

Terminal Evaluation Validation form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID	5549		
GEF Agency project ID	GCP/PHI/062/GEF		
GEF Replenishment Phase	GEF-5		
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)	FAO		
Project name	Dynamic Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agro-biodiversity in Traditional Agro-ecosystems of the Philippines		
Country/Countries	Philippines		
Region	Asia, Middle East & Pacific		
Focal area	Biodiversity		
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives	SO2: Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner		
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework	Standalone		
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID	N/A		
Executing agencies involved	Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agriculture Research		
NGOs/CBOs involvement	NGOs: consultation Jaime V. Ongpin Foundation: secondary executing agency Lake Sebu Indigenous Women and Farmers Association, Hungduan Heirloom Rice Producer Organization, Hingyon Hingland Agrobiodiversity Producers and Processors Organization: beneficiaries		
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises) ¹	Private actors: consultation		
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date	10/27/2015		
Effectiveness date / project start date	5/1/2016		
Expected date of project completion (at start)	12/31/2019		
Actual date of project completion	12/31/2021		
Project Financing			
	At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)	
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.1	0.1
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		2.183	2.183
Co-financing	IA own	0.458	0 ²
	Government	10.962	5.4
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.1	0.1
	Private sector		
	NGOs/CBOs		
	Other		
Total GEF funding		2.283	2.283
Total Co-financing		11.519	5.5
Total project funding		13.803	7.783

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 The TE (p. 92) does not report the exact value of co-financing from FAO, because it was not able to verify it.

(GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		
Terminal evaluation validation information		
TE completion date	May 2022	
Author of TE	Gigi Manicad, Wilhelmina Pelegrina, Ivan Scot, and Amelie Solal	
TER completion date	12/7/2022	
TER prepared by	Emanuele Bigagli	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)	Neeraj Kumar Negi	

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

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review ³	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	MS ⁴	MS	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes		ML	ML	ML
M&E Design		MU	MU	MS
M&E Implementation		MU	MU	MU
Quality of Implementation		MU	MU	MU
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 objective of the project is to enhance, expand and sustain the dynamic conservation practices that sustain globally significant agro-biodiversity in traditional eco systems of the Philippines (Project Document, p. 49; TE, p. 94).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Project Document and the TE do not specify any development objectives as distinguished from the global environmental objectives.

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)?

The PIR 2018 (p. 32) and PIR 2019 (p. 40) report the following changes in project outcomes and outputs:

- Outcome 2.2 – increase of total number of community-based seed/gene banks from 9 to 17 structures, to cover 100% of pilot communities implementing in situ ABD conservation, and to answer the request of farmers and indigenous peoples’ leaders that each pilot barangay should have one CSB.
- Outcome 2.4 – reduction of some outcomes: from 350 farmers with increased income of 10%, to 100 farmers with increased income of 5%; from 350 to 200 farmers applying for producers’ labels; from 55 top 25 tonnes of rice per year labeled.
- Outcome 3.2 – expansion of areas revised from “other provinces and regions” to “other municipalities” of South Cotabato and Ifugao, within the same regions in region 12 and Cordillera, to optimize the replicability and proximities of pilot areas as showcase of best practices.
- Output 2.4.1 – Lake Sebu opted for the procurement of carabaos instead of micro-tillers, based on the results of the FPIC consultations.
- Output 2.4.2 – revision of “three traditional varieties registered with the National Seed Industry Council”, to “three varieties submitted to the National Seed Industry Council for registration”. Also, as the

³ The ratings of the TE are repeated because the TE was commissioned by the Office of Evaluation of the FAO.

⁴ The TE (p. 16) does not provide a rating for project outcomes. It rates “Overall assessment of project results” as Moderately Satisfactory.

target of 5,000 hectares in three municipalities covered by GI certification cannot be attained due to the absence of GI certification guidelines, the target of “two farmer groups covered by organic certification” was initially revised as “two farmer groups, practicing organic agriculture”, and then changed from “farmer groups” to “individual farmers” for organic agriculture certification (PIR 2020, p. 61)

- Output 3.2.1 – Due to the shortened period of the project, reduction from 4,000 farmers covered in ABD knowledge sharing in other parts of core provinces and regions elsewhere, to 2,000 farmers covered in Region CAR and Region 12.

