1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		4434	
GEF Agency project ID		612634	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		FAO	
Project name		Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities Using Micro Watershed Approaches to Climate Change and Variability to Attain Sustainable Food Security	
Country/Countries		Cambodia	
Region		Asia, Middle East & Pacific	
Focal area		Climate Change	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		SO-2 (Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and Sectors) LDCF/SCCF Strategic Objectives: CCA-1 (Reducing vulnerability), CCA-2 (Increasing adaptive capacity), CCA-3 (Adaptation technology transfer)	
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework		Standalone	
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID		N/A	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Agriculture Forests and Fisheries (MAFF) and Ministry of Environment in collaboration with Ministry of Water Resources Management (MoWRAM)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		NGOs: consultation	
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises)[1]		Farmer groups, smallholder farmers, women and female-headed households, agricultural input companies, phone service companies: beneficiaries	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date		3/6/2014	
Effectiveness date / project start date		6/9/2014	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		6/30/2019	
Actual date of project completion		9/30/2020	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US $M)	**At Completion (US $M)**
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		5.174	5.174
Co-financing	IA own	3.330	3.373
	Government	0.654	0.474
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	21.744[2]	21.920[3]
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CBOs		

[1] Defined as all micro, small, and medium-scale profit-oriented entities, including individuals and informal entities, that earn income through the sale of goods and services rather than a salary. (GEF IEO 2022)

[2] This amount includes a USD 17 million loan from the Asian Development Bank and a grant of USD 4.744 million from the European Union (Final PIR 2020, p. 55).

[3] This includes a USD 17 million loan from the Asian Development Bank, and USD 4.920 from the European Union, materialized at 30 June 2020 of (TE Annex 5, p. 2; Final PIR 2020, p. 55).

	Other		
Total GEF funding		5.174	5.174
Total Co-financing		25.728	25.768[4]
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		30.903	30.942
Terminal evaluation validation information			
TE completion date		1/31/2021	
Author of TE		Anne C. Woodfine and Sovith Sin	
TER completion date		11/29/2022	
TER prepared by		Emanuele Bigagli	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Ritu Kanotra	

Access the form to summarize key project features here: https://www.research.net/r/APR2023.

[4] Co-financing materialized as of 30 June 2020: USD 25,767,782 (Final PIR 2020, p. 56; TE, p. 9).

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives and theory of change

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project objective was to build the adaptive capacity of rural communities and reduce their vulnerability to climate change through integrated micro-watershed management and climate resilient agriculture practices through interventions at national, sub-national and community levels to ensure food security.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

No development objectives were proposed different from the global environmental objective.

3.3 Were there any **changes** in the Global Environmental Objectives, Development Objectives, or project activities during implementation? What are the reasons given for the change(s)?

PIR 2018 (p. 28) reports that the implementation of Outcome 1 was adjusted to focus on bottom-up approach where field-based experience of micro-watershed management implementation is used to inform the policies related to climate change adaptation, as also recommended by the MTR. Also, several activities were either adjusted or removed without impacting on the overall project objectives and outcome (PIR 2018, p. 28).

Moreover, PIR 2019 (p. 40) noted the following changes in the project's approach, in line with the recommendations of the MTR and to reflect a more comprehensive recognition of the broader expected benefits:

- Refinement of Project Objective Indicators;
- Outcome 1: change of focus from national government to include also sub-national government, and from food security and agriculture only to include forest, water, and rural livelihoods; from a narrow focus on policy and planning to broader focus that includes implementation procedures; and from a more prescriptive CCA approach to a process of informing the policy and planning process on a recommended CCA approach.
- Outcome 2: broadening of outputs and indicators to include reduction of impacts to water resources, rural livelihoods agriculture and food security; more precise determination of targets for watershed management.

- Outcome 3: stronger focus and budget for training-of-trainers in climate-smart agriculture techniques and technologies, on-site mentoring and oversight from experts, and production of field-level guidance and training materials.
- Outcome 4: stronger focus on women's participation in farmers field schools; reduction of target for Output 2.2 (number of beneficiaries of farmers field schools) to reflect schools' reduction and low population rates.
- Outcome 5: improvement of the M&E system to address the weaknesses identified by the MTR.
- Refinement of several Outputs and related indicators.

3.4 Briefly summarize project's theory of change – describe the inputs and causal relationships through which the project will achieve its long-term impacts, key links, and key assumptions.

