



Evaluation
Office

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project “Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Phase 2” (2021-2024), SMA ID 99286



Evaluation Office of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distributed: December 2025



Photos Credits:

Front cover: Religious leaders from the IRI–Colombia Chapter participating in a forest restoration day in the Serranía La Lindosa as they work together to protect and restore the local watershed. Charras Boquerón, Guaviare, Colombia.

© IRI-Colombia, October 2022 (with permission obtained for use of the image in this report)

This report has been prepared by an external consultant evaluator and is a product of the Evaluation Office of UNEP. The findings and conclusions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of Member States or the UN Environment Programme Senior Management.

For further information on this report, please contact:

Evaluation Office of UNEP

P. O. Box 30552-00100 GPO
Nairobi Kenya

Email: unep-evaluation-director@un.org

Website: <https://www.unep.org/evaluation-office>

UNEP Project “Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Phase 2
SMA ID 99286/ PIMS 2118
December 2025
All rights reserved.
© (2025) UNEP

Acknowledgements

This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Michelle Spearing, as an external consultant.

The evaluator would like to express her gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation.

The evaluator would like to thank the members of the IRI UNEP project team for their contribution and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to the UNEP staff and project partners who took time to provide comments to the draft report. The evaluator would also like to thank members of the Global Steering Committee and civil society and government partners who took time to inform this evaluation.

The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of any next phases and to the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

Evaluator

Michelle Spearing – Evaluation Consultant

Evaluation Office of UNEP

Susanne Bech – Evaluation Manager

Dipti Jethwa – Evaluation Programme Assistant

Brief consultant biography

Michelle Spearing has over 20 years of experience spanning operational programming, research and policy engagement, monitoring, and evaluation. As a consultant she delivers technical advice/accompaniment, evaluations, and research studies commissioned by UN agencies and bilateral donors. She is particularly experienced supporting programming to address governance, conflict and insecurity, gender inequality and social exclusion, and environmental conservation. Michelle holds a BA degree in Theology, an MA degree in Peace Studies and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Research Skills.

About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

Report Language: English.

Evaluation Type: Terminal Evaluation

ABSTRACT: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project: “Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Phase 2” (SMA ID 99286)), implemented between 2021 and 2024. The project's overall objective was to “build faith-based movements in program countries (Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru) that mobilize religious leaders on the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that are grounded in the values, ethics and moral guidance of faith communities”. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) and determine the sustainability of its results. The evaluation has two primary purposes: accountability and learning. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and document review. Data analysis was based on applying data to assess performance against a reconstructed Theory of Change and its causal pathways and answering key evaluation questions against defined criteria. With an overall performance rating of ‘Satisfactory’, the 5th point on a six-point scale, the main findings include: i) The innovative approach of framing environmental protection as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility proved exceptionally powerful, fostering unprecedented trust and collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples, ii) The decentralized, country-driven model was a major strength, fostering deep ownership and the flexibility to adapt to immense challenges, iii) A lack of clear governance and leadership roles among core partners created confusion, diluted accountability, and prevented the project from fully leveraging the expertise of its partners. The main recommendations to UNEP are: UNEP should establish a formal, bi-annual strategic dialogue with the IRI Global Steering Committee to sustain the strategic link, ensure lessons are mainstreamed, and connect IRI’s work to UN global processes. Implementing parties are advised to prioritize and structure mentorship and knowledge-sharing between more mature country programmes (e.g., Brazil, Colombia) and its less-established ones (e.g., DRC) to accelerate capacity building.

Sources of Funding by Country: Government of Norway / Rainforest Foundation Norway

Sources of Funding by Institution Type:

Foundation/NGO	Yes
Private Sector	No
UN Body	No
Multilateral Fund	No
Environment Fund	Yes

Key words: Forest Management, Climate Change, Advocacy, Indigenous Peoples.

Primary data collection period: May-July 2025

Field mission dates: n/a

Table of contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	10
1 THE PROJECT	14
1.1 Context	14
1.2 Results Framework	15
1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners	17
1.4 Stakeholders	18
1.5 Project Financing	21
2 EVALUATION METHODS.....	22
2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach	22
2.2 Data Collection	23
3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION	26
4 EVALUATION FINDINGS	30
4.1 Strategic Relevance	30
4.2 Quality of Project Design	34
4.3 Nature of the External Context.....	36
4.4 Effectiveness.....	38
4.5 Financial Management.....	56
4.6 Efficiency	59
4.7 Monitoring and Reporting.....	60
4.8 Sustainability.....	63
4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues	66
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	71
5.1 Conclusions.....	71
5.2 Lessons learned.....	75
5.3 Recommendations.....	76
ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS.....	79
ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK.....	80
ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION	85
ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED	86
ANNEX V. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR	87
ANNEX VI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT	89

*Evaluation Terms of Reference available, with this report, in wedocs, [link](#)

List of acronyms and abbreviations

AC	Advisory Council
CBFP	Congo Basin Forest Partnership
COP	Conference of Parties
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
IP	Indigenous Peoples
IPMR	Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting [system]
IRI	Interfaith Rainforest Initiative
KII	Key Informant Interview
MTS	Medium Term Strategy
NICFI	Norway's International Climate and Forests Initiative
PIMS	Programme Information and Management System
PoW	Programme of Work
PPMM	Programme and Project Management Manual
PRC	Project Review Committee
ProDoc	Project Document
RfP	Religions for Peace
RoI	Return on Investment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMA	System Management Application [ID for UNEP projects]
SP	Subprogramme
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToRs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Development Framework
USD	United States Dollar
WCMC	UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Project identification table

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP SMA ¹ ID:	PIMS:02118 / SMA: 99286	Grant ID ² :	SB-018738
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Ecosystems Division (Nov 2021-Jan 2024) Biodiversity and Land Branch (2022-Feb 2023) to Nature for Climate Branch (March 2023) to Climate Change Division, Adaptation and Resilience Branch, Climate Change Mitigation Unit (Feb 2024 onwards)		
Implementing Partners:	Project Executing Partners: UNEP-WCMC, Religions for Peace (RfP) <u>IRI Coalition Partners:</u> Rainforest Foundation Norway, GreenFaith, World Council of Churches, Parliament of the World's Religions, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology, Indigenous Peoples, local communities		
Sources of Funding:	<i>Country³: Government of Norway</i>	<i>Institution⁴ Name:</i> Norway's International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI)	
Relevant SDG(s):	SDG 1 (1.4, 1.4.2); SDG 2 (2.3, 2.4); SDG 5 (5.1, 5.5); SDG 6 (6.6, 6.6.1); SDG 13 (13.2, 13.2.1), SDG 15 (15.1, 15.1.1, 15.2, 15.2.1, 15.5, 15.5.1); SDG 16 (16.7, 16.10); SDG 17 (17.6, 17.17)		
MTS (all that apply):		UNEP approval date:	
POW Direct Outcome number/reference:	<i>POW Direct Outcome:</i> 2022 – 2023: Climate stability: Outcome (1A): Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways i) Number of countries and/or legal entities that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support	POW Expected Accomplishment number/reference:	<i>POW Expected Accomplishment:</i> SP3: EA a) The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels (b) Policymakers in the public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making.
Sub-programme:	Nature Action, Chemicals and Pollution, Environmental Governance, Finance and Economic Transformations	Programme Coordination Project:	Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
<i>Expected</i> start date:	November 2021	Actual start date:	16/11/2021

¹ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023. Previously, it was referred to as a PIMS ID number.

² For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.

³ Where applicable, list countries 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; Other.

Planned completion date:	01/10/2024	Actual operational completion date:	15/11/2024
Planned project budget at approval:	Planned Core Funding (regular budget, Environment Fund, etc.):		
	Planned Extra-budgetary Funds: Cash: USD 6,691,123 In-kind: USD 840,840		
	Total Planned Budget: USD 6,697,537		
Actual expenditures reported:	Actual Core Funding expenditures reported as of <i>insert date</i> :		
	Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of <i>insert date</i> : Cash: USD 5,857,057. (loss from NOK depreciation versus USD of USD 767,816.6) In-kind: USD 840,840		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 31/12/24: USD 5,797,094.26		
First disbursement:	USD 1,086,593.00 (27/12/2021)	Planned date of financial closure:	1 year after operational completion.
No. of formal project revisions:	1	Date of last approved project revision:	25/09/2024
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	2	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	
Mid-term Review	UNEP requirement:	N	Mid-term Review actual date: n/a
	Donor requirement:	N	
Terminal Evaluation (<i>planned</i>):	October 2024	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	April-Sept 2025
Coverage - Countries:	Brazil, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Peru	Coverage - Regions:	Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean
Dates of previous phase:	Phase 1: 05/09/2018 to 30/06/2021	Status of future phase:	New phase and/or follow-up under negotiation

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The UNEP Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) project Phase 2 was implemented between 2021 and 2024.⁵ The Phase 2 Project Objective as stated in its revised ProDoc in 2024 was “To build faith-based movements in program countries (Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru) that mobilize religious leaders on the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that are grounded in the values, ethics and moral guidance of faith communities”.
2. The project was funded by Norway’s International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI) with USD 6,691,123 committed at design stage.⁶ During implementation there was a significant reduction of the originally approved budget from USD 6.6 million to 5.8 million due to depreciation of the Norwegian Krone (NOK) against US Dollar (USD), reflected in a revision of the ProDoc. Additionally, in-kind contributions totalling USD 840,480 from the Environment Fund were identified in the ProDoc, covering staff part-time contributions (from P4, G7 and D1 roles) within UNEP.
3. The IRI project Phase 2 was executed by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and Religions for Peace (RfP), with Coalition Partners.
4. Whilst acknowledging the importance of informing international policy debate on tropical deforestation, IRI Phase 2 has particularly addressed the need and potential for influence at local and national levels in each of the five focus countries, with focal issues and potential routes to achieve change determined by national level problem analysis and political and social context analysis.

This evaluation

5. This Terminal Evaluation (TE) covers the implementation of the IRI project in its second phase, from 2021-2024.
6. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual, the TE is being undertaken at operational completion to assess project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and to determine actual and potential outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including their sustainability.
7. The evaluation has two primary purposes:
 - To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and:
 - To promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, WCMC-UNEP, Religions for Peace (RfP) and NICFI,

⁵ The Project Document (ProDoc) was approved on 16 November 2021 with expected start date of 1 October 2021. Actual implementation started in January 2022.

⁶ Approximately USD300,000 (cash) was allocated by the UNEP Ecosystems Division to cover expenses between the end of Phase 1 (September 2021) and the official commencement of Phase 2 (November 2021).

informing a potential third phase of the project and the wider work of UNEP and its partners.

8. The target audience for this TE includes the IRI UNEP Project Team and implementing partners, the core donor (NICFI), and Global Steering Committee. Secondary audiences include other UNEP teams and wider stakeholders interested in the interface of faith-based activity and environmental goals.
9. The evaluation findings are disseminated through the UNEP Evaluation Office.

Key findings and performance ratings

10. Overall, the IRI project Phase 2 performed at a 'Satisfactory' level (See table 2 below).
11. IRI was a highly effective and strategically relevant initiative that successfully mobilized faith constituencies and religious leaders as influential actors to influence environmental policy and public awareness on forest and climate governance but faced financial and management challenges and limitations. The project's efficiency was significantly hampered by a complex, multi-layered financial and management structure that created high administrative burdens and major delays in fund disbursement. The flow of funds through multiple intermediary partners was ill-suited for an agile, politically sensitive initiative and created significant operational challenges.
12. IRI has strong prospects for socio-political and institutional sustainability in some form, thanks to deep country ownership, the establishment of robust local networks, and a proven ability to build resilient coalitions. The project was proactive in seeking additional funds both globally and in some countries. Whilst some funds were secured in some countries, this was not successful at global level. Financial sustainability remains a risk due to over-reliance on a single donor.
13. In answering the evaluation's key strategic questions, it is clear that the tiered management structure negatively affected costs and efficiency while the decentralized programme model positively bolstered country ownership. Coherence with other UNEP initiatives like Faith for Earth was strong conceptually but weak in practice, with few realized synergies and a failure by UNEP to amplify IRI's powerful communication assets. Coherence was hampered by coordination issues and staff turnover. The potential for replicating and scaling up the IRI model is high, provided that future designs adopt simplified management structures and prioritize flexible, country-led approaches.
14. In the new phase (Phase 3) the hosting of IRI has transitioned from UNEP to the Rainforest Foundation Norway, in part to overcome operational challenges. It will be important for UNEP to carve out a clear role and relationship to IRI to maintain gains to date and to further linkages to related UN initiatives.

Table 2: Summary of project ratings

Criterion	Rating⁷
Strategic Relevance	HS
Quality of Project Design	S
Nature of External Context	MU
Effectiveness	HS
Financial Management	MU
Efficiency	MU
Monitoring and Reporting	MU
Sustainability	ML
Factors Affecting Performance	MS
Overall Project Performance Rating	S

Conclusions summary

15. The project's main achievement was its innovative approach of framing environmental protection as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility. This narrative proved exceptionally powerful, fostering unprecedented trust and collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples. Its decentralized, country-driven model was a major strength, fostering deep ownership and the flexibility to adapt to immense challenges, such as political hostility and financial shocks.
16. Despite these programmatic successes, performance was significantly hampered by systemic weaknesses in its management and financial architecture. A lack of clear governance and leadership among core partners, NICFI and the Global Steering Committee created confusion, diluted accountability, and prevented the project from fully leveraging the expertise of its partners.

Lessons Learned

- Multi-partner projects need to establish clear, unambiguous governance structures with well-defined leadership roles and responsibilities from the very beginning to prevent fragmentation, ensure accountability, and facilitate effective collaboration, especially with key implementing partners.
- UNEP needs to pre-empt budgetary challenges with financial scenario planning to accommodate changes to funding streams, external currency fluctuations, changing donor priorities or changing in-country needs and costs, building flexibility into plans and contracts where possible and ensuring that project teams have capacity and mandate to adapt when necessary.
- Future multi-partner initiatives need to balance administrative processes and requirements with financial and management structures to maximize efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure the timely flow of resources to implementing teams.
- Project design prioritizing country-level ownership and operational autonomy allowed local teams the flexibility to adapt strategies to their specific political and social contexts

⁷ Most criteria were rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

for greater effectiveness and sustainability. However, this reduced UNEP's own ability to make overall strategic changes to the approach during implementation.

- Where environmental issues are framed not just in scientific or policy terms, but as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility, this can mobilise large communities around environmental change. The faith-based approach could be mainstreamed across other influencing approaches.
- Specific activities and strategies to integrate gender equality are needed to ensure an inclusive approach, incorporating these based on analysis at design stage and including both gender mainstreamed and gender-specific activities to foster equal participation and to address specific gendered barriers to participation.
- There are multiple benefits to co-locating multi-partner initiatives alongside wider UNEP work, including building public profile and trust, monitoring and increased interaction between initiatives, as well as efficiency savings.

Recommendations

- To ensure the strategic value and lessons from IRI are sustained and mainstreamed, UNEP should establish a formal, bi-annual strategic dialogue with the IRI Global Steering Committee to review IRI's progress, identify synergies with UNEP's global processes, and facilitate the integration of IRI's successful faith-based approaches into wider UNEP programming and ensure continuity of the normative framework and policy engagement processes.
- For future agile, multi-partner initiatives, UNEP should adopt a simplified management and financial architecture that minimizes intermediary layers and prioritizes direct funding to primary implementing partners.
- For IRI Phase 3, each country programme should develop a context-specific Gender Action Plan. These plans should be based on a rapid analysis of local barriers to women's participation and leadership and must establish ambitious but realistic targets for female representation in all activities, trainings, and governance structures.
- IRI should prioritise mentorship and knowledge-sharing between less established country programmes (such as IRI DRC) with more mature programmes (like IRI Brazil and Colombia). This programme should facilitate structured exchange on successful strategies for fundraising, gender mainstreaming, and impactful advocacy, with the goal of accelerating the institutional capacity and effectiveness of newer chapters.
- UNEP Communications should take a more proactive approach to integrating messaging around faith-based engagement on environmental issues to cohere with wider policy processes and opportunities for influence. Guidelines for managing communication on faith-based activities and partnerships should be developed and disseminated across relevant project teams to encourage coverage.

1 THE PROJECT

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Intervention context

17. The Project Objective of Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI) Project Phase 2 as stated in its revised ProDoc in 2024 was “To build faith-based movements in program countries (Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru) that mobilize religious leaders on the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and that are grounded in the values, ethics and moral guidance of faith communities”.
18. IRI responds to a problem analysis identifying tropical deforestation as a major contributor to climate change that also erodes people’s resilience to it and undermines poverty reduction. Designed after the COVID-19 pandemic, Phase 2 recognised the potential of rainforest protection and restoration to contribute to sustainable development and green recovery. It also recognised the potential of diverse religious and spiritual communities in influencing policy and practice at local, national and international levels as well as shifting norms and behaviours that impact conservation.
19. IRI’s problem analysis recognises multiple drivers of tropical deforestation, including large-scale infrastructure projects, illegal timber trade, unsustainable patterns of consumption and extractive industries. It notes that a lack of legal rights or enforcement of rights for indigenous and forest-dwelling communities is a barrier to protection. It further notes that the influence of faith leaders and faith communities is limited by lack of knowledge and understanding on deforestation and climate change as well as in weak relationships between different stakeholder groups and weak engagement in policy influencing for forest protection, meaning that political leaders and commercial actors feel little pressure to change from indigenous and faith-based communities.
20. Whilst acknowledging the importance of informing international policy debate on tropical deforestation, the IRI project Phase 2 has particularly addressed the need and potential for influence at local and national levels in each of the five focus countries, with issue focus and potential routes to achieve change determined by national level problem analysis and political and social context analysis (explored further under the effectiveness section).

1.1.2 Institutional context

21. IRI was launched in 2017 by UNEP, the Government of Norway and interfaith partners, as an international, multi-faith alliance that would provide a platform for religious leaders, and traditional leaders to work together with Indigenous Peoples, local communities, governments, civil society organizations and businesses on actions that protect rainforests and safeguard the peoples that serve as their guardians.
22. The IRI project Phase 2, covered by this evaluation, was implemented between November 2021 and November 2024. Phase 2 was implemented by the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and Religions for Peace (RfP), with Coalition Partners. It was managed by UNEP’s Ecosystems Division, with responsibility moving from the Biodiversity and Land Branch (2022-Feb 2023) to the Nature for

Climate Branch (March 2023) to the new recently established Climate Change Division, Adaptation and Resilience Branch, Climate Change Mitigation Unit (Feb 2024 onwards).

23. IRI contributes to the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work (POW) for 2020-2021 and 2022-2023. It is related to the POW's Subprogrammes on Climate Action and Nature Action, and specifically contributes to the Direct Outcome for 2022 – 2023 on climate stability: Outcome (1A): Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways i) Number of countries and/or legal entities that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support.
24. The project was funded by Norway's International Climate and Forests Initiative (NICFI) with USD 6,691,123 committed at the design stage. During implementation there was a significant reduction of the originally approved budget from USD 6.6 million to USD 5.8 million due to depreciation of the Norwegian Krone (NOK) against US Dollar (USD), reflected in a revision of the ProDoc. Additionally, in-kind contributions totalling USD 840,480 from the Environment Fund were identified in the ProDoc, covering staff part-time contributions (from P4, G7 and D1 roles) within UNEP.

1.2 Results Framework

25. Table 3 shows the Outcome and Output Statements and Indicators as included in the revised Prodoc. This provides a good basis for assessing progress against the effectiveness criteria, and it allows assessment of progress at country level which may differ due to the country context.

Table 3: Summary of project's latest approved results framework (source: Revised ProDoc)

Project Objective	
Project Outcome 1	Indicators
IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia and Peru educate and mobilize religious leaders and, with their support, advocate with public authorities in country programs to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and address climate change.	Number of IRI local or provincial chapters in each program country working on awareness-raising, gender responsive as applicable, campaigns, and actions on rainforests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 9) Colombia (Baseline: 36; Target: 42) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 20) Indonesia (Baseline: 3; Target: 6) Peru (Baseline: 12; Target: 15) Number of religious leaders (male and female) trained by each IRI country program on the protection of rainforests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Target: 30% of female representation) Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 400) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 400) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 400) Indonesia (Baseline: 0; Target: 400) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 400) Number of calls to action and gender responsive, as applicable, policy positions taken by IRI country programs on legislation, laws and policies related to the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (e.g. meetings with ministries, statements to Congress, open letters to public authorities, proposal on legislation, etc.) Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 10) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 10) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 5) Indonesia (Baseline: 0; Target: 2) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 10)
Project Outputs 1	Indicators
1. Trainings and educational materials provided to religious leaders on rainforests, climate change, and the	Number of educational materials (e.g. issue primers, religious teaching guides, faith toolkits, etc.) on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, gender responsive as applicable, launched and disseminated through interfaith networks to religious leaders. (Baseline: 12, Target: 19)

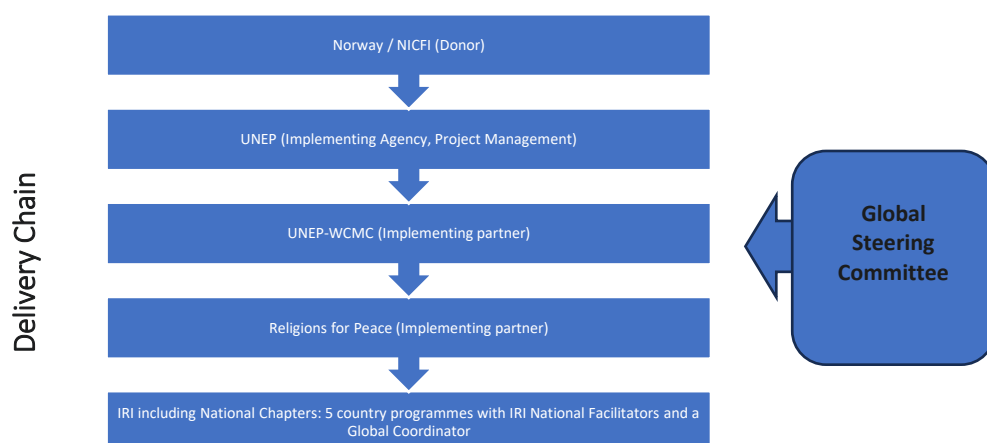
rights of indigenous peoples, and knowledge amongst religious leaders on priority topics is increased.	Number of trainings and capacity building workshops (gender responsive as applicable) held for religious leaders on rainforests, climate change, the rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Baseline: 0; Target: 50) Percentage of religious leaders (disaggregated by male and female) that reported in their interviews an increase in awareness and knowledge about forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples after engaging with IRI trainings and educational materials. (Baseline 0; Target: 60%) Audio-visual material on the nexus between religion, gender and rainforests, and indigenous women's role safeguarding the rainforests. (Baseline 0; Target 1)
2. Technical assistance provided to IRI country programs focused on education and awareness-raising, on-the-ground mobilization (local and regional levels), and advocacy with policymakers.	Number of IRI country program annual work plans (gender responsive where applicable) developed in consultation with IRI Advisory Councils on education and training, on-the-ground mobilization, strategic communications, and advocating at critical moments in national policymaking. Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 3) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 3) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 3) Indonesia (Baseline 0; Target: 3) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 3) Number of Advisory Council meetings held for each IRI country program Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 9) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 9) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 9) Indonesia (Baseline 0; Target: 9) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 9) A gender-sensitive social and environmental safeguards policy developed to manage national and local risks associated with IRI (Baseline: 0; Target: 1)
Project Outcome 2	Indicators
IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru deliver interventions into priority global events and communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and address climate change to religious communities and the broader public.	Number of statements, calls to action or interventions by IRI country programs into global events on forests protection and the rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Baseline: 0; Target: 6) Number of statements, calls to action or interventions made by IRI country programs at major interfaith forums and assemblies (Baseline: 0; Target: 2) Number of people reached by IRI country programs communications campaigns on the protection of forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and climate change. Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 50,000) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 50,000) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 50,000) Indonesia (Baseline 0; Target: 50,000) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 50,000)
Project Outputs 2	Indicators
3. IRI country programs interventions and calls to action on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples delivered into global events.	Number of side events at global conferences that profile the work of the IRI country programs (Baseline: 0; Target: 3)
4. Communications products and awareness campaigns (gender responsive when applicable) delivered to engage and inform religious communities and the general public about rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Number of IRI country programs communications strategies supported with content related to rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples to be delivered to religious networks and the general public. Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) Indonesia (Baseline 0; Target: 1) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) Number of IRI country specific program websites design and launch supported to inform and engage religious communities about rainforests, climate change, and indigenous rights. Brazil (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) Colombia (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) DRC (Baseline: 0; Target: 1) Indonesia (Baseline 0; Target: 1) Peru (Baseline: 0; Target: 1)

	Number of editorials by IRI country programs on the moral imperative of protecting the forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (gender responsive when applicable) placed in prominent news outlets. (Baseline: 0; Target: 10)
--	--

1.3 Project Implementation Structure and Partners

26. IRI was delivered through five country programmes, each with an established IRI National Facilitator providing technical and strategic leadership at country level. The country programmes received technical advice and support from Religions for Peace, from UNEP-WCMC and from a Global Coordinator.
27. The governance and delivery chain of partners had multiple layers with funds flowing from NICFI to UNEP and then onwards to UNEP-WCMC, then to Religions for Peace who channelled funding to the National programmes. UNEP, UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace each had distinct management and technical functions. Figure 1 outlines the delivery chain for the project. Some adaptive measures were introduced during delivery to enhance efficiency, including streamlined contracting and closer coordination with WCMC and RfP.

