

Terminal Evaluation Validation form, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		9352	
GEF Agency project ID		P01664	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-6	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		IUCN	
Project name		Strengthening Capacities for Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Nepal	
Country/Countries		Nepal	
Region		Asia, Middle East & Pacific	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD-3 Program 8 (on Nagoya Protocol)	
Stand alone or under a programmatic framework		Standalone	
If applicable, parent program name and GEF ID		Not applicable	
Executing agencies involved		Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE, formerly Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		As PSC members: Himalayan Grassroots Women's Natural Resource Management Association (HIMAWANTI); Dalit Association for Natural Resources (DANAR); Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN); and Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). The project coordinated with other organizations, including academic and research institutes.	
Private sector involvement (including micro, small and medium enterprises) ¹		Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) as member of the PSC. The project conducted capacity building activities of private sector in collaboration with FNCCI.	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval (MSP) date		3/3/2016	
Effectiveness date / project start date		11/24/2016	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		4/30/2019	
Actual date of project completion		4/30/2022	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		1.38	1.37
Co-financing	IA own	0.04	UA
	Government	3.00	UA
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector	0.01	UA
	NGOs/CBOs		
	Other	0.02	UA
Total GEF funding		1.38	1.37
Total Co-financing		3.07	UA

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](#))

Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)	4.44	UA
Terminal evaluation validation information		
TE completion date	6/30/2022	
Author of TE	Gobinda Basnet and Prof. Ram Prasad Chaudhary	
TER completion date	9/25/2023	
TER prepared by	Mariana Calderon	
TER peer review by (if GEF IEO review)	Neeraj Negi	

NA = Not available.

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	GEF IEO Review
Project Outcomes	S	NA		S
Sustainability of Outcomes		L		ML
M&E Design		NA		S
M&E Implementation		NA		S
Quality of Implementation		NA		S
Quality of Execution		NA		S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report				MS

NA = Not available.

3. Project Objectives and theory of change

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The global environmental benefit of this project was to contribute to achieving “fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources” (Request for MSP Approval p.22).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The objective of the project was to “build the capacity of key stakeholders at national, sub-national, and local levels to implement access and benefit-sharing (ABS) in Nepal”. It intended to “facilitate the Government of Nepal for the accession and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Nepal by formulating appropriate laws, regulations, policies, and strategies at national, provincial, and local levels” (TE p.5).

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 Project adopted an adaptive management approach, and some activities were added/amended after the MTR. As part of Output 1.1, a gender assessment was added. Additional activities under Output 2.2 were also included: capacity building on ABS related policies and legal frameworks in all provinces; capacity building on biodiversity and traditional knowledge (TK) documentation in all provinces; capacity building on local bodies of the pilot sites to demonstrate ABS institution mechanism; negotiation skills training for private sector; training of MoFE officials by an international expert; training for officials of all centers of the Department of Plant Resources (DPR); and, traditional knowledge digital library (TKDL) finalization and handover to DPR (TE p.7).

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

The project had three drivers: i) ABS stakeholders actively cooperate and coordinate; ii) stakeholders increase their commitment to implementing ABS; and iii) government at all levels supports the project.

The two overarching assumptions were the following: i) the economic, social, and political situation remains stable; and ii) natural disasters do not interrupt ABS implementation (ProDoc p.5).

The project was expected to integrate ABS into national conservation and development policy and practice (ProDoc p.5). To this end, the project had three inter-linked and complementary components (Request for MSP Approval p.14-19 and TE p.13):

- Component 1: Policy, Rules and Regulation. Expected outcome: The rules and regulations that will allow the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol once the ABS law is enacted.
- Component 2: Capacity needs and training. Expected outcome: Representatives of ABS stakeholder groups at all levels have sufficient skills to contribute to implementing ABS and communities have enhanced bargaining power for negotiating eventual ABS agreements.
- Component 3: Education, public awareness, and communication. Expected outcome: Stakeholders at all levels have greater awareness and understanding of ABS and the issues involved in implementing it.