These changes were based on untested assumptions and weak diagnosis. The main shortcomings include: (i) the omission of the landscape approach, which led to the lack of incorporation of some critical drivers of biodiversity loss (e.g., habitat loss, climate change) in areas related to integrated forest and water basin community management with farmlands and with indigenous natural resource management and agri-food systems; (ii) a shift from community-based systems for production and management of planting materials (community gene bank) to the prescribed 17 community seed banks, which was not guided by a systematic baseline and assessment of local and indigenous seed systems, nor by the formation of evidence to priority needs, and did not include the definition of clear and measurable conservation and sustainable use objectives for the 17 community seed banks (TE, p. 39).

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.

- Problem: inadequate appreciation of the full socio-economic and cultural value of traditional varieties.
- Assumptions: (i) farmers will conserve traditional rice varieties if they value them through deriving (higher) income through their marketing; (ii) by increasing rice production, through improved agronomy and through increasing the number of traditional rice varieties planted by the farmers, they will sell more rice and therefore, value and conserve the traditional rice varieties; (iii) the raising of awareness amongst policy makers, the creation of capacity for community-based conservation of agrobioforestry amongst farmers and the creation of market opportunities for traditional varieties, will lead to the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity; (iv) consumer awareness on the superior nutritional value of agricultural biodiversity will lead to consumer support, willingness to pay, and scaling up of agrobiodiversity conservation and use.
- Strategy: (1) Mainstreaming agrobiodiversity considerations into policy and legal frameworks, development strategies and institutional structures; (2) Pilot activities to enhance and expand dynamic conservation practices for agrobiodiversity in three pilot communities; (3) Dissemination of information, awareness raising and preparation for scaling-up, monitoring and evaluation.
- Outcomes: dynamic conservation practices that sustain globally significant agricultural biodiversity in traditional agro-ecosystems of the Philippines.

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 rates relevance as Satisfactory, and this review concurs. The project is aligned to GEF, FAO, and national objectives, plans and policies; its design is well-targeted and overall appropriate to achieve the desired outcomes, despite some limitations.

The project is highly relevant to global and national priorities as well as the needs of the beneficiaries (TE, p. 15). The project is aligned with the GEF's 2018-2022 Biodiversity Strategy, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Target 13 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the FAO's International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the FAO Philippines Country Strategy, related to the improvement in agricultural productivity within ecological limits and increasing agricultural-based enterprises focusing on the intensification of value chains and equitable use of natural resources (TE, pp. 35-37). At national level, the project is aligned with the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan 2015-2028 (TE, p. 37). It complements existing interventions (TE, p. 15)

The project design is highly innovative, relevant, and addressed the institutional fragmentation of agrobiodiversity conservation and use (TE, p. 15), potentially adding value to the dynamic conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (TE, p. 38). The TE (p. 39) highlights some limitations to project design, related to the small number of beneficiaries for knowledge sharing programs related to the project budget, and the removal from project design of the originally included market feasibility studies and assessment of return on investment. Moreover, the project's rationale in relation to the purpose of conservation and use of traditional varieties was unclear, as there was a lack of focus in the operations of the Community Seed Banks, a key component of the project's on-farm agrobiodiversity conservation strategy (TE, p. 46). Finally, the changes in project design during implementation were based on untested assumptions and weak diagnosis (TE, p. 39).

Also, the TE (p. 34) identified some limitations in the theory of change: limited appreciation of the farmers' need to consider adaptation of their plant and genetic resources for food and agriculture to rapidly changing environmental and market conditions; assumption, without varietal testing, that traditional varieties and landraces remain resilient to the increasingly virulent pests and diseases, and extreme climate shocks such as droughts; insufficient factoring in of land use issues, simply assuming that the limitations of the traditional varieties and landraces are on the demand side, but not addressing the supply side; lack of a perspective on addressing people's vulnerabilities to shocks, trends and seasonality; and lack of inclusion of climate change and variability as barriers to agricultural biodiversity conservation, and of the leveraging of agrobiodiversity for community-based disaster risk reduction and management (TE, p. 39).

