

20th LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

June 09, 2016

Washington, DC

Agenda Item 05

LDCF/SCCF ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT 2015

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	iii
Background	2
Assessment of Terminal Evaluations	2
Outcomes and Sustainability.....	2
Quality of Project Monitoring and Evaluation	4
Innovative Approaches	6
Gender Considerations	7
Gender Disaggregation of Indicator Data	8
Explicit Gender Considerations in Project Activities	8
Existence of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy or Approach	8
Gender Rating.....	9
Synthesis of Lessons Learned from Completed Projects	10
Communications and Stakeholder Involvement.....	10
Monitoring and Evaluation.....	12
Project Design and Management.....	13
Content-Technical: Climate Change Adaptation.....	13
Management Action Record	14
Annex A: Terminal Evaluation Report Review Guidelines	15
Annex B: NAPA Implementation Projects Alignment rating.....	20
Annex C: Gender Rating.....	21

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This third LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report (AER), prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF, presents an assessment of eleven completed LDCF/SCCF projects for which the terminal evaluations (TEs) were submitted during the fiscal year 2015. These eleven projects account for \$14.6 million in LDCF funding and \$33.91 million in SCCF funding. The AER looks at performance, innovation, gender considerations and presents a synthesis of lessons learned from the FY 2015 cohort of completed LDCF/SCCF projects.
2. Nine projects focused on watershed and water resource management, for five of them this focus was integrated with land, agricultural or food security management. Two projects focused on strengthening climate early warning systems, which was linked for one project to managing climate sensitive health risks. The five LDCF projects all address primary priority areas as outlined in their respective NAPA country reports.
3. Ten of the eleven completed projects had outcome ratings in the satisfactory range, while only the completed Sudan project was rated moderately unsatisfactory. Projects rated in the satisfactory range had objectives that were relevant to the GEF climate change focal area and to the country's priorities; they achieved the majority of set objectives in a cost effective way. Eight of the eleven completed projects received sustainability ratings in the likely range, suggesting limited risks to the sustainability of their project outcomes. Reasons for the remaining three projects' sustainability being rated moderately unlikely were linked to a lack of solid financial and institutional arrangements and limited buy-in from national or state level decision-makers beyond the projects' timeline, as well as delays in the implementation of an exit strategy.
4. Only four of the eleven projects received M&E ratings in the satisfactory range. These projects had an M&E design that was specific, comprehensive and included SMART indicators, set baseline values and targets, mentioned data verification sources and comprised a description of M&E responsibilities. Project documentation included a comprehensive M&E execution plan with a timeline for all M&E specific activities.
5. The results on outcome ratings are comparable to those reported in the AER 2014. Given the small number of completed projects to date, a comparison of one year to the next is not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the two funds. A retrospective review of all completed projects, currently 24 in total, is planned for next year's report.
6. An identification of innovative approaches and synthesis of lessons learned is further discussed in the report. Most of the lessons learned synthesized in this report do not relate to the innovative approaches identified but to standard good practice elements in project management, communication and stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Engaging stakeholders and strategic partnerships are crucial to encourage project ownership, increase buy-in from institutional decision-makers, and should be promoted early on in order to properly understand a country's context. For successful M&E, multiple projects

indicated a clear need for dedicated M&E staff and M&E capacity building at the national level. Strong working relationships among project management teams and with government stakeholders as well as the provision of sufficient resources in project design and supervisory capacities were also found to be key elements of project success.

7. The focus of the gender assessment was on three gender considerations: 1) gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data, 2) explicit gender considerations in the description of the project activities, and 3) the existence of an overarching women inclusion, empowerment and/or gender mainstreaming strategy or approach. A new gender rating, piloted in the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016, has been applied and is further explained in annex C. When applied to the FY 2015 cohort of completed LDCF/SCCF projects it rates seven projects as gender aware and four projects as gender sensitive. None of the completed projects part of the FY 2015 cohort were rated as gender mainstreamed. Note that all projects reviewed were designed before the 2012 gender policy and the 2014 gender equality action plan came into effect. Also, individual GEF implementing agencies often apply their internal gender thinking, but do not report on these efforts because this was not a requirement in the past. It is envisaged that in due course projects will make reporting on gender-positive outcomes intentional by developing more integrated and holistic gender empowerment approaches as part of a gender mainstreaming strategy formulated at the project's onset.

BACKGROUND

1. The Least Developed Countries Fund / Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2015 - prepared by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) - presents an assessment of project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation, and a review of innovative approaches used in completed projects. For this assessment, eleven projects were considered for which terminal evaluations (TEs) were submitted by GEF Agencies to the IEO in FY 2015. This year's AER also looks at gender considerations and presents a synthesis of lessons learned from completed projects. The assessments and synthesized lessons are based on the FY 2015 cohort of eleven completed LDCF/SCCF projects, which is also part of the GEF Annual Performance Report (APR) 2015.

ASSESSMENT OF TERMINAL EVALUATIONS

2. This is the third year that completed LDCF/SCCF projects are reported on in the GEF APR. In the APR 2015 cohort of terminal evaluations (TEs) there are six completed projects that received funding from the SCCF and five completed projects that received funding from the LDCF. These projects account for \$14.6 million in LDCF funding and \$33.91 million in SCCF funding. Reporting on project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation, and innovative approaches are based on an analysis of the ratings and information provided in TEs that have been first reviewed by the IEO and/or the evaluation offices of GEF Partner Agencies. See annex A for details on the Terminal Evaluation Report review guidelines.

Outcomes and Sustainability

3. Table 1 provides summary information and ratings for the AER 2015 cohort of eleven completed LDCF/SCCF projects. Given the small number of completed projects to date, these projects are not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the two funds.

