

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, APR 2016

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## 1. Project Data

Summary project data	
<b>GEF project ID</b>	3376
<b>GEF Agency project ID</b>	00073331
<b>GEF Replenishment Phase</b>	GEF 4
<b>Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)</b>	UNDP
<b>Project name</b>	Private Public Partnership for Sustainable Land Management in the Shire River Basin
<b>Country/Countries</b>	Malawi
<b>Region</b>	Africa
<b>Focal area</b>	Land Degradation
<b>Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives</b>	LD-2 - Supporting sustainable forest management in production landscapes  LD-3 – Investing in innovative approaches in SLM
<b>Executing agencies involved</b>	Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mines
<b>NGOs/CBOs involvement</b>	Coordination Union for the Rehabilitation of Environment (CURE); Community Partners for Relief and Development (COPRED); Development Aid People to People (DAPP); Nature Conservation & Humanitarian Support Organization (NOCOHUSA) and Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM)
<b>Private sector involvement</b>	Blantyre Water Board (BWB); Southern Region Water Board (SRWB); Kawandama Hills Ltd ( beneficiary)
<b>CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)</b>	4/13/2010
<b>Effectiveness date / project start</b>	6/10/2010
<b>Expected date of project completion (at start)</b>	6/30/2014
<b>Actual date of project completion</b>	12/31/2015

Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
<b>Project Preparation Grant</b>	GEF funding	0.125	NA
	Co-financing	0.1	NA
<b>GEF Project Grant</b>		2.07	2.07
<b>Co-financing</b>	IA own	0.6	0.85
	Government	0.4	0.11
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector	0.45	0
	NGOs/CSOs	0.99	0
<b>Total GEF funding</b>		2.19	NA
<b>Total Co-financing</b>		2.45	NA
<b>Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)</b>		4.64	NA
Terminal evaluation/review information			
<b>TE completion date</b>		April 27, 2016	
<b>Author of TE</b>		Dr. Floris Deodatus and Dr. Kenneth Wiyo	
<b>TER completion date</b>		February, 2017	
<b>TER prepared by</b>		Ritu Kanotra	
<b>TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)</b>		Molly Fahey Watts	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	S	NR	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		L	NR	MU
M&E Design		MS	NR	MS
M&E Implementation		MS	NR	MS
Quality of Implementation		MS	NR	MS
Quality of Execution		MS	NR	MS
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report		-	NR	S

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

As defined in the Project Document(PD), the Global Environmental Objective of the project is that ‘Sustainable Land Management provides the basis for economic development, food security and sustainable livelihoods while restoring the ecological integrity of the Shire River Basin’.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

As per the Project Document, the Development Objective of the project is to ‘reduce land degradation in the Shire River Basin through improved institutional, policy and Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES) arrangements and improved food security’.

The project has four main components namely:

- 1. The policy, regulatory and institutional arrangement support sustainable land management in the Shire River Basin.**

Alignment of sector policies improved; SRB Development Authority formed improve coordination of SLM, environmental management and development in basin

- 2. Private Public Partnerships (PPP) providing financial incentives for SLM 9 through green water credits and sustainable charcoal).**

Green Water Credits Scheme operationalized to provide financial incentive for SLM; Sustainable charcoal providing additional income as an incentive for sustainable woodlands management

- 3. Crop insurance providing the basis for increased access to credits and use of weather information in decision making.**

Index-based crop insurance piloted using lessons learnt during the initial pilot to refine the scheme; improving weather data generation and use in decision making

- 4. Knowledge and skills for SLM provided to resource managers at all levels.**

Application of knowledge to support SLM implementation by farmers and rehabilitation of specifically degraded communal lands; support to increase forest and plantation forest productivity; a participatory M&E system designed and used to monitor ecosystems health and improvement in livelihoods and increased socio-economic demographic income in the project area.

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or other activities during implementation?

No

#### 4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

Please refer to the GEF Terminal Evaluation Review Guidelines for detail on the criteria for ratings.

Relevance can receive either a Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory rating. For Effectiveness and Cost efficiency, a six-point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess. Sustainability ratings are assessed on a four-point scale: Likely=no or negligible risk; Moderately Likely=low risk; Moderately Unlikely=substantial risks; Unlikely=high risk. In assessing a Sustainability rating please note if, and to what degree, sustainability of project outcomes is threatened by financial, sociopolitical, institutional/governance, or environmental factors.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE rates relevance of the project as ‘highly satisfactory’. Based on the information in the Project Document and the TE, this TER rates the relevance to be ‘satisfactory’.

