <i>(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)</i>
Response: <i>(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Environmental and Social Safeguards)</i>
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? <i>(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)</i>
Response: <i>(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Communication and Public Awareness)</i>
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response:

³⁰ 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)

³¹ This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

Annex 3: Project Results Framework³²

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Project Long Term Objective: Enhanced Conservation, and Management of Carbon Stocks and Biodiversity in Forest and non-Forest Lands in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (ChEZ), in Ukraine.	Number of hectares declared as Biosphere Reserve with formalized links to Polessky Nature Reserve	The current extent of protected area within the ChEZ is approximately 20% (46,000ha), with generally a low level of protection; Lack of formalized links with the Polessky nature reserve.	Legislative and regulatory mechanisms necessary to longterm management of the newly protected areas in place by the end of year 2; Extensive stakeholders consultations for establishment of the new PA initiated by end of year 1.	Presidential Decree upgrading the ChEZ to Biosphere Reserve (230,000 ha) status expected by mid- year 3; By beginning of year 4 sustainable use activities through development and implementation of a "Triad Approach" has begun; Results of the triad approach are apparent and are quantified by the end of year 4.	Records of stakeholder discussions/inputs; copies of staffing pattern, contracts and job descriptions; memoranda of Agreement or similar documents with Polessky Nature Reserve; evaluation mission to the offices of the reserve.	Assumes continued government support for establishment of a large, new protected area in the ChEZ; risk that PA will not have sufficient level legal status and thus of protection; risk that Ukraine and Belarus will fail to enter into
	A formally adopted Protected Area Management Plan for the ChEZ	No sustainable management plan has been implemented for the ChEZ; Some initial forestry planning.	By mid-year 2 draft management plan developed; Final draft submitted to government for approval and funding by the end of year 2.	At end of year 2/mid-year 3 a sustainable management plan has been developed for a 230,000 ha Biosphere Reserve, with formalized links to Polessky Nature Reserve.	Records of stakeholder consultations; draft and final versions of an approved management plan for ChEZ; project and government legal documents related to PA establishment.	Assumes a timely, efficient and ultimately successful set of consultations necessary for development of the PA Plan.
	Formally established and operational ChEZ Research Environmental protection Center (REPC)	The current Chernobyl Research Center is understaffed and underfunded; Limited Center focus on environmental protection ³³ .	Beginning of year 2 center staffing and budgetary needs detailed and submitted to government for approval; End of year 2 centre staffed and working with an approved research plan;	End of year 4 the Center is fully functional with full complement of staff, approved budget, and agreed upon research agenda. A collaborative transboundary international program on radioecological research, monitoring and management of carbon stocks in forest and nonforest lands, and protected areas management is initiated with the Polessky State Reserve in Belarus.	Government documents related to the establishment of a new, large PA in the ChEZ. Evidence of sustainable funding mechanism for plan implementation; Written staffing pattern, position descriptions, and budget document	Assumes adequate and successful level of inter-ministerial support for and provision of sustainable financing from government and other sources (bi and multi-lateral donors, cooperative ventures with other research institutions). Assumes continued government commitment to

³² Extract from the [Request for CEO endorsement dated 25 November 2014](#).

³³ The priority within the ChEZ over the past 26 years has been reduction of threat levels from radionuclides with no emphasis placed on conservation and sustainable use.