4. Three national projects (GEF IDs 2931, 3227 and 3838) and one regional project (GEF ID 2902) focused on adaptive capacities to address climate change risks in watershed and water resource management. Three national projects (GEF IDs 3430, 3689 and 3718) and one regional project (GEF ID 3101) focused on combined water and land, agricultural or food security management, while one national project (GEF ID 3249) had water management linkages through its focus on climate change adaptation measures in arid and semi-arid lands. The aforementioned Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) focused on supporting countries with highly vulnerable highlands and glacier-dependent watersheds to define adaptation measures and high priority activities that relate to the pressures on Andean highlands and prioritized Andean-origin river basins. The earlier mentioned Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) focused on supporting Pacific island countries with the integration of climate change risks into relevant national and sectoral strategies and policies related to their food security and water resources. The Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) focused on strengthening climate early warning systems, while the global health project (GEF ID 2553) aimed to support early warning systems for, and response capacity to climate sensitive health risks by increasing the adaptive capacity of national health system institutions.

Table 1. Outcome, Sustainability and M&E ratings of completed SCCF and LDCF projects part of the APR 2015 cohort
Table 1 Continued

GEF ID	Fund	Agency	Project Title	Country	LDCF Grant (M\$) ¹	Outcome rating ²	Sustainability rating ³	M&E design at entry rating ²	M&E plan implementation rating ²
2553	SCCF	WHO	Piloting Climate Change Adaptation to Protect Human Health	Global	5.04	MS	MU	S	MS
2902	SCCF	WB	Adaptation To The Impact Of Rapid Glacier Retreat In The Tropical Andes	Regional	7.94	MS	ML	MU	MU
2931	SCCF	UNDP	Adaptation to Climate Change through Effective Water Governance	Ecuador	3.0	MS	L	S	S
3101	SCCF	UNDP	Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project (PACC)	Regional	13.13	MS	ML	MU	MU
3227	SCCF	WB	Conservancy Adaptation	Guyana	3.8	MS	ML	MU	MU
3249	SCCF	UNDP	Adaptation To Climate Change In Arid Lands (KACCALI)	Kenya	1.0	MS	L	MU	U
3430	LDCF	UNDP	Implementing NAPA Priority Interventions to Build Resilience in the Agriculture and Water Sectors to the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change	Sudan	3.27	MU	MU	MU	U
3689	LDCF	UNDP	Adaptation to the effects of climate variability and change in agro-ecological regions I and II in Zambia (CCAP)	Zambia	3.77	S	MU	S	S
3718	LDCF	UNDP	Building the Capacity of the Agriculture Sector in DR Congo to Plan for and Respond to the Additional Threats Posed by Climate Change on Food Production and Security	Congo DR	3.0	S	ML	MU	UA

¹ Amount excludes PPG grant and agency fees.

² GEF/EF Agency six-point rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Alternatively, the rating might be Unable to Assess (UA).

³ GEF/GEF Agency four-point scale: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), and Unlikely (U).

GEF ID	Fund	Agency	Project Title	Country	GEF Funding (M\$) ¹	Outcome rating ²	Sustainability rating ³	M&E design at entry rating ²	M&E plan implementation rating ²
3728	LDCF	UNEP	Strengthening of The Gambia's Climate Change Early Warning Systems	Gambia	1.06	S	ML	MU	MU
3838	LDCF	UNDP / UNEP	Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change by Establishing Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness Systems and Support for Integrated Watershed Management in Flood Prone Areas	Rwanda	3.5	S	L	S	S

5. Ten of the eleven completed projects had outcome ratings in the satisfactory range. Five projects, being the global health project (GEF ID 2553), the Andes and Pacific regional projects (GEF IDs 2902 and 3101) and two national projects in Guyana and Kenya (GEF IDs 3227 and 3249), were rated moderately satisfactory. Five national projects, in Ecuador, Zambia, Congo DR, Gambia and Rwanda (GEF IDs 2931, 3689, 3718, 3728 and 3838), were rated as satisfactory. Projects rated in the satisfactory range tended to share commonalities: project objectives were relevant to the GEF climate change focal area and to the country's priorities and projects achieved the majority of set objectives in a cost-effective manner. A common differentiator between projects with a satisfactory rating and those with a moderately satisfactory rating links to how efficient project finance, administration, and implementation were planned. The Sudan project (GEF ID 3430) was rated moderately unsatisfactory, because the intended results in two outcome areas were not achieved.

6. In terms of sustainability of project outcomes, eight of the eleven completed projects received ratings in the likely range. Five projects, the Andes and Pacific regional projects (GEF IDs 2902 and 3101) and three national projects, in Guyana, Congo DR and Gambia (GEF IDs 3227, 3718 and 3728), were moderately likely to be sustainable. The three projects in Ecuador, Kenya and Rwanda (GEF IDs 2931, 3249 and 3838) are likely to be sustainable. The sustainability of the global health project (GEF ID 2553) and the national projects in Sudan and Zambia was rated as moderately unlikely. Reasons for projects' sustainability being rated moderately unlikely were linked to a lack of solid financial and institutional arrangements and limited buy-in from national or state level decision-makers beyond the projects' timeline, as well as delays in the implementation of an exit strategy to ensure sustainability of outcomes.

7. The results on outcome ratings are comparable to what we saw in the AER 2014. In last year's cohort of completed projects, all eight projects had outcome ratings in the satisfactory range. Looking at the FY 2014 cohort's sustainability ratings, seven of the eight projects were rated in the likely range and as such performed better on sustainability. Given the small number of completed projects to date, a comparison of one year to the next is not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the two funds. A retrospective review of all completed projects, currently 24 in total, is planned for next year's report.

8. For the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016, the alignment of NAPA implementation projects with their NAPA country priorities has been assessed.⁴ The five completed LDCF projects that are part of the AER 2015 cohort all received an alignment rating of very high, which means that the implementation projects' outcome areas all address primary priority areas as listed or outlined in their respective NAPA country reports.