The project was based in Shire River Basin that covers 3.1 million ha, directly and indirectly supporting the livelihood of over 5.5 million people in the southern region of Malawi. The basin is of critical economic importance and supplies water to major cities, supporting significant artisanal fishery and supplies irrigation water for valuable crops. However, land degradation is the key factor responsible for the decline in water resources in the Basin. This project seeks to address the problem of land degradation through the development of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) and practices and addressing key barriers: weaknesses in the policy, planning and institutional environment that influences SLM; weak financial incentives for adoption of SLM; weak capacities and inadequate skills at all levels required for promoting and /or adopting SLM. The project is also consistent with national policies and priorities as the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II mentions sustainable environmental management and food security as key areas of focus for Malawi.

The project was formulated in the frame of the GEF focal area of land Degradation which aims at arresting and reversing current global trends in land degradation, specifically desertification and deforestation and addresses all focal area objectives of LD1 (Maintain and improve flow of agro-

ecosystem services sustaining the livelihoods of local communities); LD2 (Generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services in drylands, including sustaining livelihoods of forest dependent people); LD3 (Reduce Pressure on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape) and LD4 (Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in SLM/SFM/NRM).

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE assesses the effectiveness of the project to be ‘satisfactory’. However, after reviewing the evidence in the TE narrative, this TE assigns it a rating of ‘moderately satisfactory’. Overall, the project contributed to an increase in the knowledge and capacity for Sustainable Land Management (SLM) at all the levels; promoted integrated river basin management; reduction of environmental degradation in pilot sites and provided important inputs in policy and legal frameworks. But it failed to achieve some of the critical outputs that impact sustainability of the project outcomes such as: 1. Establishing the Shire Development Authority that was meant to increase coordination and harmonization of policies for better management; 2. Establishing Green Water Scheme and sustainable charcoal that was supposed to provide strong motivation for SLM amongst farmers while reducing siltation and emissions.

The project achieved the objective of bringing an area of 158,654ha under SLM as against target of over 800,000ha. As per the TE, the current project objectives were too ambitious to be achieved within the given time frame and budget of the project, with strong dependency on unrealized co-funding. The key innovative components like, crop insurance, Green Water Credit Scheme and Sustainable Charcoal, would have required, what the TE describes as, ‘higher level champions’ to push the agenda further through different channels for policy development.

**Outcome 1: Policy, regulatory and institutional support for SLM**

The TE assesses achievements under this outcome as ‘moderately satisfactory’ and this TER also assigns the same rating to Outcome 1. The project contributed to the review and development of policies supporting SLM and prepared the report on policy sector review for incorporating SLM in the Shire River Basin and development of an institutional framework for sustainable land management. However, a major output planned under this outcome - the development of Shire River Basin Authority to provide governance mechanisms to mainstream SLM in the Basin, was not achieved as considered too ambitious to be achieved through this project. The project was on target as it facilitated in establishing legislation and institutional arrangements for the effective implementation of SLM under 4 policies – energy policy, fisheries policy, wildlife policy and forest policy. But, another target related to legalization of charcoal rules and regulations was partially achieved, as the National Charcoal Strategy was prepared and in the process of adoption but not yet at a stage where, as anticipated in the project document, taxes to Malawi Revenue Authority could be realized.

**Outcome 2: Private Public Partnerships providing financial incentives for SLM**

The TE assesses achievements under this outcome as ‘moderately satisfactory’ and this TER also assigns the same rating to Outcome 2. The Green Water Credit (GWC) scheme to be developed and made operational by the end of year 3, one of the outputs under this component, couldn’t be fully achieved. The scheme was developed through conducting a feasibility study on the potential for GWC system in Malawi and 5 pilots were identified for implementation of the scheme with the involvement of NGO CURE for testing GWC in 2 pilot sites. But, overall the progress in this area was much slower than planned, also because of delayed funding to CURE. The TE notes that the project missed the opportunity as several buyers were interested to cooperate in GWC pilot areas. Another target of 50% of charcoal producers adopting sustainable charcoal production was also partially achieved. As per the TE, reluctance of the government to accept sustainable charcoal as legal and taxable good, was the main cause for not realizing the project targets. The project was successful in setting up three efficient Kilns in Chkangawa Forest with a private company, licensed to produce sustainable charcoal from Eucalyptus wood. Additional kilns were also constructed but awaiting government’s approval. Overall, the sustainable charcoal development suffered due to various delays and reasons such as lack of agreement on sustainable wood source in the area and inadequate technical support from the project’s technical advisor on developing other aspects of the value chain as well as the mindset among various policy makers who believed in complete ban on charcoal as an effective solution to deforestation.

