

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		4922	
GEF Agency project ID		613307	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		FAO	
Project name		Decision Support for Mainstreaming and Scaling Up of Sustainable Land Management (DS-SLM)	
Country/Countries		Global	
Region		4 regions – Africa; East and South East Asia; Europe and Central Asia; South and Central America	
Focal area		Land Degradation	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		LD-1; LD-3 and LD-4	
Executing agencies involved		Center for Development and Environment (CDE) / World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and 15 country lead agencies	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		NA	
Private sector involvement		NA	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) / Approval date (MSP)		10/20/2014	
Effectiveness date / project start		05/01/2015	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		04/30/2018	
Actual date of project completion		10/31/2019	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0	0
	Co-financing	0	0
GEF Project Grant		6.11	5.92
Co-financing	IA own	5.8	6.07
	Government	30.71	8.55
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	1.5	1.5
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CSOs		
Total GEF funding		6.11	5.92
Total Co-financing		38.01	16.12
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		44.11	22.04
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		September, 2019	
Author of TE		Jyrki Salmi, and M. Doris Cordero	
TER completion date		March, 2020	
TER prepared by		Ritu Kanotra	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)		Molly Watts Sohn	

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

As per the Project Document, the Global Environmental Objectives of the project was to ‘contribute to combating desertification land degradation and drought (DLDD) worldwide through scaling up sustainable land management best practices based on evidence based and informed decision making’ (PD, Pg 2).

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

As per the Project Document, the Development Objective of the project was to ‘increase the provision of ecosystem goods and services and enhance food security in countries and regions affected by Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) through the promotion of Sustainable Land Management (SLM), integrated management, and efficiency in the use of natural resources’ (PD, Pg 2).

The project had the following 3 components:

Component 1: National and local decision- support on combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought and promoting mainstreaming and up-scaling of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices

Component 2: Global Desertification Land Degradation and Drought and SLM Knowledge Management and Decision- Support Platform

Component 3: Monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of project results

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

The TE did not report any changes in the Global Environmental and Development Objectives of the project. (later it sounds like activities planned in Nigeria didn’t take place, is this correct? This would be a major change in activities that should be noted here.)

## 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.

<b>4.1 Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The TE assessed the relevance of the project as ‘highly satisfactory’. Based on the review of available documents and reports, this TER assessed the relevance of the project as ‘satisfactory’. The project was designed to address national land degradation issues and promote SLM best practices as mitigation measures in 15 participating countries. All the participating countries suffered from various degrees of land degradation, which also had an economic consequence at national level leading to reduction of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with for example the total cost to GDP estimated at 0.7% in China and 0.5% in Tunisia, and 5% of agricultural GDP in Nigeria (PD, Pg 11). The project was formulated as a response from the governments of participating countries to address land degradation and desertification issues, which were clearly part of national priorities in plans, programs and/or strategies of the participating countries.

The proposed project was also consistent with several operational objectives of the UNCCD 10-year strategy, with one of the contributions to improve quality and timeliness of reporting and implementation of existing and planned National Action Program (NAPs), with linkages in some countries to the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPS) and the National Communications to the UNFCCC.

The project was also consistent with the goal of the GEF-5 Land Degradation (LD) strategy to contribute to arresting and reversing current global trends in land degradation and more specifically desertification. The project aimed to contribute to the GEF-5 focal area, Land Degradation Outcome 1.2: improved agricultural management; Outcome 3.1: Enhanced cross sector environment for integrated landscape management; Outcome 3.2: Integrated landscape management practices adopted by local communities and Outcome 4.2: Improved GEF portfolio monitoring using new and adapted tools and methodologies.

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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This TER agrees with the rating assigned by the TE of the effectiveness of the project as ‘moderately satisfactory’. Most of the countries completed the landscape level assessments and the selection of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices and formulated a strategy for mainstreaming assessment findings into planning at national and local level. However, up-scaling of SLM best practices would require more time and additional financing, as the time frame and the budget of the current project was insufficient to achieve these outcomes. However, the project set the stage and could be seen as a work in progress for integration of SLM in regulatory frameworks.

The project triggered positive regional and country to country cooperation (south-south), particularly through trainings and capacity building from more experienced to less experienced countries. The project was successful in developing the combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and SLM knowledge management platform designed under World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) website that continues to provide support to countries' capacity building and strengthening their ability to systematically collect data, assess land degradation and identify responses through SLM measures.