Figure 1: Organigram of the project with key project stakeholders



28. IRI is also supported by a Global Steering Committee providing strategic oversight. The project has a range of additional partners at global and national levels. Table 4 summarises key roles of different partners in delivery, management and strategic oversight.

Table 4: Project delivery partners roles

Partner	Key roles
Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)	NICFI was the main donor and participated in the governance of IRI through the GSC.
UNEP	UNEP had overall responsibility for executing and overseeing the project, including project management and reporting to the donor. UNEP also provides technical and strategic guidance.
UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)	UNEP-WCMC provided technical guidance and support for educational materials and training, as well as logistical and operational support for country-level work, including contracting, administering disbursements, and monitoring financial transactions. Additionally, it led on safeguards, quality assurance, and impact monitoring.

Religions for Peace	RfP provided direct support to the country programmes, including staffing, disbursing payments and overseeing delivery. The national chapters of RfP also serve as national implementing partners, particularly in mobilising and connecting with existing interfaith initiatives.
Greenfaith, Yale Forum on Ecology and Religion, Religions for Peace, World Council of Churches, Parliament of the World's Religions, Tebtebba, Rainforest Foundation Norway	Global Steering Committee Partners (in addition to NICFI and UNEP) providing high level advice and strategic direction

1.4 Stakeholders

29. The ProDoc provided an analysis of types of stakeholders within the IRI. This usefully highlights the wider organizational ecosystem of the IRI which explicitly aims to bring a range of stakeholders together. These stakeholder groups were included in consultations during the design phase of the project and during the strategic planning phase at the beginning of implementation.
30. Table 5 summarises the stakeholder groups and shows their level of power and interest related to the project. This breaks down groups identified in the ProDoc to better understand the different levels of engagement in the project, for example, making greater distinctions between single faith and interfaith entities, between faith leaders and faith communities, and between local, national and global engagements.
31. In addition to the stakeholders presented in Table 5 which are grouped by functional role, the ProDoc identifies the need for greater engagement with women, youth, people with disabilities, and a wider range of faith/indigenous belief groups. This engagement with wider groups of vulnerable people was considered as a cross-cutting issue across the defined functional stakeholder groups and in the evaluation framework for this evaluation. Specific channels of engagement exist at different levels of the project, including through other initiatives such as the Global Women of Faith Network and Interfaith Youth Network of RfP.

Table 5: Stakeholder Mapping

Stakeholder group	Power	Interest	Expected Roles	Expected Changes
Religious leaders at National and Global Levels	High	Low	- Engagement of religious leaders in learning activities and advocacy activities - Engagement in national networks and global initiatives	- Increased knowledge of scientific approaches to environmental conservation - Increased commitment to spread environmental messages to faith communities - Increased commitment to engage in environmentally focussed advocacy at national and global levels
National Faith-Based or Inter-faith Organisations	High	High	- Engagement in local and national chapters - Engagement in regional and global networks - Learning and advocacy activities	Increased knowledge and coordination across FBOs on forest conservation
Global or Regional Faith-Based and Inter-Faith Organisations	High	High	- Support to develop approaches on faith and forest conservation, shaping national level - Mobilising engagement at regional & global levels - Several entities engaged in Global Steering Committee and/or Programme Management Team	These are a combination of organizations with the networks, relationships and combined legitimacy to mobilize inclusive, dynamic and impactful networks and to help us assess and navigate the needs, expectations and political sensitivities of religious practitioners from different faiths.
Faith-based communities - religious practitioners and faith-followers – major faiths and indigenous beliefs.	Low	High	- Engagement in local level learning and activism on forest conservation	- Changes in knowledge, beliefs and behaviours relating to forest conservation / environmental protection - Mobilisation in support of local and national forest conservation issues
Indigenous Peoples and Local (forest) Communities - local and national level	Low	High		
Donor government committed to	High	High	Funding; Role on Global Steering Committee; Outreach to other donors	- Greater awareness of FBO perspectives on

Stakeholder group	Power	Interest	Expected Roles	Expected Changes
engaging FBOs on forest conservation.				funding and political decisions. - Greater understanding of donor priorities, opportunities and constraints amongst FBO's. - Stronger dialogue within donors on faith-based approaches to forest conservation
UNEP Divisions, Regional Offices and Country Programmes	High	High	- Specific roles as implementing agency in Global Steering Committee/ Global Strategy Team/ Programme Management Team - Wider UNEP Engagement with IRI to identify thematic synergies and potential for engagement with FBOs. - Knowledge production and capacity building/training. Provision of scientific knowledge tailored to FBOs. - Participation in interfaith forums/IRI events.	- Engagement with FBOs mainstreamed in relevant UNEP subprogrammes and country programmes. - Synergies between IRI and wider UNEP POW/Country Programmes
Environmental and Indigenous People's NGOs	Low	High	- Participation in consultations. Alignment of NGO programmes with IRI. Sharing lessons. - IRI Global Steering Committee/ Global Strategy Team	Greater body of knowledge of intersection of faith, wider environmental action and People's rights
Other UN agencies active on environment	Low	High	Engagement with IRI through the UN Task Force on Religion and Development and in key global policy processes.	Greater representation on rainforest conservation / climate change issues across UN Taskforce work
Governments at national and local levels	Low	Low	Target of advocacy and engagement	Increased willingness to change policies and practices, including support to IP roles in forest management and wider changes in support of rainforest conservation
Private sector at national and local levels	Low	Low	Target of advocacy and engagement	Participation in dialogue on the role of the private sector in forest conservation Increased willingness to change practices in favour of forest conservation

1.5 Changes in Design during Implementation

32. Planned project outputs and outcomes were set out in the original ProDoc (November 2021). The project objective, ToC and results framework were revised during implementation based on updated analysis, review and strategic prioritisation in each country during the Phase 2 inception, consultation with the IRI Global Steering Committee, wider stakeholders and partners, and learning from implementation to date. This was formally reflected in the ProDoc revision in 2024.
33. The revision intended to refine the outcome statements to place greater emphasis on the five country programmes as the core of IRI, with the global level providing a platform to raise messages from country level to global audiences. During this revision the main change was the addition of a second outcome, which was intended to reflect work at a global level. The number of indicators was reduced, and targets were disaggregated by country.
34. The most significant change during implementation was the need to re-prioritize activities in response to NOK depreciation and reduced budgets which was done in consultations with country teams. This financial constraint, an external shock beyond the project's control, triggered a crucial phase of adaptive management. The project's response involved a recalibration of activities and extensive discussions with country teams and partners to assess core needs and prioritize interventions within the reduced budget framework.

1.6 Project Financing

35. This IRI project was financed through a grant to UNEP from the Government of Norway, with a small in-kind contribution (see Table 6 below).

Table 6: Project funding sources

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding ⁸	% of secured funding
<i>All figures as USD</i>				
<i>Cash</i>				
Extra-budgetary funding: Government of Norway	6,691,123	89%	5,857,057	87%
<i>Sub-total: Cash contributions</i>				
<i>In-kind</i>				
Environment Fund: 40% of a P4; 50% of a G7; 5% of a D1	840,840	11%	840,840	13%
<i>Sub-total: In-kind contributions</i>				
Total	7,531,963	100%	6,697,897	100%

⁸ Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

2.1 UNEP's Evaluation Approach

36. The evaluation is being undertaken at operational completion to assess project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and to determine actual and potential outcomes and impacts stemming from the project, including their sustainability. This Terminal Evaluation (TE) covers the implementation of the IRI project in its second phase, from 2021-2024. The evaluation findings will be disseminated through the UNEP Evaluation Office.
37. The evaluation has two primary purposes:
- To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and:
 - To promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, WCMC-UNEP, Religions for Peace (RfP) and NICFI, informing a potential third phase of the project and the wider work of UNEP and its partners.
38. The target audience for this TE includes the IRI UNEP Project Team and implementing partners, the core donor (NICFI), and Global Steering Committee. Secondary audiences include other UNEP teams and wider stakeholders interested in the interface of faith-based activity and environmental goals.
39. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual (PPMM), the evaluation has been carried out using a set of 9 commonly applied evaluation criteria which include: (1) Strategic Relevance, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues (see Annex II: Evaluation Framework for more details on each evaluation criterion).
40. In addition, the Evaluation Framework includes strategic questions that are of interest to UNEP:
- (a) Examine the extent to which the partner-based tiered project management structure affected management costs and country ownership?
 - (b) In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of Indigenous Peoples been considered in the implementation and monitoring of the project?
 - (c) Examine the coherence and synergy of the IRI project with other faith-based interventions, including the 2018 UNEP Strategy "Engaging with Faith-based Organizations", Indigenous Peoples, nature-based solutions, and climate initiatives in UNEP?
 - (d) Explore the extent to which scaling-up or replication opportunities for effective and cost-effective implementation of future Faith based forest initiatives at country level?
 - (e) Review the donor investment and return on investment (RoI) made and potential for future diversified donor investments in country programmes such as IRI?

41. Most evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).
42. The UNEP Evaluation Office has developed detailed descriptions of the main elements required to be demonstrated at each level (i.e. Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory) for each evaluation criterion. The ratings against each criterion are 'weighted' to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability. The evaluator has considered all the evidence gathered during the evaluation in relation to this matrix to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.
43. This evaluation adopted a participatory approach, consulting with project team members and delivery partners at several stages throughout the process.
44. Central to the evaluation was the analysis (and reconstruction) of the project's Theory of Change. Consultations were held during the evaluation inception phase to arrive at a nuanced understanding of how the project intended to drive change and what contributing conditions ('assumptions' and 'drivers') would need to be in place to support such change. The (reconstructed) Theory of Change, supported by a graphic representation and narrative discussion of the causal pathways, was discussed further with respondents during the data collection phase, and refined as appropriate. The final iteration of the Theory of Change is presented in this final evaluation report and has been used throughout the evaluation process.
45. Throughout, the evaluation has probed into why the project performed as it did, seeking to understand the influence of the design, management and delivery approach, and the external environment. Crucially, given the spread across five country programmes, the approach sought to understand why and how progress and results have differed across these examples, including an understanding of how the external context affected progress and an understanding of the effects of specific differences in delivery.
46. The inception period has consisted of preliminary documentation review, and interviews with the UNEP Project Team to clarify scope, gain an overview of the project and discuss aspects of delivering the evaluation. A project design quality assessment was conducted, and the Theory of Change was reconstructed as a basis for assessment. The evaluation presents the Reconstructed Theory of Change at evaluation taking into account data gathered and analysis during the main evaluation phase.
47. Annex II presents the Evaluation Framework which is built around the evaluation criteria that were covered by the evaluation. This matrix provided the framework for enquiry supporting document review, consultation and analysis and reflects the structure of the final report.

2.2 Data Collection

2.2.1 General approach to data collection and analysis

48. The evaluation has drawn on both secondary and primary data. Quantitative data from secondary sources were used to assess progress against numerical indicators.

Qualitative data from both secondary and primary sources were used to explore how the project was implemented and how change happened.

49. The evaluation has drawn on both secondary and primary data. Quantitative data from secondary sources were used to assess progress against numerical indicators. Qualitative data from both secondary and primary sources were used to explore how the project was implemented and how change happened.
50. The evaluator conducted a series of key informant interviews (KII) with stakeholders. Stakeholders were mostly identified by UNEP project staff and cross-checked by the consultant to understand how they related to IRI and whether any essential stakeholders were omitted. Additional individuals were identified once consultations commenced to address specific information gaps. Interviews were conducted remotely due to the multi-country nature of the stakeholder group. A list of stakeholder organisations is included in Annex III. In most cases multiple informants were interviewed from each organisation. In the case of non-anglophone country programmes, translators were used during the consultations. Table 7 provides an overview of stakeholders contacted and consulted.

Table 7: Evaluation respondent profile

Target Respondents – Individuals			A. # people involved in project Total (M/F)	B.# people contacted Total (M/F)	Sample size (% B/A)	C. # people responded Total (M/F)	Response rate (% C/B)
Project Team	Implementing agency (UNEP) ⁹		13	13	100%	13	100%
Target Respondents – Entities			A. # entities involved in project	B.# entities contacted	Sample size (% B/A)	C. # entities responded	Response rate (% C/B)
Partner	Project implementing partners (IRI / RfP / WCMC)		3	3	100%	3 ¹⁰	100%
	Project contributing partners		Not known	10	n/a	6	60%

51. All key informant interviews were conducted after prior informed consent from participants, following an explanation of the purpose and approach. All discussions remain anonymous, and all information was collected according to the UN 'Standards of Conduct'.

52. Data from interviews was transcribed and analysed against the Evaluation Framework.

2.2.2 Strategies for inclusivity

53. Stakeholders for consultation were identified during the inception phase, focussed on covering a range of functional roles across all collaborating partner organisations. Multiple individuals within UNEP and the core delivery partners were contacted and all responded. All collaborating partners represented on the Global Steering Committee were contacted and 67% were consulted. Additionally, collaborating partners at country level were identified from reporting and discussion with IRI National Facilitators. A

⁹ Including project management and financial administration, project coordination, and wider UNEP staff positions at headquarters and in focus countries

¹⁰ Multiple individuals were consulted within each implementing partner to cover different functional roles.

small number were consulted to provide insight into specific issues and views of diverse stakeholder groups that arose in those countries. A small number of core stakeholders did not respond after multiple approaches, however the consultant is confident that all relevant perspectives have been represented in the group consulted, particularly as a consistent picture emerged from multiple sources.

2.2.3 Secondary data sources

54. The evaluator systematically reviewed project documentation provided against the evaluation framework, including ProDocs, baseline analysis, annual plans, budgets and reports, revisions to the project during implementation, minutes of key meetings and communications materials or publications of the project. A particularly valuable secondary resource was the UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment Framework report covering Phase 2.¹¹ A list of documents reviewed is included in Annex IV.
55. Additionally, the consultant reviewed information publicly available from the IRI web pages to understand how the initiative has communicated externally.

Data Analysis

56. Based on project reporting, a summary of results, lessons and challenges was compiled for each country. Additionally, key informant interview transcripts were analysed for emerging themes that illustrated key questions.

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

57. Field visits were not covered by the evaluation budget and it was therefore not possible for the evaluation consultant to conduct extensive field consultations with the wider collaborators of IRI, or the communities that benefit from its advocacy efforts at country and local levels. However, the information given by IRI National Facilitators and key partners as well as existing sources gave a clear picture how these stakeholders had interacted with and benefitted from IRI, as well as challenges. The consultant proactively sought to include secondary sources reflecting local community perspectives and to identify individuals who are representative of community level views where possible.
58. The evaluation covers diverse linguistic contexts, and some stakeholders did not speak English. Where language was a barrier, the consultant used translators.¹² Whilst this enabled sufficient information to be gathered, some richness was lost from those consultations.
59. The TE covers the IRI project Phase 2 which implemented a wide range of activities and engaged partners and communities in five countries. The resources available for the evaluation meant that there were limitations on the level of depth possible in individual countries. The consultant, however, finds that sufficient evidence was available from different sources to draw the necessary conclusions about the project overall.

¹¹ The Phase 2 Impact Assessment Framework report was led by IRI partner UNEP-WCMC and based on an online survey of 160 religious leaders and 72 semi-structured interviews conducted at country level by IRI country programmes. In each country an average of 15 interviews were conducted, spanning government, religious leaders, communities, NGO's/CSO's, and academic/scientific experts.

¹² Selected from people known to the consultant based on language skills, geographical knowledge and existing familiarity with topics relating to climate change, forest conservation. Translators were independent and had no prior engagement with IRI.

3 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

60. The consultant reviewed the IRI Theory of Change (ToC) as outlined in the original ProDoc (2021) and the revised ToC in the Revised ProDoc (2024) that was developed jointly between UNEP and UNEP-WCMC. This helped to understand the intended causality of the project. There is strong evidence that this was developed in partnership with key stakeholders and reflects a thorough level of consultation at different levels and at key stages. However, the framing of the original ToC, had several weaknesses including:

- Inconsistencies in how expected results and causal pathways are presented within the visual depiction of the ToC and the narrative description. The ToC included a single Outcome which did not sufficiently break down the multiple changes expected, notably the recognition that the project works differently at national and global levels.
- The ToC included impacts stated as short, medium and long term, rather than intermediate states and long-term impact in line with the terminology in the UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions (December 2023).
- There were a high number of short-term impacts noted without an obvious causal pathway from the single Outcome.
- The framing of drivers and assumptions was inconsistent and therefore did not optimally illustrate the causal pathways from output level to outcome, outcome to intermediate state and intermediate state to impact.

61. While the revised ToC in the Revised ProDoc addressed some of the weaknesses, for example, causal pathways at both national and global levels (Outcome 1 and 2) further reformulation was made by the evaluation. A reconstructed ToC and results statements were used as a basis for the evaluation and presented in the evaluation inception report. Table 8 outlines changes made with justifications.

Table 8: Justification for reformulation of results statements

Formulation in Revised ProDoc	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
(LONG LASTING) IMPACT	(LONG LASTING) IMPACT	
Improved health, resilience and sustainable management of rainforests for the benefit of people and nature	Enhanced sustainable use of rainforest ecosystems for the benefit of nature, Indigenous People and others.	Drawn on the previous impact statement and the Intermediate Stage 2 statement
INTERMEDIATE STATES	INTERMEDIATE STATES	
Intermediate Stage 2: Enhanced rainforests conservation and behavioural change towards the sustainable use of rainforest ecosystems and recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights	Removed	Incorporated into the Impact Statement and Intermediate States
Intermediate Stage 1: Policies and practice to protect forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples are strengthened in priority countries.	Intermediate state 1: Project countries implement policies and practices to protect forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	Reframed to capture both government policy change, improved implementation and changed actions/behaviours at societal level as complementary factors.
Intermediate Stage 2: The protection of rainforests and Indigenous Peoples is mainstreamed as a spiritual priority into religious organisations and communicated as such to the public.	Intermediate state 2: Project countries and the global community incorporate faith-based and inter-faith approaches to rainforest protection and Indigenous Peoples' rights in national decision making and global faith discourse.	Reframed to demonstrate what is achieved by the mainstreaming into religious organisations ie they influence others. The mainstreaming itself happens at a lower level in the causal pathway.
PROJECT OUTCOMES	PROJECT OUTCOMES	
Outcome 1: IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru educate and mobilize religious leaders and, with their support, advocate with public authorities in country programs to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous peoples, and address climate change.	Outcome 1: Faith leaders advocate with public authorities in country programs to endorse the protection of rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and addressing climate change.	This level and below is where the mainstreaming happens. The reformulation aims to make the outcome state explicit and allow for the use the data from the indicators.
Outcome 2: IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru deliver interventions into priority global events and communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and address climate change to religious communities and the broader public.	Outcome 2: Faith communities and the broader public support the protection of rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and addressing climate change.	The reformulation aims to make the outcome state explicit.
OUTPUTS	OUTPUTS	

Formulation in Revised ProDoc	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
Output 1: Trainings and educational materials provided to religious leaders on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and knowledge amongst religious leaders on priority topics is increased.	Output 1: Religious leaders have access to training and educational material on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples to increase their knowledge on priority topics.	Reformulated to emphasise the stakeholder and output state.
Output 2: Technical assistance provided to IRI country programs focused on education and awareness-raising, on-the-ground mobilization (local and regional levels), and advocacy with policymakers.	Output 2: Faith based communities in IRI country programs have access to technical assistance on education and mobilization of local community groups and advocacy with policymakers.	Reformulated to emphasise the stakeholder and output state.
Output 3: IRI country programs interventions and calls to action on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples delivered into global events.	Output 3: Faith leaders at global events have access to information about IRI country interventions on rainforests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	Reformulated to emphasise the stakeholder and output state.
Output 4: Communications products and awareness campaigns (gender responsive when applicable) delivered to engage and inform religious communities and the general public about rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Output 4: Faith communities and the general public have access to information that is gender responsive (when applicable) about rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Reformulated to emphasise the stakeholder and output state.

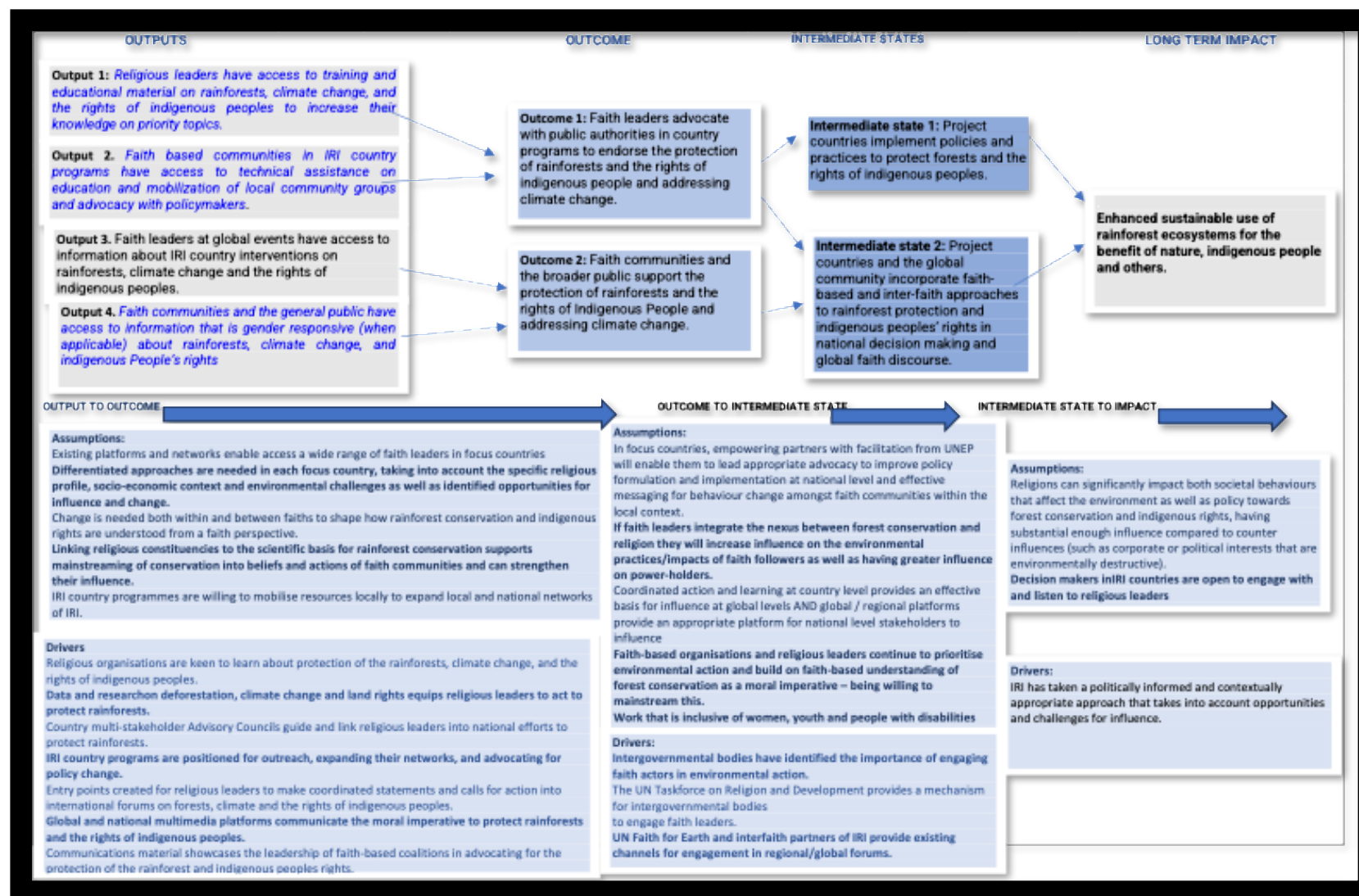
62. The Reconstructed ToC also has revised drivers and assumptions to ensure that the expected causal pathways are explicit. In some cases, these have been moved from elsewhere in the ToC so that they correctly illustrate the causal chain and assumptions around change at the correct level. In other cases, statements have been added to illustrate logical assumptions that are clear in the project narrative but not previously explicitly included in the ToC diagramme. Table 9 presents the revised formulation with justifications.