The project did not develop explicitly a theory of change, although it was designed to clearly link activities, outputs, outcomes, and objective. The MTR developed a theory of change, which did not include the assumptions, which were developed by the TE (p. 12). The main elements of the theory of change are as follows:

- Problem: Cambodia is an impoverished country, extremely vulnerable to climate change, which is expected to exacerbate existing food challenges and negatively impact the livelihoods of population at risk and degrade the ecosystems upon which they rely.
- Barriers: 1) Inadequate capacity to integrated climate change adaptation principles and practices within policy and planning frameworks; 2) Limited experience with micro-watershed management designed to build climate change resilience; 3) Tools and knowledge resources required for rural communities to adopt climate change adaptation-related agricultural practices are largely absent; 4) Scarcity of suitable climate resilient alternative livelihood models targeted for women.
- Objective: build the adaptive capacity of rural communities and reduce their vulnerability to climate change through micro-watershed management and climate resilient agriculture practices through interventions at national, sub-national and community levels.
- Outputs: (i) increased capacity of national decision-makers, and policy frameworks established; (ii) four integrated watershed management plans implemented; (iii) climate change adaptation best practices integrated into training programs; (iv) increased climate change adaptation capacity of women and alternative livelihoods demonstrated; (v) results-based monitoring, data & lessons learned captured.
- Outcomes: (1) Climate change adaptation integrated into national agricultural and food security policies and planning; (2) Participatory integrated micro-watershed management reducing climate impacts on natural resources and agriculture; (3) Climate resilient agricultural practices promoted, demonstrated and sustained through farmer field schools; (4) Climate resilient alternative livelihood options targeting women piloted and sustained; (5) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and information dissemination.
- Impact: vulnerable communities more resilient to climate variability.

4. GEF IEO assessment of Outcomes and Sustainability

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

The outcome ratings (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and overall outcome rating) are on a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory. The sustainability rating is on a four-point scale: Likely to Unlikely.

Please justify the ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 **Relevance and Coherence**	S

The TE evaluates relevance as Satisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. The project was relevant to GEF, FAO, and national objectives, plans, and programs; it was generally well-designed, although there were some flaws related to Outcome 1 that were partly addressed in the course of implementation.

The project is fully in line with, and aims to contribute to the achievement of, three GEF-LDCF adaptation objectives: CCA-1"Reducing vulnerability", CCA-2 "Increasing adaptive capacity" and CCA-3 "Adaptation technology transfer" (TE, p. 15). It also contributed to all the three outcomes of the FAO Country Programming Framework 2019-2023[5], and was relevant to several key environmental concerns related to climate change, faced by rural communities in Cambodia (TE, p. 16). Also, the project contributed to the implementation of the sectoral policies and strategies related to food security and climate change (TE, p. 17), including the Agricultural Strategic Development Plan (2013-2018) and (2019-2023), the Cambodia Climate Change Development plan (2014-2023), and the National Strategy for Food Security and Nutrition (2014-2018) and (2019-2023).

As for project design, the project was logical and synergistic towards the achievement of the set objective (TE, p. 10), with the only limitation related to Outcome 1 (*Climate change adaptation integrated into national agricultural and food security policies and plans*), which was not well aligned to national needs, because the project was too short to provide evidence for such a policy change. Therefore, it was revised following the recommendations of the MTR to improve its relevance, so as to provide a more bottom-up approach (TE, p. 17). Also, the proposed climate-smart adaptation technologies for rice, which were labor and time intensive, and nitrogen fixing over crops, which interfered with the crop calendar, were not carefully designed to meet the needs of local communities (TE, p. 39).

4.2 Effectiveness	MS

The TE assesses effectiveness as Moderately Satisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. Although the majority of the ex-ante targets were achieved, some important targets were not achieved or achieved partially.

The TE evaluated the project achievements against the revised set of indicators and targets. It notes that several outputs were achieved, although there are shortcomings and delays that undermined the overall

[5] The three outcomes are: 1. Enhanced agricultural productivity, diversification and commercialization, and safe and nutrition-sensitive food systems for poverty reduction and food and nutrition security. 2. Equitable and sustainable management of natural resources, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. 3. Reduction of vulnerability and improved resilience to shocks at national, community and household level

effectiveness of the project and its ability to meet a number of targets (p. xii). More details are provided below for each Outcome (Outcome 5 is presented in the M&E section of this report):