The relationship between Component 1, which focused on policy, rules and regulations, and Components 2 and 3, which focused on training and public awareness was the realization that implementing ABS requires stakeholder capacity to work on a range of related issues at the national, district, and community levels. The project engaged primarily with government institutions in Component 1 and with communities in Component 2, although Components 1 and 2 also involved civil society organizations and the private sector. Component 3 – the education, public awareness, and communications component – targeted all ABS stakeholders (Request for MSP Approval p. 14-15).

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 six-point scale: Likely to Unlikely.

Please justify the ratings in the space below each box.

4.1 Relevance	5
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The TE rated the project as *Relevant* (TE vii). This validation assesses the relevance criterion as *Satisfactory*. Project outcomes were aligned with GEF’s Program 8 of the Biodiversity focal area, international bodies and instruments, IUCN’s program, country priorities, and capacity building needs of ABS stakeholders. The project could have been better targeted regarding pilot sites, as they fell short on their ecological belt coverage.

The project was aligned with one of the four objectives of GEF’s Biodiversity focal area strategy, which referred to “mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity...”. Specifically, Program 8 of the biodiversity focal area was designed to support national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol: “Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing”. The project focused on two of the

three core activities of Program 8: stocktaking and assessment; and building stakeholder capacity to negotiate between providers and users of genetic resources (Request for MSP Approval p. 13).

The project was consistent with international bodies and instruments, such as the third objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Aichi Targets 16 and 18, the Nagoya Protocol and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources, and FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) (TE p.10).

Likewise, the project contributed to the following IUCN’s 2013-2016 Programme areas and global results: Valuing and conserving nature; Effective and equitable governance of nature’s use; and Deploying nature-based solutions (ProDoc p.2).

Regarding country priorities, the project was consistent with provisions of the Constitution of Nepal, such as those included in articles 51.g, 51.5 and 51.10. Additionally, the project was related to Nepal’s SDGs, especially SDG 2-Target 2.5, SDG 5-Target 5, and SDG 15-Target 15.6. The project supported the Nature Conservation National Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development (2015-2030), especially the forest, biodiversity, agriculture, and GESI sectors. The project was aligned with Nepal’s Fifteenth Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24) to meet the national strategies of the “Forests, biodiversity and watershed [wetlands]” sectors. It was also related to the Forest Act 2076 (2019), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020, the Forestry Sector Strategy 2016-2025, Agriculture Development Strategy, and the ITPGRFA Multilateral System Implementation Strategy and Action Plan (IMISAP) 2018-2025 (TE p.11-13).

ABS stakeholders were the beneficiaries of this capacity-building project (ProDoc p.8). The primary benefits of this project were expected to be social, as upon completion, Nepal’s ABS stakeholders would improve their capacities to engage with each other, to develop and implement ABS policy and legislation, and to implement ABS generally. This increased capacity would enhance Nepal’s ability as a country to contribute to conserving biodiversity and sustainably using its components (Request for MSP Approval p.25).

Activities planned under different components were appropriate to meet the project’s overall objective. However, the TE mentions that the project could have been more comprehensive if the pilot sites had also covered other ecological belts of Tarai and high mountains and not only the same ecological belt of middle mountains (TE p. 13).

4.2 Coherence	HS
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The TE rated the project as *Coherent* because it exhibited high level of inter-dependency and complementarity among different components (TE viii). In addition, the project showed compatibility with other projects in the country. Therefore, this validation rates project’s coherence as *Highly Satisfactory*.

According to the TE, the Project showed high level of internal coherence as activities planned under different components were interrelated and complemented one another. Component 1 focused on identifying the gaps and developing policies; Component 2 focused on developing training packages and conduction of training; and Component 3 focused on developing awareness and communication (TE p.23).

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was chaired by the Secretary of MoFE, and it comprised representatives from 14 government and civil society institutions. Besides providing strategic direction to the project management unit (PMU) and project executing unit (PEU) for major decisions, it also provided policy guidance and feedback on project plans and strategies; monitored project goals, outputs, and activities; reviewed performance; and liaised with the government. It held 7 meetings and, based on its recommendations, the project was extended four times (TE p.8).