However, the project had a late start that delayed the achievement of several outputs. Overall, the progress of the project varied across 15 countries due to their different agro-ecological condition and institutional set ups, and a range of budget allocation (based on their GEF -STAR resources and co-financing commitments) which posed a major challenge to project management and coordination. Countries which started the project implementation late (particularly Bangladesh and Lesotho, and to a lesser degree also Bosnia and Herzegovina and Thailand) still had considerable work to accomplish before the project closure.

#### **Component 1: National and local decision- support on combating Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and promoting mainstreaming and up-scaling of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices**

Under the first component of the project, landscape level assessment and the selection of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices were completed in 8 (out of target of 15) countries. While the assessments were still being carried out in Bangladesh, Lesotho, Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time of the TE, China and Turkey had a well-established assessment in place before the project. A total of 10 countries had formulated a strategy for mainstreaming assessment findings into planning at national and local level (Output 1.2). Depending on their national priorities and conditions, most of the countries moved towards integrating SLM strategies into their national or local planning process. As per the evidence in the TE, the project triggered positive regional and country to country cooperation (south-south), particularly through trainings and capacity building from more experienced to less experienced countries. All other countries except Philippines and Thailand had selected the pilot landscapes or sites for demonstration activities. A total of 10 countries had implemented selected SLM best practices in pilot/demonstration sites, while 3 more (Bangladesh, Thailand and Tunisia) had plans to start the implementation at the time of the TE. Only 1 country (Lesotho) was reported to have scaled up the implementation to other locations as against a target of all up-scaling to at least 500,000 ha under SLM by the end of the project. As per the TE, all the countries had either published policy briefs, guidelines, other publications, or organized conferences, seminars, meetings, trainings, and / or exchanged experiences and information in regional or global events.

#### **Component 2: Global Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and SLM Knowledge Management and Decision- Support Platform**

As expected under this component, CDE/ World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) developed the Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and SLM knowledge management platform designed under the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) website, where countries were also required to contribute relevant information. As per the TE, the database created was highly regarded and appreciated, but some countries expected more dynamic exchange of experience and sharing technical information. For instance, countries like as Argentina, Thailand and Tunisia expected the platform to be more interactive and user -friendly.

According to World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) this would require more financial resources for the introduction of dynamic elements (e.g. questions and answers, interactive blogs, etc.) in the platform. At the time of the TE, the WOCAT platform had published 42 Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies and 27 approaches. WOCAT also continued to provided support to countries' capacity building and strengthening their ability to systematically collect data, assess land degradation and identify responses through SLM measures. Training materials and tools have been further elaborated and made more user- friendly.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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As per the TE, the project experienced delays during start up as well as delays due to certain administrative bottlenecks and by the lack of responsiveness from the PCU, which resulted in a low disbursement of the GEF grant till mid-term. As a result of these delays, the project was extended from a 3-year duration to 4.5 years. As per the Mid Term Evaluation, 'the efficiency of the project is questionable. On one hand there are resources available at headquarters to provide support to participating countries but on the other hand, country teams are complaining about the lack of project information, and responsiveness to timely approval of work plans and establishment of LOAs' (MTE, Pg 5). The midterm evaluation identified some persistent communication problems between the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) and FAO country/regional officer as well as between PCU and some country offices, as main reasons for delay and poor efficiency of the project.

However, the TE did not find any major problems in the country execution efficiency and the quality of project execution, apart from one or two other countries. The project picked up after the mid -term, particularly in those countries that started late implementation. The institutional arrangements to work on the project was found to vary across various countries, which reflected flexibility and the project's ability to adjust to country situations. In general, the established institutional arrangements and partnerships, either established before or during the project, contributed to the project implementation in a positive manner.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: <b>Moderately likely</b>
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This TER agrees with the rating assigned by the TE to the likelihood of overall sustainability of the project as 'moderately likely'. The project was found to have strong national ownership in almost all the 14 countries. Several countries perceive the tools and methodologies of the DS-SLM project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects. Many countries (e.g. Bangladesh, FBiH, RS, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) had already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others are in the process of preparing project proposal(s). However, the Project Management started planning an exit strategy for the global project quite late, only in 2019, which was the main drawback in ensuring the sustainability of the main outcomes of the project. Overall, as the TE noted, the upscaling of project interventions would need more time and resources and integration of SLM practices in regulatory frameworks would require more advocacy and convincing of the higher-level decision makers.