Table 9: Justification for reformulation / expansion of drivers and assumptions

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
DRIVERS Intermediate State to Impact		
	IRI has taken a politically informed and contextually appropriate approach that takes into account opportunities and challenges for influence	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
DRIVERS Outcome to Intermediate State		
	Intergovernmental bodies have identified the importance of engaging faith actors in environmental action	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	The UN Taskforce on Religion and Development provides a mechanism for intergovernmental bodies to engage faith leaders	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	UN Faith for Earth and interfaith partners of IRI provide existing channels for engagement in regional/global forums	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
DRIVERS Output to Outcome level		
Religious organisations are keen to learn about protection of the rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Religious organisations are keen to learn about protection of the rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
Data and research on deforestation, climate change and land rights equips religious leaders to act to protect rainforests	Data and research on deforestation, climate change and land rights equips religious leaders to act to protect rainforests	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
Country multi-stakeholder Advisory Councils guide and link religious leaders into national efforts to protect rainforests	Country multi-stakeholder Advisory Councils guide and link religious leaders into national efforts to protect rainforests	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
IRI country programs are positioned for outreach, expanding their networks, and advocating for policy change	IRI country programs are positioned for outreach, expanding their networks, and advocating for policy change	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
Entry points created for religious leaders to make coordinated statements and calls for action into international forums on forests, climate and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Entry points created for religious leaders to make coordinated statements and calls for action into international forums on forests, climate and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
Global and national multimedia platforms communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Global and national multimedia platforms communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
Communications material showcases the leadership of faith-based coalitions in advocating for the protection of the rainforest and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Communications material showcases the leadership of faith-based coalitions in advocating for the protection of the rainforest and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	Moved – presented as contributing factors and not within the results chain itself
ASSUMPTIONS Intermediate State to Impact		
	Religions can significantly impact both societal behaviours that affect the environment as well as policy towards forest conservation and Indigenous Peoples rights, having substantial enough influence compared to counter influences	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
Decision makers in IRI countries are open to engage with and listen to religious leaders.	Decision makers in IRI countries are open to engage with and listen to religious leaders.	No change

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
ASSUMPTIONS Outcome to Intermediate State		
	In focus countries, empowering partners with facilitation from UNEP will enable them to lead appropriate advocacy to improve policy formulation and implementation at national level and effective messaging for behaviour change amongst faith communities within the local context.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	If faith leaders integrate the nexus between forest conservation and religion then will increase influence on the environmental practices/impacts of faith followers as well as having greater influence on power holders.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	Coordinated action and learning at country level provides an effective basis for influence at global levels AND global/regional platforms provide an appropriate platform for national level stakeholders to influence.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
Religious organisations are open to mainstream the protection of forests, climate change and Indigenous Peoples' rights as a spiritual priority.	Faith-based organisations and religious leaders continue to prioritise environmental action and build on faith-based understanding of forest conservation as a moral imperative – being willing to mainstream this.	Reformulated for clarity
	Work that is inclusive of women, youth and people with disabilities will have greater reach,	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
ASSUMPTIONS Output to Outcome level		
	Existing platforms and networks enable access to a wide range of faith leaders in focus countries	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	Differentiated approaches are needed in each focus country, taking into account the specific religious profile, socio-economic context and environmental challenges as well as identified opportunities for influence and change.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	Change is needed both within and between faiths to shape how rainforest conservation and Indigenous Peoples rights are understood from a faith perspective.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
	Linking religious constituencies to the scientific basis for rainforest conservation supports mainstreaming of conservation into beliefs and actions of faith communities and can strengthen their influence.	Added based on project narrative because the previous ToC did not articulate assumptions at this level
IRI country programmes are willing to mobilise resources locally to expand local and national networks of IRI.	IRI country programmes are willing to mobilise resources locally to expand local and national networks of IRI.	No change though previously noted at intermediate state level.

Figure 2. Theory of Change at Evaluation



4 EVALUATION FINDINGS¹³

4.1 Strategic Relevance

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

63. The project has been implemented under the UNEP MTS for 2022-2025 which articulates the need for transformational partnerships, participation, and inclusion of diverse stakeholders in tackling interconnected environmental challenges. It commits UNEP to “inclusive multilateralism that reaches beyond governments and supports systemic shifts, with the help and collaboration of the private sector and business community, youth, civil society at large and faith-based organizations” (MTS 2018-2021). The MTS notes that ‘UNEP will continue to promote faith-based organizations and communities as custodians of far-reaching, value-based perspectives on environmental sustainability that speak to billions of people around the world’ (MTS 2018-2021). The commitment to engaging FBOs on rainforest conservation reflects an evolving recognition over decades that faith-communities and leaders should be supported to engage with environmental issues. At the global level, IRI is aligned with UNEP’s inclusive multilateralism agenda by mobilizing faith constituencies as partners in climate and forest policy discussions, bringing added value through connection to UNEP’s institutional architecture.

64. IRI Phase 2 operationalized the MTS and PoW outcomes, for example, it contributed to Outcome 1B and 2B of the PoW by equipping influential non-state actors (faith leaders) with knowledge and platforms to support national climate and forest objectives, and by integrating biodiversity and ecosystem approaches into national dialogues through faith networks.

65. The ProDoc identifies climate stability as a PoW Direct Outcome to which IRI contributes (PoW 2022-2023) and also identifies a related expected accomplishment. The ProDoc notes the intention of the Climate Action and Nature Action Subprogrammes to make science-based information available to the public as a basis for changing attitudes and actions of the public and of the private sector (IRI Phase 2 ProDoc 2021-2024, p8). The dissemination of scientific data to faith leaders and alignment of faith-based and scientific approaches was strongly emphasised by stakeholders as a key achievement of IRI, in support of these wider UNEP goals. Table 10 describes these areas of alignment.

Table 10: Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and Strategic Priorities

UNEP strategic document	Alignment with UNEP’s mandate and thematic priorities	Level of alignment
MTS (2022-2025)	Contribution to MTS commitment to promoting faith-based organisations to act on environmental sustainability.	Full
POW (2022-2023)	<i>Contribution to PoW 2022-2023</i> - <i>Direct Outcome:</i> Climate stability: Outcome (1A): Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways i) Number of countries and/or legal entities that adopt climate change mitigation and/or adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction strategies and policies with UNEP support - <i>POW Expected Accomplishment:</i> SP3: EA. The health and productivity of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems are institutionalized in education, monitoring and cross-sectoral and transboundary collaboration frameworks at the national and international levels (b) Policymakers in the	Full

¹³ Refer to the TOR for descriptions of the nature and scope of each criterion.

	public and private sectors test and consider the inclusion of the health and productivity of ecosystems in economic decision-making. - <i>Contribution to targets within the Climate Action and Nature Action Subprogrammes, particularly promoting scientific information to drive knowledge and action</i>	
--	---	--

4.1.2 Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

66. IRI reflects a growing interest across the UN system and donor community in how faith communities engage with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specifically the faith-environment nexus as well as development more broadly. This interest in how FBOs and faith communities can be engaged is evident across the UN system as well as in the policies of multiple bilateral donors. The UN has principles for engaging with FBO's, as well as an UN-wide Task Force on Religion and Development which seeks to harness engagement with FBO's to support achievement of the SDGs.

67. IRI's relevance to its primary donor, Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI)¹⁴, is evident in its direct contribution to NICFI's overarching goal of reducing and reversing tropical forest loss for a stable climate, preserved biodiversity, and sustainable development. NICFI gives grants to initiatives aimed at reducing and reversing forest loss in 10 tropical forest countries including the 5 IRI countries – with the aim of contributing to a stable climate, protects biodiversity, and enhances sustainable development. IRI's advocacy and awareness-raising efforts align particularly with NICFI's strategic areas concerning land use policies, the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities as forest guardians, transparency in forest governance, and the promotion of deforestation-free commodity markets.

68. NICFI was a driving force in the initiation of IRI, specifically promoting the role of interfaith engagement. As such IRI strongly reflects NICFI, and wider Norwegian aid, priorities (See Table 11 below).

Table 6: Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities

Donor or partner strategic document	Alignment with donor or partner strategic priorities	Level of alignment
Government of Norway	Focus on addressing climate change through protection of rainforests, including through engagement of faith communities. Work in 5 out of 10 priority rainforest countries.	Full

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

69. The ProDoc identifies ways in which IRI project Phase 2 contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Development Framework (UNSCDF) in each of its 5 focus countries, outlining broad human development outcomes as well as sustainability and natural resources-related outcomes. It also outlines ways in which IRI will engage with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), including through targeted Calls to Action and influencing strategies related the Conference of Parties (CoP) events relating to these.

70. IRI responds to a global problem of deforestation, the major contributor to climate change and a significant factor in the erosion of ecosystem resilience and the undermining of poverty reduction efforts. The initiative's focus on rainforest protection and restoration

¹⁴ NICFI is financed from the Norwegian aid budget and managed by the Ministry of Climate and Environment.

aligns with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), which aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide.

71. The ProDoc also details which SDGs are relevant for IRI. It is directly relevant to SDG 13 on Climate Action. However, given the inter-relation of SDGs IRI has broader/indirect relevance across a range of the SDGs. Table 12 illustrates this explicit alignment.

Table 7: Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities

Strategic document or agreement	Alignment with global, regional, sub-regional, national environmental priorities	Level of Alignment
UNFCCC, UN CBD, UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People	The ProDoc notes how IRI relates to the relevant global agreements by mapping IRI interventions to global targets or goals. This includes global goals under the UN CBD, UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. The ProDoc also notes how IRI will respond to Nationally Determined Commitments I Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia and Peru under the UNFCCC. Reporting and public statements reflect this commitment to align IRI interventions with global and to hold stakeholders accountable for commitments at both global and national levels.	Full
SDGs	Relevant SDGs identified in the ProDoc are: • SDG 1: No Poverty • SDG 2: End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture • SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls • SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation • SDG 13: Climate Action • SDG 15: Life on Land • SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	Full

72. However, within IRI specific environmental priorities are identified within country-level analysis and plans. These are presented in the ProDoc as well project reporting. Interviewees described how each country has adapted the broad approach of IRI to the specific national and local needs. Further, there was evidence from reporting and some country-level discussions that, in some countries, adaptations in approach were made during implementation to remain relevant to local needs and opportunities. This was supported by a politically informed approach and is explored further under Effectiveness.

73. The project's strategic relevance is further underscored by its strong alignment with the SDGs. While primarily contributing to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) through its focus on forest conservation and climate change mitigation, IRI's cross-cutting impacts extend to a broader range of SDGs. These include SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). This comprehensive contribution highlights IRI's holistic approach to sustainable development.

4.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

74. IRI project Phase 2 showed strong alignment of intent with Faith for Earth, UNEP's flagship project seeking to drive faith-based and interfaith engagement on environmental governance in global policy spaces. This global approach and increasing recognition of faith-based approaches within UNEP is reflected in the 2018 UNEP Strategy on Engaging with Faith-Based Organisations. Faith for Earth and IRI were established around the same time and IRI was formally an implementing partner with Faith for Earth.

75. Although there was sharing of resources and lessons between Faith for Earth and IRI, the potential to collaborate and find synergies between these two UNEP initiatives was not fully realised. For example, greater practical coordination and collaboration could have amplified lessons and advocacy from local and national IRI chapters within regional and global policy spaces. Several barriers to optimal cooperation are evident, including the layers of partners involved in delivery and some incentives to retain a somewhat independent profile of IRI. This is discussed more under Effectiveness.
76. In Brazil, there has been a very good and consistent collaboration with UNEP's Brazil office, including in providing office space for IRI Brazil. This has had several positive elements, including facilitating synergies with UNEP's wider work, stimulating information exchange, and providing some direct support.
77. IRI aligns with UNEP's wider commitment to promoting the rights and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in environmental efforts. UNEP recognizes them as crucial allies, rights holders, and knowledge holders in addressing environmental challenges. This commitment includes integrating Indigenous Peoples' rights into environmental policies and practices, fostering their participation in relevant processes, and promoting the use of their traditional knowledge.
78. IRI is aligned with UNEP's commitment to addressing climate change. The hosting of IRI within UNEP switched during implementation within the Ecosystems Division (Nov 2021-Jan 2024) from the Biodiversity and Land Branch (2022-Feb 2023) to the Nature for Climate Branch (March 2023). Most recently it has moved to the Climate Change Mitigation Unit in the Climate Change Division (Feb 2024 onwards). This institutional move was partly in order to strengthen synergies with UNEP's work on UN-REDD, with four out of five IRI countries being part of UN-REDD, offering prospects for cross-fertilization and shared learning. However, capacity to realise this during the last year of the project was limited. There was conceptual alignment but little practical programmatic collaboration at country level, although there was productive policy-level engagement in Brazil due to UNEP's country presence and co-location of IRI within UNEP's offices. Table 13 summarises aspects of coherence.

Table 8: Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

Other initiatives by UNEP or other organisations	Complementarity (including collaboration, coordination and overlap or duplication)	Level of Alignment
2018 UNEP Strategy 'Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations'	IRI was complementary to UNEP's flagship project Faith for Earth that ran from 2017 to 2025 and shared a commitment to faith-based and interfaith engagement on environmental issues. However, this could have been harnessed more effectively in practice.	Partial
Existing interfaith movements	IRI incorporated the leading interfaith organisations within its Global Steering Committee – ensuring that IRI complements and contributes to wider initiatives.	Full
Wider work of UNEP on Indigenous Peoples, climate change and nature-based solutions (including REDD+)	Conceptual alignment but little programmatic collaboration with wider programmes of UNEP, except where UNEP has a presence in country (Brazil).	Partial

4.1.5 Findings Statements on Strategic Relevance and Complementarity

- 79. Key Finding:** IRI demonstrates a high degree of strategic relevance, aligning closely with global environmental imperatives, the mandates of its implementing partners, and the specific needs of its beneficiary countries.
- 80. Key Finding:** IRI project Phase 2 had good conceptual alignment with UNEP's wider work to engage faith-based and interfaith organisations around environmental action through Faith for Earth and the UNEP MTS 2022-2025 commitment to engage faith-based

organizations and communities as custodians of far-reaching, value-based perspectives on environmental sustainability. However, opportunities to coordinate, complement and amplify effects at the programme level by connecting country-based actions of other projects with global policy processes were not fully realised.

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

Rating for Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence: Moderately Satisfactory

4.2 Quality of Project Design

81. The quality of the IRI project Phase 2 design is assessed and summarized in Table 14. The project design was based on an earlier phase and demonstrated a high level of preparatory work in each focus country to understand the local context, determine needs and foster partnerships. A clear understanding of the different needs and opportunities for environmental action was given. However, at design stage the detailed plans for each country were not complete. The design recognised this and built in a process for clarifying country level approaches as a first activity (later detailed in the Revised ProDoc). A general awareness of the operating context overall for faith-based engagement was given, as well as for specific countries. This could have been further enhanced with greater consideration of the importance of political and economic analysis, understanding how influence happens in each context, potential risks in seeking to engage politically in advocacy and likely changes in the contexts over the duration of the project and what this might mean for the project.

Table 9: Summary of quality of project design assessment ratings

	SECTION	RAT ING (1- 6)	Summary Assessment
A	Project Preparation	5	Design based on lessons from previous phase, analysis of global problem addressed and country level context and stakeholder analysis, through a consultative process
B	Risk identification and Safeguards	4.5	Some risks are described. Potential negative unintended impacts are identified at country level but not systematically.
C	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	6	Very clear governance structure.
D	Partnerships	4	Wide range of appropriate partners established in previous phase. Multilayered partnership-based delivery structure is complex.
E	Strategic Relevance	6	ProDoc identifies clear alignment with the MTS, SDGs and UNSCDF in focus countries, as well as with NICFI priorities.
F	Logical Framework and Causality	4.5	Basic logic clear but drivers and assumptions are poorly articulated.
G	Financial Planning	4.5	Adequate budget at design but strategy to mobilise additional funds needed over time is unclear.
H	Efficiency	4.5	Builds on existing partnerships and aims to leverage wider work. Potential inefficiency in project management and delivery structure.

I	Monitoring	4.5	Monitoring plan set out alongside design but budget to support monitoring unclear.
J	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	4.5	Sustainability/exit strategy not included in design. Establishment of local structures offers potential for sustainability beyond UNEP support.
K	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5.5	Builds on previous work and is a core feature expected to contribute to outcomes.
	Total (Weighted) Score:	4.82 (Satisfactory)	(Full analysis in the Inception Report, available from the Evaluation Office.)

- 82.** The project logic and theory of change (ToC) were clearly articulated in relation to the high level aims of the project, highlighting a common approach to build local and national networks of religious leaders and faith-based actors to have influence on their national context for rainforest conservation and Indigenous People's rights whilst also acting at regional and global levels to bring awareness of these needs and approaches to environmental forums. However, the original ToC did not sufficiently convey the balance and relationship between country-level work and regional or global engagement. The revised ToC made it clearer that country-level work was the priority, with regional and global engagement complementing this and providing a platform rather than working more widely. The ToC at design gave a stronger articulation of the causal pathways between Outputs and Outcomes than at higher levels from Outcome to Impact. Very few assumptions were given to support the causal pathways. Whilst the project narrative does contain a lot of descriptions of how change happens it could have been strengthened with clearer articulation in terms of causal pathways and assumptions behind change at different levels. This would enable testing of the assumptions and potential to replicate where these are shown to be correct.
- 83.** Arrangements for governance and supervision of IRI overall were a significant strength of the design, reflecting an awareness of the important role of clear structures and systems for managing local and national level engagements between different faith leaders, FBO's and Indigenous Peoples' entities in dynamic socio-political contexts. However, the management arrangement between core delivery partners UNEP, WCMC and RfP was overly complex, raising questions for efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.
- 84.** The design notes some approaches to ensure efficiency and sustainability. However, these were not fully articulated in the ProDoc at design stage, including expectations for local resource mobilisation and efforts to ensure that IRI is not reliant on UNEP funding in the longer term
- 85.** The project design discussed a Gender Marker and a mainstreaming approach, recognising the importance of considering gender. However, there was not detailed articulation in the ProDoc of the specifically gendered dimensions of forest degradation and forest management, nor of gendered dynamics within faith-based action. It could have been strengthened by articulating how the project would identify the different needs and roles of men and women in relation to religious communities and leadership, Indigenous People's interests (such as land ownership or resource use) and in the local political context. It could also consider how the project would engage women, given gendered roles within faith hierarchies and local power structures and in relation to resource use and environmental issues. Similarly, the ProDoc could have been strengthened through a specific consideration of the role of youth in relation to resource

use, environmental change and potential roles in influencing on rainforest conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Rating for Project Design: Satisfactory
--

4.3 Nature of the External Context

86. Although the volatile political context in each country was factored into design, some countries experienced extreme challenges within the external context. In DRC, for example, interviewees noted that channels for advocacy and civic action are generally weak. In Brazil, interviewees noted in contrast that there is an established movement seeking to influence environmental change but that the election of President Bolsonaro (2019-2023) stirred religious politics and brought greater than anticipated hostility to the environmental movement so that, for a time, little advocacy was possible whilst risks to civil society were heightened.¹⁵
87. The project also operated within a context where religious leaders wielded significant moral influence, including in political spheres. This inherent social capital was a critical external factor that IRI was designed to leverage. The overwhelming majority of people in the target countries claimed religious affiliation (e.g., Brazil 91%, Colombia 90%, DRC 99%, Indonesia 92%, Peru 95%), providing a vast constituency for mobilization.
88. A prominent feature of the socio-political landscape was increasing polarization. IRI took an adaptive approach to counter negative political dynamics and to mobilise around political opportunities, particularly in Peru, Brazil and Colombia. In Brazil environmental concern had become politicised, labelled as left-wing and often entangled with misinformation, conspiracy theories, and denial, leading to strong pushback against environmental issues under the previous government, however, the changing political landscape after four years created a readiness among people to step in as soon as opportunities for environmental engagement resurfaced.¹⁶ This shift appears to have allowed for easier engagement with local and national government and increased influence. Similarly, IRI Colombia strategically timed its participation in key political moments, such as elections and the formulation of the National Development Plan, to embed environmental priorities.
89. During the COVID-19 pandemic, certain churches in Indigenous Peoples' communities became major conduits for misinformation, including about vaccines, which underscored the complex and sometimes adverse role of religious institutions in public discourse.¹⁷ Similar trends were reported by interviewees across IRI countries whilst global research points to high levels of climate change denial amongst some religious groups, including evangelical Christian groups and some Islamic groups.¹⁸ This is highlighting the importance of increasing the understanding of environmental science and data amongst faith leaders and communities to challenge misinformation.
90. The external context also included the broader international development and environmental policy landscape, characterized by initiatives like the UN Decade on

¹⁵ See: '[Bolsonaro has driven Brazil's Indigenous peoples to the brink](#)' in Nature, Vol 584, 27th August 2020; '[Bolsonaro is a catastrophe for the environment](#)' by Diego Gonzaga for Greenpeace; '[Brazil restores stricter climate goals weakened under former administration](#)' by Fabiano Maisonnave, PBS News

¹⁶ <https://lens.civicus.org/brazil-back-on-the-green-track/>

¹⁷ <https://theconversation.com/religion-is-shaping-brazils-presidential-election-but-its-evangelicals-arent-the-same-as-americas-190509>

¹⁸ <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/11/17/religious-groups-views-on-climate-change/>;
<https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/tackling-climate-crisis-misinformation-in-indonesia>

Ecosystem Restoration and various UN-REDD programmes, which provided a supportive environmental framework for IRI's objectives.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Moderately Unfavourable

4.4 Effectiveness

4.4.1 Availability of Outputs

91. The IRI project has met, and in most cases, far exceeded its targets against output indicators, indicating an impressive level of delivery, primarily at country programme level. Tables 15-18 present results against output indicators, including a breakdown by country programme and including a narrative description of key outputs and achievements in each country.
92. Variations in levels of achievement between countries reflect contextual factors that have shaped delivery, including political cycles enabling or constraining activity, levels of maturity in inter-faith platforms at country level, and the enabling environment for civil society engagement in policy. In Brazil, for example, a change in government has enabled swift and widespread progress due to increased political will. Conversely, progress against many indicators was slow in DRC with lower levels of activity and achievement due weak levels of civil society and interfaith engagement more broadly.