Quality of Project Monitoring and Evaluation

9. The quality of monitoring and evaluation in LDCF/SCCF projects is reviewed by rating the M&E design and planning at project start, as well as the implementation of the M&E plan. The latter also looks at adjustments made to the logical results framework during the project's life

⁴ For details on the procedure for the NAPA implementation projects alignment rating, please see annex B.

cycle, and follow-up and management response to mid-term review (MTR) recommendations. The scoring of both M&E elements is done by means of a six-point rating scale, ranging from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

10. Only four of the eleven projects were found to have an 'M&E design at entry' rating in the satisfactory range, while seven of the eleven projects were found to have ratings in the unsatisfactory range (see table 1 for details). For example, in the case of the Kenya project (GEF ID 3249) the project was restructured after approval and the M&E framework was updated, but the old baseline and targets were maintained. This resulted in confusion and inconsistency, and explains why the project's 'M&E plan implementation' rating is also moderately unsatisfactory. In the case of Sudan (GEF ID 3430) the M&E framework's indicators "bear little relation to the result they are supposed to indicate. Moreover, there is confusion across the indicators, baseline values and targets" (TE p.30). Looking at the Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718) there were no numerical baselines set and indicators were unspecific; for example "farmers will be equipped to cope with climate induced risk" says little if 'to be equipped' is not further defined.

11. Projects rated in the unsatisfactory range for 'M&E design at entry' were equally rated in the unsatisfactory range for the 'M&E plan implementation' element. Four of the eleven completed projects were given a rating in the satisfactory range for 'M&E plan implementation', while six were rated in the unsatisfactory range and one could not be assessed. For example, the Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) had a complexity not reflected in the M&E system and results framework before the mid-term review. This was adjusted after the mid-term review. Also the Guyana project (GEF ID 3227) needed a restructuring of the project and the project's M&E framework, following the mid-term review, to make M&E results of practical use. Kenya (GEF ID 3249) and Sudan (GEF ID 3430) both received an unsatisfactory rating because of inadequate oversight of M&E activities by the agency. In the case of Kenya this came down to a general lack of support for the project manager and M&E not getting the attention it needed. In the case of Sudan there was a mismatch between the type of data collected at site level – anecdotal and unverified – and the type of data needed for overall project monitoring. The moderately unsatisfactory rating for the Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) was due to serious limitations in ensuring regular monitoring of progress against indicators and reporting due to the absence of staff dedicated to M&E. However, a range of studies were conducted to provide baseline information which supported progress monitoring and reporting on the implementation of project activities, and M&E activities were carried out by other staff and consultants.

12. Projects that scored in the satisfactory range for 'M&E design at entry' and the 'M&E plan implementation' element had an M&E design that was specific, comprehensive and included SMART indicators, set baseline values and targets, mentioned verification sources and comprised a description of M&E responsibilities. Project documentation includes a comprehensive M&E execution plan with a timeline for all M&E specific activities. Last year's analysis of completed projects, as part of the AER 2014, shows better performance in the M&E categories.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

13. As stated in last year's Annual Evaluation Report, there is no overarching description or definition of what is to be regarded as 'innovation' or 'innovative'. One common denominator in LDCF/SCCF projects is that projects and approaches are regarded as innovative if they are deliberately applied to tackle an issue, and these approaches (1) have not been used before in the project area, and/or (2) have not been used before to tackle this specific issue. Other elements that make an approach innovative is that the approach needs to be (3) widely replicable, which is linked to being locally appropriate from a technological, environmental as well as a socio-economic point of view, and this should be possible (4) at low economic cost, which links innovation to financial sustainability.

14. All five SCCF and six LDCF completed projects of the AER 2015 cohort were reviewed for innovative approaches. The Sudan project (GEF ID 3430) is the only one that clearly "did not develop new understanding, new knowledge or new technologies [...] It made little contribution to better understanding of lessons learned and emerging best practices" (TE p.41). All other projects have clear innovative elements, which are further discussed below.

15. One recurrent topic is innovations in early warning systems and related communication. China, as part of the global project with GEF ID 2553, "developed software modules for a heat-related health risk early warning system using a mathematical model based on historical health and climate data." (TE p.44) The software provides early district forecasts of heat related health risks and offers public health recommendations, including district-specific health communication products. Uzbekistan, part of the same global project, developed a 'Meteorological Comfort Index' based on 10-day meteorological forecasts; the index was then included in the early warning system. Similarly, the Rwanda project (GEF ID 3838) developed a hydro-meteorological model that integrates meteorological data from automatic weather stations with climate change risk assessments and socio-economic parameters. Kenya (GEF ID 3249) focused on disseminating up-to-date climate risk information to community leaders, extension staff and farmers / pastoralists, to change behavior by providing key groups with updated information. The Zambia project (GEF ID 3689) focused on translating meteorological data into decision making and developed an innovative training for government planners in "interpreting the seasonal weather forecast in terms of time of planting, choosing the variety of seed to be planted, flood probability and probability of animal disease outbreaks" (PIR 2014 p.15).

16. Another recurrent topic is innovations in climate resistant crops and seeds. Fiji's Ministry of Agriculture, as part of the Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101), re-introduced old water-resilient crops and piloted these on-site with 65 farmers; these were compared against more productive varieties that were more impacted by waterlogging. Large scale distribution of taro varieties resistant to waterlogged conditions also took place on the archipelago of Palau. The Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718) focused on climate-resilient seeds and collaborated with two renowned institutions involved in the selection and screening of high yielding varieties in terms of production and climate-resistance. Ecuador (GEF ID 2931) also developed climate

resistant wheat and corn seeds and seed potatoes resistant to drought and other climate variabilities.

17. The introduction of innovative water technologies is another topic identified in project documentation of closed projects. Drip irrigation technologies were piloted in Kenya and Ecuador (GEF IDs 3429 and 2931). Many of the Pacific island countries that were part of the Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) are characterized by poor quality and/or low levels of groundwater resources. Solar water purification systems were introduced on the Marshall Islands and Nauru, with varying levels of success. Solar water pumps were installed in Tonga and other systems were perhaps less innovative, but included rainwater catchment and storage systems on Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu. As part of the Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) an integrated water management plan was developed in Choquecota, Bolivia, which was selected as example on how to include climate change pressures into the country's incipient basin plans.