**a. Financial risks:**

As per the TE, several countries (e.g. Bangladesh, FBiH, RS, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and other countries were also in the process of preparing the project proposals. Mainstreaming strategy developed through the project was also likely to lead to a situation where governments would continue the implementation using their own budget. For instance, the TE reported that in Lesotho, the government was now financing community engagement in SLM activities. But, except in a few countries, the project largely failed to adequately involve the private sector, a key player in the decision making and implementation of land-based productive investments and had a central role in securing the sustainability of land management.

#### **b. Institutional/Governance:**

In most of the countries, except in Bangladesh where interviews during the TE suggested the project was driven by the local FAO office rather than the National Project Coordinator, the project had good support and was embedded in the programs of the key ministries of the government, ensuring sustainability of project interventions. But the TE also highlighted that that 'countries such as Bangladesh, FBiH, Morocco, Philippines and Turkey have seen the tools and methodologies of the current project as a good means to develop new and larger follow-up / scaling-up projects' (TE, Pg 67). The international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically objective 15 and the agreements linked to the UNCCD including the goals for the Land Degradation Neutrality, also provide a space to continue promoting SLM actions at the national, regional, provincial and local levels. However, the TE pointed towards the need to make the SLM best practices and technologies developed through the project available in a user-friendly and easily readable publication/book form for use by decision makers and other stakeholders. Also, in some of the countries 'weak capacity of extension services to promote SLM may hinder the progress of SLM out-scaling' (TE, Pg 4).

#### **c. Socio-political**

The TE noted that social sustainability was particularly good in those countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH & RS), Colombia, Morocco, Panama, Lesotho and Uzbekistan) where the pilot / demonstration activities were adopted by the local communities and where the introduced SLM practices proved to be profitable at farm / community level. The project was also likely to be sustainable in countries where it got a good support from various other stakeholders (technical institutions and other project partners) as evident through their active participation in various project related meetings and workshops. However, the TE also highlights the challenges involved as in most of the countries 'high-level decision makers appear to require still more convincing information and the advocacy' for integration of SLM in planning and regulatory frameworks (TE, Pg 6). Moreover, the TE also recommended the need to focus and involve the landowners/farmers during the project preparation for designing practical solutions to reduce land degradation and improve ecosystem services, which was missing in the current project.

#### **d. Environmental risk:**

The TE did not report any potential environmental risk that can hinder the likelihood of sustainability of the project.

## 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?

Co-financing commitment at the end of June 2019, as officially reported by the 15 project countries, was only 28% of the original commitment (co-financing at the CEO endorsement). Project partners such as World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and FAO reported materialization of 100% or more (118% by the FAO headquarters) of the co-financing contributions. So, overall materialization of co-financing contributions was 42% which can be considered very low. As per the TE, this was primarily because Nigeria did not participate in project activities as planned, and thus Nigeria's very large (18,4 million USD) co-financing commitment did not materialize at all. If Nigeria was eliminated from the co-financing status analysis, the level of contributions goes up to 82%, which can be considered as reasonably good. The TE also notes that the official reporting of the co-financing from some of the countries was unreliable mainly because of the under reporting of actual figures by these participating countries (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia, China, Panama). Co-financing was particularly high in countries such as Morocco, the Philippines and Thailand, which was also linked to high ownership of the project by their respective governments and linkages with other existing projects, which would also contribute to the sustainability of the project in these countries.

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?

According to the TE, the project duration was extended from 3 years to 4.5 years, mainly due to the delays in getting the GCP (Government Cooperative Agreements) and Letter of Agreements (LOAs) signed in some countries. The original closing date for the project was October, 2017. But as per the progress reported in the Midterm Evaluation, the project had spent only 29 percent of the GEF grant as of the end of June 2017 and less than 11 percent of its committed funding materialized, with many countries barely starting implementation by that time. But the project was granted extension till October, 2019 and it seems that project picked up most of the progress during its extension period of last two years after the midterm evaluation.