4.2 Effectiveness	MS
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The TE rates effectiveness as Moderately Satisfactory, and this evaluation agrees. The project completed almost all outputs, and made important contributions to achieve the intended outcomes in Components 1 and 3, with some targets being exceeded, although outputs lagged behind and outcome achievement was lower in Component 2.

The project marked important achievements, and significantly contributed to addressing the fragmentation of institutional structures for the formulation and implementation of agrobiodiversity policies and laws (TE, p. 59). The TE (p. 15) reported the completion of 92% of its outputs with mixed results, and impressive policy outcomes. Major weaknesses were found in the technical/community interventions and challenges in communications (TE, p. 15). Further details by component are as follows:

Component 1 – the project marked a considerable achievement, having developed and steered processes for cross-cutting and intersectional policies, and developed local resolutions for mainstreaming agricultural biodiversity at local level. A model was established for institutional formation at both national and local level, as basis for scaling-up (TE, p. 58). Also, the project successfully contributed in strengthening institutional relationships between and among agencies for agrobiodiversity. Agrobiodiversity was mainstreamed also at local levels, providing the local government with a pathway to focus and undertake agricultural development in the uplands by working with farmers and indigenous communities and their agricultural biodiversity (TE, p. 42). A policy space was created for discussion among institutions supporting a common agenda, strengthening institutional relationships among agencies (TE, p. 43)

Component 2 – the project organized or revived more than 10 peoples’ organizations, farmers associations and women’s groups within and across communities (TE, p. 44); however, it made limited contributions to enhance and expand the dynamic conservation practices for agrobiodiversity in the three pilot communities, with limited functionality and uptake from farmers of the community seed banks, demonstration farms, and farm machinery, and low volume and sales of agrobioforestry products (TE, p. 43). Especially, the viability of the 17 community seed banks is questioned by the low membership, low stock and usage of seeds, low number of rice varieties, and farmers’ concern for reliability and quality of seeds (TE, p. 48). Also, there was lack of leverage of indigenous’ knowledge on seed selection and storage, nor traditional practices that these should complement (TE, p. 70). Moreover, the project established 15 demonstration farms with 86 farmer co-operators, which had a low harvest, lack of data on varietal performance, and lack of learning objectives for farmers. Especially, the rice harvest from demonstration farms, intended to supply the community seedbanks, was low, mainly due to the fact that traditional varieties may be planted only once a year, and due to the impacts of climate change (TE, p. 50). The distribution of farm tools and machineries was performed; however, the farmers unanimously provided critical feedback due to delays in delivery, and their unsuitability for the environment and users (TE, pp. 50-51). As for Outcome 2.3, related to expansion of knowledge among local decision makers and community members, several training, information, and mentoring sessions were delivered, exceeding the target number of farmers (TE, p. 52). Finally, enterprises were established to improve opportunities to derive economic, livelihood and food security benefits from agrobioforestry conservation, although

financial viability and added value of these enterprises were not clear, and interventions for traditional rice varieties produced negligible results with very low production and sale of rice cookies and grains, due to wrong project assumptions (TE, p. 54).

Component 3 – the project made substantial contribution, having raised awareness among policy-makers on the socio-economic value of agrobiodiversity, as shown by the number of policy documents issued at all levels and despite the lack of reliable indicators to measure the achievement of this outcome, as well as among women from indigenous communities (TE, p. 55). However, limited progress was marked on public and consumer awareness, due to unclear communication objectives and strategy that resulted in mixed messages not matched to target audience. On the contrary, remarkable achievements were made in bringing different institutions together and establish a model for institutional formation for the purposes of scaling up agricultural biodiversity promotion in other provinces and regions (TE, p. 58).

4.3 Efficiency	MS
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The TE assesses efficiency as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this review rates it as Moderately Satisfactory. The project was overall cost-effective despite some limitations, and was extended twice due to initial implementation delays and the impact of COVID-19.