Table 10: Results against Output 1

Output 1 - contributes to outcome 1	Trainings and educational materials provided to religious leaders on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and knowledge amongst religious leaders on priority topics is increased.					
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target	Actual ¹⁹	Achieved / Not Achieved	Breakdown by country
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	Number of educational materials (e.g. issue primers, religious teaching guides, faith toolkits, etc.) on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, gender responsive as applicable, launched and disseminated through interfaith networks to religious leaders.	12	19	99	Achieved	• IRI Brazil: 52 • IRI Colombia: 2 • IRI DRC: 0 • IRI Indonesia: 18 • IRI Peru: 15
	Number of trainings and capacity building workshops (gender responsive as applicable) held for religious leaders on rainforests, climate change, the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	0	50	148	Achieved	• IRI Brazil: 28 • IRI Colombia: 28 • IRI DRC: 20 • IRI Indonesia: 28 • IRI Peru: 44
	Percentage of religious leaders (disaggregated by male and female) that reported in their interviews an increase in awareness and knowledge about forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples after engaging with IRI trainings and educational materials.	0%	60%	99%	Achieved	N/A

¹⁹ Based on project reporting and monitoring data from IRI and partners

	Audio-visual material on the nexus between religion, gender and rainforests, and indigenous women's role safeguarding the rainforests.	0	1	1	Achieved	N/A
Sources of Information	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment:	The project's achievements for Output 1 exceed both quantitative targets and demonstrating change towards outcomes through a profound impact on increasing knowledge and awareness among religious leaders regarding rainforest protection, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights, across all countries: ● Brazil: IRI Brazil was particularly prolific, producing 52 educational materials. A standout achievement was the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality (VR) film, which one interviewee described as "the best I have ever seen about the Amazon, the most powerful in terms of how the communication is done". This film was complemented by comprehensive campaign guides (including 8 advertising spots and 6 billboards) and faith-specific religious guides tailored for Spiritism, African Matrix traditions, and Islam. The country programme conducted 28 trainings, reaching 1,008 leaders. A study conducted with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) scientifically assessed the film's impact, finding that it increased financial donations to help Indigenous Peoples and boosted participation in Amazon defense campaigns. This demonstrates a tangible shift in behaviour directly attributable to the educational material. ● Colombia: The programme produced two key teaching guides: "Guidance for the celebration of World Environment Day" and "Environmental Bible Lessons". Through 28 training and capacity-building events, IRI Colombia reached 1,621 religious leaders. ● DRC: IRI DRC focused its efforts on delivering 20 training events, reaching 1,483 religious leaders, often in collaboration with other organizations. The programme notably engaged with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to develop methodological guides on forests and climate specifically for religious leaders, indicating a strategic approach to content development. ● Indonesia: The country programme developed 18 educational materials, including a significant output of 14 religious teaching guides (comprising guidebooks and sermon books) tailored for Indonesia's six major religions, alongside 6 religious learning videos. These materials were disseminated through 28 training sessions, reaching 2,053 leaders. A partnership with the Peatland and Mangrove Restoration Agency (BRGM) of the Republic of Indonesia for environmental journalism training further diversified its educational reach. ● Peru: IRI Peru produced 5 educational guides and 4 educational videos.¹ The country programme held 44 training events, engaging 1,089 leaders.					
Level of Achievement:	Fully					

Table 11: Results against Output 2

Output 2	Technical assistance provided to IRI country programs focused on education and awareness-raising, on-the-ground mobilization (local and regional levels), and advocacy with policymakers.					
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target	Actual	Achieved / Not Achieved	Breakdown by country
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	Number of IRI country program annual work plans (gender responsive where applicable) developed in consultation with IRI Advisory Councils on education and training, on-the-ground mobilization, strategic communications, and advocating at critical moments in national policymaking.	0	15	15	Achieved	IRI country programs developed annual work plans and budgets in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

	Number of Advisory Council meetings held for each IRI country program	0	45	57	Achieved	• IRI Brazil: 7 • IRI Colombia: 10 • IRI DRC: 9 • IRI Indonesia: 19 • IRI Peru: 12
	A gender-sensitive social and environmental safeguards policy developed to manage national and local risks associated with IRI	0	1	1	Achieved	N/A
Sources of Information /Evidence:	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment:	Output 2 demonstrates consistent and effective provision of technical assistance to IRI country programmes, contributing significantly to their strategic planning, operational effectiveness, and adherence to ethical guidelines. The project successfully met or exceeded all its targets for this output. The project fully achieved its quantitative targets for Output 2: ● Annual Work Plans were developed in close consultation with the respective IRI Advisory Councils. They were designed to be gender-responsive where applicable, focusing strategically on education, training, on-the-ground mobilization, strategic communications, and advocacy at critical junctures in national policymaking. This collaborative development ensured that plans were tailored to specific country contexts and responsive to local needs. ● Advisory Councils (ACs) played a pivotal role in guiding the country programmes. They were instrumental in defining strategic priorities, including the development of national strategies and action plans, and actively ensured inclusion and representation from a diverse array of relevant actors and faith communities. Beyond strategic guidance, ACs served as crucial forums for assessing national-level political risks, identifying obstacles, and collaboratively devising solutions, including communications, advocacy and efforts to achieve self-sufficiency of national chapters. ● The gender-sensitive social and environmental safeguards policy, developed by UNEP-WCMC, was a critical component of technical assistance. This policy ensured that environmental and social risks were systematically identified, analysed, and mitigated throughout project design and implementation. It aimed to "extend beyond a 'do no harm' approach by seeking to enhance rights and other environmental and social outcomes".¹ The policy included practical tools such as a risk and impact screening checklist, a framework for a grievance redress mechanism, and capacity-building webinars to facilitate its application by country teams.¹ ● Findings of the UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment (2025) confirms that IRI country programmes received direct technical support from the global team and their Advisory Councils for the effective production and implementation of their activities. UNEP-WCMC provided technical guidance and support for educational materials and training, and was responsible for safeguards, quality assurance, and monitoring impacts. WCMC's had direct technical involvement in producing policy papers and an impact assessment framework for phase 2, as well as providing capacity-building on safeguarding principles and impact measurement. The consistent development of annual work plans and the frequent, well-attended Advisory Council meetings are directly attributable to the project's commitment to strategic coherence and a country-driven implementation approach. The ACs, with their diverse representation and active role in risk assessment and solution identification, ensured that technical assistance was precisely tailored to specific national contexts and emerging priorities, thereby significantly enhancing the relevance and overall effectiveness of interventions. The development and application of the Safeguards Policy, a direct output of UNEP-WCMC's technical expertise, provided a critical ethical and operational framework for responsible implementation. This policy's emphasis on enhancing rights and environmental outcomes, rather than merely avoiding harm, indicates a proactive approach to integrating social and environmental considerations into all project activities. This is directly attributable to WCMC's specialized knowledge and its commitment to robust ethical principles. The technical assistance provided to country teams was instrumental in enabling their capacity to adapt to complex local political realities and to implement nuanced, effective strategies. Examples include pioneering					

	scientific immersive learning experiences in Brazil and Colombia ²⁰ and Colombia's development of a Territorial and Parliamentary Alliance. This adaptability, consistently supported by global technical input, was crucial for achieving tangible results in often challenging and dynamic operational environments.
Level of Achievement:	Fully

Table 12: Results against Output 3

Output 3	IRI country programs interventions and calls to action on rainforests, climate change, and the rights of indigenous peoples delivered into global events.					
Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target	Actual	Achieved / Not Achieved	Breakdown by country
	Number of statements, calls to action or interventions by IRI country programs into global events on forests protection and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	0	6	54	Achieved	List provided to the evaluator – mostly global
	Number of statements, calls to action or interventions made by IRI country programs at major interfaith forums and assemblies	0	2	34	Achieved²¹	• IRI Brazil: 8 • IRI Colombia: 5 • IRI DRC: 0 • IRI Indonesia: 11 • IRI Peru: 10
	Number of people reached by IRI country programs communications campaigns on the protection of forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and climate change.	0	250,000	11,074,438	Achieved²²	• IRI Brazil: 1,077,686 • IRI Colombia: 4,337,674 • IRI DRC: over 5,000,000 • IRI Indonesia: 600,788 • IRI Peru: 58,290
Sources of Information /Evidence:	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment: <i>Discuss the nature, depth, and scale of Outcome. Discuss the contribution, credible association, or attribution of the Outcome level change to the project.</i>	Output 3 demonstrates IRI's capacity to elevate country-level advocacy and calls to action onto the global stage, significantly exceeding its targets and effectively profiling the work of its country programmes in high-profile international forums. This indicates a strong strategic emphasis and successful execution in securing and leveraging diverse international platforms: • IRI, as a collective initiative, successfully hosted or participated in 9 side events at major global conferences. These platforms were specifically utilized to profile the impactful work being undertaken by the IRI country programmes and to deliver compelling interventions and calls to action on the critical issues of rainforest protection, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights. • These events spanned a range of influential international forums, including the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) 2022, the 52nd General Assembly of the Organization of American States, the Amazon Summit 2023, the Parliament of the World's Religions 2023, UNFCCC COP 28, the G20 Interfaith Forum, and New York Climate Week 2024. This broad engagement ensured visibility across different sectors and policy spheres. • Brazil: IRI Brazil actively participated in 15 global events, including "Amazonian Leapfrogging" at					

²⁰ <https://www.interfaithrainforest.org/2024/08/05/iri-brazil-facilitates-immersion-for-religious-leaders-on-forests-climate/>;

<https://www.interfaithrainforest.org/2025/09/09/iri-colombia-brings-closer-and-strengthens-the-voice-of-the-amazonian-territory-with-science-and-exchange-of-experiences/>

²¹ List provided to the evaluator

²² Based on estimated reach calculated by the project team

	Princeton University and the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum. A significant highlight was the launch and showcasing of the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film at COP27 within the exhibition space of the Consortium of Governors of the Amazon.²³ Further, IRI Brazil's participation in the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum in 2024 secured commitments for additional screenings of "Amazônia Viva" at prestigious venues, including the European Parliament Session, demonstrating sustained global outreach. ● Colombia: IRI Colombia engaged in 11 global events and 5 interfaith forums, notably including the UN General Assembly, COP16, and the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum. The programme effectively utilized these platforms to present the "Escucha la Amazonía" alliance, amplifying its message on high-profile and well-networked stages.²⁴ ● DRC: IRI DRC participated in the Summit of the African Union and European Union, where it joined European civil society organizations in denouncing the ongoing destruction of African forests. The programme also contributed to the 19th Meeting of the Parties of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP). ● Indonesia: IRI Indonesia made notable contributions to UNFCCC COP27, with its National Facilitator actively participating in side events and promoting IRI's efforts. The programme also engaged in the International Conference on Peace, Religions, and Civilizations. ● Peru: IRI Peru delivered impactful statements at the 52nd General Assembly of the Organization of American States, the Amazon Summit, and UNFCCC COP28, ensuring its country-specific concerns were voiced at critical international gatherings. The Impact Assessment emphasizes that IRI's capacity for policy advocacy and mobilization at the international level was a direct result of its extensive networks and its strong ability to access political circles globally. This approach enabled the moral imperative for rainforest protection to be articulated and discussed in a diverse array of high-level forums, thereby broadening the discourse beyond traditional environmental circles. The active participation of National Facilitators and religious leaders from the country programmes in these global events was crucial. Their presence ensured that the interventions were not abstract but deeply rooted in the on-the-ground realities and lived experiences of forest communities and Indigenous Peoples, significantly enhancing the credibility and resonance of their messages. The strategic deployment of innovative communication tools, such as the "Amazônia Viva" VR film from Brazil, at these global events, directly contributed to raising awareness and fostered engagement among diverse audiences, including policymakers and the general public. This effectively translated localized environmental issues into pressing global concerns, demonstrating the power of immersive storytelling in advocacy. Furthermore, the ability to secure prominent platforms at major international conferences, such as the UN Environment Assembly and various Conferences of the Parties (COPs), can be attributed to the inherent convening power of UNEP and the established reputation and networks of IRI's global partners. This provided the necessary access and legitimacy for IRI's voice to be heard in critical policy arenas. A deeper analysis of this output reveals that global visibility served as a powerful force multiplier for local action. Global engagement was a strategic means to an end: to amplify local successes, attract broader international attention, and potentially influence both international policy and funding streams. The implication is that the project leveraged global platforms to create a positive feedback loop: successful country-level initiatives gained international visibility, which, in turn, could reinforce their legitimacy, attract further support, and potentially influence national policy-making by demonstrating international recognition of their efforts. This "force multiplier" effect of global profiling for local action is a significant contribution, even if direct, immediate policy attribution at the global level remains complex.
Level of Achievement:	Fully

Table 13: Results against Output 4

Output 4	Communications products and awareness campaigns (gender responsive when applicable) delivered to engage and inform religious communities and the general public about rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.					
	Indicator(s)	Baseline	Target	Actual	Achieved / Not Achieved	Breakdown by country

²³ <https://www.un-redd.org/multi-media-stories/unredd-cop28>

²⁴ For example: <https://www.interfaithrainforest.org/2024/02/16/iri-colombia-issues-calls-to-action-at-un-climate-conference-cop28/>

Performance against Indicator(s) and Target(s):	Number of side events at global conferences that profile the work of the IRI country programs	0	3	9	Achieved	N/A
	Number of IRI country programs communications strategies supported with content related to rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples to be delivered to religious networks and the general public.	0	5	5	Achieved	N/A
	Number of IRI country specific program websites design and launch supported to inform and engage religious communities about rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	0	5	5	Achieved	
	Number of editorials by IRI country programs on the moral imperative of protecting the forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (gender responsive when applicable) placed in prominent news outlets.	0	10	32	Achieved	• IRI Brazil: 7 • IRI Colombia: 16 • IRI DRC: 0 • IRI Indonesia: 1 • IRI Peru: 8
Sources of Information /Evidence:	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment:	Output 4 demonstrates good performance in developing and disseminating diverse communications products and awareness campaigns, meeting or exceeding targets and effectively engaging a broad public on the moral imperative of rainforest: • Each country programme developed and implemented a tailored communications strategy and plan, which included the regular production of monthly bulletins. IRI Colombia and IRI Peru further enhanced their outreach by publishing dedicated newsletters or magazines. At the global level, IRI developed a comprehensive communications strategy and chronogram, primarily focusing on its central website, newsletter, country programme websites, and various promotional and fundraising materials. • All five country programmes successfully launched and consistently updated their dedicated websites and/or social media channels, including Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. They also utilised the global IRI web pages to publicise events and messages and to present background materials. These platforms served as vital conduits for disseminating information and engaging with their respective audiences.²⁵ • A remarkable total of 32 editorials were strategically placed in prominent news outlets across the programme countries.					

²⁵ For example: IRI Brazil's website and social media channels can be accessed here: www.iri-brasil.org / Instagram: [iribrasil](https://www.instagram.com/iribrasil/) / Facebook: [brasiliri](https://www.facebook.com/brasiliri/) / X: [brasiliri](https://twitter.com/iribrasil/). Other online presence includes: <https://iriperu.org/>; <https://iri-indonesia.org/>; <https://www.interfaithrainforest.org/colombia/>

	○ Brazil: Produced 7 editorials in major outlets such as O Globo, Veja Magazine, and IG, significantly amplifying IRI's message. ○ Colombia: Led with 16 editorials, including an opinion column by Monsignor Héctor Fabio Henao in El Espectador and another in the influential El País newspaper. ○ DRC: While no editorials were explicitly reported under this indicator, the country programme achieved substantial reach through other media channels. ○ Indonesia: Published 1 editorial, which was strategically placed on the official website of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, lending it significant institutional weight. ○ Peru: Contributed 8 editorials, with a notable opinion article by Cardinal Pedro Barreto Jimeno and others published in El Comercio, a prominent national newspaper. ● Campaigns: ○ Brazil launched impactful campaigns such as "For Right to Breathe Clean Air" (2023), which evolved into "For the Right to Breathe Clean Air and Access to Drinking Water" (2024), and "The Will of God is" (2024). There was a strategic shift in these campaigns to focus on direct threats to people's lives (e.g., polluted air, water scarcity) rather than abstract environmental concepts, which proved highly effective in mobilizing public engagement. ○ Colombia implemented a comprehensive communications strategy that utilized diverse media, including billboards, radio spots, national editorials, and social media content, reaching over 4.3 million people. Key campaigns included "Friends of the Amazon" and the promotion of the "Decalogue of Peace with Nature". ○ DRC achieved an estimated reach of over 5 million people through 84 radio and television broadcasts, demonstrating extensive public awareness efforts through traditional media. ○ Indonesia launched multimedia campaigns strategically aligned with religious calendars, such as the "Green Ramadan" initiative, achieving over 2 million in audience reach via social media and religious broadcast channels. ○ Peru reached 58,290 people through its communications campaigns, utilizing various channels to disseminate its messages. The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment notes that IRI's communication strategies were particularly effective in engaging younger audiences, especially young evangelicals in the Amazon, indicating a significant increase in their participation and responsiveness. The successful development and implementation of comprehensive communications strategies, coupled with the establishment of dedicated online platforms reflect IRI's commitment to fostering broad public awareness and engagement and a strong capacity for strategic media outreach and the effective leveraging of the moral authority of religious leaders to influence public discourse. The localized and culturally sensitive nature of the campaigns, such as Brazil's "Right to Breathe Clean Air" and Indonesia's "Green Ramadan," directly contributed to their resonance with diverse audiences. By connecting rainforest protection to tangible impacts on people's lives (e.g., health, clean air, water) or integrating it with deeply held spiritual values, these campaigns effectively mobilized communities around environmental issues. The strategic utilization of social media and targeted messaging, particularly aimed at youth demographics, directly contributed to expanding the project's reach beyond conventional communication channels. This approach was instrumental in fostering a new generation of environmental advocates, as evidenced by the increased participation among younger audiences. Consistent presence in prominent news outlets through editorials and widespread dissemination via radio and television broadcasts (notably in DRC and Colombia) significantly amplified IRI's message. This broad media coverage lent considerable credibility to the initiative and allowed it to reach millions of individuals, a clear and direct attribution to the project's dedicated communication efforts and the inherent influence of its religious leadership. IRI has demonstrated an ability to craft compelling narratives that transcend abstract environmentalism and make the environmental crisis personal and urgent. The "Rights to Breathe Pure Air" campaign in Brazil, which shifted focus from abstract "natural resources" to the direct, relatable threat of "polluted air" affecting people's health, is a prime example of this. This strategic reframing was intended to make the issue more personally relevant and emotionally resonant for a mass audience. The project's particular outreach to "younger audiences" and "young evangelicals" further underscores the power of this relatable framing. The implication is that IRI's communication approach is not simply about the volume of messages, but about the quality and emotional resonance of the narrative. By connecting rainforest protection to fundamental human well-being and leveraging the moral authority of religious leaders, the project has effectively reached a vast audience. This demonstrates that effective environmental communication to reach a wide audience for broad mobilization
--	--

	requires moving beyond purely scientific or policy-focused messaging to narratives that tap into core human concerns and values, fostering a deeper sense of urgency and responsibility.
Level of Achievement:	Fully achieved

93. Overall, the project has fully achieved its outputs and achievement of outputs in most cases are exceeding targets and demonstrating strategic choices in tailoring approaches for maximum impacts in each country.

4.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

94. IRI project Phase 2 achieved, and in most cases exceeded, all of its targets against outcome level indicators. Tables 19 and 20 present a summary of results against IRI's two outcomes, by indicator. These provide a breakdown of achievements by country programme together with a narrative detailing key elements.

Table 14: Results against Outcome 1

Outcome 1:	IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru educate and mobilize religious leaders and, with their support, advocate with public authorities in country programs to protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples, and address climate change.					
	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual ²⁶	Met / Not met	Breakdown by country
Performance against Indicators and Targets:	Number of IRI local or provincial chapters in each program country working on awareness-raising, gender responsive as applicable, campaigns, and actions on rainforests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	62	92	120	Met	• IRI Brazil: 9 (of which none were created during IRI Phase 1 and 9 were created during IRI Phase 2) • IRI Colombia: 42 (of which 36 were created during IRI Phase 1 and 6 were created during IRI Phase 2) • IRI DRC: 47 (of which 10 were created during IRI Phase 1 and 37 were created during IRI Phase 2) • IRI Indonesia: 6 (of which 3 were created during IRI Phase 1 and 3 were created during IRI Phase 2) • IRI Peru: 16 (of which 13 were created during IRI Phase 1 and 3 were created during IRI Phase 2)
	Number of religious leaders (male and female) trained by each IRI country program on the protection of rainforests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	0	2,000	7,254	Met	• IRI Brazil: 1,008 (49.4% male; 50.6% female) • IRI Colombia: 1,621 (53.5% male; 31.1% female; 15.4% unaccounted for) • IRI DRC: 1,483 (80.5% male; 19.5% female) • IRI Indonesia: 2,053 (59.6% male; 40.4% female) • IRI Peru: 1,089 (48.0% male; 38.8% female; 13.2% unaccounted for) Note: Target for female representation 30%
	Number of calls to action and gender responsive, as applicable, policy positions taken by IRI country programs on legislation, laws and policies related to the protection of forests, climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples (e.g. meetings with ministries, statements to Congress, open letters to public authorities, proposal on legislation, etc.)	0	37	57	Met	• IRI Brazil: 13 • IRI Colombia: 3 • IRI DRC: 12 • IRI Indonesia: 2 • IRI Peru: 27

²⁶ Based on project reporting, corroborated by key stakeholder interviews conducted by UNEP-WCMC and by the evaluator, online features and provision of supporting documents to the evaluator.

Outcome 1:	IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru educate and mobilize religious leaders and, with their support, advocate with public authorities in country programs to protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples, and address climate change.					
	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual²⁶	Met / Not met	Breakdown by country
Sources of Information	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment:	IRI demonstrates strong success in building and activating faith-based movements at the country level, leading to significant educational outreach, widespread mobilization, and impactful advocacy with public authorities. The project substantially exceeded all its targets for this outcome. Local/Provincial Chapters: The target was 92 chapters; the project achieved 120, representing a 30% overachievement and a significant expansion of its on-the-ground presence across the five countries. These chapters served as decentralized yet interconnected platforms for faith-based action. ○ Brazil: Successfully launched 9 state chapters, establishing a presence in each Amazonian state. ○ Colombia: Added 6 new chapters, bringing its total to 42. These new chapters were strategically located in municipalities most threatened by deforestation. ○ DRC: Launched an impressive 37 additional chapters, significantly expanding its reach to a total of 47 operational chapters. ○ Indonesia: Established 3 new local chapters in Aceh, North Maluku, and Papua, increasing its total to 6. ○ Peru: Launched 3 new chapters, bringing its total to 16. Calls to Action/Policy Positions: The target was 37 calls to action or policy positions; the project delivered 57, an overachievement of over 50%, indicating a strong and consistent advocacy presence. Mobilization and Education: A total of 7,254 religious leaders received training on rainforests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights. The Impact Assessment highlights that 99% of interviewed religious leaders reported a tangible increase in their awareness and knowledge, indicating a widespread and deep impact of the educational efforts.¹ IRI successfully fostered confidence among these leaders to discuss environmental issues and actively promoted the replication of its messages within their networks. Crucially, the initiative has built trust between religious and Indigenous leaders, leading to unprecedented collaboration on shared environmental goals.¹ Advocacy with Public Authorities: IRI country programmes collectively issued 57 calls to action and policy positions, demonstrating their proactive engagement in policy discourse. ○ Brazil: Published 13 calls to action, including powerful open letters to the Federal Supreme Court and the National Congress, specifically opposing environmental setbacks. IRI Brazil directly contributed to shaping the nation's Participatory Climate Plan. An IRI letter contributed to the Supreme Federal Court condemning the government in a case against environmental setbacks. ○ Colombia: Issued 3 calls to action. The programme secured formal forest protection commitments from 13 mayors and 3 governors. It successfully influenced at least 9 local, subnational, and national laws and policy processes, notably securing the inclusion of forest protection goals in Colombia's National Development Plan 2022–2026. ○ DRC: Published 12 calls to action. IRI DRC played a pivotal role in the adoption and early implementation of Law 22/030, which protects the rights of Pygmy Indigenous Peoples. The programme also secured agreements with major religious bodies like CENCO and ECC to mainstream forest protection into their broader programming. Furthermore, IRI DRC actively advocated for land reform processes. ○ Indonesia: Issued 2 calls to action. The programme successfully mobilized faith voices ahead of the 2024 national elections and held strategic meetings with members of the Indonesian House of Representatives to influence policy. ○ Peru: Published 27 calls to action. IRI Peru achieved successful advocacy on forest policies with the President, various Ministries of Environment, regional governors, and mayors. It notably formed the "Pact for the Amazon," an agreement signed by 64 public authorities, Indigenous Peoples, companies, civil society organizations, and faith communities, demonstrating broad-based consensus.					