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:

According to the TE, the project was found to have a good level of national ownership in almost all the 14 countries (except in Nigeria where project did not take off). The project was led by the relevant departments in the key ministries, except in Bangladesh where the project was mainly led by the FAO local office and was embedded in the already existing government plans and programs, reflecting the buy in of the project by the national governments. The ownership of the project was also evident from the fact that most of the participating countries were committed to use the tools and methodologies developed during the project for formulating new follow up projects. Most of the countries owned the project results through adopting the strategy to mainstream SLM in decision making at national and sub

national levels. However, even though the project set the stage more advocacy and convincing was required before the SLM could be integrated in the national regulatory frameworks of the participatory countries.

## 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: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE assessed the M&E design at entry as 'moderately satisfactory'. Based on the evidence in the available reports (midterm evaluation and project implementation reports), this TER assessed the M&E at design as 'moderately unsatisfactory'. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan in the project document defined the responsibilities for M&E, the reporting procedures and schedules, the guidelines for the mid-term and final evaluations, and the indicators to measure the progress of the project. The M&E plan was also well budgeted, with funds allocated for the main M&E activities.

However, as noted in the available reports, the results matrix contained outcome/impact indicators too ambitious to achieve in relation to the duration and budget available. Specifically, targets related to land use productivity (percentage increase by the end of the project), and the country specific targets such as total carbon sequestration, increase in land cover and productivity by the end of the project, were difficult to achieve in a period of three years. Moreover, this TER agrees with the assessment by the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) that the project had too many indicators (a total of 32), with some overlapping and not SMART indicators. For instance, the indicator to monitor the outcome 1.1 "Number of countries mainstreaming Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices into relevant national policies, plans and programs" and the indicator monitoring the output 1.1.2 "Number of countries and policy/planning processes in which Desertification Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) assessment findings have been substantively integrated", are essentially the same and could be merged together.

The results framework was also heavy on measuring the output indicators as against measuring the progress towards project outcomes and objectives. For instance, measuring the capacities being developed mostly through number of people trained and number of trainings, as against measuring capacities acquired by these training events could provide a better indication of the impact of the project.



<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
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The TE provided a rating of ‘moderately satisfactory’ for M&E implementation. Based on the evidence in the available reports, this TER assessed the rating as ‘moderately unsatisfactory’. The country based annual work plans were developed according to the DS-SLM framework. The DS-SLM framework with 5 modules was developed in order to adapt project implementation to the high variation of agro-ecological conditions and institutional setups of the participating countries. While this framework provided flexibility and was in tune with the realities of different countries, as per the observations made in MTE as well, this framework was not entirely consistent with the results framework in the project document. On one hand, the countries prepared work plans and were monitoring the progress as per the five modules of under the DS-SLM framework, but the PIRs at the global level were produced according to FAO and GEF project guidelines. Review of the 2 annual PIRs (2015-16 and 2016-17) by the Midterm Evaluation (MTE) suggested that ‘ratings [were]...too much optimistic and difficult to be justified by the evaluation team’ (MTE, Pg 48). The PIRs prepared for the year 2018 and 2019 were improved and provided an overall view of the progress of the project under its various components. But the TE also notes that ‘the decision- making process using the M&E information was not entirely clear, to large extent due to the very few and deferred steering committee meetings’, which shows that the information generated was not used adequately for adaptive 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.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately unsatisfactory</b>
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This TER agrees with the quality of project implementation rated as ‘moderately unsatisfactory’. As per the information in the TE, most of the National Project Coordinators (Bosnia and Herzegovina, both entities, China, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan) considered FAO’s project coordination unit and Project managers as efficient and responsive. But other countries (e.g. Lesotho, Thailand) found FAO administrative rules complicated and cumbersome which hindered implementation to some degree. It is also evident that the Project Coordinating Unit may not have been adequately staffed as some, particularly the Latin American countries, expressed lack of enough coordination and technical support from the Project Coordinating Unit at FAO Rome. However, visits from the technical experts and trainings from FAO were highly appreciated by some of the member countries.