**Outcome 3: Crop insurance providing the basis for increased access to credits and use of weather information in decision making.**

The TE assesses progress under this component as ‘unsatisfactory’ and this TER concurs with the rating. A draft study on crop insurance was completed in May, 2015. But this report was delayed and other critical details related to the insurance couldn’t be worked out due to which the crop insurance could not be operationalized before the end of the project. Moreover, as the TE notes, *‘crop insurance for small holders is a relatively young approach and would need more time to prove its success In Africa’*. The project reports and people consulted during the TE confirmed that an automatic weather station was purchased and installed but not functional due to configuration issues. However, as per the TE, the evaluation team couldn’t find the station during field inspection. This issue was further investigated following the TE, because of the which the station was finally installed at Neno on 14 February 2016.

**Outcome 4: Knowledge and skills for SLM provided to resource managers at all levels.**

The TE provides a rating of ‘highly satisfactory’ for achievements under this outcome. Based on the evidence in the TE narrative, this TER provides a rating of ‘satisfactory’ achievement. The TE refers to the achievements reported in 2015 PIR, of at least 77% of the beneficiaries who adopted 3 practices (target of 3-5 improved practices) in the SLM impact areas, with various SLM practices contributing to reduction of soil erosion by over 40% (against the target of 30%) and consequently soil fertility increased in 150,000 ha of land covered under the project. As per the TE, the project facilitated various trainings to the land users, technical officers and district staff on SLM approaches and practices, with an aim to extend and upscale SLM practices to the entire basin. The target of 20% increase in coverage of urban forests couldn’t be achieved within the project duration. There is also no reporting in the TE on the target of increase in extent of improvement (target of 5%) in forest under protected areas.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE assigns rating to the efficiency of the project as ‘satisfactory’. Based on the evidence in the TE, this TER assess the efficiency of the project to be ‘moderately satisfactory’. The project used existing government structures for management and implementation of the project activities, reducing cost that would have otherwise been spent in creating parallel management structure, that also helped in build capacity and continuity within the government. But, as per the TE, the project management lacked the experience and administrative capacity to follow and meet UNDP financial and administrative procedures, resulting in non-compliance of reports and delay in funding. Late and erratic disbursement of funds from the Project Management Unit (PMU) to the partners affected timely execution of the activities. For instance, seasonal activities related to forestry and agriculture, such as land preparation and planting, could not be implemented during the appropriate season due to delay in funds, losing a full year of implementation, affecting the overall progress of the project. The TE also notes that another activity - the weather station for a total of USD 12, 751 that was to be installed in Neno, and was shown as installed, although not functional, as per the department reports, couldn’t be found on the site when visited by the evaluators during the TE. The issue was further investigated by UNDP after the evaluation mission, only after which the station was installed, reflecting poor monitoring/communication and fund management by the concerned authorities.

The TE notes that the project was also under budgeted in relation to its overall objectives, which resulted in smaller areas that could be brought under SLM. The project also had limited communication budget that reduced project’s visibility and potential for replication. Delayed decision making and poor monitoring of outcomes and impacts further hampered adaptive management. However, the TE notes that despite these challenges, the district, NGO and field staff tried to find practical solutions such as ‘buffer funding’ from other sources, to keep project activities on track. The TE also notes that field activities were implemented in a cost-effective manner that provided a cushion against all the challenges faced by the project. The project also benefitted from the multi-sectoral involvement of various departments at the district level.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Moderately unlikely
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The TE assigns the sustainability of the project as ‘satisfactory’. However, based on the evidence in the TE narrative, this TER assigns it a rating of ‘moderately unlikely’. The TE notes that the current government funding to support SLM in Malawi is limited, with the government staff mostly dependent on additional funds for operation. The project fell short in terms of engaging and mobilizing the private sector investments as well as making changes in the existing legal and institutional structures to support SLM. Unless, the pending issues under the project are taken up through future support from the donor community and the government, the sustainability of the project is assessed to be ‘moderately unlikely’

