

Terminal Evaluation Validation form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		5516	
GEF Agency project ID		GCP/MOZ/117/GFF	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-5	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	
Project name		Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods	
Country/Countries		Mozambique	
Region		Africa	
Focal area		Biodiversity Climate Change	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD-2: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. CCM-5: Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of land use, land use change and forestry. SFM/REDD+-1: Reduce pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.	
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework		Standalone	
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID		-	
Executing agencies involved		National Directorate of Forest of the Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development (MITADER)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		[Indicate as: Lead executing agency; secondary executing agency; one of the beneficiaries; through consultation]	
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises) ¹		[Indicate as: Lead executing agency; secondary executing agency; one of the beneficiaries; through consultations]	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date		10/21/2016	
Effectiveness date / project start date		8/25/2017	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		8/24/2022	
Actual date of project completion ²		12/24/2022	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M) ³
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.137	0.137 ⁴
	Co-financing	-	-
GEF Project Grant		3.638	3.595
Co-financing	IA own	0.200	0.200
	Government	4.800	0.900
	Other multi-/bi-laterals	32.600	157.300
	Private sector	-	-
	NGOs/CBOs	-	-
	Other	-	-

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 Data source: PIR 2023 (p.3)

³ Data source: PIR 2023 (pp.37-38)

⁴ Data source: CEO Endorsement (October 2016, p.30)

Total GEF funding	3.775	3.595
Total Co-financing	37.600 ⁵	UA ⁶
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)	41.375	UA
Terminal evaluation validation information		
TE completion date	10/31/2022	
Author of TE	Mr. João Pinto Ms. Helena Motta	
TER completion date	12/4/2024	
TER prepared by	Mariana Vidal Merino	
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>.

⁵ Data source: ProDoc (p.2); PIR2023 (p.3)

⁶ Note: TE (p. 70) indicates a co-financing of USD 33.1 million. The PIR 2023, that was prepared after the TE, indicates different amounts of total co-financing: 158.4 million (PIR 2023, pp.37-38) and USD 63.3 million (PIR2023, p.3). See section 5.1 of this review.

2. Summary of Project Ratings

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

3. Project Objectives and theory of change

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The direct Global Environmental Benefits to be generated by the project included avoided deforestation of 6,840 hectares of the diverse Miombo forest ecosystems and 1.49 million tons of CO₂ equivalent worth of emissions related to deforestation and degradation. The project was also to generate indirect Global Environmental Benefits through integrating payment for ecosystem services in a national forest and wildlife revenue sharing mechanism, thus helping to mainstream biodiversity conservation into the country's development policy framework (ProDoc, p.3).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

In addition to supporting the sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife, the development of a payment for ecosystem services (PES) scheme was expected to improve local peoples' livelihoods (TE, p.11).

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)?

Following the recommendations of the MTR the following changes were implemented: (i) the Theory of Change and the results framework were revised and became effective from February 2021 onwards (TE, p.33); (ii) the project implementation area was reduced from 7 to 4 districts to align with project's team proposed strategy (PIR 2023, p.30).

The TE (p.28) also reports on the cancellation or postponement of some project's activities, particularly under Components 2 and 3. For instance, within Component 2, the assessment of capacity needs for sustainable land management practices and the Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) was initially scheduled for year 2 but got deferred to year 3. The training programs on Payment for Environmental Services (PES) intended for government staff and NGOs were initially slated for years 1 and 2 but ultimately took place in year 4. The planned exchange visit on PES to a relevant country for Mozambique was canceled. Additionally, the two plenary meetings scheduled with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambézia to discuss RSM and PES were called off due to the project's failure to sufficiently engage local stakeholders in provincial discussions (TE, p.28).

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.

