TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF project

"Strengthening endogenous capacities of least developed countries to access finance for climate change adaptation" (Short title: UNILEAD)

GEF ID 10525 / SMA IPMR ID: 95143

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

GEF Project ID/SMA ID[1]:	GEF ID: 10525 / SMA ID: 95143		
Type of GEF Project:	Child: N/A	**Global Coordinating Project:**	N/A
	GEF Programme[2] ID: N/A	**Medium-Size Project or Full-Size Project:**	Medium-Size Project
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Climate Change Division / Adaptation & Resilience Branch / Climate Change Adaptation Unit	**Executing Agency: (*indicate if internally executed*):**	START International
Sources of Funding (Co-finance):	*Institution[3] Name/Type:* UNEP Global Adaptation Network, UNIDO, START International, and LUCCC University members.		
Relevant SDG(s):	Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts		
MTS (at approval):	MTS 2018-2021		
POW Output(s) number/reference [15] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022)*	2021 POW expected accomplishment *(a) Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans, which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation.* 2021 POW outputs 1.1 Technical support provided to countries and by extension regions to develop tools, methods, scientific evidence, knowledge networks and promote South-South cooperation to advance near-term and long-term national adaptation plans that integrate ecosystem-based adaptation Output 2.5: Readiness of countries and institutions to access or mobilize climate finance strengthened through support to make projects bankable and replicable negotiations and reporting	POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference [15] *(applicable for projects approved pre-2022):*	POW 2020-2021 Expected Accomplishment (b) Countries increasingly adopt and/or implement low greenhouse gas emission development strategies and invest in clean technologies *MTS 2022-2025 Direct outcomes: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.8*

[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] *GEF Programme refers to 'Parent' project.*

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

	MTS 2022-2025 *Outcomes: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A*		
Sub-programme:	Climate Action	**Programme Coordination Project (if relevant):**	N/A
UNEP approval date:	November 2021	**GEF approval date:**	August 2021
GEF Operational Programme/Cycle # (e.g. GEF-7):	GEF 7	**GEF Strategic Priority (e.g. BD4):**	CCA 3 -Foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation
Focal Area(s):	Climate Change Adaptation		
***Expected* start date:**[4]	Q4 2021	**Actual start date:**[5]	December 2021
***Planned* completion date:**[16]	Q4 2023	**Actual operational completion date:**	June 2025
***Planned* project budget at approval:**	GEF grant allocation: USD 1,980,000		
	Expected co-financing: USD 2,074,424 *Cash: USD 1,285,684* *In-kind: 788,740*		
	Total planned budget: USD 4,054,424		
Actual expenditures reported (cash only):	GEF grant expenditures reported as of **30 June 2025**: : 1,033,845		
	Actual co-financing as of **30 June 2025**: 2,426,795		
	Total actual expenditures reported as of 30 June 2025: 3,460,640		
No. of formal project revisions:	Two (2)	**Date of last approved project revision:**	August 2021 December 2024
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	7	**Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:**	Apr 19, 2022 Dec 1, 2022 March 15, 2023 Nov 3, 2023 May 16, 2024 Oct. 4, 2024 July 24, 2025
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation[6] ***(required or not required):***	UNEP requirement: N/A GEF requirement: N/A	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation actual date:	N/A
Terminal Evaluation *(planned date):*	December 2024	Terminal Evaluation actual date:	September 2025
Coverage - Countries:	Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda	Coverage - Regions:	Africa, Asia and the Pacific
Dates of previous project phases:	N/A	Status of future project phases:	N/A

2. Project Rationale[7]

1. Anthropogenic climate change has been recognized as one of the most pressing global issues currently facing humanity. However, it has also been recognized that the impacts of climate change are not distributed evenly, and that in many cases, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) stand to absorb a disproportionate share of these impacts, whilst at the same time these LDCs lack the resources and capacities to address the impacts. A cornerstone of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the understanding that developing countries, and especially LDCs, have historically contributed the least to the phenomenon of anthropogenic global warming, which is the

[4] *Expected/planned dates are listed in the Project Document (ProDoc).*

[5] *Actual start date is the date of the last signature on the PCA or ICA.*

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

[7] *Grey =Info to be added*

principle driver of climate change. To address the inequity of impacts, developed country Parties to the UNFCCC have committed to channeling new and additional financing to developing countries to assist with climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.

2. Next to the official financial mechanisms of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, several other multilateral mechanisms have been established to facilitate this mobilization of funds. In addition to these efforts, some developing countries have even taken the initiative to establish funds at national level to finance adaptation and mitigation activities at sub-national level.