18. The cross-boundary collaborative nature of the Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) could in itself be seen as innovative: "Bolivia became a regional leader in satellite imagery, and provided support to the other participating countries in image processing; Peru made remarkable innovations in understanding future climate change impacts on selected crops and hydrology, and transferred its knowledge to the other two countries; whereas Ecuador is arguably the world's first country to implement páramo restoration activities, páramo being the ecosystem of regions above the continuous forest line, yet below the permanent snowline" (TE p.14)

19. The low number of LDCF/SCCF projects analyzed makes the identification of innovation trends and generalization of such trends difficult. Furthermore, there is no correlation between GEF Agency or geographical region, and the level of innovation identified. However, SCCF projects seem to be more innovative than LDCF projects.

20. Innovations often cannot be detached from the more 'conventional' project elements, and solutions introduced combine a suite of innovative and conventional approaches. Combined with innovation being context-dependent – what is seen as innovative in one project country could be regarded as conventional in another project country – it is not possible to come to an overarching conclusion, or a consistent understanding, of the effectiveness of innovative approaches.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

21. The focus for the gender assessment was on three gender considerations: 1) gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data, 2) explicit gender considerations in the description of the project activities, and 3) the existence of an overarching women inclusion, empowerment and/or gender mainstreaming strategy or approach. A new gender rating, piloted in the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016, has been applied.⁵

⁵ For details on the new gender rating, please see annex C.

22. The majority of completed projects that are part of the FY 2015 cohort included women as stakeholders and beneficiaries to varying degrees. But few included women as decision-makers and none of the projects had a gender mainstreaming strategy or approach.

Gender Disaggregation of Indicator Data

23. The majority of completed projects reviewed for the AER 2015 show no evidence of gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data. Only four projects, being the Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) and three national projects in Kenya, Zambia and Gambia (GEF IDs 3249, 3689 and 3728), mention gender disaggregated data or report on project results using gender disaggregated reporting figures. For example, Kenya's project documents mention gender disaggregated data as an intention but show little evidence that this was followed up on. The terminal evaluation of the Zambia project reports on some gender disaggregated result.

Explicit Gender Considerations in Project Activities

24. Three out of the eleven projects, the global health project (GEF ID 2553) and two national projects in Ecuador and Guyana (GEF IDs 2931 and 3227), did not include any explicit gender considerations.

25. Agricultural project activities in particular, as part of the Andes and Pacific regional projects (GEF IDs 2902 and 3101) and national projects in Kenya, Zambia and Congo DR (GEF IDs 3249, 3689 and 3718) targeted women specifically for training and capacity building regarding, among other topics, smart farming practices and food processing techniques. For the Pacific regional and Kenya projects it was noted that women were both key stakeholders and decision-makers in project activities. The Pacific regional project noted the leadership of a woman member of parliament from the Cook Islands as key to implementing a more gender-balanced approach for the islands. In Kenya and Zambia, greater than 50% of participants were women. For a Kenyan training on human-rights based approaches, gender integration and environmental and social safeguards 67% of participants were women. In Zambia 387 women out of 900 small scale farmers were reported to have adopted at least one adaptation measure and the project expects to meet the target of 50% women participation with the extension of the project.

26. In contrast, the Sudan project (GEF ID 3430) noted that the project impressively reached a large number of women beneficiaries, but project decision-makers were almost entirely men and no gender assessment or gender-based analysis took place as part of the project.

Existence of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy or Approach

27. Assessing the project documents of the eleven completed projects, it does not appear that any of the projects part of the FY 2015 cohort included an overarching women inclusion, empowerment, or gender mainstreaming strategy or approach formulated into the project.

28. Only two projects, the Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) and the Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718), make statements in their respective Project Document and Request for CEO

Endorsement about intending to create a gender strategy. However, subsequent project documentation makes no mention of gender mainstreaming strategies or approaches having been created. The project that comes closest to a mainstreaming strategy or approach is the Pacific regional project. Project documentation demonstrates gender-specific project activities that are comparatively more robust than those for many of the other projects. For example, the project saw the creation of a Pacific Climate Change and Gender Toolkit and a Gender Action Plan 2013-2014. However, there is no indication whether or how these actions fit into an overarching gender strategy.

29. It appears unlikely that gender mainstreaming strategies or approaches were devised, yet undocumented, and thus not reported upon in the terminal evaluation. Though it is equally not impossible that more gender relevant analysis and strategizing took place than is being reported.

Gender Rating

30. For the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016, a new gender rating was developed and applied.⁵ Assessing the eleven completed projects part of the AER 2015 by means of this gender rating, four national projects were rated as gender sensitive, while seven projects were rated as gender aware. None of the projects were rated 'gender mainstreamed', though the UNEP component of the joint UNDP-UNEP Rwanda project can, on its own, be considered gender mainstreamed.

31. The gender aware rating was given to seven of the eleven projects, being the global health project (GEF ID 2553), the Andes and Pacific regional projects (GEF IDs 2902 and 3101) and the national projects of Ecuador, Guyana, Kenya and Sudan (GEF IDs 2931, 3227, 3249 and 3430). The Pacific regional project appears to acknowledge various gender issues, inequalities, and challenges as these relate to the project's activities. Some activities include a gender focus, but overall the project does not robustly address women issues and works around existing gender differences and inequalities. The terminal evaluation of the Ecuador project shows high percentages of women participating in trainings in some pilot sites, though it is not clear whether this is incidental or due to the specific targeting of women as beneficiaries and stakeholder. The terminal evaluation of the Sudan project states that "the project is not based on a proper gender assessment nor gender-based analysis, and there is no overall strategy for addressing gender concerns or mainstreaming gender" (p.28). While there were some successes regarding the inclusion of women in project activities, there was no project-wide approach to gender and women were not sufficiently involved as decision-makers.