The project spending was relatively on track, reaching 90% after the approved no-cost extension. However, there were considerable delays in staff recruitment, some of which outside the control of the project, and further delays in crucial project activities such as the procurement of farm equipment and machineries, and in the delivery of labels for the enterprise products (TE, p. 61). More in detail, activities started only in 2017, due to national elections in the Philippines and the consequent change of Government, and the leadership changes occurred among the identified government agencies (PIR 2018, p. 33). Other delays regarded the time taken to issue the independent Free Prior and Informed Consent Certificates of Precondition for involvement of the various indigenous groups in the target areas, a prerequisite for any project activities involving the concerned groups (MTR, p. 23). A further extension to 31 December 2021 was granted to face the negative impacts on project implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The TE (p. 61) questions the project’s cost-effectiveness, as the number of target beneficiaries, although exceeding the set targets, were considerably below standards, even for a pilot. This was tied to the fact that the budget and operations were disproportional for a pilot, compared to what was delivered. Also, the TE (p. 62) evaluated the budget assigned to communication activities as insufficient.

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

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

The TE does not assess outcomes as separated from effectiveness (rated as Moderately Satisfactory). This review assesses overall outcome to be Moderately Satisfactory. The project was relevant to GEF, FAO, and national objectives; it was well-designed but with some limitations, achieved the majority of targets, and was adequately cost-effective although there were delays in implementation.

The key outcomes and impacts are summarized as follows:

Environmental impacts. The project had meagre results at field/technical level for conservation and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity (TE, p. 59), mainly because of the limited viability of community seedbanks (TE, p. 48), and the lack of leverage of indigenous’ knowledge on seed selection and storage and related traditional practices (TE, p. 70).

Socioeconomic impacts. The project raised ownership and commitment from the local government for planning and governance mechanisms on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use (TE, p. 44). Also, it improved opportunities for local communities, especially indigenous women-farmers, to derive economic, livelihood, and food security benefits from agrobiodiversity conservation, by creating community enterprises (TE, p. 53).

Enabling conditions. The project significantly contributed to addressing the fragmentation of institutional structures that are crucial to the formulation and implementation of agrobiodiversity policies and laws in the Philippines, developing and steering processes for cross-cutting and intersectional policies (TE, p. 41), and towards the establishment of national and local agricultural heritage sites (TE, p. 16). Agrobiodiversity was mainstreamed also at local levels, considerably increasing awareness and knowledge among local policy-makers about the full socio-economic value of agrobiodiversity (TE, p. 55). Finally, farmers’ knowledge on agrobiodiversity conservation practices and their relation to cultural heritage was improved (TE, p. 51).

Unintended impacts. The TE reports no unintended impact.

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

The TE assesses sustainability as Moderately Likely, and this review concurs. There are some sociopolitical and environmental risks which may have an impact on project sustainability, but the benefits will be more likely to continue than abate.

The TE (p. 9, 62) indicates good prospects of sustainability of project results at the policy level, promising prospects on the financial side, and significant risk in terms of infrastructures, interventions, and pilots. The project drafted an exit plan, intended as a sustainability plan (TE, p. 63).

Financial. The local government units have allocated budget for key project activities and some supporting policy instruments, although changes in the political landscape may change the financial risks related outlook (TE, p. 17).

Sociopolitical. The TE (p. 63) notes a strong sense of ownership and commitment from project beneficiaries, specifically from indigenous women; however, the narrow number of beneficiaries is considered as not limiting the risks of elite capture. Also, there was inadequacy in safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples for special measures to control, develop and protect their plant genetic resources, seeds, derivatives and associated indigenous knowledge (TE, p. 17). The heavy investment on capacity building is not likely to be self-sustaining given the lack of trainers' training, and usable and adaptable training materials (TE, p. 61). Moreover, the role of national and local elections makes the political prospects of the project uncertain (TE, p. 62).

Institutional framework and governance. The Department of Agriculture agreed to be the institutional host of the project after termination (TE, p. 63). Moreover, the 17 Community seed banks have been legally turned over to the competent institution. However, it is unclear if there are sufficient local capacities and demand to operate and maintain the community seedbanks of indigenous people (TE, p. 63). To scale up project activities, the technical weaknesses should be addressed and the technical and policy components should be integrated and sustain/inform each other (TE, p. 63).

Environmental. FAO did not leverage its expertise on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use; as a result, the minimal achievements of the community seedbanks did not demonstrate the added value of the project in this respect (TE, p. 63), whose sustainability is therefore uncertain.

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?