**a. Financial sustainability: Moderately unlikely**

The TE provides a rating to the financial risks to the sustainability of the project as ‘moderately likely’. However, based on the evidence in the TE, this TER assigns it a rating of ‘moderately unlikely’. The project was supposed to generate some funds for its sustainability. For instance, some of the initiatives taken under the project, like sustainable charcoal and Green Water Credits, were expected to increase source or income at the local level as well as for government coffers through taxation, that could be used for further improving forest management, but couldn’t be fully achieved. The project was also expected to provide a mechanism for the private sector to invest in SLM and in turn ensure financial sustainability, but there is no evidence in the TE about mobilization of funds from private sector. Some of the interventions from the project may, however, benefit from continued support through existing and new NRM projects (e.g., PDRP, COVAMS II, MCA and SRBMP) in Malawi.

**b. Socio-political sustainability: Moderately unlikely**

The TE assigns a rating to the socio-political aspect of the sustainability as ‘moderately likely’. Overall, the SLM project was designed in the frame of MGDS II and other existing NRM and development policies of the Government of Malawi. The project had good support from various government departments as well as of the village structures and traditional authorities at the local level. But as the TE notes, some of the initiatives under the project suffered due to lack of political will and willingness of the policy makers to support these issues. For instance, the development and implementation of policy recommendations on crop insurance, Green Water Credit Schemes and sustainable charcoal, responsible for substantiality of the project, required more support at the political level. The project also suffered due to less than expected co-financing being realized from the government. The TE also notes that some of the initiatives under the project like crop insurance, will take time to develop within the context of Africa and would need more support from the government and donors in the future.

**c. Institutional sustainability: Moderately likely**

The TE assigns it a rating of ‘moderately likely’ and this TER agrees with the assigned rating. The project contributed to building the capacity of the government staff to continue SLM interventions at all levels, but as per the TE, ‘their frequent transfers can reduce the use of skilled staff’ in future. Delayed or non-accomplishment of creation of Shire River Basin Authority (SRBA) and essential enabling legal frameworks (particularly for GWC scheme and sustainable charcoal) by the project forms a risk to further replication and upscaling of SLM applications in the basin. As per the TE, the development of the institutional set up for the Shire River Basin is now taken care of by the World Bank funded project. So, the project would need the support of the government and other donors in dealing with the pending legal issues and set up the institutional basis for sustaining SLM activities in the Shire River Basin.

**d. Environmental sustainability: Unable to assess**

**The TE assigns it a rating of ‘moderately unlikely’. But this TER is unable to provide any ratings to the environmental risks to sustainability as the TE lacks any evidence to support the ratings.**



## 5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

5.1 Co-financing. To what extent was the reported co-financing essential to the achievement of GEF objectives? If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for it? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

As per the expenditure report till October, 2015, the actual realized UNDP co-funding to the project was higher than what was originally committed in the CEO endorsed document (USD 850,761 as against actual commitment of USD 600,000). But the co-funding realized from the government was lower than initially planned (USD 114,233 as against commitment of USD 400,000). Co-financing from other sources such as ESCOM (Electricity Supply Coop of Malawi); Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust; Blantyre Water Board and Mulanie Mountain Trust, didn't materialize during the project. As per the TE, 'strong dependency on unreliable funding', was one of the contributing factors that hampered the project to achieve its targets as well as its sustainability. Since significant ambitions of the project were based on about 85% co-funding, the project 'underestimated risk regarding the realization of these ambitions' (TE, 22).

5.2 Project extensions and/or delays. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability? If so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

As per the TE, the project was signed off on 13 July 2010. It was planned to close on 30 June 2014, but was extended firstly to 30 June 2015 and later to 31 December 2015. The project experienced delays mostly in the early years due to late and erratic disbursement of funds that in turn was due to insufficient capacity of the administrative staff to manage funds flow for the project of this nature. Lack of compliance of financial reports from the implementing partner, was cited as one of the main reasons for delays in funds from UNDP Country Office. This impacted timing and planning of certain activities in the field, particularly seasonal activities related to forestry and agriculture, that were delayed for almost a year.