With regards to external coherence, the project complemented baseline projects on ABS in Nepal which were ongoing at the time. It also provided a basis for coordinating their outputs more effectively. Baseline projects included a GEF’s full-sized project on crop genetic resources (ID 4464), ICIMOD’s Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI); the South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) project on management of plant genetic resources; and the first phase of the Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP) supported by the governments of Finland, Switzerland, and the UK. The project was also linked with the Government of Nepal's Poverty Alleviation Program supported by the World Bank, whose activities focused on improving livelihoods and empowering the rural poor, with particular attention to groups that have traditionally been excluded. Finally, Component 2 of the project built on work of the 2003-2004 IUCN’s project (Request for MSP Approval p. 10-12, 21).

4.3 Effectiveness	S
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The TE assessed project effectiveness as *Satisfactory* (TE vii). This validation concurs. All activities planned were successfully completed; however, the passing of the ABS Bill is still pending.

Although some of the activities planned were contingent upon the passing of ABS Bill, which did not happen during the project time, those activities were implemented based on the draft Bill (TE p. 13). According to the TE, a large pool of trained human resources on ABS was developed at all levels, and the training of officials and citizen scientists was effective. Similarly, the publication of materials on ABS in Nepali language was very effective and the training manuals are expected to help in expanding those activities in other local levels. Some activities, such as Training of Trainers (ToT) trainings in all provinces and a gender assessment, were added as the project implementation progressed and was successfully completed.

According to the terminal evaluation, the expected outcome of Component 1 was the formulation of rules and regulations that would allow the implementation of Nagoya Protocol in the country once the ABS law was enacted. The TE mentions that, through persistent lobbying and continuous advocacy, Nepal acceded to the Nagoya Protocol in December 2018 and the country became a party in March 2019 (TE p. 13 and 15). As part of this component, the project planned to identify stakeholders for

capacity assessments, to carry out consultations, and to develop a strategy and action plan. It also anticipated drafting ABS Rules and regulations and guidelines. Upon completion, a database on stakeholders for ABS was prepared. Likewise, the strategy and action plan for implementation of ABS was developed, draft regulations for implementation of ABS at policy level were formulated and the draft ABS Bill was prepared (TE p. 38 and 39).

The terminal evaluation explains that Component 2 intended to strengthen the skills of representatives of ABS stakeholder groups at all levels and to enhance communities’ bargaining power for negotiating eventual ABS agreements. Activities that were added to this component considered developing training materials, Training of Trainers and training for stakeholder groups. The TE notes that the project developed a large pool of human resources on ABS (especially government officials); three Community Protocols were prepared; and that training materials to carry out trainings on ABS were finalized (TE p.39 -44).

The terminal evaluation reports that Component 3 aimed to increase stakeholders’ understanding and awareness of ABS and the issues involved in implementing it. In this sense, ABS related documents in Nepali were published and disseminated; and capacity, understanding, and awareness on ABS and documentation of traditional knowledge was improved (TE p.42).

The TE also notes that the project outcomes contributed to materializing several policies: the National Forest Policy, Agrobiodiversity Policy, 2063 (2007) (first amendment 2014), National Intellectual Property Policy 2017, and Climate Change Policy 2019 (TE p.12).

The terminal evaluation does not note any unintended consequences.

4.4 Efficiency	MS
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The TE assessed efficiency to be *Satisfactory* (TE viii). This validation considers it was *Moderately Satisfactory* as the project completion was delayed by three years. After four no-cost extensions, the project finished all planned activities, and even added a few more.

Almost all the committed GEF grant was spent (99.68%). Program expenses accounted for 90.87% of total GEF grant budget, similar figure to the one expected upon project approval. Human resources were effectively utilized (TE p. viii).

