

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project
“The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project - Phase 2
PIMS ID: 01990”
(2019 -2023)



**Practical
ACTION**



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The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project - Phase 2

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

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About the Evaluation

Joint Evaluation: No

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Brief Description: This report is a Terminal Evaluation of a UNEP project 'The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project – Phase 2' implemented between 2019 to 2023. The project's overall development goal was '*to establish climate-resilient livelihoods and reduce natural resource conflicts as well as displacement due to loss of livelihoods in North Darfur*'. The evaluation sought 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 learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, Practical Action and the other relevant agencies of the project participating country, Sudan.

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Source(s) of Funding by Institution Type:

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Private Sector	No
UN Body	No
Multilateral Fund	Yes
Environment Fund	No

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Field mission dates: No field mission was carried out due to on-going armed conflict in the project sites.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAADP	Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CBO	Community Based Organization
CC	Climate Change
CEAP	Community Environmental Action Plan
CMA	Catchment Management Agency
CMF	Catchment Management Forum
COVID-19	CoronaVirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DC	Disasters and Conflicts
DCPI	Division of Communication and Public Information (UN Environment)
DDS	Darfur Development Strategy
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EA	Expected Accomplishment (within the UN Environment Programme of Work)
EU	European Union
FNC	Forestry National Corporation
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
GWWD	Groundwater and Wadis Directorate
HAC	The Humanitarian Aid Commission
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IS	Intermediate State
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
KII	Key Informant Survey
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
MoAAR	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MoAR	Ministry of Animal Resources
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NR	Natural Resources
NRM	Natural Resources Management
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PCDMB	Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (UNEP)
PCEA	Post-conflict environmental assessment

PDQ	Project Design Quality
PM	Project Manager
POW	Programme of Work
PRC	Project Review Committee
PTC	Project Technical Committee
RDN	Rural Development Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDNAIP	Sudan's National Agriculture Investment Plan
SNRM	Sustainable Natural Resources Management
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USD	United States Dollars
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WEK	Wadi El Ku

Project Identification

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ¹ ID:	PIMS ID: 01990	Grant ID ² (if applicable):		
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Disasters and Conflicts Branch, Ecosystems Division.			
Implementing Partners:	1. Agricultural Research Centre 2. Forestry National Cooperation (FNC) 3. Groundwater and Wadis Directorate (GWWD) 4. Ministry of Production and Economic Resources (North Darfur) 5. Practical Action 6. University of El Fasher 7. University of Khartoum			
Sources of Funding:	Country ³ (ies):	Institution ⁴ Name/Type: European Union (EU)		
Relevant SDG(s):	5, 6, 12, 13			
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021, MTS 2022-2025	UNEP approval date:	22 November 2017	
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	POW Direct Outcome:	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome:	
	POW Output: DC Subprogramme (EA C): Crisis-affected countries adopt key environmental and natural resource governance policies and sustainable practices as a contribution to recovery and development. CC Subprogramme (EA A): Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation. EuR Subprogramme (EA): Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the	OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	POW Expected Accomplishment: DC Subprogramme (EA C): Crisis-affected countries adopt key environmental and natural resource governance policies and sustainable practices as a contribution to recovery and development. CC Subprogramme (EA A): Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation. EuR Subprogramme (EA): Governments and other stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify	

¹ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

² 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.

	science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action.		emerging issues and foster policy action.
Sub-programme:	Climate Action (previously -Resilience to disasters and conflicts)	Programme Coordination Project:	N/A
Expected start date:	1 January 2018	Actual start date:	1 January 2019
Planned completion date:	31 December 2022	Actual operational completion date:	31 October 2023
Planned total project budget⁵ at approval:	US \$ 11,934,000	Actual total expenditures reported as of 10 June 2024	US \$ 11,950,000
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds⁶:	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000
	In-kind: N/A	Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of 10 June 2024	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000
First disbursement:	US \$ 6,650,160	Planned date of financial closure:	30 August 2024
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	1 February 2023
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	11 May 2022
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	June 2021	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	October 2021
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	June 2022	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	September 2024
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Sudan	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	The Wadi El Ku catchment management project for livelihoods development and sustainable peace (July 2013 to April 2017)	Status of future project phases:	Under discussion with the EU

⁵ Total budget may include Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly earmarked' etc.

⁶ Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

Executive Summary

Project background

1. The Wadi El Ku Phase II (WEK II) Project, implemented in North Darfur, Sudan, sought to address critical challenges of climate change, natural resource conflicts, and fragile livelihoods in a conflict-affected region. Building on the successes and lessons of Phase I (2012–2017), WEK II was launched with a focus on integrated water resources management (IWRM) as a strategic framework to enhance climate resilience, improve agricultural productivity, and foster peaceful coexistence among diverse community groups, including pastoralists, farmers, and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

2. WEK II, which received financial support from the European Union totalling USD 11.37 million, emphasized participatory governance, inclusive planning, and capacity building, targeting 100,000 direct beneficiaries across upstream, midstream, and downstream areas. It sought to empower communities through interventions such as water harvesting infrastructure, community forestry, agroforestry, and value chain development. The project also sought to strengthen governance structures i.e., Catchment Management Agency (CMA), Natural Resource Committees (NRCs); livelihood enhancement and peacebuilding initiatives to ensure equitable resource use and conflict resolution.

3. WEK II was implemented collaboratively by UNEP, Practical Action, and local government bodies, leveraging technical expertise and community engagement to address cross-cutting challenges in Natural Resources Management (NRM) and livelihood improvement. It adopted participatory approaches to engage communities, integrate marginalized groups, and promote inclusive governance. The project also piloted innovative socio-technical models and scaled up learnings from Phase I to address critical environmental, social, and economic vulnerabilities.

4. The project witnessed and navigated significant challenges, including political instability, ongoing armed conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these hurdles, WEK II delivered innovative approaches to NRM while integrating gender and climate resilience into its core strategies.

This evaluation

5. This terminal evaluation assessed the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the WEK II project. It focused on the project's achievements, challenges, and overall performance while synthesizing lessons learned to inform future integrated NRM initiatives. The scope included a review of project outputs, outcomes, and institutional frameworks, considering gender equity, inclusivity, and the scalability of the IWRM and NRM models. The evaluation also examined cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth inclusion, and climate vulnerability.

Key findings

6. The WEK II project demonstrated 'Satisfactory' performance across UNEP's standard evaluation criteria. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, political instability, and conflict, the project achieved significant outcomes in governance, livelihoods, and peacebuilding, demonstrating adaptability and resilience.

7. Relevance: The project was highly aligned with Sudan's national priorities, UNEP's mandate, and global SDGs. The project was well-aligned with community needs, focusing on critical issues such as water scarcity, livelihood insecurity, and resource-based conflicts. It

addressed urgent needs for water management, agricultural productivity, and conflict mitigation in a fragile region. Its integrated approach to NRM, peacebuilding, and livelihood support demonstrated strong relevance to the context.

8. **Effectiveness:** Most outputs and outcomes were achieved. WEK II achieved significant results, including participatory governance structures like the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), improved water access, increased agricultural productivity, and reduced resource-based conflicts. Community ownership and participation were central to these outcomes. However, delays in implementing water infrastructure limited the potential to demonstrate scaled impacts.

Availability of Outputs

9. Output 1: Participatory governance structures like CMA and NRCs were established and strengthened, engaging diverse stakeholders. CMA emerged as a vital institution for catchment management, fostering inclusive decision-making and conflict resolution.

10. Output 2: Improved agricultural and NRM practices were introduced, benefiting 10,220 farmers through Farmer Field Schools, extension packages, and agroforestry initiatives. Water infrastructure, such as weirs and dams, significantly expanded irrigated areas and improved productivity.

11. Output 3: Scientific research, including hydrological and hydrogeological studies, strengthened evidence-based decision-making. Academic institutions contributed to generating and disseminating data on water management. Productive engagement with universities was, however, limited due to armed conflict and changes in governance forms.

12. Output 4: Knowledge-sharing activities, including workshops and publications, promoted IWRM adoption. However, the ad hoc approach of dissemination of the project learning limited the potential for scaling good practices.

Achievement of Project Outcomes

13. Improved NRM at the catchment level: Water harvesting structures enhanced resource availability, reducing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. CMA's leadership fostered coordination among stakeholders, improving resource governance while the technical committee provided technical input and coordination support.

14. Use of SNRM at community level: Increased adoption of climate-resilient practices, diversified agriculture, and community forestry that helped to increase household incomes, food security, and environmental stability. Women's groups played a key role in promoting sustainable practices.

15. Likelihood of Impact: Significant progress was made in reducing natural resource conflicts and started to enhance climate-resilient livelihoods. Increased capacity of catchment-level institutions and adoption of sustainable NRM practices at the community level contributed to environmental restoration, economic resilience, and social cohesion.

16. Efficiency: The project utilized resources effectively, leveraging local contributions to maximize resources and fostering collaboration among national stakeholders especially Practical Action with their strong presence in the project sites. Cost-efficient approaches, such as using local materials and training community members, enhanced implementation. However, delays in activities' implementation, such as the construction of weirs, were noted as weaknesses, impacting the implementation of sequential activities.

17. **Sustainability:** The project's emphasis on community ownership, locally adaptable technologies, and institutional capacity-building strengthened prospects for sustainability. Strong institutional and community foundations, including CMA and natural resource committees, provide potential for long-term sustainability. However, political instability, lack of formalized policies, and financial constraints remain key risks to sustainability.

18. **Gender and Inclusion:** The project demonstrated noteworthy efforts in integrating gender considerations, addressing systemic inequalities, and empowering women across its interventions. Gender-sensitive strategies, such as land advocacy for women farmers and the promotion of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), contributed to increased participation, capacity building, economic empowerment and inclusion. For instance, Women's involvement in governance structures like CMA and NRCs increased from 5% in Phase I to 31% in Phase II. However, systemic barriers such as cultural norms and access to resources remain a challenge.

A summary table of the ratings is presented below, and the detailed table against all evaluation criteria is found in 'Table 16: Summary of project findings and ratings' of this report.

Criteria	Rating
Strategic Relevance	HS
Quality of Project Design	HS
Nature of External Context	U
Effectiveness	S
Financial Management	S
Efficiency	S
Monitoring and Reporting	S
Sustainability	L
Factors Affecting Performance	S
Overall Project Performance Rating	S

Response to Strategic Questions

19. A detailed response to strategic questions is provided in the conclusion section of this report. In brief:

20. Question 1 related to differentiated needs: The project effectively addressed the needs of women, pastoralists, and vulnerable groups through tailored interventions, enhancing inclusivity and equity.

21. Question 2 related to adaptability: The project demonstrated flexibility in responding to conflict, COVID-19, and funding delays, ensuring progress despite challenges.

22. Question 3 related to building on Phase I and MTR: Lessons from Phase I informed the design and implementation of Phase II, scaling good practices and refining governance models. Similarly, the project integrated recommendations from the MTR, such as gender study, while implementing the project activities.

Project strengths and challenges

23. Key strengths of the project included: a) engaging communities in participatory ways from the outset to ensure ownership and alignment with local priorities; b) support in the provisioning of water through the IWRM approach; c) strengthening community-based governance mechanisms, such as the Catchment Management Agency, fostering collaboration between communities and government on resource management; d) supporting

livelihood and economic empowerment interventions such as VSLAs, agroforestry, and climate-resilient agricultural practices; e) integration of women participation in project planning and management and f) effective collaboration and flexibility among UNEP, Practical Action and local stakeholders.

24. The project also witnessed some challenges. Some of the challenges are external in nature such as armed conflict, political instability and the COVID-19 pandemic which affected government functions and community dynamics and disrupted effective implementation of some activities. There were also delays in activities' implementation such as weir construction which was reported as the late fund transfers from UNEP to partners that hindered the timely execution of project activities.

25. The evaluation noted that the project can serve as a good model for integrated, community-driven resource management in fragile and conflict-affected regions. By fostering collaboration, empowering the local communities, and addressing critical environmental challenges, it achieved significant progress toward sustainable development and peace. However, sustaining and scaling these gains would require political stability, continued investment, institutional support, and adaptive strategies.

Conclusions

26. The project significantly contributed to sustainable natural resource management, community resilience, and peacebuilding in a conflict-affected region. Building on Phase I, it addressed resource degradation, water scarcity, and livelihood insecurity while promoting inclusive governance, gender empowerment, and pastoralist integration. Highly aligned with community needs and national priorities, the project achieved the most outputs, including participatory catchment management, improved agricultural practices, and IWRM knowledge dissemination. These achievements led to improved resource use, enhanced agricultural techniques, and climate-resilient livelihoods. The project's IWRM model, collaboratively governed by policymakers and communities, holds strong potential for scaling in similar contexts.

Lessons Learned

27. Lesson Learned 1: Community-centered participatory planning fosters ownership, engagement, conflict resolution, and sustainability, but requires significant investment in expertise, resources, and perseverance.

28. Lesson Learned 2: Establishing robust governance structures fosters inclusiveness and sustainability but requires institutionalized policies and dedicated technical and human resources.

29. Lesson Learned 3: Effective stakeholder collaboration is critical for project success but hinges on trust, clear roles, and inclusive decision-making.

30. Lesson Learned 4: Continuity, economic incentives, and trust-building are critical for sustainable and integrated natural resource management.

31. Lesson Learned 5: Empowering women in governance and economic activities improves outcomes, but addressing systemic barriers is critical for equity.

Recommendations

32. Recommendation 1: Ensure continued support for existing governance mechanisms by securing funds, streamlining processes, and strengthening policies to maintain effective coordination across national, state, and community levels. This will ensure the sustainability of governance structures like the CMA and their ability to manage resources effectively in fragile contexts.

33. Recommendation 2: Secure sustainable financing mechanisms, including government budgets, development partner support, and innovative user-based contributions, to ensure the maintenance of water infrastructures and agricultural value chain activities. Strengthen local capacities and market linkages to enhance enterprise management and long-term sustainability.

34. Recommendation 3: UNEP should prioritize scaling up the IWRM model and associated best practices from the project by: a) strengthening dissemination efforts through targeted knowledge-sharing platforms and capacity-building initiatives to promote the adoption of these approaches; b) leveraging its normative expertise to advocate for IWRM integration into national and regional policies, ensuring alignment with climate resilience and sustainable development goals; and c) collaborating with development partners, donors, and government agencies to secure resources and institutional commitments for replication in similar contexts within Sudan and beyond.

35. Recommendation 4: UNEP headquarters should enhance financial authorization and disbursement mechanisms by adopting streamlined processes and empowering field offices to manage timely fund releases. This will reduce delays, improve responsiveness to local needs, and ensure the continuity and sustainability of project activities.

1 INTRODUCTION

36. The project area, the Wadi El Ku Catchment⁷, encompasses approximately 26,000 km² of the Sahel region in Darfur, Sudan. This catchment is experiencing increasing demands for land and water that surpass the environment's carrying capacity and the government's planning capabilities. This challenging scenario, compounded by ongoing conflict and a growing population, has led to heightened tensions over resources and resulted in significant environmental degradation, including deforestation, erosion, soil fertility depletion, and inadequate water management. As livelihoods deteriorate, a negative feedback loop emerges between environmental decline and economic recovery within and around the Wadi El Ku.

37. This strain is further exacerbated by unreliable rainfall and inefficient water resource management, particularly regarding the management of surface and subsurface water within the wadi. Agricultural practices have intensified environmental degradation through uncoordinated watershed management, over-exploitation of soil, and deforestation, which contribute to erosion and decreased productivity. Farmers have expanded cultivation to meet food needs, further damaging fragile qoz soils. The removal of trees and shrubs has intensified erosion and led to shortages of wood for fuel and construction.

38. Additional challenges persist. The lack of integration between statutory and customary land-use systems complicates the enforcement of proper management practices. These issues are further amplified by the socio-economic effects of conflict, including rapid urbanization, shifting social norms, and weakened governance systems, all of which have led to unsustainable resource use and increased community mistrust. Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach to natural resource management that fosters cooperation and sustainability within the region.

39. Following the successful implementation of the WEK phase I (July 2013 to April 2017), the WEK II Project aimed to continue demonstrating how effective and inclusive natural resource management—based on experiences related to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)—can enhance relationships concerning natural resources, thereby contributing to peace in a conflict-affected region of Sudan. The project was designed to improve livelihoods by facilitating sustainable increases in agricultural productivity and related value chains. It was expected that participating communities would achieve these sustainable increases through the rehabilitation and enhanced management of land, forest, and water resources. Supporting this project represented an opportunity to mitigate the aforementioned challenges through inclusive natural resource management.

40. The project received financial support from the European Union totalling USD 11.37 million. The project was implemented by UNEP and executed by Practical Action starting in January 2019 and completed in October 2023. The Project Management Unit was supervised and supported by UNEP's programme office in Khartoum, and the Ecosystems Division's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in Geneva. A Mid-Term Review (MTR) was conducted in October 2021 and the project was rated at the 'Satisfactory' level at that time.

⁷ The Wadi El Ku catchment area, covering some 26,000 km² of the Sahel region of Darfur, Sudan, and receiving an annual average rainfall of just around 220 mm (far below the world average of 990 mm), has been subject to an amalgam of climate impacts, including highly erratic and decreasing rainfall. This climatic instability, along with a range of fragility-related factors, has led to a breakdown in rain-fed pastoral and farming livelihoods and thus decreasing social cohesion with several outbreaks of violence between herders and farmers since the 1980s.

41. The project contributed to UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2018 - 2021, specifically within the priority area "Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts," as well as the MTS 2022 - 2025 thematic sub-programmes: 1) Climate Action and 2) Nature Action. Additionally, the project was aligned with the Programme of Work (PoW) for 2020-2021 and supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5, 6, and 13, along with UNEP's country initiatives in Sudan.

42. One project revision was undertaken in 2021, and a no-cost extension in 2023. These changes were necessary to address implementation challenges, including ongoing conflict, deteriorating economic conditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Purpose and scope of the Evaluation

43. Based on the UNEP Evaluation Manual (2022) and UNEP evaluation guidelines using the OECD/DAC criteria, UNEP commissioned a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project. The evaluation has two primary purposes:

- i. To provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements; and
- ii. To promote operational improvement, learning, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and the target country. The evaluation also identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, particularly if the next phase was being considered. Recommendations relevant to stakeholders are to be identified during the evaluation process.

44. Based on this, the evaluation has assessed project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency) and determined outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

45. In addition to the evaluation criteria discussed in this report, the evaluation has also addressed the following key strategic questions:

- i. In what ways, and to what extent, were the needs and interests of differentiated groups (gender, economic activity – farmers, pastoralists etc.) considered in the implementation of the project?
- ii. What changes were made to adapt to the effects of political instability, insecurity and COVID-19 and how might any changes have affected the project's performance?
- iii. To what extent did the project build on the successes and lessons from the mid-term review and phase 1 of WEK?

46. All evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale. The set of evaluation criteria is grouped into 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.

1.2 The target audience for the evaluation

47. The terminal evaluation report will be of interest to UNEP staff, the EU, the Government of Sudan, UNEP's counterparts, other UN and international organizations involved, local groups/forums, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.

2 EVALUATION METHODS

48. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNEP Evaluation Policy, UNEG norms and standards, and UNEP's 2019 guidelines using the six OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

2.1 Evaluation approach

49. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection and analysis. The quantitative method was used to analyze financial reports and other numerical figures related to the progress of the project, while the qualitative method was employed to understand the context, identify the progress and performance and document learning, among other things. Qualitative methods provided an in-depth view of the actions implemented at each level of intervention. The information derived from both quantitative and qualitative methods was used for data/evidence triangulation. Evidence from the qualitative and quantitative approach was used to assess the level of attainment of outputs and the outcomes of the project.

50. Stakeholders and beneficiaries were actively involved during the evaluation process. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted based on semi-structured questionnaires formulated based on the evaluation questions while maintaining the confidentiality of the stakeholders. Gender consideration was emphasized while collecting the data. The evaluation ensured the inclusion of the views of marginalized or potentially disadvantaged groups, especially women in conflict zones. Besides, ethics and human rights issues were considered during data collection and analysis.

51. Central to the evaluation was the analysis and reconstruction of the project's Theory of Change (ToC), considering the changed context and implementation strategies. The inception phase of the evaluation refined and reconstructed the ToC, providing a strong foundation for the evaluation approach, methods, and tools for data collection. The reconstructed ToC was verified during the evaluation inception phase.

52. The evaluation methodology relied on analyzing causal factors. To evaluate all outputs and outcomes achieved by the project and their contributions to intended and unintended impacts, the evaluator sought to assess project performance by distinguishing between two questions: i) "What happened?"; and ii) "What was most likely to have happened without the project?" This approach enabled the evaluation to assess a credible association between the project's work and the established results through quantitative means and provided reasons for why certain results were or were not achieved, allowing for triangulation of information for higher reliability of findings.

53. To achieve the evaluation purpose, an evaluation matrix was developed based on the evaluation criteria and scope presented in the ToRs. The matrix provided directions for the evaluation and was used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing relevant project documents.

54. Evaluation criteria are rated on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact are rated from Highly Likely (HL) to Highly Unlikely (UL), while the Nature of External Context is rated from Highly Favorable (HF) to Highly Unfavorable (UF). The overall project performance rating is weighted, with the greatest emphasis on outcomes, followed by sustainability. The evaluator considered all evidence gathered during the evaluation to generate ratings for each evaluation criterion.

55. This evaluation was based on three main phases.

Phase 1: Inception phase

56. This phase included activities involving a brief project analysis, including project design, stakeholder analysis, development of Theory of Change (ToC), and the finalization of evaluation questions related to the evaluation criteria mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToRs) and the interviews within UNEP and project staff. A tentative list of stakeholders for consultation during the data collection phase was proposed.

57. An evaluation matrix was developed based on the evaluation criteria and scope presented in the ToRs, the project intervention logic (log frame), and a review of key project documents (Annex II). This matrix was structured according to the updated UNEP evaluation criteria set out within the ToRs and included all evaluation questions. The inception report was finalized based on the analysis of project documents and introductory interviews with the selected stakeholders.

Phase 2: Data Collection

2.2 Data Collection Methods

58. The following methods and tools were used to collect evaluation data in this evaluation.

Desk Review

59. The desk review involved examining the project documents provided by the UNEP team, project staff, and local implementing partners, and other documents relevant to the project such as national policies and reports produced by the government and other organizations. The evaluation included a more in-depth document review aimed at understanding: a) the specific intervention context and project objectives; b) project interventions and implementation strategies; and c) the main operational challenges and opportunities. Some of the documents included the project document, progress reports, communication materials, and knowledge products (0ANNEX IV: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED). Financial data was also examined to evaluate financial progress and project implementation timelines.

Interview with stakeholders and beneficiaries

60. Due to security concerns, the evaluator could not visit the project sites. Therefore, an evaluation consultant, who was knowledgeable about the local stakeholders, project sites, and context, was hired to support the data collection process. This was critical to collect information from those who did not speak English. A set of semi-structured interview questionnaires was developed and adequate guidance for the data collection was provided to the local facilitator to reduce possible confusion while collecting field data. In addition, a detailed plan for data collection was prepared.

61. A purposive sampling method was used to select respondents based on their project roles, participation in thematic interventions, and representation of different social groups (e.g., gender, resource-poor members) from various geographic locations targeted by the project (ANNEX III: PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION).

62. Community-level Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) /Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Based on the data collection plan, the local facilitator organized community-level KIIs and

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The following individuals and groups were interviewed (see Table 4). Inclusion and diversity considerations (e.g., gender and resource-poor community members) were incorporated into the interview process to capture diverse perspectives.

63. Online interviews: The evaluator conducted on-line KIIs with stakeholders. These respondents included the UNEP Project Manager (PM), project management team, UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO), project partners, former project staff, members of the WEK Catchment Management Coordination Agency and Weir Management Committees, the Climate Action sub-program coordinator, the Delegation of the European Union to Sudan and civil society representatives. For this, the semi-structured interview questions were prepared with consideration of the participants' roles in the project planning and implementation.

Table 2 Respondents

		# people involved (M/F)	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project Team (those with management responsibilities e.g., PMU)	UNEP Staff	4	4	2 M / 2 F	100%
	Project Management Unit	5	4	4 M / 0 F	80%
	# entities involved	# entities contacted	# people contacted (M/F)	# respondent (M/F)	% respondent
Project (implementing/ executing) partners (receiving funds from the project)	Practical Action	5	3	2 M / 1 F	100%
	Technical Committee	14	7	3 M	42.8%
Project (collaborating/ contributing) partners (not receiving funds from the project)	Independent expert/researcher	1	1	1 M	100%
Beneficiaries: <i>Examples:</i> Duty bearers Gate keepers Direct beneficiaries Indirect beneficiaries Civil society representatives	FGDs				
	Eid Elbiada committees	21	10	5 M / 5 F	100%
	Kusa/Sarafaya committee	28	12	5 M / 7F	100%
	ElFasher - RDN (NGOs)	6	6	4 M / 1F	83%
	ElFasher - CMA	30	9	3 M / 2 F	55%
Donors	The EU Delegation	5	2	2 M	100%

Phase 3: Data Analysis, Synthesis, and Report Preparation

2.3 Data Analysis, Synthesis, and Report Preparation

64. All information collected during desk reviews, in-person, and online interviews was verified through cross-checking from multiple sources for accuracy. The evaluator prepared an evidence matrix and conducted thematic categorization and content analysis based on the research questions. During the process of analysis, triangulation of data/information was also carried out from various sources collected during the evaluation period. This process identified key factors that influenced or contributed to the project's outputs and outcomes, considering the program logic.

65. A draft report was shared with the evaluation manager and subsequently with the project team for their feedback. Findings were validated in an online presentation with stakeholders. A final report was produced following further analysis based on the feedback received.

2.4 Limitations and Mitigation Strategy

66. The TE encountered the following challenges:

67. Due to the ongoing armed conflict, the evaluator could not visit the project sites. Online data collection was further challenged by the lack of or weak internet access and inadequate English proficiency of some stakeholders and beneficiaries. This challenge was addressed by hiring an evaluation facilitator from the project sites who was knowledgeable about the context and project interventions. The facilitator had a strong network with project stakeholders which was instrumental in engaging the local stakeholders such as Community Based Organisations (CBOs), and the target communities. Weak internet access was addressed by using WhatsApp to send text and audio messages.

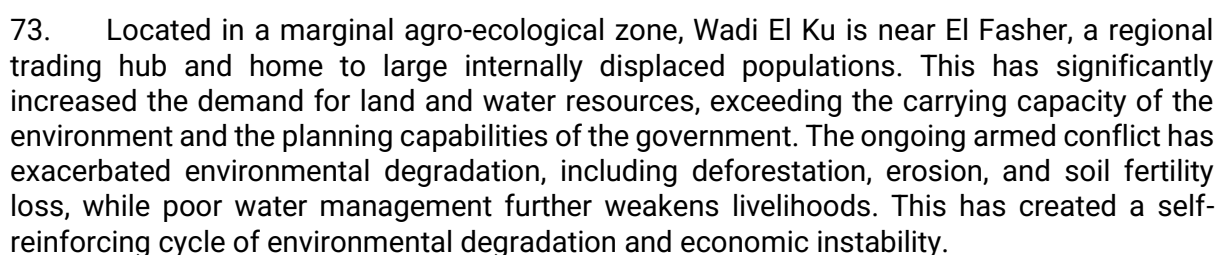
68. Security challenges when meeting in groups were witnessed during the data collection process. To address this challenge, a 'do-no-harm' principle was adopted and participants were advised to avoid such situations by either meeting when they felt secure or cancelling the meeting. In addition, respondents were given the flexibility to discuss evaluation issues over multiple sessions (extended FGDs), and regular feedback mechanisms were established to address any confusion that arose from both sides during the data collection processes.

69. As the project completed its operations a year ago (October 2023), in some cases, there was a limited recall among respondents mainly due to the time lapse between the project's activity completion and the evaluation data collection period. The local facilitator, who understood the context and project, helped to identify the right stakeholders and community members to ensure appropriate responses with good ability of project operation tracing and performance recall. The information received from the project was further triangulated during the analysis phase.

70. There may be some level of 'response bias' among respondents who may expect that the evaluation findings could lead to future opportunities and personal benefits. The evaluation ensured that respondents were not led to raise their expectations and clarified the objectives and scope of the evaluation.

71. The Wadi El Ku is a seasonal inland river in North Darfur, with a catchment area of 25,660 km. It spans parts of the Jebel Mara mountains in the west and the Kutum uplands in the north, extending into South Darfur where it ends in an inland delta. This semi-arid zone receives an annual average rainfall of just 220 mm—far below the global average of 990 mm—and experiences erratic and declining rainfall patterns. These climatic challenges have undermined rain-fed farming and pastoral livelihoods, leading to reduced social cohesion and recurring violence between herders and farmers since the 1980s.

Figure 1: The Wadi El Ku catchment, showing the Phase 2 project areas



74. The project was designed to address several interconnected challenges⁸.

- Increased population and resource pressure, lead to competition and conflict.
- Low and variable rainfall, resulting in limited and unpredictable water availability.
- Environmental degradation is due to weak governance, deforestation, erosion, and poor resource management.
- Limited knowledge of hydrology, ecosystems, and sustainable practices.
- Conflict intensifies social, environmental, and governance challenges, disrupting livelihoods.

75. To address these development challenges, the Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and UNEP was signed on 12 August 2018, the inception period effectively ran from January 2019 till the end of 2019⁹ when small seasonal activities were also implemented, and the real implementation of project activities started in January 2020 and extended to October 2023¹⁰.