Outcome 1:	IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru educate and mobilize religious leaders and, with their support, advocate with public authorities in country programs to protect rainforests and the rights of indigenous peoples, and address climate change.					
	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual ²⁶	Met / Not met	Breakdown by country
	The local chapters created decentralized yet interconnected platforms that enabled faith-based action to flourish at the community level. The numerous calls to action and successful policy engagements, such as influencing Brazil's Climate Plan, Colombia's National Development Plan, and the adoption of the Pygmy Peoples Law in DRC, demonstrate a strong and credible association and attribution to IRI's advocacy efforts. The unique moral authority wielded by religious leaders, combined with the scientifically grounded information provided by IRI, enabled the initiative to gain access to policymakers and influence political discourse in ways that traditional environmental NGOs might not have achieved. This distinctive blend of spiritual influence and factual basis proved to be a potent force in policy engagement. Furthermore, the project's deliberate strategy of fostering a bridging role between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples directly contributed to stronger, more unified advocacy efforts on Indigenous Peoples' rights and forest protection. This collaboration, built on mutual understanding and shared moral imperatives, led to calls to action that would have been more challenging to achieve in isolation. The qualitative data consistently emphasizes the "moral power" and "unparalleled reach" of religious leaders, which allowed them to be "protagonists" in campaigns due to their inherent "legitimacy". The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment explicitly states that IRI "mobilized religious leaders to hold governments to account for their commitments" and enabled IRI to navigate complex political landscapes, influence public debate, and secure commitments from policymakers, even in highly polarized environments. The project effectively demonstrated that moral persuasion, backed by a large, organized, and deeply committed constituency, can be a potent and often underestimated force in environmental governance. This approach allowed IRI to transcend conventional political divides and appeal to a broader sense of shared responsibility. The overwhelming 99% of leaders reporting increased awareness directly links to the effectiveness of IRI's educational activities. The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment highlights that IRI's activities instilled greater confidence in religious leaders to discuss complex topics like forests, climate change, and Indigenous Peoples' rights within their communities. It further notes a crucial transformation: religious leaders and Indigenous leaders, who previously viewed each other with scepticism, began to realize their shared mission for rainforest protection, a shift facilitated by IRI's reframing of environmental action as a moral responsibility. 160 religious leaders responded to the question "Do you consider that the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative's activities and materials have increased your understanding and awareness about the importance of protecting the rainforest, Indigenous Peoples' rights, and tackling climate change?". Out of the religious leaders who indicated their understanding and awareness about these topics increased and partially increased (159 respondents), 74% were male (119 male respondents) and 25%, females (40 female respondents). Overall, 99% of total religious leaders who answered the question considered IRI's activities and materials have increased their understanding and awareness about the importance of protecting the rainforest, Indigenous Peoples' rights, and tackling climate change. This extensive capacity building empowered a large and influential cohort of individuals to act as advocates within their respective spheres of influence, extending the project's reach far beyond its direct beneficiaries.					
Level of Achievement:	Fully					

Table 20: Results against Outcome 2

Outcome 2:	IRI country programs in Brazil, Colombia, DRC, Indonesia, and Peru deliver interventions into priority global events and communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and address climate change to religious communities and the broader public.					
	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual	Met / Not met	Breakdown by country
	Number of statements, calls to action or	0	6	54	Met	N/A

	interventions by IRI country programs into global events on forests protection and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.					
	Number of statements, calls to action or interventions made by IRI country programs at major interfaith forums and assemblies	0	2	34	Met	• IRI Brazil: 8 • IRI Colombia: 5 • IRI DRC: 0 • IRI Indonesia: 11 • IRI Peru: 10
	Number of people reached by IRI country programs communications campaigns on the protection of forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and climate change.	0	250,000	11,074,438	Met ²⁷	• IRI Brazil: 1,077,686 • IRI Colombia: 4,337,674 • IRI DRC: over 5,000,000 • IRI Indonesia: 600,788 • IRI Peru: 58,290
Sources of Information /Evidence:	IRI Phase 2 – Operational Closure Report, UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment, KII's					
Narrative Assessment:	Outcome 2 highlights the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative's exceptional success in projecting its message onto the global stage and broadly communicating the moral imperative for rainforest protection and Indigenous Peoples' rights. The project has exceeded all its targets for this outcome, demonstrating a powerful capacity for international advocacy and public outreach. ● Global Event Interventions: IRI collectively made 52 interventions across 26 international events. These included high-profile platforms such as the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Oslo Tropical Forest Forum, the UN High-Level Forum on SDGs, the UN General Assembly, COP27, the Amazon Summit, the Parliament of the World's Religions, COP28, and the G20 Interfaith Forum.¹ This broad engagement ensured that the moral imperative for rainforest protection was articulated across diverse sectors and policy spheres. ● Interfaith Forum Interventions: IRI country programmes made a total of 34 interventions at major interfaith forums and assemblies, fostering internal cohesion and shared purpose within the global interfaith community. ○ Brazil: Contributed 8 interventions at interfaith forums. ○ Colombia: Made 5 interventions at interfaith forums. ○ DRC: While no interventions were explicitly reported under this indicator, the country programme achieved significant public awareness through other channels. ○ Indonesia: Demonstrated strong engagement with 11 interventions at interfaith forums. ○ Peru: Contributed 10 interventions at interfaith forums. ● Communications Reach: The combined communications campaigns of IRI country programmes achieved an extraordinary reach of 11,074,438 people. ○ Brazil: Reached 1,077,686 people. ○ Colombia: Achieved a reach of 4,337,674 people. ○ DRC: Reached over 5,000,000 people, primarily through extensive radio and television broadcasts. ○ Indonesia: Engaged 600,788 people through its campaigns. ○ Peru: Reached 58,290 people. The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment emphasizes that IRI's core strategy of reframing environmental care as a moral and spiritual responsibility was instrumental in bridging ideological divides and fostering a shared understanding of environmental challenges. This approach was effectively mainstreamed through extensive religious networks, amplifying its reach and resonance.¹ Furthermore, IRI's communication strategies proved particularly effective in engaging younger audiences, demonstrating an ability to connect with new demographics. This demonstrates IRI's success in positioning faith leaders as highly influential voices in the global environmental discourse, capable of transcending traditional political and scientific boundaries. The high					

²⁷ Noting that it was not possible to fully verify these numbers although they do reflect the types of communication and expected reach based on followers, views and direct engagement and general reach of specific media channels.

	volume of interventions at major interfaith forums directly contributed to strengthening the internal cohesion and shared purpose within the global interfaith community regarding rainforest protection. This helped fostering a unified voice that could then be projected outwards, increasing the collective outreach of faith-based advocacy. The reach of communications campaigns, engaging over 11 million people, is a direct result of the effective development and widespread dissemination of compelling communication products. This was achieved by leveraging the extensive, pre-existing networks of religious communities and employing innovative tools such as the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film. This broad public engagement contributed to raising widespread awareness and, importantly, to potentially shifting public opinion on the urgency of rainforest conservation. The project's ability to translate complex environmental issues into a universally understandable moral and ethical framework, and to communicate this through trusted religious channels, directly contributed to its capacity to reach a vast audience. This audience might otherwise remain disengaged from conventional environmental messaging, highlighting the distinct advantage of IRI's faith-based approach. IRI demonstrates effective deployment of the "soft power" of faith in global environmental diplomacy. The quantitative results for global interventions and communications reach are undeniably substantial. The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment explicitly states that IRI "communicated the moral imperative" and succeeded in bridging "ideological divides". IRI took a politically-sensitive approach utilising global platforms but often treading carefully at country level depending on local perceptions of the international community and of UNEP's appropriate role in country. IRI effectively leveraged the inherent moral authority of faith to transcend traditional political and scientific discourse. By framing rainforest protection as a universal moral imperative, it allowed for engagement with a broader, more diverse audience, including those who might be sceptical of secular environmentalism. This approach facilitated a unique form of public diplomacy, utilizing spiritual authority to advocate for environmental action on a global scale, thereby contributing to a broader societal shift in perception and engagement.
Level of Achievement :	Fully

4.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

95. Overall, it is reasonable to conclude that IRI has significant impact on policies and practice around tropical forest deforestation and thus has impact on the forests themselves. Outputs and outcome targets have been met, and often exceeded, whilst there is evidence that most assumptions hold and drivers are in place. It is not possible to determine whether the scale of inputs is optimal – whether more could be done – but there is evidence of policy change following IRI engagement. Table 21 summarises the factors influencing the likelihood of impact based on the IRI RToC (outputs, outcomes and intermediate states plus assumptions and drivers linking stages in the change process.

Table 15: Summary of factors contributing to impact

Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	In place	
Religious organisations are keen to learn about protection of the rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	In place	Most religious organisations have engaged positively though each country facilitator was able to identify some faith groups that are harder to reach – additional strategies may be needed to reach these
Data and research on deforestation, climate change and land rights equips religious leaders to act to protect rainforests	In place	Leaders gave positive feedback on this capacity building
Country multi-stakeholder Advisory Councils guide and link religious leaders into national efforts to protect rainforests	In place	Strong evidence that the advisory councils provide

		targeted linkages between faiths and policy spaces
IRI country programs are positioned for outreach, expanding their networks, and advocating for policy change	In place	All IRI country programmes expanded
Entry points created for religious leaders to make coordinated statements and calls for action into international forums on forests, climate and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	In place	IRI was able to identify and harness appropriate entry points
Global and national multimedia platforms communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	In place	IRI was able to access these channels
Communications material showcases the leadership of faith-based coalitions in advocating for the protection of the rainforest and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	In place	Strong communications coverage amplified messaging
Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes	Partially hold	
Existing platforms and networks enable access to a wide range of faith leaders in focus countries	Hold	Strong reach of existing platforms via project partners at global and country levels
Differentiated approaches are needed in each focus country, taking into account the specific religious profile, socio-economic context and environmental challenges as well as identified opportunities for influence and change.	Hold	This is clearly demonstrated in the focus on local change
Change is needed both within and between faiths to shape how rainforest conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights are understood from a faith perspective.	Hold	IRI worked with specific faiths that do not understand scientific approaches as well as bringing faiths together to boost collective voice to counter misinformation within faiths
Linking religious constituencies to the scientific basis for rainforest conservation supports mainstreaming of conservation into beliefs and actions of faith communities and can strengthen their influence.	Hold	Work with faith leaders strongly confirms this
IRI country programmes are willing to mobilise resources locally to expand local and national networks of IRI.	Partially hold	All countries considered seeking additional funds but some made no progress and see little potential
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved	All	
Outcome 1	All	See section 4.4.2
Outcome 2	All	See section 4.4.2
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	In place	
Intergovernmental bodies have identified the importance of engaging faith actors in environmental action	Partially in place	UNEP has a strategy on engaging faith actors, supported by wider UN Taskforce on Religion and Development. Strong engagement at CoPs via Faith for Earth and existing interfaith networks provided a platform and raised awareness.

The UN Taskforce on Religion and Development provides a mechanism for intergovernmental bodies to engage faith leaders	Partially in place	
UN Faith for Earth and interfaith partners of IRI provide existing channels for engagement in regional/global forums	In place	
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Partially hold	
In focus countries, empowering partners with facilitation from UNEP will enable them to lead appropriate advocacy to improve policy formulation and implementation at national level and effective messaging for behaviour change amongst faith communities within the local context.	Partially hold	
If faith leaders integrate the nexus between forest conservation and religion then will increase influence on the environmental practices/impacts of faith followers as well as having greater influence on power holders.	Partially hold	Not yet much evidence of behaviour change in faith followers
Coordinated action and learning at country level provides an effective basis for influence at global levels AND global/regional platforms provide an appropriate platform for national level stakeholders to influence.	Hold	This understanding has been seen to drive engagement in policy
Faith-based organisations and religious leaders continue to prioritise environmental action and build on faith-based understanding of forest conservation as a moral imperative – being willing to mainstream this.	Hold	IRI has demonstrated the appetite for national stories at global level
Work that is inclusive of women, youth and people with disabilities will have greater reach.	Partially hold	Many faith leaders have demonstrated commitment, but some are still hard to reach
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved	Partial	
Intermediate state 1: Project countries implement policies and practices to protect forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	Partial	Evidence of some influence on policies and practices in each country – see sections 4.4.2
Intermediate state 2: Project countries and the global community incorporate faith-based and inter-faith approaches to rainforest protection and Indigenous Peoples' rights in national decision making and global faith discourse.	Partial	Evidence of some influence on global faith discourse and national decision making
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact	In place	
IRI has taken a politically informed and contextually appropriate approach that takes into account opportunities and challenges for influence	In place	All country programmes and IRI globally demonstrate a high political sensitivity in their approaches
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially hold	
Religions can significantly impact both societal behaviours that affect the environment as well as policy towards forest conservation and Indigenous	Hold	

Peoples' rights, having substantial enough influence compared to counter influences		
Decision makers in IRI countries are open to engage with and listen to religious leaders.	Partially hold	The openness of decision makers to engage changed over time, for example, in Brazil there was hostility to environmental concerns under the previous government but now a strong interest
Factors influencing likelihood of impact	Assessment	Justification
Drivers to support transition from Outputs to the Project Outcomes	In place	
Religious organisations are keen to learn about protection of the rainforests, climate change, and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	In place	Most religious organisations have engaged positively though each country facilitator was able to identify some faith groups that are harder to reach – additional strategies may be needed to reach these
Data and research on deforestation, climate change and land rights equips religious leaders to act to protect rainforests	In place	Leaders gave positive feedback on this capacity building
Country multi-stakeholder Advisory Councils guide and link religious leaders into national efforts to protect rainforests	In place	Strong evidence that the advisory councils provide targeted linkages between faiths and policy spaces
IRI country programs are positioned for outreach, expanding their networks, and advocating for policy change	In place	All IRI country programmes expanded
Entry points created for religious leaders to make coordinated statements and calls for action into international forums on forests, climate and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	In place	IRI was able to identify and harness appropriate entry points
Global and national multimedia platforms communicate the moral imperative to protect rainforests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples	In place	IRI was able to access these channels
Communications material showcases the leadership of faith-based coalitions in advocating for the protection of the rainforest and Indigenous Peoples' rights.	In place	Strong communications coverage amplified messaging
DRIVERS Outcome to Intermediate State	Partially hold	
Intergovernmental bodies have identified the importance of engaging faith actors in environmental action	Partially hold	UNEP has a strategy on engaging faith actors, supported by wider UN Taskforce on Religion and Development. Strong engagement at CoPs via Faith for Earth and existing interfaith networks provided a platform and raised awareness.
The UN Taskforce on Religion and Development provides a mechanism for intergovernmental bodies to engage faith leaders	Partially hold	Some engagement but could be further enhanced

UN Faith for Earth and interfaith partners of IRI provide existing channels for engagement in regional/global forums	Hold	Multiple existing channels utilised
Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved	All	
Outcome 1	All	See section 4.4.2
Outcome 2	All	See section 4.4.2
Drivers to support transition from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	In place	
Intergovernmental bodies have identified the importance of engaging faith actors in environmental action	In place	All country programmes and IRI globally demonstrate a high political sensitivity in their approaches
The UN Taskforce on Religion and Development provides a mechanism for intergovernmental bodies to engage faith leaders	In place	
UN Faith for Earth and interfaith partners of IRI provide existing channels for engagement in regional/global forums	In place	
Assumptions for the change process from the Project Outcomes to Intermediate States	Mostly hold	
In focus countries, empowering partners with facilitation from UNEP will enable them to lead appropriate advocacy to improve policy formulation and implementation at national level and effective messaging for behaviour change amongst faith communities within the local context.	Hold	Partners have demonstrated strong capacity for action
If faith leaders integrate the nexus between forest conservation and religion then will increase influence on the environmental practices/impacts of faith followers as well as having greater influence on power holders.	Partially hold	Not yet much evidence of behaviour change in faith followers
Coordinated action and learning at country level provides an effective basis for influence at global levels AND global/regional platforms provide an appropriate platform for national level stakeholders to influence.	Hold	This is clearly demonstrated in the focus on local change
Faith-based organisations and religious leaders continue to prioritise environmental action and build on faith-based understanding of forest conservation as a moral imperative – being willing to mainstream this.	Hold	Work with faith leaders strongly confirms this
Work that is inclusive of women, youth and people with disabilities will have greater reach,	Hold	IRI has made efforts to incorporate diverse audiences
Existing platforms and networks enable access to a wide range of faith leaders in focus countries	Hold	Strong reach of existing platforms via project partners at global and country levels
Differentiated approaches are needed in each focus country, taking into account the specific religious profile, socio-economic context and environmental	Hold	This understanding has been seen to drive engagement and influence

challenges as well as identified opportunities for influence and change.		
Change is needed both within and between faiths to shape how rainforest conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights are understood from a faith perspective.	Hold	Efforts to counter misinformation have highlighted the need to influence change within faith traditions
Linking religious constituencies to the scientific basis for rainforest conservation supports mainstreaming of conservation into beliefs and actions of faith communities and can strengthen their influence.	Hold	IRI has worked with specific faiths that do not understand scientific approaches to the environment as well as bringing faiths together to boost collective voice
IRI country programmes are willing to mobilise resources locally to expand local and national networks of IRI.	Partially hold	All country programmes considered seeking additional funds but several have made no progress on this and do not see much potential
Proportion of Intermediate States achieved	Partial	
Intermediate state 1: Project countries implement policies and practices to protect forests and the rights of Indigenous Peoples.	Partial	Evidence of some influence on policies and practices in each country – see sections 4.4.2
Intermediate state 2: Project countries and the global community incorporate faith-based and inter-faith approaches to rainforest protection and Indigenous Peoples' rights in national decision making and global faith discourse.	Partial	Evidence of some influence on global faith discourse and national decision making
Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially in place	
If faith leaders integrate the nexus between forest conservation and religion then will increase influence on the environmental practices/impacts of faith followers as well as having greater influence on power holders.	In place	This understanding has been seen to drive engagement in policy
Coordinated action and learning at country level provides an effective basis for influence at global levels AND global/regional platforms provide an appropriate platform for national level stakeholders to influence.	In place	IRI has demonstrated the appetite for national stories at global level
Faith-based organisations and religious leaders continue to prioritise environmental action and build on faith-based understanding of forest conservation as a moral imperative – being willing to mainstream this.	Partially in place	Many faith leaders have demonstrated commitment, but some are still hard to reach
Work that is inclusive of women, youth and people with disabilities will have greater reach,	Partially in place	Still assumed
Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact	Partially hold	

Religions can significantly impact both societal behaviours that affect the environment as well as policy towards forest conservation and Indigenous Peoples' rights, having substantial enough influence compared to counter influences	Partially hold	Influences of religious groups, both positive and negative, have been noted in all contexts, although some groups have greater influence than others due to the nature of religious authorities, specific beliefs and the external environment.
Decision makers in IRI countries are open to engage with and listen to religious leaders.	Partially hold	The openness of decision makers to engage changed over time, for example, in Brazil there was hostility to environmental concerns under the previous government but now a strong interest

96. For the most part, assumptions and drivers identified in the RToC still hold, though some have not been much evidence there is no reason to conclude that they are erroneous.

97. In some countries, the use of innovative communication had additional unintended consequences in reaching more diverse and hard to reach audiences. For example, the use of platforms like the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film were particularly effective in engaging younger audiences and those beyond traditional environmental circles in ways that traditional environmental NGOs might not have achieved. This approach transcended political divides and engaged individuals who might be sceptical of secular environmentalism.

98. Given the scale of potential engagement on tropical forest conservation, it is impossible to determine whether IRI activities are at sufficient scale in each country and globally to have a significant impact.

Findings Statements on Effectiveness:

99. **Key Finding:** Overall, IRI appears to be highly effective in achieving its stated outputs and these contribute towards achievement of outcomes. However, given the scale of change required and the substantial barriers to influencing some stakeholders, it is difficult to determine whether the impact is sufficiently significant to lead or contribute to long-lasting effects.

Rating for Effectiveness: **Highly Satisfactory**

Rating for Availability of Outputs: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Project Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Achievement of Likelihood of Impact: Likely

4.5 Financial Management

4.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

100. Financial management procedures for IRI project Phase 2 involved a complex, multi-layered structure, designed to enable partner-led delivery at country level. Funds flowed from the donor (NICFI) to UNEP, which then transferred them to the UNEP World

Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). UNEP-WCMC then sent the funds to Religions for Peace (RFP), which was finally responsible for disbursing them to the individual country teams.

101. The multi-layered disbursement structure built into the project design created significant challenges and delays. Interviewees describe a convoluted cashflow process. Financial reporting followed this chain in reverse and therefore carried a high administrative burden across the project partners. Thus the design of the project's financial structure was a barrier to swift disbursement. UNEP's financial management system, though efficient in itself, was unable to override these structural constraints.

102. Interviewees noted that the timeline for financial reporting and disbursement was unrealistic because it did not properly account for the processing times and administrative steps at each level. UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace both reported that they had responded to financial delays by advancing funds to country programmes from other budgets whilst they waited for the funds to arrive in order to keep activities on track. A delay in a single country's report could create a backlog that was amplified up the chain. The reporting delays created a perceived underspend, which in turn led to delays in the transfer of funds from the donor to UNEP.

103. The project's budget was affected by the depreciation of the Norwegian Krone (NOK) against the US Dollar, resulting in a budget reduction of USD 834,065 (a 13% shortfall). This forced a formal project revision based on consultation between partners to recalibrate activities to the new, lower budget. IRI demonstrated an adaptive approach in prioritizing and amending activities to accommodate this external shock, enabling progress to continue.

104. The project's reliance on a single primary donor, NICFI, while indicative of a strong and committed partnership, exposed the initiative to inherent financial vulnerabilities. The project's risk register notes that funding was insufficient from the start to cover all desired activity. The budget reduction directly attributable to currency depreciation further illustrates this exposure to currency fluctuation. This financial dynamic was a critical factor in influencing project stability. IRI's financial risk mitigation strategy involved working closely with each of the IRI country programmes adapt workplans to resource availability, as well as supporting them on resource mobilization efforts, building off of successful national fundraising in some instances (as in Brazil).

105. This experience highlights lessons for future project design:

- UNEP's internal procedures need to be adequately considered when planning for reporting and disbursement schedules in future projects and to realistically account for the administrative procedures of all partners involved.
- The reporting and cashflow structure need to be simplified to avoid unnecessary intermediaries.
- The expenditure rate or ability to spend funds of individual country teams need to be decoupled, so that a reporting delay from one team does not prevent the disbursement of funds to others.

4.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

106. Financial documents provided to the evaluator were sufficient to understand budget and budget revisions as well as overall expenditures (see Table 22 below).

Table 16: Financial management

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/Donor's policies and procedures:			
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ²⁸ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules		Yes	Significant delays in disbursement of funds led project partners to advance funds from other budgets in order to keep activity going
Was first disbursement carried out within 9 months of UNEP's project approval date.		Yes	
Were the procurement policies of UNEP and the donor(s) followed?		Yes	
2. Completeness of project financial information²⁹:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator			
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design	Yes	
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	Detailed in project closure report and elsewhere
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g. SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Yes	Proof of invoicing for transfer to the Norwegian Government
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	Yes	
F.	A summary report on the project's expenditures during the life of the project (by budget lines, project components and/or annual level)	Yes	
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	N/A	No audit during Phase 2
H.	Procure documents ³⁰ , including the approved requisition document and Source Selection Plan	N/A	
I.	Any other financial information that was required for this project	N/A	
Overall rating		Moderately Satisfactory	

Findings Statements on Financial Management:

107.Key Finding: The financial management structure of IRI was overly complex and did not support timely delivery, leading partners to utilise alternative funds to avoid derailing project plans and limiting impacts. This also created a disproportionately high administrative burden.

Rating for Financial Management: Moderately Unsatisfactory

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

Rating for Completeness of Financial Information: Moderately Unsatisfactory

²⁸ If the evaluation raises concerns over adherence with policies or standard procedures, a recommendation maybe given to cover the topic in an upcoming audit, or similar financial oversight exercise.

²⁹ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference.

³⁰ Relevant for procurement action over USD 10,000 in value.

4.6 Efficiency

108. The efficiency of the IRI project was a mixed picture, characterized by significant achievements in output delivery despite notable administrative and structural inefficiencies. Overall, the project achieved planned results within the project timeframe, although at country level activities were sometimes delayed and rescheduled both to accommodate administrative delays and to adapt to local contextual factors.
109. High levels of output delivery and availability were facilitated by the broad nature of IRI with a range of highly networked partner organisations within the delivery chain and governance structure at global and national levels. In particular, IRI was able to leverage the existing networks of organisations and individuals within the project design, particularly existing interfaith structures that already bring together faith leaders and have wide reach. Additionally, IRI saw particularly strong progress where individuals within country programmes were highly networked and already active within policy spaces. This enabled the project to capitalise on existing channels of influence.
110. The physical location of IRI Brazil within the UN House, hosted by UNEP, played a significant role in enabling the programme's strong performance. This arrangement: (i) enhanced the credibility and public trust of the initiative; (ii) facilitated regular interaction with UNEP technical staff across thematic areas, thereby improving the formulation and implementation of national workplans; (iii) enabled closer monitoring of analytical studies carried out in support of federal socio-environmental public policies; and (iv) allowed administrative savings to be redirected to programmatic activities, increasing overall cost-effectiveness.
111. A primary challenge to efficiency stemmed from the project's complex and multi-layered management structure and fund flow. The channelling of funds from Norway through UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, and Religions for Peace, before reaching the country teams, was described in interviews of several national facilitators and individuals within all delivery partners as incredibly complicated. This convoluted chain led to a high administrative and reporting burden on all partners and significant delays in fund transfers, which directly impacted the timely execution of activities and caused country programmes to lose confidence and momentum at times. These administrative delays meant that resources, once secured, were not always deployed with optimal speed, impacting overall operational efficiency.
112. Further inefficiencies arose from UNEP's internal administrative processes and some degree of dual reporting in the early stages due to UNEP's internal quality assurance processes which resulted in different reporting frameworks than initially agreed with the donor. This consumed considerable time and resources that detracted from supporting programmatic activities. Many interviewees within and outside of UNEP noted a mismatch between IRI's agile nature as a highly networked, politically sensitive mechanism for influence and the bureaucratic requirements of the UN system. This was noted as contributing to less flexibility and lack of incentives to try innovative approaches or to adapt in a timely manner to respond to opportunities.
113. National facilitators noted that administrative inefficiency caused some activities to be delayed. However, this was mitigated somewhat by a high degree of resourcefulness and adaptability at the country level, often compensating for systemic bottlenecks by utilising a flexible network of partners, in-kind contributions and locally mobilised resources.
114. The project's internal management dynamics were noted by several interviewees as contributing to limiting the potential utilization of certain technical assistance resources, particularly from UNEP-WCMC. Partners at all layers of the delivery chain hold policy and programming expertise. While formal structures for technical assistance and advisory input were in place and active, contributing significantly to project direction and risk management,

the effectiveness of this assistance was at times limited by a lack of full integration of expertise across the multi-layered management structure. This indicates that formal structures alone are insufficient; the quality of collaboration and the seamless integration of expertise within those structures are paramount for maximizing the effect of technical assistance.

115. Along with the factors above that were constrained by the project design structure, some further inefficiency was experienced during implementation due to changes in staffing and responses to internal institutional changes at UNEP, with hosting of IRI moving during implementation and some associated loss of institutional memory within management at global level.
116. As previously noted, IRI project Phase 2 faced an external financial shock with the depreciation of the Norwegian Krone against the US Dollar, leading to a substantial budget reduction. This necessitated prioritization exercises, which, while adaptive, inherently involved a period of adjustment and loss of efficiency in delivery.
117. The achievement of targets despite this financial pressure demonstrates remarkable efforts, particularly at the country level, to maximise use of resources and attract additional in-kind and financial contributions at country levels. The national facilitator model and high levels of independence of the IRI country programmes leave room for local adaptation to accommodate such pressures. The ability of some country programmes, like IRI Brazil, to mobilize additional funds locally also speaks to their efficiency in resource generation and utilization, enabling them to maintain momentum despite central budget constraints.
118. The project also leveraged existing UNEP networks, including Faith for Earth and the UN-REDD Programme, to maximize reach at minimal additional cost, contributing to overall cost-effectiveness. Whilst it was noted that the coherence with Faith for Earth could have been enhanced, the platform provided entry points between IRI and global environmental policy spaces.

Findings Statements on Efficiency:

119. **Key Finding:** While the project's overall efficiency was hampered by a complex financial architecture and internal bureaucratic processes, its country-level implementation teams demonstrated significant resourcefulness and adaptability. Their ability to consistently overachieve on the delivery and availability of outputs, often under tight budgetary conditions, suggests that operational efficiency was high at the programmatic delivery level, even when constrained by broader systemic inefficiencies.