3. Although much progress has been made, scaled-up actions to support climate change adaptation in developing countries are not without obstacles. The obstacles to scaling up climate change adaptation action in developing countries have to date impeded the effective delivery of finance to where it is most needed and have created bottlenecks in terms of project identification, design, and implementation. As climate finance is scaled up in the future, if these obstacles are not addressed, they are expected to continue to have a significant impact on the ability to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of the people and places most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

4. These obstacles can be grouped generally into three related categories: (i) Mobilization of public and private sector climate finance; (ii) Flow and delivery of funds; and (iii) Fundability of projects. The overall impact of this situation serves to curtail the resources available to LDC governments from domestic public sources, international climate change financiers, and the private sector to support adaptation efforts. This in turn undermines scaled-up adaptation action and the transformative change that is necessary to move LDCs into climate-resilient economic and social development pathways. The project titled “Strengthening endogenous capacities of least developed countries to access finance for climate change adaptation” (a.k.a UNILEAD), as designed to address these underlying capacity gaps by building the requisite capacities among LDC institutions through a long-term, sustained institutional approach.

5. There had been several other initiatives aimed at building capacities related to developing climate change adaptation projects among stakeholders in developing countries, and several guides and toolkits had been developed. UNILEAD represented a departure from previous capacity development initiatives in that it situated the locus of capacity building activities within the LDCs by establishing an enduring institutional structure (the thinktanks). Thus, the project built on successful pedagogical and capacity-building approaches implemented by other donor-supported projects and created a mechanism for sustained capacity strengthening, along with mentoring and support that was essential for increasing the capability of LDCs to develop their own climate change adaptation projects. In that sense, UNILEAD was innovative in that it envisioned a long-term, sustained institutional approach to addressing the underlying capacity gaps that had been identified.

3. Project Results Framework

6. The **overall objective** of the project was to strengthen capacities of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to achieve scaled up and effective climate change adaptation, by fostering sustained endogenous technical services for project development, policy mainstreaming and the creation of an enabling environment for adaptation to climate change. This project, and others like it, while not focusing specifically on climate change adaptation, anticipated a significant success in supporting sustained improvements in institutions, research capability, co-production of knowledge partnerships between the universities and governments, and creating the enabling conditions for universities to serve as service providers to governments and other stakeholders in developing countries.

7. The main mechanism to achieve the overall objective was via the establishment and capacitating of a network of LDC-based institutions (Technical Service Providers; referred to hereafter as “thinktanks”), based at existing tertiary education/research institutions. Candidate institutions were identified during the project’s design phase and included members of the LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC) as well as other organizations/institutions involved in climate change adaptation policy design and project development. These thinktanks would provide critical services to LDC governments relating to the design and implementation of climate change adaptation policies and projects/programmes.

8. The project was organized around three main components, with four expected Outcomes as follows:

9. **Component 1**: <u>Collaborative mechanism for sustained endogenous capacity on climate change adaptation finance.</u> This component sought to build the human and institutional capabilities of LDC universities to provide fee-based technical services to governments and other stakeholders. The