76. The project's objective was to establish climate-resilient livelihoods and reduce resource conflicts and displacement caused by livelihood loss in North Darfur. To achieve this, the project targeted areas in the Wadi El Ku and focused on:

- Support the development of inclusive natural resource management systems and structures within the Wadi El Ku, that are informed by appropriate levels of scientific and technical analysis and input;
- Support community-level agricultural and livelihoods adaptation, and improved local natural resource management practices; and
- Build institutional and organizational capacities needed to understand the dynamics of the change processes, reach agricultural producers, and implement and replicate successful integrated natural resource management.

3.2 Results Framework

77. This terminal evaluation (TE) uses the updated objectives, outputs, outcomes, indicators, and log-frame presented in the 2019 Inception Report.

78. The project's overarching purpose was to demonstrate how integrated natural resource management—focusing on water—can establish sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods, reduce natural resource conflicts in North Darfur, and prevent displacement caused by livelihood loss while safeguarding ecosystem integrity.

⁸ Pro doc ToC page 43

⁹ The inception period of WEK II started with the arrival of the team leader on 24th January Field work finished in October 2019, followed by two months of data analysis and write-up. The objective of the inception phase was to produce a detailed implementation plan that has high and sustainable impact, and has maximum buy-in from all stakeholders, including men and women, farmers and pastoralists, and the government.

¹⁰ The project got one no-cost extension to the project, which extended the project from an initial five years (planned to end in Dec 2022) to October 2023 – helped for successful project completion despite the ongoing armed conflict in Sudan, including Darfur region which impacted the implementation timeline.

79. The project aimed to directly benefit 100,000 people. It encompassed upstream, midstream and downstream sub-catchment areas, reaching 22 village councils (primarily farmers) and seven Damara (primarily pastoralists).

80. The project log frame, prepared in 2017, anticipated implementation starting in 2018. However, the initial implementation of the project was delayed by one year, with the inception period completed in 2019, during which indicators and milestones were revised while outcomes and outputs remained unchanged.

81. The project's overall objective was: "to establish climate-resilient livelihoods and reduce natural resource conflicts and displacement due to loss of livelihoods in North Darfur."

82. The project's structure included four outputs contributing to two outcomes:

- **Output 1:** Train and support a participatory, community-based catchment management forum in Wadi El Ku.
- **Output 2:** Demonstrate and promote improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, extension packages, and cooperation mechanisms for uptake at the community level in Phase II areas.
- **Output 3:** Expand and promote scientific and technical information for better water and natural resource management and early warning systems.
- **Output 4:** Share knowledge to enable government and non-government actors to adopt integrated water resource management (IWRM) for sustainable growth and stability in Darfur and Sudan.

83. The project targeted two outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Improved natural resource use and management in Wadi El Ku.
- **Outcome 2:** Communities applying improved techniques in natural resource management and agriculture.

3.3 Stakeholders

84. The project engaged multiple stakeholders, including federal and provincial government agencies, UNEP, service providers, NGOs/CSOs, and local communities. These groups contributed expertise to achieve the project objectives. Government agencies were both beneficiaries and key partners in project management.

85. The ProDoc reported a comprehensive stakeholder analysis during the project design stage, outlining the roles and benefits for local groups and institutions engaged in the project. The project confirmed that the primary beneficiaries were local communities in the WEK catchment, whose livelihoods depend on natural resources. Stakeholder engagement involved six groups during project design and implementation (details in **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Table 3 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholders	Type of Involvement	Participation in project design	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the project
Project advisory Committee	Provision of an oversight role, guidance	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project	Increased capacity and management of similar projects. No other changes (as this committee provided management support to the project).
Project Technical Committee	Provision of technical input and quality of implementation	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project	Increased capacity and management of similar projects. No other changes (as this committee provided management support to the project).
Government Ministries: (regional and federal ministries)	Take the lead in overall management ¹¹ and execution through PAC and coordinate ministry. Integrate the successful technologies and practices in their plans. Participate in capacity-building activities. Facilitate through regulatory and policy frameworks.	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project	These institutions are instrumental in ensuring the long-term sustainability and replicability of effective natural resources and catchment management.
Practical Action including other CSOs such as Rural Development Network (RDN), Voluntary Network for Rural Help Development and Women Development Association Network	Participation in project strategy development and served as the main project implementation partner in the project sites.	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project. Provided experience in phase I.	Play a leading role in promoting techniques and technologies that can support sustainable livelihoods and facilitate active engagement among participating communities, and in due course benefit (in terms of strengthened capacities and resourcing) from its development and implementation.
Users Committees (resident farmers and agro-pastoralist communities, IDPs and nomadic pastoralists)	Play an active role in guiding the project to ensure it responds to community needs and priorities, they participate in and contribute to project implementation.	Participate during the inception phase.	The use of technologies and practices (technical extension packages) promoted by the project and provide feedback on the technologies and practices from improvement and serve as the agents of project sustainability.
Private sector	Participate and promote economic activity and	Their role is unclear at this stage.	No clear statement is available.

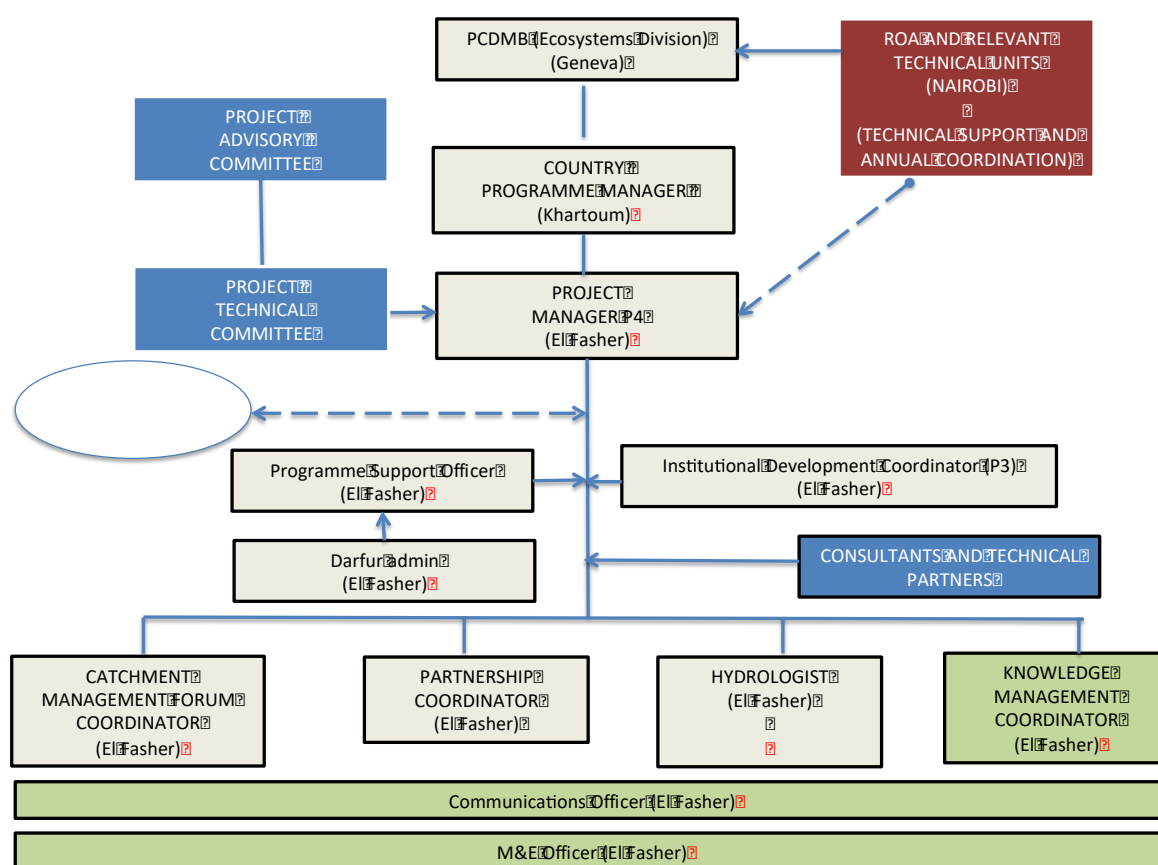
¹¹ For example, the State Ministries of Agriculture and Animal Resources is responsible to develop sustainable approaches to land and agricultural use in the project area; the Groundwater and Wadis Directorate (GWWD) is to manage water resources in the project area; and the State Water Corporation, and the Water & Environmental Sanitation project (WES) is to supply El Fasher town and its neighbouring IDP camps. The other important agencies include the Forest National Corporation (FNC), the State Ministry of Environment, the University of El Fasher, and the El Fasher Agricultural Research Centre. It also includes federal level institutions such as the Federal Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Physical Development and the Federal Ministry of Water Resources for state – federal policy links and for promotion of good practice for replication and uptake more widely across Sudan.

Stakeholders	Type of Involvement	Participation in project design	Changes in their behaviour expected through the implementation of the project
	productivity resulting from project activities.		
European Union	Donor	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project	Not clear at this stage
UN system (UNEP)	Project implementation, quality assurance, reporting	Participated in core meetings to discuss the nature of the project	Promote replication/scaling up

3.4 Project implementation structure and partners

86. The project was implemented by a dedicated UNEP Project Management Unit (PMU) based in El Fasher, North Darfur, co-located within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) premises. This arrangement ensured staff safety and security while enhancing coordination with other major UN development-focused agencies in Darfur. The PMU was supervised by UNEP's Khartoum office and supported by the Ecosystems Division's Post-Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB) in Geneva (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Organogram of the Project with key project stakeholders



87. To implement the project activities, the project signed eight legal agreements¹² between UNEP and its partners. The principal agreement was signed with implementing partner Practical Action, who was primarily responsible for implementation at the community level. Through these agreements, clear roles and responsibilities of the engaging parties were agreed upon.

88. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) / Steering Committee, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture, was originally made responsible for reviewing progress, providing strategic recommendations, and resolving implementation challenges. However, due to political instability, there were massive changes in the government system which rendered the PAC inactive. Its primary functions were subsequently assumed by the Technical Committee (TC)¹³.

89. The Technical Committee (TC), chaired by the Director General of the Ministry of Agriculture, oversaw the project's overall performance against its work plan. Its responsibilities included: (a) ensuring effective coordination between UNEP, government institutions, and NGOs; (b) providing technical guidance and oversight; and (c) addressing operational issues during implementation.

90. The Project Manager provided overall supervision of the project, focusing on refining the catchment management system developed during Phase I. The role also emphasized building institutional capacities and policies to scale up and replicate the system across Darfur.

3.5 Changes in design during implementation

91. The project underwent two revisions during implementation due to security challenges, the economic crisis in Sudan, the COVID-19 pandemic, and operational delays, such as late staff recruitment. The inception phase concluded in late 2019, incorporating additional assessments and contextual updates. While indicators and milestones were revised, the original objectives, outcomes, and outputs remained unchanged (see Table 4). Substantive justifications were provided for each change.

Table 4: A Summary of the Project Revisions undertaken during the Project Implementation period

Revision	Reason(s) for Revision
1 22 July 2020	<u>Revision of baseline and target figures:</u> The original log-frame left many baseline and target figures as 'TBD' (to be decided) during the inception phase. All 'TBD' figures have been filled. <u>Revision of indicators:</u> Some of the original indicators have been reworded for clarity; some have been revised to better measure progress and some have been added to measure progress that was not covered by the original indicators. <u>Revision of milestones:</u> Some of the original milestones have been reworded for clarity: some have been revised to better measure progress and some have been added to measure progress that was not covered by the original milestones. <u>Revision of milestone dates:</u> The delayed start of the project resulted in all milestone dates being moved forward. <u>Revision of project end date:</u> Funds were only available from the end of December 2018 and the project team was only in place in early 2019. In effect, the project started one year late.

¹² Five Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs) were signed with University of Khartoum, Water Research Centre (WRC); University of El Fasher, Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Water Resources; The Forestry National Corporation (FNC), North Darfur; the Groundwater and Wadis Department, North Darfur (GWWD); and UNESCO Chair for Water Resources, Khartoum.

¹³ PAC members are the ministerial level and due to the political change, which started in 2019, the new governor has not appointed ministers and consequently, the WEK Advisory Committee continue to be dormant. However, since the heads of important State government departments are members of the WEK Technical Committee, the collaboration at technical level continues to be close and they play the role of the PAC.

Revision		Reason(s) for Revision
2	1 February 2023	of the project to 31 October 2023 due to delays occasioned by slow project execution on account of the worsening security situation in North Darfur and the economic crisis following the October 2021 coup.

3.6 Project financing

92. The project had a budget of USD 11,370,313 contributed by the European Union. It is noted that half of the total project budget was used for water infrastructure construction (output 2) while other outputs received about 20% altogether. [Table 5](#) details funding sources while [Table 6](#) summarizes the project's planned budget and expenditure at the design stage.

Table 5: Project Funding Sources

Funding source	Planned funding	% of planned funding	Secured funding ¹⁴	% of secured funding
<i>All figures as USD</i>				
Cash				
Funds from the Environment Fund				
Funds from the Regular Budget				
Extra-budgetary funding (listed per donor):				
European Commission	11,934,000	100%	11,370,313	95%
<i>Sub-total: Cash contributions</i>	<i>11,934,000</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>11,370,313</i>	<i>95%</i>
In-kind				
Environment Fund staff-post costs				
Regular Budget staff-post costs				
Extra-budgetary funding for staff-posts (listed per donor)				
<i>Sub-total: In-kind contributions</i>				
Co-financing*				
Co-financing cash contribution				
Co-financing in-kind contribution				
<i>Sub-total: Co-financing contributions</i>				
Total	11,934,000	100%	11,370,313	95%

Table 6: Project budget summary (planned and expenditure)

PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY (IN USD)	TOTAL Budget (Revised 2022)	Total budget (revised 2022) %	Total Expenditures as of 30 April 2024	% OF TOTAL
Output 1	759,862	6.37	828,863.00	109
Output 2	5,996,441	50.25	5,224,287.55	87
Output 3	922,293	7.73	856,242.00	92
Output 4	680,193	5.70	600,174.00	88
PMU (Darfur)	863,817	7.24	965,256.00	112
Programme Team (Khartoum)	1,665,435	13.96	1,979,499.15	119
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning	136,846	1.15	114,846.00	84
Communications and Visibility	54,384	0.46	52,384.00	96
Project Evaluations	74,000	0.62	74,000	100
Programme Support Costs	780,729	6.54	748,335.52	96
TOTAL	11,934,000	100	11,443,887.22	96

Table 7: Expenditure by Year (in USD)

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1,881,660	2,896,142	4,631,217	782,056	1,221,877	30,935

¹⁴ Secured funding refers to received funds and does not include funding commitments not yet realised.

4 THEORY OF CHANGE AT EVALUATION

93. The Theory of Change (ToC) provides an overall framework illustrating the changes initiated by the project and the causal pathways between outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, and impacts. It serves as a critical tool for assessing project performance and results during this terminal evaluation. **Error! Reference source not found.** compares the original ToC from the project document with the reconstructed ToC developed for this evaluation.

94. The analysis of the project document, inception report, and documents related to project revisions necessitated to reconstruction of ToC. It was however not possible to undertake direct consultations as the project was already completed and the project site was suffering from armed conflict.

95. The reconstructed ToC (Table 8 and Figure 3) incorporates revisions based on project updates. While the impact, outcomes, and outputs were slightly revised for clarity, two intermediate states (IS) were added to strengthen the logical coherence of the project. The causal pathways from outputs to outcomes and impacts are illustrated, along with key success drivers and assumptions from the project design and implementation phases.

Table 8: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
LONG LASTING) IMPACT Project objective: to establish climate-resilient livelihoods and reduce natural resource conflicts and displacement due to loss of livelihoods in North Darfur	Impact: Emergence of resilient communities in North Darfur by establishing climate-resilient livelihoods and reducing natural resource conflicts and displacement linked to livelihood loss	The project objectives/impact has three components. It has been slightly rephrased to make it 'long term – collective change of state' from the three important components. It is noted that the impact is a collective action of many stakeholders in the long term (which is not attributed to the project intervention alone).
INTERMEDIATE STATES		
	Intermediate state 1: Inclusive and integrated natural resources management systems (policy and institutions) established and operational at the state level to effectively support catchment management approaches.	This 'IS' is required to create an enabling environment and contribute to the achievement of the project objective or impact.
	Intermediate state 2: Sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods strengthened through the adoption and ongoing use of improved NRM practices at the community level.	This IS is required to create an enabling environment and contribute to the achievement of the project objective or impact.
PROJECT OUTCOMES		
Outcome 1: Improved natural resource use and management in Wadi El Ku	Outcome 1: Improved natural resources use and management at the catchment level in WEK	
Outcome 2: Communities are applying improved techniques in NR management and agriculture.	Outcome 2: Communities applied improved techniques in NR management and agriculture at the community level.	Outcomes are a change in institutions or behaviours, attitudes or conditions.
OUTPUTS		
Output 1: Support and train a participatory, community-based catchment management forum in Wadi El Ku	A participative, community-based catchment management forum established and trained in Wadi El Ku	Rephrase the sentence without changing the essence of the original statement to make an 'output statement'

Formulation in original project document(s)	Formulation for Reconstructed ToC at Evaluation Inception (RTOC)	Justification for Reformulation
Output 2: Demonstrate and promote improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, extension packages, and cooperation mechanisms (convening pastoralists and farmers over water and natural resources), for uptake at the community level in Phase 2 project areas	Improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, including extension packages and cooperation mechanisms, were demonstrated and promoted at the community level.	Rephrase the sentence without changing the essence of the original statement to make an 'output statement'
Output 3: Expand and promote scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management and early warning.	Scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management, and early warning systems, expanded and disseminated.	Rephrase the sentence without changing the essence of the original statement to make an 'output statement'
Output 4: Knowledge sharing to support government and non-government actors to take up and apply IWRM approaches to achieve sustainable growth and stability in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.	Knowledge of IWRM approaches was shared with and among government and non-government actors in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.	Rephrase the sentence without changing the essence of the original statement to make an 'output statement'

The causal logic from outputs to outcomes

96. The project aimed to demonstrate how effective integrated natural resource management (NRM) can support economic recovery in conflict-affected areas, enhance resilient livelihoods, and mitigate environmental degradation.

97. The project's two main outcomes were supported by four outputs: a) establish and train a participatory, community-based catchment management forum in Wadi El Ku; b) promote improved agricultural and NRM approaches, including extension packages and cooperation mechanisms, at the community level; c) expand and disseminate scientific and technical information for improved NRM and early warning systems; and d) share knowledge on integrated water resource management (IWRM) with government and non-government actors in Darfur and Sudan.

98. These outputs aimed to achieve two outcomes: a) improved natural resource use and management at the catchment level; and b) communities applying improved techniques in NRM and agriculture at the community level.

99. The project assumed that government and community stakeholders would remain committed, land tenure issues would not arise, institutional stability would be maintained, and management challenges (e.g., visa or currency issues) would not negatively impact activities.

100. Drivers of success identified during the retrospective ToC development included strong government ownership at technical and political levels, sustained community engagement through awareness-raising and monitoring, and trust and collaboration between stakeholders during project planning and implementation.

101. Although project documents did not indicate which outputs contributed to which outcomes, analysis implies that Outputs 1 and 2 primarily supported Outcome 1, while Outputs 3 and 4 reinforced Outcome 2. Logical links between outputs and outcomes were established, given available resources and contextual assumptions.

The causal logic from outcomes to Intermediate States (IS)

102. The project aimed to achieve its objectives by demonstrating effective NRM, promoting sustainable practices at the local level, and creating governance mechanisms for catchment management. However, the causal links between outcomes and impacts were unclear in the programme logic. For instance, it was unclear how “improved NRM at the catchment level” (Outcome 1) and “improved techniques in NRM and agriculture” (Outcome 2) would contribute to the broader project impact.

103. A review of project documents and discussions with the project team identified two critical milestones for achieving project goals: (a) the establishment of inclusive and integrated NRM systems to support catchment management; and (b) strengthening climate-resilient livelihoods through improved NRM practices. These elements, although implicit in the project document, were not clearly articulated in the ToC. The following intermediate states were reformulated to bridge outcomes and impacts:

- a) IS 1: ‘Inclusive and integrated natural resources management systems (policy and institutions) established and operational at the state level to effectively support catchment management approaches’; and
- b) IS 2: Sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods strengthened through the adoption and ongoing use of improved NRM practices at the community level.

104. While both outcomes contribute to the intermediate states (IS), Outcome 1 primarily contributes to IS 1, as outlined below:

- Outcome 1 focuses on building governance structures for catchment management and enhancing local capacities for better water resource management. These are essential for the integrated natural resource management (NRM) systems envisioned in IS 1.
- By strengthening local governance structures and engaging stakeholders from both government and communities, inclusive management systems take shape. These participatory practices contribute to developing integrated and inclusive NRM systems at the state level (IS 1).

105. Outcome 2 primarily contributes to IS 2, as outlined below:

- Outcome 2 emphasizes demonstrating and promoting climate-resilient NRM and agricultural practices, directly aligning with IS 2's focus on enhancing livelihoods through improved NRM practices.
- By encouraging community members to adopt sustainable practices and diversify livelihoods, the project strengthens their capacity to cope with climate variability, making livelihoods more resilient to shocks and stresses.

106. Achieving these IS requires critical assumptions and key drivers. Assumptions include government commitment to coordinating and supporting project priorities, integrating project findings into state plans, allocating resources for scaling up, providing adequate human resources, and maintaining political stability. Key drivers include lessons learned from Phases I and II, increased stakeholder awareness and ownership, and the government's international climate change commitments. If these conditions are met, both IS 1 and IS 2 can be realized, enabling the achievement of outcomes.

Causal Pathways from Intermediate States to Impact

107. The project's ultimate goal was to support climate-resilient communities by reducing natural resource conflicts and displacement in North Darfur. This goal was ambitious, given the long-term nature of its objectives and the ongoing conflict, within a limited project timeframe.

108. The project's goal statement included three interrelated themes: establishing climate-resilient livelihoods, addressing natural resource conflicts, and reducing displacement. However, the phrasing of the goal lacked a consolidated expression of broader change. For example, "establishing" climate-resilient livelihoods is action-oriented but insufficient as an impact statement. In this case, a more suitable goal statement could be: "Emergence of resilient communities in North Darfur through climate-resilient livelihoods and reduced natural resource conflicts and displacement linked to livelihood loss."

109. Achieving this impact depends on IS 1 and IS 2, supported by sustained political will, resource availability, and suitable policy frameworks at national and international levels.

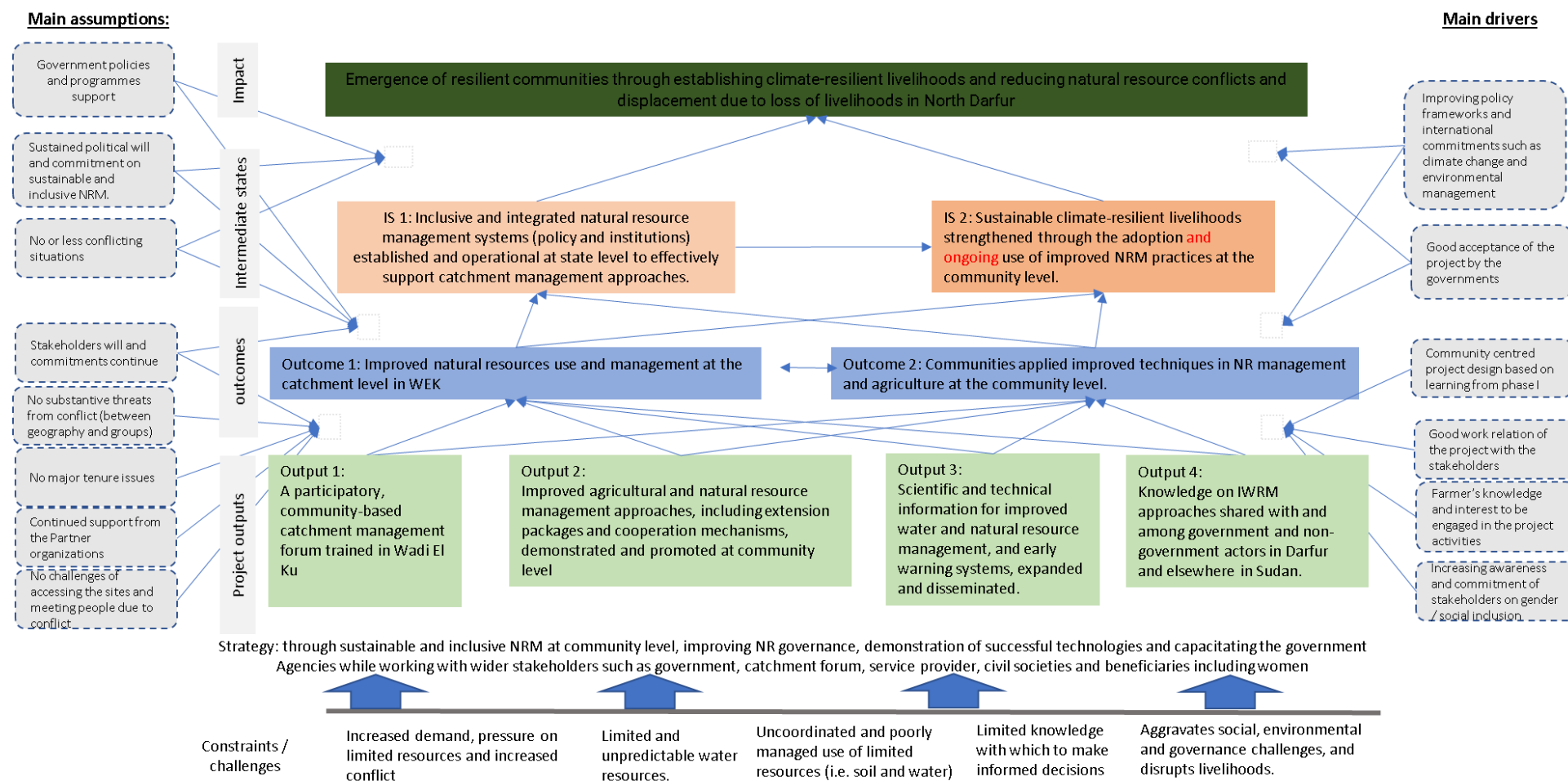
110. Contribution of IS 1 to impact:

- Improved policy and institutional frameworks for sustainable water resource management at the catchment level reduce conflicts over water by clarifying rules, ensuring fair access, and improving governance.
- These changes provide a foundation for resilient communities by promoting better resource management, reducing disputes, and mitigating displacement caused by resource conflicts.

111. Contribution of IS 2 to impact:

- Strengthened, climate-resilient livelihoods emerging from community-level NRM practices reduce vulnerability and resource-based conflicts.
- Increased resilience minimizes the risk of displacement due to livelihood loss and equips communities to manage natural resources more sustainably and peacefully.

Figure 3: ToC at Evaluation



5 EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1 Strategic Relevance

5.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

112. The project was aligned with UNEP's mandate and contributed to key commitments outlined in UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2021, particularly in the thematic priority area "Resilience to Disasters and Conflicts". It also supports UNEP's current strategy (2022–2025¹⁵) by addressing the thematic sub-programmes of Climate Action and Nature Action, as well as foundational sub-programmes of Science-Policy and Environmental Governance.

113. The project contributed to UNEP's Programme of Work 2018-2019 (PoW) accomplishments:

- Climate Change: Supported national adaptation plans integrating ecosystem-based approaches and key environmental policies in crisis-affected countries.
- Disaster and Conflicts: Helped countries integrate environmental measures into policies for risk reduction.

114. The project aligned with UNEP's five-year Freshwater Strategy (2017-2021), promoting integrated water resource management (IWRM) at national and basin levels.

115. However, there were limited activities carried out to support a 'South – South Cooperation'.

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

5.1.2 Alignment to UNEP/ Donor Strategic Priorities

116. The project, funded by the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), was in line with the fund's objective of addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. In addition, it was aligned with the EU's Short-Term Strategy 2016/17 for Sudan. It contributes to two of the three sectors: livelihoods and food security, and local governance and peacebuilding¹⁶. It also addresses EU priorities on climate change, water scarcity, and displacement risks¹⁷.

117. The project supported the EU Gender Equality Strategy (2018–2023¹⁸) by promoting equal rights, participation, and resource access for women and men and the EU Action Plan

¹⁵ UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022–2025: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35875/K2100501-e.pdf>

¹⁶ EU development cooperation with Sudan.

<https://www.asktheeu.org/en/request/4491/response/14191/attach/html/7/factsheet%20eu%20development%20cooperation%20with%20sudan%20en.pdf.html>

¹⁷ EU proposes comprehensive new outlook on threats of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence, Brussels, 28 June 2023.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/en/ip_23_3492/IP_23_3492_EN.pdf.

¹⁸ COUNCIL OF EUROPE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2018-2023. <https://rm.coe.int/prems-093618-gbr-gender-equality-strategy-2023-web-a5/16808b47e>

for Resilience in Crisis-Prone Countries (2013–2020¹⁹) by building resilience and supporting sustainable water management, as well as the EU Water Framework Directive (2000).

Rating for Alignment to UNEP/GEF/Donor Strategic Priorities: Highly Satisfactory

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

118. The project contributed to SDGs 5, 6, 12, and 13:

- **SDG 5:** Promoted gender equality, ensuring women's leadership in decision-making.
- **SDG 6:** Increased water-use efficiency and implemented IWRM at all levels.
- **SDG 12:** Supported sustainable and efficient resource use.
- **SDG 13:** Strengthened climate resilience and adaptive capacity.

119. At the regional level, the project aligned with the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), reinforcing priorities such as professional training, improved knowledge systems, and environmental knowledge sharing.