Rating for Efficiency: Moderately Unsatisfactory

4.7 Monitoring and Reporting

4.7.1 Monitoring of Project Implementation

120. The project's adaptive nature was evident in the revision of its objective, Theory of Change (ToC), and results framework in 2024, although interviewees suggested that this ProDoc revision was overdue and to some extent reflects weaknesses in the original framing. The project recognized that no one-size-fits-all and that country programmes needed to remain nimble and adaptable, rooted in the local context. The formal revision of the ProDoc in 2024 explicitly placed greater emphasis on the five country programmes as the core of IRI. This structural adaptation was a direct consequence of observed effectiveness at the local level. This recalibration reflected updated analyses, strategic prioritization processes, and learning derived from the ongoing implementation of activities.

121. IRI employed adaptive management strategies, often in response to critical issues and through the proactive efforts of country teams. A clear instance of adaptive management driven by monitoring data was the project's response to the reduction in funding due to Norwegian Krone depreciation. Monitoring of budget utilization and currency fluctuations directly triggered a recalibration of the project's activities. This involved a full mapping of finances, discussions with country teams to assess core needs, and a prioritization exercise to adjust the scope of work within the reduced budget. Contractual arrangements were subsequently amended to reflect these financial realities.
122. Learning from country-level implementation was a key driver of adaptive management. Monitoring insights, particularly the success of "scientific immersions" in Brazil, informed strategic adjustments to educational methodologies.
123. A significant issue in monitoring was a structural barrier to incorporating suggestions and input from UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace on how to improve. Insights from key partners were not consistently integrated into monitoring or adaptive management processes. This dynamic limited the project's ability to learn and adjust based on a comprehensive understanding of on-the-ground realities and partner expertise.
124. IRI experienced delays in formal approval and shifting requirements for its monitoring framework in Phase 2. A new project document and logical framework were only finalized at the very end of Phase 2, rendering them largely irrelevant for guiding ongoing monitoring and adaptive management throughout the project's active period. This absence of a consistently agreed-upon and formally approved framework undermined the clarity and utility of monitoring efforts.
125. At country level, there is evidence of adaptive practice and continuous learning. National Facilitators described how approaches to scientific immersion for faith leaders have evolved based on lessons from initial efforts to build capacities. This indicates that feedback and data from initial activities were used to refine practical implementation strategies, aiming for increased effectiveness and reach. Strategic communications were also subject to adaptive adjustments. The success of campaigns like "Rights to Breathe Pure Air" in Brazil, which shifted focus from abstract natural resources to direct threats to human health, indicates an adaptive use of communication effectiveness data to refine messaging for broader public mobilization and resonance.

4.7.2 Project Reporting

126. Clear and detailed project reports were made available to the evaluator. These were of generally good quality and contained sufficient detail at overall and country levels to assess progress and understand how IRI activities were delivered and amended over time.
127. A fundamental challenge stemmed from the legacy of Phase 1, where a dual reporting framework emerged. Differences between a previous agreed reporting system reflecting donor preferences and UNEP's internal quality assurance requirements resulted in dual reporting initially, significantly slowing down resource transfers and increasing the reporting burden for delivery partners. To mitigate this, standardized templates for reporting were introduced in 2023 to streamline the process. However, this foundational inconsistency set a precedent for ongoing reporting complexities.
128. While country teams produced monthly and quarterly reports with substantial content, there was a noted lack of alignment with UNEP's reporting requirements. One reason identified as contributing to this was a lack of understanding of UNEP reporting requirements (such as specific formats) across all partners in the delivery chains. As a result, information was not consistently structured to easily meet UNEP's needs. This disconnect meant that valuable

data was collected but not always presented in a strategically aligned manner for efficient review and utilization at the central level.

- 129.Despite these challenges, country programmes successfully tracked and reported on progress against output and outcome indicators and sufficient data was available at operational completion of the project to assess progress, presented clearly against expected results. This improved reporting over time reflects significant time and focus by UNEP and partners.
- 130.The project built in an impact assessment process, with this process designed and implemented by UNEP-WCMC. This process was thorough and, although not independent, provides a detailed and convincing picture of achievements.
- 131.The project's reporting mechanisms, while providing substantial data, exhibited both strengths and areas for improvement, particularly concerning their alignment with broader institutional requirements and the consistent depth of disaggregated information for all cross-cutting issues. During implementation, there was notable improvement in aligning reporting with the UNEP IPMR and to harmonize indicators across the five countries.
- 132.Challenges with reporting suggest that partners need a high level of preparation and support to meet the requirements of UNEP's reporting systems, something that is particularly challenging in an agile, multi-partner, multi-country initiative.
- 133.The project demonstrated a clear and commendable commitment to gender equality and female empowerment in its reporting. This was evident in the explicit target of 30% female representation among trained religious leaders. The actual results show significant female participation across most countries, with Brazil achieving 50.6%, Indonesia 40.4%, Peru 38.8%, and Colombia 31.1% female representation in trained leaders. Furthermore, Religions for Peace (RFP) played a leading role in gender mainstreaming, commissioning dedicated research papers on gender, faith, and rainforest advocacy. However, a notable disparity was observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) programme, which reported only 19.5% female representation among trained leaders. This suggests that while the overall intent and performance in gender mainstreaming were strong, specific contextual or implementation-related factors in DRC might have presented barriers to equitable gender participation, warranting further investigation and targeted strategies in future phases.
- 134.IRI consistently and effectively integrated the consideration and rights of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities into its reporting and operational framework. Indigenous Peoples' were recognized as crucial and vulnerable stakeholders, with their representatives actively serving as members of all five country Advisory Councils. IRI's mission explicitly aimed to elevate the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights, resources, and territories to a spiritual priority for religious leaders. Expert guidance was sought from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Issues. All National Facilitators reiterated the importance of defending Indigenous Peoples' rights, and the UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment noted IRI's success in building trust and bridging divides between religious and Indigenous Peoples' leaders. Interviewees were able to articulate the complexities of how religious identity and expression intersects with indigenous identity, spirituality and politics in each country. This demonstrates a deep and intentional integration of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and rights, not merely as a reporting requirement but as a core component of the project's strategy and reported achievements.
- 135.IRI demonstrates limited specific reporting on disability inclusion despite a general commitment to inclusivity. While the project's overarching framework and operational closure document explicitly articulated a commitment to disability inclusion, aiming to include "disabled persons wherever possible, promoting accessibility and participation", the provided

quantitative and qualitative reporting largely lacked specific disaggregated data or detailed narrative on the extent of disability inclusion in project activities or the changes on this marginalized group by the uptake, adoption or application of IRI outputs. The general commitment to inclusivity is stated, but the depth of reporting on disability inclusion appears less robust compared to the detailed data provided for gender or the narrative depth for Indigenous Peoples' engagement. This suggests a potential area for more granular data collection, specific indicators, and detailed narrative reporting in future phases to fully capture the project's performance in this important cross-cutting area.

Findings Statements on Monitoring and Reporting:

136. **Key Finding:** Systemic barriers in the project management structure created a high reporting burden for all partners but did not fully support flexible and adaptive programming. However, procedures were improved over the project lifetime and final reporting is detailed and useful.

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Project Reporting: Moderately Satisfactory

4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

137. A significant contributing factor to socio-political sustainability is IRI's demonstrable success in fostering trust and collaboration between diverse religious groups and Indigenous Peoples. These groups, who historically harboured scepticism towards each other, have begun to forge common ground. The project achieved this by strategically reframing environmental care not merely as a technical or political issue, but as a "moral and spiritual responsibility. This reframing effectively bridged ideological divides and cultivated a shared understanding of environmental challenges, transcending pre-existing biases. In IRI's longer established country programmes a deliberate strategy of creating bridges between different groups of people trying to create a space of dialogue, and developing empathy directly underpins this achievement. This deepening of social cohesion around the environmental agenda, built on shared values and mutual respect, makes the project's achievements more resilient to external political shifts and fosters a more unified front for advocacy. The ability to unite disparate groups under a common moral banner creates a durable social fabric that can withstand external pressures and continue to drive change.

138. A significant undermining factor for socio-political sustainability is the persistent and often escalating political polarization prevalent in several target countries, particularly Brazil. In this context, environmental issues are frequently co-opted by political and business interests becoming entangled with misinformation and conspiracy theories and outright denial. One interviewee from a CSO in Brazil highlighted a concerning trend during the COVID-19 pandemic, where certain churches in indigenous communities became major conduits for misinformation, including about public health measures. This demonstrates how political narratives can infiltrate and take over religious platforms, creating a hostile environment for environmental action. While IRI's scientific immersions and its moral framing serve as a measure against misinformation, the continued presence and influence of politically polarized narratives and their capacity to sway religious segments could severely undermine achievements. This risk lies in the potential re-introduction of distrust, disengagement, and active opposition to environmental protection efforts within the very communities IRI seeks to mobilize, threatening to unravel the social consensus built.

4.8.2 Financial Sustainability

139. A major contributing factor to financial sustainability is the demonstrated capacity of strong country programmes, particularly IRI Brazil, to proactively mobilize significant additional funds from diverse sources. IRI Brazil successfully raised around 50% or more of its initial budget from new projects during the 2022-2023 period. These new funding streams came from philanthropic organizations like the Ford Foundation and Porticus, attracted by IRI's unique approach to addressing polarization and climate misinformation. This localized diversification of funding reduces the over-reliance on a single donor and provides a crucial hedge against currency fluctuations and shifts in donor priorities at the global level and makes country-level achievements inherently more financially sustainable and less vulnerable to external economic shocks. In this case it enabled IRI Brazil to maintain operational momentum. Along with Brazil, IRI Colombia coped better than other national chapters due to their ability to attract their own funds and leverage strong local partnerships.
140. Conversely, a primary undermining factor is the project's reliance on a single primary donor, NICFI, coupled with its vulnerability to currency depreciation. The significant budget reduction due to the depreciation of the Norwegian Krone (NOK) against the US Dollar (USD) directly impacted the project's overall financial capacity with fewer resources available than anticipated, exacerbated by currency devaluation. This underscored the urgent need for new donors. While the project demonstrated adaptive capacity in response to this shock, this inherent financial vulnerability could severely limit the scale, scope, and persistence of achievements in future phases if a truly diversified and stable funding base is not proactively secured for IRI.
141. This situation highlights a critical observation regarding the project's financial sustainability and its underlying conditions. While the project demonstrated adaptability, the capacity to mobilize resources was not uniform across all countries. IRI's sustainability strategy, and exit strategy for UNEP, rests on the assumption that country programmes with robust local leadership, established networks, and the ability to independently attract diversified funding will be sustainable outside of the current project structure. This underscores the importance of fostering strong country-level capacity and actively pursuing diversified funding strategies as fundamental components of long-term project stability and the persistence of achievements, rather than solely relying on central funding mechanisms. The prospect of financial sustainability in future is strong in some countries, notably with Brazil attracting funds in-country. However, this was not uniform across all countries as it depends on the specific funding environment in-country and centralised donor funding remains necessary at this stage in IRI's evolution.

4.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

142. A significant contributing factor to institutional sustainability is the project's successful fostering of strong country-level ownership and a largely independent identity as IRI. This was achieved through the strategic placement of national facilitators within existing interfaith organizations and the empowerment of diverse Advisory Councils. The establishment of 120 operational local/provincial chapters across the five countries, coupled with the training of over 7,000 religious leaders, has created robust, deeply embedded, and potentially self-sustaining networks. Partners along the delivery chain expressed positivity about the potential for sustainability at the country level in the longer-established country programmes due to built capacities and networks. This deep institutional embedding at the local and national levels ensures that the initiative's activities and influence are not merely project-dependent but are integrated into existing community and religious structures, significantly contributing to the persistence of achievements. This provides lessons for a newer country programme, like in DRC, to build on.

143. A critical undermining factor relating to institutionalisation of UNEP's role is the project's heavy reliance on individual roles for leadership, strategic direction, and operational momentum at the global coordination level, rather than being fully institutionalized within either the Global Steering Committee or within UNEP. During Phase 2, IRI was coordinated by a consultant role. This position was exposed to the inherent tensions of supporting a highly independent, politically sensitive and adaptive entity whilst responding to the demands of a highly structured, systematised UN agency.
144. Several interviewed stakeholders noted a potential risk to institutional sustainability at both national and global level if key individuals leave IRI resulting in loss of institutional memory as well as highly-effective personal networks and channels of influence. There is a strong sense of ownership of the project amongst national facilitators and the global coordinator, as well as within the Global Steering Committee members. This gives momentum to IRI but there has been a lack of consistent, structured knowledge transfer at the central management level. This suggests that while country-level institutionalization and network building are strong, the global management's institutional memory, succession planning, and the systematic capture of lessons learned from its complex operational model remain significant institutional weaknesses that could undermine the long-term sustainability of achievements if not addressed.
145. Plans for a new phase (Phase 3) of the project are at an advanced stage. The project's funding for this phase will notably bypass UNEP systems, flowing directly to Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN) to the country programme, a development that partners agree will be positive for operational efficiency and the initiative's independence. This shift underscores a critical observation: while UNEP's institutional association provided undeniable legitimacy and convening power, particularly at high political levels, its internal administrative and bureaucratic overheads demonstrably hampered operational efficiency, timely fund flow, and optimal partner relations. This created a paradox where the "brand" of the UN was beneficial, but the "machinery" of its internal systems proved to be a challenge to agile project delivery. The implication is that for future multi-stakeholder initiatives requiring rapid response and flexible implementation, a careful assessment of design and how UN agencies host such projects is warranted to meet expectations.
146. UNEP's hosting of IRI Phase 1 and 2 provided a strategic layer of legitimacy for IRI's engagement, particularly in politically sensitive contexts like Brazil, where it allowed for careful navigation of relations with the influential evangelical movement without being perceived as overtly partisan. Further, the physical co-location of IRI within the UN building in Brazil not only enhanced the project's respect and credibility but yielded practical benefits such as cost savings on rent and proximity to engage in policy discourse.
147. Given the shift away from UNEP hosting IRI, the ongoing role for UNEP remains uncertain. A representative from UNEP's Faith for Earth Initiative was nominated to represent UNEP on the IRI Global Steering Committee with a view to maintaining a strategic connection and retaining links between IRI and UN global processes. However, with the current political context exaggerating funding constraints within UNEP, Faith for Earth formally ended in October 2025. There is therefore a need to consider how to sustain linkages between UNEP and IRI both globally and at country levels whilst also furthering the mainstreaming of faith-based approaches across UNEP's work.
148. With the transition in hosting of the initiative away from UNEP; UNEP's continued engagement could build on UNEP's normative and convening role to utilise its comparative advantage in global convening power which has been central to positioning faith constituencies within international forest governance and climate governance processes. Under new management arrangements, IRI can still benefit from UNEP's brand, networks, influence and leadership of policy processes as a delivery partner.

Findings Statements on Sustainability:

- 149.**Key Finding:** IRI demonstrates strong sensitivity to socio-political realities at national levels and retains a flexibility to respond to these. At the same time, IRI has fostered strong support in longer-established countries across broad networks of faith-based and indigenous groups, civil society and government allies. This bolsters its prospects of socio-political sustainability.
- 150.**Key Finding:** Some IRI national programmes were able to raise additional funds locally. However, there is still an over-dependence on funds from the Government of Norway.
- 151.**Key Finding:** IRI has a strong sense of ownership both within focus countries and at the Global Steering Committee that offers prospects for institutional sustainability, however, the linkages between country level and global activity are not well-developed and risk diminishing through the changed delivery structure under Phase 3. There is a need to consider how to sustain linkages between UNEP and IRI both globally and at country levels whilst also furthering the mainstreaming of faith-based approaches across UNEP's work.

Rating for Likelihood of Sustainability: Moderately Likely

Rating for Socio-political Sustainability: Likely

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Moderately Unlikely

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

4.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

4.9.1 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

4.9.1.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

152. The performance of the IRI project was significantly shaped by the dynamics of its multi-layered management and supervision structure involving UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, and Religions for Peace. This complex arrangement presented both strategic advantages and considerable operational challenges.
153. Being housed within UNEP provided IRI with valuable access to the organization's extensive information, knowledge bases, resources, and a network of specialists in environmental science and policy. This access enriched the project's content and strategic direction.
154. Managing the tension between granting country programmes the necessary ability to be adaptable to diverse national contexts and simultaneously ensuring their alignment with the overarching global IRI purpose, proved challenging. This delicate balance required continuous strategic oversight and communication to prevent fragmentation while fostering local responsiveness. This fragmented authority diluted overall accountability, slowed down strategic adjustments, and made it difficult to pinpoint responsibility for delays or issues.
155. The shifting of IRI hosting between units within UNEP both reflects and explains limitations in the quality of project management of IRI within UNEP. The internal transfer of the IRI project between different UNEP units, coupled with the re-assignment of Programme Managers, introduced organizational instability. These changes necessitated adjustments in staffing and systems, leading to disruptions in continuity, quality and efficiency during periods of transition.

156.Despite IRI's alignment with UNEP's broader strategies, awareness of the faith-based approach within UNEP remains quite limited. Many UNEP staff reportedly did not fully understand or engage with the value of working through faith communities.

4.9.1.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

157.The most significant and recurring challenge was the persistent lack of clear governance and defined leadership roles through the project delivery chain. Several interviewees noted that the project's management and governance structure was confusing, with multiple parties—UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, and consultants—all attempting to lead, creating ambiguity regarding who was ultimately responsible for decisions, who partners should respond to and who's technical advice should be taken on board. This absence of clear leadership led to a fragmented decision-making process and hindered swift action. This was compounded by the convoluted flow of funds, originating from NICFI and passing through UNEP, then through UNEP-WCMC, and finally to Religions for Peace before reaching the country teams. There were strong barriers to leveraging valuable technical and strategic advice from key implementing partners, leading to missed opportunities for enhanced project delivery and a less integrated approach to problem-solving.

4.9.2 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

158.The establishment and active engagement of country-level Advisory Councils (ACs) were crucial to project performance. These ACs, comprising a diverse array of stakeholders including religious leaders, Indigenous Peoples' leaders, environmental NGOs, scientists, and government representatives, ensured broad inclusion and representation. Their role extended beyond consultation. They actively guided country-based activities and served as vital forums for assessing national political risks and devising solutions. The UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment further affirmed IRI's success in its ability to bring groups together in their efforts to protect rainforests, demonstrating effective cooperation.

159.A notable limitation was the structural divides between partners in the delivery chain which prevented IRI from making maximum use of the technical capabilities within partners such as UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace, even on crucial aspects like gender mainstreaming. This dynamic suggests that UNEP's management did not consistently facilitate a truly collaborative environment where input from all partners was equally valued and integrated.

4.9.3 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

160.A particularly significant achievement in stakeholder cooperation was the project's success in building trust and fostering collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples. These two groups, who historically often viewed each other with scepticism, began to develop a shared purpose. A key strategy involved organizing field visits for religious leaders to Indigenous communities, which provided firsthand exposure to indigenous knowledge and practices in forest protection. This experience led religious leaders to perceive Indigenous Peoples as crucial allies and instilled in them a moral responsibility to advocate for Indigenous rights. This unique bridging role significantly enhanced the collective power and reach of advocacy efforts.

161.The project demonstrated a strong responsiveness to human rights, particularly by integrating Indigenous Peoples' rights as a core mission mandate. Indigenous organizations were actively involved as members of all country Advisory Councils, ensuring their perspectives were central to project planning and implementation. The project explicitly aimed to elevate the protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights, resources, and territories to a spiritual priority for religious leaders. IRI's advocacy efforts consistently included defending environmental defenders and securing legislative measures aimed at protecting Indigenous Peoples. This deep integration reflects a high degree of responsiveness to human rights principles.

162. The project demonstrated a robust commitment to gender equality and female empowerment. It set a clear target of 30% female representation among trained leaders, which was notably exceeded in Brazil (50.6%), Indonesia (40.4%), and Peru (38.8%). Religions for Peace (RFP) played a leading role in gender mainstreaming, commissioning dedicated research papers on the intersection of gender, faith, and rainforest advocacy. Adriana Ramos also highlighted the historical connection of social movements in Brazil with churches, including women's organizations, indicating a fertile ground for gender-responsive engagement.

163. While overall gender mainstreaming was strong, a notable inconsistency was observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) programme, which reported a significantly lower female representation (19.5%) among trained leaders compared to other countries. This disparity suggests that while the policy intent for gender equality was robust, its implementation faced varying degrees of success across different country contexts, potentially due to specific cultural barriers or operational challenges that were not fully overcome. This indicates a need for more tailored, context-specific strategies to ensure equitable gender participation in all programme areas.

4.9.4 Environmental and Social Safeguards

164. UNEP-WCMC developed a gender-sensitive social and environmental safeguards policy for IRI. This policy was designed to be cross-cutting for all IRI activities, ensuring that potential risks and impacts were systematically identified, analyzed, and mitigated throughout project design and implementation. The policy included practical tools such as a risk and impact screening checklist and a framework for a grievance redress mechanism, demonstrating a commitment to responsible and ethical project delivery.

165. UNEP-WCMC provided direct technical assistance through capacity-building sessions for country teams on safeguarding principles and impact measurement. This initiative aimed to equip country-level implementers with the necessary knowledge and tools to effectively apply the safeguards policy on the ground, thereby enhancing the project's ability to manage environmental and social risks in a decentralized manner.

166. Despite the development of a robust safeguards policy and capacity-building efforts, a strong barrier was noted against fully integrating UNEP-WCMC's technical input on project deliverables, even when related to strengthening gender perspectives or safeguards. This suggests that internal management arrangements may have hindered the optimal application of available safeguards expertise across all aspects of project delivery, potentially leading to missed opportunities for enhanced environmental and social outcomes.

4.9.5 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

167. The decentralized national chapter model and National Facilitators strongly supported country ownership and drive. The project's design, which emphasized the establishment of local/provincial chapters (totalling 120 operational units) and the empowerment of National Facilitators within existing interfaith organizations, was highly effective in fostering strong country ownership. Country strategies based on in-depth local consultations and adapting to specific national contexts exemplifies this country-driven approach. This decentralized model ensured that initiatives were rooted in local realities and needs.

168. The country-level Advisory Councils played a crucial role in driving country ownership. Composed of diverse national stakeholders, these councils were empowered to guide and advise on country-based activities and to define strategic priorities. This participatory approach ensured that project activities were not only tailored to national contexts but also genuinely reflected local needs, opportunities, and political landscapes, thereby enhancing relevance and local buy-in.

169. A significant undermining factor was the observation that project ownership, particularly at the country level, tended to be more personal (tied to individual National Facilitators or global consultants) rather than fully institutionalized within the country coordinating organizations (e.g., Religions for Peace). The direct communication line from the global consultant to country coordinators, bypassing RfP and UNEP-WCMC for strategic guidance could have contributed to this phenomenon. This could potentially undermine long-term institutional ownership by the country coordinating organizations and contribute to a loss of institutional memory for UNEP and RfP, creating a reliance on key individuals rather than robust organizational structures.

4.9.6 Communication and Public Awareness

170. IRI's institutional affiliation with UNEP provided a very powerful brand and added strong credibility to IRI. This was a significant asset in many contexts, particularly when engaging with religious leaders, government officials, and other organizations, as it facilitated access and enhanced the project's legitimacy. In some countries the associations with UNEP effectively opened doors for IRI's activities. However, in others, where UN agencies and the international community are viewed with greater scepticism, association with the UN was less beneficial. Country programmes highlighted UNEP's role variously depending on local understanding of its value.

171. The project's performance in communication and public awareness was significantly bolstered by the development of highly effective and culturally relevant communication tools. Brazil's "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film stands out as an innovative example, effectively conveying complex environmental messages. The creation of faith-specific teaching guides also ensured that messages resonated deeply within diverse religious communities. The strategic shift to focus on relatable issues, such as the "Right to Breathe Clean Air," as highlighted by IRI Brazil, significantly boosted public engagement by connecting environmental issues to immediate human well-being.

172. The project effectively leveraged an unparalleled reach of religious networks, which extend into remote areas often beyond the reach of conventional government or NGO initiatives. This, combined with strategic use of mass media (radio, TV, social media), enabled the project to reach an impressive audience of over 11 million people. This broad dissemination of messages through trusted religious channels and widespread media coverage was a key factor in raising public awareness on a massive scale.

173. A missed opportunity in communication performance was the limited leveraging of the project's successful communication assets by UNEP itself. UNEP did not fully utilise IRI material for its own broader communications work. Communication efforts were primarily handled by the IRI platform itself, led by the consultants. This suggests a missed opportunity for UNEP to amplify the project's messaging for its broader mandate and institutional visibility, potentially limiting the overall synergistic effect of the partnership.

174. IRI engaged with UNEP's Communication Division at different points, including global advocacy moments. However, IRI communications were not systematically aligned with UNEP's flagship campaigns, social media and international events. They often ran in parallel rather than being integrated within wider messaging. Greater two-way engagement could have enhanced the quality of IRI communications products in terms of influencing global processes and increased the impact of UNEP communications in supporting IRI's intended results.