As of October 2021, the co-financing delivered was 47.65% of the amount committed, mainly due to the shift of government priority to the response to COVID-19. It came mostly in-kind from partner national government agencies and local government units. Even so, it was almost double the amount of GEF financing, thanks to the good institutional arrangement and expressed commitment of various partner agencies, thus demonstrating the leveraging power of FAO and the project.

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?

Due to the delays in project start because of the change in government after general election, leadership changes among government agencies, a no-cost project extension of one year was requested (PIR 2018, p. 33) and approved (PIR 2019, p. 41). A further extension up to 30 June 2021 was proposed by the MTR to reconcile project duration with expected outputs and the approved workplan (PIR 2020, p. 62). Finally, a further extension to 31 December 2021 was approved because of the situation generated by the COVID-19 pandemic that continued to affect project implementation in both project sites (PIR 2021, p. 90).

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

The TE (p. 71) notes a high level of ownership and participation among the indigenous communities and their leaders. The various indigenous peoples in the pilot areas felt that they were involved only in technical activities, and not adequately involved in policy issues nor they were consulted on the design, with a few having made minimal labor contribution to the construction of the Community Seed Banks (TE, p. 48). This resulted in a mix sense of ownership amongst the local leaders, the officers and members of the Community Seed Banks, who found the construction cost to be expensive, and felt that their local knowledge was not fully considered.

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

The midterm elections for all local government positions at municipal and provincial level, congressional representatives and half of senatorial seats, held in 2019, entailed a change of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) twice, while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) changed Secretary thrice. This change in leadership at national and local levels could have shifted interests and support to the project and accounted for a number of delays in the project implementation (TE, p. 32).

The lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic significantly restricted operations and impacted timelines during the fifth year of project implementation (TE, p. 61). It hit harder because of earlier inefficiencies of operation and monitoring (TE, p. 67). The project team adjusted their mode of operations, including using virtual meetings and telephone calls, limiting community meetings, activation of a health and safety protocol, observation of quarantine guidelines under the guidance of FAO HQ, and project implementation was delivered reasonably well (TE, p. 67).

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 M&E design as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this review rates it as Moderately Satisfactory. The M&E plan is practical and well-thought; it has clear, although in some cases limited, indicators. It specifies means of verification, baseline and targets, and underlying assumptions, the use of GEF tracking tools, and provides clear roles and responsibilities and a complete reporting schedule.

The M&E plan includes a periodic assessment of project implementation and performance and an evaluation of outcomes in terms of relevance and effectiveness. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, with indication of clear time-frame and indicative budget. Indicators include the indication of baseline and targets, means of verification, and underlining assumptions. Provisions are included for the finalization of the M&E plan after project start.

The indicators were largely based on activities, with little attention to monitor quality (TE, p. 18). No baseline was determined to one of the two indicators designed to measure the achievement of the project objective, namely “number of additional traditional varieties grown in target barangays” (TE, p. 94). Moreover, the project did not have a system in place to keep track of fundamental project data to inform performance and support the development of knowledge products, nor to capture, test, share and act on lessons learned (TE, p. 69). Also, there was a lack of logical chronological order of crucial diagnostic activities, which should have taken place at the beginning rather than the end of the project (TE, p. 61). The diagnostics activities should have informed the project’s prognosis and implementation, and guided the project’s monitoring and adaptive management. Finally, activities related to communication effectiveness and efficiency were not planned to be monitored (TE, p. 62).

6.2 M&E Implementation	MU
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The TE assesses M&E implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this review concurs. The implementation of the M&E plan did not follow the M&E plan and did not address adequately its shortcomings, despite some areas of good performance.

The M&E system regularly kept track of the activities, levels of spending and some outputs (TE, p. 64). The indicators were consistently monitored, although data on important components (e.g., utilization of community seedbanks and demonstration farms, enterprise business operations, and use of farm machineries) were not reported, and the tracking of target beneficiaries was weak and did not include data on diversity of indigenous people, number of trainings per individual, and their feedback to projects, nor any measure on audience reach and on the return on investment for the communication materials developed. Also, the M&E implementation had a major incoherence with project plans and results delivery (TE, p. 18). There were significant gaps in supervision and technical backstopping provided by FAO at system level (TE, p. 64). No actions were taken as a result of the environmental and social safeguard risks raised by the MTR, and no critical reflection based on monitoring data toward adaptation or changes in project activities. Reporting did not have a coherent logic in the chronology of activities.