Both the TE and MTE note that the requirement to negotiate and sign a large number of separate agreements between FAO and different countries delayed the project significantly in some of the countries and had a high transaction cost that could have been avoided if FAO adopted a different operational modality. Moreover, the project also suffered from lack of clarity of roles and

communication problems between FAO country and regional offices. Although FAO's expertise in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) was appreciated in project countries, project management at FAO had to spend considerable time in solving daily administrative issues and necessary chores, and probably not enough time could be spent on getting global/high level attention to project's objectives and potential impacts, which is also likely to impact the sustainability of the project. Lack of sufficient budget for project management was cited as one of the main reasons for problems associated with coordination related issues. It is possible that complex and global projects require more time, which was not adequately covered by 5% (as per GEF guidelines) of the total budget allocated for project management and coordination for this particular project.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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This TER agrees with the rating assigned to the quality of project execution as 'moderately satisfactory'. The project was led by the relevant ministries in the participating countries with partnerships executed through different institutional arrangements in different countries, which makes it difficult to draw an overall inference on the quality of execution. But the different institutional arrangements also reflect the flexibility and project's ability to adjust to country situations. The TE rated project execution satisfactory in the project countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH and RS), China, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey; highly satisfactory in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco, Panama and Uzbekistan; moderately unsatisfactory in Bangladesh and Lesotho, and highly satisfactory in Nigeria. It was also evident that the project was more likely to be sustainable in countries where the National Project Coordination Unit was embedded in the national or regional/local government department. In general, the established institutional arrangements contributed positively to the project implementation. But partnerships, either established already before or during the project, were key to achievement of results in the countries where quality of execution was rated as highly satisfactory.

## 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.

The available reports do not include information on the changes in the environmental outcomes and objectives, except for Uzbekistan and Colombia, the details of which are given below:

1. In Uzbekistan, 10-20% increase of vegetation cover due to Sustainable Land Management technologies.

2. In Colombia, soil organic carbon below ground level in silvo pastoral system increased from 1.1% to 2.2% of the soil stock.

3. In Uzbekistan, sequestration of carbon in biomass and soil to the amount of 4.5 tons/ha (equivalent to 16,5 tons CO<sub>2</sub>) through cultivation of desert perennial crops and tree species (almond).

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 available reports (including the GEF tracking tool), included information on two countries – Colombia and Uzbekistan, as described below:

1. In Colombia, fodder production increased 6% with the implementation of Sustainable Land Management technologies. Also, project intervention led to increase in animal production from 1 animal/ha to 4-5 animals/ha and milk production increased from 15 liters to 45 liters. This led to increase in agricultural income.
2. In Uzbekistan, the project interventions helped increase in cotton yield of “Gulistan” variety from 1.8 t/ha to 3.2 t/ha on an average.

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 & b) Governance

The TE reported the country level impact, which is detailed below:

1. The project has a good potential to have bigger impacts in Bangladesh due to evidence of high demand by various land users for the knowledge, information and tools produced by the project. However, as the TE notes, that would require translation of the best practices and lessons to local languages written in a manner that the farmers understand. The private sector would need to be get involved too to make a significant impact.
2. Due to the very complex administrative situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was decided to focus on subnational (cantonal) level as well as on the local level. Mainstreaming strategy was prepared for Tuzla Canton with activities funded by canton and municipalities. Federal government recommended to cantonal ministries responsible for agriculture to initiate land capability mapping with a study on Sustainable Land Management approach. During the project,

four municipalities prepared such maps. Land capability study and maps were being prepared for nine municipalities of Tuzla Canton in total. The preparation of land capability studies and maps were financed by cantonal governments which is an evidence for the ownership and commitment to continue the work to produce the expected impact.

3. In China, the provided guidance and methods in mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in planning and policy formulation were used in the national and provincial processes to improve the sustainability of land use e.g. in road construction, selection of agricultural crops and other SLM best practices, etc. in local level, as well as to provide a model and guidance for the similar work at national level.
4. In Colombia, the project supported the formulation of the Land Management Plan (POT) of the municipality of San Juan Nepomuceno, where the results of the local assessment were incorporated. The Land Management Plan was implemented and expected to achieve the impact of improving the sustainability of land use, as well as improving livelihoods of local farmers.
5. In Ecuador, FAO and a public bank BanEcuador signed an agreement for the creation of a green credit line that incorporates Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices in the livestock sector.
6. In Morocco, the project was considered as one important element / step in the implementation of that National Plan to reduce desertification and land degradation. Project contributed to development of a National Land Degradation Neutrality Plan and a related Investment Plan.
7. In Panama, the project supported the draft of a new Soil Law that will integrate Sustainable Land Management (SLM), which if approved would facilitate the integration of the SLM into the country's planning, financing and policy frameworks. The ecological economic assessment study of the best SLM technologies in the Parita and Tonosi basins, financed by the project, was used as a technical input in the discussions for the creation of a new trust fund for Water, Protected Areas and Wildlife created by the Ministry of Environment.
8. In the Philippines, the integration of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices in the Land Use Planning Guidelines of the Local Governments was expected to bring about significant long- term impact as these Guidelines offered an effective instrument in guiding land use decisions.
9. In Thailand, Tunisia and Uzbekistan, the project is expected to have a significant contribution to the mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in national and sub-national planning, financing and policy frameworks, and thus increasing the sustainability of land use as well as increasing the long-term profitability of agriculture under sustainable practices.