- Outcome 1: the revised outputs were achieved, although several written outputs were still in draft at the moment of the TE or were limited in scope and impact (e.g., three policy briefs on climate change adaptation-related topics, a stocktaking report of policies, regulations, strategies and literature such as manuals and project documents, and a country profile on climate-smart agriculture in Cambodia). Moreover, only 2 of the 6 scheduled annual national workshop on climate change adaptation were conducted, together with 14 province/district-level workshops (TE, pp. 18-20).
- Outcome 2: the targets set were generally achieved, with important steps performed towards introducing the watershed management approach in the pilot communes in Cambodia, catalyzing communities to set-up a watershed management committee, demonstrating how in-stream structures can control stream flows, encouraging tree planting to improve rainwater infiltration/reduce riparian erosion, and improving the management of community protected areas and forests. However, the two reforestation-related targets had a low achievement, while the 11 pilot community Vulnerability Impact Assessments were not updated annually as planned (TE, p. 24).
- Outcome 3: after the MTR, considerable progress was made to catalyze adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices using the farmers field schools' approach, with some targets being exceeded (e.g., 442 ha of land covered by climate change-resilient practices against the target of 225 ha, and 10 training of trainers against the 6 planned), while others were not achieved, including the number of farmers reached (160 against a target of 352; TE, p. 25), due to the focus on single commodity and the mixed classroom/practice training formula (TE, p. 26).
- Outcome 4: despite the late start of activities, considerable progress was made and some targets were exceeded, such as the number of women reached in farmers field schools, generating positive achievements such as the inclusion of women in watershed management committees, farmers field schools, and the establishment of valuable savings and loan groups and development of business development groups (TE, p. 28).

4.3 **Efficiency**	MU

The TE assesses efficiency as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. The project was adequately cost-effective, although some expense categories were unusually high, and it suffered initial delays in implementation that were not completely made up for during the rest of duration.

The TE (p. 34) notes a delay in project start-up, gaps in several field operations, and numerous unavoidable issues that affected project efficiency, including the early decision not to house the project management unit in the Ministry of Environment, delays in recruitment, high levels of staff turnover, light oversight by the Project Coordination Committee, and communication issues. These shortcomings were partly counterbalanced by an adaptive capacity to reshape Outcome 1, and the progress in activities marked after the MTR (TE, pp. 31-32). Due to limited data availability, the TE could not assess the level of GEF grant disbursement at project end, nor to compare expenses in the period January 2019-January 2020 with the previous period. nonetheless, the TE (p. 33) notes a considerably high expenditure on consultants (53,7%), i.e., 3 times the amount budgeted in the project document.

4.4 **Outcome**	MS

Summarize key outcomes related to environment, human well-being, and enabling conditions (Policy, Legal & Institutional Development; Individual & Institutional Capacity-Building; Knowledge Exchange & Learning; Multistakeholder Interactions), as applicable. Include any unintended outcomes (not originally targeted by the project), whether positive or negative, affecting either ecological or social aspects.

Where applicable, note how both intended and unintended outcomes have positively and/or negatively affected marginalized populations (e.g., women, indigenous groups, youth, persons with disabilities), and where some stakeholder groups have benefited more/ less than others.

The TE does not assess outcomes as separated from effectiveness. This evaluation rates outcomes as Moderately Satisfactory. The project was relevant to GEF, FAO and national objectives; it achieved several outputs, although with notable shortcomings that undermined overall effectiveness, and was adequately cost-effective although there were delays in implementation.

The key outcomes and impacts are summarized as follows:

Environmental impacts. Progress was made to restore degrade forest and water ecosystem services in the pilot communes (TE, p. 20), and support the construction of instream structure reducing, inter alia, land degradation and soil erosion (TE, p. 15). The micro-watershed management projects improved catchment ecosystem functions in rainy seasons, especially for paddy fields (TE, p. 22). More than 10,000 ha of forest reserves and 147 ha of degraded forest patches were restored, although related indicators were not achieved. The choice of use of planted seedlings and saplings, instead of assisted natural regeneration, involved disturbance of the soil, possibly exacerbating soil erosion (TE, p. 39).

Socioeconomic impacts. The project contributed to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience for climate change adaptation, providing models for future scaling-up (TE, p.15). More in detail, the micro-watershed management projects addressed the needs of daily water consumption and for animal husbandry (TE, p. 22). Also, some of the climate-smart agricultural practices introduced by the project, including advocating the use of cover crops (green manures), incorporation of composted crop residues, conservation agriculture/zero tillage, improved rice cultivation systems, use of drip irrigation, and agroforestry (TE, p. 15), contributed to food security and income of farmers, as they catalyze a shift from risky monocrop rain-fed agriculture towards more diversified, resilient and productive livelihood activities (TE, p. 42). This includes the support to non-timber forest products, in relation to which the project ensured better protection of boundaries with demarcation and patrols to reduce encroachment, and control of harvesting to sustainable levels through management committees (TE, p. 24). Finally, the project supported the establishment of women's producer groups, producer and business groups (TE, p. 15).

Enabling conditions. The government commitment and local community planning systems towards greater climate change resilience was strengthened; this includes mainstreaming of watershed management, community protected areas, and community forest plans into the community investment plans of the communes (TE, p. 42). Also, thanks to the project, watershed management, and climate-smart agriculture and women's business groups have a much more prominent role in communities and key

ministries. At ministerial level, better recognition has been created of the challenges and complexities in joint implementation, while at community level, the integration of climate resilience and the importance of cooperation on the ground (as opposed to integration at national level) was encouraged (TE, p. 42).