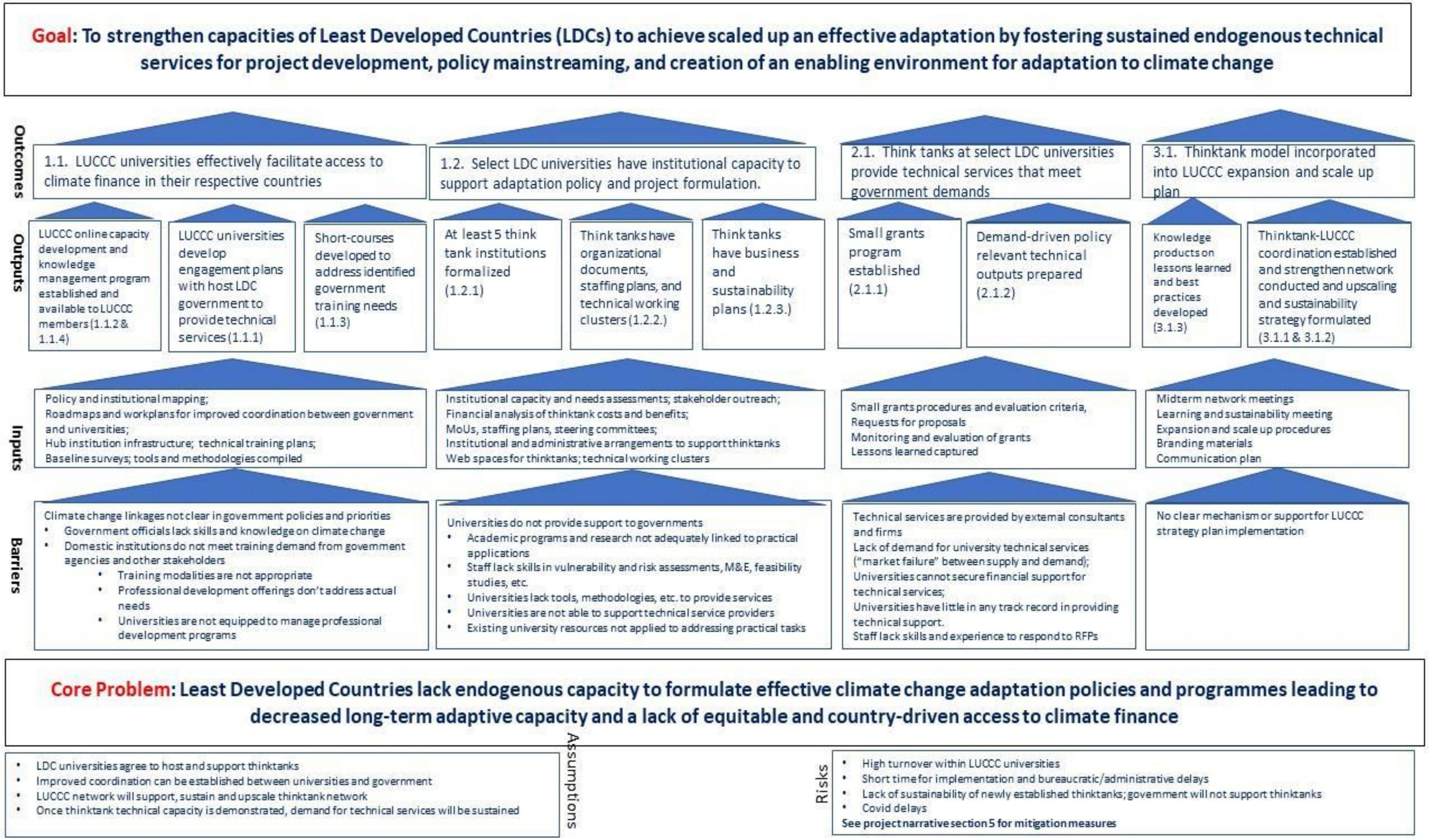
results (Outcomes) from this first component included (**Outcome 1.1**) LUCCC universities would effectively facilitate access to climate finance in their respective countries; and (**Outcome 1.2)** LDC universities would have institutional capacity to support adaptation policy and project formulation.

10. **Component 2**: Technical capacity building for LDC governments. This component provided small grants primarily to the thinktanks established in Component 1 to support the production of technical service products that were needed by host governments to support climate change adaptation planning and project development. The result was that thinktanks at select LDC universities would provide technical services that meet government demands (**Outcome 2.1**).

11. **Component 3**: Scaling up. It was expected that after project completion, the thinktank network would be embedded within the existing structure of the LUCCC, and so this component helped to establish the enabling conditions for a successful phase over. Under this component, UNLIEAD would develop a sustainability and upscaling strategy to facilitate the entry of more thinktanks into the network in the future (**Outcome 3.1**).

12. The project's **Theory of Change** is presented in Figure 1 and an abridged version of the **Results Framework** is presented in Table 2 (overleaf).

Figure 1. Theory of Change at Design (source: Revised CEO Endorsement Request. August 2021[8])



[8] Note that the theory of change was not updated to reflect the changes to the project that are reflected in the revised results framework. So there may be a bit of a mismatch between the two.

Table 2. Revised Results Framework (Abridged. Source: Baseline Study for the UNI-LEAD project)

