

Final Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF project

**“Building sustainable capacity and ownership to
implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia” 2005-2008**

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FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

The final evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD Objectives in Latvia” was mandated by the UNDP-Latvia Office, in accordance with GEF and UNDP Monitoring and Evaluation policies and requirements. The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which project outcomes and objectives were met, and to determine the likelihood of continued impact beyond the project’s duration and scope.

The evaluation was undertaken by Unisféra International Centre, a Canada-based consultancy, and Jolanta Bara, a national consultant, on the basis of an Evaluation Methodology designed specifically for projects of this type. Evaluation parameters, indicators and methods were derived from the GEF’s Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, the UNDP’s own Monitoring and Evaluation framework, as well as the Terms of Reference, bearing in mind the specificities of the country and of the project. The evaluation methodology and associated Evaluation Matrix were submitted to UNDP and the Project Manager for review. A first analysis was undertaken on the basis of available documentation, and preliminary findings were validated during an evaluation mission that took place from January 14-18, 2008 in Latvia. Additional materials were collected during the mission, which were integrated into the draft report. Finally, upon a first review of the draft report, a final draft was produced and submitted to UNDP for final endorsement.

The objectives of the UNCCD are to combat land degradation and drought, and to promote sustainable land management (SLM) in order to enhance living conditions. Among other commitments, country parties to the UNCCD are invited to produce National Action Plans highlighting their actions to promote SLM; to promote inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation; as well as to promote the mobilization of resources towards SLM.

The goal of this project was to create or build SLM capacity in Latvia and to promote greater awareness and knowledge of SLM issues. As a general finding, the evaluators found that the project achieved this goal within its scope and limits: greater understanding and awareness was found among project stakeholders and participants, which has in turn led to increased ownership of land management issues.

The evaluation found that a number of planned tasks and outputs were revised or adjusted during the course of the project, testifying to a high degree of capacity among the project team members to learn from and adapt to evolving circumstances, to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to circumvent potential hurdles. However, the evaluators also found that this need to revise the project may have been due to an incomplete understanding of underlying risks and an overly ambitious project design. In the final analysis, the evaluation finds that the project’s intended outcomes were indeed achieved, albeit through somewhat less formal means than originally intended.

This project provides a useful indication as to the barriers to SLM in Latvia as well as a potential model for future efforts to address them. Project team members and stakeholders all testified that no “socially-accepted” definition of SLM existed in Latvia before the project, and that there were no inter-sectoral discussions of land issues, despite a multiplicity of actors (government departments, services, NGOs, and private sector alike). The project also uncovered gaps in the technical knowledge base, ongoing data and information needs, as well as low levels of capacity among stakeholders that may need to be addressed in an ongoing fashion.

From a policy perspective, the project contributed to the analysis of legislative and institutional issues potentially affecting SLM in the country. This analysis revealed that some of these barriers were deeply-rooted in the country’s transition processes and macro-economic conditions, and were therefore beyond the scope of this project (for example, land tenure arrangements or trade policies). This analysis constitutes a definite asset for the future of SLM in the country and continued dissemination to policy-makers could help inform broader policy changes.

The country’s accession to the European Union provided both a challenge and an opportunity for this project. The evaluation found that this context was not always favourable to the adoption of new policies, strategies and plans (including the National Action Plan), which may have led to a revision of some planned outputs and activities due to competing priorities. However, the evaluation also found that this process created significant opportunities for mainstreaming land issues into sectoral plans and policies, of which many project stakeholders were keen to take advantage. In addition, the policy reform process resulting from accession also creates a driver for change towards SLM at all levels, from actions at the farm level to policy reform. Hence, provided there is a continued leadership on SLM issues among project stakeholders, this opportunity will likely lead to increased impact and sustainability.

Summary of findings

This evaluation found that the project’s key successes was to foster greater awareness and knowledge among a cadre of key government stakeholders across departments, and an increased understanding of SLM and of the role of each ministry in promoting it. Capacity at the local level was also created, and is likely to continue to increase through the continued services of agencies such as the Rural Advisory and Training Center, as well as through the gradual integration of SLM issues into government programmes and policies.

The project team was also capable of taking advantage of emerging opportunities arising mainly from the EU accession process and related financing instruments, although the policy reform process may have created some untimely hurdles. In a climate of ongoing transition, the project

was successful in adapting to changing realities, and to integrate the product of learning by the project team itself into evolving work plans and activities.