Deforestation, forest degradation and fragmentation caused by shifting cultivation and unsustainable timber and charcoal exploitation, as well as uncontrolled forest fires, are reducing the capacity of the forests of Mozambique to deliver ecosystem services (CEO Endorsement, p.6). Over the past two decades, Mozambique has developed several laws, policies, strategies, programs and action plans addressing conservation and sustainable management of the country's natural forests, as well as mechanisms for sharing revenues of commercial forestry and wildlife conservation activities with local communities. However, the effective implementation of this mechanism has not been achieved by the Government due to two main problems: (i) the lack of an adequate enabling policy and regulatory environment leading to poor law enforcement and partial implementation of regulations, reinforced by a lack of awareness of decision-makers on the potential for Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) to contribute to ecosystem conservation and restoration as well as rural people's livelihoods; and (ii) the RSM related regulations are interpreted in very different ways by different stakeholders at different levels (TE, p.10).

In response to the above problems and challenges, the objective of the proposed project is to: "promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems through improvement of the existing revenue sharing mechanism that supports sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local peoples' livelihoods". This objective aims to be achieved by: (i) providing the government-financed Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) with a legal basis; (ii) improving the local capacity to measure and verify conservation impacts; and (iii) assisting local communities in developing capacities and engaging in income generation activities that are in line with ecosystem conservation principles (TE, p.11).

At the impact level, the project assumes that the Government of Mozambique will develop an integrated landscape management which includes principles of sustainable use and conservation of forests and that the improved forestry and wildlife revenue sharing mechanism will be aligned with the national REDD+ MRV system under development by MITADER with the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) assistance (TE, p.13).

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
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The TE assesses the project's relevance and coherence as **Highly Satisfactory** whereas this review provides a rating of **Satisfactory**. The project was consistent with relevant national policies, legislation and strategic priorities, as well as aligned with FAO's country programming and GEF 5 funding cycle priorities. The needs of local communities were well addressed. Initially, the project's log-frame did not include indicators for outputs, but this was corrected based on MTR recommendation.

The project was relevant to the Agenda 2030 (SDG), FAO's regional Priority 4 (Climate action and sustainable natural resource management), and its country programming framework in Mozambique. It was also relevant to the GEF-5 focal areas priorities. Additionally, the project aligns with the Government's priorities, particularly the Government's Five-Year Plan (PQG 2020-2024), which includes the sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation and reduce deforestation as national priorities, and the National Development Strategy (END 2015-2035), where sustainable management of natural resources is also identified as a critical factor for country's development (TE, p.xi). The project built on synergies and complementarities with other projects and different REDD+ programs underway in the country (TE, p.29). By offering opportunities to generate income while ensuring the sustainability of forest resources, the project effectively addresses the needs of local communities. Although the internal design of the project initially exhibited coherence, a conditional approach to achieving expected outcomes limited its strategic relevance. This was rectified at midterm, emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of local communities in conjunction with improving the legal framework. Despite political, climate, and health-related events during implementation, the project's relevance remained unchanged, as the overall country context continued to be conducive to forest conservation and the promotion of ecosystem services (TE, p.xi,15).

4.2 Effectiveness	MS
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The TE rates the project's effectiveness as **Moderately Satisfactory**, and this review concurs. Level of outcomes achieved was generally close to the targets. The majority of the targets were met or almost met but some were not.

The TE (p.xii) notes that the targets for outputs in Component 1 were fully met; however, there could have been a stronger involvement of the National Directorate of Agriculture and Silviculture (DINAF) in delivering technical assistance and drafting legal proposals. In Component 2, targets for outputs were only partially achieved (output 2.3), and the number of people trained was very limited. Conversely, targets for outputs in Component 3 were nearly fully attained, with the choice of working with communities through a comprehensive "package" of ecosystem services and the selection of Service Providers deemed appropriate.

The Results matrix (TE, p. 71) shows that, under Outcome 1, two out of three indicators were almost fully attained, and one was not achieved; under Outcome 2, one indicator was nearly attained, and one was not; under Outcome 3, two indicators were achieved and two were nearly achieved.

Progress has been observed in technical and policy discussions concerning the revision of the Revenue Sharing Mechanism legal framework and the incorporation of the Payment for Environmental Services concept. These discussions now involve eight different ministries, with some initial policy dialogue achievements credited to another project, FAO UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ. However, the approval of the Forest Law and its regulations remains incomplete, and payments to communities are sporadic, posing a potential threat to the project's impact. While there is advancement in understanding the PES concept, the results in terms of strengthening human capacity are modest (TE, p.xii).