Unintended impacts. The TE does not report any unintended impacts.

4.5 **Sustainability**	MU

Note any progress made to sustain or expand environmental benefits beyond project closure, using stakeholder (rather than project) resources, e.g. through replication, mainstreaming or scaling-up of GEF-supported initiatives. Examples would be farmers adopting practices using own funds, follow-on replication projects, development of plans for scaling, inclusion in local or national legislation, and allocation of government budgets or private sector investments for institutional adoption.

The TE assesses sustainability as Moderately Likely, and this evaluation rates it as Moderately Unlikely. There are several risks to project sustainability, due *inter alia* to the lack of detailed scaling-up plan, whose effects on the continuation of project benefits are expected to be substantial, hampering the achievement of net project benefits.

The TE (p. 36) notes that the project catalyzed activities specifically designed towards sustainability after project end; specifically, it evaluates that the mainstreaming of climate change into commune development processes will have a significant long-term impact on future local government programs (TE, p. 42). However, there are no confirmed plans of scaling-up, and the vulnerability impact assessments were not updated annually as scheduled. Also, there is no detailed "exit plan" detailing responsibilities, financial support, technical mentoring and coaching, and institutionalizing the approach after project end.

Financial. A saving and loan program and business development groups targeted at women were established (TE, p. 34), which will support farmers in the future. However, without external financial support, the maintenance of check and cascade dams, the operation of community forests and community protected areas will have difficulties after project completion (TE, p. 35).

Sociopolitical. The dams built will benefit farmers in terms of water supply and reduction of food risk (TE, p. 34). Also, yield variability is expected to decrease in the future thanks to the training and awareness raising of farmers (TE, p. 34). However, there is a low rate of uptake of climate-smart agriculture techniques by farmers, as those proposed by the project do not address farmers' needs for business plan and capital, adequate income from new crops, and reduction of labor requirements (TE, p. 35). Also, the TE (p. 36) notes some risks to the sustainability of ownership within the line ministries, as there are still occasional limitations among key decision makers for climate resilient mainstreaming, evidencing the need for further awareness raising activities, given that the project activities have been too short-term to lead to building trust and changing mindsets. Partnerships with potential post-project support groups were not explored during the closing months of the project.

Institutional framework and governance. Vulnerability impact assessments, watershed management plans, and action plans have been mainstreamed into watershed management at local level (TE, p. 34). However, the pilot watershed small-scale check and cascade dams lack maintenance plans and personnel.

Rules for the collection of membership fees for water user groups, community forest, and community protected areas have been established but not implemented (TE, p. 35). Also, the farmers field schools' approach was short-term (not the longer-term learning by doing recommended by FAO), and the translation of written material in local language and with including images was not done at the moment of the TE (TE, p. 35). Moreover, the TE (p. 36) notes the lack of a strategy to scale-up the achievement of this pilot project

Environmental. The trees planted will stabilize soils, enhance rainfall infiltration and provide non-timber forest products in the future (TE, p. 34). However, the survival rates of native tree seedlings and saplings for forest restoration was low, partly because of the lack of plans for aftercare (TE, p. 35).

5. Processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes

Before describing the factors, you may choose to summarize reported outcomes and sustainability here: https://www.research.net/r/APR2023.

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, 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?

The project materialized overall a slightly higher co-financing than expected, thanks to a small increase in the co-financing of FAO and the EU. However, the MTR reported that co-financing had no impact on project interventions, a statement that the TE could not verify because of lack of data (TE, p. 41).

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?

The MTR recommended a no-cost extension of 1 year (new scheduled end: 30 June 2020) because of late project commencement due to delayed appointment of the Chief Technical Advisor, maintaining of project momentum after its resignation in late 2016, and limited review of project design at the start of implementation (PIR 2018, p.29). A further extension of 3 months (new scheduled end: 30 September 2020) was proposed and justified by the need to complete major remaining activities impacted by the global pandemic, including final evaluation, degraded forests restoration, and final closing workshop (Final PIR 2020, p. 49).

5.3 Stakeholder ownership. Assess the extent to which stakeholder ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability. Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links.

The project motivated officials at national and provincial level to work together towards the agreed objective (TE, p. 38). Local stakeholders, including farmers and particularly women, were satisfactorily engaged in project activities and contributed to the results of the project (TE, p. 39). On the negative side, the Project Management Unit was not housed in the Ministry of Environment, because the then Adviser did not agree with the office offered. This would have been preferable to enhance ownership and

involvement of the Ministry of Environment, and had deleterious repercussions for the entire project period (TE, p. 30).

5.4 Other factors: In case the terminal evaluation discusses other key factors that affected project outcomes, discuss those factors and outline how they affected outcomes, whether positively or negatively. Include factors that may have led to unintended outcomes.