120. At the national level, the project supported Sudan's Twenty-Five Year National Strategy (2007–2031) and the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS) (2013–2019). It also contributed to the Sudan National Agriculture Investment Plan (2015–2019) by addressing food security, natural resource management, and gender inclusion, and supported the Sudan Country Programming Paper (CPP, 2019²⁰) to strengthen livelihood resilience and rangeland rehabilitation. The project was further aligned with Sudan's Five-Year Programme for Economic Reform (2015–2019), the National Adaptation Plan, and other frameworks, contributing to Sudan's climate change commitments through sectoral consultations and validation workshops for NDC preparation.

121. The project was in line with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018–2021 for Sudan, addressing economic development, climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, governance, and community stabilization through shared resource use.

122. At the state level, the project served as a model for replication, improving water harvesting, fostering peaceful relationships between Natural Resources users and Planners, and strengthening coordination between institutions and communities.

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

5.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/Coherence

123. Building on the successful IWRM and CBNRM models of Phase I, WEK II expanded its scope to upstream and downstream areas, enhancing catchment-based IWRM to improve livelihoods and resource management.

¹⁹ COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Action Plan for Resilience in Crisis Prone Countries 2013-2020, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/resilience/com_2013_227_ap_crisis_prone_countries_en.pdf

²⁰ Republic of The Sudan Country Programming Paper to Build Resilience and End Drought Emergencies in the Horn of Africa Consolidating the Path to Resilience and Sustainability 2019 – 2024, Khartoum, July 2019. <https://resilience.igad.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CPP-SUDAN.pdf>.

124. The project shared project approaches and learning²¹ with other organizations but there were no collaborative actions noted. Limited partnerships with other UN agencies, including UNDP and FAO, were also noted as areas that could have been improved.

Rating for Complementarity and Coherence with Existing Interventions: Satisfactory

Rating for Strategic Relevance: Highly Satisfactory'

5.2 Quality of Project Design

125. The Project Design Quality (PDQ) was assessed using the UNEP Evaluation Office's "Template for the Assessment of Project Design Quality (PDQ)." The project received a score of 5.12, rated "Satisfactory," reflecting a positive assessment of its design quality (see [Table 9](#)).

126. Operating Context: The project identified several implementation challenges, including security risks, unfavourable climatic conditions, and the need for adequate stakeholder support. However, it did not anticipate health risks, such as COVID-19, or the severe escalation of the political crisis witnessed during the evaluation. These external challenges, though beyond the project's control, significantly affected implementation.

127. Project Preparation: The project design process was extensive, involving robust consultations with local stakeholders and ensuring coherence with similar projects while integrating lessons from Phase I. The design process included context analysis, stakeholder identification, refinement of implementation arrangements, and development of a detailed monitoring plan and work plan. Participatory consultations were held in Darfur and Khartoum with government stakeholders, UNEP staff, community groups, NGOs, CBOs, and external partners. Feedback from these consultations informed the final design. UNEP staff from Nairobi and EU officials contributed regional insights and facilitated synergies with national initiatives.

128. Strategic Relevance: The project aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2018–2021) and Programme of Work (2018–2019), as well as Sudan's national development priorities. It addressed local needs for sustainable water and natural resource management, aimed at improving livelihoods and reducing community conflict through multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms.

129. Intended Results and Causality: The project's rationale and expected results were based on participatory processes that reflected local needs and integrated findings from Phase I. The project engaged multi-stakeholder groups to analyze challenges, identify root causes, and propose solutions. Stakeholders widely supported the proposed results, ensuring ownership and alignment with their priorities.

130. Logical Framework and Monitoring: The project developed a logical framework during the design phase, which was further refined in the inception phase, primarily revising indicators, baselines, and targets. The log frame was well-structured, with clear outputs, baselines, and targets. Activities were designed to build upon each other between outputs, ensuring a coherent approach to achieving outcomes. There were however some ambitious

²¹ For instance, the project team supported UNDP to take up the use of Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAPs) as a basis for its own programming. In such light, UNEP led a Training of Trainers on CEAPs for the benefit of UNDP and partner institutions in North and West also the project team facilitated so many numbers of trainings and support these agencies and their partners in the area of Community participatory planning and natural resources management

outcome targets, such as ‘legislation that ensures the leading role of CMF is promulgated’, that were beyond the scope of the project.

131. The Theory of Change (ToC) included in the project document described the causal pathways from activities to outcomes but lacked clarity in the pathways from outcomes to impacts. While drivers and assumptions were outlined, they were general and not specific to individual pathways. It is noted that a more detailed ToC with specific causal pathways, drivers, and assumptions for each phase would have strengthened project logic.

132. The monitoring plan was revised based on Phase I learning and included essential elements such as indicators, baselines, targets, data sources, and collection methods. This plan facilitated tracking of activities and monitoring of log frame indicators during the project lifecycle.

133. Governance and Partnerships: Drawing on Phase I experience, the project utilized the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Committee (TC) to support decision-making, although the PAC was non-functional due to increased armed conflict. Establishing the Catchment Management Agency (CMA²²) was instrumental in ensuring participatory governance, and fostering coordination among stakeholders from government to local CBOs and NRCs.

134. Partnerships: A significant strength of the project was its partnerships with local organizations, including CBOs, NGOs, and INGOs, as well as government institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MOAAR), GWWD, FNC, Meteorological authority, Agriculture Research Center, and universities. Practical Action, with its strong community connections and field expertise, was a key partner in facilitating participatory implementation.

135. Learning, Communication, and Outreach: Lessons from Phase I informed the project’s emphasis on knowledge generation from the project and dissemination. To address the gap of dissemination in Phase I, Phase II proposed dedicated output (output 4) for effective communication and dissemination. Clear activities and implementation plans were developed to ensure effective communication and outreach.

136. Financial Planning and Budgeting: The project budget was well-structured and aligned with its scope. It included allocations for outputs, monitoring and evaluation, communication and visibility, and project support costs, with segregation across implementation years. However, activity-level budgets were not detailed, limiting granularity in financial tracking.

137. Efficiency: The project effectively leveraged Phase I learnings, particularly in technical approaches and management strategies. By emphasizing community ownership and involving organizations with strong local experience, the project aimed to enhance management efficiency and strengthen project results.

138. Risk Identification and Social Safeguards: The project identified key risks and developed mitigation strategies, categorized by severity and level of impact. The project however could have added robust risk planning such as integrating the potential impact of different stages of escalation of conflict in the implementation of the project while designing

²² Wadi El Ku CMF members was renamed Catchment Management Coordination Agency (CMA) to formalize as an institution (forum is locally understood as a loose informal network) that would facilitate to include a broader catchment areas and stakeholders. As a result, CAM was registered within the government systems as a voluntary institution to work as a legal entity.

the project. Gender aspects were integrated during the design phase through lessons from Phase I and a Gender Marker Self-Assessment. Equal participation opportunities for men and women were ensured, including in situation analysis, needs identification, and activity planning. Budgetary provisions were also made for gender-related activities, reflecting a strong emphasis on gender inclusivity.

139. Sustainability, Replication, and Catalytic Effects: A dedicated chapter in the project document outlined sustainability strategies, including supporting community action plans, building relationships between communities and technical government departments, capacity building for stakeholders, documenting and sharing knowledge, and preparing an exit strategy. These strategies aimed to ensure the project's long-term impact and scalability.

140. Identified Design Weaknesses and Gaps: While the project incorporated PRC feedback and adhered to UNEP design criteria, some gaps were identified. These include the lack of detailed causal pathways in the ToC, limited specificity in drivers and assumptions, and an insufficient focus on activity-level budgeting.

141. Overall, the project design was a strength, leveraging lessons from Phase I to create a participatory, evidence-based approach. It successfully engaged communities and governments, established multi-stakeholder mechanisms, and developed solutions aligned with local needs. However, refining the ToC with detailed assumptions, risks, and drivers, and incorporating more granular budgeting, could have further enhanced project design quality.

Table 9: Quality of project design

	SECTION	SELECT RATING	SCORE (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
B	Project Preparation	Highly Satisfactory	6	1.2	0.72
C	Strategic Relevance	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.8	0.48
D	Intended Results and Causality	Satisfactory	5	1.6	0.8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	Moderately Satisfactory	4	0.8	0.32
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.4	0.24
G	Partnerships	Highly Satisfactory	6	0.8	0.48
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	Satisfactory	4	0.4	0.16
J	Efficiency	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	Satisfactory	5	0.8	0.4
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	Satisfactory	5	1.2	0.6
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	Satisfactory	5	0.4	0.2
TOTAL SCORE					5.2
1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)			< 1.83		
2 (Unsatisfactory)			≥ 1.83 < 2.66		
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)			≥ 2.66 < 3.5		
4 (Moderately Satisfactory)			≥ 3.5 <= 4.33		
5 (Satisfactory)			> 4.33 <= 5.16		
6 (Highly Satisfactory)			> 5.16		

Rating for Project Design Quality: 'Highly Satisfactory'

integrating robust risk management frameworks into project design to address political instability, economic shocks, and global crises. Such frameworks are essential to ensuring continuity and the effective delivery of critical development outcomes. Regular joint risk assessments, flexibility and updated contingency plans were critical to navigating unprecedented challenges effectively.

Rating for Nature of the External Context: Unfavorable

5.4 Effectiveness

148. This section provides the effectiveness of the project considering the project implementation – the extent to which the project has achieved its intended results in terms of planned outputs, outcomes and progress toward the achievement of the longer-term impacts including the replication and sustainability effects. The main data sources of the review were the project progress reports, project documents, inception reports and primary data collected through KIIs and FDGs.

5.4.1 Availability of Outputs

149. Most of the project activities have been completed and nearly all output targets were met during the project lifetime. The stakeholders including beneficiaries from communities were found to be fully satisfied with the delivery of outputs. Beneficiaries felt that all the outputs served as community property and benefitted from the increased awareness of the NRM technologies and practices, improved income, and enhanced strong networks for community work.

150. However, there were delays in activities implementation in some cases. The delays in completing the project activities through the initial project lifetime were due to several factors, including delay in selecting a partner for managing a large infrastructure²⁵, lengthy procurement processes and late placement of project staff, among others.

151. The following section provides major progress made during the project implementation.

Output 1: A participatory, community-based catchment management forum is supported and trained in Wadi El Ku

152. Building on the successes and lessons of Phase I, Phase II established three sub-catchment Natural Resource Committees (NRCs) to address natural resource challenges. These NRCs were developed collaboratively with communities, ensuring representation from community-based organizations (CBOs) that collectively encompassed diverse community groups.

153. The Catchment Management Agency (CMA²⁶), an inclusive and multi-stakeholder governance body, was formalized with 30 primary members (21% female). The members

²⁵ The construction of water infrastructure was a big investment from the project. The project explored some options within the UN organizations and finally decided to work with Practical Action and the process took longer than expected time. In addition, procurement process within UNEP was long and bureaucratic making the construction of weirs even longer. It was delayed by at least one and half years.

²⁶ The Phase I forum's constitution was reviewed in collaboration with the forum's executive committee. The former name of the forum has been changed to the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Agency (CMA). This amendment entails the establishment of a trustee board, an increase in agency membership from 24 to 30. The six new members were from Phase II sub catchment community representation i.e., National Resource Councils (NRCs). Changes were made by omitting and adding certain articles to the constitution. The constitution was subsequently presented to the Technical Committee, where it was accepted and approved.

represented a wide range of institutions, including government ministries, NRCs, Farmers' and Pastoralists' Unions, CBOs, Native Administration, landowners, and community representatives from across and downstream of the project area. A shared vision and operational plan for the CMA were revised based on Phase I learnings and approved by the Technical Committee (TC), enhancing its strategic alignment.

154. Addressing identified capacity gaps, the project provided extensive technical assistance and capacity development for both the NRCs and CMA. The training programs emphasized equal participation of women in decision-making processes and covered topics such as environmental analysis, conflict resolution, NRM laws and policies, and customary practices. Exchange visits between NRCs also facilitated peer learning. Overall, 20 workshops, conferences, and training sessions on IWRM and climate change adaptation reached 300 participants, including 135 women and 165 men.

155. The evaluation found the CMA to be fully operational and effective in its roles of coordination, advisory, and advocacy. It played a pivotal role in linking water users across the catchment with state government structures and facilitating integrated water resource management. Moreover, the CMA's field monitoring efforts and its ability to incorporate upstream and downstream considerations underscored its capacity to promote inclusive, integrated management of water and other natural resources within the WEK catchment. These achievements highlight the success of Output 1 in fostering sustainable governance for natural resource management. Indicator-wise progress is presented in [Table 10](#).

Table 10: Progress status of output 1

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Output 1: Support and train a participatory, community-based catchment management forum in Wadi El Ku	1. Number of community Natural Resource Committees established with representation of women and men	3	Formed three Natural Resource Committees (NRC) - one for each sub-catchment, with a total member of 37 (9 Female:28 male) representing community leaders, farmers, pastoralists, women and youth. Carried out the institutional capacity assessment of the CBOs.	Achieved
	2. Number of training activities implemented for the forum and NR committees targeting men and women	20	20 capacity-building training activities implemented for the forum and NR committees on natural resources (NR), environment, environmental policies, laws, and norms, climate changes and early warning systems workshop. In addition, a training event for the CMA members about the use of social media.	Achieved
	3. Number of communications plans developed by the CMF	1	One communication plan was developed by the Catchment Management Forum (CMA) and implemented ²⁷ .	Achieved

²⁷ In April 2022, UNEP communications officer facilitated a two-days media and communication training for 14 CMA members and two PA staff. Topics covered included overview of social media, the importance of social media, social media features, the most prominent social media platforms, use of social media for non-profit organizations for visibility and fundraising, how to create a Facebook account and manage it and its insight tools. After that the CMA had number of communication planning meetings and finally the plan was developed and implemented

Output 2: Improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, including extension packages and cooperation mechanisms, are demonstrated and promoted, facilitating collaboration between pastoralists and farmers over water and resources in Phase 2 project areas).

156. The following are the major deliverables of this output. Indicator-wise progress is presented in [Table 11](#).

157. The project employed extensive participatory planning with 29 communities (22 village councils and 7 pastoralist communities), resulting in the development of Community Action Plans (CAPs) and shared visions. Detailed land-use plans were created through participatory mapping, integrating conflict-sensitive approaches to address longstanding tensions between pastoralists and farmers.

158. The project introduced cost-recovery seed systems for crops and vegetables, trained 146 extension agents, and revised and published nine extension packages, in addition to two new manuals (Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) and pest management). It established five Cooperative Agriculture Associations focusing on marketing, livestock, vegetable production, seed production, and oilseed production, all registered with the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, 1,000 donkey ploughs were distributed to farmers from 23 villages, enabling better agricultural practices.

159. Over 10,220 farmers were trained in sustainable practices, contributing to the adoption of improved agricultural (25%), livestock (13%), and NRM techniques (27.3%) at the household level. These efforts promoted climate-resilient agriculture and strengthened local capacity.

160. The project rehabilitated three water harvesting weirs/dams with active community participation, benefitting approximately 44,000 farming households and irrigating about 9,000 hectares of farmland. Committees comprising 63 members were established to oversee the management and maintenance of these structures, ensuring sustainability.

161. Cross-learning initiatives, such as exchange visits between downstream and upstream communities, facilitated the sharing of experiences in water infrastructure management and challenges, such as those faced with the Korga weir.

162. Gender-responsive approaches were integrated into the project interventions. Five women farmers' groups (50 members) were formed²⁸, prioritizing marginalized women such as widows and subsistence farmers. Women's representation in decision-making structures increased significantly, with their participation rising from 5% in Phase I to 31% in Phase II at the state decision-making level. The project also supported 18 VSLA groups involving 360 women and youth, providing training and loans. Women-led small businesses in agricultural processing (e.g., watermelon jam and tomato paste) were supported, empowering 30 women through skills training. Monitoring reports showed significant impacts: 37% of women used loans for livelihoods, 34% for school fees, 13% for health, and 10% for business startups.

²⁸ In Eddebeida, Wad kuta, bahar umdermen, Wadaa and Kusa

163. The VSLAs became vital platforms for savings, loans, and social interactions. Pastoralist women particularly benefited from the opportunity to share experiences, expand roles beyond household duties, and engage in productive and community activities²⁹.

164. However, the primary challenge was delays in fund authorization, which postponed water spreading weir construction. This cascading delay affected agricultural activities reliant on water infrastructure, thereby hindering timely demonstration of IWRM, agriculture winter season extension and food security and livelihood improvements.

165. Despite challenges, Output 2 achieved significant milestones in promoting sustainable practices, fostering collaboration, empowering women, and building community ownership of natural resource management. Its contributions to improved agricultural productivity, inclusive governance, and conflict resolution underscore its success in addressing local development needs.

Table 11: Progress made under Output 2

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Output 2: Demonstrate and promote improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, extension packages, and cooperation mechanisms (convening pastoralists and farmers over water and natural resources), for uptake at the community level in Phase 2 project areas	1. Number of new or improved agricultural and NRM extension packages promoted in the Phase 2 project area through effective means of demonstration and communication (targeting men and women)	9	Nine extension packages were revised and published, two agricultural extension manuals were prepared, and Farmers' Field Schools' approach (FFSs) and pest management practices for store pest control, organic fertilizer, and disease control measures were developed and published.	Achieved
	2. Number of new or improved cooperation mechanisms demonstrated in the project area	3	Economical social cooperation was established in the women farmers groups, farm demonstration, agro-processing groups, the VSLA groups and 5 marketing groups/cooperation associations ³⁰ formed. These associations were registered as collaborative associations within the Ministry of Finance, North Darfur.	Achieved
	3. Number of community water harvesting structures established or	4	Studies carried out for weir construction ³¹ in 2022 based on agreed criteria ³² .	Achieved

²⁹ Establishment of 300 km fire breaks to control dry season grass fires (vital for environmental protection, combating desertification, and safeguarding rangelands and livestock), fuel efficient stove training to 120 women on environmental issues and empower women to reduce their reliance on charcoal and firewood through the manufacturing of fuel-efficient stoves (FES); animals' vaccination 100,000 livestock; establish Seven community-based revolving funds for veterinary medicine; and 126000 tree seedlings produced and planted and support Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR) of forest in 105 Feddan.

³⁰ Animal production association, vegetable production association, improved seeds production association, gum Arabic production association and oilseed production association)

³¹ weir studies considered a) Environmental and social impact assessment b) geotechnical surveys and soil investigations; c) topographical survey; and d) hydrological studies

³² The water harvesting interventions in WEK II is based on preliminary selection criteria which include: Water harvesting structures development is based on community priorities set during PAPD/CEAP process; availability of arable land; number of community member served; diversity of livelihoods in the area as it is very important when considering high cost structures; Conflict free area; Water yards, wells and pumps are considered when the available sources are not sufficient, or the communities has to move for distances more than 500 m to get water. Also availability of construction material in the vicinity of the site for big structures; obtain a representative view on landowners, important people in a community and those who will

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
	rehabilitated in the Phase 2 project areas with participation from men and women in communities and government		3 water harvesting structures were established (Wada) or rehabilitated (Edalbada and Kusa). The Edalbada and Kusa weirs were for agricultural production purposes while the Wada dam was mainly for drinking water. Establishment of 4 hand pumps (2 in Damras and 2 in Wadda). Established six water yards complete with solar systems and installed two water wells	
	4. Trees planted by farmer families implementing forestry practices for stabilising soils and increasing soil productivity is increased – including agro-forestry, community forestry, soil stabilisation, and natural regeneration forests	150,000	126,000 tree seedlings produced and planted with an average survival rate of 70% across the project, promoted the planting of vetiver grass for stabilizing gullies (1.5 km long strip), Established community forest and one new community forest along with training and seedling bags Promoted individual family nurseries for seedling production for agro-forestry and family use Support to rangeland management	Partially Achieved
	5. Number of village extension workers (farmers and pastoralists) trained by the project in the delivery of new or improved NRM and livelihoods (crops and livestock) extension packages is increased, targeting both men and women	262	326 farmers and pastoralists community extension agents trained on agriculture, livestock and NRM extension packages as Training of Trainers (TOT). As a result, 10,220 farmers have been trained by the extension agents. More than 6,000 farmers and extension staff received extension messages through the mobile SMS approach.	Achieved

Output 3: Scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management, as well as early warning systems, is expanded and disseminated.

166. Building on lessons from Phase I, the project partnered with the Water Resources Centre (WRC) at the University of Khartoum to develop an updated modelling framework. Key outputs included the delineation of groundwater recharge areas, sustainability analysis for water harvesting structures, and climate change impact assessments. This process incorporated contributions from key stakeholders, including the Technical Committee (TC),

be most directly affected or benefit from any dam, to determine their needs; solicitation of community participation and contribution towards the siting and construction (provision of land, their labour and possibly local materials); and operation and maintenance (maintenance of existing structures can only be done on special cases as it should be performed by communities).

Catchment Management Agency (CMA), and local communities, ensuring alignment with local needs and priorities. The progress under this output is presented in [Table 12](#)

167. The project collaborated with academic institutions such as the WRC, the University of El Fasher, and the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Natural Resources (FES & NR) to strengthen the scientific foundation of water resource management. Studies conducted included assessments of water information systems, water quality, and mapping of natural resources in selected areas.

168. Training initiatives addressed critical topics such as data quality management, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for natural resource management, and water quality monitoring. As part of institutional capacity building, equipment such as rain gauges, GPS devices, laboratory tools, and software were distributed to key institutions, including the General Directorate of Groundwater and Wadis (GWWD), the University of El Fasher, and other partners.

169. To promote community participation, the project piloted a citizen science initiative in three locations (Mario, Sarafaya, and Eid Al Beida). Rain gauges were installed, and volunteers from these areas were trained to collect data, fostering a link between local communities and government data custodians, such as the GWWD and Meteorological Office.

170. There were notable challenges in fostering a strong partnership with universities to generate evidence-based knowledge for project decision-making. These challenges were exacerbated by changes in the political context, resulting in leadership transitions, insufficient funding for universities, and capacity gaps. This weak collaboration hindered the full-scale achievement of the intended outputs and limited the project's ability to leverage academic expertise for informed decision-making.

171. Output 3 demonstrated significant achievements in advancing science-based decision-making. By integrating robust data generation, institutional capacity-building, and community engagement, the project strengthened knowledge systems and decision-making processes. However, the weak institutional ability of universities due to political uncertainties affected the full delivery of the output. Scaling up these initiatives and ensuring sustained institutional engagement will be critical for long-term impact.

Table 12: Progress made under output 3

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Output 3: Expand and promote scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management and early warning.	1. Number of hydrological and hydrogeological models improved and updated	1	The project helped to produce a modelling framework that guides the modelling process, and models were partially updated based on the information.	Partially achieved
	2. Number of additional sub-basins in which community data collection networks are established and mobilized	1	The project helped to create data through community data collection networks. Communities were engaged in monitoring and data collection processes. Academic institutions were involved to strengthen and build the knowledge and science base on water resources in the project area.	Achieved
	3. Number of studies and assessments produced to	3	Carried out some studies: 'status of water information and demand was conducted (2019)', 'need assessment in the selected sites' 'study on water	Achieved

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
	understand problems and opportunities within the catchment		quality of pilot areas' 'delineation of the groundwater recharge zones', 'impact and sustainability analysis of the water harvesting structures' and 'impact of climate change'.	
	4. Number of institutions capacities strengthened in data and science provision	2	Local institutions were capacitated through training and workshops. For example, 5 training on various themes were provided, community meetings were conducted with the government and other stakeholders, and the capacity of institutions was also supported through training and material support. For example, GWWD has rain gauges, flow gauges, laptops, desktops, GPS, printers, and UPS	Achieved

Output 4: Knowledge-shared to support government and non-government actors in adopting and applying IWRM approaches, to achieve sustainable growth and stability in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.

172. Building on lessons from Phase I, this output focused on consolidating learning through pilot initiatives and disseminating insights to stakeholders for potential scaling up. A conducive environment was created within the government to support the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Capacity-Building Framework³³. Activities included facilitating field visits for government officials to observe and engage with IWRM practices, ensuring their active participation and buy-in for further adoption. The progress under this output is presented in Table 13.

173. The project utilized diverse platforms and materials to share findings and learning:

- Sharing at the international event: The WEK II case study was presented at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27), elevating its visibility and relevance.
- Preparation of Audio-Visual Materials³⁴: Topics included peacebuilding, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), agricultural extension via radio, and climate-resilient practices such as soil erosion prevention using vetiver grass.
- Published Articles³⁵: These documents supported further dissemination and learning.

³³ through the strategic partnership between UNEP and the Training and Capacity Building Directorate (TCBD) of the MoIWR

³⁴ for example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=BpPCSkcvnq4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR3eOyaLrFGhVgD2Q6EoGv9n2YxY5qGRJZUx4dsJ1etQMMH5kZyqQWlZID4>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_slqoKetEc and https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=817918222561582&_rdc=1&_rdr.

³⁵ for example: On 25 January, a scientific article featured on Ecosystem for Peace entitled "[Natural Resources Management, Environmental Governance and Peacebuilding in Darfur: How a zero-sum game became a win-win situation when farmers and pastoralists were incentivised to find shared solutions](#)". This article was a contribution to a compendium of lessons learned, visions for, and recommendations towards the future of environmental peacebuilding. It was part ongoing project that aims to deliver a strong, cogent message about the future of the field to the Stockholm+50 forum in June 2022.

- Knowledge Sharing Events³⁶: Stakeholders were engaged through field visits, workshops, and discussions to explore lessons and practical applications of IWRM approaches.

174. At the national level, the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources (MoIWR) and the Technical Capacity-Building Directorate (TCBD) identified the WEK project as a case study for achieving SDG 6. Additionally, collaborations with UN sister agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, OHCHR, IOM, and WFP) at the state level focused on raising awareness of WEK's unique contributions to governance, women's capacity-building, Farmer Field Schools, extension packages, and lessons learned.

175. Respondents indicated that dissemination materials and events effectively highlighted NRM issues and provided valuable opportunities for scaling up. However, these efforts were often organized on an ad hoc basis. The extent to which stakeholders used shared knowledge for planning and decision-making remained unclear, reflecting a gap in structured follow-up and strategic communication planning. A significant number of respondents viewed that the communication and dissemination functions of the project could have been further enhanced to increase the visibility of the project and its findings. This has affected the full-scale delivery of this output.

176. Output 4 demonstrated significant efforts in sharing knowledge and raising awareness of IWRM practices and governance models. While the project succeeded in engaging diverse stakeholders, the lack of systematic follow-up limited the measurable impact of knowledge-sharing activities on policy and planning processes. Future efforts should prioritize a more structured approach to ensure knowledge is effectively utilized for scaling up and decision-making.

Table 13: Progress made under output 4

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Output 4: Knowledge sharing to support government and non-government actors to take up and apply IWRM approaches to achieve sustainable growth and stability in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.	1. Number of communications materials produced and shared capturing key processes, concepts, and lessons, targeting donors, government, UN and NGOs	10	At least 10 communication materials were produced and shared. Some of them included	Achieved
	2. Number of events held to share key processes, concepts, and lessons, targeting donors, government, UN and NGOs	15	15 events were organized.	Achieved
	3. Number of learning visits organised for the benefit of communities, NGOs, UN, donors and government wishing to apply IWRM in the broader WEK catchment and elsewhere	10	Some communication materials were developed and shared, and some events were held but there could have been more. Besides, some visits were organized within the project sites but not at a wider scale as planned.	Partially achieved

177. The WEK II project demonstrated commendable progress and performance across its outputs, despite facing significant external challenges such as political instability, the

³⁶ Shared the project's information/knowledge with the high-level US Congress members visited El Fasher.

COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing armed conflict in Sudan. All planned outputs were completed, contributing to the project's outcomes.

178. Output 1 established inclusive governance structures like the Catchment Management Agency (CMA) and Natural Resource Committees (NRCs), fostering collaborative resource management. Output 2 demonstrated and promoted improved agricultural and natural resource management practices, engaging communities and empowering women through initiatives like VSLAs and Farmer Field Schools. Output 3 strengthened science-driven decision-making by updating hydrological models and piloting citizen science approaches. Output 4 shared project knowledge nationally and internationally, facilitating awareness and future replication.

179. While delays, such as in weir construction, hindered the timely demonstration of agricultural improvements, a no-cost extension enabled project completion. Overall, the project's achievements are notable, with outputs effectively contributing to sustainable resource management and resilience-building in conflict-affected contexts.

Rating for availability of outputs: Satisfactory

5.4.2 Achievement of Project Outcomes

180. The assessment of the outcomes at the aggregate level from the available set of indicators was challenging as the indicators are more focused on the completion of activities rather than providing the overall changed status or context from the outputs delivered during the project implementation. However, the progress made according to the proposed indicators is provided below in [Table 14](#).

Outcome 1: Improved Natural Resource Use and Management at the Catchment Level in WEK

Water Infrastructure Driving Agricultural Productivity and Resource Conflict Reduction

181. The construction and rehabilitation of water-harvesting infrastructure, such as weirs, have significantly enhanced water availability, particularly for agriculture in the rainfed WEK areas³⁷ (see Box 1). These interventions have enabled better utilization of scarce water resources, contributing to improved agricultural productivity. For instance, the rehabilitation of the Kusa weir expanded the irrigated area to 4,000 Feddan³⁸ (1,680 Hectares), and the flood area increased from 5,000 Feddan (2,100 Hectares) to 9,000 Feddan (3,780 Hectares). Precipitation of surface water is projected to rise by over 20%. Respondents noted that the timely availability of water for sowing and irrigation has directly supported increased crop production and expansion of agricultural areas.