32. Four completed national projects, in Zambia, Congo DR, Gambia and Rwanda (GEF IDs 3689, 3718, 3728 and 3838), are rated gender sensitive. The Zambia project made some inroads in terms of building gender equity, but this was only the case for some specific project activities. The terminal evaluation of the Congo DR project shows that efforts to include women as project stakeholders were made, "Women's participation in project activities was very decisive" (p.35), but there is no disaggregation of indicators or any notion of gender mainstreaming. The Rwanda project was a joint UNEP-UNDP project. While the UNEP project

components are clearly gender mainstreamed, the UNDP project components were rated as gender aware at best, resulting in an overall gender sensitive rating.

33. None of the completed projects part of the FY 2015 cohort were rated as gender mainstreamed. All completed projects reviewed were designed before the 2012 gender policy and the 2014 gender equality action plan came into effect. Also, individual GEF implementing agencies often apply their internal gender thinking, but do not report on these efforts because this not being a requirement in the past. It is envisaged that in due course projects will make gender-positive outcomes intentional by developing integrated and holistic gender empowerment approaches as part of a gender mainstreaming strategy formulated at the project's onset. Future gender assessments will hopefully point in that direction and assessment results could inform future gender thinking within the GEF.

SYNTHESIS OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM COMPLETED PROJECTS

34. The synthesis of lessons learned has been drawn from the specific terminal evaluation report sections on lessons learned, as well as other sections of the TEs that held valuable lessons.

35. Most of the lessons learned do not relate to earlier identified innovations. They relate to standard good practice elements in project management, communication and stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The lessons learned groupings in order of occurrence (from most to least occurring) are; (1) communications and stakeholder involvement, (2) monitoring and evaluation, (3) project management, and (4) content-technical. These groupings are used below to further discuss individual lessons learned topics.

Communications and Stakeholder Involvement

Engaging Stakeholders and Strategic Partnerships

36. Eight of the eleven completed projects, being the Andes and Pacific regional projects (GEF IDs 2902 and 3101) and six completed national projects; Ecuador, Kenya, Sudan, Congo DR, Gambia and Rwanda (GEF IDs 2931, 3249, 3430, 3718, 3728, and 3838) note that targeting government and other institutional stakeholders was crucial because of these groups' authority and approval role. In terms of project examples demonstrating the importance of stakeholder engagement, the Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) recommends that relevant government ministries, especially those with the authority to allocate resources, be integrated into projects from the earliest planning stages. The Kenya project (GEF ID 3249) recommends that projects involve all technical support agencies and rural service providers, and encourage these groups to work together, to ensure consolidated program management and to raise awareness of what is at stake. The Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) discussed the benefits of establishing regular and clear communications between the implementing agency, partners and stakeholders, to build trust, clear expectations, and project ownership. Similarly, the Rwanda project (GEF ID 3838) worked with in-country agencies to ensure the project's goal aligned with the country's climate

change and development needs and priorities, and was implemented within existing institutional frameworks. The Ecuador project (GEF ID 2931) also recommends that project implementers maintain frequent and open communications with government officials, to maintain trust and transparency with decision-makers.

37. Seven of the eleven projects part of the FY 2015 cohort, being the Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) and six completed national projects in Ecuador, Kenya, Sudan, Zambia, Gambia and Rwanda (GEF IDs 2931, 3249, 3430, 3718, 3728 and 3838), discuss how forming strategic partnerships can increase the chance of project success. Looking at examples from these projects, the Andes regional project recommends forming careful and early-planned partnerships with key stakeholders that are well positioned to build support for the project. The project worked with CARE, which was better positioned to leverage resources and facilitate working with rural communities than the implementing agency. The Ecuador project successfully identified community members who could serve as ‘social leaders’, able to mobilize and build relationships and partnerships with other domestic groups and individuals. These social leaders were essentially deputized to act as project advocates. The Kenya project included an intensive stakeholder assessment process prior to project implementation, which identified critical stakeholders and assigned roles and responsibilities. The Sudan project cautions against neglecting to understand existing partnerships and linkages, and failing to identify potential partnerships, which resulted in a loss of project efficiency in Sudan.

Communicating Project Results to Raise Awareness and Knowledge

38. Several terminal evaluations discussed the importance of communicating project results in order to raise awareness of the project’s goals with stakeholders, and increase public education and knowledge. In the Gambia project (GEF ID 3728), part of the activities focused on communicating project results to stakeholders, and helping them utilize that knowledge for organizational learning and improvement. The project analysis recommended using creative, innovative, and varied communication methods, including multimedia formats like video, photos, and sound recordings, since lengthy, detailed reports will not be compelling to many. The Guyana project (GEF ID 3227) included a grant-funded communication plan that regularly disseminated project results to stakeholders, resulting in knowledge transfer and increased coordination of activities. The Rwanda project (GEF ID 3838) noted great successes in disseminating project results and transmitting knowledge. It produced a film documenting project achievements and distributed it to officials via DVD, and to the wider public on YouTube. The TE of the Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718) notes that not communicating regularly with national counterparts resulted in misunderstandings about financial responsibility.

Buy-in and Project Ownership

39. One frequently discussed lessons learned-category centers on the use of stakeholder engagement to encourage project ownership. In the Zambia project (GEF ID 3689) the implementing agency was noted as being responsive and flexible to stakeholder needs, resulting in greater buy-in of the project and a strong working relationship. In Rwanda, (GEF ID 3838), the project similarly involved stakeholders to ensure the process was country-driven and

reflected the needs and concerns of the community. In Ecuador (GEF ID 2931), concerted efforts to engage stakeholders resulted in a strong sense of ownership and support. The global health project (GEF ID 2553) included a focus on engaging and educating key stakeholder groups within each country. Training health professionals and relevant agencies on the health risks of climate change resulted in greater cooperation and project buy-in.