The COVID-19-related restrictions on project activities and travel may have incurred a delay in the reporting of M&E data in the closing months of the project (TE, p. 38).

6. Assessment of project's Monitoring and Evaluation system

Ratings are assessed on a six point scale: Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory.

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 **M&E Design at entry**	S

The TE assesses M&E design as Satisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. The M&E plan was clear and practical; it addressed the elements of the theory of change, and included appropriate applicable indicators and provisions for performing a baseline assessment. The M&E plan clearly indicated roles and responsibilities, and provided a detailed and comprehensive schedule of reporting (Project Document, pp. 48-53).

The TE (p. 37) confirmed that the M&E design was clear and practical; it met most of the basic requirements (TE, p. 47), although it lacked the preparation of quantitative assessments on meteorology, hydrology, and soil properties after dams' construction and tree planting.

6.2 **M&E Implementation**	MU

The TE assesses M&E implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. The implementation of the M&E plan was generally below expectations, despite some areas with adequate performance; some M&E activities were completed but some important data, including those necessary for the tracking tool, were not reported.

Although the reporting was produced timely and contributed to tracking project results, the M&E system did not operate as expected (TE, p. 47). A complete and detailed baseline assessment was performed of the target villages, to serve as benchmarks to measure project achievements and impact; however, it was done later than expected (TE, p. 37) and was not repeated before project end to allow comparison with that performed at project start. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) was performed in March 2018, to which the management answered officially in June 2018 (TE, p. 6); it led to a considerable restructuring of the project, catalyzing progress towards project objectives, outcomes, and outputs, which were found lacking. However, the TE (p. 37) reports the persistent uncertainties on the roles and responsibilities for reporting and database management of the various activities. In fact, the GEF Adaptation Monitoring and Assessment Tool (AMAT) was not completed or updated for terminal evaluation.

Data for two indicators (namely, the number of farmers expressing satisfaction with the climate change adaptation practices adopted from farmers field schools and expressing desire to continue longer-term, and the number of field days, cross visits and study tours) were not collected. In addition, no evidence was collected in relation to two objective indicators: "LNP will design and implement an annual survey to monitor food security adapting FAO assessment tools" and "Survey to measure yield per ha." (TE, p. 37). The dissemination component distributed some lessons learned through the publication of four success stories on the FAO Cambodia website, but not all targets were reached; moreover, the planned biannual newsletters were also not published, with only three of four factsheets finalized by project end (TE, p. 29).

7. Assessment of project implementation and execution

Quality of Implementation rating is based on the assessment of the performance of GEF Agency(s). Quality of Execution rating is based on performance of the executing agency(s). 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**	MS

The TE assesses quality of project implementation as Moderately Satisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. The performance of the agency met expectations and implementation was adequate, although the delays accumulated in the first part of the project were not completely made up for, and supervision was not always adequate.

The TE (p. xiii) notes the adaptive capacity to re-write Outcome 1, modify the climate smart agriculture approach, and recruit of staff to get the project back on track after the very slow start and critical MTR. However, there was a reported gap in several field operations between 2016 and late 2018, followed by a massive push to complete the activities, which has negatively affected commitment among partners and beneficiaries.

The Project Management Unit was housed in the FAO Office in Phnom Penh (which was the Budget Holder of the project under FAO's Direct Execution Modality; Project Document, p. 43), and not in the Ministry of Environment, as the Adviser did not agree with the office offered; this had deleterious repercussions for the entire project period (TE, p. 30). More in general, the project lacked good communication, coordination and management between FAO's Technical Advisers at national, provincial, and community levels (TE, p. 32), due to poor management and coordination of tasks and overall unclear roles, among others, which had a negative impact on project results, including mistakes such as the re-building existing structures in streams that could not withstand the wet season floods (TE, p. 22).

7.2 **Quality of Project Execution**	MU

The TE assesses quality of project execution as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this evaluation concurs. Overall, the executing agency did not meet the expectations, with poor management and coordination of

tasks lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, limited number of coordination meetings, and limited information sharing.

The project was to be executed by the Ministry of Environment through its Climate Change Department and the National Project Director (NPD), with the support of other relevant ministries. The National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (NCDD) was also supposed to play a key role in the project's work to mainstream Climate Change Adaptation into local government planning (Project Document, p. 42). However, the Climate Change Department of the Ministry of Environment was not closely involved in project execution, despite the fact that the national project Director (NPD) was from that Department (TE, p. 30). Also, in contrast with what stated in the Project Document, the NCDD was not part of this project, and the assigned tasks were done by the respective provincial departments of the national implementing partners (TE, p. 30).