175. IRI interviewees noted the need to be mindful of ensuring diverse representation and adequate context in communications to avoid perceptions that UNEP favor any particular faith traditions. They also noted a need to be careful in the use of language to adequately

and appropriately utilize both faith-based framing and scientific, policy and media-oriented language.

176. There are no specific strategies for communicating UNEP's work with FBO's as all communications are governed by corporate communication policies including the publishing guidelines, logo use policy, media engagement policy and social media guidelines. For UNEP, faith-based communications should position UNEP as a convenor and amplifier of faith voices, helping them reach policy and media spaces whilst avoiding theological positioning and emphasizing shared values such as stewardship, harmony with nature and responsibility for future generations.

177. With IRI utilising multiple platforms, the visibility of UNEP and branding of IRI outputs was inconsistent. Further, as IRI has broad reach through partners, UNEP has not had full visibility of the reach of different communications which are forwarded through faith-based networks.

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

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: Moderately Unsatisfactory

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: Satisfactory

Rating for Environmental and Social Safeguards: Moderately Satisfactory

Rating for Country Ownership and Driven-ness: Highly Satisfactory

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: Moderately Unsatisfactory

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

178. Overall, the project performed at the 'Satisfactory' level. The strongest performing aspects were strategic relevance, effectiveness and the likelihood of sustainability. Comparative weaknesses were apparent in financial and project management.
179. IRI stands out as a highly effective and strategically relevant initiative that successfully mobilized faith-based movements to achieve tangible influence on environmental policy and public awareness in its five focus countries. The project consistently met and, in most cases, substantially exceeded its output and outcome targets, training over 7,000 religious leaders and reaching an estimated audience of over 11 million people with its message.
180. The main achievements of the project were its ability to build broad, resilient coalitions and shift the public and political discourse on rainforest protection. These successes were driven by several key factors. First and foremost was the project's innovative approach of framing environmental protection as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility. This narrative proved exceptionally powerful, bridging historical divides and fostering unprecedented trust and collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples, groups that had often viewed each other with scepticism. This strategy allowed the project to transcend political polarization and mobilize a vast constituency that might otherwise be disengaged from conventional environmentalism.
181. The project's success was facilitated by its decentralized, country-driven model. Empowering national chapters with the autonomy to tailor strategies to their specific local contexts was a major strength, fostering deep country ownership and adaptability. This flexibility allowed country programmes to navigate immense challenges, such as political hostility in Brazil, and seize strategic opportunities, such as influencing Colombia's National Development Plan. This country-led approach also proved crucial, as the strongest country programmes were able to mobilize their own funds locally when faced with budget cuts.
182. Despite remarkable achievements, the project's performance was hampered by its partner-based tiered project management structure. This was consistently identified for interviewees as its greatest weakness. The project's overall efficiency was rated 'Moderately Unsatisfactory' due to an overly complex, multi-layered management and financial architecture. The convoluted flow of funds—from the donor through UNEP, then UNEP-WCMC, and finally Religions for Peace before reaching country teams—was ill-suited for an agile, politically-sensitive initiative. This structure created significant delays in fund disbursement, a disproportionately high administrative burden, and internal friction that detracted from programmatic work. Structural weakness was compounded by a persistent lack of clear governance and defined leadership roles among the core partners. Multiple partners attempting to lead created confusion, fragmented decision-making, and diluted accountability. A critical consequence was that the project was unable to fully leverage the valuable technical and strategic expertise of key partners like UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace, representing a significant missed opportunity for enhanced delivery and synergy.
183. The project demonstrated a profound and integrated commitment to human rights and gender equality. The protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights was not an add-on but a core component of IRI's mission, with IP representatives actively included in all country Advisory Councils. The project successfully made the defence of Indigenous Peoples' rights a spiritual priority for religious leaders, thereby creating a powerful, unified front for advocacy. On gender, the project set and largely surpassed its 30% female representation target in leadership trainings, with notable exceptions such as in the DRC. This highlights a strong

overall commitment, but also the need for more tailored strategies to overcome context-specific barriers to women's participation.

184. The sustainability of the project's outcomes is rated as 'Likely', though this is uneven. Strong local ownership and large collaborative networks of partner organisations and stakeholders provide a foundation for socio-political sustainability. However, financial sustainability remains a risk due to over-reliance on a single donor. The ability of IRI Brazil to attract diversified funding from new donors offers a promising path forward, demonstrating that the project's unique model is attractive to other funders. The future of IRI in Phase 3, with funding flowing directly to a partner organization and bypassing UNEP, is seen by partners as a positive step towards improving efficiency. However, this shift raises questions about how to maintain the strategic link to UNEP and ensure the lessons from IRI are mainstreamed into the UN's broader work on faith and environment.

185. In answering the evaluation's key strategic questions, it is clear that the tiered management structure negatively affected costs and efficiency while the decentralized programme model positively bolstered country ownership. Coherence with other UNEP initiatives like was strong conceptually but weak in practice, with few realized synergies and a failure by UNEP to amplify IRI's powerful communication assets. The potential for replicating and scaling up the IRI model is high, provided that future designs adopt simplified management structures and prioritize flexible, country-led approaches.

186. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and finding discussed in Chapter 4. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of 'Satisfactory'.

Table 17: Summary of project findings and ratings³¹

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		HS
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	IRI demonstrates a high degree of strategic relevance, aligning with the priorities of the UN, its primary donor, and its focus countries. The project directly supports the UNEP MTS 2022-2025, which commits to engaging faith-based organizations as partners for environmental sustainability. By disseminating scientific data to faith leaders, IRI aligns faith-based and scientific approaches, contributing to UNEP's Programme of Work on climate stability. IRI's goals are in full alignment with its donor, NICFI, by working to reduce tropical forest loss and supporting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. A key strength is its ability to adapt its approach to the specific national and local priorities of each of its five countries, ensuring that it also responds strategically to local contexts. Although it aligned conceptually with Faith for Earth, the potential for synergy was not fully realised.	HS
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/Partner strategic priorities		HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities		HS
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/ Coherence		MS

³¹ Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated, also on a six-point scale, from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU).

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Quality of Project Design	Overall the design was strong and based on a participatory process that incorporated lessons from a previous phase and an in-depth analysis of the local context in each country. The project design was a strong fit with the strategic priorities of UNEP and its donor, the Government of Norway. The governance and supervision arrangements were a significant strength. However, the multi-layered management structure between partners (UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, and Religions for Peace) was overly complex, creating potential inefficiencies. The project's Theory of Change, while articulated, lacked detailed assumptions and did not clearly convey the causal pathways to long-term impact. The design also lacked a clear sustainability strategy and specific plans for local resource mobilization. Additionally, it could have been strengthened by a more detailed consideration of gender-specific dynamics and the role of youth in the project's activities.	S
Nature of External Context	IRI faced significant challenges, including volatile political situations in its target countries, such as outright hostility towards environmentalism in Brazil and weak channels for civic action in the DRC. Increasing political polarization led to environmental issues becoming entangled with misinformation. A favourable factor was the significant moral influence wielded by religious leaders in countries with high rates of religious affiliation, which the project was designed to leverage.	MU
Effectiveness	Based on a holistic view across IRI's achievement of outputs, outcomes and intermediate states, it is reasonable to conclude that IRI has significant impact on policies and practice around tropical forest deforestation and thus has impact on the forests themselves. Outputs and outcome targets have been met, and often exceeded, whilst there is evidence of most assumptions hold, and drivers are in place.	HS
1. Availability of outputs		HS
2. Achievement of project outcomes		HS
3. Likelihood of impact		L
Financial Management	The financial management structure of IRI was overly complex and did not support timely delivery, leading partners to utilise alternative funds to avoid derailing project plans and limiting impacts. This also created a disproportionately high administrative burden.	MS
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures		MS
2. Completeness of project financial information		MS
Efficiency	While the project's overall efficiency was hampered by a complex financial architecture and internal bureaucratic processes, its country-level implementation teams demonstrated significant resourcefulness and adaptability. Their ability to consistently overachieve on outputs, often under tight budgetary conditions, suggests that operational efficiency was high at the programmatic delivery level, even when constrained by broader systemic inefficiencies.	MU
Monitoring and Reporting	Systemic barriers in the project management structure created a high reporting burden for all partners but did not fully support flexible and adaptive programming. However, procedures were improved over the project lifetime and final reporting is detailed and useful.	MS
1. Monitoring of project implementation		MS
2. Project reporting		MS
Sustainability	IRI demonstrates strong sensitivity to socio-political realities at national levels and an retains a flexibility to respond to these. At the same time, IRI has fostered strong support in longer-established countries across broad networks of faith-based and indigenous groups, civil society and government allies. This bolsters its prospects of socio-	ML
1. Socio-political sustainability		L
2. Financial sustainability		ML

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
3. Institutional sustainability	political sustainability. Some IRI national programmes were able to raise additional funds locally. However, there is still an over-dependence on funds from the Government of Norway. IRI has a strong sense of ownership both within focus countries and at the Global Steering Committee that offers prospects for institutional sustainability, however, the linkages between country level and global activity are ill developed and risk diminishing through the changed delivery structure under Phase 3. There is a need to consider how to sustain linkages between UNEP and IRI both globally and at country levels whilst also furthering the mainstreaming of faith-based approaches across UNEP's work.	L
Factors Affecting Performance		MS
1. Quality of project management and supervision	Project management was a significant and recurring challenge. The primary issue was an overly complex, multi-layered management structure involving UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, and Religions for Peace. This led to a persistent lack of clear governance and defined leadership roles, resulting in fragmented decision-making and internal friction. Combined with a convoluted fund flow, the structure caused significant operational delays and a high administrative burden. These barriers also prevented the project from fully leveraging the technical expertise of its partners.	MU
2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:		MU
2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:		MU
2. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	Stakeholder participation and cooperation were significant strengths of the IRI. The project successfully established and engaged country-level Advisory Councils, which included a diverse mix of religious and Indigenous leaders, NGOs, scientists, and government representatives. A key achievement was building trust and collaboration between religious leaders and Indigenous Peoples, who historically viewed each other with scepticism. This was enhanced by field visits that helped religious leaders understand Indigenous knowledge. However, cooperation was sometimes limited by structural divides between the core delivery partners.	HS
3. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	IRI demonstrated a strong commitment to human rights and gender equality. The project successfully integrated Indigenous Peoples' rights as a core part of its mission, making their protection a "spiritual priority" for religious leaders. A significant achievement was building trust and collaboration between religious and Indigenous groups, who historically viewed each other with scepticism, thereby enhancing advocacy efforts. For gender equality, the project set a 30% female representation target for trainings, which was exceeded in most countries. However, a notable inconsistency was the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where female participation was significantly lower (19.5%), indicating that context-specific barriers were not fully overcome.	S
4. Environmental and social safeguards	IRI's environmental and social safeguards were formally established through a gender-sensitive policy developed by UNEP-WCMC. This cross-cutting policy provided practical tools, including a risk screening checklist and a grievance mechanism framework, to systematically identify and mitigate risks. UNEP-WCMC also delivered capacity-building sessions to help country teams apply the policy on the ground. However, a strong barrier was noted against fully integrating UNEP-WCMC's expert input into project deliverables which could have strengthened application of safeguards further.	MS
5. Country ownership and driven-ness	IRI successfully fostered strong country ownership and driven-ness. This was primarily achieved through its decentralized national chapter model, which empowered National Facilitators and allowed country strategies to be developed from in-depth local consultations. The establishment of 120 local chapters and diverse, empowered Advisory Councils ensured that activities were tailored to national contexts and reflected local needs, enhancing buy-in. However, a key undermining factor was that ownership often became personalized, tied to individual facilitators rather than being fully institutionalized within partner organizations, posing a risk to long-term institutional sustainability.	HS

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
6. Communication and public awareness	IRI communication and public awareness efforts were highly effective. The affiliation with UNEP provided a powerful and credible brand, which was a significant asset in gaining access and legitimacy with officials and religious leaders. The project developed impactful and culturally relevant tools, such as the "Amazônia Viva" virtual reality film and faith-specific guides. By strategically using the reach of religious networks and mass media, the initiative reached an audience of over 11 million people. A key weakness, however, was a missed opportunity for UNEP to integrate and amplify the project's successful communication materials into its own broader work.	MU
Overall Project Performance Rating	Satisfactory	S

5.2 Lessons learned

Lesson Learned #1:	Multi-partner projects need to establish clear, unambiguous governance structures with well-defined leadership roles and responsibilities from the very beginning to prevent fragmentation, ensure accountability, and facilitate effective collaboration.	
Context/comment:	The evaluation points to a "persistent lack of clear governance and defined leadership roles" as a significant and recurring challenge throughout the project. Multiple partners attempting to lead created confusion, diluted accountability, and hindered swift decision-making. This ambiguity created barriers that prevented the project from fully leveraging the valuable technical and strategic advice of key implementing partners like UNEP-WCMC and Religions for Peace. The resulting internal friction and fragmented authority slowed down strategic adjustments and made it difficult to pinpoint responsibility for issues. This highlights that simply having capable partners is not enough; a clear and agreed-upon governance framework is essential for effective collaboration.	
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.9	

Lesson Learned #2:	UNEP needs to pre-empt budgetary challenges with financial scenario planning to accommodate changes to funding streams, external currency fluctuations, changing donor priorities or changing in-country needs and costs, building flexibility into plans and contracts where possible and ensuring that project teams have capacity and mandate to adapt when necessary.	
Context/comment:	IRI's heavy reliance on a single donor (NICFI) and its vulnerability to currency fluctuations were major undermining factors. This experience starkly illustrated the risks of a non-diversified funding base and the need to manage adaptively when budget constraints emerge. The country programmes that demonstrated the most resilience were those, like IRI Brazil, that were able to proactively mobilize additional funds from other sources as well as those able to swiftly adapt planned activities.	
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.5 / 4.8	

Lesson Learned #3:	Future multi-partner initiatives need to balance administrative processes and requirements with financial and management structures to maximize efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure the timely flow of resources to implementing teams.	
Context/comment:	The project's multi-layered management and financial structure were a primary source of inefficiency and frustration. Funds were channelled through a "convoluted" chain from the donor to UNEP, then to UNEP-WCMC, then to Religions for Peace, and finally to the country programmes. This complex pathway created significant delays in fund disbursement, a high administrative and reporting burden for all partners, and a loss of momentum at the country level. This experience shows that overly bureaucratic structures, even with well-intentioned partners, can actively hinder project delivery and need to be avoided in favour of more streamlined models. The anticipated efficiency gains from a more direct funding route in the project's next phase underscores this lesson.	

Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.5 / 4.6 / 4.9
---	-----------------

Lesson Learned #4:	Project design prioritizing country-level ownership and operational autonomy allowed local teams the flexibility to adapt strategies to their specific political and social contexts for greater effectiveness and sustainability. However, this reduced UNEP's own ability to make overall strategic changes to the approach during implementation.
Context/comment:	The project's decentralized national chapter model was as a major strength that fostered strong country ownership and drive. Country strategies were more effective because they were based on in-depth local consultations and were able to adapt to changing national realities. This adaptability was crucial for navigating challenges, such as the political hostility in Brazil, and for seizing opportunities, such as influencing Colombia's National Development Plan. Furthermore, country programmes with strong local leadership and networks demonstrated greater resilience, with some successfully mobilizing additional funds locally. This demonstrates that a "one-size-fits-all" approach is less effective than a flexible, country-driven model that empowers local actors.
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.1

Lesson Learned #5:	Where environmental issues are framed not just in scientific or policy terms, but as a shared moral and spiritual responsibility, this can mobilise large communities around environmental change. The faith-based approach could be mainstreamed across other influencing approaches.
Context/comment:	A key success of IRI was its ability to bridge divides between historically sceptical groups, such as religious and Indigenous leaders, by reframing rainforest protection as a moral imperative. This approach proved highly effective at fostering trust, creating a shared purpose, and uniting disparate groups into a more powerful front for advocacy. By connecting environmental action to core human values and relatable concerns like public health—as seen in Brazil's successful "Right to Breathe Clean Air" campaign—the project engaged a vast audience that might otherwise be indifferent to conventional environmental messaging. This shows that tapping into the "soft power" of faith and ethics can be a potent strategy for transcending political polarization and fostering deep, value-based commitment to environmental goals.
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.1 / 4.3 / 4.4

Lesson Learned #6:	Specific activities and strategies to integrate gender equality are needed to ensure an inclusive approach, incorporating these based on analysis at design stage and including both gender mainstreamed and gender-specific activities to foster equal participation and to address specific gendered barriers to participation.
Context/comment:	A general commitment to gender equality was not sufficient to overcome specific contextual or implementation-related barriers in all locations, highlighting the need for more tailored, country-specific strategies to ensure equitable participation and leadership opportunities for women in all programme areas.
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.9.3 / 4.9.4

Lesson Learned #7:	There are multiple benefits to co-locating multi-partner initiatives alongside wider UNEP work, including building public profile and trust, monitoring and increased interaction between initiatives, as well as efficiency savings.
Context/comment:	The physical location of IRI Brazil within the UN House, hosted by UNEP, played a significant role in enabling the programme's strong performance. This arrangement: (i) enhanced the credibility and public trust of the initiative; (ii) facilitated regular interaction with UNEP technical staff across thematic areas, thereby improving the formulation and implementation of national workplans; (iii) enabled closer monitoring of analytical studies carried out in support of federal socio-

	environmental public policies; and (iv) allowed administrative savings to be redirected to programmatic activities, increasing overall cost-effectiveness.
Cross-reference to relevant paragraphs	4.10 (para 110)

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	To ensure the strategic value and lessons from IRI are sustained and mainstreamed, UNEP should establish a formal, bi-annual strategic dialogue with the IRI Global Steering Committee to review IRI's progress, identify synergies with UNEP's global processes, and facilitate the integration of IRI's successful faith-based approaches into wider UNEP programming and ensure continuity of the normative framework and policy engagement processes.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	With IRI's Phase 3 country programme funding and management moving outside of UNEP, there is a significant risk that the strategic link between the two entities will diminish. This could lead to missed opportunities for synergy, prevent the valuable lessons from IRI's unique model from being mainstreamed across UNEP's work, and reduce IRI's ability to connect its national-level advocacy to UN global processes. A formal mechanism is needed to sustain the relationship and ensure mutual benefits continue.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	145
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP Law Division
Proposed time-frame:	Within 3 months of the start of IRI Phase 3, with the first dialogue to be held within 6 months.

Recommendation #2:	For future agile, multi-partner initiatives of a similar nature, structure and scale, UNEP should adopt a simplified management and financial architecture that minimizes intermediary layers and prioritizes direct funding to primary implementing partners.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The project's performance was significantly hampered by an overly complex, multi-layered management and financial architecture. The convoluted flow of funds through multiple partners (UNEP, UNEP-WCMC, RfP) was ill-suited for an agile, networked initiative that required high flexibility, contributions from a range of stakeholders and high levels of political and technical sensitivity.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	114
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #3:	For IRI Phase 3, each country programme should develop a context-specific Gender Action Plan. These plans should be based on a rapid analysis of local barriers to women's participation and leadership and must establish ambitious but realistic targets for female representation in all activities, trainings, and governance structures.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The evaluation found that while the project demonstrated a robust overall commitment to gender equality and exceeded its 30% female representation target in most countries, there was a notable inconsistency in performance. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) programme, for example, reported only 19.5% female representation among trained leaders. This suggests that the general commitment to gender equality was not sufficient to overcome specific contextual or implementation-related barriers in all

	locations, highlighting the need for more tailored, country-specific strategies to ensure equitable participation and leadership opportunities for women in all programme areas. In view of the new phase of the IRI project and UNEP's role, UNEP project staff will pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	156 / 157
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	IRI Global Coordinator and National Coordinators
Proposed time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #4:	IRI should prioritise mentorship and knowledge-sharing between less established country programmes (such as IRI DRC) with more mature programmes (like IRI Brazil and Colombia). This programme should facilitate structured exchange on successful strategies for fundraising, gender mainstreaming, and impactful advocacy, with the goal of accelerating the institutional capacity and effectiveness of newer chapters.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	The evaluation highlights a disparity in performance and resilience between well-established country programmes and newer ones. While IRI Brazil and Colombia have demonstrated strong capacity to mobilize local funds, adapt to political shocks, and exceed gender representation targets, less established programmes like IRI DRC have struggled in these areas, reporting significantly lower female participation (19.5%) and less progress on local resource mobilization. Without a structured mechanism to transfer successful practices and institutional knowledge from mature programmes to newer ones, there is a risk that performance gaps will persist, limiting the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the initiative. In view of the new phase of the IRI project and UNEP's role, UNEP project staff will pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	139 / 163
Priority Level:	Critical
Type of Recommendation	Partner
Responsibility:	IRI Global Coordinator and National Coordinators
Proposed time-frame:	12 months

Recommendation #5:	UNEP Communications should take a more proactive approach to integrating messaging around faith-based engagement on environmental issues to cohere with wider policy processes and opportunities for influence. Guidelines for managing communication on faith-based activities and partnerships should be developed and disseminated across relevant project teams to encourage coverage.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	IRI engage with UNEP's communication team but was not systematically aligned with wider policy processes which was a missed opportunity to amplify messaging. Faith-based engagements should be communicated sensitively, presenting UNEP as a facilitator of diverse voices and partnerships.
Cross-reference(s) to relevant paragraphs	167-171
Priority Level:	Opportunity for improvement
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	Communication Division
Proposed time-frame:	12 months

ANNEX I. RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluator

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
Lessons learned/Recommendations	Agree with everything stated. In terms of optimising the project administration and finance flow, it is essential to run administrative capacity building sessions to country teams focused on: financial reporting, management of receipts, digitalisation of expense reports (using online platforms such as Expensify), etc. The teams need to improve their reporting process, otherwise, the bottlenecks will remain. Furthermore, considering the differentiated admin capacities between teams, the transfer of funds should not be conditioned on the reception of all countries' financial reports. Each country should receive funds upon submission of its own financial/admin report. (and not wait for other teams to report theirs, as it was in Phase 2, this jeopardises teams that report on time).	Comment is noted. Funds transfer conditions applied are a UNEP-wide practice. No change.	The comment has been addressed.