The direct Global Environmental Benefits aimed at the beginning of the project included avoided deforestation of 6,840 hectares of the diverse Miombo forest ecosystems and 1.49 million tons of CO2 equivalent worth of emissions related to deforestation and degradation. Progress towards the achievement of these targets was not monitored, and hence their achievement was not assessed.

4.3 Efficiency	MS
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Overall assessment of project efficiency is **Moderately Satisfactory**, and this review concurs. The project had only minor deviations from the initially proposed timeline; however, its cost-effectiveness was limited, especially regarding high expenditures on salaries and consultants, given the low materialization of results.

The project started on August 25, 2017, and was set to finish on August 24, 2022. A 3-month project extension until December 24, 2022, was requested and approved to allow for a smooth finalization of the project activities. The TE notes that the project faced challenges due to various external factors such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, the COVID-19 pandemic, and others. These factors substantially impacted the project, disrupting its initial planning and necessitating successive adjustments. While the project leveraged synergies and complementarities with other projects, the delayed initiation of Component 3 hindered its efficiency since its activities would have benefited from starting at the very beginning of the project so that more time would be available to implement and consolidate community work (TE, p.xii).

The total project budget was USD 41.2 million⁷, with a GEF grant of USD 3.6 million and co-financing by the Government and multi-/bi-lateral organizations of USD 37.6 million. As of August 2022, the GEF grant was financially executed at a rate of 93%, which is considered satisfactory given that the project was approaching completion with 92% of the implementation time already elapsed. (TE, p.36). For the same period, the reported materialized co-financing was USD 33.1 million⁸. The TE (pp.27-28) notes that about USD 1.8 million was spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a USD 3.6 million budget. This means that 50% of the total budget was spent on human resources, including staff and consultants. These

⁷ Excluding the PPG

⁸ The latest available data from the last PIR (2023) indicate two divergent amounts of co-financing, 158.4 million (PIR 2023, pp.37-38) and USD 63.3 million (PIR2023, p.3). The former number has been considered for filling out section 1 of this validation document. The TE (p.37) notes that the co-financing reported throughout the project implementation was clearly overestimated.

costs appear excessive, particularly given the modest progress in the outcomes and outputs of Components 1 and 2.

4.4 Outcome	MS
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The TE assesses the achievement of project outcomes as **Satisfactory**, whereas this review considers the achievement of project outcomes as **Moderately Satisfactory**. Overall, the outcomes achieved were lower than targets, although some were achieved. The outcomes were generally relevant, but cost-effectiveness was low.

Key outcomes related to environment, human well-being, and enabling conditions are summarized below:

- A. Environment. None reported. However, the TE (p.xiv) notes that the practices adopted by communities, such as agro-forestry, beekeeping, and establishment of anti-fire brigades, are more sustainable and contribute to preserving biodiversity and reducing deforestation.
- B. Human well-being. None reported. However, the TE notes that the project introduced several sustainable natural resource management practices to improve their livelihoods, such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption (TE, p. xiv). At TE, the results of the endline survey were not yet available and therefore it was not possible to assess the actual percentage of households that reported revenue based sustainable alternative income-generating activities (TE, p.73).
- C. Enabling conditions
 - Policy, Legal & Institutional Development. None reported although the TE (p.xiv) highlights that the results achieved by the project may lead to broad changes in the enabling environment towards changing the legal and regulatory frameworks (TE, p. xiv). The project aimed at incorporating Revenue Sharing Mechanism (RSM) and Payment for Environmental Services (PES) concepts into laws and regulations. Even though significant progress was made on this regard, at TE the proposed changes were yet to be approved (TE, p.71).
 - Individual & Institutional Capacity-Building. The project managed to introduce several sustainable natural resource management practices in the target communities that contributed to increasing their capacities of the communities (TE, p.xii) and access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods, such as income generation, access to credit, and food consumption (TE, p. xiv). The TE (p.xii) also mentions evidence indicating that communities exhibit greater readiness for PES; therefore, impact prospects at the community level are promising once the PES become operational.
 - Knowledge Exchange & Learning. There is progress towards a better understanding of the PES concept by decision-makers from different government sectors (TE, p.xiv). The project adequately systematized and documented its results, lessons learned and success stories and managed to produce and deliver several knowledge materials which were useful for disseminating lessons learned and can also be helpful to support the scaling up of project results (TE, p. xiii).
 - Multistakeholder Interactions. Progress was made in the technical and policy discussions towards revising the RSM legal framework and including the PES concept (TE, p.xii). The Inter-ministerial Working Group was successfully created with eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions, and a draft document to guide the sectors