The TE (p. xiii) notes a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities for individual agencies, particularly at the provincial level, and a limited number of project coordination committee meetings, a situation that improved in the last 18 months of the project where the strengthened project leadership and team catalyzed major progress towards the Outcomes. Poor management and coordination of tasks was due to inadequate capabilities of contractors and unclear roles, among others, affecting the results (TE, p. 32). The Project Coordination Committee had only a light oversight on the project, holding only four meetings in more than six years; this limited information sharing (TE, p. 30).

8. Lessons and recommendations

8.1 Briefly describe the key lessons, good practices, or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report, including how they could have application for other GEF projects. Lessons must be based on project experience.

The TE does not describe lessons or good practices as separated from the recommendations (see Section 8.2).

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE (p. 49) proposes the following recommendations:

1. **Recommendation 1** (To FAO and national implementing partners). Projects should start as soon as possible after approval and effort/activities should be spread as evenly as possibly throughout the implementation period, avoiding periods of inactivity when momentum is lost and rushing to reach outputs towards project completion.
2. **Recommendation 2** (To GEF project formulators and FAO). Projects need to be thoroughly reviewed in terms of their ambitions vis-à-vis the country context and capacity before finalization and approval. Before including a policy-related Outcome (such as the original Outcome 1 in this project design), national partners should be fully aware of the implications and the enormity of the task involved, also that ultimately a Project Management Unit cannot achieve this without full Government support.

3. **Recommendation 3** (To GEF project formulators and FAO). Projects should include the development of an exit strategy around the time of the MTR, to ensure support is clear beyond project closure for sustainability and to catalyze scaling-up.
4. **Recommendation 4** (To the Government and FAO). Continued support post-project should be sought for the watershed management, farmers field schools and savings and loans groups established by the project. Good practices should be showcased (e.g. through study tours) and watershed management plans should be scaled-up to other communes/micro-watersheds.
5. **Recommendation 5** (To the Government and FAO). Projects like this should have M&E systems that are anchored in a project theory of change, operate in (near) real time to increase management flexibility and indicate, as and when required, where the project and its partners are at, so that resources and support can be redirected according to needs in a timelier manner. Furthermore, relevant focal points (e.g., climate change, land degradation and GEF) should be given more prominent roles and training in M&E.
6. **Recommendation 6** (To the Government and FAO). National Project Coordination Committees should hold more regular meetings and members should be more engaged in project activities (including visiting project sites), with comparable committees being set-up at decentralized levels as appropriate.
7. **Recommendation 7** (To FAO). For more effective cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships on key issues of mutual concern towards climate change adaptation, future projects should develop a detailed strategy for stakeholder engagement and clarify roles and responsibilities of implementing partners via letters of agreement.
8. **Recommendation 8** (To GEF and FAO). Projects including farmers field schools and climate-smart agriculture should use the many resources/training materials etc. that FAO has developed to speed up implementation of innovative activities and also share its lessons on widely available platforms
9. **Recommendation 9** (To FAO). Projects should place greater emphasis on facilitating experience sharing, particularly in the later years of implementation.
10. **Recommendation 10** (To FAO). FAO should systematically carry out assessments of gender, youth and other vulnerable group needs. Furthermore, it should integrate gender, youth and vulnerability specific indicators and targets relevant to project objectives and consistent with the FAO Policy on Gender Equality and Environmental and Social safeguard.
11. **Recommendation 11** (To FAO, in collaboration with recipient countries and executing partners). Given the importance the GEF places on co-finance, FAO-GEF project teams should keep track not only of the amounts of co-finance materialized by GEF projects but also track what these funds were used for.

9. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

Before rating the quality of the terminal evaluation, click here to summarize your observations on the sub-criteria: https://www.research.net/r/APR2023.

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/indicators of terminal evaluation quality	GEF IEO COMMENTS	Rating
1. Timeliness: terminal evaluation report was carried out and submitted on time?	The TE was conducted within six months from project completion and was submitted to the GEF portal within 12 months from project completion	HS
2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?	The TE provides the information on project and evaluation, including GEF project ID, list of evaluators, list of executing agencies, key project milestone, and GEF environmental objectives	HS
3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?	The TE identified the key stakeholders and sought their feedback on the draft report, which was incorporated in finalization; however, no information is available as to whether the OFP's feedback was sought and incorporated	S
4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project's theory of change?	The TE discusses the casual links and mechanisms to achieve intended impact, presents the key assumptions of the theory change and discusses whether they remained valid	HS
5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?	The TE provides a detailed account of the methodology used, including information sources, list of interviewees, information on project sites/activities, tools and methods, and limitations	HS
6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?	The TE provides a clear and complete account of project relevance to GEF and country priorities, and of project design; it reports performance on all outcome targets, and discusses factors that affected achievement; it reports	HS