The work of the NGOs responsible for carrying out some of the project activities in the field, was also impacted as they had to interrupt their activities when waiting for funds to cover the activity costs. For instance, part of the reason that NGO CURE couldn't operationalize GWC pilots in the field was attributed to the delayed funding. Similarly, late start of the consultancy delayed the study report on crop insurance completed in May 2015 because of which the crop insurance could not be operationalized as the project ended in December 2015. Furthermore, due to limited available time, the project failed to follow up on some of the policy recommendations that emerged from these studies, that would have created the enabling environment required for replication and upscaling of the project activities in future.

5.3 Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability? Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links:

The project had a ‘moderate’ level of support from the government for implementation of the activities. Overall, the SLM project was run with the support of the government at national, district and local levels. At national level, the Government of Malawi provided in kind support to the project through provision of office space, utilities and staff. Project benefited from the synergy between various departments at the district level, that were involved in the implementation of SLM related activities. But, certain components of the project, like sustainable charcoal production, suffered from lack of political will to support these issues. Also, limited administrative capacity of the staff at the district level resulted in delay of some of the activities and low co-financing contribution from the government also hampered the progress of the project.

## 6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory=no shortcomings in this M&E component; Satisfactory=minor shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Satisfactory=moderate shortcomings in this M&E component; Moderately Unsatisfactory=significant shortcomings in this M&E component; Unsatisfactory=major shortcomings in this M&E component; Highly Unsatisfactory=there were no project M&E systems.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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This TER agrees with the rating assigned by the TE to the M&E design at entry as ‘moderately satisfactory’. The project document defines the monitoring and evaluation framework, clearly stating the type of M&E activities to be undertaken, responsible parties and time frames. Baseline indicators were determined at the start of the project, with tracking scheme through SMART indicators of impact of the project. The M&E plan suggests multiple tools and sources of information/verification like participatory ecological monitoring and socio-economic monitoring reports for obtaining information against various indicators. The PD recommended the inception workshop be used to review and agree on the indicators, targets and their means of verification, with details on reporting and M&E requirements, in line with the first annual work plan.

However, most of the activities in the M&E work plan were not separately budgeted as mainstreamed into the work plans and resources dedicated to achieve the three outcomes of the project. As described in the next section, monitoring of the project suffered due to insufficient budget to carry out such a diverse set of monitoring activities as required for this project.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Moderately unsatisfactory
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The TE assesses the M&E implementation to be ‘moderately satisfactory’. But, based on the evidence in the TE, this TER assigns it a rating of ‘moderately unsatisfactory’

As per the TE, ‘The inception workshop organized at the beginning of the project was to provide, amongst others, a detailed overview of reporting, monitoring and evaluation requirements and to agree on a M&E work plan and budget, however, the inception reported didn’t include a section on M&E’. The TE notes that the project faced difficulties in measuring impact indicators due to absence of an elaborate monitoring implementation plan. Although the monitoring matrix was prepared during the start of the project but it didn’t lead to a sound monitoring action plan as required in the Project Document (PD). The TE notes issues related to insufficient or late data collection – for instance, there was no information on impact indicators like ‘silt reduction in Blantyre and ESCOM water stations’ and information on ‘improvement of soil organic matter’ was collected only towards the end of the project. Moreover, the data collection was based on quantification of interventions instead of measuring and recording the impact. For instance, tracking of the impact indicator – ‘increased of household welfare’ didn’t involve monitoring the percentage increase of income and reduction of days of food insecurity, but estimates were based on number of households reached through the project. As per the TE, tracking and measurement of some of the impact indicators would have required hiring of experts, which was not done by the project.

However, monitoring of day to day field activities was carried out by the district staff, with the project manager, UNDP staff and technical advisors frequently visiting the field for supervision. The TE notes that activity planning of the project was based on a consistent reporting and planning procedure at the district level, with reports sent to the Steering Committee meetings. Information from these reports formed a basis for adaptive management during the project. For instance, information from these reports helped in identification of project hotspots to focus interventions. But, MTR conducted at the end of 2013/beginning 2014 was not approved by the UNDP office, which as per the TE, provided some useful recommendations, like the need to reinforce the PMU with administrative assistance, need to measure/monitor soil fertility and erosion etc., which were not addressed by the project. As per the TE, the MTR still had status of a ‘draft report’ in view of multiple imperfections noted in the report.