The project also contributed to the identification of potential new barriers to SLM, including the lack of data and information on soil. This issue will likely have to be addressed in the near future, and will also entail that a national discussion is initiated on methodological and scientific aspects. There remains limited technical and scientific capacity on land and soil degradation in Latvia – but this aspect will not likely be resolved until the longer-term.

From a management perspective, there was a good participatory approach to the management of the project. Most relevant stakeholders were involved in the project, and constant efforts were made to mobilize as many partners as possible. Notably absent was the Ministry of Finance, whose participation in the project could have been useful for future mainstreaming efforts.

In terms of adaptive management, as mentioned earlier, the project team was able to adapt to emerging opportunities and constraints and revised outputs were, for the most part, produced. However, the evaluation found that some of the outputs were not achieved or were, in some cases replaced by less formal activities. This may have resulted in an excessive downscaling of the project activities, even though the outcomes appear to have been achieved through other means. In our view, this is most likely due to the fact that the initial project plans were ambitious and that potential risks and hurdles were not adequately assessed.

Finally, in terms of sustainability, the project has contributed to the establishment of some of the basic conditions for SLM in the long term, including a body of knowledge, capacity, commitment and awareness among a group of national stakeholders and potential experts, as well as a set of test cases that can be useful for the future. Materials produced, including educational documentation, training packages and public relations documents can also be used to a larger scale when the conditions are ripe. These elements do not per se ensure the sustainability of the project but have laid foundations upon which to build. Indeed, the project seemed to have succeeded in creating the basic conditions of socio-political sustainability. But, in terms of financial sustainability, it was difficult to determine whether the project contributed to creating the conditions for long-term financing of sustainable land management. While the financial targets for implementation of the NAP appeared reasonable, the required additional resources (5.8 million LVL, or approximately 12 million US\$) may prove difficult to mobilize.

Recommendations for further action

In order to maintain the momentum created by this project in terms of SLM in Latvia, as well as to take advantage of emerging opportunities, the evaluators make the following suggestions for action in the short and longer-term.

1. It will be important to decide on a follow-up course for at least the next six months to a year, so that project achievements are not lost. Although the project is officially closing in March 2008, and the UNDP office in Latvia is also set to close in the short term, a number of initiatives can still be undertaken by project participants. Participants in the project committees should meet to decide what activities they can each deliver within the scope of their regular functions. For example, the Ministry of Environment could revise and finalize the NAP, and communicate its achievements in this regard to the UNCCD Secretariat.
2. Additionally, each ministry representative could decide on a set of concrete activities it will undertake to integrate project achievements and SLM in general into their ongoing work. These activities could be collated in a shared workplan. The project members should also agree on a focal point for SLM issues in order to maintain leadership and focus, and to continue to support the coordinating mechanisms that were created during the course of this project (e.g. Agriculture and Environment Protection Council).

It should be noted that, at the time of writing, plans were underway to hold a follow-up planning meeting supported by the UNDP office.

3. Products derived from the legal, institutional and policy analysis should be published to serve as continued awareness raising tools and to build on the mainstreaming efforts that will be necessary in an ongoing fashion to ensure long-lasting conditions for SLM in the country.
4. The National Action Plan could be revised to adjust the financial plan, taking into account the likelihood of additional resource mobilization, or the Ministry of Environment could define a strategy for mobilizing NAP resources. It may be useful to gather information on continued investments into SLM-related policies and programs from national and EU resources.
5. The project team and other project participants should continue in their efforts to raise awareness of SLM issues among their broader circles.

In the longer-term, it may also be useful to consider a set of actions designed to remove the remaining barriers to SLM uncovered by this project. For example, the scientific debate initiated by this project regarding the methodological and technical issues related to soil

mapping, soil quality monitoring and classification issues, should continue. This will also be useful in designing a full-fledged and operational environmental monitoring system.

It may also be beneficial to continue to encourage the Rural Advisory and Training Center to pursue its activities in the areas of training at local level, integrating SLM principles into their material. Continued outreach to local land users will be of paramount importance in order to replicate project achievements and to achieve broader impact at local level. In terms of continued awareness raising, the RATC can also continue to play a key role, for example by using the information generated by this project for awareness raising among the general public.

It should be noted that many of the above recommendations were already being discussed and, in some cases, plans for their implementation were also underway by the project team and Steering Committee members.