The project had four no-cost extensions. The timeliness of implementation of activities was mainly affected by these factors: (i) first local level election in 2017; (ii) dependency on passing of ABS Bill from the Parliament; and (iii) two waves of COVID-19 pandemic. The extensions allowed the project to complete all the initially planned activities, including the gender assessment output that was added during implementation (TE p.7 and 20).

4.5 Outcome	S
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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.

This validation provides a *Satisfactory* outcome rating because the project was relevant, coherent, and effective.

Since the beginning of the project, the team acknowledged that the economic benefits of the resulting increased capacity would be realized over the longer term rather than during the life of the project (Request for MSP Approval p.25). As expected, evidence of the impact of implementation of Nagoya Protocol in Nepal is not yet available. However, based on the achievements made in strengthening capacities for implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, it is anticipated that the project will have long term positive impact (TE p.28).

4.6 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 rated project’s sustainability as *Likely* (TE p. viii), whereas this validation considers it as *Moderately Likely*. The executing agency was highly committed to the project and the project enhanced the capacity on ABS of government staff and local community. Nevertheless, the ABS Bill was not passed by the Parliament during the project’s duration despite stakeholders’ efforts, which suggests competing government’s priorities. In addition, it is still pending to adopt some MTR recommendations for the longer term that were expected to promote its sustainability.

Institutional framework and governance

The TE noted that the institutional base of the project is strong. Capacity of human resources on ABS in the federal, provincial and local governments was enhanced, thus supporting the continuity of ABS initiatives in the country. Local community members (citizen scientists) and ward officials from the pilot sites were also capacitated. However, at the local level, there might be dearth of human resources when the ABS is in full swing in implementation (TE p.21).

Some instances from rural municipalities have already started documenting agrobiodiversity in their area. Expansion of such local level initiatives would further reinforce the initiatives of the project. Linking with the academia and institutions working on biodiversity conservation such as the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) and Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LIBIRD) will also contribute towards ensuring the project's sustainability (TE p.21).

The MoFE strongly owned the design, implementation, and outcomes of the project, which increases the likelihood that its achievements/effects will be streamlined in future initiatives. In addition, the DPR got support for the TKDL, which may contribute to systematic documentation of traditional knowledge (TE p. 21).

Despite continuous efforts, the ABS Bill was not approved by the Parliament (TE 13). Neither could some MTR's recommendations for the longer term be adopted during the project's duration (TE p.17), although those were the ones related to the project's sustainability (PIR 2018 p.16). They included a National ABS Clearing House; ABS Bill sensitization; resource inventory; steering for operationalization of ABS legislation; fostering partnerships with national companies; and biodiversity prospecting (MTR p.56). The TE considered some of them in its recommendations (TE p. 31-33).

Sociopolitical

One possible threat is that the local communities in the pilot site have high expectations that they will get benefit from utilization of genetic resources in immediate future. If such expectations are not met or the perception is not changed/corrected, it might lead to resentment, ultimately affecting some of the project achievements (TE p.21).

Environmental

This project was categorized as low risk when the ESMS screening was undertaken; therefore, it did not have any ESMS risk monitoring requirements (PIR 2018 p.13).

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?

Neither the TE nor other available documents delved into co-financing.

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?

Although the project was planned to be completed by April 30, 2019, it had four no-cost extensions and ended on April 30, 2022 (TE p.1). The reasons for implementation delays were the following: (i) first local

level election in 2017; (ii) dependency on the Parliament passing the ABS Bill; and (iii) two waves of COVID-19. On the one hand, initial implementation was delayed as the inception phase was affected by a local level election held in May 2017. Similarly, the implementation of some activities (such as the development of Rules and Regulations, ABS Strategy and Action Plan) was dependent on the passing of the ABS Bill, which was not achieved on a timely basis; as such, these activities were carried out later based on the draft ABS Bill. In addition, several trainings rescheduled in 2020 were delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, all the initially planned, amended, and added activities were completed during the extended period (TE p. 20).