on PES "rules of the game" has been delivered to DINAF (TE, p. xiii). A specific partnership with the private sector through AGRIMEL proved particularly successful as this company played a pivotal role in purchasing honey from the communities. This contribution significantly supported the entire honey value chain. (TE, p. xiii).

D. Unintended outcomes. None reported.

4.5 Sustainability	ML
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The TE rates the project sustainability as **Moderately Likely**, and this review concurs. There are some risks to sustainability, particularly related to financial resources, and they may have some effect on the continuation of benefits if they materialize. However, the probability of materialization of these risks is relatively low. The TE outlines the following risks that, if materialized, may affect the continuation of the project's benefits:

Financial resources. The project strategy for financial sustainability assumed that the Revenue Sharing Mechanism would be improved, thus leading to a more regular flow of financial resources to communities. However, despite some advances in political and technical discussions, payments of the 20% to communities remained incipient. Besides the forestry sector, no visible advances in other sectors, such as mining, tourism, and energy, would point to increased revenues from fees or licenses to communities. However, important REDD+ programs were underway in Zambézia Province, which contemplate Payment for Environmental Services mechanisms (TE, p.30).

Sociopolitical. Project beneficiaries improved their livelihoods. Activities such as beekeeping were generating income, which was guaranteed by the purchase of honey by AGRIMEL. The same was observed regarding the savings and credit groups, which were operating with an increasing volume of savings in almost all communities and granting small credits (interest rate 10%) to community members (TE, p.31). At TE, the project didn't have an exit strategy, which would have been important to consolidate results and to leave a road map for the public institutions and other stakeholders involved (TE, p.31). An e-survey conducted as part of the TE showed that 84% of respondents considered that some project benefits could continue in the long term, while only 9% deemed that the project results were not sustainable (TE, p.29).

Institutional framework and governance. An inter-ministerial group was established with support from the project, including representation from eight government sectors. Still, due to the ad hoc nature of this group, its continuation was unlikely without external financial support. At the central level, particularly in DINAF, many organizational gaps in planning, budgeting, monitoring, and communication needed to be strengthened further. In addition, the high turnover of Government staff and the low level of public budget allocation to the forest sector posed risks to institutional sustainability (TE, p.31).

Environmental. The main risks to environmental sustainability stemmed from deforestation, soil erosion, and uncontrolled wildfires in the Zambézia landscape. Project-introduced sustainable natural resource management practices helped mitigate these risks. Beekeeping raised community awareness about

biodiversity preservation, and integrated fire management techniques, disseminated by trained anti-fire brigades, showed promise in reducing wildfires. Although conservation agriculture through agroforestry systems took time to consolidate, communities adopted techniques for increased resilience to climate change. There was evidence that beneficiaries would sustain beekeeping for income. However, the aquaculture model tested wasn't viable for beneficiaries due to challenges in restocking fishponds and obtaining sufficient feed locally, making the purchase of industrial feed or alevins impractical (TE, p.30).

Adoption of GEF initiatives at scale: Not reported. However, the project was closely aligned with a government flagship initiative that was being implemented in the same target Province of Zambézia, the Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Program (ZILMP), which aims at Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in the same Districts as the project. The ZILMP is funded by the Government through a grant received from the Forest Investment Program (FIP) financed by the World Bank (TE, p.12).