ANNEX II. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection methods
A. Strategic relevance			
To what extent was the project aligned with the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW), and other Strategic Priorities?	- Alignment between the project and the MTS, the POW, and strategic priorities? - Align with plans of key stakeholder institutions at global, regional and national levels?	- ProDoc and project planning documents - UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities - UNEP staff and Partners	- Desk review - Interviews
To what extent did the project respond to demonstrated environmental needs and priorities?	Evidence of IRI responding to identified local needs and priorities in programme countries both at design and during implementation	- Prodoc and project planning documents - Documents outlining approaches to faith and environment - Partners - UNEP staff	- Desk review - Interviews
STRATEGIC QUESTION: To what extent, and how, is there coherence and synergy of the IRI project with other faith-based interventions, including the 2018 UNEP Strategy “Engaging with Faith-based Organizations”, Indigenous Peoples, nature-based solutions, and climate initiatives in UNEP?	Description of how IRI contributes to achievement of the UNEP Strategy and how it aligns or complements other faith-based initiatives, particularly Faith for Earth	- UNEP Strategy - UNEP staff - Documents from other faith based initiatives	- Desk review - Interviews
To what extent did the project embrace a strong adaptation rationale?	Evidence of changes in approach over time based on changes in the global, national or regional strategic and operating context as well as on lessons learnt	- Prodoc and project planning documents - UNEP and delivery partners	- Desk review - Interviews
B. Effectiveness			
<i>Achievement of outputs:</i> was the project successful in delivering its outputs and achieving targets as per the prodoc?	- Number and type of outputs delivered against the logframe’s final targets. - Timeliness of output delivery against the work plan. - Quality of outputs delivered	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Minutes - Stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
<i>Achievement of direct outcomes:</i> Did the outputs contribute to the achievement of the project’s outcomes?	- Number and extent of achievement of milestones toward meeting direct outcome indicators - Evidence of contribution of the project to direct outcomes	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Minutes - Stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
<i>Likelihood of impact (where appropriate and feasible):</i> Did intended impacts effectively materialise as a result of the project’s outcomes? Did the project generate adverse environmental, social, and economic effects?	- Description, referencing the ToC, of progress towards the intermediate state and impact stated. - Evidence that assumptions and drivers identified in the ToC have held	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Minutes - Stakeholders	Interviews

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection methods
	- Evidence and extent of barriers or enabling conditions toward achievement of impact indicators - Nature and likelihood of adverse unintended environmental, social and economic effects from the project.		
STRATEGIC QUESTION: In what ways, and to what extent, have the needs and interests of Indigenous Peoples been considered in the implementation and monitoring of the project?	Evidence from country programmes of how Indigenous Peoples have been considered and/or engaged in the project	Country programme reports and interviews with country-based stakeholders	- Desk Review - Interview
C. Financial management			
Was the rate of disbursement consistent with the work plan, the length of implementation to date and the outputs delivered?	Description of budget execution	- Monitoring and reporting documents (quarterly and annual work plans) - Minutes	Document review
Did the project comply with financial reporting and/or auditing requirements/ schedule, including quality and timeliness of reports?	- Proportion and types of financial reporting and/or auditing materials submitted a) correctly and b) on time - Quality of financial reporting/auditing materials - Description of challenges to financial management and reporting	- Financial reporting/ auditing documents (quarterly, annual reports) - Interviews	- Interviews - Desk Review
D. Efficiency			
To what extent were the outputs achieved in a cost- effective manner?	- Level of alignment between planned and incurred implementation costs and nature of divergences - Evidence of use of financially sound practices for project execution and Quality and timeliness of procurement processes	Financial reporting/ auditing documents (quarterly, annual reports)	- Desk review - Interviews
Did the timing and sequence of activities contribute to or hinder efficiency?	- Timing and sequence of outputs against work plan - Identified challenges and mitigation strategies	- Project planning and reporting documents - Financial reporting/ auditing documents	- Desk review - Interviews
How did the project enhance its cost- and time- effectiveness	- Nature of measures implemented to enhance cost- and time- effectiveness - Factors likely to enhance or hinder efficiency	Project planning and reporting documents	Desk review Interviews
STRATEGIC QUESTION: To what extent has the partner-based tiered project management structure between core-partners affected management costs, planning and country ownership?	Identified positive and/or negative effects of the partner-based and tiered project management structure	- Project reporting - Partner and staff	Document review Interviews

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection methods
E. Monitoring and Reporting			
Was the monitoring plan well- conceived, and sufficient to monitor results and track progress toward achieving project outputs and direct outcomes?	• Use of SMART indicators • Existence and quality of: - o Baseline assessment; - o Performance measurement framework/ logframe; - o Methodology; - o Roles and responsibilities; - o Budget and timeframe/ work plan	• Planning documents • Baseline report • Monitoring and reporting documents	Desk review
Was the monitoring plan operational and effective to track results and progress towards objectives?	• Degree of adherence to timeline and work plan, and (if any) evidence of external factors affecting them • Evidence of collection of monitoring data from all relevant stakeholders • Difference between types of progress and activities reported by local stakeholders and the indicators used to assess results • Types, number and quality of reporting materials submitted a) correctly and b) on time	• Planning meeting minutes/review procedures • Monitoring and reporting documents (annual reports) • UNEP reporting guidelines	
What (if any) corrective actions were taken in response to monitoring reports (such as PPRs)?	Evidence of management response/changes in project strategy/approach as a direct result of information in PPRs	• Project Performance Reviews (PPRs) • Workshops/Meeting minutes from technical group, steering committee, staff, stakeholders, including project steering committee (PSC)	Interviews Desk review
What corrective actions were taken in response to changes/lessons during the implementation period. Were these actions able to enhance delivery of the project's results?	Evidence of management response/changes in project strategy/approach as a direct result of lessons, contextual changes or recommendations	Workshops/Meeting minutes from technical group, steering committee, staff, stakeholders, including PSC	
F. Sustainability			
Did the project design and implement an appropriate exit strategy?	• Existence and quality of an exit strategy • Degree of coherence between actions taken during implementation to avert sustainability risks and prepare project exit, and intended plan	• Project planning documents • Staff • Key stakeholders	
What factors in place enabled or hindered the persistence of achieved direct outcomes?	• Number and type of organisational arrangements that support or hinder the continuation of project activities or results (private or public sector) • Type of political and social conditions affecting the sustainability of direct outcomes • Level of declared willingness among stakeholders to take the project achievements forward • Level of dependence of achievements on future funding for their sustainability and likely availability	Project documents, monitoring and reporting, partners	Interviews Desk review
STRATEGIC QUESTION:	• Existence and type of contextual factors supporting or hindering replication/upscaling	• Project documents, monitoring and reporting, partners	Interviews Desk review

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Information source	Data collection methods
Explore the extent of scaling-up or replication opportunities for effective and cost-effective implementation of future Faith based forest initiatives at country level?	- Examples of actions undertaken by the project to favour upscaling and replication - Evidence of monitoring on the upscaling actions	Wider literature on potential countries suitable for upscale	
STRATEGIC QUESTION: What is the potential for future diversified donor investments in country programmes such as IRI?	- Examples of funding sources identified in each country programme with analysis of how feasible it is to access alternative funds - Identification of opportunities and barriers to diversified funding		
G. Factors affecting project performance			
Did the project appropriately address any weaknesses in project design or any changes in the context or needs identified during the inception/ mobilisation stage of the project?	Number, quality and timeliness of adjustments made in response to identified weaknesses	Delivery partners, staff, meeting minutes	Interviews Desk review
Did the management team and project team, respectively, provide quality and timely project management and backstopping?	- Perceived effectiveness of in managing team structures, leadership and partner relationships, communication, and collaboration - Extent of use of risk management tools - Perceived effectiveness of problem-solving methods	Implementing staff and partners	Interviews Desk review
Were the stakeholder communication and consultation mechanisms effective and inclusive of differentiated groups?	- Number and type of stakeholder engagement activities at each stage of the project - Evidence of participation from a representative range of stakeholder groups, including differentiated groups - Proportion of male/female implementing partners, and participants of workshops, trainings or knowledge exchange - Evidence that issues and feedback provided by stakeholders were taken into consideration in project implementation	Workshop/planning meeting minutes and action items, including PSC Staff and partners	Interviews Desk review
To what extent were effective partnership arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region?	- Number and types of partnerships developed between project and local bodies/organisations - Extent and quality of interaction/ exchange between project implementers and local partners	Minutes and reports	Interviews Desk review
To what extent did the project apply the UN Human rights- based approach, the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous People and UNEP's Policy and Strategy for gender Equality and the Environment?	Level of alignment between project design and implementation and the UN HRBA, the UN DRIP and UNEP Policy and Strategy for gender Equality and the Environment	Planning, monitoring and reporting documents Staff	Interviews Desk review
Did the project effectively communicate lessons and experience with project partners and interested groups?	- Number and quality of knowledge sharing mechanisms with project partners and interested groups - Perceived awareness by partners and interested groups about project lessons, including by gender and marginalized groups	Partners	Interviews Desk review

ANNEX III. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

A total of 21 stakeholders were interviewed for the evaluation (see Table 6. Evaluation respondent profile)

In most cases multiple individuals were consulted across a variety of roles relating to the project

Organization

NICFI

Rainforest Foundation Norway

GreenFaith

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

Parliament of the World's Religions

UNEP

WCMC

RFP

IRI Brazil and partners from government and civil society

IRI Colombia and partners

IRI DRC and partners

IRI Indonesia and partners

IRI Peru and partners

Instituto Socioambiental

Government of Brazil

ANNEX IV. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Document Title	Date
UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Brazil 2023-2027	2022
UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Peru 2022 - 2026	2021
UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Colombia 2024-2027	2023
UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Indonesia 2021 - 2025	2020
UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for DRC 2024-2028	2023
Project Document (ProDoc) and annexes/additions from design stage, comments from project design review meeting	2021
Prodoc Revision, including specific country plans and annexes	2024
IRI Annual Work Plans overall and Country Plans and Budgets	Various
IRI project reports, including six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.	Various
UNEP Strategy on Engaging with Faith-based Organizations to Achieve the SDGs	2018
Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project "Faith for Earth Initiative PIMS 2053", 2019-2023	2024
Faith for Earth – A Call to Action	2020
UNEP-WCMC IRI Impact Assessment	2025

ANNEX V. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Name	Michelle Spearing
Profession	Independent Evaluation Consultant
Nationality	United Kingdom
Country experience	Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen
Education	2017 PG Diploma in Social Research Skills (Conflict Specialism) , University of Ulster 1998 MA in Peace Studies (Politics and International Relations) , University of Lancaster 1997 MA in Theology , University of Oxford

Short biography

Michelle has over 20 years of experience spanning operational programming, research and policy engagement, monitoring, and evaluation. As a consultant she delivers technical advice/accompaniment, evaluations, and research studies commissioned by UN agencies and bilateral donors. She is particularly experienced supporting programming to address governance, conflict and insecurity, gender inequality and social exclusion, and environmental conservation. Michelle holds an MA degree in Peace Studies (Politics and International Relations) and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Research Skills with Conflict Specialism.

Selected assignments and experiences

- May 2025 to August 2025, **Team Leader, Formative Evaluation of the Australia-PNG Sub-National Programme (APSP)**, Australian High Commission/DFAT
- February 2025 to July 2025, **Team Leader, Mid-Term Review of the Bougainville Partnership**, Australian High Commission/DFAT
- January 2025 to June 2025, **Team Leader, Mid-Term Review of the Building Community Engagement in Papua New Guinea Programme**, Australian High Commission/DFAT
- Aug 2024 to October 2025, **Team Leader, Gaashaan Protection Programme Evaluation Somalia**, FCDO
- Dec 2023-December 2024, **Researcher, Climate Resilient Futures (PNG case study)**, ODI / USAID
- May 2024 ongoing to 2026, **Gender, Conflict and Safeguarding Advisor, Sudan Independent Monitoring and Analysis**, FCDO
- November 2023 – March 2025, **Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor Support to the Governance Branch, Australian High Commission, PNG**, OPM for DFAT
- May 2024-Oct 2024, **International Consultant, Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Partnership Framework 2022-2025 (SPFIII) between Sida, Norad and UN Women**, UN Women
- July 2023 - June 2024, **Independent Evaluator: UNEP Faith for Earth Initiative**, UNEP Evaluation Office.
- Nov 2023 – March 2024, **MEL Advisor, Developing an M&E framework and baseline for the UK NAP on Women, Peace and Security**, WPS Helpdesk/FCDO
- May 2022 to December 2022, **Team Leader/International Expert, Evaluation of UN Peace Building Fund (PBF) projects in Bougainville, PNG**. UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA.
- February 2018-April 2022, **Team Leader / Technical Advisor, Papua New Guinea Quality and Technical Assurance Group (QTAG)**. An initiative to review and support DFAT aid in PNG, including:
 - **2021/2022 Final Review of the PNG Governance Facility** (Gender Social Inclusion Advisor

- **2019 Mid-Term Review of Australia-PNG Church Partnerships Programme** (Team Leader)
- **2019 Annual Review of PNG Governance Facility** (Gender Equality/Social Inclusion Advisor)
- **Annual Review of PNG Governance Facility** (Gender Equality/Social Inclusion Advisor)
- **2018 Independent Evaluation of Justice Services for Stability and Development** (GBV advisor)
- Aug-Dec 2021, **Gender and Peacebuilding Evaluation Lead - Development of a Women, Peace and Security Strategic Approach for UNDP Asia-Pacific**, UNDP.
- March 2022-June 2022, **Review Lead, External Review of PVE Projects**, UN Women Asia Pacific
- April 2020-Dec 2021, **Women, Peace and Security Lead: Global Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (GMEL) Project**, CSSF.
- August-October 2021, **Women, Peace, and Security Research Consultant - Study on Women Peacebuilders in Somalia**, UNDP Somalia.
- Dec 2020 to May 2021, **Technical Lead, Development of a Guidance Note to support Implementation of the Danish National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security**, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Jan-March 2020, **Gender Expert, The Pacific Ocean Litter Project**, DfEE (Australia).
- Mar 2020-Aug 2020, **Technical Lead on Security, Justice, and Peacebuilding, VAWG Helpdesk**, DFID.
- 2017-2019, **Principal Investigator: 'Exploring the Intersection of peacebuilding and statebuilding with VAWG', What Works to Prevent VAWG in Conflict and Humanitarian Emergencies**, DFID.
- 2019, **Lead Researcher, The Centre for Disaster Protection (Crisis Financing Series)**
- 2017-2018, **Team Lead, Gender Review of GiZ Programme with Refugee/Host Communities, Kenya**.
- 2015-2016, **Lead Evaluation Researcher: Inclusive Local Governance in Fragile States, Peace under Construction / Foundations for Peace Programme in Somalia and Burundi**, CARE Netherlands.
- 2012-2015, **Technical Advisor, Somalia Governance and Peacebuilding Programme**, CARE for DFID.
- 2010-2012, **Technical Lead, Reducing conflict between refugees, IDP's and host communities, Yemen**, FCO.
- 2012-2013, **Project Director, The Conflict, Crime and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI)**, DFID.

ANNEX VI. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

Evaluand Title:

Terminal Evaluation: UNEP Project “Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, Phase 2” (2021-2024), SMA ID 99286

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

Report Quality Criteria	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Section A: Executive Summary	Assessment	
1. Does the <i>Executive Summary</i> act as a concise, accurate standalone section, especially to inform decision-making? Consider how clearly and concisely the report presents: - a clear summary of the evaluation object - evaluation objectives, scope and methodology - the overall project evaluation rating - a summary of main evaluation findings, including key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) - summary responses to key strategic evaluation questions - summary of main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> <i>All required elements are addressed.</i> <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> <i>A concise and summarized presentation is made of the required elements of the executive summary.</i> It would have been beneficial to mention more about the evaluation methodology.	5.5
Section B: The Project	Assessment	
2. Does the report clearly describe the <i>key parameters, scale and complexity of the evaluand</i>? Consider how well the report presents: - an overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address - timeline, including dates of project approval, duration and number of phases (where appropriate) - geographic coverage (regions/countries) - total secured budget and project financing, including a table with funding sources - implementing and funding partners - institutional context (i.e. UNEP sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) - implementation structure with diagram - UNEP results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. PoW Direct Outcome) - summary of results framework as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) - stakeholder groups organised according to relevant common characteristics - whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, by an external agency, etc.) - substantive or significant changes in design during implementation	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are addressed and contains context, results framework, project implementation structure and partners, stakeholders, changes in design during implementation, and project financing. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Tables are used to present easy-to-read overviews of the project’s results framework with indicators, project partners role, stakeholder mapping and project funding sources. It would have been beneficial to present more detail about the geographic coverage of the project. The project countries are presented in the project	5.5

	identification table and addressed in the evaluation's findings.	
Section C: Evaluation Methods and Theory of Change		Assessment
3. Does the report present a clear, comprehensive and adequate description of the evaluation methodology? Consider how well it presents the following elements, and their adequacy based on the scope of the evaluation: - statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the evaluation findings - data collection methods and information sources - justification for methods used (e.g. electronic/face-to-face interviews, qualitative/quantitative analysis) - criteria and sampling strategies used to select stakeholders for consultations, and for sites/countries visited - number and types of respondents (<i>including in a table broken down by gender</i>) - strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and response rate - methods used to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. women, marginalised) - data verification methods (e.g. triangulation) - data analysis methods (e.g. scoring, thematic analysis) - evaluation limitations and mitigation measures (e.g. how these were addressed by the evaluator) - consideration for ethics and human rights issues, including how anonymity and confidentiality were protected	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The required elements are covered in the section, including evaluation approach, data collection, data analysis, and limitations and mitigation strategies. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The description references relevant annexes. Table 7 provides an overview of evaluation respondents' profile. It would have been beneficial it is had included a breakdown by gender of the interviewees.	5
4. Does the report describe an assessment and reformulation of the Theory of Change, and present an adequate articulation of the TOC causal pathways that were used to assess project performance (<i>narratively and diagrammatically</i>)? Consider how well the report presents: - whether the project design included a TOC - how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>³² was designed (e.g. who was involved, etc) - confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions (<i>including reformulation table, which may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear in the Main Evaluation report.</i>) - articulation of causal pathways - identification of drivers and assumptions - identification of key actors in the change process	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are included. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The prescribed tables and diagram have been used for RToC. In table 8: Justification for reformulation of results statements, the reformulated wording is highlighted in red to improve readability. The assessment of the RToC could have benefited from a more detailed accompanying narrative.	5
Section D: Evidence and Analysis		Assessment
5. Is the report based on sufficient and adequate data and clear and credible evidence? Consider how well the report presents: - sufficient evidence that is consistent throughout the report - evidence that is supported by data sources (e.g. quotes, reports, etc)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Quantitative and qualitative evidence is presented. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	5

³² During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

- evidence that is explicitly triangulated, unless noted as having a single source - gaps in data are explained and justified - data sources that are reliable, adequate, sufficient for the scope of the evaluation	Sufficient data sources in terms of documents and interviewees are referenced as evidence with due consideration of maintaining the anonymity of the interviewees. It would have been beneficial to include more explicit reference to the UNEP-WCMC Impact Assessment when used as evidence or for triangulation.	
6. Does the report include <i>rigorous analysis</i> and <i>logical findings</i>? Consider the extent to which the findings are: - supported by clear analysis that is consistent with the evidence presented - logical, clear and coherent - aligned with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix - aligned with the evaluation framework - more than descriptions and provide insights into 'how' and/or 'why' the project performed a certain way - balanced, presenting both successes and weaknesses	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Findings are formulated based on the evidence presented. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Consistency is achieved throughout the report.	5.5
Section E: Evaluation Findings	Assessment	
7. Does the report present evidence and analysis of project <i>Strategic Relevance</i> with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval? Consider how well the report addresses: - Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities - Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partners Strategic Priorities - Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities - Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation³³), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Each sub-category is assessed with ratings, and an overall rating is provided. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The strategic relevance of SDGs to IRI has been assessed. Tables are used for each sub-category to present the relevant alignment and determine the level of alignment. It would have been beneficial to explore and assess complementarity with interventions of other UN entities.	5
Does the report present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the <i>Quality of Project Design</i>, based on the detailed assessment presented in the Inception Report?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> All required elements are included in the section. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The summary presents both strengths and weaknesses of the IRI project design.	*NOT RATED

³³ 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.

Does the report recognise and describe, when appropriate, key features of the Nature of the External Context under which the project was implemented that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval³⁴), and how they affected performance?	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section presents relevant external factors. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The factors relevant to the context of religious communities and churches have been assessed.	*NOT RATED
8. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Availability of Outputs to the intended beneficiaries? Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing, evidence-supported and clear presentation of the outputs made available by the project compared to its approved plans and budget • assessment of the nature and scale of outputs versus the project indicators and targets • assessment of the timeliness, quality and utility of outputs to intended beneficiaries • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Each output is assessed and an overall rating of availability of outputs is provided for Outputs 1-4. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Each output's availability is assessed against baseline, target and actual result with a breakdown by project country. The narrative assessment for each output is detailed presents further evidence to support the assessment of the outputs' level of achievement.	6
9. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the Achievement of Outcomes, as a result of the uptake, adoption and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries? This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. Consider how well the report presents: • a convincing and evidence-supported analysis of the uptake of outputs by intended beneficiaries • assessment of the nature, depth and scale of outcomes versus the project indicators and targets • discussion of the contribution, credible association and/or attribution of outcome level changes to the work of the project itself • any constraints to attributing effects to the projects' work • identification of positive or negative effects of the project on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes key required elements. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Each outcome's achievements are assessed against baseline, target and actual result with a breakdown by project country. The narrative assessment for each outcome is detailed presents further evidence to support the assessment of the outcomes' level of achievement, including at country level.	6
10. Does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to Likelihood of Impact? Consider how well the report presents: • an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and the resulting change processes	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The section includes key required elements.	5

³⁴ Note that 'political upheaval' does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project's design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

• an explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out • an explanation of roles played by key actors and change agents • identification of any unintended negative effects of the project, especially on disadvantaged groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation (e.g. through disability).	<u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> A short assessment is included of additional unintended consequences in reaching more diverse and hard to reach audiences. It would have been beneficial to include an assessment of potential unintended effects on groups due to gender.	
11. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Financial Management and include a completed 'financial management' table? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • <i>adherence</i> to UNEP's financial policies and procedures • <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs and actual co-financing used and explanation of any variances between planned and actual expenditures	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The two sub-categories have been assessed and rated, and an overall rating is provided. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Lessons for future project design are highlighted.	5.5
12. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Efficiency? Consider how well the report presents: • cost-effective or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe • implications of any delays and no cost extensions • discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, partnerships and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. • the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> A summarized assessment is provided covering some aspects. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The assessment highlights both efficiency gains achieved during the project and challenges and identifies inefficiencies.	5.5
13. Does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the project's Monitoring and Reporting? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • the quality of <i>monitoring of project implementation</i> (including use of monitoring data for adaptive management) • the quality of <i>project reporting</i> (e.g. PIMS and donor reports)	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The required elements of the two sub-categories are addressed and ratings provided and an overall rating of the criteria. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> Short and concise assessment of the criteria. The quality of project reporting includes an assessment of the extent to which gender equality and female empowerment, indigenous people and disability inclusion are part of the project's reporting.	5.5
14. Does the report present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under Sustainability (i.e. the endurance of benefits achieved at outcome level)? Consider how well the report addresses the following: • socio-political sustainability • financial sustainability • institutional sustainability	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The three sub-categories are assessed and rated, and an overall rating is provided. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	5.5

	5.5The assessment identifies contributing factors and undermining factors to sustainability. Considerations related to the new phase of the project have been included.	
15. Does the report present a well-evidence analysis of the <i>Factors Affecting Performance</i>, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections? <i>These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed, and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors.</i> Consider how well the report addresses the following cross-cutting issues: • quality of project management and supervision³⁵ • stakeholder participation and co-operation • responsiveness to human rights and gender equality • environmental and social safeguards • country ownership and driven-ness • communication and public awareness	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Each sub-category is assessed and rated, and an overall rating is provided. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The assessment of stakeholders' participation and cooperation address key groups but could have benefited from insights on stakeholders particular to each specific IRI project country.	5
Section F: Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Recommendations	Assessment	
16. Do the <i>Conclusions</i> present a summative assessment of the evaluand as a whole, reflecting on prominent aspects of the project's performance? Consider how well the conclusions: • provide a compelling narrative and integrated assessment of project project's performance (i.e. achievements and limitations) • add deeper insights and analysis beyond the findings under each individual criterion • are derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process • provide clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions • address the human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) • provide lessons that are rooted in real project experiences, describe the context from which they are derived, and do not duplicate recommendations	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Section 5 has conclusions and recommendations, and Responses to Key Strategic Questions. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The summary table (Table 23) of project findings and ratings provides very good summary assessments of each criterion that can be read as a standalone overview of the project's performance. Seven lessons learned are presented in the required format and rooted in the IRI project experiences.	5.5
17. Does the report present <i>Recommendations</i> for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its results? Consider how well the recommendations: • are clearly formulated and logically derived from the findings and/or conclusions	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> Four recommendations are presented in the format required. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u>	5

³⁵ In some cases 'project management and supervision' will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP. This includes providing the answers to the questions on Core Indicator Targets, stakeholder engagement, gender responsiveness, safeguards and knowledge management, required for the GEF portal.

- are feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when - include at least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions - represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations. NOTES: (i) In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance. (ii) Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.	Recommendations #3 and #4 are addressed to the IRI Global Coordinator and National Coordinators. The role of UNEP in passing on the recommendations has been specified but it could have been more integrated in the formulation of the two recommendations.	
Section G: Report Structure and Presentation	Assessment	
18. Is the report <i>well-structured and complete</i>? Does it: - follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines - include all required sections and annexes, as applicable - not exceed 50 pages in length from the Executive Summary to the end of the Conclusion Does the report present information clearly and appropriately? Is it written: - in clear and accessible language - largely free from grammar, spelling and punctuation errors - in an adequate and professional tone - with the use of visual aids, such as maps, graphs tables and photos	<u>Coverage/omissions:</u> The draft report is complete and structured according to guidelines. <u>Strengths/weaknesses:</u> The language is clear, adequate and satisfactory. The report makes good use of tables, figures and diagram to provide overviews and improve the overall readability of the report.	5.5
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING	The average of the ratings is 5.36.	5.5

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

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

Rating the Report Quality Criteria

Rating (1-6)	Description
6	Provides all content with high quality.
5	Provides all content with minor weaknesses.
4	Provides most content with minor weaknesses.
3	Provides most content with significant weaknesses.

2	Omits substantive content with significant weaknesses.
1	Omits almost all content with major weaknesses.

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

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
Consultant's independence:		
1. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?		X
2. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders?		X
3. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		X
4. If Yes to Q3: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?	-	
Project's engagement and support:		
5. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	X	
6. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	X	
7. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	X	
8. Were the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff, partners and interviewed stakeholders given an opportunity to provide comments on key deliverables, as appropriate (e.g. Terms of Reference, Inception Report and Draft Evaluation Report)?	X	
Quality assurance of key deliverables:		
9. Were the Terms of Reference peer-reviewed?	X	
10. Was the inception report peer-reviewed, including the Theory of Change?	X	
11. Were evaluation preliminary findings presented to the project team in a format allowing discussion, before drafting the report?	X	
12. Was the draft report peer-reviewed?	X	
Transparency and commenting:		
13. Was the inception report, including the (reconstructed) TOC, sent to the project team, relevant UNEP senior staff and partners, with a minimum of eight working days to comment?	X	
14. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	X	
15. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office?	X	
16. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	X	
17. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	X	
Financial Resources:		
18. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation? If not, comment in the table below on the sufficiency of the funds made available.	X	
19. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process? If not, comment in the table below.	X	

Timeliness:		
20. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within six months after project operational completion and not more than three months prior? (Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?)	X	
21. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	-	
22. Were all submission and commenting deadlines met as set by the Evaluation Manager and as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed? If not, comment in the table below on exceptional delays.	X	