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 passing of the ABS Bill was largely affected by the country’s political priorities. It could not be passed during the project duration because the Parliament had a long list of bills (TE p. 27). The government focused on updating the Base Environmental Laws in line with the new Constitution including the Environment Law, Water Law and Forest Law among others. This led to the de-prioritization of the ABS Bill (PIR 2022 p.17).

In contrast, the MoFE strongly owned the design, implementation and outcomes of the project (TE p. 21). Likewise, the enthusiasm shown by newly elected local level governments (rural municipalities) contributed towards the smooth functioning of the project (TE p.27).

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.

A strong coordination and synergies created with several agencies like ACAP, FNCCI, NEFIN, and LIBIRD was found to be effective, as it contributed to project implementation (TE p.27).

6. Assessment of project’s Monitoring and Evaluation system

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

Please justify ratings in the space below each box.

6.1 M&E Design at entry	S
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The TE did not explicitly address M&E design at entry, though there are scattered statements on project documentation that allow this validation to rate it as *Satisfactory*. The M&E plan was aligned with the theory of change. In addition, data collection and M&E implementation were planned since project start.

The project was designed to follow IUCN’s project monitoring guidelines and tools. The M&E plan provisioned for a mid-term review and a terminal evaluation. A baseline survey was to be conducted during the first year of project implementation (Request for MSP Approval p. 28).

6.2 M&E Implementation	S
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The TE did not explicitly rate M&E implementation either. However, this validation rates it as *Satisfactory* based on evidence found in project’s documentation. M&E activities were the basis for conducting adaptative measures to improve project implementation. Weaknesses on the M&E plan that were observed by supervision missions and the MTR were subsequently addressed.

The project team was expected to produce an annual work plan to define activities, outputs and milestones for each project year. It would also monitor and update the annual plan and the milestones once each quarter and a supervisory mission would monitor the project once each year (Request for MSP Approval p. 28). The 2016 supervision mission recommended the project to adopt a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, with clear monitoring schedules, monitoring processes, monitoring plan as well as identification of roles and responsibilities of the various project execution related stakeholders; this applied for both programmatic as well as financial monitoring. Accordingly, the project improved its monitoring and evaluation framework and defined a clear monitoring protocol following the supervision mission’s recommendations (PIR 2018 p.6). This allowed for regular monitoring, including gathering data and reporting against logical framework indicators. The monitoring of activities at the district level was undertaken jointly with communities and stakeholders including NEFIN, FNCCI and academic research partners (PIR 2018 p.13). The supervision mission also recommended the project to strengthen its monitoring framework by adopting gender disaggregated and indigenous peoples specific indicators (PIR 2018 p.6).

Output 2.5 aimed to develop and implement a project joint monitoring mechanism (monitoring and reporting) and to conduct project mid-term and final evaluations (TE p.25). In this regard, a joint monitoring of the project was done in May 2018 by a Joint Monitoring Team. The team comprised representatives from MoFE, Ministry of Finance, MoALRC and NEFIN. The project conducted the MTR in June/July 2018 (TE p. 17). The MTR suggested that the reporting system should be improved to incorporate more gender and ethnicity disaggregated data of beneficiaries. The project followed MTR recommendations and included segregated data in subsequent reports (TE p.14).

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	S
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The TE did not rate Quality of Project Implementation, although it provided some information which suggests that IUCN Nepal ensured that project preparation and implementation were robust, and that all activities were finished upon completion despite the ABS Bill not being approved. This, in conjunction with information found in additional project documents, constitutes the basis for providing a *Satisfactory* rating.

IUCN Nepal supported the project execution as a technical service provider (PIR 2018 p.7). It housed the PEU, which was established to support PMU. The PEU was responsible for executing the project activities, providing administrative, managerial budgetary and financial support to the PMU. The PEU had three Component Experts, one for each component. Each Component Expert worked in collaboration with the respective Component Lead at the PMU. In addition to three Component Experts, the PEU had a Project Technical Advisor and a Project Officer to facilitate the project’s implementation. At the District level (in the Pilot districts), two Field Project Officers, one in each District. Each District had one Admin/Finance Assistant and two Social Mobilisers (TE p.8).