Programmed Outputs and Expected Outcomes	Indicators	Target
Project Objectives: to strengthen capacities of LDCs to achieve scaled up and effective adaptation by fostering endogenous technical services for project development, policy mainstreaming, and creation of an enabling environment for adaptation to climate change	Positive satisfaction ratings in Government for think tank services to support in scaling up of adaptation finance	3 countries that have positive feedback on think tank services
Component 1: Collaborative mechanism for sustained endogenous capacity on climate change adaptation finance		
Outcome 1.1: LUCCC universities effectively facilitate access to climate finance in their respective countries	Number of institutions with increased ability to access and/ or manage climate finance	3 institutions with level 3 ability to access climate finance[1] At least three institutions per region with evidence of engagement with their respective LUCCC universities through representation of NFPs at in-person regional meetings At least two PoCs per region providing evidence of follow up meetings with their NFPs after the face-to-face regional workshops
Output 1.1.1: LUCCC universities formulate engagement plans with host LDC governments to provide specific technical services to government agencies	Number of engagement plans with host governments (derived from the completed roadmaps)	7 engagement plans
Output 1.1.2. LUCCCC development hub established	Number of capacity development hubs established	At least three surveys of the PMU with PoCs to determine capacity needs as the project progresses A training workshop and learning resource packet developed for the PoCs that include GESI, climate rationale, basics of climate finance, climate finance proposal development, and other topics, to be determined through consultations between PoCs and NFPs. 1 capacity development hub launched within the second quarter of the project
Output 1.1.3: At least 5 short course programs inclusive of GESI/CC developed for use by LUCCC institutions for technical service delivery to host governments	Number of short course trainings developed and provided to the LUCCC member institutions to enhance capacity for them to then offer this training to their governments.	At least 1 meeting between PoCs and NFPs for at least 7 universities One in-person training session held on the 5 short-course topics
Output 1.1.4: Knowledge and information resource management system set up at the capacity development hub with procedures for updating and disseminating resources repository contents	Number of knowledge and information resource management systems	1 knowledge and information resource management system set up at capacity development hub
Outcome 1.2: Select LDC universities have institutional capacity to support adaptation policy and project formulation	Number of people trained through capacity building activities/ initiatives	260 people [2] – of which 100 are women and 160 are men.
Output 1.2.1: At least 3 thinktank institutions formalized through MoU or similar mechanism at 3 LUCCC universities	Number of thinktank institutions established	3 thinktank institutions established

Programmed Outputs and Expected Outcomes	Indicators	Target
Output 1.2.2: Thinktanks formally operational through development of organizational charters, staffing plans and steering committees (no less than 3). At least 1 multidisciplinary technical working clusters established at each thinktank (no less than 3 thinktanks).	Number of organisational charters, staffing plans or steering committees Number of multidisciplinary technical working clusters established	3 organisational charters, staffing plans or steering committees developed/established 3 multidisciplinary technical working clusters established (1 in each thinktank)
Output 1.2.3: Technical working clusters and support system established to provide technical goods and services	Type of support system established for thinktank to provide goods/services	A list of fee-based services established for think tanks
Output 1.2.4. Business and sustainability plans formulated for each thinktank (at least 3).	Number of business and sustainability plans formulated	3 business and sustainability plans formulated (one for each thinktank)
Component 2: Technical capacity building for LDC governments		
Outcome 2.1: Think tanks at select LDC universities provide technical services that meet government demands	Number of people made aware of think tank services and their ability to assist with appropriate adaptation responses	105 people (35 technical officers/planners per each country[3]) The project would use a scorecard approach to measure levels of awareness
Output 2.1.1: Small grants program set up with proposal guidelines, procedures, and evaluation criteria to support demand-led policy research and technical services.	Number of small grants programs set up	1 small grants program developed
Output 2.1.2: At least 12 demand-led and policy relevant technical outputs prepared across university thinktanks in a minimum of 3 countries.	Number of demand-led policy relevant outputs prepared across university thinktanks	12 technical products/ outputs developed
Component 3: Scaling up		
Outcome 3.1: Think tank model incorporated into LUCCC expansion and scale up plan	Number of additional institutions with confirmed interest and funded workplan to pilot the model	2 Institutions
Output 3.1.1: Two meetings (1 per year of project implementation) conducted to a) share knowledge and learning about the thinktank experience; b) strengthen the overall LUCCC thinktank network; and c) increase regional and global awareness of the thinktanks and their capabilities.	Number of meetings held (by the project) to share knowledge and increase global awareness	2 meetings (1 per year)
Output 3.1.2: LUCCC thinktank network upscaling and sustainability strategy developed	Number of upscaling products/ documents developed for LUCCC	1 upscaling strategy for the LUCCC network and thinktanks
Output 3.1.3: At least 2 knowledge products developed to synthesize and disseminate lessons learned and best practices from thinktank network	Number of lessons learned knowledge products developed through the project	2 knowledge products developed

4. Executing Arrangements

13. The GEF **Implementation Agency** (IA) for the project was the Climate Change Adaptation Unit (CCAU) in the Ecosystems Division which was responsible for the overall supervision of the project and provided oversight for its progress through the monitoring and reporting of activities. The IA also provided guidance to the GEF **Executing Agency** (EA) – START International - including through the review and approval of work plans, budget allocations and budget revisions. The EA was responsible for, among other things: ensuring that the project is executed according to the agreed work plan and budget; submit required reporting obligations to the IA, including quarterly expenditure reports and annual Project implementation Reports (PIR); ensuring procurement is done in compliance with UN and GEF standards; communicating and disseminating information to all project stakeholders; establishment, adequate staffing and uninterrupted functioning, throughout the project's life span, of the PMU; etc.