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
						establishment of a fully functional Center
Component 1: Establishment of a Research and Environmental Protection Center						
Outcome 1. Improved monitoring and research for large areas of forests, wetlands, and other habitat types and associated carbon benefits in the ChEZ.	Environmental monitoring systems designed and operational and generating information on state of the ChEZ environment.	No conservation-based research or field experiment program in place in ChEZ; Limited research program that does not meet the requirements of an expanded and upgraded protected area in the ChEZ	By mid year 2 a stakeholder driven research plan developed; End of year 2 research plan forwarded to government for appropriate action. Linkages with at least four relevant national and/or international educational institutions established.	Center based activities (ec. publishing and making available monitoring data) Begin by the end of year 3. End of year 3, linkages created with relevant international agreements and platforms (e.g CBD, Ramsar, CCD).	Project and government reports; Minutes of stakeholder meetings; approved budgets; Published research agenda and publications of research results; Annual reports of REPC.	Overall risk that government decisions on extractive resource uses within the zone will prevent enhanced management consistent with project objectives
Output 1.1 <i>The REPC established and fully functional</i>	Budget of ChEZ EPC in Mill USD Number of jobs created to manage the reserve. Research and business plan in place with stakeholder input;	As of year 2014 no budget allocated to manage the natural resources of the ChEZ. An under-funded and under-staffed research center	Beginning of year 2 center staffing and budgetary needs detailed and submitted to government for approval; Staff list and ToRs developed by end of year 1. Procurement plans developed by end of year 2. Research and business plan completed by end year 3.	3 Mill annual budget allocation for the management of the Biosphere reserve by project end. By end of year 3 the REPC is fully staffed – up to 300 jobs created Required equipment purchased and operational; Implementation of related activities begins end year	Review of the approved staffing pattern; Staff contracts and ToR; Copies of an approved research plan with timetables.	Assumes long-term government support for the ChEZ, including provision of sufficient finance; assumes that jobs created by the PA and international support for the Center will be sustained.
Output 1.2 <i>Comprehensive assessment of the current state and trends of natural ecosystems in the ChEZ</i>	Components of a research and field experiment program designed and launched; Results of Ukrainian and international publications made available on the project website and through	No comprehensive program planned	Research and field experimental program designed by mid-year year 2; Program delivered to government with request for funding end of year 2; By end year 2 extensive physical description of	Programme for, targeted radioecological and sustainable forest and wetlands management research launched by beginning of year 3; A study of the impact of radioactivity related factors on selected habitats, species and populations of global	Project reports and minutes; draft and final version of an approved program	Assumes that initial government funding will be sustained over recurring budget years

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
	other means such as scientific journals, etc.		forest and wetland habitat completed;	importance published by end of year 4; Summary report of socio-economic benefits derived to date at end of year 4		
Output 1.3. <i>Assessment of the status of ecosystem services and their values and enhancement of carbon benefits in terms meeting LLUCF</i>	Analysis/description of ecosystem services deriving from the ChEZ, including values and benefits of meeting LLUCF targets.	Ecosystem services benefits for the ChEZ not identified and no assessment planned.	Terms of reference for ecosystem services assessment mid-year 2; Assessment begins end year 2;	1. Assessment completed by the end of year 3 and forwarded to government: 2. An assessment of the status and pattern of rehabilitation processes of forest and wetland habitats, and evaluation of their role in terms of CC mitigation and meeting LULUCF targets completed by mid- year 3; 3. Appropriate sustainable habitat management measures for the rehabilitation of Forests, Wetlands and Marshlands contributing to the conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks and meeting LULUCF targets developed by end of year 3. 4. A study of the ongoing natural succession processes in the various habitat types affected by radiation in the ChEZ completed and published by mid-year- year 3;	Project records including contracts and ToR for assessment preparation; draft and final assessment reports	Assumes government ability to provide the necessary financial and human resources as part of the cofinance commitment

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
				5. A fire monitoring system established within the ChEZ by end of year 3; 6. Peer reviewed research publications and monitoring results available end of year 4.		
Component 2: Establishment and Management of a Full Protected Area Network						
Outcome 2. Improved management of natural resources and carbon stocks within and around the ChEZ.	Number of hectares declared as Biosphere Reserve with formalized links to Polessky Nature Reserve; Stakeholders contributing to maintain and protect nature reserve; Approved management plan;	Current amount of PA in ChEZ approximately 20% (46,000ha), but low level of protection; Legislation to expand PA in ChEZ not in place; Assessment of carbon stocks and other natural capital in ChEZ incomplete in some cases and not undertaken in others;	Legislation focused on expanded ChEZ PA in place by midyear 2; Draft of ew/expanded protected area plan by mid-year 2; Established cooperative arrangements with Polessky Nature Reserve end of year 2. Public consultations have occurred by mid-year 2.	At end of year 2 a sustainable management plan has been developed for a 230,000 ha Biosphere Reserve, with formalized links to Polessky Nature Reserve, and submitted to government for approval. PA management structure in place end year 3; Records or public involvement contain gender segregated data.	Legal documentation establishing new protected areas; Public participation plans and proceedings; Approved management plans; Carbon stock assessments; Maps of new biosphere reserve; Initial analysis of effectiveness of the management plan.	Assumes applications for natural resource use in the zone will be undertaken only after studies and inventories have been completed
Output 2.1: Formal designation of the ChEZ as Biosphere Reserve for enhancing conservation and management of carbon stocks.	Number of hectares declared as Biosphere Reserve with formalized links to Polessky Nature Reserve; PA management plans designed in line with the results from carbon stock, ecological and socioeconomic surveys	No PA focus or priority in the ChEZ; Low level of protection for existing PA in the zone; Ecological surveys rudimentary and/or out of date.	A protected area zoning plan, defining areas with various degrees of carbon stocks enhancement and conservation potential developed by end of year 2. First draft monitoring and research plan developed mid-year 2; Carbon stock, ecological and socioeconomic surveys initiated by beginning of year 2.	Presidential Decree upgrading the ChEZ to Biosphere Reserve status expected by mid- year 3; Carbon stocks inventory complete end year 2; Comprehensive ecological and socioeconomic surveys are conducted by end of years 2 and 4 containing gender segregated data by end of year 3. Final comprehensive PA management plan by mid-year 3.	Presidential Decree Management plans; ToR and draft/final reports; interviews w/ project staff and contractors; Copies of survey results; Legal instruments	Assumes applications for natural resource use in the zone will be undertaken only after studies and inventories have been completed. Assumes continued and growing support for the objectives of the project from the Government of Ukraine and other national and international stakeholders