As mentioned in section 6.2, the project team considered annual monitoring data and MTR recommendations to implement adaptative measures. MTR recommendations were broadly framed into two categories: (i) for undertaking during the remaining project duration by the PMU and (ii) for consideration by the MoFE for longer term effects. The PMU adopted most of the recommendations as suggested in the MTR whereas the suggestions for MoFE could not be adopted (TE p.17). By adopting the MTR’s recommendations, the PMU enhanced the delivery of the project. This was evidenced by its financial performance, which increased from 35% of the total GEF grant budget at the MTR to 99.68% upon completion (TE p.20).

The project also conducted a gender assessment after the MTR found that participation of women and IPs was more in Component 3 and less in the first two components. And following MTR recommendations, it reported gender and ethnicity disaggregated data of beneficiaries (TE p. 14). By integration of gender thematic analysis and mainstreaming gender in the ABS strategy and action plan, the project emphasized the importance of mainstreaming gender equality (PIR 2022 p.19).

No financial risks were reported, included those related to procurement, as IUCN Nepal undertook the project’s financial management at the request of the executing entity. The reconciliation of funds, generation of reports and disbursements was all done through the ERP system. The IUCN procurement policy was used for procurement of all goods and services (PIR 2018 p.6).

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	S
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The TE did not rate Quality of Project Execution. However, it does mention that the MoFE strongly owned the design, implementation and outcomes of the project (TE p. 21). Based on this, together with additional information which suggests that the executing entity met expectations without any salient weaknesses, this validation provides a *Satisfactory* rating to this criterion.

The project execution team adequately implemented risk mitigation measures identified in the project design and scanned for any emergent risks (PIR 2018 p.13). In addition, MoFE's staff undertook some activities instead of leaving them to consultants, which resulted in cost savings. Some of these activities included: development of the capacity self-assessment tool; development of biodiversity registration format; editing of publication materials, among others (PIR 2018 p.6).

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.

Key lessons (TE p.31):

- Stakeholders' collaboration and partnership. Stakeholders' collaboration provides opportunities to strengthening capacities for implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and enhancing the process of passing of the ABS Bill in Nepal, as the 'access and benefit sharing' provisions of the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol are particularly complex to implement. They interact with several laws and policies, broad range of academic and commercial activities, and extremely diverse groups of individuals and organizations. The resource rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are critical to the effective distribution of the benefits to the communities and to the conservation of biodiversity.
- Capacity strengthening. Stakeholders in the government sector and at the pilot sites acknowledged that the project had increased their knowledge and skills on the concept of ABS and sustainable harvest of genetic resources. However, there is a need for expansion at the local government level.
- Unrealistic expectations for benefit sharing. There is a common perception among local level stakeholders and community organizations that there will be high demand for genetic resources, and that they would get benefit in short term from benefit sharing. It is not clear to them that a commercial market product development involves a lengthy process of investment in research and development. A proper understanding of intricacies and complex process would minimize the false expectation.

Good practices (TE p.30):

- The project developed two documents, the 'Activity Description and Execution Guidelines' and the 'Summary of the Project', which contributed to implementation by minimizing confusion. Similarly, a reporting system was developed to incorporate issues raised by participants, as well as responses to those issues. Such documentation provided a good feedback mechanism and facilitated adaptive management.

8.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Recommendations (TE p. ix and 31-33):

- Policy, rules, and regulations
 - Promote stakeholder’s consensus, including indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), user groups, and research institutions, to pass the ABS Bill.
 - Incorporate provisions of the ABS mechanism into sectoral and cross-sectoral legal policies.
 - Initiate policy debates on the establishment of a functional and acceptable Competent National Authority.
 - Ensure that monetary and non-monetary benefits from the utilization of genetic resources are shared fairly and equitably with the country of origin and IPLCs.
- Capacity needs and training
 - Improve integration of scientific, indigenous and local knowledge under science–policy–practice interfaces at different levels to support the ABS mechanism.
 - Enhance capacities of disadvantaged groups in the ABS process.
- Education, public awareness, and communication
 - Sensitize a larger audience to the ABS mechanism, including IPLCs.
- Research
 - Give high priority to bioprospecting in biodiversity conservation and ABS program.
 - Ensure that benefit-sharing mechanisms deliver desirable socio-economic and conservation outcomes, particularly among IPLCs.
- Building on project achievement
 - Strengthen local governments capacities to document and conserve their biodiversity resources. Institutions like IUCN can undertake such an initiative.
 - Incorporate ABS issues in future National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans.