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 total co-financing amount included in the GEF CEO endorsement was USD 37.6 million. As of June 2022, the TE (p.70) reports a materialized co-financing of USD 33.1 million. As of June 2023, the last PIR (2023), which followed the TE, reports a materialized co-financing of USD 63.3 million (PIR 2023, p.3) and USD 158.4 million (PIR2023, p.38). It further notes that a significant increase in co-financing was made available to the Zambézia Integrated Landscape Management Program from additional sources by the Government, a bilateral aid agency (JICA) and a multi-lateral agency (World Bank).

The TE notes that the approach used by the project to estimate co-financing led to overestimated figures. The procedure to report the co-financing was based on the information provided by the different partners, including the Government, but mainly the World Bank through its ongoing REDD+ programs in the Zambezia Province, which account for several million dollars. Overall, it was assumed that the resources from those REDD+ programs should be considered as co-financing because of their thematic relation and implicit synergies with the objectives of this project. However, it was not reasonable to assume that all resources available in the REDD+ program were, in fact, being (directly or indirectly) channeled to support its activities, as the reported co-finance suggested (TE, p.37). The presence of important REDD+ programs in Zambézia Province, which contemplate Payment for Environmental Services mechanisms, will play an essential role in the continuity of the Revenue Sharing Mechanism for communities (TE, p.30).

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 project started on August 25, 2017, and was set to finish on August 24, 2022. A 3-month project extension until December 24, 2022, was requested and approved to allow for a smooth finalization of the project activities. The TE notes that the project faced challenges due to various external factors such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, General Elections, the COVID-19 pandemic, and others. These factors substantially impacted the project, disrupting its initial planning and necessitating successive adjustments. While the project leveraged synergies and complementarities with other projects, the delayed initiation of Component 3 hindered its efficiency since its activities would have benefited from starting at the very beginning of the project so that more time would be available to implement and consolidate community work (TE, p.xii).

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.

Partnerships were established with a wide range of stakeholders, including high engagement of local authorities and fruitful collaboration with the private sector (in the case of beekeeping) (TE, p.38).

The TE (pp.39-40) assesses the project's partnerships and stakeholder engagement as highly satisfactory. The project successfully established partnerships with various government sectors, actively involving them in the steering committee. This engagement enhanced ownership of the project's strategy by enabling participation in decision-making processes. The partnerships with service providers were deemed appropriate, demonstrating strong technical expertise and effective capacity for community mobilization. The strategy of entering into Letters of Agreement (LoAs) with district governments increased ownership and encouraged them to assume greater responsibility for overseeing work at the community level. A partnership with the private sector, specifically with AGRIMEL, proved particularly successful. This company facilitated the purchase of honey from communities and supported the entire honey value chain.

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.

None reported.

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	MS
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The TE rates the M&E design at entry as **Highly Satisfactory**. This review assesses the M&E design as **Moderately Satisfactory**. On balance, the project M&E plan was solid. The specified indicators were generally appropriate, and arrangements for the M&E plan implementation were adequate. The alignment of the M&E plan with the project theory of change is solid. There were areas where the M&E plan could be strengthened, but overall, the plan was adequate.

The monitoring & evaluation system and procedures were adequate, allowing for a correct follow-up of activities, data collection and information on progress, reporting and analysis to support corrective measures (TE, pp. xii-xiii).

The original Results Framework did not include indicators for outputs, only for the project objective and outcomes, and there was not enough information to measure qualitative indicators due to the absence of custom criteria for their assessment (TE, p.33). Additionally, the initial project coverage was not realistic, and the project assumed the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised; this assumption proved deleterious to project results. These weaknesses were detected at midterm and led to the revision of the Theory of Change and the Results Framework. These changes became effective from February 2021 onwards (TE, pp. xii-xiii).

6.2 M&E Implementation	HS
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The TE rates the M&E implementation at entry as **Highly Satisfactory**, and this review concurs. The M&E plan implementation was excellent. Weaknesses in the M&E plan were addressed promptly. M&E activities were conducted on time, and data from M&E was used to improve project implementation.

Results of the e-survey conducted as part of the TE show that 72% of the respondents considered the project's M&E of good quality. The TE also found that the M&E system captured information that allowed tracking project activities and achievement of results. The M&E system was centrally managed from the FAO country office. The monitoring officer was experienced and dedicated; she was primarily responsible for these tasks and had continued support from the project facilitator and the technical officer for Component 3 (TE, p.34).