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
Output 2.2 <i>Measures developed to ensure financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs.</i>	Approved budgets and workplans of relevant government ministries and other national and international stakeholders. Number of jobs created to manage the reserve.	No ChEZ specific budget allocation or work programs w/in the MENR; Budgets of Agency for Management of Exclusion Zone make no provision for environment or nature reserve based activities.	End of year 2 MENR budgets and workplans contain financial and other resources specifically dedicated to sustainability of the new protected area.	A protected area management structure, an initial core team of staff, equipment and associated professional capacity on place by end of 3. By end of year 3 budget for the PA management formally part of approved MENR annual budget. Up to 300 jobs created	Budgets and programs of relevant government ministries; Budgets and programs of other relevant national and international stakeholders.	Assumes continued governmental support, i.e. funding and a multi-agency level of support for the conservation related objectives of the project.
Component 3: Learning, Field Testing and Dissemination						
Outcome 3. Increased availability and access to critical information needed for decision-making for effective sustainable management of the ChEZ.	System for tracking number of requests for data and other information.	Substantial knowledge gaps exist; What knowledge does exist is scattered which makes access and availability difficult.	By end of year 2 establishment of a comprehensive data base that would drive efforts to physically or electronically repatriate critical knowledge in the REPC initiated.	By end of year 4 comprehensive data base completed and located in the REPC; Repositories in place and access protocols and data sharing agreements finalized by end of year 4.	Verification of the data base and evidence of its accessibility and use.	Assumes that individuals, organizations and governments are willing to share existing and future data re. the ChEZ.
Output 3.1: <i>A set of lessons learned and practical recommendations on habitat rehabilitation, carbon stocks management and biodiversity conservation developed and published.</i>	Number and extent (national/international) of distribution and use of, and feedback derived from use of project derived lessons learned. Written report enumerating and describing, on the project website and through other distribution mechanisms, lessons learned widely uptaken/cited/used;	Project not yet implemented.	Written summaries of project outputs of lessons learned and dissemination available at end of year 2. End of year 2 report of lessons learned from prior work on habitat restoration, carbon stocks management and biodiversity conservation.	Written summaries of project outputs of lessons learned and dissemination expanded upon at end of year 4 By end of years 3, and 4 reports developed for ongoing work; end of year 4 Final Report of lessons learned and recommendations.	Level of uptake of Project products: e.g. # of website clicks/unique visits, project reports used/cited by others (as measured by media reports, etc.); external peer review and demonstrated inclusion of project results into relevant international meetings/fora/similar cases in other countries (e.g. Fukushima, etc.)	Assumption is that relevant international organization and regional and international stakeholders willing to cooperate with and participate and/or learn from project experiences and lessons learned.

Project Results	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-Term Targets	End-of-Project Targets	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
	Interviews with national and international organizations and individuals targeted for lessons learned distribution.					
Output 3.2: <i>Knowledge sharing at national and international level and Training programme field tested and available for replication</i>	Distribution lists and numbers distributed; Training manuals and list of trainers; Dedicated project website; Project presence (representatives, project displays, etc.) at relevant national and international events.	Project not yet implemented.	Distribution lists prepared by end of year 1; Distribution lists and description of yearly distributions at end of year 2.	Description of yearly distributions for all project years; Trainers recruited and trained at end of year 3; List of number of people trained at end of year 4; Final Report at end of year 4; National education center opened at end of year 4.	Web site review to determine # of hits and interactive exchanges; interviews with selected visitors to the Project web site; interviews with project staff and contractors.	Assumes continued government support for staffing and budgetary allocations for the REPC.