	on timeliness of activities and discusses efficiency	
7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?	The TE identifies risks to sustainability and their likelihood and effects, and indicates overall likelihood of sustainability	HS
8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?	The TE analyzes quality of M&E design and implementation, including discussion on the use of information from the M&E system for project implementation	HS
9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?	The TE reports on utilization of GEF resources and provides data on co-financing (amount, sources, types), but is not able to discuss reasons for excess materialization and contribution to project results due to lack of data	HS
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?	The TE provides a brief account of GEF agency and executing agencies' performances, discussing factors that affected implementation and execution and how challenges were addressed	S
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?	The TE reports on the implementation of social and environmental safeguards, on gender analysis and implementation of related actions	HS
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	The TE does not explicitly present lessons, nor discusses their applicability; it includes recommendations specifying clearly the action taker and the content of action	S
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	The TE provides clear ratings based on sufficient and credible evidence	HS
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?	The TE is written in English; it is well written, well-organized and consistent, and makes good use of tables	HS
Overall quality of the report		HS

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

ANNEX 1. GEF IEO THEORY OF CHANGE FRAMEWORK

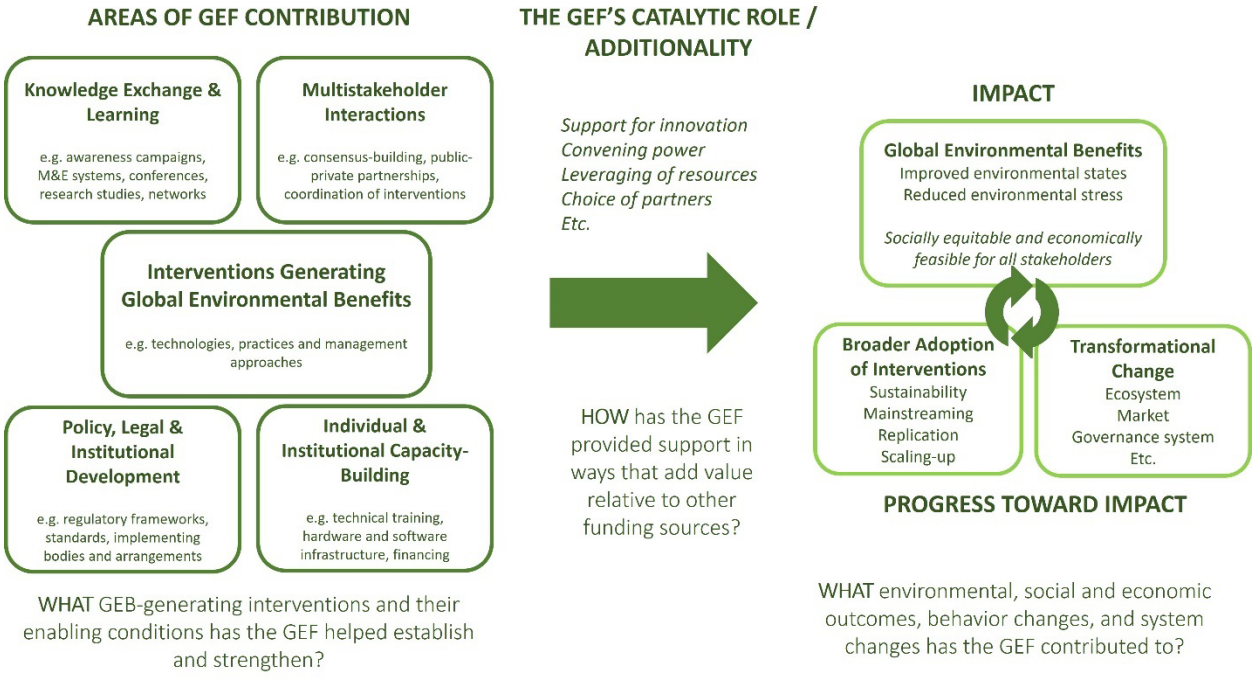

Figure 1. The GEF IEO's updated Theory of Change Framework on how the GEF achieves impact

The general framework for the GEF's theory of change (figure 1) draws on the large amount of evaluative evidence on outcomes and impact gathered over the years by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office. The framework diagram has been updated to reflect the IEO's learning since OPS5 (GEF IEO 2014, p. 47-50) about how the GEF achieves impact, as well as the evolution of the GEF's programming toward more integrated systems-focused and scaled-up initiatives.

The framework outlines the three main areas that the IEO assesses in its evaluations: a) the GEF's contributions in establishing and strengthening both the interventions that directly generate global environmental benefits, and the enabling conditions that allow these interventions to be implemented and adopted by stakeholders, b) the GEF's catalytic role or additionality in the way that the GEF provides support within the context of other funding sources and partners, and c) the environmental, social and economic outcomes that the GEF has contributed to, and the behavior and system changes that generate these outcomes during and beyond the period of GEF support.