40. The terminal evaluations of multiple projects recommend that stakeholder participation should be promoted early on in order to properly understand a country's context. The Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) observes that stakeholder participation was high at all levels and project design benefited because it accurately reflected community concerns and challenges. In Ecuador (GEF ID 2931), the project involved stakeholder groups in the formulation of community-based water management initiatives. The project notes that, despite initial delays, it was worthwhile pursuing because it ensured more accurate project targeting. The Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) observes the downsides of not utilizing a participatory approach to project design. The project employed a 'one size fits all' approach, resulting in a project design that should have been more differentiated and appreciative of countries' individual capacities and policy environments. Similarly, the TE of the Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718) observed low stakeholder involvement in project design and recommends stronger grassroots involvement in future projects.

Monitoring and Evaluation

41. A clear lesson learned across multiple projects, for example in the Pacific, Sudan and Gambia projects (GEF IDs 3101, 3430 and 3728) is about the need for dedicated M&E staff and M&E capacity building at the national level. The Pacific regional project indicated a need for greater M&E oversight at the national and local level, while the Sudan project indicated overall weak M&E due to a lack of dedicated M&E staff and poor indicators. The TE of the Gambia project also noted that a heavy burden was placed on project management staff as a result of a lack of dedicated M&E staff, leading to weak monitoring of progress against indicators.

42. Another theme across projects, related to M&E lessons learned, is the benefit of having a customized M&E framework cognizant of and embedded within country and project specificities. For the Zambia project (GEF ID 3689), an agriculture-specific M&E framework was recommended, stressing that there is no one-size-fits-all M&E approach. The Andes regional project highlighted a similar issue, noting a desire for two different M&E systems; one to follow up on project progress and results, and a separate system to capture and evaluate long-term adaptation benefits. The terminal evaluation of the global health project (GEF ID 2553) supported the notion of a more customized, tailored M&E framework, noting that an M&E framework customized to country needs would have been helpful.

43. The Pacific regional and Congo DR projects (GEF IDs 3101 and 3718) highlighted the need for information collection and sharing mechanisms with regard to M&E information. A final lesson learned from the Kenya project (GEF ID 3249) discusses the need for the M&E plan to be flexible enough to be changed when project adjustments occur, while also needing to be robust enough to continuously track performance throughout the project's lifetime.

Project Design and Management

44. Based on the evidence from the global and regional projects (GEF IDs 2553, 2902 and 3101), it is clear that sufficient resources need to be invested in project design and supervisory capacities to guarantee good collaboration between global, regional, and country offices. The global health project provides an example of successful and well-organized project management across offices, while the two regional projects lacked clear operational procedures, had insufficient supervisory budget, and the complexity of project operations was underestimated.

45. For the Pacific regional and Sudan projects (GEF IDs 3101 and 3430), there were major challenges in dealing with demands from all stakeholders. In the case of Sudan this was because different states made use of different farming systems, resulting in a wide range of demands.

46. Strong working relationships among project management team members and with government stakeholders were seen as crucial to the success of multiple projects, including the global health project, the Pacific regional project, and national projects in Ecuador, Kenya, Sudan and Gambia (GEF IDs 2553, 2902, 2931, 3249, 3430 and 3728). The Pacific regional project indicated that the lack of a strong working relationship with and low profile of national counterparts made high-level dialogue with government officials difficult, and limited the ability of the project to mainstream climate change into national policies. The Kenyan and Sudan projects both suffered as a result of staff changes (Kenya) and leadership changes (Sudan) and could have benefited from the establishment of strong project teams early on.

47. The Zambia project (GEF ID 3689) indicated problems with a 'silo approach' among all participating agencies, while the Rwanda project (GEF ID 3838) suffered from increased project management complexity due to a structure with joint UNDP-UNEP implementing agencies).

Content-Technical: Climate Change Adaptation

48. The lessons learned in the content-technical grouping focus mainly on climate change adaptation, and eight of the eleven completed projects part of the FY 2015 cohort offered lessons learned on adaptation-specific content or technical issues.

Climate Data Collection, Training and Research

49. Several projects specifically mentioned the pivotal role of robust climate data and research to successfully carry out climate change adaptation. The Andes regional project (GEF ID 2902) discussed the need to equip countries with the tools to generate and analyze climate vulnerability data. The project initially focused on applying a specific climate change model, called 'Japan's Earth Simulator', rather than on developing in-country capacity to generate and interpret climate change data. Providing specific climate models runs the risk of the effort being a one-off. Early focus should be on climate data collection and database build-up, since absence of data is typically the most important hurdle in these efforts. The Guyana project (GEF ID 3227), by contrast, specifically mentions the benefits of technical tools like climate models. The

project documentation stresses the need to develop a technical foundation for climate risk analysis, stating that developing these technical tools allowed the country to rationalize key investment strategies to deal with flood risk.

50. The Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) discussed the importance of creating a core team of trained staff able to understand and use the data produced by the new early warning system. The Congo DR project (GEF ID 3718) discussed the need to enable communities to gather data and be part of scientific research, in order for them to understand the climate risks they face and to appropriately target interventions. The project notes the importance of conducting scientific research collaboratively to identify appropriate seed varieties and technical innovations for each project site or ecological zone. Similarly, the Ecuador project (GEF ID 2931) states that climate change is an extremely technical issue and that scientific, technical research should be documented and explained in a way that enables all relevant stakeholders to understand the findings.

Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

51. An issue that came up repeatedly was how to ensure long-term sustainability of project efforts. Some projects focused on the need to mainstream climate adaptation into national policies, programs, and procedures. The Kenya project (GEF ID 3249) stresses that climate change adaptation must be mainstreamed into the country's broader development planning at various levels in order for the results of the project initiatives to be sustainable over time. The terminal evaluation of the Gambia project (GEF ID 3728) states that the early warning system created as part of the project needed to be embedded in a wider framework for climate adaptation planning and socio-economic development, in order for it to have long-term impacts. The Pacific regional project (GEF ID 3101) states that focusing on climate adaptation in isolation of non-climate drivers of exposure, risk, and vulnerability is not sufficient. To ensure long-term sustainability and preparedness, a holistic approach linking climate and non-climate drivers should be adopted.