The Project Progress Reports (PPR) and the annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR) were submitted on time and provided adequate information to track the project's progress towards achieving intended results and the status of the implementation of activities. When necessary, corrective measures were proposed in the PPR and PIR. It was found that the annual work plans had been systematically adjusted to respond to changes in context to modify the project's strategy accordingly, as occurred with re-scheduling some activities to face restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. A mid-term review was conducted in 2020, and the status of implementation of the recommendations was monitored by the project (TE, p.34).

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
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The TE rates the quality of project implementation as **Moderately Satisfactory**, and this review concurs. The Implementing Agency of this project was FAO. It supported the project design, accessing the GEF funding, and implementing activities and provided an overall assurance role.

FAO effectively oversaw and supervised the implementation of work plans and agreements, offering technical and methodological guidance for project interventions. The organization also provided support in preparing and reviewing progress reports and administered financial resources appropriately. This is evident from the analysis of various progress reports (PPR and PIR) and back-to-office reports from national and international consultants. The project team appreciated FAO-Rome's oversight. Regular interactions with the Lead Technical Officer played a crucial role in guiding overall project implementation, reviewing work plans, terms of reference, progress reports, and the quality of deliverables (TE, p,35).

However, interviews suggest that interactions with the GEF focal point in Mozambique, as well as the GEF Funding Liaison Officer, were less frequent, particularly in the initial project phases. This was reflected in inadequate co-financing reporting, only rectified in the project's final year. While the operational arrangement facilitated decision-making, housing the Project Management Unit (PMU) at FAO instead of DINAF limited project performance. Financial management adhered to FAO rules and procedures (TE, p,35).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	MS
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The TE rates the quality of project execution as **Moderately Satisfactory**, and this review concurs. The executing agency for this project was the National Directorate of Forests (DINAF), and through both the Provincial Forests services under the Ministry of Land and Environment (MTA) and the District Economic Activities Service (SDAE) at district level.

The project's operational arrangement was adequate to support decision making and facilitate the implementation of activities. DINAF was responsible for ensuring coordination with other relevant initiatives government sectors, both in Zambézia Province and at national level. A project task force was set up comprising the Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer, the GEF Funding Liaison Officer and other

relevant technical staff, being responsible for the coordination and daily management of activities. In terms of decision-making, a project steering committee was set up, which included representatives from various Government bodies and FAO Mozambique. Various bilateral and multilateral donors also took part in the steering committee as observers.

Originally, the project design envisioned locating the Project Management Unit (PMU) at DINAF. In the first year, the technical adviser and consultants worked directly at DINAF. However, in 2020, the PMU transitioned to teleworking due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite ministries returning to normal work routines by the end of 2020, the PMU remained in telework. This decision potentially impacted project performance by hindering continuous discussions on progress and technical advancements and reducing the efficiency of activities (TE, p.35).

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 outlines the following lessons:

- Working with communities requires a constant presence on the ground.
- Partnerships with the private sector contribute to greater effectiveness and increase prospects for sustainability in working with local communities.
- Signing Letters of Agreement with the Government, including the allocation of a small package of financial resources, significantly contributes to greater engagement, commitment, and ownership by the public institutions.
- The absence of the institutional/organizational strengthening dimension hinders the effectiveness of capacity building strategies towards Government's institutions.
- The start of community interventions components cannot depend on the results of project components focused on improving legal frameworks.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The recommendations as provided by the TE are presented below:

R1. Identify/map the most outstanding communities/Natural Resource Management Communities in terms of results achieved and flag them to The National Fund for Sustainable Development (FNDS) as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programmers [Owner: FAO, DINAF and FNDS].

R2. Together with the District Authorities, prepare an "exit plan" for the four Districts benefiting from the project in order to ensure that communities supported by the project continue to benefit from a minimum technical follow-up, thus ensuring the investment and effort applied is not lost [Owner: FAO and Local Authorities].