³⁷ The Gurdian Newspaper has covered the benefits of the water weirs in the project area. Wednesday 18 December 2019 by Damian Carrington

³⁸ A feddan is a unit of area used in Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Oman. It is equivalent to 1.038 acres or 0.42 hectares. The word "feddan" comes from the Arabic word faddān, which means "yoke of oxen". This implies the area of land that could be tilled by oxen in a certain amount of time.

182. The project also carried out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which provided no major issues. The assessment however reported minor potential impacts, such as possible conflict of upstream and downstream communities, during the construction of weirs. These issues were well mitigated during the implementation of the project.

183. Improved water availability has also mitigated conflicts between farmers and pastoralists by reducing competition for resources. However, delays in constructing water infrastructure limited the project's potential to fully realize large-scale outcomes, particularly in agriculture and livestock management.

CMA's Role in Effective Natural Resource Management

184. The project strengthened the capacity of the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), which has become a pivotal institution in managing natural resources and reducing conflicts in the project area. The CMA is a collaborative organization that brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including 24 members representing various entities: 14 Governmental institutions, Native administration of farmers and pastoralists (marginalized and vulnerable communities), Academic institutions, Civil society organizations, Women and youth groups, and Media outlets.

Box 1: Contribution of Wadaa dam in livelihood

The Wada dam (which was fully functional in 2023 rainy season) is 2000 meter long with two spill ways. It has demonstrated positive impacts on drinking water, farming, environmental impact. The dam provides water for the people of Wada, neighbouring communities, and those passing through Wadaa. According to Technical Committee members, Wadaa weir stored a good amount water in addition to diversion and the reserve is expected to last for a long time. It was reported that more than 100 barrels of water was supplied daily from the weir, and it is expected to solve 90% of water shortage problem in Wada. The dam structure had increased the opportunities for off-season cultivation, where hundreds of farmers have accessed to water. Community consultations also revealed that farmers planted vegetables such as tomatoes, radishes, onions, cucumber and okra which supported household income and diversified food diets thereby contributing to the resilient livelihoods of the communities. This availability of water was also used for the groundwater recharge and feeding animals. The project monitoring reports also suggested that the water table has been increased compared to previous years demonstrating a clear positive environmental impact of the dam.

185. The CMA demonstrated leadership in developing sub-catchment plans addressing invasive species, controlled water harvesting, gully erosion, and environmental rehabilitation. The CMA effectively facilitated collaboration among upstream, midstream, and downstream users, fostering resource-sharing and conflict resolution. It influenced the Ministry of Agriculture to issue decrees protecting water infrastructure and regulating terrace and dam construction.

186. The CMA also acted as a coordination hub, bridging government departments, communities, and technical staff. It led efforts in IWRM planning, advocating best practices and conflict prevention. Respondents highlighted that the CMA's operational independence and confidence in resolving resource disputes have increased.

187. Despite its success, institutionalization remains a challenge. While the CMA has earned recognition as the lead IWRM coordinator, the absence of state-level legislative support limits the creation of legally binding systems. A lack of government policies due to ongoing armed conflict poses further obstacles to long-term sustainability.

Integration of the IWRM approach by Other Partners

188. The CMA's leadership attracted participation from organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), ZOA, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), and others, who shared their experiences and contributed to the catchment

management plans. Women's priorities were also integrated into the plans, enhancing inclusivity in natural resource governance.

189. Outcome 1 demonstrates significant achievements in enhancing water availability, promoting agricultural productivity, reducing conflicts, and establishing a robust governance model for natural resource management. However, delays in implementation and the absence of formal policy frameworks underscore the need for strengthened institutional and legislative support to sustain these gains.

Outcome 2: Communities Applied Improved Techniques in NR Management and Agriculture

190. The project effectively addressed the challenges of environmental degradation and livelihoods by promoting improved techniques in natural resource (NR) management and agriculture at the community level. Through integrated water resource management (IWRM) and the construction of water-harvesting infrastructure, communities experienced a transformative shift in NR management and agricultural practices. This intervention proved especially critical in the arid desert climate, where water availability is a persistent challenge. The water-spreading weirs were instrumental in ensuring water accessibility, driving significant improvements in agricultural productivity and resilience.

Box 2: Women's participation in the project

In terms of inclusiveness, women's participation in decision-making has significantly increased through their involvement in governance structures such as CBOs, NRCs, and CMA. The inclusion of women in planning processes is evidenced by their 53% representation among beneficiaries and their active role in community action plans, which 100% of female participants reported as reflecting their needs.

The project promoted women's economic empowerment by facilitating access to resources, land, and financial opportunities. For example, women farmer groups secured 10 feddans (equivalent to 4.2 Hectares) of land per group—a landmark achievement for land access. Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) supported 235 women and youth in starting income-generating activities, with 73% reporting improved livelihoods. Training in climate-resilient agricultural practices and access to tools and seeds further enhanced their economic resilience.

Women played critical roles in peacebuilding by participating in dialogues and social events aimed at promoting coexistence. While men largely dominate formal conflict resolution, women have become instrumental in preventing disputes, contributing to stability in the project area.

Despite progress, barriers remain. Women continue to face limited access to markets and larger financial opportunities. While female representation improved in state-level decision-making (from 5% in Phase I to 31% in Phase II), leadership roles are still predominantly male. Cultural norms remain a significant obstacle to full gender equity.

191. The project's use of extension packages and Farmer Field Schools, guided by IWRM and climate-resilient approaches, significantly boosted agricultural practices. Respondents reported multiple benefits, including expanded crop areas, increased productivity due to reliable irrigation, and greater diversity in crops and vegetables. The project's deliberate focus on engaging women (see Box 2) in these activities ensured inclusivity and equitable benefits across communities.

192. Community forestry initiatives yielded tangible results, particularly downstream, where households adopted valuable tree species such as Acacia and Ziziphus. These efforts contributed to sustainable land management, environmental stewardship, and economic benefits. Agroforestry technologies and family tree nurseries were linked to increased household income, providing an additional avenue for climate adaptation and resilience.

193. Improved NR and agricultural practices generated employment opportunities, enhanced household income, and strengthened food security. By advancing water management practices, the project enhanced agricultural yields, drought resilience, and overall community livelihoods. These interventions addressed pressing challenges,

positioning communities to better adapt to the harsh climatic conditions of the region while fostering long-term economic and environmental sustainability.

194. Outcome 2 demonstrates a significant shift in community capacity for sustainable agriculture and resource management. The emphasis on IWRM, agroforestry, and women's participation has created a robust framework for resilience, though scaling these successes would require continued support and adaptation.

Table 14: Progress Towards Achievement of Project Outcomes

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
Outcome 1: Improved natural resources use and management at the catchment level in WEK	1. Percentage of the surface water in Wadi El Ku used for agricultural production by the improved water infrastructure implemented by the project	20%	No data was available regarding the percentage of the surface water used in the WEK. There has been an increase in the area of water use. For example, Kusa weir rehabilitation increased the irrigated area by 4000 Feddan.	Partially achieved
	2. CMF accepted as the lead institution for IWRM coordination in Wadi el Ku indicated by 80% of organizations working on IWRM in Wadi El Ku have joined the CMF or legislation that ensures the leading role of CMF is promulgated	80%	Organizations such as FOA, ZOA, COOPI, SOS Sahil, DARA and WHH were interested in working within the scope of CMF and TC initiated by the project. For instance, ZOA and COOPI used to share their experiences on IWRM (monthly monitoring reports). These organizations represent 80% of the organizations implementing the IWRM approach. Due to the absence of the legislative council in the state since April 2019, no policy was formed. The CMA was however registered as an NGO under HAC.	Achieved
	3. Number of institutions or programs applying IWRM concepts and good practice as demonstrated by the project	10	Organizations such as OXFAM, ZOA, COOPI, DRA, Sahel Sudan, PA, RDN and the government (MOA, GWWD, State Water Cooperation) applied IWRM in their projects. The project received a request for support in this regard and they were also included as members in the project TC where they presented their project regularly. In addition, sharing of the best practices and challenges with the WEK project was also carried out. Also, the CMA conducted training for the organizations which were interested in IWRM at the state and field level along with organizing joint field visits to learn from each other.	Achieved
	4. Number of IWRM sub-catchment plans developed, endorsed by all stakeholders, and implemented	3	Three sub-catchment plans were developed for the upper stream, med-stream and downstream of the Wadi and endorsed by stakeholders and implemented.	Achieved
	5. Percentage of women's priorities reflected in the catchment management plans	50%	The project progress report indicated the level of response to the women's priorities identified during the planning phase showed that all women's	Achieved

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
			priorities were supported by the project activities ³⁹ .	
	6. Number of protocols developed by the catchment management forum and promoted	1	One protocol developed by the catchment management forum	Achieved
Outcome 2: Communities applied improved techniques in NR management and agriculture at the community level.	1. Households that benefit from new or rehabilitated water-spreading interventions	5,000	In the 2023 rainy season, 200 farmer households from the Wadda community started to cultivate on 200 terraces. In 2024, the Wada Dam provided drinking water in an area where accessing groundwater is difficult. This dam ensures a reliable water supply for approximately 13,000 people and supports around 30,400 livestock, including goats, sheep, cows, and camels. In the case of Kusa weir rehabilitation, 7 villages with about 3,000 farmers benefited from the increase in the flooded area (in addition 4,000 Feddan). The weir currently benefits over 20,000 people, including farmers, returnees, and settled communities, by supplying water to more than 9,000 hectares of farmland in Kusa and Sarafaya ⁴⁰ . The construction of the Eid al Beida Water Weir addressed the challenges of groundwater scarcity. The weir provided a reliable irrigation source for local farmers and supported approximately 11,000 individuals and around 25,300 heads of livestock. The weir helped to increase agricultural yields, improve food security, and foster economic growth within the community. Additionally, mitigating conflicts over scarce resources promotes peacebuilding endeavours.	Achieved
	2. Households that adapt improved agricultural techniques	25%	The monitoring report (Dec 2021) showed that 30% of the farmers confirmed they adopted improved agricultural techniques. Among households trained in agricultural techniques, 40% of them use improved seeds for cultivation. Additionally, 30% of the trained individuals apply plant spacing and thinning, while 27.7% focus on disease and pest control. 19% diversify their crop production, and 15% use optimal planting times, determined by rainfall. The plant spacing and thinning practice (30%) and disease and pest control (27.7%) were identified as critical techniques during plant growth.	Achieved

³⁹ M & E report 2022

⁴⁰ PAC Final report 2024 which cover 2024 rainy season flooding

Output	Indicator(s)	Target	Progress made during the project implementation	Achieved/ Not Achieved
	3. Households that adopt improved livestock techniques	5%	The monitoring report (Dec 2021) showed that 13% of the pastoralists and the farmer's pastoralists confirmed they adopted improved livestock techniques. About 16.2% of respondents were trained in various livestock techniques. Among those trained, 13% use animal drugs properly and treat animal diseases, 10% understand and practice good animal husbandry techniques, 9% select animals with good genetic characteristics for breed improvement, and 8% understand how to prepare animal fodder and provide proper nutrition for their animals.	Achieved
	4. Households that have knowledge about improved NRM practices	25%	Project Monitoring report showed that 21% of the respondents at the end of year 2021 confirmed they acquired knowledge about the improved NRM practices. The most common practice was community forests (25.84%) and crescent terrace construction (10.53%). In addition, households got knowledge of Wadi bank stabilization (7.18%) and individual family nurseries (6.7%).	Achieved

Status of achievement of intermediate states

195. The project outcomes also positively contributed to IS 1. Through the establishment and operationalization of governance structures such as the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), the project created inclusive, multi-stakeholder systems for managing water and natural resources. CMA's leadership in developing sub-catchment plans and fostering collaboration between government, communities, and development partners provided a foundation for integrated natural resource management (NRM). These structures, supported by capacity-building initiatives and evidence-based planning, ensured alignment with state-level objectives. Despite legislative barriers, the CMA's recognition by state ministries underscores its potential to drive inclusive and sustainable NRM policies.

196. Similarly, achievement of the IS 2 was also supported by project outcomes. By promoting improved agricultural techniques, water harvesting infrastructure, and climate-resilient practices, the project strengthened sustainable livelihoods. The adoption of IWRM approaches, combined with community-led initiatives like Farmer Field Schools and agroforestry, enhanced food security, income diversification, and ecological resilience. Women and marginalized groups actively participated in economic and governance activities, fostering social cohesion and reducing vulnerabilities. These achievements lay a foundation for sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods that support long-term community adaptation to environmental and socio-political challenges.

Rating for the achievement of project outcomes: Satisfactory

5.4.3 Likelihood of Impact

197. The achievement of the overall outcomes contributes to the achievement of the intermediate states of adopting inclusive and integrated NR systems at the catchment level and strengthening sustainable climate-resilient livelihoods at the community level. These

achievements of outcome and intermediate states contributed to the progress from outcomes towards the impact in terms of the 'Emergence of resilient communities through establishing climate-resilient livelihoods and reducing natural resource conflicts and displacement due to loss of livelihoods in North Darfur'.

198. The project effectively initiated the reduction of natural resource-related conflicts during implementation, laying the groundwork for the long-term resolution of disputes, particularly between pastoralists, farmers, and IDPs. The conflict-sensitive approaches, including trust-building, inclusive planning, and respect for diverse interests led to foster agreements on land use and demarcation of migratory routes for cattle, combined with ongoing dialogues and negotiations among stakeholders.

199. Respondents unanimously noted that project interventions significantly reduced conflicts and improved stability in project areas. Critical achievements include resolving historical disputes over migratory routes and water resource use, creating communication channels, and fostering collaborative relationships.

200. Besides, climate-resilient livelihoods by addressing water security through the construction of weirs and dams, agricultural productivity, and community cohesion improved water access, expanding irrigation, increasing cropping intensity, and enhancing food security under adverse climatic conditions. Capacity-building efforts empowered communities with skills, technology, and agricultural inputs, boosting yields, household incomes, and resilience to climate and social shocks.

201. It was also noted that by reducing water-related conflicts and fostering social cohesion, the project positioned communities to better navigate climate stressors and political instability, demonstrating a robust contribution toward achieving the project's overarching objective.

202. So far, no negative consequences or impacts from the project interventions noted.

Rating for the achievement of the likelihood of impact: Likely

Success factors

203. In summary, important factors behind the success of the project include:

204. **Resilient, Participatory, and Inclusive Planning:** The project's success stemmed from its comprehensive and transparent participatory planning process around IWRM and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), led by end users and supported by evidence generation. The involvement of government and communities, combined with scientific insights and local knowledge, ensured inclusive decision-making. Participatory mapping and monitoring of local conditions fostered a strong sense of ownership among communities, demonstrated through their in-kind contributions. The project's guiding principles of inclusivity, adaptability, and representation promoted a devolved approach with decisions made in consultation with local stakeholders.

205. **Stakeholder Engagement and Trust Building:** Sustained engagement with communities, state governments, and research institutions fostered trust and yielded realistic, impactful solutions that short-term projects often fail to achieve. The project strengthened relationships between natural resource users, enhancing community unity and solidarity. This engagement also supported the coordination of natural resource management with dialogue and peacebuilding activities, crucial in a humanitarian context.

206. **Securing Government Buy-In:** The project strategically involved state government stakeholders at all stages, defining specific contributions such as providing office space for the CMA, participating in technical committees, conducting fieldwork, and supporting repairs and maintenance of water weirs. This collaboration ensured long-term government involvement and ownership.

207. **Women's Transformative Role:** Women played a pivotal role in building resilient communities through initiatives like village savings and loan associations and farmers' cooperatives. Extensive consultations ensured alignment with women's preferred activities, fostering their commitment and hard work. The consultation process was facilitated by the UNEP WEK2 gender focal point with the support from UNEP/PA field staff, led by women association members at the village level and Umda Omer pastoralist native administrator leader.

208. The project followed a gender-inclusive process to ensure women's active participation. A guideline was set using a 50%+1 women's quota for activity selection. During the planning phase, women were actively involved in assessments and baseline studies, ensuring their priorities shaped implementation plans. Women's representation in governance structures was prioritized, enabling involvement in decision-making. In the implementation phase, activities were informed by gender analysis, focusing on empowerment and livelihoods to address women's specific needs. These efforts improved the governance of funds, introduced sustainability at the community level, and provided tangible benefits such as increased income and diversified livelihoods.

209. **Establishment of Inclusive Governance Structures:** The creation of permanent governance structures promoted social cohesion, reduced conflicts over resources, and supported collective action for CCA and IWRM. Pre-existing local structures were integrated to form sustainable governance bodies managing water harvesting, livelihood strategies, and resource disputes. These governance structures strengthened during WEK II, operated independently, exemplifying their resilience and the project's transformative impact. Dedicated technical expertise and inclusion of CBO leaders' solutions in local committees were critical to addressing governance challenges effectively.

210. **Strong Partnerships with Implementing Partners:** The collaboration between UNEP and Practical Action along with CBO networks showcased the value of combining their expertise. UNEP facilitated political buy-in and donor engagement, while Practical Action addressed technical challenges and worked closely with communities. The strategic partnership leveraged local experience and participatory approaches to ensure the project's success and continuity in conflict-affected and remote areas like North Darfur.

211. **Conflict-Sensitive and Peacebuilding Approaches:** Beyond enhancing water management and agricultural production, the project catalyzed peacebuilding and stabilization efforts. Facilitators in the peacebuilding process included project staff from UNEP and PA, NRC, CBO networks, influential women, and native administration leaders representing both farmers and pastoralists. Women played a central role as members of governance structures, natural resource committees, and facilitators of peace and social events. Their active participation was pivotal, as demonstrated in the Kusa peace event, where women's speeches, addressing problems, impacts, and solutions, were fully incorporated into the final agreement attended by over 2,500 stakeholders.

212. By fostering cooperation and relationship-building, the project transformed the dynamics between historically conflicting pastoralist and farming communities. Investments in participatory mapping and shared responsibility exercises during the inception phase were

instrumental in creating a common vision for natural resource management and reducing conflicts.

213. Long-Term Engagement and Integration of Past Learning: The project built on lessons from Phase I to ensure sustained success. Donor flexibility in supporting Phase II allowed the project to capitalize on prior insights, demonstrating the value of integrating past learning into future implementations.

Project Implementation Challenges

214. The project encountered several implementation challenges stemming from both external and internal factors. External factors beyond the project's control included war, heightened insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, and fuel shortages (see the 'Nature of External Context' chapter). During the early stages, the project faced difficulties accessing Sudanese Pounds in banks, complicating payments to vendors⁴¹. The high inflation of the Sudanese currency⁴² further exacerbated these challenges, significantly increasing costs for interventions, such as cement, planned during project design.

215. The most severe challenge arose in 2023 with the outbreak of war in April. This conflict severely restricted access to project sites, including weir construction locations, and disrupted the provision of fuel for heavy machinery required for construction and transportation of materials.

216. Implementation delays were observed early in the project mainly due to internal reasons. Although the project officially began in January 2018, funds were not available until the end of that year. Staff recruitment processes were also delayed⁴³ during the initial year. UNEP's requirement for all job descriptions (TORs) to be cleared by the Crisis Management Branch (CMB) in Geneva before advertisement caused further delays, as staff recruitment had previously been managed at the country office level.

217. Additionally, UNEP's internal processes slowed the authorization of activity implementation. Although a no-cost extension allowed the project to complete its tasks, these delays resulted in additional costs and extended the timeline.

Rating for Effectiveness: Satisfactory

5.5 Financial Management

5.5.1 Adherence to UNEP's Financial Policies and Procedures

218. The Project Cooperation Agreement signed between the EU and UNEP in November 2017 defined all operational issues, responsibilities, and procedures on technical and financial processes, including transfer of funds, financial reporting, and audit in detail.

219. The review of the financial reporting documents (expenditure, interim Certified Financial statements) received from the project team and interviews with the relevant project staff showed both the EU and UNEP Financial Policies and procedures were met. The project

⁴¹ Annual report 2018

⁴² Annual report 2018

⁴³ During 2018 two staffs based in El Fasher prepared for the startup of the project. In October 2018, Practical Action joined as a field implementation agency. Two technical experts were contracted for the inception team. The team leader arrived in El Fasher by the end of January 2019 and Recruitment for the remaining inception team positions continued. The Forum Coordinator position was filled in May 2019 and in October 2019 the M&E expert took up his position (project annual report 2028 and 2019).

fund is subject exclusively to the internal auditing procedures provided for in the UN financial rules and regulations. Financial reporting was conducted regularly, ensuring transparency and accountability in financial management. In the course of the project implementation, there were no observations noted from the Board of Auditors (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

220. Budget management and revisions were carried out in consultation with stakeholders and with the approval of the EU. The budget was adapted mainly due to delays occasioned by slow project execution on account of the worsening security situation in North Darfur and the economic crisis following the October 2021 coup.

221. Budget management and revisions were carried out in consultation with stakeholders and with the approval of the EU. The budget was adapted mainly due to delays occasioned by slow project execution on account of the worsening security situation in North Darfur and the economic crisis following the October 2021 coup.

222. Regarding procurement, appropriate administrative procedures were followed. The procurement processes were as below.

- Program staff developed a detailed plan based on seasonality in consultation with communities.
- A procurement committee was formed, composed of members from UNEP and the implementing partner, Practical Action, including field and Khartoum-level representatives from both technical (program) and support (finance, admin, logistics) teams.
- The procurement committee prepared and submitted a detailed procurement plan, which was reviewed and approved by UNEP.
- Practical Action invited suppliers to submit bids for the construction and rehabilitation of three weirs, with announcements published in three local newspapers, on the Sudan Bid website (www.sudanbid.com), and PA's internal notice boards in Khartoum and El Fasher offices.
- The tendering process commenced immediately after the submission deadline, with bid analysis completed, contractors selected, and UNEP HQ Procurement Unit granting a no-objection.
- There were however a few instances noted where no financial reports were provided from the government partners due to the on-going conflict. This was however cross-checked through the local partners with confirmation of work completion on time.

223. There were however a few instances noted where no financial reports were provided from the government partners due to the on-going conflict. This was however cross-checked through the local partners with confirmation of work completion on time.

224. However, the project also witnessed some challenges related to the timely authorization of funds for the timely implementation of some activities. The long vetting process for carrying out larger water construction work caused subsequent delays in the finalization of work authorization and fund release from the UNEP HQ. It was noted that UNEP at the country level and other national implementing partners provided the required assistance in navigating procurement processes.

225. The evaluation concludes that the financial management was handled according to proper financial management standards and practice, procurement processes were followed and adherence to UNEP's financial management policies. There were no identified instances of deviation from UNEP's financial policies and procedures.

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

5.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

226. The project document provided financial information in Table 6 (tentative project legal agreements and partners, page 74/75), and detailed budget in Annex B. The Project Document provided the budget figures in component/output level, for the proposed expenses, coherently and in sufficient detail.

227. Project Financial Reporting covered the Quarterly Expenditure Reports prepared by the Project Manager and the project finance officer and submitted to UNEP. Standard certified reports were prepared by UNEP in consultation with UNON (the approver of all financial reports for UNEP). Financial reports were issued every year and on an ad-hoc basis upon request by the Donor. Expenditure reports submitted to the donor included detailed financial information on the approved budget and actual expenditures broken by the project budget lines, prepared by the Project Manager, reviewed, and signed by the authorized finance officer of the project team. There was however not adequate information available to review.

228. The financial reporting information was found adequate and there were no concerns from the stakeholders noted during the evaluation.

Rating for the Completeness of Financial Information: Satisfactory

5.5.3 Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff

229. There was close coordination established with both the project team and finance team at UNEP. The Admin/finance team had a standard monthly meeting to discuss and resolve financial issues for the project. Ad hoc meetings were also organized during the implementation of the project.

230. The review of the financial progress reports reflects the finance officer and Project Manager's involvement in the financial process and reporting, as well as disbursements. This also applies to the UNEP side, mainly via quarterly financial reporting.

Rating for Communication Between Finance and Project Management Staff: Satisfactory

Table 15: Financial Management

Financial management components:	Rating	Evidence/ Comments
1. Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures:	Satisfactory	The Adherence to UNEP's/GEF's policies and procedures was noted.
Any evidence that indicates shortcomings in the project's adherence ⁴⁴ to UNEP or donor policies, procedures or rules	Yes	All financial operations were conducted in accordance with UNEP's established financial policies and procedures. UNEP developed standard certified reports in consultation with UNON

⁴⁴ 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.

Financial management components:		Rating	Evidence/ Comments
			and a review of financial reports did not reflect such a shortcoming from the project and UNEP side.
2. Completeness of project financial information⁴⁵:			
Provision of key documents to the evaluator (based on the responses to A-H below)		Satisfactory	
A.	Co-financing and Project Cost's tables at design (by budget lines)	Yes	The information was available in the ProDoc.
B.	Revisions to the budget	Yes	A budget revision reference document exists in the reviewed documents.
C.	All relevant project legal agreements (e.g., SSFA, PCA, ICA)	Yes	Official project approval documents were provided.
D.	Proof of fund transfers	Partial	No such documents were available for review.
E.	Proof of co-financing (cash and in-kind)	No	No co-financing from UNEP
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	Summary reports according to budget line and cumulative yearly expenditure were available.
G.	Copies of any completed audits and management responses (<i>where applicable</i>)	N/A	
H.	Any other financial information that was required for this project (list):	N/A	
3. Communication between finance and project management staff		Satisfactory	
Project Manager and/or Task Manager's level of awareness of the project's financial status.		Satisfactory	The review of the financial progress reports reflects the Project Manager and Financial Management Officer (FMO) involved in looking after the financial process and financial reporting, as well as disbursements. This also applied to the UNEP side, via quarterly financial reporting. Regular meetings and updates ensured alignment between the financial team and project management regarding budgetary matters and project progress. Financial reports and updates were provided to project management promptly, ensuring transparency and accountability.
Fund Management Officer's knowledge of project progress/status when disbursements are done.		Satisfactory	
Level of addressing and resolving financial management issues among Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager.		Moderately Satisfactory	Close coordination was noted among the relevant officers. Operational barriers (when existed) were sorted through effective communication and the provision of feedback among the team members.
Contact/communication between by Fund Management Officer and Project Manager/Task Manager during the preparation of financial and progress reports.		Satisfactory	
Project Manager, Task Manager and Fund Management Officer responsiveness to financial requests during the evaluation process		Satisfactory	
Overall rating		Satisfactory	

Rating for Financial Management: Satisfactory

⁴⁵ See also document 'Criterion Rating Description' for reference

5.6 Efficiency

231. This chapter evaluates the cost-effectiveness of project implementation, focusing on strategies that prioritise low-cost options wherever possible. While no comparable projects were available for benchmarking, stakeholders and communities noted that the project employed cost-effective strategies, particularly during the challenging implementation period.

232. The project experienced a 10-month delay, primarily due to the ongoing war, COVID-19 disruptions, and delays in activity implementation. A no-cost extension⁴⁶ was granted in February 2023 to allow the project to complete its objectives. According to the project's financial progress reports, one hundred per cent of the EU project grant was spent.

233. **Building on Phase I Learning:** The project built on the six years of learning from WEK Phase I (July 2013–April 2017), leveraging its foundation in promoting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and fostering relationships over natural resource management. Phase II strengthened these modalities, such as institutionalizing the Catchment Management Agency (CMA) and demonstrating scalable outcomes. These strategies enhanced clarity around stakeholder roles, expedited community engagement including the pastoralist communities⁴⁷, and promoted timely activity implementation with strong ownership, contributing to overall efficiency.

234. **Government Participation and Coordination:** Government participation in design, supervision, and implementation was vital for efficient execution. The establishment of the PAC and TC facilitated planning and coordination. While the PAC was less effective due to the political change and transitions between 2019 to 2023, the TC played a critical role in smooth project execution. It ensured stakeholder coordination, provided real-time feedback for improved performance, and supported activity implementation and monitoring, even during periods of conflict.

235. **Technical Services and Local Partner Engagement:** The provision of in-country technical expertise and collaboration with Practical Action, a local implementing partner with extensive experience and established CBO networks, significantly improved efficiency. Practical Action's participatory development approach enabled the project to operate effectively in a challenging environment, increasing cost-effectiveness.

236. **Community Engagement and Knowledge Dissemination:** Engaging communities through CBOs and NRCs, including agricultural and women's groups, accelerated planning, facilitation, implementation, and monitoring. The use of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) effectively showcased technical packages, leading to the rapid adoption of improved practices. Additionally, the project leveraged existing networks for efficient information sharing and dissemination, promoting the uptake of good practices by government and non-government actors beyond the project area.

237. **UNEP's Role and Cost Efficiency:** UNEP's strong relationship with the Sudanese government facilitated rapport-building with stakeholders, enhancing government ownership

⁴⁶ First extension on 22 July 2020 and the second extension on 1st February 2023 for up to October 2023 (Expected start date: 1 January 2018, Actual start date: 1 January 2019, Planned completion date: 31 December 2022 and Actual operational completion date: 31 October 2023).

⁴⁷ Inclusion of pastoralist community was not the case in phase I. In the second phase, the project conducted community baselines, studies and prepare community participatory plans during the inception phase which give the opportunity for staff, partners and community to understand the contexts and integrate pastoralist issues in the project interventions.

and oversight. The use of long-term consultants instead of full-time UN staff contributed to cost savings without compromising project delivery.

238. **Operational and Management Costs:** In general, the cost of operation in Sudan was higher compared to other countries which was mainly due to the armed conflict and weak economic performance of the country. The project's operation and management costs were estimated at 23.2%, with an additional 6.5% allocated to Programme Support Costs (PSC⁴⁸). This compares favourably to Phase I, where operation and management costs were 27% plus 6.5% PSC, demonstrating improved efficiency.