MANAGEMENT ACTION RECORD

52. None of the decisions from the LDCF/SCCF Council will be tracked and reported on in MAR2015 because the one decision that was tracked in MAR2014 was graduated from the MAR due to significant adoption, and no new decisions from the LDCF/SCCF Council were required to be tracked.

ANNEX A: TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT REVIEW GUIDELINES

The assessments in the terminal evaluation reviews is based largely on the information presented in the terminal evaluation report. If insufficient information is presented in a terminal evaluation report to assess a specific issue such as, for example, quality of the project's monitoring and evaluation system or a specific aspect of sustainability, then the preparer of the terminal evaluation reviews briefly indicates so in that section and elaborate more if appropriate in the section of the review that addresses quality of report. If the review's preparer possesses other first-hand information such as, for example, from a field visit to the project, and this information is relevant to the terminal evaluation reviews, then it should be included in the reviews only under the heading "Additional independent information available to the reviewer." The preparer of the terminal evaluation review has taken into account all the independent relevant information when verifying ratings.

A.1 Criteria for Outcome Ratings

Based on the information provided in the terminal evaluation report, the terminal evaluation review makes an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved⁶, relevance of the project results, and the project's cost-effectiveness. The ratings on the outcomes of the project is based on performance on the following criteria:⁷

- a) **Relevance.** Were project outcomes consistent with the focal area/operational program strategies and country priorities? Explain.
- b) **Effectiveness.** Are project outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (that is, the original or modified project objectives)?
- c) **Efficiency.** Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project's cost/time versus outcomes equation compare to that of similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative, or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?

An overall rating is provided according to the achievement and shortcomings in the three criteria ranging from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory, and unable to assess.

⁶ *Objectives* are the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or program is expected to contribute (OECD DAC 2010).

⁷ *Outcomes* are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention; these may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD DAC 2010). For the GEF, environmental outcomes are the main focus.

The reviewer of the terminal evaluation provides a rating under each of the three criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency). Relevance of outcomes is rated on a binary scale: a 'satisfactory' or an 'unsatisfactory' rating is provided. If an 'unsatisfactory' rating has been provided on this criterion, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than 'unsatisfactory'. Effectiveness and Efficiency is rated as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** The project had no shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory.** The project had minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** The project had moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** The project had noticeable shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The project had major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** The project had severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

The calculation of the overall outcomes score of projects considers all three criteria, of which relevance criterion will be applied first - the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than 'unsatisfactory'. The second constraint that is applied is that the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the 'effectiveness' rating. The third constraint that is applied is that the overall rating may not be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Outcomes} = (b + c) \div 2$$

In case the average score is lower than the score obtained after application of the first two constraints, then the average score will become the overall score. The score is converted into an overall rating with mid values being rounded up upwards.

A.2 Impacts

Has the project achieved impacts, or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? Impacts will be understood to include positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention. They could be produced directly or indirectly and could be intended or unintended. The terminal evaluation review's preparer takes note of any mention of impacts, especially global environmental benefits, in the terminal evaluation report including the likelihood that the project outcomes will contribute to their achievement. Negative impacts mentioned in the terminal evaluation report should be noted and recorded in section 2 of the terminal evaluation reviews template in the subsection on "Issues that require follow-up." Although project impacts are to be described, they will not be rated.

A.3 Criteria for Sustainability Ratings

Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after completion of project implementation (GEF 2000). To assess sustainability, the terminal evaluation reviewer identifies and assesses key risks that could undermine continuation of benefits at the time of the evaluation. Some of these risks might include the absence of or inadequate financial resources, an enabling legal framework, commitment from key stakeholders, and enabling economy. The following four types of risk factors are assessed by the terminal evaluation reviewer to rate the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes: financial, sociopolitical, institutional frameworks and governance, and environmental.

The following questions provide guidance to assess if the factors are met:

- **Financial resources.** What is the likelihood that financial resources will be available to continue the activities that result in the continuation of benefits (income-generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project outcomes)?
- **Sociopolitical.** Are there any social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership is insufficient to allow for project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- **Institutional framework and governance.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency, and the required technical know-how, are in place.
- **Environmental.** Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits? The terminal evaluation should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, construction of dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project.

The reviewer provides a rating under each of the four criteria (financial resources, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental) as follows:

- **Likely.** There are no risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately likely.** There are moderate risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately unlikely.** There are significant risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.
- **Unlikely.** There are severe risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.

- **Unable to assess.** Unable to assess risk on this dimension.
- **Not applicable.** This dimension is not applicable to the project.

A.4 Criteria for Assessment of Quality of Project M&E Systems

GEF projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work program inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that measure results (such as environmental results) after project completion. Terminal evaluation reviews will include an assessment of the achievement and shortcomings of M&E systems.

- M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. Questions to guide this assessment include: In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient (sufficient and practical indicators identified; timely baseline; targets created; effective use of data collection; analysis systems including studies and reports; practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, and when for M&E activities)?
- M&E plan implementation.** The M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the project. Annual project reports were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings. The information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance. An M&E system should be in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure. Question to guide this assessment include: Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress toward project objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?
- Other questions.** This includes questions on funding and whether the M&E system was a good practice.
 - Was sufficient funding provided for M&E — in the budget included in the project document?
 - Was sufficient and timely funding provided – for M&E during project implementation?

- Can the project M&E system be considered – a good practice?

A number rating 1–6 is to be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation provides a rating under each of the three criteria (M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and M&E properly budgeted and funded) as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There was no project M&E system.

