

Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: Sahel and Sudan-Guinea Savanna Biomes

AUDIT TRAIL

Stakeholder comments on the draft report circulated on April 30, 2020

May 12, 2020

Author	Topic / Paragraph	Comment	Reply and actions taken
World Bank	General Comments	Hypotheses regarding sustainability factors (rejected during analysis as well as proved to be correct). The logic behind the sustainability analysis could be deducted – to a certain extent - from the project review template (volume 2), but it would more informative for the reader if this logic were presented in the evaluation report. The approach paper does not describe this logic either. In particular, the conclusions of the evaluation regarding the determinants of project outcomes' sustainability are very useful and well presented. They certainly go beyond the previously understood factors of sustainability (financial and institutional). However, it would be helpful to know what hypotheses regarding the determinants of sustainability were used and which of them proved wrong.	No action taken. As explained in the approach paper and in the methodology section of the main report, we applied a purposive evaluative enquiry approach starting from aggregate analyses and deep diving based on the results of these analyses. The logic is not based on pre-determined hypotheses or sustainability factors that needed to be proven true or false. Based on what we knew already from previous evaluations, we designed the protocol with the most comprehensive list of assumptions on possible factors (plus an open-ended option) as this is the only way to conduct a thorough desk review on a large project dataset. The real deep dive has been done in the country studies where we applied an open, qualitative enquiry approach to data gathering to capture any possible factor having played a role in the observed sustainability at the time of the mission.
World Bank	General Comments	The nexus between environmental challenges and climate change adaptation. The statement that the environmental challenges in the biomes are driven largely by climate change is not very clear. Many of the environmental challenges appear to be the result of productive activities and human/institutional neglect to	Accepted: '...the main driver' replaced with '...a major driver'. Climate change is the result of human productive activities, and it certainly is a major driver of global importance for most environmental challenges in the biomes. Local populations pay a much higher price for the consequences of climate change than what they should and

		the environment. A related point is that most of GEF support to the countries in the biomes focused on climate change, with 78 percent of this support addressing adaptation. In this context, it would be helpful to understand if the adaptation support went to projects comprising activities at the nexus of environmentally sustainable economy and adaptation when the same actions are needed to address both objectives. For example, it could be land degradation projects with adaptation co-benefits or climate smart agriculture that improves farm profitability. What is the observed overlap between adaptation and environmental protection in projects?	have no other choice but to adapt. On the related point, the adaptation portfolio, supported almost entirely by SDCF and SCCF funding, focused on building resilience and adaptation co-benefits in projects that also targeted land degradation and climate smart agriculture. In this portfolio there is some overlap between adaptation and environmental protection and resilience. For example, 40 percent of adaptation projects included alternative income generation and diversification activities. This issue will be explored further in future evaluations.
World Bank	General Comments	Balancing needs between the environment and development as a determinant of project sustainability. This topic seems to be wider than what is emphasized in the evaluation under the alternative livelihoods and sustainable local development. It seems that many GEF projects recognize the importance of the connections between economic development and environmental sustainability at different levels and go beyond community and local activities and address market creation, policy mainstreaming, environmentally sustainable export, and alike. While these types of interventions are mentioned in the evaluation when discussing the mechanisms of broader adoption (volume 1, p. 22), they are not included in the factors of sustainability. Would it be possible to do it based on collected evidence? There is a possibility that, to some extent, sustainability was achieved as a result of system-wide interventions in the focus areas. For example, in Nigeria World Bank's interventions through Fadama I-III projects with a similar set of interventions could contribute to the sustainability of the GEF investment.	No action taken. We agree that the topic spans from the national to the local level, and that the evaluation focuses on the latter more than the former. However, we disagree that many GEF projects recognize the connection between environment and development. Data show that only 15 percent ($n = 52$) of projects in the relevance cohort ($n = 378$) had some mention of trade-offs and/or synergies at the design stage (paragraph 76). The broader adoption analysis is based on a relatively small sample of 67 terminal evaluations of projects completed between 2007 and 2014. Even when looking at such a small sample, available data show rather low levels of broader adoption in the biomes. We don't think it's possible to say more than what is already there based on the collected evidence.

World Bank	Editorial and formatting	A minor point: the executive summary does not seem to emphasize the main points of the report (outcomes, conclusions, lessons) but rather describes the content. It would be fair to the readers who want to quickly understand the evaluation outcomes by reading the ES to focus it on the main take-away points.	Accepted: the main take-away messages have been boldened at the beginning of each paragraph in the executive summary.
UNIDO	Factual correction	During our review of the main report, we noticed that in <i>Annex 1: List of Projects Reviewed</i> , specifically on page 88, project with ID 9080 is attributed to UNIDO. However, this is a project being implemented by UNEP. Thank you very much for correcting this.	Corrected in Annex 1.