The circular arrow between impact and progress toward impact, as before, indicates how bringing about positive environmental change is an iterative process that involves behavior change (in the form of a broader group of stakeholders adopting interventions) and/or systems change (which is a key characteristic of transformational change). These three areas of change can take place in any sequence or simultaneously in a positively reinforcing cycle, and are therefore assessed by the GEF IEO as indicators of impact.

Assessing the GEF's progress toward achieving impact allows the IEO to determine the extent to which GEF support contributes to a trajectory of large-scale, systemic change, especially in areas where changes in the environment can only be measured over longer time horizons. The updated diagram in particular expands the assessment of progress towards impact to include transformational change, which specifically takes place at the system level, and not necessarily over a long time period.

The updated diagram also more explicitly identifies the link between the GEF's mandate of generating global environmental benefits, and the GEF's safeguards to ensure that positive environmental outcomes also enhance or at the very least do not take away from the social and economic well-being of the people who depend on the environment. Thus the IEO assesses impact not only in terms of environmental outcomes, but also in terms of the synergies and trade-offs with the social and economic contexts in which these outcomes are achieved.

ANNEX 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Intervention	Any programmatic approach, full-sized project, medium-sized project, or enabling activity financed from any GEF-managed trust fund, as well as regional and national outreach activities. In the context of post-completion evaluation, an intervention may consist of a single project, or multiple projects (i.e. phased or parallel) with explicitly linked objectives contributing to the same specific impacts within the same specific geographical area and sector. https://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Activity (of an intervention)	An action undertaken over the duration of an intervention that contributes to the achievement of the intervention's objectives, i.e. an intervention is implemented through a set of activities. E.g. training, (support to) policy development, (implementation of) management approach.
Outcome	An intended or achieved short- or medium-term effect of a project or program's outputs. https://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Impact	The positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a project or program, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. https://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Environmental outcomes	Changes in environmental indicators that could take the following forms: • Stress reduction: reduction or prevention of threats to the environment, especially those caused by human behavior (local communities, societies, economies) • Environmental state: biological, physical changes in the state of the environment http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Social and economic outcomes	Changes in indicators affecting human well-being at the individual or higher scales, e.g. income or access to capital, food security, health, safety, education, cooperation/ conflict resolution, and equity in distribution/ access to benefits, especially among marginalized groups.
Synergies	Multiple benefits achieved in more than one focal area as a result of a *single intervention*, or benefits achieved from the interaction of outcomes from at least two separate interventions in addition to those achieved, had the interventions been done independently.

	http://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/evaluation-multiple-benefits-gef-support-through-its-multifocal-area-portfolio-map-2016
Trade-offs	A reduction in one benefit in the process of maximizing or increasing another benefit. http://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/evaluation-multiple-benefits-gef-support-through-its-multifocal-area-portfolio-map-2016
Broader adoption	The adoption of GEF-supported interventions by governments and other stakeholders beyond the original scope and funding of a GEF-supported intervention. This may take place through sustaining, replication, mainstreaming, and scaling-up of an intervention and/or its enabling conditions (see definitions below). http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Sustainability	The continuation/ likely continuation of positive effects from the intervention after it has come to an end, and its potential for scale-up and/or replication; interventions need to be environmentally as well as institutionally, financially, politically, culturally and socially sustainable.https://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Replication	When a GEF intervention is reproduced at a comparable administrative or ecological scale, often in different geographical areas or regions. http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Mainstreaming	When information, lessons, or specific aspects of a GEF initiative are incorporated into a broader stakeholder initiative. This may occur not only through governments but also in development organizations and other sectors. http://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/ops5-final-report-eng.pdf
Scaling-up	Increasing the magnitude of global environment benefits (GEBs), and/or expanding the geographical and sectoral areas where they are generated to cover a defined ecological, economic, or governance unit. May occur through replication, mainstreaming, and linking. http://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/evaluation-gef-support-scaling-impact-2019
Transformational change	Deep, systemic, and sustainable change with large-scale impact in an area of major environmental concern. Defined by four criteria: relevance, depth of change, scale of change, and sustainability. http://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/evaluation-gef-support-transformational-change-2017
Additionality	a) Changes in the attainment of direct project outcomes at project completion that can be attributed to GEF's interventions; these can be reflected in an acceleration of the adoption of reforms, the enhancement of outcomes, or the reduction of risks and greater viability of project interventions. b) Spill-over effects beyond project outcomes that may result from systemic reforms, capacity development, and socio-economic changes. c) Clearly articulated pathways to achieve broadening of the impact beyond project completion that can be associated with GEF interventions. https://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/council-documents/files/c-55-me-inf-01.pdf