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 terminal evaluation was carried out on schedule and its report was submitted on time.	HS

<p>2. General information: Provides general information on the project and evaluation as per the requirement?</p>	<p>Project identification table does not include GEF ID nor agency ID. Chronology table in Annex 2 does not include all key milestones, for instance CEO endorsement/approval or first disbursement date. GEF's environmental objectives are not listed.</p>	<p>U</p>
<p>3. Stakeholder involvement: the report was prepared in consultation with – and with feedback from - key stakeholders?</p>	<p>Participation of key stakeholders was sought during evaluation, although the TE notes that there was a limitation in consulting with the project beneficiaries/stakeholders in the field/districts and field project staff because most activities have ended in the project site and because of local elections. The TE does not mention if OFP feedback sought/incorporated in the report.</p>	<p>MS</p>
<p>4. Theory of change: provides solid account of the project's theory of change?</p>	<p>The report only mentions that there was high level of inter-dependency and complementarity among different components, but it does not discuss the theory of change.</p>	<p>U</p>
<p>5. Methodology: Provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology?</p>	<p>The report provides an informative and transparent account of the methodology.</p>	<p>HS</p>
<p>6. Outcome: Provides a clear and candid account of the achievement of project outcomes?</p>	<p>The report assesses relevance to country priorities and international bodies. It also evaluates effectiveness and efficiency. However, it does not assess relevance to GEF priorities, agency priorities nor project design. It does not evaluate external coherence either. The report could have discussed factors that affected outcome achievements more in depth.</p>	<p>MS</p>
<p>7. Sustainability: Presents realistic assessment of sustainability?</p>	<p>The report identifies two risks that may affect sustainability but does not indicate how likely it is that they will materialize, nor their potential effects. It discusses institutional and sociopolitical sustainability but does not expound on financial sustainability.</p>	<p>MS</p>

8. M&E: Presents sound assessment of the quality of the M&E system?	The report does not present a sound assessment of the quality of the project M&E system. It mentions the use of the MTR for adaptative management.	U
9. Finance: Reports on utilization of GEF funding and materialization of co-financing?	The TE reports on utilization of GEF resources and provides data on types of expected co-financing. However, it does not discuss the materialization of such co-financing.	MU
10. Implementation: Presents a candid account of project implementation and Agency performance?	The report only discusses factors that caused implementation delays. It does not provide account of the GEF Agency performance. With regards to the executing entity performance, it only mentions that the MoFE strongly owned the design, implementation and outcomes of the project without providing any further detail.	U
11. Safeguards: Provides information on application of environmental and social safeguards, and conduct and use of gender analysis?	This project was categorized as low risk when the ESMS screening was undertaken and hence does not have any ESMS risk monitoring requirement. The TE reports on conduct of gender analysis and on following MTR recommendations on this regard.	S
12. Lessons and recommendations are supported by the project experience and are relevant to future programming?	The report presents lessons based on project experience. It also provides recommendations and explains what needs to be done. However, it does not discuss applicability of lessons nor specifies action taker for recommendations.	MS
13. Ratings: Ratings are well-substantiated by evidence, realistic and convincing?	Where ratings are provided, they are well substantiated by evidence, they are realistic and credible. However, there are no ratings for all criteria that should have been assessed.	MS
14. Report presentation: The report was well-written, logically organized, and consistent?	The report was well written, logically organized, and consistent. Few charts and no graphs were used.	S
Overall quality of the report		MS

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