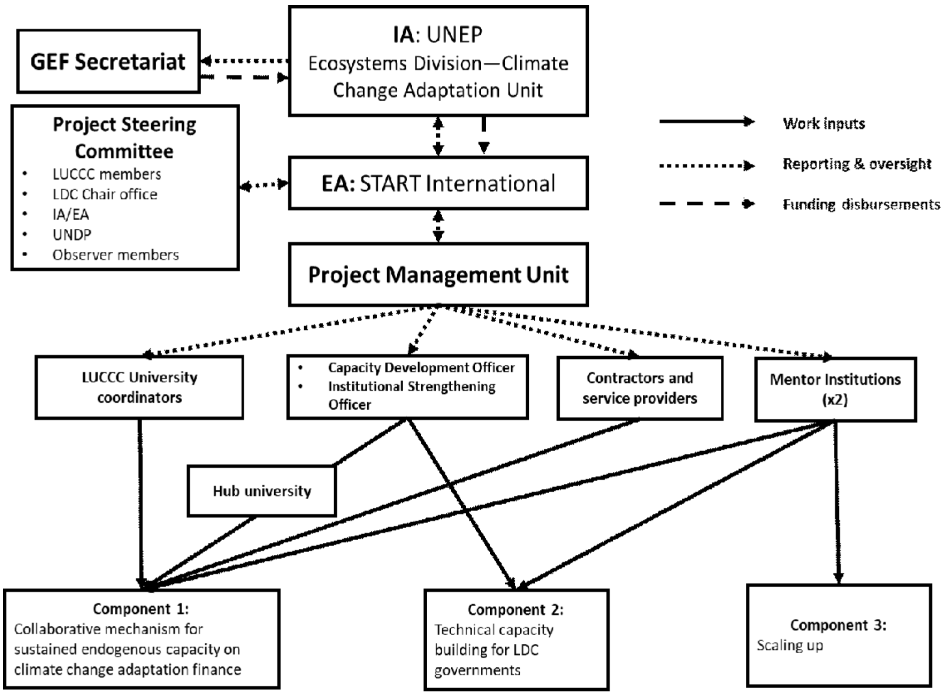
14. The IA reported on the project implementation progress to the GEF and took part in the **Project Steering Committee** (PSC) which carried out the function of a Project Board. Some of the roles of the PSC included providing strategic oversight and direction; approving workplans and budgets; providing overall supervision on implementation and corrective actions; and ensuring the project remained consistent with the strategic direction of the LUCCC and the LDC Group. A **Project Management Unit** was established to serve as the secretariat for the PSC and receive progress updates by the **Project Manager**. The PMU managed the day-to-day operations of the project, with functions including: preparing annual and monthly workplans; quarterly and annual reporting; implementing the M&E, gender action and stakeholder engagement plans; maintaining accounting and financial records; etc.

15. The project also engaged a **mentor institution (Climate Analytics)** that has existing programs and/or expertise that are consistent with the thinktanks that the project aimed to establish in the LUCCC universities. The mentor institutions would support all three of the project components. National level execution was at the LUCCC universities, each of which designated a department to be the recipient of the project's activities. At each university, a focal point was appointed to serve as the UNILEAD **Point-of-Contact** (PoC) to assist in the implementation of the project's activities at the university and to engage their respective governments.

16. Stakeholder groups involved in the project included government planners, University researchers; NGOs, partnering thinktanks, and the LDC group of political focal points. The think tanks initiated under this project were hosted by academic and research institutions based in LDCs, and which also conducted some of the project activities.

17. The implementation arrangements for the project are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Project organogram



5. Project Cost and Financing

18. UNILEAD is a Medium-Sized Project with a total project cost of **USD 4,054,424** of which USD 1,980,000 is from the GEF LDCF Trust Fund, and USD 2,074,424 in co-funding from the Executing Agency and other third parties.