239. **Synergies and Collaboration:** Despite its achievements, the project lacked evidence of collaboration and synergies with EU and non-EU-funded projects or other development partners, which could have multiplied its impact. For example, inadequate collaboration was reported with the DFID-funded ADAPT project implemented by UNEP, which focused on partnerships in IWRM, NRM, and climate change to improve nationwide delivery and policy reform.

240. **Challenges in Fund Authorization and Inflation:** Lengthy administrative processes for fund authorization and activity approval delayed implementation, leading to costlier options. Respondents noted that slow fund transfers from UNEP delayed the construction of community centres and water structures. These delays coincided with high inflation, further escalating costs, such as the increased price of building materials like cement.

241. Overall, by leveraging Phase I lessons, prioritizing partnerships, and adopting participatory approaches, the project achieved notable efficiency gains. However, addressing delays in fund authorization and enhancing collaboration with other projects could further amplify impact and cost-effectiveness.

Rating for Efficiency: Satisfactory

5.7 Monitoring and Reporting

5.7.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

242. Monitoring and reporting of the project is assessed considering the three components: monitoring design and budgeting; monitoring of project implementation; and project reporting.

5.7.1 Monitoring Designing and Budgeting

243. The project document included a 'Monitoring and Budget Plan', detailing baseline and target indicators, data sources, collection methods, frequency, and responsibilities for project outcomes and outputs. During the project inception phase, indicators at the outcome and output levels were revised to improve clarity, quantify progress, and reduce ambiguity.

244. The plan proposed capturing socio-economic information during the baseline and throughout the project to provide a nuanced understanding of impact, including disaggregated gender data where possible. However, only 1% of the total budget was allocated for monitoring and an additional 1% (€96,861) for evaluation. Allocating indicator-specific budgets during the design phase would have improved implementation and resource planning.

48 Percentages are calculated in relation to the EU contribution only and exclude the UN Environment co-financing contribution.

245. UNEP was responsible for project monitoring, with oversight provided by the El Fasher-based Project Manager and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer. These staff were tasked with collaborating with project partners, communities, and counterparts and conducting periodic joint site visits.

246. The project emphasized regular monitoring and learning, with progress reported every six months. Data collection was intended to track progress against the project log frame rigorously. Annual Progress and Financial Reports were required to meet donor requirements. These reports included implementation progress, financial updates, and proposed work plans for subsequent years.

247. Biannual reporting to UNEP was conducted through its Project Information and Management System (PIMS). Additionally, a final Progress and Financial Report was to be submitted within 60 days of project closure. Risk management strategies were to be reviewed periodically to enable corrective actions when necessary.

Rating for Monitoring Designing and Budgeting: Satisfactory

5.7.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

248. The project adopted a participatory monitoring approach, involving local communities in tracking activities. Staff and stakeholders received training on M&E methodologies and tools to ensure efficient data collection, analysis, and reporting. Standardized reporting formats were shared with project partners to facilitate regular updates. Monitoring processes were adapted to address contextual risks, such as COVID-19 and conflict, by delegating responsibilities to community members and providing staff with additional support.

249. Once the inception phase revised the indicators and created baselines in the log frame, the project revised the monitoring plan, capacitated the stakeholder to use the plan, carried out monthly monitoring of field activities, shared with TC and finally used in the planning process based on their relevance.

250. Respondents reported that the monitoring plan was instrumental in tracking project activities and assessing progress against log frame indicators. Field data collection enabled the evaluation of milestones, outputs, and indicators, which supported result-based management.

251. The Technical Committee (TC), part of the project's governance structure, actively participated in periodic monitoring and convened quarterly. Due to the political changes, the TC also assumed oversight responsibilities initially assigned to the PSC⁴⁹. Several meetings⁵⁰ were conducted by the TC and here was a good level of discussion where most of the stakeholders engaged and provided feedback for the improvement of the project activities. It also provided leadership in monitoring through the project site visits along with

⁴⁹ According to project document, followings are some of the ToRs of TE: Ensure effective coordination between UN Environment and the various government institutions and NGOs involved in project implementation; Provide high quality technical guidance to and oversight of the project's work; Address operational problems and obstacles facing the project during the course of implementation; To monitor progress being made by the project in relation to activity and output targets, and to recommend corrective action in the event that shortfalls or underperformance arises; To support and participate in project evaluations, scheduled for the mid-term of project implementation, and at the end of the project; and to actively identify operational problems and obstacles facing the project during implementation, and to seek solutions to those problems;

⁵⁰ Altogether seven meetings were conducted by TC since the commencement of the project. This is based on the meeting notes available for review for the evaluator. No of meetings: 1 in 2028, 2 in 2020, 3 in 2021 and 1 in 2022

project technical experts and provided technical, managerial, and operational feedback to improve project performance⁵¹.

252. Mid-Term review was carried out and the recommendations were integrated during the project implementation. One of the main recommendations (recommendation #4) was to carry out gender-related focus study dissemination. The project carried out a gender study and disseminated it to young, educated people in the project area.

Rating for Monitoring of Project Implementation: Satisfactory

5.7.3 Project Reporting

253. The project's monitoring and reporting processes followed established standards and supported adaptive management. Monitoring data was shared across three systems: monthly (UNEP PIMS+), quarterly (EUTF MLS), and biannual (UNEP PIMS).

254. Monitoring and reporting adhered to processes outlined during project design. Timely monitoring contributed to effective intervention management and adaptation. The project however is yet to be finalized in the final technical report.

255. Monitoring efforts also documented the project's achievements through case studies, publications, photos, videos, and success stories. Progress and monitoring reports facilitated tracking of results and progress toward objectives throughout the implementation period. The quality of monitoring data was appropriate and enabled adaptive management, supporting the achievement of project outcomes.

256. Monitoring was conducted semi-annually, consistent with UNEP's PIMS practices. Annual Progress and Financial Reports were submitted to donors, adhering to both donor and UNEP requirements. In PIMS, most of the progress and achievements of indicators and milestones were reported. The PIMS reporting was adequate.

Rating for Project Reporting: Satisfactory

Rating for Monitoring and Reporting:	Satisfactory
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5.8 Sustainability

257. The project demonstrates strong potential for sustainability across socio-political, financial, institutional, and environmental dimensions. However, significant challenges threaten the continuation of its achievements, particularly in the context of Sudan's ongoing conflict.

5.8.1 Socio-political Sustainability

258. The socio-political sustainability of the project is closely tied to state and national policies on water and natural resource management, particularly in promoting integrated water resource management (IWRM), protecting water infrastructure, and continuing catchment management structures such as the Catchment Management Agency (CMA). These policies also emphasize participatory processes and livelihood improvements.

⁵¹ Construction of water harvesting structures must start early by December 2020 to avoid any delay again and for quality ensures (TC meeting minute of 20-04-05); t the TC to discuss and prepare strategy plan for the CMA sustainability (1-2 March 2021); and Water quality was highlighted as a concern in the project area and around. It was recommended to conduct study to understand the reason and prepare solution plan to address water quality issue (TC meeting 2021-12-20).

259. In 2020, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture, two state-level decrees were adopted to protect water harvesting infrastructure and regulate the construction of water terraces and dams. However, these decrees lack the legal weight to ensure full accountability among stakeholders. The absence of a legislative council at the state level due to armed conflict undermines policy implementation and poses significant risks to the sustainability of project outcomes.

260. Social sustainability has been strengthened through the integration of gender, youth, and climate-vulnerable groups into project design and implementation. This inclusion has empowered marginalized groups, improved participation, and addressed systemic inequalities.

261. Women's roles have expanded significantly in governance structures like community-based organizations (CBOs), natural resource committees (NRCs), and the CMA. Women's economic empowerment was promoted through improved access to resources, land, and financial opportunities. Additionally, women played vital roles in peacebuilding by fostering social cohesion and preventing disputes. However, cultural norms, limited market access, and male-dominated leadership structures remain barriers to full gender equity. Female representation in decision-making increased from 5% in Phase I to 31% in Phase II but is still constrained.

262. Despite some positive aspects, the prolonged and acute political instability in Sudan poses a significant threat to sustainability. This instability can undermine governance quality, weaken economic performance, and hinder social development, all of which are critical for sustaining project outcomes.

Rating for Socio-Political Sustainability: Likely

5.8.2 Financial Sustainability

263. The project has significantly improved agricultural productivity, which is central to financial sustainability. Increased water availability from weirs, dams, and hafirs expanded irrigated land, diversified crops, and enabled off-season farming. For instance, the Kusa weir expanded irrigation by 4,000 Feddans (1,680 Hectares), and the Wadaa dam supported vegetable farming and drinking water access. These interventions have boosted household incomes, diversified diets, and enhanced resilience.

264. Agroforestry and community forestry initiatives further strengthened financial sustainability by integrating valuable tree species like Acacia and Ziziphus, which provide long-term economic benefits. Family nurseries contributed to household economies and sustainable land management.

265. By embedding sustainable practices into livelihoods and fostering collaborative governance, the project showcased a replicable financial model that can be sustained and expanded by communities, even amidst external challenges.

Rating for Financial Sustainability: Likely

5.8.3 Institutional Sustainability

266. Institutional sustainability has been a major achievement, particularly through the development of catchment management structures and capacity-building initiatives that enhanced human resource capabilities in project areas.

267. The establishment of governance structures, such as the CMA and NRCs, is a notable success. These locally owned structures are supported by both community stakeholders and

government entities, demonstrating institutional ownership. Logistical support from the state government, including office space and resources from the State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (SMOAR), further emphasizes commitment to sustaining these institutions.

268. Community ownership has been pivotal. Farmers and pastoralists have actively maintained water infrastructure, supported by simple, resilient designs and locally available repair materials. These efforts have fortified community engagement in sustaining project benefits.

269. The project has reduced tensions between farmers and pastoralists through improved inter-community relationships. Communication channels and early warning systems established during project-supported events have effectively mitigated conflicts, showcasing the durability of social structures.

270. Despite the outbreak of conflict in April 2023, project-level institutions demonstrated remarkable resilience. Local stakeholders safeguarded construction sites, secured critical resources, and negotiated with armed groups to continue operations, highlighting adaptability and commitment.

271. While state-level funding faces challenges due to conflict, the strong institutional and community foundations laid by the project provide significant potential for sustained impact.

Rating for Institutional Sustainability: Likely

5.8.4 Environmental Sustainability

272. The project has shown strong potential for environmental sustainability by addressing climate change impacts and promoting sustainable natural resource management practices. These efforts are expected to yield long-term ecological benefits that support both livelihoods and ecosystems.

273. The adoption of IWRM has optimized water use in arid regions where scarcity is a critical challenge. Community forestry and agroforestry initiatives have increased tree cover, restored degraded land, and enhanced carbon sequestration. Planting tree species like Acacia and Ziziphus has supported sustainable land management while generating economic benefits for communities.

274. Climate-resilient agricultural practices have further strengthened environmental sustainability by improving soil health, crop diversity, and water use efficiency. Soil conservation efforts, such as protecting gullies and erosion-prone areas, have reduced land degradation and aligned project activities with broader ecological objectives.

275. These measures contribute to environmental conservation and reduce the carbon footprint. However, ongoing conflict and the potential influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) may strain environmental resources, posing risks to the sustainability of project outcomes.

276. The project has created a good foundation for sustainability, particularly through inclusive governance structures, community ownership, and environmental stewardship. However, challenges such as political instability, financial constraints, and environmental pressures threaten the continuation of these achievements. Addressing these challenges through policy institutionalization, funding mechanisms, and enhanced stakeholder collaboration will be critical to ensuring the long-term impact of the project.

Rating for Environmental Sustainability: Likely

Overall Rating for Sustainability (Likelihood): Likely

5.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

5.9.1 Preparation and Readiness

277. The project demonstrated notable efforts to address weaknesses in its design and adapt to changes that arose between project approval, fund disbursement, and mobilization.

278. After the project was approved, the first year was dedicated as an inception year. Based on the learning from Phase I the phase proactively approaches addressing some of the design weaknesses and responds during the inception phase⁵². The inception phase produced a detailed Community Environment Action Plan (CEAP) based on the participatory process that has a high and sustainable impact and has maximum buy-in from all stakeholders, including men and women, farmers and pastoralists, and the government.

279. Based on the nature of the project and learning from Phase I, the project instituted responsive governance mechanisms during the inception phase that ensure meaningful ownership of the government, communities and other stakeholders in the project activities.

280. In addition, implementing partner organizations were strategically identified based on their prior involvement, and experience of working on participatory approaches including NRM, people's livelihoods and peacebuilding. Partnership capacity was confirmed through a comprehensive review process, resulting in agreements with Practical Action and other partners experienced in participatory development and integrated natural resource management. The government institutions were also involved in the inception phase to carry out studies, create a baseline and revise the log frame. These partnerships leveraged local expertise and networks, ensuring efficient implementation in challenging contexts. The financing mechanism of the project was generally robust and agreed among the partners. There was however inadequate staff in place.

281. Overall, the project demonstrated reasonable readiness, with strong stakeholder engagement and effective partnerships, although delays in staff recruitment and the absence of staff capacity assessment especially at the early stage of the project highlight areas for improvement.

Rating for Preparedness and Readiness: 'Satisfactory'.

⁵² Major areas of interventions to address the gaps of phase I were: integration of pastoralist issues while designing the project and provision of benefits through project interventions (allocation of water for human and animals, pastoralist women engagement and empowerment through VSLA/IGA, vaccination of 100,000 animals, construction of two water yards along the demarcated livestock migration routes, participation in CMA – 3 members); selection of sub-catchments based on hydrological boundaries; and better understanding of community dynamics during inception phase through context specific socio-environmental studies, assessment and consultations along with use of Community Environment Action Plan (CEAP) and Community led Participatory Mapping of the WEK2 project area for joint planning and decision making in natural resource management

5.9.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

282. The evaluation found that the project management and supervision were effectively executed. Evidence from project documents, progress reports, and stakeholder interviews underscores collaborative partnership among the implementing partners while maintaining relevance in a dynamic and challenging context.

5.9.2.1 UNEP/Implementing Agency:

283. UNEP's dedicated Project Manager and experienced team demonstrated a clear understanding of the project's objectives and context, providing thematic expertise in IWRM. UNEP's technical and managerial oversight ensured compliance with donor guidelines and facilitated adaptive responses to emerging challenges.

5.9.2.2 Partners/Executing Agency:

284. Partner organizations, particularly Practical Action, played a pivotal role in maintaining the quality and timeliness of project activities. Leveraging their deep understanding of local contexts and participatory approaches, they promoted sustainable livelihoods, facilitated community engagement, and ensured effective delivery despite political instability and resource conflicts.

285. Government institutions provided oversight and supervisory functions through the Technical Committee (TC) and the Catchment Management Agency (CMA). Their involvement in governance and monitoring bolstered the project's credibility and contributed to its successful implementation. Community ownership was a key factor, as local stakeholders actively monitored activities, ensuring quality and alignment with community needs.

286. The project's communication and collaboration strategies were effective, fostering strong relationships with stakeholders, local organizations, and NGOs. These efforts ensured that all partners worked cohesively to achieve project outcomes.

287. Despite challenges such as political crises, inflation, and logistical constraints, the project maintained momentum through adaptive management strategies, including sustained stakeholder engagement, problem-solving, and responsiveness to the changing external environment. This flexibility ensured the quality of project delivery and its continued relevance.

288. Overall, the project demonstrated effective leadership, coordination, and problem-solving, ensuring quality execution while addressing risks and adapting to evolving conditions.

Rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision: 'Satisfactory'.

5.9.3 Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation

289. A robust stakeholder analysis was included in the project document and further refined during the inception phase. The project fostered ownership among diverse stakeholders, including government entities, communities, and local partners, ensuring meaningful engagement throughout planning and implementation. Stakeholder participation was inclusive, notably involving a significant number of women in capacity-building activities, which positively influenced project outcomes.

290. The project established multi-stakeholder partnerships from its inception, promoting collaboration across various groups. Government engagement through the Technical Committee (TC) and the Catchment Management Agency (CMA) was pivotal in ensuring

proper coordination and timely participation. Academic and research organizations contributed to knowledge generation, tool development, and methodologies. The project also utilized a citizen science approach, actively engaging communities in data collection and decision-making. Stakeholder collaboration extended to monitoring and review processes, and the project successfully facilitated dialogue between pastoralist and farming communities to address long-standing resource conflicts, demonstrating its commitment to inclusive and impactful engagement.

291. Communication within the project and among external stakeholders was effective, fostering a culture of sharing and learning. Joint review sessions among partners enabled open discussion of challenges and opportunities, while learning dissemination efforts reached organizations like UNDP, amplifying the project's impact.

292. During crises such as conflict and COVID-19, the project adapted communication strategies effectively by leveraging internet technologies and empowering local communities to manage and monitor activities. These adaptations ensured continuity and stakeholder involvement despite external challenges.

293. While the project achieved significant results through strategic collaboration and active participation, joint partnerships beyond project-specific activities were limited, indicating an area for potential improvement. Overall, the project's stakeholder engagement and communication strategies were effective, contributing significantly to achieving its objectives and stakeholders' participation and cooperation.

Rating for Stakeholders Participation and Cooperation: 'Highly Satisfactory'.

5.9.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

294. The WEK II project demonstrated a strong commitment to upholding human rights, aligning with the UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) and UNEP's Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment. The project proactively addressed inequalities in access to natural resources and engaged disadvantaged groups, including women and youth, in decision-making, economic empowerment, and environmental protection.

295. **Human Rights Considerations:** The project's commitment to inclusivity was evident in its response to challenging circumstances such as war, local resource conflicts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the Environmental, Social, and Economic Principles outlined in the project document, efforts were made to engage potentially affected stakeholders and address their concerns within the scope of the project. This approach ensured that vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth, were not excluded during the project's planning and implementation phases.

296. **Alignment with SDGs and Gender Mainstreaming Policies:** The project contributed to SDG 5 by promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls (5.1), with a specific focus on increasing women's participation in decision-making processes (5.5). It was also aligned with the EU's gender mainstreaming policy, which further strengthened its framework for addressing gender-related vulnerabilities and inequalities.

297. **Gender Responsiveness and Inclusion:** The project made significant strides in integrating gender-responsive mechanisms, which included conducting gender analyses to identify the specific needs and priorities of men and women. Women's representation in governance structures such as the Catchment Management Agency (CMA) and Natural Resource Committees (NRCs) increased, providing spaces for women to advocate for their interests in decision-making processes. While progress was made in elevating women's

roles, persistent structural barriers and cultural norms limiting their participation in conflict resolution and leadership require further attention to achieve sustained gender equity.

298. Key Achievements in Gender Empowerment

- **Awareness and Participation:** Women's awareness of development activities increased, and they became more vocal in expressing their views and concerns. This was validated through project reports, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, and feedback from field missions.
- **Economic Empowerment:** The project supported 242 women farmers across 15 villages by providing 200 donkeys and 21 kg of improved onion seeds, 1,500 kg of improved groundnut seeds, 100 kg of improved sesame 75 kg of improved sorghum seeds⁵³ to enhance agricultural value chains. Training programs that saw 8459 women trained in agriculture and NRM extension package delivery empowered women with skills and knowledge, leading to improved livelihoods and economic independence.
- **VSLA and Market Access for 236 women:** Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) facilitated women's access to markets and business opportunities. These groups created safe spaces for women, particularly pastoralists, to engage in discussions about their concerns and strengthened their roles in society.
- **Agricultural Training:** Women farmers were trained in sustainable agriculture and product processing, equipping them with practical tools for climate adaptation and resilience.
- **Knowledge Documentation:** The project documented its gender impact through interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and short videos, showcasing empowerment narratives from pastoralist and farming communities.

299. **Monitoring and Data Disaggregation:** Gender considerations were embedded in the project's design and implementation. Participant lists for training sessions were sex-disaggregated, and FGDs, surveys, and assessments were structured to capture both men's and women's feedback effectively.

300. While the project made commendable progress in addressing gender equity, challenges remain. Cultural norms and structural barriers continue to limit women's involvement in leadership and conflict resolution. In addition, strategic support to women considering the value chain is required along with capacity building support. Strengthening efforts to address these barriers would be critical to ensuring a transformative and inclusive impact.

301. Overall, the WEK II project demonstrated substantial responsiveness to human rights and gender equity issues, contributing meaningfully to women's empowerment, economic advancement, and participation in governance. By addressing existing gaps and further embedding gender-responsive strategies, the project has the potential to create lasting and transformative change for disadvantaged groups.

Rating for the Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity: Highly Satisfactory

⁵³ 72% persons succeeded to increase their agricultural production through agricultural support provided reference 2022 Monitoring of WEK II Project Impact

5.9.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards

302. The project integrated UNEP's environmental and social safeguards requirements during its design and implementation phases. The Environmental, Social, and Economic Review Note classified the project as low-risk⁵⁴ across nine safeguard categories⁵⁵, ensuring alignment with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), and 13 (Climate Action).

303. Although some risk assessments and monitoring activities related to safeguards were conducted, these processes were not systematic and regular. Respondents indicated that when environmental or social safeguard issues were identified, they were appropriately addressed through risk avoidance or mitigation, with necessary reporting undertaken.

304. The project integrated safeguards into its design through a risk checklist and inclusive community participation. Key mitigating measures included risk assessments, community-led planning, sustainable resource management (e.g., reforestation, erosion control), equitable land use arrangements, and accessible reporting channels to address disputes. While no direct negative impacts occurred, the civil war caused resource strain due to the IDP influx, leading to overharvesting of forests. NRCs raised awareness and promoted sustainable practices, mitigating external impacts and ensuring long-term project sustainability amidst challenges ([Annex V](#)).

305. The project effectively prioritized safeguarding measures by focusing on environmental leadership through pioneering Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and natural resource management (NRM). It actively included women, pastoralists, and vulnerable groups, ensuring social considerations were embedded in project outcomes. Initiatives such as establishing community forests, promoting soil and water conservation via weirs, and adopting climate-resilient agricultural practices minimized environmental risks and contributed to climate resilience while reducing UNEP's environmental footprint.

306. The integration of safeguards in project design and its responsive approach during implementation highlighted the project's commitment to balancing environmental sustainability and social equity. However, a more structured and regular approach to monitoring safeguard issues would enhance future project resilience and effectiveness.

Rating for the Environmental and social safeguards: 'Highly Satisfactory'.

5.9.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness

307. The project demonstrated strong state-level government ownership and alignment with Sudanese priorities, with significant engagement from various government entities throughout its lifecycle. The government established and actively participated in the Technical Committee (TC), and Catchment Management Agency (CMA). These platforms facilitated government involvement in key project activities, including design, baseline studies, annual planning, monitoring, and biannual reviews.

308. The government played a vital oversight and coordination role, particularly during periods of armed conflict, ensuring the project-maintained momentum. In-kind contributions, such as providing office space and fuel for water weir construction, exemplified tangible

⁵⁴Low risk: Negative impacts negligible; no further study or impact management required.

⁵⁵ Those categories are: 1. Biodiversity and natural habit and Sustainable Management of Living Resources, 2. Resource efficiency, pollution prevention and management of chemicals, 3. Safety of Dams, 4. Involuntary resettlement, 5. Indigenous peoples, 6. labor and working conditions, 7. Cultural heritage, 8. Gender equity, 9. Economic Sustainability

support and commitment. This active engagement extended to integrating the project into national-level programs, indicating its alignment with broader development goals.

309. Evaluation feedback highlighted the government's full ownership of key outcomes, particularly the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) model. Government stakeholders expressed interest in scaling up this model to other regions of the country, reflecting their commitment to advancing project results beyond its immediate scope.

310. Overall, the project effectively fostered country ownership from the state government by embedding its results into institutional frameworks and aligning with national priorities. While this ownership provided a strong foundation for scaling up, continued support and investment from the government including from central government would be critical for realizing long-term impacts and ensuring inclusivity across all gender and marginalized groups.

Rating for the Country Ownership and Driven-ness: 'Satisfactory'.

5.9.7 Communication and Public Awareness

311. Knowledge sharing and communication were integral components of the WEK II project, prioritized as one of its outputs. Building on the lessons from Phase I, the project emphasized promoting awareness and communication about IWRM, NRM, and climate-resilient agriculture tailored to the local context. The project also focused on scaling up IWRM approaches across other regions of Sudan, aiming to expand its impact ([Annex VI](#)).

312. To facilitate effective communication and public awareness, the project developed a range of knowledge products and materials, including audio-visual content. Learning exchange visits and fairs were organized to benefit communities, NGOs, government entities, and UN agencies interested in applying IWRM approaches. Innovative events and capacity-building initiatives further strengthened stakeholders' ability to integrate IWRM into their practices.

313. Workshops, training sessions, and conferences were held locally, nationally, and internationally to share project insights (see output 4 for details). While various websites served as platforms for disseminating project-related information, a dedicated project-specific website was notably absent. Knowledge products, such as the IWRM Capacity Building Framework and the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project Case Study presented at COP27, were thoughtfully designed to meet diverse audience needs and facilitate the adoption of IWRM practices.

314. Interviews and document reviews highlighted that communication between the project team and partners was effective. Partners expressed satisfaction with the project's responsiveness and open communication, which fostered trust and facilitated the free exchange of ideas. During challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the project maintained timely communication, raising awareness about its impacts and adapting strategies accordingly.

315. While the project achieved notable success in communication and public awareness, the absence of a dedicated project-specific website represents a missed opportunity to consolidate and sustain knowledge-sharing efforts. Addressing this gap could further enhance the accessibility and sustainability of project learning.

Rating for Communication and Public Awareness: 'Satisfactory'.

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

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

316. The evaluation of the WEK II project highlights its substantial contributions to sustainable natural resource management, community resilience, and peacebuilding in a fragile, conflict-affected region. By incorporating lessons from Phase I, WEK II effectively addressed critical challenges such as resource degradation, water scarcity, and livelihood insecurity. The project promoted inclusive governance, gender empowerment, and the integration of pastoralist communities, demonstrating significant achievements in these areas.

317. The project's objectives and outputs were highly relevant to community needs and national priorities. It aligned with UNEP's priorities⁵⁶, Sudan's strategic frameworks, and donor priorities.

318. Most project outputs and milestones were achieved. Outputs included the development of the capacity of participatory community-based catchment management forum (output 1); demonstration and promotion of improved agricultural natural resources management approaches including extension packages and cooperation mechanisms at the community level (output 2); dissemination of scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management, and early warning systems (output 3); and shared knowledge on IWRM approaches with and among government and non-government actors in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan (output 4). These outputs contributed to the project outcomes of improved natural resource use at the catchment level (outcome 1) and enhanced application of natural resource management and agricultural techniques at the community level (outcome 2). Ultimately, the project supported the higher objective i.e., the emergence of climate-resilient livelihoods and reduced resource conflicts and displacement in North Darfur.

319. A key success of WEK II was advancing IWRM approaches in Sudan. By fostering collaborative governance structures involving policymakers and communities, the project established a model for natural resource management (NRM) suited to arid and semi-arid contexts. This approach, equally owned by the government and communities, has the potential for adaptation and scaling in similar geographic and socio-political environments.

Responses to Strategic Questions

Q1: To what extent were the needs and interests of differentiated groups considered in the project?

320. The project successfully integrated the needs of diverse groups, including women, pastoralists, farmers, and displaced populations, through gender-responsive and inclusive strategies. Women participated in decision-making processes, climate-resilient agriculture, and water management initiatives. Pastoralist issues were mainstreamed, promoting dialogue and reducing long-standing conflicts with farming communities. Economic empowerment activities such as value chain support for farmers and small-scale businesses further demonstrated the project's commitment to inclusion. These efforts reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

⁵⁶ POW 2018-2019 of MTS 2018-2021, UNEP POW 2022-2023 of MTS 2022-2025

Q2: How did the project adapt to political instability, insecurity, and COVID-19, and what was the impact on performance?

321. The project exhibited flexibility in addressing contextual challenges. During natural resource conflicts, dialogues between farming and pastoralist communities⁵⁷, exchange visits, and targeted support facilitated conflict resolution. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the project maintained continuity by adopting online tools, implementing health precautions, and empowering communities to monitor field activities. The political instability and war in 2023 were particularly challenging; however, the project leveraged local networks, maintained communication and engaged stakeholders to mitigate impacts. These adaptive measures ensured that core activities progressed, albeit with some delays.

Q3: To what extent did the project build on lessons from Phase I and the mid-term review (MTR)?

322. The project effectively built on Phase I learnings, refining and scaling the inclusive catchment management model. Lessons informed the development of the Catchment Management Forum (CMF), Technical Committees, and participatory governance structures, which contributed to sustainable NRM practices. Phase II added components to enhance resilience, focusing on climate-resilient agriculture, market access, and integrating pastoralist issues. Recommendations from the MTR, such as conducting a gender study and improving information-sharing mechanisms, were well-implemented, further strengthening the project's design and execution.

323. A major strength of the project was its participatory approach, ensuring community priorities were central to planning and implementation. This inclusivity fostered strong ownership, as evidenced by community contributions in cash and in-kind. Governance structures, such as the CMA, were instrumental in coordinating stakeholders and maintaining project relevance.

324. Gender equity was a critical focus, resulting in increased women's participation in decision-making, governance, and economic activities. Notable achievements included women securing land for farming, benefiting from Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and engaging in peacebuilding initiatives.

325. The project's focus on environmental sustainability through IWRM, agroforestry, and soil conservation demonstrated significant commitment. Infrastructure for water harvesting and climate-resilient agricultural practices enhanced productivity and community resilience to climate variability.

326. Participatory action learning ensured interventions were grounded in local realities, fostering trust and collaboration among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and local communities. That led to demand-driven intervention identifications and implementation.