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	MU
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The TE rates quality of implementation as Moderately Unsatisfactory, and this review concurs. The performance of the implementing agency was below expectations due to weaknesses in project supervision and monitoring, insufficient capacity to address emerging concerns, and delays in project implementation.

The project Lead Technical Officer and the Funding Liaison Officer, based in the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, had advisory role, while the Project Steering Committee was the deciding body and the Project Management and Coordination Unit was the operational body. To this respect, the TE (p. 67) notes that the necessary checks and balances for quality assurance among all these project bodies had significant gaps. The Lead Technical Officer reviewed and provided technical assistance to the project team, reviewed reports and knowledge products, monitored the technical implementation and overall concurrence with expectations of donors, beneficiaries and government agencies. In parallel, the Funding Liaison Officer provided monitoring support and oversight, which included reviewing and approving progress reports and budget revisions.

The TE (p. 60) notes that FAO Philippines ensured that the project implementation adhered to the GEF policies, providing oversight and monitoring support although with major gaps (TE, p. 65), due to the lack of competent technical and social expertise in agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use (TE, p. 60). In particular, it was unclear how changes in project design and implementation were communicated and approved, and who had oversight on quality standards. Moreover, FAO did not take final responsibilities to address problems and redirect the project (TE, p. 65). Although FAO provided backstopping support, the competent technical expertise on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use was missing (TE, p. 60). Finally, FAO had missed opportunities for adaptive management, and approved reports despite the consistent lack of important technical data (TE, p. 64).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	MS
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The TE assesses quality of execution as Moderately Satisfactory, and this review concurs. Project execution had some weakness but, overall, it met the expectation, demonstrating the capacity to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

The activities related to contracts and procurement, approval and start-up were executed relatively well, and the project execution adapted to the challenges and limitations posed by COVID-19 (TE, p. 18, 67).

However, the necessary agrobiodiversity expertise from project execution was not delivered; moreover, internal project execution was largely driven by reporting compliance rather than results (TE, p. 64).

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 (p. 84) proposes the following lessons and highlights the following good practices:

Lessons:

- In cases of severe drought, farmers reluctantly abandon their traditional rice production. For project interventions, baseline information is important to understand farmers' profile and vulnerabilities and their context specific decision-making rationale as to why they abandon and keep specific crops and crop varieties.
- Agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use need to be informed by the duality of the production systems of local farmers and indigenous communities whereby they use a diversity of agrobiodiversity, often both traditional and modern varieties, to adapt to vast and rapidly changing environments and markets.
- With climate change, traditional cultivars and landraces are facing increasing biotic and abiotic stresses so that their conservation and sustainable use should not be confined to storage and maintenance of varietal traits but should also consider crop improvements through e.g., enhancement and breeding.
- Project interventions on the conservations and sustainable use of agrobiodiversity such as community seed bank and seed fairs should be designed to complement, not replace, existing farmers' seed strategies and use of local knowledge. Community seeds banks and other interventions could add value to the seed strategies of the farmers, by increasing and complementing the diversity of reliable sources of seeds and corresponding knowledge.
- Seeds is an experience good, whereby farmers will definitively know the performance of the seeds, once the seeds have been planted and grown. Hence, bad performing seeds can be devastating for the livelihood of the farmers. Therefore, mutual trust in the quality of the seed material, reliability of knowledge and social relations are important component of farmers' livelihoods. In the case of the community seed banks, farmers are more likely to consistently deposit/share and/or borrow seeds if they are consistently assured of the quality, quantity and timeliness of the seeds in the community seedbanks. The quality, quantity and timeliness of the seeds in the community seedbanks can be assured by including: (i) demand-led objectives; (i) community governance, (iii) adequate technical support and linkages; and (iv) continuous technical practices such as farmer-led seed characterization, seed management, good record keeping, etc.