R3. Systematize the approach, experience and good results achieved with the "Beekeeping" and "Savings and Credit Groups" practices to reinforce the learning dimension of the project [Owner: FAO].

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?		S
2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?		HS
3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?		HS
4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project's theory of change?		HS
5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?		HS
6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?	The TE assesses the project's relevance to GEF and country priorities. It reports performance on all outcome targets, although there were some minor inconsistencies in the reported achievement of targets. The TE assesses efficiency in using project resources and discusses factors.	S
7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?	The TE identifies risks that may affect sustainability but does not indicate the likelihood of key risks materializing. The report indicates overall likelihood of sustainability.	S

8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?		HS
9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?		HS
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?		HS
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?		HS
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	The TE presents lessons based on project experience but does not discuss their applicability. The TE presents recommendations and clearly specifies what needs to be done and by whom.	S
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	The TE supports ratings mostly with sufficient evidence. The evidence provided is credible.	S
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?		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

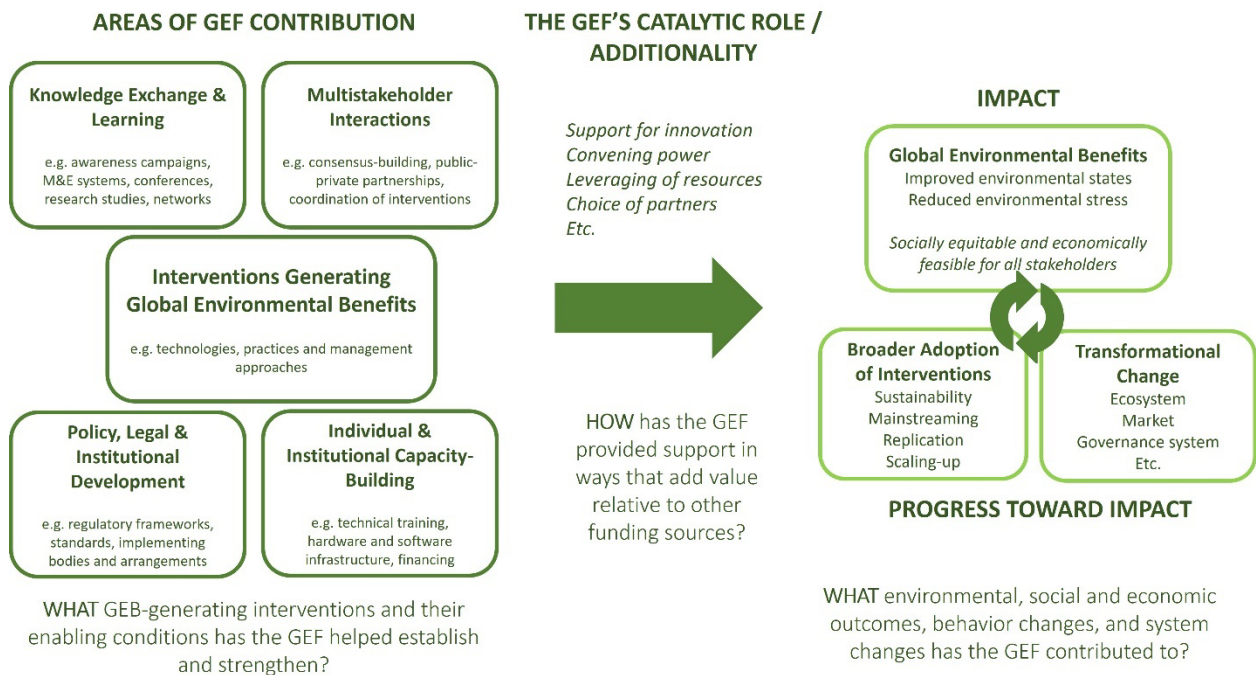


Figure 1. The GEF IEO's updated Theory of Change Framework on how the GEF achieves impact

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 OPSS (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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-evaluation-policy-2019
Environmental outcomes	Changes in environmental indicators that could take the following forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.gefio.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 <i>single intervention</i> , 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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.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.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/council-documents/files/c-55-me-inf-01.pdf