Table 3. Project Budget

Project Outcomes	GEF - LDCF	Co-financing
Outcome 1.1: LUCCC universities effectively facilitate access to climate finance in their respective countries Outcome 1.2: Select LDC universities have institutional capacity to support adaptation policy and project formulation	661,000	1,380,146
Outcome 2.1: Think tanks at select LDC universities provide technical services that meet government demands	1,050,000	381,125
Outcome 3.1: Think tank model incorporated into LUCCC expansion and scale up plan	30,000	109,000
Monitoring and Evaluation	59,000	
Project Management Cost (PMC)	180,000	204,153
Total project costs	**1,980,000**	**2,074,424**

Table 4. Co-financing for the project

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount ($)
Beneficiaries	LUCCC University members	In kind	Recurrent expenditures	687,844
Beneficiaries	LUCCC University members	Grant	Investment mobilised	731,560
Donor Agency	UNEP Global Adaptation Network	Grant	Investment mobilized	100,000
Executing Agency	START	Grant	Investment mobilized	454,124
Executing Agency	START	In Kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,896
Total Co-financing				**2,074,224**

6. Implementation Issues

19. The development of a project guidance manual with best-case examples of university-government collaboration, the initiation and completion of policy and institutional mapping for climate finance across 13 LUCCC countries, and the development of roadmaps for university-government engagement, served to lay the groundwork for a call for proposals for the establishment of think-tanks. These were established at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop (Senegal), Makerere University (Uganda), Pokhara University (Nepal), and Eduardo Mondlane University (Mozambique) The Senegal think tank fell behind schedule in2024 but was eventually established, and it met all of its deliverables. In the run-up to establishing the think-tanks, the issue of capacity deficiencies in how to develop successful climate finance proposals was a consistently expressed sentiment, that led to a consensus by the project partners to focus on capacity building related to developing fundable climate finance proposals for which the universities would play a technical advisory role in collaboration with their governments.

20. One of the challenges experienced during implementation involved concerns over the Capacity Development Hub (CDH), which (according to PIR FY 2023) was found to be significantly underperforming. A formal documentation of this problem was shared with UNEP, and the decision was made by UNEP and START to rescind the contract with the CDH in 2024 and for START to take over the development of the web platform and repository, which was a major deliverable of the CDH. Furthermore, the LUCCC POCs expressed concerns about the way that capacity development was structured (i.e. through webinars and virtual short courses); in response, the project was restructured to accommodate in-person shared learning and a greater focus on relevant capacity development to mitigate the problems identified.

21. Since the inception of this project, the LDC Chairmanship had changed three times; this presented an intrinsic limitation that made it difficult to fully engage the Chair in the project. The formal engagement between universities and government officials was also relatively late, beginning in the 2nd quarter of 2023.

22. PIR FY 2023 indicates that the project was found to be overly ambitious for its 2-year duration (i.e. setting up think-tanks in LDCs, establishing functioning relationships across the LUCCC network, etc.). Therefore, a no-cost extension for an additional 6 months was submitted for consideration by the PSC in 2024 to ensure deliverables from the grants to the think tanks are finalised to the quality required, and a sustainability/ upscaling strategy is developed. This was in addition to a 12-month no-cost extension that had previously been approved by the PSC in 2023.

23. The project underwent a revision of the Results Framework and Workplan to reflect needs and priorities expressed by the LUCCC partners. The motivation for changing the project's activities and work-plan stemmed from significant concerns expressed by the LUCCC PoCs around the ability of universities to effectively engage their respective governments, scepticism around whether the fee-for-services model could work at the outset of establishing a think-tank, and be replicable across the LUCCC network (given the diversity of governing contexts across the network), and a desire to see the network truly function as a learning community by moving from completely virtual engagement to a mixed virtual and in-person approach. The PMU responded by developing a revised Workplan (approved by the Project Steering Committee) that featured in-person regional dialogues and training, direct in-person involvement of the UNFCCC and the GCF national focal points with the PoCs, and provision of in-person events to foster learning across the LUCCC network. The main changes to the Results Framework are the replacement of the webinar series with in-person learning workshops, the development of regional dialogue events that brought together national focal points with the PoCs, a shift in think-tank funding mechanisms towards greater flexibility — from strictly fee-for-services to a combination of fee-for-services and grant funding, or purely grant funding, and the inclusion of a LUCCC-wide learning event at the end of the project. These changes were funded by shifts in the budget from 5 to 3 think-tanks, and the proportional reduction in small grant allocation. A fourth think-tank was added through leveraging funding from a UNIDO project with complementary goals of supporting LDCs.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

24. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy[9] and the UNEP Programme and Project Management Manual[10], the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and main project partners *(START International, PoCs within the 13 LUCCC University partners and climate finance Think-tanks, and NFPs in the participating LDC countries, UNIDO, Climate Analytics and the International Centre on Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD).* Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

8. Key Evaluation Principles

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

26. **The "Why?" Question.** As this is a Terminal Evaluation, particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the "*why?*" question should be at the front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance was as it

[9] *https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/41114*
[10] *https://wedocs.unep.org/20.500.11822/42752*

was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project's results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

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

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

9. Key Strategic Questions

29. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below (no more than 5 questions are recommended). These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE

- ***Q1:*** *How have the think-tanks helped to advance NDCs and NAPs (and other policy frameworks) in their respective countries?*
- ***Q2****: What role is the think-tank playing in harnessing and channelling knowledge and expertise across its university to address government needs related to climate adaptation and finance?*
- ***Q3:*** *How has the think-tank developed relationships with government entities that can be carried forward? What does that relationship look like in the post-project period?*
- ***Q4:*** *UNILEAD was innovative in that it envisioned a long-term, sustained institutional approach to addressing the underlying capacity gaps. To what degree of success was the project able to create an enabling environment for scaling up its model to additional universities, thus expanding the network of thinktanks for LUCCC members and LDCs?*
- ***Q5:*** *How well did the project help to strengthen the LUCCC network? In what ways was the project design conducive or non-conducive towards strengthening the network?*
- ***Q6:*** *What has been the effect of the choice of key project partners on the success of the project's implementation, and were there any missed opportunities or unintended effects (positive or negative) as a result of the partners engaged?*
- ***Q7:*** *To what degree of success did the inclusion of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) capacity development and integration into project implementation enhance the understanding and application of gender as it relates to Climate Finance among the LUCCC member institutions?*

For GEF-funded projects there are a series of questions that need to be uploaded to the GEF Portal. The consultant should complete the table in Annex 2 of these TOR and append it to the Final Evaluation report.

10. Evaluation Criteria

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

A. ***Strategic Relevance***

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

i. ***Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy[11] (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities***

31. The Evaluation should assess the project's alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building[12] (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

ii. ***Alignment to Donor/Partner Strategic Priorities***

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

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

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

iv. ***Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence[13]***

34. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization[14], took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-

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

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

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

[14] *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.*

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

B. ***Quality of Project Design***

35. The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating[15] should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a brief summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

C. ***Nature of External Context***

At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval[16]). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

D. ***Effectiveness***

i. ***Availability of Outputs[17]***

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

ii. ***Achievement of Project Outcomes[18]***

36. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed[19] Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table should be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project

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

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

[17] *Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2023)*

[18] *An outcome is a change at institutional level, or changes in behaviors, attitudes or conditions achieved from the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of outputs by intended beneficiaries. (UNEP, 2023)*

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

outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

iii. ***Likelihood of Impact***

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

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

39. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role[20] or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

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

E. ***Financial Management***

41. Financial management will be assessed under two themes: *adherence* to UNEP's financial policies and procedures and *completeness* of financial information. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors an including co-finance. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner.

F. ***Efficiency***

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

43. Focussing on the translation of inputs into outputs, *cost-effectiveness* is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. *Timeliness* refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project

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

extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

44. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities[21] with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

G. ***Monitoring and Reporting***

46. The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across two sub-categories: monitoring implementation and project reporting.

i. ***Monitoring of Project Implementation***

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

ii. ***Project Reporting***

48. UNEP has a centralised Integrated Planning, Monitoring and Reporting system (IPMR) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled on a timely basis and represent quality/accurate reporting. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

H. ***Sustainability***

49. Sustainability[22] is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an <u>assessment of bio-physical factors</u> that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

i. ***Socio-political Sustainability***

50. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards.

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

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

iii. ***Financial Sustainability***

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

iv. ***Institutional Sustainability***

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

I. ***Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues***

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

i. ***Quality of Project Management and Supervision***

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

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

v. ***Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation***

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

vi. ***Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality***

56. The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment[23].

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

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

vii. ***Environmental and Social Safeguards***

58. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements[24] were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and r*eport* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. The evaluation will use the Safeguards Assessment Template to support assessment of the evaluand's planning, monitoring and mitigation of environmental and social safeguards during project design and implementation and attach the completed template as an annex in the main evaluation report.

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

viii. ***Country Ownership and Driven-ness***

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

ix. ***Communication and Public Awareness***

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

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

61. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange

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

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

throughout the Evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

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

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

- Relevant background documentation;
- Project design documents including: minutes of the project design review meeting at approval; Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent; Revisions to the project, the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
- Project deliverables: for example, roadmaps, university-government engagement events, short courses, think-tank establishment, etc.