This TER assigns it a rating of ‘moderately unsatisfactory’, since the project failed to develop a monitoring matrix or a monitoring plan that would have helped a more systematic gathering of information and measuring indicators towards the impact of the project, although district offices played the role, to the best of their capacities and within the time and budget available, to collect data and report it to the Steering Committee to facilitate day to day management of the project.

## 7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation includes the quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by implementing agency(s) to execution agencies throughout project

implementation. Quality of Execution covers the effectiveness of the executing agency(s) in performing its roles and responsibilities. In both instances, the focus is upon factors that are largely within the control of the respective implementing and executing agency(s). A six point rating scale is used (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory), or Unable to Assess.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

7.1 Quality of Project Implementation	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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The TE assesses the quality of project implementation to be ‘moderately satisfactory’ to which this TER also concurs. The project was implemented under UNDP NEX procedures by the UNDP Malawi as the GEF implementing agency. UNDP had an important role to play in the monitoring and supervision of the project as part of the Outcome Board (UNDP and MFPEd) and Steering Committee (UNDP, MNREE, NEMA). UNDP co-funding contribution was also higher than originally committed in the project budget. The UNDP country office provided oversight, monitoring and supervision role to the project. But, stagnation of funds at the level of UNDP, was mentioned by stakeholders interviewed during the TE, most often as a cause of implementation delay. The evaluators noted that the cause of delay from UNDP was due to lack of compliance of financial reports from the implementing partner. The UNDP procedures didn’t allow the release of funds when expenditures of the previous funding were not properly reported. But, the project activities suffered due to lack of funds during the time lost in reporting and approval of funds.

The TE records few instances when UNDP played an active role in the adaptive management of the project. For instance, the decision to employ NGOs in the implementation of SLM covered by additional UNDP funding helped in boosting the progress in the field. But, as per the TE, the UNDP regional office didn’t approve the MTR conducted during the project and some of the useful recommendations from the MTR, that would have benefitted the project, were not followed up or acted upon during the project.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Moderately satisfactory
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This TER agrees with the rating assigned by the TE to the quality of project execution as ‘moderately satisfactory’.

The SLM project used the existing government structures for the management and implementation of the project limiting the use of PMUs in the project management. This was as per the policy of the Government of Malawi to build capacity and continuity within the government departments. The project used decentralized government structures and established partnerships at national and district levels with other government departments (Department of Land Resources and Conservation, Forestry, Fisheries, Energy and Climate Change and Meteorological Services) and worked closely with Village

Development Committees at Group Village levels. The Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) played a critical role in successful collaboration and integrated effort between multiple sectors, government, non-government and private sector involved in SLM. As per the TE, 'collaboration between the different project partners at the district level was also smooth and respectful' (TE, 28).

As per the TE, while the day-to-day management of the project was smooth, the project lacked 'leadership' to deal with issues at the strategic level, particularly concerning the shortcomings in the project design and operational set. Also, administrative staff at the district level lacked the experience and capacity to deal adequately with UNDP financial and administrative procedures that led to delays in approvals of reports, which was one of the main factors for erratic and ill-timed fund flow considerably hampering the performance of the project. Training of the administrative staff was also undermined by high turnover amongst the staff during the project.

## 8. Assessment of Project Impacts

**Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.**

8.1 Environmental Change. Describe the changes in environmental stress and environmental status that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

As per the TE, a total of 150,000 hectare SLM coverage over a period of 4 years contributed to an estimated mitigation of 225,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub>. Also, the soil erosion was reduced by 40% over an area of 150,000 hectares through increase in the ground cover from grass and trees and effective bushfire control and natural regeneration in the basin.

8.2 Socioeconomic change. Describe any changes in human well-being (income, education, health, community relationships, etc.) that occurred by the end of the project. Include both quantitative and qualitative changes documented, sources of information for these changes, and how project activities contributed to or hindered these changes. Also, include how contextual factors have contributed to or hindered these changes.

The TE includes information on a range of income generating activities and reports that almost 45% of households improved income through alternative livelihoods promoted through the projects in the pilot districts. More than 70% of households adopted 2-3 SLM practices, resulting in higher yields for maize (averaging 1.8 Mt/hectare).

8.3 Capacity and governance changes. Describe notable changes in capacities and governance that can lead to large-scale action (both mass and legislative) bringing about positive environmental change. "Capacities" include awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, and environmental monitoring systems, among others. "Governance" refers to decision-making processes, structures and systems,

including access to and use of information, and thus would include laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc. Indicate how project activities contributed to/ hindered these changes, as well as how contextual factors have influenced these changes.