327. The WEK II project effectively built on the foundations of Phase I, delivering significant impacts on natural resource management, livelihoods, and governance. Its inclusive, adaptive strategies offer a model for integrated resource management in fragile contexts. Despite delays and external challenges, the project produced commendable

⁵⁷ During the inception phase of the project, the project carried out participatory planning (including participatory 3-D planning) where all segment of communities participated including the pastoralists. There was a long-standing conflict between the farming communities and pastoralist on resource use (such as migratory route, crop damage, water source use etc) which was well reflected in the community discussion and the project included this aspect in the WEK second phase.

results, contributing to its outcomes and higher objectives. Sustained financial and institutional support would be critical for long-term impact. The project is rated **Satisfactory** for its strong achievements and resilience in addressing challenges within a fragile context.

328. The table below provides a summary of the ratings and findings discussed in Chapter 5. Overall, the project demonstrates a rating of '**Satisfactory**'.

Table 16: Summary of project findings and ratings⁵⁸

Criterion	Summary assessment	Rating
Strategic Relevance		HS
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities	Aligned with MTS 2018-2021, POW 2018-2019, and MTS 2022-2025, POW 2022-2023 strategic objectives and priorities.	HS
2. Alignment to UNEP Donor/GEF/Partner strategic priorities	Aligned with priorities of the EU related to water, livelihoods and stability in migration.	HS
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Aligned with regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities.	HS
4. Complementarity with existing interventions/Coherence	Continuation of WEI Phase I maintained synergy with other initiatives, complementary to UN/UNEP, and environment-driven initiatives.	S
Quality of Project Design	The ProDoc developed in a participatory way followed by a robust inception phase of studies and verification by involving communities and other stakeholders, the proposed objectives are coherent and consistent but some targets were ambitious. The design was adequate and responsive to the stated project objectives, outcomes and outputs.	HS
Nature of External Context	Generally, political and economic stability but the earthquake affected the project interventions slightly in some parts of the project sites.	U
Effectiveness		S
1. Availability of outputs	Most of the project outputs were delivered. Most important outputs are considered good quality by users/stakeholders. Most of the output indicators were fully achieved whereas one-fifth of them were partially achieved.	S
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The project outcomes were mostly achieved. The changing logic from outputs to outcomes holds for most outputs.	S
3. Likelihood of impact	Some intermediate states were partially achieved. The changing logic from outcomes to impacts holds but it requires additional support from the government and communities.	L
Financial Management		S
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures. No issues noted.	HS
2. Completeness of project financial information	Mostly available but some of the information was missing.	S

58 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
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Good and regular communication was noted between finance and project management staff at UNEP.	S
Efficiency	All secured funds were spent. The project was implemented within the planned budget with minor variations in the challenging context. The no-cost extensions were justified to mitigate delays due to armed conflict, COVID and implementation delays. Project activities were sequenced and mostly managed efficiently.	S
Monitoring and Reporting		S
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	Relevant information was included, but not the corresponding budgets by activities/milestones in the monitoring plan and work plan.	S
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Regular monitoring by the project along with TC, CMA and communities. However, systematic collection of data, regular risk assessment and feedback loop were yet to be in place.	S
3. Project reporting	Regular progress reports were produced, PIMS is satisfactory and mid-term and final technical reports were yet to be produced.	S
Sustainability		L
1. Socio-political sustainability	Highly dependency on socio-political factors – mainly the political uncertainties in the project area.	L
2. Financial sustainability	Medium dependency on financial resources (income of farmers and financial sustainability of CSBs) so far, no adequate financial viability demonstrated through successful examples.	L
3. Institutional sustainability	Moderate dependency on institutional factors. Implementation mechanisms were in place but need strengthening – especially CMA to be recognized through a policy.	L
4. Environmental Sustainability	Less dependency on environmental factors. The interventions generated useful outcomes that are likely to contribute positively.	L
Factors Affecting Performance		S
1. Preparation and readiness	The government was involved in different capacities as a part of continuation of phase I. The inception phase was dedicated to field verification and assessment while government involvement was strong.	S
2. Quality of project management and supervision	The project was managed effectively through strong partnerships, leadership, and adaptive strategies. UNEP and Practical Action ensured quality delivery despite challenges, while government oversight and community ownership reinforced credibility. However, addressing systemic delays (such as timely provision of funding and staff recruitment) remains critical for improved project execution).	S
3. Stakeholders' participation and cooperation	The project worked with various stakeholders mainly the government, universities and communities and integrated the issues of different segments of communities (i.e., pastoralists and women).	HS
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	Human rights issues were not in focus but the project integrated a gender-sensitive approach in the planning and management of the project.	HS
5. Environmental and social safeguards	The project prepared the Environmental, Social, and Economic Review Note which classified the project as low-risk across nine safeguard categories. The project considered environmental, social and economic safeguards in implementation.	HS
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Good ownership by the government entities such as the Agriculture Ministry and Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) at the state level. Besides, TC was actively engaged to provide support and supervise the project work.	S
7. Communication and public awareness	Communications and public awareness activities are moderately effective. Some knowledge products are developed and shared. Communication and dissemination outside of the project did not get the required level of emphasis.	S
Overall Project Performance Rating		S

6.2 Lessons Learned⁵⁹

329. The following lessons are drawn from the evaluation.

Lesson Learned #1:	Community-centered participatory planning fosters ownership, engagement, conflict resolution, and sustainability, but requires significant investment in expertise, resources, and perseverance.
Context/comment:	The project highlighted the critical role of participatory planning in promoting project ownership, active engagement, and sustainability. Using the Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAP) process, the project effectively aligned interventions with community needs. Participatory mapping proved instrumental in addressing conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, fostering respectful engagement and collaboration. Conflict-sensitive approaches, rooted in an understanding of local dynamics, successfully navigated intricate challenges⁶⁰. Complementary tools such as cross-learning, exposure visits, and cultural celebrations further built mutual understanding, communication, and trust among stakeholders. While transformative, these processes demanded significant resources, skilled facilitation, and persistence. The project underscores the importance of initiating community engagement early, ensuring interventions are locally relevant, and committing to sustained dialogue to build a foundation for collaboration, inclusivity, and long-term impact.
Lesson Learned #2:	Establishing robust governance structures fosters inclusiveness and sustainability but requires institutionalized policies and dedicated technical and human resources.
Context/comment:	A critical lesson from the WEK II project is the necessity of investing in governance structures that promote inclusiveness, collaboration, and transparency. Integrating pre-existing local structures was instrumental in establishing sustainable bodies to manage water infrastructure, livelihood strategies, and natural resource disputes. The Technical Committee (TC), chaired by the State Minister of Agriculture, provided oversight, coordination, and technical advice, aligning the project with broader government objectives and leveraging specialized expertise. The Catchment Management Agency (CMA), a multi-stakeholder forum involving government, development organizations, and communities, fostered shared ownership and commitment to project goals. This approach strengthened government buy-in and effective project implementation. However, the evaluation highlights challenges, including the need for formalized policies to institutionalize governance roles and accountability. Additionally, sustaining the CMA requires dedicated technical expertise and human resources to ensure long-term functionality and success.

⁵⁹ Lessons learned should be anchored upon the conclusions of the evaluation and have the potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization). No lessons should appear which are not based upon an explicit finding of the evaluation. The statement should briefly describe the context from which the lesson learned is derived and specify the context(s) in which it may be useful.

⁶⁰ Even amidst the outbreak of conflict between the SAF and RSF in April 2023, which disrupted operations in the area, an exemplary instance of this cooperative spirit emerged when pastoralist and farming communities united to advocate for the project's continuation. This shared responsibility extended beyond project activities, encompassing the protection of project members and water storage infrastructure (learning report prepared by Adelphi, 2023)

Lesson Learned #3:	Effective stakeholder collaboration is critical for project success but hinges on trust, clear roles, and inclusive decision-making.
Context/comment:	The WEK II project underscored the importance of constructive relationships among stakeholders, including implementing agencies, CBOs, and communities, to create a shared vision and define clear roles and responsibilities. UNEP, as an advisory agency, facilitated political buy-in from state and national governments and brought expertise in Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Practical Action, as the main implementing partner, leveraged its long-standing community engagement and participatory development approach to ensure project success. The collaboration between UNEP, Practical Action, and network partners demonstrated the value of combining technical expertise and local knowledge to address the complex challenges of conflict-affected and remote areas like North Darfur. However, the evaluation highlights that such partnerships require an environment of trust, effective communication, mutual respect, and collaborative decision-making to align diverse actors and achieve a shared vision for sustainable outcomes.
Lesson Learned #4:	Continuity, economic incentives, and trust-building are critical for sustainable integrated resource management
Context/comment:	The WEK II project underscores the importance of continuity, iterative adaptation, and strategic engagement in achieving sustainable integrated natural resource management. Building on lessons from Phase I, the IWRM model was refined to address governance (engaging government, communities, and partners) and technical aspects (upstream-to-downstream integration). Phase I also highlighted the need for enhanced communication and scaling of successful outcomes. Economic incentives, such as promoting tree planting for commercial use, natural regeneration, and marketing strategies, emerged as powerful drivers of community buy-in and sustainability. The project also emphasized the necessity of long-term engagement and reliable financial support to sustain integrated resource management efforts. A critical factor was the strong relationships built with partners like Practical Action and trust fostered among stakeholders. Although trust-building required significant time and effort, it enabled collaboration, sustained momentum, and ensured alignment with project goals. The evaluation highlights that achieving lasting impacts in complex socio-environmental contexts demands patience, inclusivity, and adaptive management strategies.
Lesson Learned #5:	Empowering women in governance and economic activities improves outcomes, but addressing systemic barriers is critical for equity.
Context/comment:	The WEK II project highlights the transformative potential of empowering women in governance structures and economic initiatives. Through participation in Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Natural Resource Committees (NRCs), and the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), women gained leadership roles and influenced decision-making processes. Economic empowerment efforts, such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and agricultural value chain support, further improved livelihoods, food security, and community resilience. Despite these achievements, systemic barriers, including cultural norms, limited market access, and financial opportunities, continue to hinder gender equality. While women's representation in governance improved from 5% in Phase I to 31% in Phase II, leadership remains male-dominated. Addressing these barriers is essential to sustain the gains made and achieve inclusive, equitable development. The evaluation emphasizes that empowering women not only strengthens project outcomes but also builds more resilient, cohesive communities.

6.3 Recommendations

Recommendation #1:	Ensure continued support for existing governance mechanisms by securing funds, streamlining processes, and strengthening policies to maintain effective coordination across national, state, and community levels. This will ensure the sustainability of governance structures like the CMA and their ability to manage resources effectively in fragile contexts.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation⁶¹:	Challenge: Governance Mechanisms Risk Weakening Without Continued Support in Conflict-Affected Contexts: While the governance structures established under WEK II, such as the Technical Committee, the Catchment Management Agency (CMA), have been effective in managing water resources, livelihoods, and natural resource disputes, their sustainability remains uncertain in the absence of continued support. The CMA, represented by governments, technical teams, and communities, is a vital institution fostering inclusiveness, collaboration, and transparency. However, the ongoing conflict in Sudan, where everything has collapsed at governmental institutions, poses a significant threat to its long-term functionality and the sustainability of integrated natural resource management outcomes. Without adequate financial resources, policy backing, and consistent coordination across national, state, and community levels, these governance mechanisms risk weakening.
Priority Level⁶²:	Important
Type of Recommendation⁶³	Project level
Responsibility:	Government and development partners including EU and UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately
Cross-reference(s) to the rationale and supporting discussions: 5.2, 5.4 and 5.8	

Recommendation #2:	Secure sustainable financing mechanisms, including government budgets, development partner support, and innovative user-based contributions, to ensure the maintenance of water infrastructures and agricultural value chain activities. Strengthen local capacities and market linkages to enhance enterprise management and long-term sustainability.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Challenge: Sustainability of Water Infrastructure and Livelihood Activities Under Threat Due to Weak Governance and Limited Financing. The water infrastructures established under WEK II have begun delivering critical water and livelihood services to communities. However, the current conflict and political instability risk weakening governance and reducing communities' capacity to manage and repair these facilities. Local governments face strained budgets, making it challenging to provide necessary support. Without dedicated funding from governments, development partners, or innovative financing mechanisms such as user-based contributions, the maintenance and continued use of these infrastructures are uncertain. Similarly, the project's promising agricultural value chain initiatives face risks due to limited financing, technological gaps, weak enterprise management, and insufficient market access, threatening the sustainability of these achievements.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	Government and development partners including EU and UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediately
Cross-reference(s) to the rationale and supporting discussions: 5.4, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.8	

⁶¹ The same challenge/problem can lead to a recommendation of more than one type, i.e. one or more of the following: Project Level, UNEP-wide or Partners recommendation.

⁶² Critical, Important or Opportunity for Improvement.

⁶³ Project Level, UNEP-Wide or Partners recommendation.

Recommendation #3:	UNEP should prioritize scaling up the IWRM model and associated best practices from the project by: a) strengthening dissemination efforts through targeted knowledge-sharing platforms and capacity-building initiatives to promote the adoption of these approaches; b) leveraging its normative expertise to advocate for IWRM integration into national and regional policies, ensuring alignment with climate resilience and sustainable development goals; and c) collaborating with development partners, donors, and government agencies to secure resources and institutional commitments for replication in similar contexts within Sudan and beyond.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Challenge: Risk of Losing Valuable Learning and Scaling Opportunities Due to Limited Stakeholder Priority and Political Instability. The WEK II project successfully developed a replicable model of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) tailored for rain-fed regions, alongside evidence-based knowledge, a robust governance mechanism (CMA), gender-responsive approaches, and climate-resilient practices. However, the potential for scaling up and replicating these achievements is constrained by ongoing political instability, weak dissemination efforts, and insufficient prioritization by key stakeholders. Without proactive action, these valuable outcomes risk being underutilized, diminishing their broader impact within Sudan and similar fragile contexts.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	Project level
Responsibility:	Government and development partners
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Immediate
Cross-reference(s) to the rationale and supporting discussions: 5.4 and 5.8	

Recommendation #4:	UNEP headquarters should enhance financial authorization and disbursement mechanisms by adopting streamlined processes and empowering field offices to manage timely fund releases. This will reduce delays, improve responsiveness to local needs, and ensure the continuity and sustainability of project activities.
Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:	Challenge: Delayed Fund Authorization and Release from UNEP Headquarters Impedes Timely Implementation and Sustainability. Delays in fund authorization and disbursement from UNEP headquarters affected the timely execution of critical project activities, such as water spreading weir construction, water supply interventions and community centres. These delays not only disrupted project schedules but also escalated costs due to inflation and diminished community trust in the project's ability to deliver on its commitments. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts like North Darfur, timely execution is crucial for addressing urgent needs and maintaining momentum toward sustainable natural resource management outcomes. Prolonged inefficiencies in financial processes risk undermining project sustainability and long-term impact.
Priority Level:	Important
Type of Recommendation	UNEP wide
Responsibility:	UNEP
Proposed implementation time-frame:	Important
Cross-reference(s) to the rationale and supporting discussions: 5.5, 5.6 and 5.8	

ANNEX I: RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the evaluator(s), where appropriate

Page Ref./ Para. n	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response	UNEP Evaluation Office Response
	All comments received were addressed.		

ANNEX II: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK/MATRIX

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
Key Strategic Questions				
Q1	In what ways, and to what extent, were the needs and interests of differentiated groups (gender, economic activity – farmers, pastoralists etc.) considered in the implementation of the project?	- To what extent and in what ways, the project supported the needs and interests of women in project implementation? - How does the project support the needs and interests of the community groups (farmers, agro-pastoralists and (nomad) pastoralists in project implementation? - What challenges are witnessed and what learning for the future can be drawn?	- The extent of support for the needs and interests of the targeted groups/beneficiaries	- Project documents/reports - Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders and beneficiaries - observations by the evaluation facilitator
Q2	What changes were made to adapt to the effects of political instability, insecurity and COVID-19 and how might any changes have affected the project's performance?	- To what extent the project was adaptive to the changed context? - What activities and/or strategies were amended to adapt to the political instability, conflict and COVID-19? - Did these changes affect the project's performance?	- Types of changes for adaptive management - Level and extent of change in project performance?	- Project document/progress reports - Meeting notes of PAC/PTC and other stakeholders? - Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders (including EU and UNEP focal points)
Q3	To what extent did the project build on the successes and lessons from the mid-term review and phase 1 of WEK?	- What are the successes and major learnings from phase I? - To what extent these successes and learning are used in the second phase of design and implementation? - To what extent the success and learning from the midterm review are integrated/revised in the project activities revision and/or implementation?	- The types and extent of integration or improvement in implementation	- Project document (MTR, Terminal Evaluation and Final Report of WEK 1) /progress reports - Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders
A. Strategic Relevance				
Key question: To what extent were the Project interventions and objectives relevant and suited to the priorities, policies and strategies of the target groups, implementing agencies and donors?				
i.	Alignment to the UNEP Medium-term strategy (MTS), programme of Work (POW), and other strategic priorities	- Was the Project in line with UNEP's Mandate and how? - Is the Project responding to UNEP strategies and programmes of work, and how (qualitative and quantitative contributions)?	- Degree of alignment with UNEP MTS and POW - Degree of alignment with UNEP Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC)	- UNEP publications (MTS, PoW) - ProDoc - progress reports - Interviews with Task / Project Manager) - UNEP publications (including BSP, S- SC)

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
ii.	Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities	- Was the Project responding to the EU's Strategic priorities (such as the EU's gender mainstreaming policy, and the EU Water Framework Directive), and how?	- The extent of alignment with the EU's strategic policies	- ProDoc - Reports/progress reports - Interviews with EU staff, Project/stakeholders
iii.	Relevance to Regional, Sub-Regional and National Environmental Priorities	- Was the Project responding to the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries/sub-regions/regions and was aligned with SDGs/UNDAF, and climate policies?	- Degree of alignment with National and (sub) regional plans, strategies, policies and agreements	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with national project stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
iv.	Complementarity with existing interventions	- To what extent did the Project, at the design and/or mobilization phase, take account of ongoing initiatives? - To what extent did the Project team make efforts to ensure that the Project was complementary to other UNEP and UN interventions (i. e. UNDAF, one-UN programming), and optimize any synergies?	- The degree of potential synergies identified - Absence of duplication of efforts - Potential duplications identified at the design stage - Degree of identified complementarities with other projects	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with national project stakeholders - Interviews/ with communities/catchment management forum - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
B. Quality of Project Design				
Key question: How adequate was the Project design to achieve the Project Outputs, Outcomes and Objectives?				
i	Relevance and logic of Project Objectives, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes according to Project Quality Design template (see appendix C).	- The Quality of the Project Design will be assessed using the template provided by the UNEP Office	- Result of Overall Project Design Quality rating	- ProDoc, including the Project Review Committee review sheet - Interviews with Task/project M and stakeholders/communities
C. Nature of External Context				
Key question: To what extent the project faced external factors which might affect project implementation?				
ii	Aspects related to external operating context (considering the prevalence of	- Has the Project faced an unusually challenging operational environment that negatively affected project performance, such as:	- Duration of project delay, level of cancellation of activities and number of extensions, ProDoc / log	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
	conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval) (also see Appendix C)	- Conflicts or security issues? - Risks of natural disasters? and - Government instability?	frame revisions and budget revisions	- Interviews with national project stakeholders - Interviews/ with communities - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives
D. Effectiveness				
Key question: To what extent did the projects achieve the expected outputs and Outcomes?				
i.	Availability of Outputs	- Level of success of the project in producing outputs? - Were Outputs and milestones delivered on time and as planned? What is the quality of these Outputs? If not, what were the reasons for the delay/changes? - How useful did beneficiaries find the Outputs produced by the Project? - What level of ownership of outputs among the beneficiaries? - To what extent do the Outputs contribute to their planned Outcomes? - Which factors contributed to the achievement of Outputs (and/or what were the reasons Outputs were not produced)? - Did the assumptions in the ToC hold or were adaptations put in place to mitigate any risks where assumptions didn't hold?	- Concrete evidence of Outputs (quantity and quality) being used by intended beneficiaries as described in the project log frame - Approved Project extensions/budget revisions - Involvement of stakeholders in the production of Outputs and their ownership	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with national project stakeholders - Interviews/ with communities - Interviews/ with the government representatives -
ii.	Achievement of direct Outcomes	- What direct Outcomes (as per the reconstructed TOC) have been achieved? And to what extent? - Are these Outcomes a result of Project intervention? What is the evidence? - Would these have been achieved without the direct involvement of UNEP? Why? - What are the major challenges witnessed and what learning can be drawn? - Did the assumptions in the ToC hold or were adaptations put in place to mitigate any risks where assumptions didn't hold?	At catchment level - sustainable use of NR good practices in IWRM in the WEK - Capacity/acceptability of CMF - Policy provision, plan ensuring CMF as a lead institution for IWRM - Involvement of women in Catchment management plan - Protocols developed and promoted by CMF - at household level - benefits from the project interventions - adaptation of improved agri and livestock technologies	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with national project stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with communities - Interviews/ with the government representatives

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
			- Knowledge about the improved NRM practices	
iii.	Likelihood of Impact	- What is the likelihood of expected positive (intended/unintended) impacts to be realized? - Are there any (possible) negative effects identified in the Project? - To what extent does the project play a catalytic role and/or promote the scaling up or replication of Project results? - Is the Project likely to contribute to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP's MTS, POW and national strategic priorities in Sudan?	- status of a resilient community - The area under agricultural land with a secure water supply - natural resource conflict and Displaced people return to the project area - Policy /strategy development/revision and institutional strengthening to support catchment management and sustainable & inclusive NRM	- Likelihood of Impact Assessment - Reconstructed ToC at Design and Evaluation - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with ex-project staff and project stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with communities - Interviews with government representatives
E. Financial Management				
Key question: How conducive was the financial management to the achievement of project Outputs and Outcomes?				
i	Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	- Was the Project implemented in compliance with UN financial management standards and procedures?	- Approval of contracting documents, Project reports and financial reporting - Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget	- Project budget - Financial reports, audit reports - Interview with UNEP Financial Management officer - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with Project partners that received financial support - EU staff
ii	Completeness of financial information	- What was the actual expenditure across the life of the Project? - To what extent were the projects' expenditures in line with the corresponding approved budget? - What changes, if any, have been made to the projects' budget and why?	- Approval of contracting documents, - Project reports and financial reporting - Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget	- Project budget - Financial reports, audit reports - Interview with UNEP responsible officer - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with Project partners that received financial support
iii	Communication between financial and Project management staff	- To what extent did the quality of communication between Project management and financial management staff affect project efficiency?	- Approval of contracting documents, Project reports and financial reporting - Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget	- Project budget - Financial reports, audit reports - Interview with UNEP responsible officer - Interviews with Ex-project staff - Interviews with Project partners that received financial support
F. Efficiency				
Key question: To what extent and how were cost-effectiveness and timeliness considered during Project implementation? How did these factors affect Project performance?				

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
i	Cost-effectiveness and timeliness of Project execution	- To what extent does the project deliver the maximum results from the given resources? - Were any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed-upon Project timeframe? - Did the Project make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, etc. to increase Project efficiency? How? - What factors have caused delays (if any) and have affected Project execution, costs and effectiveness? How? - Were events leading to the completion of activities sequenced efficiently? - What was the role of the Project's Governance structure and management approach on its efficiency?	- Number of Project extensions, budget adjustments, revisions - Number of measures to mitigate delays - Timeliness of report submission	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget - Financial reports - Monitoring reports - Interviews with ex-project staff
G. Monitoring and Reporting				
Key question: How were monitoring, evaluation and reporting used to support, adapt and improve Project implementation?				
i.	Monitoring design and budgeting	- To what extent were the sound (quality, relevance and appropriateness) monitoring plans designed to track progress against indicators (at different levels and groups)? - To what extent were the allocated funds adequate for monitoring purposes, and the mid-term and terminal evaluations?	- Quality, relevance and appropriateness of monitoring plan - allocated budget for M & E.	- ProDoc - Project budget - Interviews with Ex-project staff
ii.	Monitoring of Project Implementation	- To what extent were the monitoring plans operational? - To what extent did the monitoring system facilitate the timely tracking of results and progress toward Project Objectives? - To what extent was the information generated by the monitoring system, (such as baseline) used to adapt and improve Project execution, achievement of Outcomes and ensure sustainability? - To what extent did the stakeholders/beneficiaries participate in the M & E process? - To what extent were the allocated funds for monitoring used to support monitoring?	- Number and quality of monitoring documents - The existence and quality of mid-term review reports	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget - Financial reports - Monitoring reports - Interviews with Ex-project staff - EU staff
iii.	Project reporting	- Have the 6-monthly status reports been delivered on time?	- Number and quality of reports delivered in line with reporting requirements	- ProDoc - Mid-term review reports - Project budget

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
		- To what extent have other UNEP and donor reporting requirements (such as disaggregated groups) been fulfilled?	- Number and quality of approved reports	- Financial reports - Monitoring reports - Interviews with Ex-project staff - EU Staff
H. Sustainability				
Key question: How do socio-political, financial and institutional factors affect the probability of Project Outcomes being maintained and developed After the Projects end?				
i.	Socio-political sustainability	- To what extent do the existing social and political factors support sustainability? What is the likelihood that the Project achievements will be taken forward at the national level, by the government (including integration in the national programme, and extension of technologies) and the main stakeholders? - What is the level of ownership, interest and commitment among governments and other main stakeholders to continue the project results? - What is the likelihood that capacity development efforts continue?	- Level of policy frameworks to support the initiatives - Level of commitments (funding, guidelines) from the stakeholders including the government - Perception of stakeholders on the level of capacity they have	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Steering Committee meetings - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff/ national stakeholders - Interviews/ with government representatives
ii.	Financial sustainability	a. To what extent are Project Outcomes dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained? b. Is there any government funding secured to sustain the CMF and extension of sustainable and inclusive NRM technologies at the catchment and household levels?	c. Number of follow-up initiatives from the government or other agencies d. Amount of funding available	e. ProDoc f. Project progress reports g. Final report h. Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders i. Interviews/ with government representatives
iii.	Institutional sustainability	- To what extent were institutional frameworks, policies, and legal and Accountability frameworks in place and robust enough to support the sustainability of Project Outcomes?	- Number and quality of policies and legal and accountability frameworks - Number of follow-up activities initiated by governments	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/ with government representatives
I. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance				
Key question: How and to what extent did certain factors – preparation and readiness, quality of Project management and supervision, stakeholder participation and cooperation, responsiveness to human rights and gender, and environmental and social safeguards - affect Project performance?				
i.	Preparation and Readiness	- Were appropriate measures taken to either address weaknesses in the Project design or respond to changes that took place between Project approval, securing of the funds and Project mobilisation? If yes, which measures?	- Number and quality of appropriate measures taken - when necessary - Quality of partner agreements	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
		- What was the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the Project team during Project preparation? - Whether partner capacity was considered, the partnership agreement was carried out? - Were initial staffing and financing arrangements sufficient to drive implementation?		- Interviews/surveys with government representatives
ii.	Quality of Project Management and Supervision	- Was Project management technical backstopping and supervision) by UNEP proactive and responding timely and adequately to any issues encountered within the Project? To what extent does the UNEP provide leadership for the adaptive management of the project? - How do UNEP, the government and the service provider collaborate in the smooth management of the project? - To what extent and how were risks managed?	- Number of issues complicating sound Project implementation solved timely (as opposed to unsolved issues) - (Amount of) evidence of adaptive management is applied.	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interview with UNEP Task Manager - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with government representatives - EU staff
iii.	Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation	- Were all Project stakeholders properly identified at Project design and duly involved in Project implementation? - What level of communication mechanisms and consultation are carried out to ensure active stakeholder engagement and ownership? Were these effective? - What measures were taken to ensure inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender and vulnerable groups?	- Number of stakeholders identified and actively involved in Project implementation - Number of stakeholders satisfied with the stakeholder participation	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with government representatives
iv.	Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity	- To what extent did the Project intervention adhere to UNEP policy and strategy for gender and human Right? - To what extent did Project implementation and monitoring take into consideration (gender; specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups, political and resource conflict to environmental degradation or disasters)	- Number of gender and human rights stakeholders identified and actively involved in Project implementation - The number of stakeholders satisfied with the stakeholder participation realized - Evidence that sensitivity in gender and inclusion has been observed in Project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation activities, including gender	- UN policies and strategies on gender and human rights: - UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with government representatives

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of Verification	Data Sources
			distribution in participation in Project activities and events	
V	Environmental and Social Safeguards	- To what extent were UNEP's requirements, for environmental and social safeguards, met (through the process of environmental and social screening at the Project approval stage, risk assessment and management) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with Project and programme activities? - To what extent were the following activities carried out (Review of risk ratings regularly; Monitoring of Project implementation for possible safeguard issues; and providing responses to safeguard issues) - To what extent did the Project management minimise UNEP's environmental footprint? What measures, if any, were taken?	- Providing responses to safeguard issues; - To what extent did the Project management minimise UNEP's environmental footprint? What measures, if any, were taken?	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/ with government representatives
vi	Country Ownership and Driven-ness	- To what extent was the government involved with the Project? (with respect to the need to embed the Outputs and Outcomes of Project work in their respective institutions) - How did this contribute to embedding changes in their respective institutions and offices?	- Number of Project Outputs and Outcomes entrenched in government institutions - The degree to which Project results have been adopted and championed nationally - The degree to which countries have willingly resourced the Project and its Outcomes and indicated ongoing budgetary funding and capacity for the local crops monitoring and reporting	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/ with government representatives
vii	Communication and Public Awareness	- How was project learning communicated between Project partners and interested groups? - Which public awareness activities were undertaken during Project implementation? - To what extent did they influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large? How? - To what extent were existing communication channels and networks used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalized groups?	- Operative communication platforms/websites - Degree in awareness of stakeholders	- ProDoc - Project progress reports - Final report - Interviews with Ex-project staff / NC / other national stakeholders - Interviews/ with government representatives - Interviews with beneficiaries

ANNEX III: PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Key Informant Interviews

Organisation	Name	Role in the project	Gender
Practical Action	Awadalla Hamid Mohamed	WEK2 Project Manager (Elfasher)	M
	Dr. Muna Eltahir	Country Director (KRT)	F
	Eissa Yagoub Musa	Area Coordinator (Elf)	M
UNEP El Fasher Office	Siddig Yousif Ali Mohammed	M&E Specialist	M
	Mohammed Siddig Sulmam Lazim	Catchment Management Coordinator	M
	Prof Dr. Kamaleldin Elsiddig Bashar Gido	Project Hydrologist	M
	Dr. Flemming Nielsen	Former WEK2 Project Manager	M
UNEP-Khartoum/	Dr. Abuelgasim A. Adam Ahmed	Chief Technical Advisor	M
	Sara Eltigani	WEK2 Communication Specialist	F
	Dr. Atila Uras	Country Programme Manager	M
	Mouna Zain	Deputy Country Programme Manager	F
Government/ Humanitarian Aid Coordinator, North Darfur	Dr. Abbas Yousif Adam	TC member	M
Independent expert/researcher	Prof Abdelaziz Gaiballa		M
The EU Delegation, Sudan	Federico Capurro	Donor representative	M
	Cosimo Lamberti	Donor representative	M
University of Al Fasher, Dean Water Research Centre	Dr. Anas Jafar Ail	Member of project TC	M
Water and Environmental Sanitation (WES) Manager, Elfasher	Eng. Ismail Ahmed	Member of project TC	M

Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

Location	Composition
Eid Elbiada community	5 men / 5 women
Kusa	5 men / 7 women
Elfasher - RDN	4 men / 1 women
Elfasher - CMA	3 men / 2 women
Total	32 (17 men / 15 women)

ANNEX IV: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

1. Project Document
2. Project revision documents #1 and #2
3. Lessons learned from the implementation -12-11-2024
4. WEK Phase 2_Annual Report 2019, 2020, 2021and 2022
5. Jan – June 2023 report
6. PRC_Report_comments_addressed
7. Wadi El Ku Phase 2_ Midterm Review
8. WEK_Phase_II_Inception_Report
9. PIMS reports (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021)
10. Water harvesting infrastructure impact monitoring report March 2024
11. Monitoring the project impact 2022 _FINAL
12. 2019 Financial Statement
13. Revised_Budget_WEK_Phase_2_FINAL_-_details
14. Project Revision # 2_budget (Funding Source)
15. Project Revision # 2_budget (Result Areas)
16. finance September 2024
17. WEK Phase II Cover and No Cost Extension Letter 6 November
18. PSA and SSFA documents
19. WEK II ToR Advisory Committee Decree
20. Technical Committee meeting minutes
21. Community Action Plans
22. MTS (2014 – 2017), MTS (2018-201), MTS (2022 – 2025) and PoW (2016 -2017; 2018 – 2019; 2020 – 2021 and 2022-2023)
23. Water Harvesting Infrastructure Impact monitoring report 2024
24. Interim financial Statements (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024)
25. First Draft Baseline Report (2019)

ANNEX V: ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING & MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Assessment of Planning and Management of Environmental and Social Safeguards⁶⁴ by the Evaluand⁶⁵

Objectives:

- [i] To assess sufficiency in planning for [Environmental and Social] Safeguards during project design
- [ii] To assess management responsiveness to Environmental and Social Risks during project implementation

PART I.