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

- UNEP Task Manager (TM);
- Project management team, including the Project Manager within the Executing Agency, where appropriate;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
- Project partners, including START International, LUCCC Universities and climate finance Think-tanks, PoCs and NFPs in the participating LDC countries, UNIDO, Climate Analytics and the International Centre on Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), etc.
- Other relevant resource persons;
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

(c) **Surveys** - with participating LDCs, LUCCC universities and networks

(d) **Field visits** – the project established four think tanks; confirmation of field visits will be determined at the Inception phase of the evaluation

(e) Other data collection tools as deemed appropriate (e.g. online sources)

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

63. The Evaluation Team will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

64. An **Evaluation Brief,** (a 2-page overview of the evaluand and key evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

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

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

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

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

12. The Evaluation Consultant

69. For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Team will consist of one Evaluation Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager (Pauline Marima), in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager (Atifa Kassam), Portfolio Manager (Jessica Troni), Fund Management Officer (Bwiza Wameyo-Odemba) and the Sub-programme Coordinator of the Climate Action Sub-programme (Niklas Hagelberg). The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility (where applicable) to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the Evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

70. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of **6 months** beginning from the contract start date, and should have the following: a university degree in environmental or social sciences, is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of 7 years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of climate change adaptation is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English and French is a requirement, and working knowledge of Portuguese language is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is also an added advantage. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

71. The Evaluation Consultant will be responsible, in close consultation with the Evaluation Office of UNEP for overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, described above in Section 11 Evaluation Deliverables, above. The consultant will ensure together that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

Specific Responsibilities

72. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

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

Reporting phase, including:

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

Managing relations, including:

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

13. Schedule of the Evaluation

The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 5. Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	Within 1 week from start date
Inception Report	1 month from starting date
Primary and secondary data collection and analysis	1.5 - 2 months from starting date
Presentation of preliminary findings	2.5 months from starting date
Draft report submitted to Evaluation Manager	3 months from starting date
Draft Report submitted to Task Manager and core project team	4 months from starting date

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	5 months from starting date
Submission of Final Report	6 months from starting date

14. Contractual Arrangements

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

Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report ***(as per Report Template)***	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report ***(as per Report Template)***	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report ***(as per Report Template)***	40%

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

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

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

77. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants’ fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard[25].

[25] *This may include contract cancellation in-line with prevailing UN Secretariat rules.*

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

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

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

ADVICE TO CONSULTANTS: As our tools, templates and guidance notes are updated on a continuous basis, kindly download documents from the link below and use those versions throughout the Evaluation.

https://communities.unep.org/display/EOU/INDEPENDENT+EVALUATION+TOOLS+AND+TEMPLATES

List of tools, templates and guidance notes available:

Terminal Evaluation Essential Tools

- 00 TE Overview of Evaluation Tools 05.05.25
- 01 TE UNEP Glossary of Results Definitions_December 2023
- 02 TE List of Documents for Evaluation 05.05.25
- 03 TE Evaluation Criteria 05.05.25
- 04 TE Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix 05.05.25
- 05 TE Criteria Weighted Ratings Table 15.05.25
- 06 TE Evaluation Methodology Guidance 05.05.25

Terminal Evaluation Inception Report

- 07 TE INCEPTION REPORT TEMPLATE 15.07.25
- 08 TE Quality of Project Design Table 15.07.25
- 09 TE Quality of Project Design Weighted Ratings Tool 05.05.25
- 10 TE Stakeholder Analysis Guidance 31.01.24
- 11 TE Gender Methods Guidance 31.01.24
- 12 TE Safeguards Assessment Template 15.05.25

Terminal Evaluation Main Evaluation Report

- 13 TE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS TABLES 05.05.25
- 14 TE GEF MAIN REPORT TEMPLATE 15.07.25
- 15 TE NonGEF MAIN REPORT TEMPLATE 15.07.25
- 16 TE Likelihood of Impact Flow Chart 31.01.24
- 17 TE Recommendations Quality Guidance 15.07.25
- 18 TE Quality of Evaluation Report FOR USE BY UNEP 15.07.25

Terminal Evaluation Process Guidance

- Process 1_Evaluation Process Guidelines for Consultants 31.01.2024
- Process 2_Template for Attestation Letter 31.01.2024
- Process 3_Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form 31.01.2024
- Process 4_Guidelines for Field Work During Coronavirus 31.01.2024
- Process 5_Evaluation Consultants Team Roles 31.01.2024
- Process 6_ Template for Reference Checks 31.01.2024
- Process 7_Letter of Introduction for Visa Applications Template 31.01.2024

Annex 2: GEF Portal Inputs

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

Table II: GEF portal inputs

Question: What was the performance at the project's completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7[26], these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided[27]).
Response: *(Might be drawn from Monitoring and Reporting section)*
Question: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section)*
Question: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality)*
Question: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*
Response: (Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Environmental and Social Safeguards)
Question: What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? *(This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*
Response: *(Might be drawn from Factors Affecting Performance section/Communication and Public Awareness)*
Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?
Response:

[26] *The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE. .(i.e. not GEF projects approved before GEF-6)*

[27] *This is not applicable for Enabling Activities*