The rating for M&E during implementation will be the overall rating of the M&E system:

Rating on the Quality of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System = b

ANNEX B: NAPA IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS ALIGNMENT RATING

The LDCF was established in response to guidance received from the Seventh Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Marrakech in 2001, as one of its climate change adaptation (CCA) financing mechanisms. The LDCF is mandated by parties to the UNFCCC to, among others, provide support to the least developed countries' (LDCs) climate adaptation efforts, including the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), the implementation of NAPA priority projects in LDCs, as well as support for the preparation of the NAP process in eligible developing countries.

NAPAs provide a process for LDCs to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change – those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. The main content of NAPA Country Reports is a country-driven list of ranked priority adaptation activities and projects, designed to facilitate the development of proposals NAPA Implementation Projects.

For the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016 NAPA Country Reports as well as NAPA Implementation Projects have been reviewed and country priorities for adaptation activities have been identified for each. These priority adaptation activities fitted the following groupings:

- Agriculture (*including animal husbandry and fishery*)
- Climate information systems
- Disaster risk management
- Natural resource management & fragile ecosystems (*including mountain ecosystems, mangroves, forestry, wildlife, land degradation and management*)
- Water resource management
- Human health
- Infrastructural development
- Renewable energy / energy efficiency / energy security
- Climate education
- Tourism
- Climate smart urban areas
- Sustainable rural livelihoods (*other than agriculture and NRM*).

Most NAPA Country Reports provided a list of prioritized adaptation activities. For those that did not, sectoral prioritization was used by the reviewer to identify areas of priority adaptation activities. For those that did not prioritize activities nor provide an overview of priority sectors, the key environmental stresses and climatic vulnerabilities as identified in the NAPA Country Report were used by the reviewer to identify key areas of priority adaptation activities.

For each country, the scoring of NAPA Implementation Projects' key priority adaptation activities was compared against its NAPA Country Report scoring on the same. This comparison resulted in an alignment rating for each NAPA Implementation Project with the key priority areas as identified in the NAPA Country Report.

The reviewer rated NAPA Implementation Projects' alignment with key priority areas in the NAPA Country Reports as follows:

- **Very High:** The NAPA Implementation Project's outcome areas address primary priority areas as listed / outlined in the NAPA Country Report.
- **High:** The NAPA Implementation Project's outcome areas do not address primary priority areas as listed / outlined in the NAPA Country Report, but address other priorities that are outlined in the NAPA Country Report.
- **Low:** The NAPA Implementation Project might touch upon some priority areas (primary or other), but does not address specific priorities as outlined in the NAPA Country Report in a structural manner.
- **No Alignment:** Project does not address ANY of the priorities (primary or other) outline in the country NAPA report.
- **Unable to Assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

ANNEX C: GENDER RATING

The GEF Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) (GEF/C.47/09.Rev.01, 2014) operationalizes the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming (Policy: SD/PL/02, 2012). The Policy states that “the GEF Secretariat and GEF Partner Agencies shall strive to attain the goal of gender equality, the equal treatment of women and men, including the equal access to resources and services through its operations.” And “to accomplish this goal, the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies shall mainstream gender into their operations, including efforts to analyze systematically and address the specific needs of both women and men in GEF projects” (p.2).

The gender mainstreaming description as part of the GEAP glossary states that “Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities.” And “It [gender mainstreaming] is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated” (p.7).

The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality, and the goal of projects taking into account gender is to mainstream gender according to the above description. It was decided to ‘relax’ the gender mainstreaming description a little in the gender assessment and not aim for gender perspectives and gender equality being central to ‘all activities’, but to ‘most, if not all, activities’. The gender rating takes gender mainstreaming as the goal for projects, but has added an even higher goal of being gender transformative to identify those projects that go beyond gender mainstreaming and could be an example to others when it comes to gender.

Overall Performance Study 5 (OPS5) Technical Document 16 “Sub-study on the GEF’s Policy on Gender Mainstreaming” (IEO 2014) makes use of the following project rating categories for gender mainstreaming:

- **Serious Omission:** The project contained little or no reference to gender issues, but it should have included gender concerns because of the nature of the project.
- **Not Sufficient:** Gender issues were mentioned in the project documents, but no real attention was paid to these concerns in project activities.
- **Gender Mainstreamed:** Gender issues were integrated into the project.
- **Not Relevant:** Gender and social issues were not considered and were not expected to be considered in the project.

In line with the gender rationale of the UNDP Gender Marker, it was questioned whether it is appropriate to have initiatives where gender equality and/or women’s empowerment issues can be considered ‘not applicable’, or ‘not relevant’. We kept the ‘not relevant’ category, but with the caveat that in practice it is rare for projects to not have any

gender relevance, given they then would be assumed to have no relevance to humans. The rating category 'gender blind' was added for those projects that do not demonstrate any gender awareness, but should. Gender aware and gender sensitive are chosen as categorizations, because their connotation is seen as more positive than the categories used in the earlier mentioned sub-study.

The reviewer provided a gender rating for NAPA Implementation Projects as follows:

- **Gender-blind:** Project does not demonstrate awareness of the set of roles, rights, responsibilities, and power relations associated with being male or female.
- **Gender-aware:** Project recognizes the economic / social / political roles, rights, entitlements, responsibilities, obligations and power relations socially assigned to men and women, but might work around existing gender differences and inequalities or does not sufficiently show how it addresses gender differences and promotes gender equalities.
- **Gender-sensitive:** Project adopts gender sensitive methodologies (a gender analysis is undertaken, gender disaggregated data are collected, gender sensitive indicators are integrated in monitoring and evaluation) to address gender differences and promote gender equality.
- **Gender-mainstreamed:** Project ensures that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to most, if not all, activities. It assesses the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels.
- **Gender-transformative:** Project goes beyond gender-mainstreaming and facilitates a 'critical examination' of gender norms, roles, and relationships; strengthens or creates systems that support gender equity; and/or questions and changes gender norms and dynamics.
- **Not gender-relevant:** Gender plays no role in the planned intervention. *(Note that in practice it is rare for projects to not have any gender relevance. If a project touches upon the lives of people, either directly or indirectly, it has gender relevance).*