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

Safeguard Standards (SS) deemed relevant to the project	Identified at project design ⁶⁶	Identified at project implementation ⁶⁷	Identified at evaluation	Notes
	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	
SS 1: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Sustainable Natural Resource Management	N	N	N	
SS 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks	N	N	N	
SS 3: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency	N	N	N	
SS 4: Community Health, Safety and Security	N	N	N	
SS 5: Cultural Heritage	Y	Y	Y	No negative impact or change made to the land and the local cultural issues
SS 6: Displacement and Involuntary Resettlement	N	N	N	
SS 7: Indigenous Peoples	Y	Y	Y	No negative impact as a result of the project approach. The project ensure d indigenous peoples active participation in decision-making processes and promoting culturally sensitive resource management practices and knowledge exchanges.
SS 8: Labour and working conditions	N	N	N	

⁶⁴ GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards was approved in 2018 (updated in 2019), for identifying and addressing environmental and social risks and impacts in GEF-financed projects and programs. UNEP established its safeguard policy in early 2015 and operationalized it in 2017. In UNEP, the Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) helps to promote human well-being and the protection of the environment. UNEP screens and categorizes proposed programme and project activities using the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF), introduced in 2019, to identify potential environmental and social risks and impacts. The ESSF was revised in 2020; subsequently, tools, templates, guidance notes and reference materials have been developed.

⁶⁵ Project/ Programme under Evaluation

⁶⁶ E.g. Project document, CEO Endorsement, etc.

⁶⁷ E.g. GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Mid-term Review, etc.

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

SS 5: Cultural Heritage				
Did the project involve or lead to:	Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
5.5 significant land clearing, demolitions, excavations, flooding?	Y	Y	Y	The construction of water harvesting weirs involved minimal vegetation removal, with reforestation and ecosystem conservation measures ensuring no significant environmental harm.

SS 7: Indigenous Peoples				
Did the project involve or affect:	Risk identified at project design (Y/N)	Risk identified at project implementation (Y/N)	Risk identified at evaluation (Y/N)	Notes
7.1 areas where indigenous peoples are present, or uncontacted or isolated indigenous peoples inhabit or where it is believed these peoples may inhabit?	Y	Y	Y	Indigenous communities were consulted early, with resource-sharing agreements and governance structures ensuring their inclusion and benefits like improved water access.
7.3 impacts to the human rights of indigenous peoples or to the lands, territories and resources claimed by them?	Y	Y	Y	The project ensured equitable resource sharing, protected indigenous rights, and minimized disruptions through community consultations.
7.4 the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	Y	Y	Y	Local land use was managed equitably, with landowners granting access to landless individuals, promoting resource sharing and supporting livelihoods.

PART II

Step 3a: Evidence of mitigative measures by project management⁶⁸ for Environmental and Social Risks identified at project design and/or during implementation

Identified Safeguard Standards Risks	Mitigation/avoidance/ management approach	Supporting documentation ⁶⁹
5.5 significant land clearing, demolitions, excavations, flooding?	The construction of the project's water harvesting weirs required minimal vegetation removal, supporting climate-resilient agriculture and erosion control. Measures such as reforestation and ecosystem conservation, approved and implemented by the community and the project, ensured no significant environmental harm.	Project weir study assessment and technical reports
7.1 areas where indigenous peoples are present, or uncontacted or isolated indigenous peoples inhabit or where it is believed these peoples may inhabit?	Indigenous communities were actively engaged early in the project planning and implementation phases. Their voices were heard and respected through consultations with local elders and leaders. Resource-sharing agreements and environmental management plans, developed and implemented by CMA and NRC, minimized environmental impacts. Indigenous communities directly benefited from the project, including improved water access, agricultural support, and participation in decision-making through established governance structures.	Project reports, monitoring reports
7.3 impacts to the human rights of indigenous peoples or to the lands, territories and resources claimed by them?	The project ensured no threats to indigenous communities' access to livelihoods and natural resources. Community consultations and equitable resource-sharing measures were conducted to respect indigenous rights and minimize disruptions while promoting inclusive benefits.	Project environmental and social economic study reports, project reports and monitoring reports
7.4 the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples?	The utilization of project area land was carried out by local land users, not outsiders. Landowners provided access to landless individuals through agreed land utilization arrangements, ensuring equitable benefits from the project's improved water access. This approach, along with community consultations and safeguarding measures, respected land rights while promoting inclusive resource sharing and supporting local livelihoods.	Project reports, monitoring reports

⁶⁸ For most low-moderate risk projects, good practice approach may be sufficient. In that case, no separate management plan is necessary. Instead, the project document demonstrates safeguard management approach in the project activities, budget, risks management, stakeholder engagement or/and monitoring segments of the project document to avoid or minimize the identified potential risks without preparing a separate safeguard management plan.

⁶⁹ E.g., GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR), Progress Report, Minutes, etc.

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

Unidentified Safeguard Standards Risks	Consequence of Risk to the Project	Justification (source of information)
N/A	N/A	N/A

Step 4: Overall assessment

Sufficiency in planning for Safeguard Standards and associated risks during project design:

The project integrated comprehensive planning to meet safeguard standards and mitigate associated risks during its design phase. A safeguard risk checklist was developed, emphasizing the importance of inclusive community participation to ensure safeguards across different project contexts.

Responsiveness to Environmental and Social Risks Identified During Project Implementation:

The project demonstrated proactive responsiveness to environmental and social risks through the following measures:

- Conducted environmental and socio-economic risk assessments for major structures, including water harvesting spreading weirs and dams.
- Ensured community-led participatory planning and monitoring, engaging local land users and indigenous groups to address emerging concerns and align with community priorities.
- Implemented sustainable natural resource management practices such as reforestation, rangeland improvement, and erosion control to mitigate environmental degradation and enhance long-term conservation.
- Promoted equity in access by facilitating land use arrangements where landowners provided access to landless individuals, ensuring fair distribution of benefits and minimizing social inequalities.
- Established accessible channels through CBOs, NRCs, and CMAs for stakeholders to report issues, enabling dispute resolution and fostering trust among communities.

These measures reflected the project management's dynamic approach to addressing risks and ensuring project sustainability, as evidenced by project reports.

Negative Effects from Unidentified Environmental and Social Risks:

While the project has not directly caused negative environmental or social risks, the ongoing civil war in the country has strained the project's limited resources. The influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has led to overharvesting of community forests for fuel, exacerbating resource misuse. NRCs have played a crucial role in raising awareness among newcomers and promoting sustainable resource management practices, continuing to mitigate these external impacts beyond the project's control.

ANNEX VI. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH TOOLS

1. Digital platforms and mass media:

- a. UNEP's official website, social media, email, and collaboration internal tools such as UNEP WeCollaborate
- b. UN in Sudan and implementing partners' website
- c. Local and international radio and TV channels
- d. Local radios
- e. International TV
- f. Newspapers such as ['The Guardian'](#)
- g. More than twelve videos were produced to document and simplify the WEK 2 project's approach, making it accessible to diverse audiences.
- h. Shared widely the Lessons learned (Lessons learned from the Implementation of the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project (Phase 2): Avenues for climate security and environmental peacebuilding programming) from the implementation of the WEK II project.

2. Key national and international events

- a. A paper presented at The Geneva Peace Week highlighted how the WEK project improved water infrastructure to spread seasonal water over wider areas, reduced erosion,
- b. An event at the Conference of Parties (COP 2022) - the WEK 2 project was featured in a case study entitled "Participatory IWRM for Adapting to Unreliable Rainfall and Preventing Conflicts through Good Governance in North Darfur, Sudan".
- c. Sharing in high-level UNEP events, showcasing reports like the [Sudan First State of Environment and Outlook Report 2020](#), [Lessons Learned and Good Practices in Natural Resource Management](#), and [Integrated Water Resources Management Good Practices in Sudan](#).
- d. Sharing through international days such as 'The World Environment Day' and 'The World Water Day'. In 2020, the project won the Water for Peace Award at the Second National Workshop on Sudan Water Resources Planning and Management, organized by the Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources.
- e. Sharing the project findings and learning with high-level policymakers. For example, project finding sharing with the high-level US Congress members and USAID as a successful model addressing environmental degradation and climate change in Darfur (2022).
- f. Presenting the project findings with UN agencies including UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, and WFP showcasing the project's achievements, focusing on the application of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), governance structures, women's empowerment initiatives, Farmer Field Schools, and key lessons learned (2022).

3. Workshops and training:

- a. Community mobilization workshops to bring together relevant stakeholders and targeted communities. They also helped to develop a comprehensive local-level understanding of the technical aspects of the project and develop tools and strategies (such as the Communication and Outreach Strategy of WEK II
- b. Other various workshops and trainings during the project implementation years

ANNEX VII: EVALUATION BRIEF

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project – “The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project – Phase 2” PIMS ID: 01990



Evaluation
Office

Introduction or Background of the Project

The Wadi El Ku (WEK) Phase II project was implemented to address critical natural resource management (NRM) challenges in North Darfur, Sudan—a fragile region marked by conflict, environmental degradation, and climate vulnerabilities. Building on the successes and lessons of WEK Phase I (2012–2017), the project sought to establish inclusive and sustainable governance structures for integrated water resource management (IWRM) while enhancing climate-resilient livelihoods and reducing natural resource conflicts.

The project, led by UNEP in collaboration with Practical Action and Sudanese government agencies, aimed to create participatory catchment management systems and promote sustainable NRM practices. Its strategic goals included improving water infrastructure, fostering collaboration among diverse community groups, and supporting capacity-building initiatives. Despite Sudan's volatile political and security context, including the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing armed conflict, the project achieved significant progress by piloting models of inclusive governance, promoting gender-responsive approaches, and enhancing community resilience to climate shocks.

Evaluation Findings

Relevance

The project was highly relevant to Sudan's socio-environmental challenges, addressing critical water and land management issues while aligning with national priorities, UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 6 (Clean Water), 12 (Sustainable Consumption), and 13 (Climate Action). Its participatory approaches ensured that interventions resonated with the needs of farmers, pastoralists, and other vulnerable groups, enhancing project ownership and sustainability.

Project Performance

The project was rated **Satisfactory**, achieving most of its planned outputs and contributing meaningfully to its objectives despite delays caused by external factors.

Output 1: Established inclusive governance structures like the Catchment Management Agency (CMA) and sub-catchment Natural Resource Committees (NRCs), fostering collaboration between government agencies, communities, and technical experts. CMA played a pivotal role in conflict resolution and planning, while NRCs effectively represented diverse stakeholders.



Output 2: Promoted improved agricultural practices and NRM techniques, benefiting 10,220 farmers through farmer field schools, extension packages, and community forestry. Water infrastructure such as weirs increased irrigated land, improving crop yields and enabling off-season farming.

Output 3: Strengthened science-based decision-making through updated hydrological models, citizen science pilots, and capacity-building programs. Data and tools developed under this output informed sustainable water management practices in the catchment area.

Output 4: Shared project knowledge widely, presenting the WEK model at events like COP27 and disseminating lessons through workshops and media. However, scaling efforts require further institutional support.

Main Achievements

The project's key achievements included:

Conflict Reduction:

Through participatory planning and conflict-sensitive approaches, the project reduced tensions between farmers and pastoralists by demarcating migratory routes, building trust, and fostering collaborative governance. Respondents noted a significant reduction in resource conflicts within the project area.



Improved Livelihoods: Climate-resilient agricultural practices and water infrastructure led to increased agricultural productivity and household income, fostering food security and economic stability. For instance, the Kusa weir rehabilitation expanded irrigated farmland to 9,000 feddans (3,780 Hectares), significantly benefiting local farmers.

Gender Empowerment: Women gained decision-making roles in governance structures and economic empowerment through village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) and agroforestry initiatives. Many women used loans to support education, healthcare, and small businesses, contributing to community resilience.

Sustainability: The CMA, NRCs, and community-driven water management systems established strong foundations for sustainable NRM. Community ownership of interventions, such as weir maintenance, reinforced long-term viability.

Factors Affecting Performance

Some strengths of the project included:

- **Strong Governance Structures:** Establishing inclusive bodies like the CMA and NRCs ensured local ownership, accountability, and effective coordination.
- **Participatory Approaches:** Community-driven planning and decision-making fostered trust, inclusivity, and alignment with local needs.
- **Gender Integration:** Women's empowerment initiatives enhanced decision-making, economic resilience, and conflict prevention.
- **Adaptation to Challenges:** Flexible strategies, such as community-led monitoring during conflict, ensured continuity.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** UNEP's technical leadership and Practical Action's community engagement expertise created synergy for impactful implementation.



The project faced some challenges that impacted its timeline and efficiency:

- **External Challenges:** Political instability and COVID-19 significantly delayed activities, such as water infrastructure construction. These delays limited the opportunity to demonstrate the full benefits of integrated water management.
- **Institutional Gaps:** Weak policy frameworks at the state level hindered the institutionalization of governance structures like the CMA. Although decrees were enacted, the absence of legislative councils prevented their formalization into binding policies.
- **Slow Administrative Processes:** Delayed fund authorization by UNEP headquarters slowed project implementation, particularly critical infrastructure development.

Despite these challenges, the project demonstrated adaptability through flexible approaches, such as virtual communication during the pandemic and community-led monitoring during conflict.

Contribution to Project Impact

The project contributed significantly to achieving its overarching objective of fostering climate-resilient communities and reducing resource-based conflicts:

- By establishing inclusive governance structures (CMA, NRCs) and promoting participatory planning, the project laid the groundwork for integrated natural resource management at the state level. These systems are expected to sustain and expand beyond the project's lifecycle.
- Climate-resilient livelihoods were strengthened through improved agricultural practices, agroforestry, and water management, enhancing community adaptability to climate shocks and economic challenges.

Major Lessons Learned

1. **Participatory Governance Drives Sustainability:** Establishing inclusive and locally owned governance structures like the CMA ensures accountability, fosters trust, and strengthens conflict resolution mechanisms.
 2. **Women's Empowerment Enhances Community Resilience:** Integrating gender-responsive approaches in governance and economic activities promotes equitable decision-making and strengthens household and community resilience.
 3. **Adapting to Contextual Challenges is Essential:** Flexibility in project implementation, such as relying on community-led monitoring during conflict, ensures continuity and mitigates external disruptions.
 4. **Knowledge Sharing is Key to Replication:** Disseminating evidence-based models and lessons is crucial for scaling up successful interventions within Sudan and similar contexts.
-

For the Future

To ensure the sustainability and replication of WEK II's successes, continued support for governance mechanisms like the CMA is essential, alongside streamlined processes and strengthened policies. Sustainable financing should be secured through government budgets, partner support, and user-based contributions, complemented by capacity-building for enterprise management. UNEP should prioritize scaling the IWRM model via enhanced knowledge-sharing, policy advocacy, and collaborative partnerships.

Additionally, UNEP headquarters must streamline financial authorization and empower field offices for timely fund disbursement, addressing delays and ensuring effective project implementation in fragile contexts.

By leveraging these lessons and recommendations, the WEK II project can serve as a replicable model for integrated natural resource management in fragile and conflict-affected regions.

ANNEX VIII. BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

Ram Khanal, PhD, Evaluation and Learning Specialist- Ecosystem and Climate Change			
Professional Profile			
For the last 20 years, I have worked as a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Specialist, primarily in the Asian context. My expertise lies in designing, managing, and strengthening MEL strategies, frameworks, and plans for climate change, biodiversity & ecosystems management, natural resource management, energy and livelihood projects. My work has consistently involved complex socio-political settings, where I provided strategic support on inclusive and collaborative approaches, as well as capacity-building initiatives related to MEL. I have successfully worked with various UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral donors, international organizations, and government agencies, contributing to their MEL processes and ensuring the integration of gender-responsive indicators to measure gender transformation.			
Experience related to the assignment			
Project Evaluation: Strong track record of managing complex, multi-country project evaluation. I have successfully designed and led monitoring and evaluation frameworks, ensuring that climate initiatives meet international standards and deliver measurable impact. Commissioned and carried out independent evaluations (more than 25) and learning studies in complex development settings.			
Climate Change and Environmental Policy: Extensive experience in formulating and implementing climate change policies, with a strong focus on low-carbon development, mitigation, and adaptation strategies. My work has involved collaborating with national governments, international organizations, and the private sector to integrate climate goals into broader development plans.			
Research and Data Analysis: Skilled in conducting thorough research and data analysis, particularly in assessing the effectiveness of climate policies and initiatives. I have utilized various research methodologies to inform evidence-based decision-making and policy development.			
Nationality	Nepalese	Experience	23 Years
Languages	Nepali, English, Hindi		
Countries of work experience: Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Mongolia, Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, Tajikistan, and Vietnam			
Qualifications			
PhD. Development Studies, School of Education, Kathmandu University, [2016] MSc. Agricultural Systems, Asian Institute of Technology, 1998 MA. Economics, Tribhuvan University, 1996			
Professional Career			
Year- 2010 Year – 2024	Independent consultant (evaluation, project development, programme management, capacity building) working on various themes including climate change, agriculture, ecosystems, equity and livelihoods		
Year - 2004 Year - 2009	Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Expert /Senior Programme Officer, IUCN Nepal, Design, manage and update multi-level (programme and projects related to climate change, ecosystems management, biodiversity conservation) MEL framework, carry out monitoring and learning studies, manage review events, write annual reports and manage external evaluation of projects.		
Year - 2001 Year - 2004	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer , Hill Research Programme of DFID, Nepal. Design monitoring and evaluation framework and plan, capacitate research provider, carry out field level monitoring and provide feedback, manage semi-annual review and write progress reports.		
Year - 1999 Year - 2001	District Development Advisor , Local Governance Programme of UNDP, Nepal. Support in participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation process, program management, capacity building, engaging stakeholders and coordination with the government		

Ms. Mariam Ibrahim Abubakr Mohammed

Mrs. Mohammed holds an MSc in Forestry Sciences from the University of Khartoum, Sudan, and a BSc in Agriculture from the University of Zalingei, Sudan. She also holds a Professional Diploma in Management of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from the University of Medical Sciences & Technology, Sudan.

Mariam worked with CARE International from 2004 to 2013 in various roles, including fieldwork, coordination, and management. Her diverse experience spans emergency response and recovery programs, with a strong foundation in gender and peace, partnership development, and project management in both relief and development settings.

Since 2014, Mariam has been working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Sudan. Until March 2024, she served as a Partnership Development Associate under the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project. In this role, she supervised, supported, and advised project partners in delivering their activities. Additionally, she played a pivotal role in gender mainstreaming, engaging with government partners, and strengthening institutional relationships.

Mariam has been a lead facilitator for community-led 3-dimensional and 2-dimensional mapping as well as Community Environmental Action Planning (CEAPs). Her efforts have promoted effective community participation and the establishment of local, community-based water and natural resource management governance structures that foster sustainable solutions for environmental and water management.

ANNEX IX. EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP project

The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project - Phase 2 PIMS ID: 01990

Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information

Table 1: Project Summary

UNEP PIMS ID/SMA ⁷⁰ ID:	PIMS ID: 01990	Grant ID ⁷¹ (if applicable):	
UNEP Management (Division/Branch/Unit):	Disasters and Conflicts Branch, Ecosystems Division.		
Implementing Partners:	1. Agricultural Research Centre 2. Forestry National Cooperation (FNC) 3. Groundwater and Wadis Directorate (GWWD) 4. Ministry of Production and Economic Resources (North Darfur) 5. Practical Action 6. University of El Fasher 7. University of Khartoum		
Sources of Funding:	Country ⁷² (ies):	Institution ⁷³ Name/Type:	European Union (EU)
Relevant SDG(s):	5, 6, 13		
MTS (all that apply):	MTS 2018-2021, MTS 2022-2025	UNEP approval date:	22 November 2017
POW Direct Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Output(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022)	POW Direct Outcome:	MTS 2025 Outcome(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved from 2022): OR POW Expected Accomplishment(s) number/reference (applicable for projects approved pre-2022):	MTS 2025 Outcome:
	POW Output: DC Subprogramme (EA C): Crisis-affected countries adopt key environmental and natural resource governance policies and sustainable practices as a contribution to recovery and development. CC Subprogramme (EA A): Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation. EuR Subprogramme (EA): Governments and other stakeholders use		POW Expected Accomplishment: DC Subprogramme (EA C): Crisis-affected countries adopt key environmental and natural resource governance policies and sustainable practices as a contribution to recovery and development. CC Subprogramme (EA A): Countries increasingly advance their national adaptation plans which integrate ecosystem-based adaptation. EuR Subprogramme (EA): Governments and other

⁷⁰ SMA refers to the ID provided by the Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting Solution (IPMR) system, which was introduced by UNEP in July 2023.

⁷¹ For example, ID references from EC, IKI, UNDA, Adaptation Fund, GCF.

⁷² Where applicable, list countries who have provided project funds and/or co-finance.

⁷³ Indicate where funding institutions are any/all of the following: Foundation/NGO; Private Sector; UN Body; Multilateral Fund; Environment Fund; Other.

	quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action.		stakeholders use quality open environmental data, analyses and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action.
Sub-programme:	Climate Action (previously -Resilience to disasters and conflicts)	Programme Coordination Project:	N/A
Expected start date:	1 January 2018	Actual start date:	1 January 2019
Planned completion date:	31 December 2022	Actual operational completion date:	31 October 2023
Planned total project budget⁷⁴ at approval:	US \$ 11,934,000	Actual total expenditures reported as of 10 June 2024	US \$ 11,950,000
Planned Extra-budgetary Funds⁷⁵:	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000	Secured Extra-budgetary Funds:	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000 In-kind: US \$
	In-kind:	Actual Extra-budgetary Funds expenditures reported as of 10 June 2024	Cash: US \$ 11,934,000
First disbursement:	US \$ 6,650,160	Planned date of financial closure:	30 August 2024
No. of formal project revisions:	2	Date of last approved project revision:	1 February 2023
No. of Steering Committee meetings:	8	Date of Last Steering Committee meeting:	11 May 2022
Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):	June 2021	Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):	October 2021
Terminal Evaluation (planned date):	June 2022	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	April 2024
Coverage – Implementing Country(ies):	Sudan	Coverage – Implementing Region(s):	Africa
Dates of previous project phases:	The Wadi El Ku catchment management project for livelihoods development and sustainable peace (July 2013 to April 2017)	Status of future project phases:	Under discussion with the EU

⁷⁴ Total budget may include; Regular Budget, Environment Fund, Extra-Budgetary, including 'softly-earmarked' etc.

⁷⁵ Extra-budgetary funds may include co-finance (cash/in-kind)

2. Project Rationale

1. North Darfur is an arid and conflict-affected region of Sudan. The conflict and the climate have created a range of settings. In some parts, the population has moved out, and the land is only occupied during the rainy season by seasonal farmers, and by pastoralists that move through the area during their seasonal migration. In other areas, including the project area, populations have concentrated, and the pressure on the vulnerable arid environment is extremely high.

2. The impacts of conflict on society, governance, environment and livelihoods are manifest in the project area, and Darfur in general, and are challenges that will need to be faced over the longer term. The social impacts include a huge and rapid swell in urbanization and population concentration, changes in social norms and values, particularly among youth, and mistrust between communities, which exacerbates conflict and competition. The conflict has also weakened government and its ability to provide services to communities and has weakened customary management systems. In particular, it has undermined both statutory and customary capacity to enforce control measures needed to safeguard the environment and livelihoods. Impacts on the environment and on livelihoods include disrupted livelihoods (e.g. loss of assets due to asset stripping of crops and livestock, loss of livelihoods due to displacement and inaccessibility of production areas because of armed conflict), and poor and unsustainable use of natural resources (e.g. deforestation in the absence of alternative sources of fuel and building materials among IDPs and urban dwellers). Finally, the trust and understanding needed for peaceful relationships over resources has been undermined, whereby livelihood groups have been polarized at the local level and communities mistrust government.

3. Though conflict remains a challenge in Darfur, an opportunity to demonstrate the role that inclusive natural resource management can play in rebuilding relationships, contributing to peace exits. By providing assistance in a way that enables the people of Darfur to jointly manage their natural resources better and to take advantage of livelihood opportunities that emerge as a result, this can contribute towards establishing conditions that support peaceful co-existence, and a positively reinforcing socio-economic relationship, as was demonstrated in The Wadi El Ku Phase 1 project.

4. The Wadi El Ku is a large inland seasonal river running through North Darfur with a catchment area of 25,660 km². Its catchment area includes a part of the Jebel Mara mountains to the west, and the Kutum uplands to the north, and extends into South Darfur where it terminates in an inland delta. As other wadis⁷⁶, it often has flowing water in part of the rainy season. It is characterized by heavy clay and alluvial soils within the wadi itself, and lighter, sandy soils (*qoz*) in the surrounding area. The wadi runs through a (semi) arid zone, with very unreliable and variable rainfall between 100 and 350 mm per year. The largest population concentration along the wadi is in El Fasher, the capital city of North Darfur, with a population of about 400,000 people and an additional population of 190,000 encamped Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

5. The Wadi El Ku is situated in a marginal agro-ecological zone. Its proximity to El Fasher, a regional trading hub and home to large populations of IDPs, has increased the demand on land and water beyond the carrying capacity of the environment and the planning capacity of the government. This, combined with the ongoing conflict, has resulted in degradation of the environment, including deforestation, erosion and soil fertility depletion, and haphazard water management. Livelihoods have in turn been weakened, setting in motion a negatively reinforcing relationship between environment and economic recovery within and around the Wadi El Ku. The Wadi El Ku Phase 2 project was therefore designed and implemented to continue to demonstrate how this negatively reinforcing relationship can be halted and eventually reversed through effective and inclusive natural resource management, building on strong progress made under Phase 1 and on UN Environment's experience in Sudan of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM).

6. The overall objective of the project was to demonstrate how the integrated management of natural resources – in particular of water – can establish sustainable and climate resilient livelihoods, reduce natural resource conflicts in North Darfur, and reduce displacement due to loss of livelihoods.

⁷⁶ A wadi is a bed or valley of a stream in regions of southwestern Asia and northern Africa that is usually dry except during the rainy season and that often forms an oasis. The word wadi means "valley" or "ravine" in Arabic ([Merriam-Webster dictionary](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wadi)).



Figure 1: A map of Sudan showing the Wadi El Ku Catchment.