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.

The TE did not report any unintended impacts caused by the project.

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.

As the TE notes, the up-scaling of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices identified under the project would require considerably more time and also additional financial resources, both from the public sector and in the private sector investments. Also, mainstreaming into policies, strategies, financing, programs and plans would require a longer time frame due to cross-sectoral nature of the issues involved and linkages of SLM with land and land tenure issues that makes mainstreaming processes to be highly political in many countries (e.g. Lesotho). However, there is evidence from some of the countries (e.g. Bangladesh, FBiH, RS, Colombia, China, Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines, Thailand, Turkey, Uzbekistan) that had already secured new project financing, either from domestic or external sources, and others were in the process of preparing project proposal(s). The TE provided evidence of adoption of GEF initiatives at scale for some of the countries (TE, Pg 41), the details of which are as stated below:

1. In Colombia, FAO integrated Sustainable Land Management (SLM) on new project proposals including a climate smart agriculture proposal presented to IKI Germany.
2. Ecuador already had a Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project funded by the Korean Forest Service (2019 - 2020) and submitted a PIF to GEF (GEF-7) in cooperation with FAO on a SLM project and was working on a proposal to the Green Climate Fund.
3. Philippines included the tools developed during the project in a new national GEF project. The Sustainable Land Management (SLM) issues were also budgeted under the regular budgets of the Local Government due to integration of SLM guidelines into the Comprehensive Land Use Plans facilitated under the current project.
4. The project took scale of a national project in Thailand although the original intention was to focus only on a one watershed. Thus, the project impact in Thailand has become larger than originally planned. Some Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies identified by the project were reported to be used at large scale by the farmers. Also, Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in Thailand secured a GEF7 funding, with the Land Development Department planning to work together with the Forestry Department.
5. Turkey submitted a proposal to GEF (GEF-6) in cooperation with FAO on a Sustainable Land Management (SLM) project in the context of Land Degradation Neutrality, the implementation of which was about to start.
6. Turkey and Uzbekistan (as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) are partners in Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM) II Project which is supported by GEF and is implemented by FAO. The overall objective of CACILM 2 is to scale up integrated natural resources management (INRM) in drought prone and salt affected agricultural production landscapes in the Central Asian countries and Turkey.
7. In some countries (e.g. Bangladesh) the tools and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies produced by the project were going to be used in other larger projects, including investment projects financed e.g. by the World Bank, and projects implemented in landscapes affected by migration/refugee settlements.
8. In Bosnia and Herzegovina entity Republic Srpska the mainstreaming strategy prepared under the project lead to the increased appreciation of the Institute of Agroecology and Soil Science of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Banja Luka by the government of the country. This led the government to commission to the University the preparation of the RS entity Strategy on Sustainable Land Management (SLM).