Good Practices:

- To adapt to rapidly changing environmental and market demand, indigenous communities combine the use of traditional and modern varieties for their dual farming systems. For example, they tend to annually plant a diversity of traditional rice varieties largely for home consumption; whilst they bi-annually plant modern crops and varieties largely for the market.
- Like many farmers and indigenous communities world-wide, the indigenous communities of Ifugao and Lake Sebu employ various seed security strategies for their traditional rice varieties: (i) they apply local knowledge in seed selection from standing crops on-farms; (ii) they apply indigenous techniques for storage of seeds at household levels; and (iii) as the need and/or interest arises, they also source, exchange or provide as gifts seeds with other farmers. They also share corresponding knowledge on seed traits, seed management and agronomic practices amongst other farmers, families, relatives, friends and through generations from (grand)parents to children.
- Seed fairs can provide good venues for wider groups of farmers to exchange seeds and knowledge. Seed fairs can also serve as vehicles for public awareness arising on agrobiodiversity conservation and sustainable use

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE (p. 13) proposes the following recommendations:

1. **Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards Risk.** It is a top priority to tackle the project's unsatisfactory performance in addressing the increased risk associated with the environmental and social safeguards and possible major gaps in the Free Prior Informed Consent-Memorandum of Agreement. The FAO Country Office as the budget holder, and the Project Management Coordinating Unit should immediately undertake a consultation process with the indigenous cultural communities and indigenous peoples of Hungduan and Hingyon Ifugao, and Lake Sebu, South Cotabato to formulate equitable actions with the necessary provisions within three months. The project should develop a plan with timetable and allocate budget and should include measures for cease and disclosure, address and redress, coordination and support.
2. **Quality of knowledge products.** A substantial budget has been allocated to knowledge products (which could be used as tools to help sustain the project results and serve as potential public goods). The evaluation recommends that committed knowledge products be delivered as finished products to the project stakeholders, particularly the indigenous communities and local government units, by the end of the project closure. This relates particularly to training materials and policy briefs.
3. **Exit Strategy: policy work.** To ensure that the achievements in policy and institutional formation are sustained and enabled to further get through the various policy approval processes, the evaluation recommends that FAO Country Office and Project Management and Coordination Unit develop, in coordination with the Office of the Under Secretary of Operations of the Department of Agriculture, by the end of the project, an exit strategy that includes: (i) mapping out the succeeding policy processes for the approval and implementation of the seed act and the Locally Important Agricultural Heritage Sites and Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage System, and agree on a course of action; (ii) make provisions to ensure that the policy progress of the project are reported to and reflected in the Philippine government compliance to the Philippine Plan to the CBD; (iii) liaise with and support the Philippine National Focal Point to the link and report the achievements of the project as part of the government's

compliance to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; (iv) The Project Management and Coordination Unit to communicate clearly to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous People and the Local Government Units and the communities that the project is definitely ending on June 2022. Discuss and document lessons learned; including sharing the results of the evaluation to the communities and across communities; (v) the Project Management and Coordination Unit have a consultative dialogue with the 17 pilot communities and the respective National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Cultural Communities/Indigenous People and the Local Government Units on the assessments of the viability, functionality and maintenance of the community seed banks, demonstration farms, farm equipment and the agrobiodiversity enterprises to assess what should be maintained and changes needed; (vi) For the livelihoods enterprise, facilitate linkages with the existing social enterprises or related LGU projects to gather continued support to the involved community members; as appropriate.

4. **To FAO and FAO GEF Coordination Unit.** Considering that the systems weakness has been a major factor that negatively affected the project performance, the evaluation recommends that for GEF projects on agrobiodiversity, FAO conduct a systems review focused on ensuring the delivery of coherent project design, provision of technical competence, project overview and supervision, compliance to quality standards, responsive Monitoring Evaluation and Learning, and outcome delivery for GEF projects. Along with improvements in future projects, this would also further advance FAO's added value in the technical and institutional innovation related to agrobiodiversity management in coherence with FAO's Strategic Framework and responsive to GEF's policy and objectives.

9. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

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

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

Criteria/indicators of terminal evaluation quality	GEF IEO COMMENTS	Rating
1. Timeliness: terminal evaluation report was carried out and submitted on time?	The TE was finalized 5 months after, and submitted within 12 months from, project completion	HS
2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?	The TE includes general information on project (ID, executing agencies, project milestones) but not GEF environmental objectives; it lists evaluators	S
3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?	The TE identified the key stakeholders and sought their feedback, including that of the GEF Regional Focal Point, that was incorporated to finalize the report	HS
4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project's theory of change?	The TE presents the theory of change, and discusses the causal links and mechanisms to achieve the intended impact, including the assumptions and whether they remain valid	HS
5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?	The TE discusses information sources, presents information on who was interviewed, on project sites and activities, tools and methods used for evaluation, and identifies limitations of evaluation	HS
6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?	The TE assesses relevance to GEF, national priorities, of project design; it reports performance on all outcome targets, discusses in depth the factors affecting their achievement, reports on timeliness of activities and assesses efficiency	HS
7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?	The TE identifies risks and their likelihood, with some indication of the effects, and rates overall sustainability	HS

8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?	The TE assesses M&E design and implementation quality and the use of information for project management	HS
9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?	The TE reports on utilization of GEF and co-financing resources, including type, sources, reasons for deficient materialization and contribution to project results	HS
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?	The TE evaluates implementing and executing agencies, discusses factors that affected their performance and how challenges were addressed	HS
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?	The TE reports on implementation of environmental and social safeguards and on the gender analysis and related actions	HS
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	The TE includes lessons based on project experience and discusses their applicability; it presents recommendations with clear action taker and description of action needed	HS
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	Ratings are supported with sufficient and credible evidence	HS
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?	The TE is written in English; it is well written, easy to read, well-organized, consistent, and makes good use of tables and charts	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

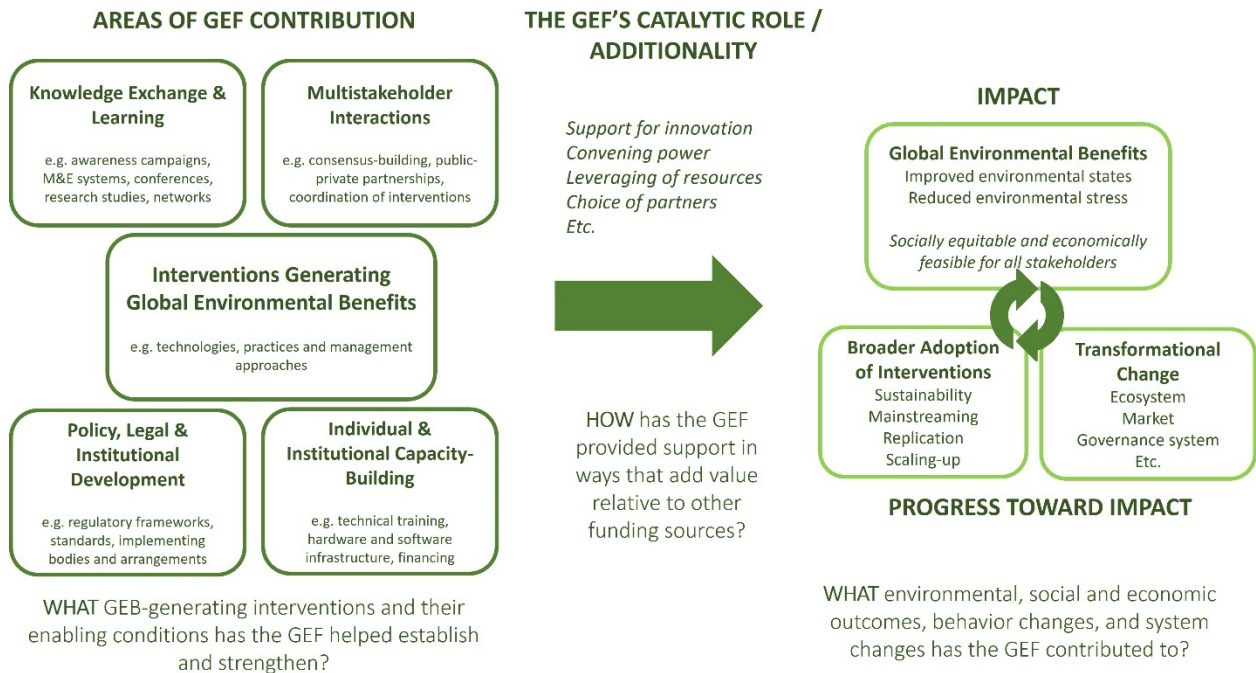


Figure 1. The GEF IEO's updated Theory of Change Framework on how the GEF achieves impact

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