Source: [The Guardian](#)

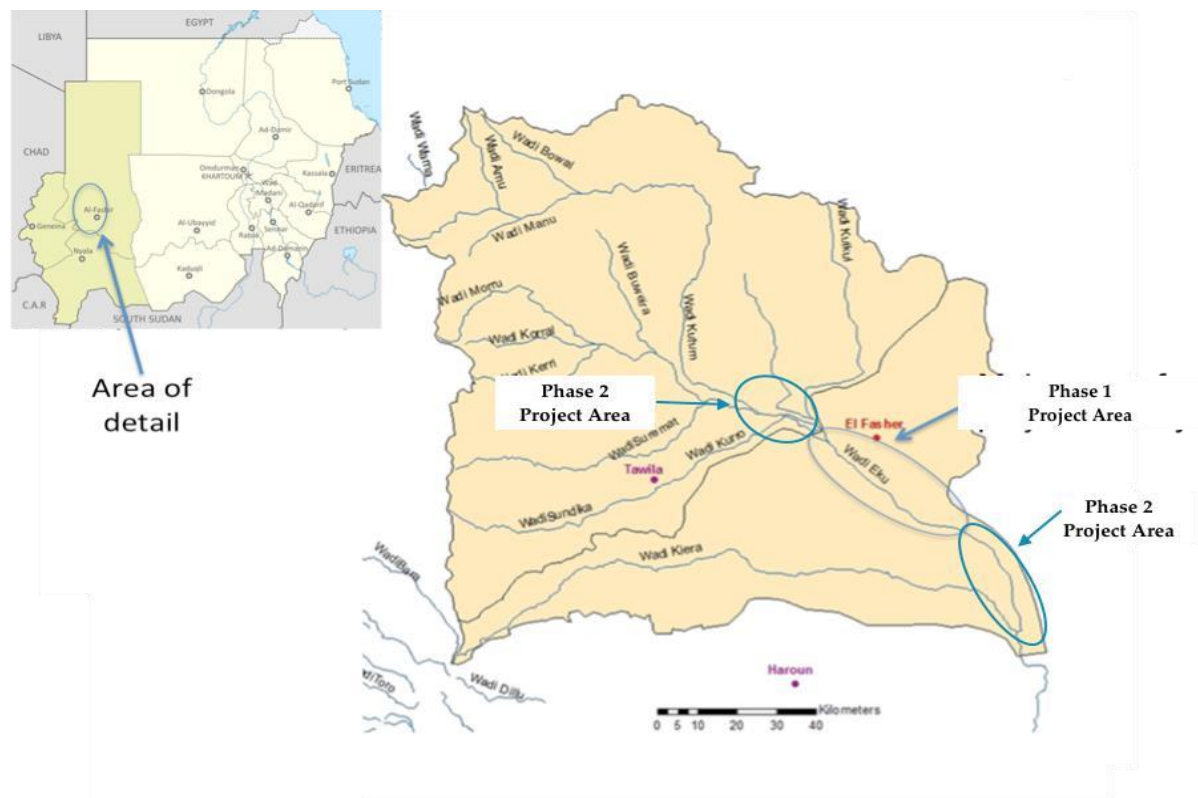


Figure 2: Map of The Wadi El Ku catchment, showing the Phase 2 project areas

Source: Project Document.

3. Project Results Framework⁷⁷

7. The project results framework is anchored on two outcomes and four outputs as outlined below and detailed in the project document and summarised in *Error! Reference source not found.*

PROJECT OBJECTIVE: To Establish climate resilient livelihoods and reduce natural resource conflicts and displacement due to loss of livelihoods in North Darfur.
OUTCOMES Outcome 1: Improved natural resource use and management in Wadi El Ku. Outcome 2: Communities are applying improved techniques in natural resource management and agriculture.
OUTPUTS Output 1. Support and train a participatory, community-based catchment management forum in Wadi El Ku. Output 2. Demonstrate and promote improved agricultural and natural resource management approaches, extension packages, and cooperation mechanisms (convening pastoralists and farmers over water and natural resources), for uptake at community level in Phase 2 project areas. Output 3. Expand and promote scientific and technical information for improved water and natural resource management and early warning. Output 4. Knowledge sharing to support to government and non-government actors to take up and apply IWRM approaches to achieve sustainable growth and stability in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan.

4. Executing Arrangements

8. The project was implemented by a dedicated United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Project Management Unit in El Fasher, North Darfur, which was co-located within existing United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) premises. The Project Management Unit was supervised and supported by UNEP's programme office in Khartoum, and the Ecosystems Division's Disasters and Conflicts Branch based in Geneva and with Practical Action as the main implementing partner.

9. The Project Advisory Committee (Steering Committee): As a means of providing the project with high-level oversight, a Project Advisory Committee that was formed under Phase 1 was reinstated under Phase 2. While not exercising executive authority over the project, it was expected to meet on a biannual basis to review progress and achievements and make recommendations concerning implementation strategy. In addition, alignment with government policy was its other important responsibility as well as resolving any obstacles facing smooth implementation of the project.

10. The Project Technical Committee: A project Technical Committee that was established under Phase 1 was reinstated under Phase 2, and was chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, which was appointed as the project's focal point Ministry by the Governor of North Darfur. The roles of the Technical Committee were (a) to ensure effective coordination between UN Environment and the various government institutions and NGOs involved in project implementation; (b) to provide high quality technical guidance to and oversight of the project's work; and (c) to address operational problems and obstacles facing the project during the course of implementation.

11. Project Manager: The role of the Project Manager was to supervise all aspects of the project with a particular focus on further developing the catchment management system put in place under Phase 1, and on building institutional capacities and policies needed to support, scale up and replicate that system elsewhere in Darfur. In doing so, the Project Manager was expected to work closely with the project team and receive significant support from the UN Environment Programme Manager and team in Khartoum, from the team in UN Environment headquarter (RoA and the Ecosystems Division), and from consultant experts in public sector natural resource policy development.

⁷⁷ The results framework is an extract from [Project Revision #2](#) dated 1 February 2023.

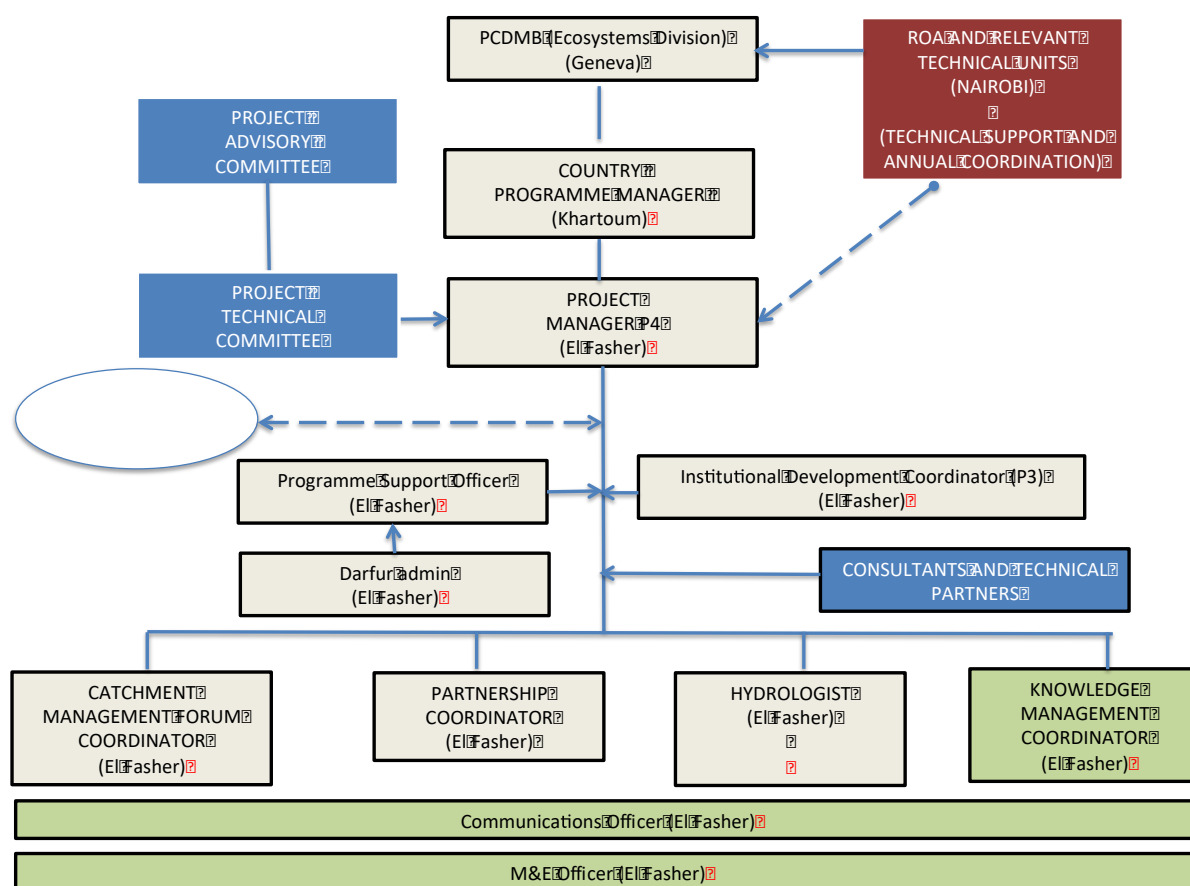


Figure 3: Project Implementation Structure

5. Project Cost and Financing

12. The total budget secured for the project was US\$11,934,000 cash with no co-financing as summarised in Table 2: **Total Project Budget** below.

Table 2: Total Project Budget⁷⁸

Type of Funding	Source of Funding	Details	Total (USD)
Cash	Environment Fund (EF) activity budget		-
	Regular Budget (RB) activity budget		-
	Extra Budgetary Funding (XB) (posts + non-post + Programme Support Cost (PSC))	Secured (EU)	11,153,271
		Program Support Cost on Secured funds	780,729
		XB Sub-Total (USD)	11,934,000
	SUB- TOTAL (USD)	Sub-Total Secured (USD)	11,934,000
In-Kind			-
Total Budget (USD)			11,934,000

⁷⁸ The project budget is an extract from [Project Budget Revision #2](#) dated 14 November 2022.

6. Implementation Issues

13. Darfur has experienced intermittent periods of reduced violence in recent years, especially during the period when the joint United Nations - African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur ([UNAMID](#)) was operating in the restive region. UNAMID ended its operation on 31 December 2020 and the Government of Sudan took over the responsibility of protecting civilians across the region. It followed a milestone [Darfur Peace Agreement](#) reached between the Sudanese authorities and two armed groups in Darfur on 5 May 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria.

14. However, on 25 October 2021, the military elements of the civilian-military coalition charged with transitioning Sudan to a more democratic future, seized full control of the country through a coup d'état. The transition government had been established to transition Sudan into a democratic path following months of protests that ousted the Government of President Omar al-Bashir on 11 April 2019. The situation took a drastic turn with the outbreak of conflict on 15 April 2023 between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces. Initially the conflict was concentrated in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, but soon it [spread](#) to other regions including the project sites in North Darfur on 13 April 2024.

15. The conflict together with a worsening economic situation and the COVID-19 pandemic meant that the implementation context was unfavorable. Two project revisions were undertaken during the life of the project in light of the above disruptions as summarised in table below.

Table 3: A Summary of the Project Revisions undertaken during Project Implementation.

Revision#	Date of Revision	Reason(s) for Revision
1	22 July 2020	○ Revision of baseline and target figures: The original log-frame left many baseline and target figures as TBD (to be decided) during the inception phase. All TBD figures have been filled. ○ Revision of indicators: Some of the original indicators have been reworded for clarity; some have been revised to better measure progress and some have been added to measure progress that was not covered by the original indicators. ○ Revision of milestones: Some of the original milestones have been reworded for clarity; some have been revised to better measure progress and some have been added to measure progress that was not covered by the original milestones. ○ Revision of milestone dates: The delayed start of the project resulted in all milestone dates being moved forward. See the next bullet point. ○ Revision of project end date: Funds were only available from the end of December 2018 and the project team was only in place in early 2019. In effect the project started one year late.
2	1 February 2023	○ A no-cost extension of the project to 31 October 2023 due to delays occasioned by slow project execution on account of the worsening security situation in North Darfur and the economic crisis following the October 2021 coup.

16. A mid-term review of the project was conducted in October 2021 and the project rated satisfactory despite the unfavorable external context characterized by political instability, insecurity and public health challenges occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

7. Objective of the Evaluation

17. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁷⁹ and the UNEP Programme Manual⁸⁰, 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 target countries. 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

18. 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.

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

20. **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.

21. **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.

⁷⁹ <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

⁸⁰ <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

9. Key Strategic Questions

22. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution:

- (a) In what ways, and to what extent, were the needs and interests of differentiated groups (gender, economic activity – farmers, pastoralists etc.) considered in the implementation of the project?
- (b) What changes were made to adapt to the effects of political instability, insecurity and COVID-19 and how might any changes have affected the project's performance?
- (c) To what extent did the project build on the successes and lesson from the mid-term review and phase 1 of WEK?

10. Evaluation Criteria

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

A. Strategic Relevance

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

- i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy⁸¹ (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

25. 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 Building⁸² (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

26. 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

⁸¹ 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>

⁸² <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

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

iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence⁸³

28. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization⁸⁴, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP's comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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

B. Quality of Project Design

29. 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 rating⁸⁵ should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project's strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

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

- Stakeholders' participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

C. Nature of External Context

30. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project's external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval⁸⁶). 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

⁸³ This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of 'Coherence' introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

⁸⁴ 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.

⁸⁵ 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.

⁸⁶ 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.

i. Availability of Outputs⁸⁷

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Preparation and readiness

Quality of project management and supervision⁸⁸

ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes⁸⁹

32. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed⁹⁰ Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project's resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP's intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP's 'substantive contribution' should be included and/or 'credible association' established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Quality of project management and supervision

Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

Communication and public awareness

iii. Likelihood of Impact

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

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

88 'Project management and supervision' refers to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments.

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

90 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.

drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

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

34. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role⁹¹ 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.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)

Stakeholders participation and cooperation

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

Country ownership and driven-ness

Communication and public awareness

E. Financial Management

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Preparation and readiness

Quality of project management and supervision

⁹¹ 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.

F. Efficiency

37. 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.

38. 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 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.

39. 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 complementarities⁹² with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

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

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)

Quality of project management and supervision

Stakeholders participation and cooperation

G. Monitoring and Reporting

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

i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting

41. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART⁹³ results towards the provision of the project's outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation

42. 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

⁹² Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

⁹³ SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

iii. Project Reporting

43. UNEP has a centralised Integrated Planning, Management, and Reporting (IPMR) solution 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. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Quality of project management and supervision

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

H. Sustainability

44. Sustainability⁹⁴ is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. 'assumptions' and 'drivers'). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

iv. Socio-political Sustainability

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

v. Financial Sustainability

46. 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.

vi. Institutional Sustainability

47. 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.

⁹⁴ As used here, 'sustainability' means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms 'environmental sustainability' or 'sustainable development', which imply 'not living beyond our means' or 'not diminishing global environmental benefits' (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

Stakeholders' participation and cooperation

Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)

Communication and public awareness

Country ownership and driven-ness

I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

i. Preparation and Readiness

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

ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision

49. 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.

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

iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

51. Here the term 'stakeholder' should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the 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 should be considered.

iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality

52. 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 Environment⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ 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 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?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

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

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

v. Environmental and Social Safeguards

55. 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 requirements⁹⁶ were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned, are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

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

vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness

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

vii. Communication and Public Awareness

58. 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.

⁹⁶ 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.

Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES

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

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

(a) A **desk review** of relevant background documentation, inter alia.

Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval);
Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;

Project reports such as annual reports, financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence etc.;

Mid-Term Review of the project;

GIS data – Project GIS data, High resolution (30cm) satellite imagery of project sites e.g. weirs.

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

UNEP Project Manager (PM);

Project management team;

UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);

Project partners, including;

- i. Agricultural Research Centre
- ii. Forestry National Cooperation (FNC)
- iii. Groundwater and Wadis Directorate (GWWD)
- iv. Ministry of Production and Economic Resources (North Darfur)
- v. Practical Action
- vi. University of El Fasher
- vii. University of Khartoum

Members of the Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Coordination Agency and Weir Management Committees.

Sub-Programme Coordinator; [Climate Action]

Representative from the Delegation of the European Union to Sudan

Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women's, farmers and trade associations etc).

Other relevant resource persons;

(c) **Field visits:** due to the ongoing civil war in Sudan, there will be no field visits for this evaluation.

11. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

61. 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: 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.

62. An **Evaluation Brief** (a 2-page overview of the evaluation and 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.

63. **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 Project Manager/Implementing Partner, 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.

64. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the Evaluation Consultant(s) and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final Main 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.

65. 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.

66. 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 Project 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

67. For this Evaluation, the Evaluation Consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager, in consultation with the UNEP Project Manager, Fund Management Officer and the Sub-programme Coordinator for Climate Action. The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the Evaluation, including travel. It is, however, each consultants' 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 Project 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.

68. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of six (6) months [June 2024 to November 2024] and should have the following: a university degree in environmental sciences, international development or other relevant political or social sciences area is required and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable; a minimum of eight (8) years of technical / evaluation experience is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and/or Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in a conflict/ post conflict setting is desired. English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For

this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement and proficiency in /knowledge of Arabic is desirable. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage. The work will be home-based with no field visits.

69. 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. The consultant will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered.

70. 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 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

71. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 4: Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

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

14. Contractual Arrangements

72. 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.

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

Table 5: Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant/Principal Evaluator

Deliverable	Percentage Payment
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document #9)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document #10)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	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, Anubis, SharePoint etc.) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

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 standard⁹⁷.

⁹⁷ This may include contract cancellation in-line with prevailing UN Secretariat rules.

ANNEX X. QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluand Title: Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project “The Wadi El Ku Catchment Management Project - Phase 2 PIMS ID: 01990” (2019 -2023).

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.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
Report Quality Criteria		
Quality of the Executive Summary <u>Purpose:</u> acts as a stand alone and accurate <u>summary</u> of the main evaluation product, especially for senior management. To include: • concise overview of the evaluation object • clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope • overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria • reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report • summary response to key strategic evaluation questions • summary of the main findings of the exercise/synthesis of main conclusions • summary of lessons learned and recommendations.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The executive summary includes all the expected sections. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The executive summary presents a concise summary of the evaluation report and includes the key messages.	6
Quality of the 'Introduction' Section <u>Purpose:</u> introduces/ <u>situates</u> the evaluand in its institutional context, establishes its main parameters (time, value, results, geography) and the purpose of the evaluation itself. To include: • institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, Branch etc) • date of PRC approval, project duration and start/end dates • number of project phases (where appropriate) • results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. POW Direct Outcome) • coverage of the evaluation (regions/countries where implemented) • implementing and funding partners • total secured budget • whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, external agency etc.) • concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The introduction section includes all the requires sections. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The introduction section situates the evaluand within the UNEP institutional framework and succinctly defines the parameters (time, value, results, geography).	6
Quality of the 'Evaluation Methods' Section <u>Purpose:</u> provides reader with clear and comprehensive description of evaluation methods, demonstrates the <u>credibility</u> of the findings and performance ratings. To include: • description of evaluation data collection methods and information sources	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation methods section presents a detailed description of the evaluation process. All expected elements are included. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation methods section passes the reproducibility test. It	5

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- justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/ quantitative; electronic/face-to-face) - number and type of respondents (<i>see table template</i>) - selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited - strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation - methods to include the voices/experiences of different and potentially excluded groups (e.g. vulnerable, gender, marginalised etc) - details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.) - methods used to analyse data (scoring, coding, thematic analysis etc) - evaluation limitations (e.g. low/ imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; language barriers etc) - ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected. Is there an ethics statement? E.g. <i>'Throughout the evaluation process and in the compilation of the Final Evaluation Report efforts have been made to represent the views of both mainstream and more marginalised groups. All efforts to provide respondents with anonymity have been made.'</i>	explains in sufficient detail how the evaluation was conducted while highlighting challenges encountered and mitigation measures.	
Quality of the 'Project' Section <u>Purpose:</u> describes and <u>verifies</u> key dimensions of the evaluand relevant to assessing its performance. To include: <i>Context:</i> overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses) <i>Results framework:</i> summary of the project's results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised) <i>Stakeholders:</i> description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics <i>Project implementation structure and partners:</i> description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners <i>Changes in design during implementation:</i> any key events that affected the project's scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order <i>Project financing:</i> completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report covers all the key dimensions of the evaluand as expected. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The project section describes the key aspects of the evaluand in adequate detail. The report describes in good detail the context, results framework, stakeholders, project implementation structure, changes in project design and project financing.	6
Quality of the Theory of Change <u>Purpose:</u> to set out the TOC at Evaluation in diagrammatic and narrative forms to support consistent project performance; to articulate the causal pathways with drivers and assumptions and justify any reconstruction necessary to assess the project's performance. To include:	Final report (coverage/omissions): All expected sections are included in the section on the project theory of change. Final report (strengths/weaknesses):	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>⁹⁸ was designed (who was involved etc) - confirmation/reconstruction of results in accordance with UNEP definitions - articulation of causal pathways - identification of drivers and assumptions - identification of key actors in the change process - summary of the reconstruction/results re-formulation in tabular form. <i>The two results hierarchies (original/formal revision and reconstructed) should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results 'goal posts' have not been 'moved'. This table may have initially been presented in the Inception Report and should appear somewhere in the Main Evaluation report.</i>	This section of the report presents a reconstructed theory of change (TOC at evaluation) in both diagrammatic and text form. The section also presents reconstruction of results in the prescribed format while providing justification for the reconstruction.	
Quality of Key Findings within the Report <u>Presentation of evidence:</u> nature of evidence should be clear (interview, document, survey, observation, online resources etc) and evidence should be explicitly triangulated unless noted as having a single source. <u>Consistency within the report:</u> all parts of the report should form consistent support for findings and performance ratings, which should be in line with UNEP's Criteria Ratings Matrix. <u>Findings Statements (where applicable):</u> The frame of reference for a finding should be an individual evaluation criterion or a strategic question from the TOR. A finding should go beyond description and uses analysis to provide insights that aid learning specific to the evaluand. In some cases a findings statement may articulate a key element that has determined the performance rating of a criterion. Findings will frequently provide insight into 'how' and/or 'why' questions.	Final report (coverage/omissions): All the expected Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The findings presented are evidence based and consistent throughout the report. The findings presented in the report provide deeper analysis and go beyond describing the "what" and tackle the "why" and "how".	5
Quality of 'Strategic Relevance' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present evidence and analysis of project strategic relevance with respect to UNEP, partner and geographic policies and strategies at the time of project approval. To include: Assessment of the evaluand's relevance vis-à-vis: - 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	Final report (coverage/omissions): This section of the report tackles all the dimensions strategic relevance as expected. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation report presents a good analysis of the relevance of the evaluand to the strategic priorities of UNEP, GEF and the national priorities of the target country – Sudan.	6

⁹⁸ 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*.

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Complementarity with Existing Interventions: complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation⁹⁹), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups.		
Quality of the 'Quality of Project Design' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the project design, on the basis that the detailed assessment was presented in the Inception Report.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation report includes a section on Quality of Project Design as expected. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The quality of project design section presents a balanced critique of both the strengths and weaknesses in project design.	6
Quality of the 'Nature of the External Context' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to describe and recognise, when appropriate, key external features of the project's implementing context that limited the project's performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval ¹⁰⁰), and how they affected performance. While additional details of the implementing context may be informative, this section should clearly record whether or not a major and unexpected disrupting event took place during the project's life in the implementing sites.	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation report includes a section on that analyses the nature of the external context. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report presents an excellent analysis of the project implementation context that covers the negative externalities that affected project implementation. The analysis also includes an analysis of the effects of these negative externalities and mitigations measures put in place by the project.	6
Quality of 'Effectiveness' Section (i) Availability of Outputs: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the outputs made available to the intended beneficiaries. To include: - 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).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report presents a section that analyses the availability of all planned project outputs. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report presents an excellent evidence-based analysis of the availability of outputs by comparing targets with achievement. Also included is the analysis of the quality, timeliness of the delivery of the outputs and effects on disadvantaged groups.	6
ii) Achievement of Project Outcomes: <u>Purpose:</u> to present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the uptake, adoption	Final report (coverage/omissions):	5

⁹⁹ 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.

¹⁰⁰ 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.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
and/or implementation of outputs by the intended beneficiaries. This may include behaviour changes at an individual or collective level. To include: - 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).	The report presents a section that analyses the achievement of project outcomes. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation presents a well-reasoned analysis on the achievement of project outcomes. The analysis also includes evidence of uptake of project outputs by the target beneficiaries and effects of project outcomes on disadvantaged groups.	
(iii) Likelihood of Impact: <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact, including an assessment of the extent to which drivers and assumptions necessary for change to happen, were seen to be holding. To include: - an explanation of how causal pathways emerged and change processes can be shown - an explanation of the roles played by key actors and change agents - explicit discussion of how drivers and assumptions played out - 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).	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation report includes a section on the analysis of the likelihood of impact. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report includes a good analysis of the likelihood of impact. The analysis also includes the actors involved the change process and the possible negative effects on disadvantaged people and challenges in project implementation. On the other hand, the report could have benefited from an analysis of the drivers and assumptions	4
Quality of 'Financial Management' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed 'financial management' table (may be annexed). 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 (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report includes a section on project financial management arrangements. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation report presents an analysis of the project financial management. The analysis covers adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures, completeness of financial information, and communication between financial and project management staff.	6
Quality of 'Efficiency' Section <u>Purpose:</u> to present an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under efficiency (i.e. the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness). To include:	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report includes a section on measures by the project to ensure efficiency. Final report (strengths/weaknesses):	6

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
- time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe - discussion of making use, during project implementation, of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. - implications of any delays and no cost extensions - the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP's environmental footprint.	This section of the report presents an analysis of the two dimensions of efficiency i.e. time and cost effectiveness. The analysis includes the cost effectiveness measures put in place by the project key of which include leveraging pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships for synergy. Also included in the analysis are the effects of the project extensions on project performance.	
Quality of 'Monitoring and Reporting' Section Purpose: to present well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the evaluand's monitoring and reporting. Consider how well the report addresses the following: - quality of the monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>) - quality of monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>) - quality of project reporting (e.g. <i>PIMS and donor reports</i>) \	Final report (coverage/omissions): A section of the quality pf monitoring and reporting is included in the evaluation report. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation report presents a good analysis of the performance of the project in relation to the three dimensions of monitoring and reporting i.e. quality of the monitoring design and budgeting, quality of monitoring of project implementation and quality of project reporting.	5
Quality of 'Sustainability' Section Purpose: to 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	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report includes a section on sustainability. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report presents a well reason analysis of the three dimensions of sustainability i.e. socio-political, financial and institutional sustainability.	6
Quality of Factors Affecting Performance Section Purpose: These factors are not always discussed in stand-alone sections and may be integrated in the other performance criteria as appropriate. However, if not addressed substantively in this section, a cross reference must be given to where the topic is addressed and that entry must be sufficient to justify the performance rating for these factors. Consider how well the evaluation report, either in this section or in cross-referenced sections, covers the following cross-cutting themes: - preparation and readiness - quality of project management and supervision¹⁰¹ - stakeholder participation and co-operation	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation report includes a section that analyses each of the factors affecting project performance. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation report includes an excellent analysis of the factors affecting project performance. These include: preparation and readiness, quality of project management and supervision, stakeholder participation and co-operation, responsiveness to human	6

¹⁰¹ 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.

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- responsiveness to human rights and gender equality - environmental and social safeguards - country ownership and driven-ness - communication and public awareness	rights and gender equality, environmental and social safeguards, country ownership and driven-ness, communication and public awareness.	
Quality of the Conclusions Section (i) Conclusions Narrative: Purpose: to present summative statements reflecting on prominent aspects of the <u>performance of the evaluand as a whole</u>, they should be derived from the synthesized analysis of evidence gathered during the evaluation process. To include: - compelling narrative providing an integrated summary of the strengths and weakness in overall performance (achievements and limitations) of the project - clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions - human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention should be discussed explicitly (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on)	Final report (coverage/omissions): The evaluation report includes a conclusions section which includes summative statements on the performance of the evaluand. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The report presents concise summative statements on the performance of the evaluand as a whole. The report also includes human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention and clear and succinct response to the key strategic questions.	6
ii) Utility of the Lessons: Purpose: to present both positive and negative lessons that have potential for wider application and use (replication and generalization) Consider how well the lessons achieve the following: - are rooted in real project experiences (i.e. derived from explicit evaluation findings or from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future) - briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful - do not duplicate recommendations	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report presents lessons learned in the prescribed format. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The lessons learned section presents lessons derived from real project implementation experiences and have wide application in similar interventions.	6
(iii) Utility and Actionability of the Recommendations: Purpose: to present proposals 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 lessons achieve the following: - 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	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report includes recommendations aimed at addressing problems in project execution and proposed actions to ensure sustainability of project results. The recommendations are also presented in the prescribed format. Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The recommendations presented are actionable and are derived from actual project implementation challenges and desire to increase likelihood of sustainability of project results. However, an opportunity to include a recommendation that relates to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions was missed.	5

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Final Report Rating
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.		
Quality of Report Structure and Presentation (i) Structure and completeness of the report: To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?	Final report (coverage/omissions): The report is complete and follows the Evaluation Office structure and formatting guidelines.	5
(ii) Writing and formatting: Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information?	Final report (strengths/weaknesses): The evaluation report is written in clear English language and used visual aids (figures and tables) appropriately.	6
OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING	Highly Satisfactory	5.6

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.