## 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 main lessons reported in the TE are listed below:

1. The Decision Support Framework of DS-SLM approach with seven modules allowed adequate flexibility that enabled adjusting the framework to varying country contexts. The Decision Support Framework could be an important tool for other new projects.
2. For similar global or regional projects, adequate funds should be allocated allowing coordination and project management at global / regional levels, including specialized technical personnel advice and support to the participating countries and enable exchange of experiences and feedback between countries that would improve the project effectiveness and efficiency.
3. The cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation (participatory approach) has proven to be crucial (combined with good and transparent communication) for securing involvement of relevant key stakeholders and sectors. Sustainable land management requires cross-sectoral decision making and action which is an important lesson for other Sustainable Land Management (SLM) projects.
4. Projects aiming to have an impact on public policies require longer time frames (at least 5 years) to allow working with multiple stakeholders and establish a roadmap for the integration of a specific topic in the policy frameworks and decision-making processes regarding planning and financing.
5. Proactive assessment of strategic South-South Cooperation opportunities are useful elements in project design particularly in global / regional projects as it improves the efficiency and project buy-out / sustainability.
6. Global or regional approach is useful when new approaches and methodologies are introduced and developed, and where policy issues are brought to normally very technical work. Such an approach allows the participating countries to share experiences, compare results and lessons.
7. World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) tools and DS-SLM experiences are useful elements for Land Degradation Neutrality monitoring improving the practicality and usability of the information generated.
8. The development of sustainability strategies and / or exit strategies as part of the necessary planning for the implementation of a project.
9. Introduction of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) requires long-term financing in any country and private sector investment in profitable productive SLM could be more relevant in many situations, an important lesson for designing new projects.
10. Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices and approaches need to be either profitable, and thus self-financing in long term, or they need to be subsidized for e.g. environmental reasons by the government. Thus, departments and institutions advocating SLM best practices need to assess if the best practices promoted are going to be profitable or not for the farmers / communities. Consequently, there is a need to focus more on the financial and economic analysis / studies of the SLM best practices / technologies and approaches in similar new projects.
11. The current project approach to link policy (mainstreaming) work with field level pilot / demonstration work appears to be right one. Successful implementation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) best practices is important to get political and local buy-out. In many

countries, the availability of existing / on-going other relevant projects active with similar SLM implementation proved to be a useful leveraging factor, a lesson to be remembered when formulating new similar projects.

12. Land tenure may need more attention in similar new projects because land tenure is a founding institutional arrangement either acting as a barrier to sustainable land management and investments, or encouraging such investments, depending on the clarity and specifications of the land tenure system.

## 9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The main recommendations reported in the TE are listed below:

1. FAO, GEF and project countries to support farmers / land users and strengthen agricultural and livestock extension services, so that they can bring practical solutions to farmers, to reduce land degradation, increase the provision of ecosystem services and, consequently, the productivity of their farms.
2. GEF, FAO and project countries to seek ways to continue and also to out-scale to other / new countries the south-south cooperation in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) work.
3. World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), GEF and FAO seek ways to strengthen the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) platform with a dynamic exchange of experiences and sharing of technical information. World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)'s SLM platform's financial sustainability need to be secured at the same time.
4. FAO and GEF pay particular attention to the clarity and focus of the project design of large and complex global / regional projects.
5. FAO to secure regular Steering Committee meetings, even by Skype, to secure discipline and structure for decision making to follow- up monitoring and evaluation information and Midterm evaluation recommendations.
6. FAO to consider promoting best practices in inter- sectoral and inter-agency partnership building in projects with significant cross-sectoral issues such as in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) projects.
7. FAO & GEF to seek ways to engage the private sector players in future Sustainable Land Management (SLM) projects. Partnerships with e.g. IFAD, World Bank and other development financing institutions could be considered in this regard. Countries should involve private sector in relevant policy, strategy and investment programming processes in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) work.
8. FAO / GEF project designs to include an assessment of relevance and importance of gender and vulnerable groups issues. If those issues found relevant, the project strategy should include specific gender and vulnerable groups involvement or mainstreaming strategies, and the project should include specific activities planned or cleared by a gender specialist.
9. FAO and project countries should encourage the country teams to write the best results and best Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies and approaches in a form of an attractive and easily readable publication / book that can be given to different stakeholders. There should be handing-over meetings in every country with the presence of at least FAO, National Project Coordinator, high-level representative of the respective Ministry.
10. Project countries to promote high level decision makers discussions, capacity building and exchanges about Sustainable Land Management (SLM), including but not limited to the planned high-level meeting on DS-SLM project at COP14.

## 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 reported progress against the expected results using the DS-SLM methodological framework which different countries used as guideline for implementation. However, it was difficult to assess the performance due to a certain dichotomy between the set of indicators in the results matrix in the project document and the framework used by the countries. The TE should have used the results framework in the project document to assess and report impact.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report was more or less internally consistent. However, as it can be difficult to consolidate findings from 14 different countries in one report, some of the findings lacked adequate details.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	Again, the evidence pertaining to sustainability was sometimes sporadic and not adequate to make a convincing argument. It could again be related to challenges of reporting on a global project with 14 participating countries.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons learnt were more or less supported by the evidence in the main report	<b>S</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The report included adequate details of the actual project costs and co-financing used	<b>S</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The TE provided adequate evidence on the M&E system of the project	<b>S</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MS</b>

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

*This TER did not use any other additional sources of information.*