#### a) Capacities

As per the TE, more than 70% of land users (particularly women and leading farmers) and over 80% of the technical officers improved their SLM skills through training under the project. Furthermore, the project provided training to the district staff (75%) on Land Use Planning and Participatory Forestry Management and information on SLM approaches and practices was documented with the aim to extend and upscale the SLM practices to ultimately cover the entire basin.

#### b) Governance

The TE notes that the project had a significant contribution to governance through an extensive review of the policy framework on natural resource management. This review resulted in important contributions to new policies on forestry, charcoal, agricultural policy and energy as well as related legislation. Natural resources governance was also enhanced by the development of bylaws at the community and district level in the field of SLM and bush fire management. However, there are no further details available on the specific policies that were impacted by the project.

8.4 Unintended impacts. Describe any impacts not targeted by the project, whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects. Indicate the factors that contributed to these unintended impacts occurring.

None.

8.5 Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale. Identify any initiatives (e.g. technologies, approaches, financing instruments, implementing bodies, legal frameworks, information systems) that have been mainstreamed, replicated and/or scaled up by government and other stakeholders by project end. Include the extent to which this broader adoption has taken place, e.g. if plans and resources have been established but no actual adoption has taken place, or if market change and large-scale environmental benefits have begun to occur. Indicate how project activities and other contextual factors contributed to these taking place. If broader adoption has not taken place as expected, indicate which factors (both project-related and contextual) have hindered this from happening.

None.

## 9. Lessons and recommendations

9.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects.

The TE lists down a set of good practices that can be applied to other similar GEF projects are:

1. Adopting a multi-sector approach for the implementation of SLM interventions leads to synergy between the efforts of different sectors and limits the risk of conflicting objectives
2. Concentrating interventions at catchment level improves synergy and facilitates learning and improving performance by measuring outcome
3. Promoting natural forest regeneration is a cost-effective approach to maximizing ecosystem benefits
4. Using existing Malawian experience with PES applied in wildlife conservation for the development of Green Water Credit Schemes
5. Promoting sustainable charcoal to counter the pressure on forest resources by engaging actors along the chain to gain control over the sector
6. Promoting short term economic gains like bee-keeping and fish farming while protecting forests in the long run to balance short term and long term economic benefits to release pressure
7. Development project buying seedlings locally from the community to contribute income to the community and to avoid unfair competition
8. Promoting low cost CA and Gully Reclamation techniques to control gully erosion and improve soil fertility.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

1. All technical reports of the project, particularly the consultancy and best practices reports, need finishing touch to achieve professional quality document; need to be stored systematically and relevant documents/reports should be widely circulated amongst partners.
2. A workshop should be organized before the end of the project with the stakeholders and related projects with the objective of sharing knowledge and lessons learned and identification and elaboration of opportunities for follow-up and upscaling through government and other donor funded projects.
3. Incomplete activities to be finalized through identification of resources for testing charcoal kilns which had been constructed in the project area and start GWC pilot through continuing to involve NGOs like CURE that were already involved in the project.
4. The implementation of UNDP's Post Disaster Recovery Projects offer some opportunities to facilitate smooth completion and/or handing over of interventions.

## 10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF IEO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The TE adequately covers an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project. However, it was also constrained by the lack of monitoring of some of the impact indicators by the project. For instance, project monitoring and evaluation system didn't track and quantify 'change in agricultural productivity' because of farmers adopting 2-3 SLM practices on their field.	<b>S</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report is internally consistent and the ratings are well substantiated, except in a few sections, like the 'quality of project execution', which was neither rated nor delved into detail in the report.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The TE provides ratings to the sustainability using a different scale and was lacking adequate evidence to assess different aspects of sustainability or exit strategy. However, the TER used findings from other sections of the report to assess sustainability of the project.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learned were drawn from the findings presented in the main body of the report	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Yes	<b>S</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE covers specific issues related to the implementation of M&E system but doesn't provide details on the frequency of reporting, adequacy and quality of different reports generated through the project and its usage in adaptive management. Although, it covers in detail the issues related to MTR.	<b>MS</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>S</b>



11. Note any additional sources of information used in the preparation of the terminal evaluation report (excluding PIRs, TEs, and PADs).