Introduction

The overall purpose of the UNDP/GEF project “building sustainable capacity and ownership to implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia” was to improve the capacity to promote sustainable land management and to minimize land and/or soil degradation in Latvia. The project consisted in three inter-related components: (1) legislation and its implementation strategy and practice, (2) local capacity building in two pilot territories and (3) improved knowledge and capacities for SLM. The final evaluation of this project was mandated by the UNDP, in accordance with GEF and UNDP monitoring and evaluation policies. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project and thereby to document and disseminate lessons learned.

This evaluation took place as the project was in its final stages, and examined early signs of impacts and factors leading to the sustainability of results, as well as the performance of project management processes. It was undertaken on the basis of an evaluation methodology (see Annex 2) derived from requirements in the UNDP and GEF’s M&E policies, as well as elements specified in the Terms of Reference (see annex 1). Evaluation parameters, indicators and methods were derived from the GEF’s Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, the UNDP’s own M&E framework, as well as the Terms of Reference, bearing in mind the specificities of the country and of the project. The evaluation methodology and associated Evaluation Matrix were submitted to UNDP and the Project Manager for review. A first analysis was undertaken on the basis of available documentation, and preliminary findings were validated during an evaluation mission that took place from January 14-18, 2008 in Latvia. Additional materials were collected during the mission, which were integrated into the draft report. Finally, upon a first review of the draft report, a final draft was produced and submitted to UNDP for final endorsement.

In designing the methodological framework for this evaluation, the consultants sought to assess the extent to which planned outputs were realized, as well as the extent to which these led to the desired outcomes and impacts. Key questions used to develop the evaluation methodology were: “What happened? Would it have happened without the project? Will it last beyond the project?”.

Key terms and definitions

Outputs: the specific products and services that emerge from processing inputs through programme, project and other activities such as through ad hoc soft assistance delivered outside of projects and programmes¹.

¹ From UNDP Evaluation Office, Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results, 2002.

Outcomes: Outcomes are the mid-term result of an action or a group of actions, or the changes in development conditions that are expected through the implementation of projects and programmes. Outcomes incorporate the production of outputs and the contributions of partners².

Impacts: Impacts are the long-term results of a project, the positive and negative long-term effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. These effects can be economic, socio-cultural, institutional, environmental, technological or of other types.³

Project stakeholders, participants and beneficiaries: For the purposes of this evaluation, *stakeholders* are defined as those actors who may have a direct or indirect interest in project objectives (for example, the larger group of ministries and government entities whose mandates are related to SLM); *participants* are those actors who are explicitly involved in the delivery of project activities, tasks and outputs (for example, implementing agencies, NGOs and local land users involved in the project); *beneficiaries* are understood as those who were targeted as the recipients of capacity building efforts or training (for example, farmers).

Sustainability: Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts after the project funding ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends.

Sustainable Land Management: Sustainable land management can be defined as the conservation and utilization of land resources such as soils, water, animals and plants to meet the material, aesthetic and spiritual needs of humankind today, while ensuring the future productive potential of these resources, as well as the maintenance of their environmental functions.⁴ For the purposes of this evaluation, it should be noted that sustainable land management (SLM) is different from “soil management” in that it usually includes multi-sectoral interventions touching upon a variety of factors: water, climate, vegetation and crops as well as techniques and technologies, policies and legislation, and financing.

Adaptive Management: Adaptive management is a systematic process for continually improving management policies and practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs. Its most effective form—“active” adaptive management—employs management programs that are designed to experimentally compare selected policies or practices, by evaluating alternative hypotheses about the system being managed.

² Id.

³ From OECD DAC *Glossary of Results-Based Management Terminology*, 2006.

⁴ World Bank, 2002.

Methodology

The project was evaluated against the parameters, criteria and indicators below. The criteria were derived from the evaluation parameters included in the Terms of Reference and specific indicators were developed according to the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Relevant and Trackable), and in line with the GEF and UNDP's requirements for Monitoring and Evaluation.

Ratings are obtained through a combination of qualitative and quantitative scales. These are then translated using a point-based system, to facilitate a synthetic rating per criterion and a total rating for the project, from: Highly Satisfactory (4 pts), to Unsatisfactory (0 pt). Please refer to the Evaluation Matrix and Methodological Notes for further detail (see annexes 2 and 3).

1 Attainment of objectives and planned results

This parameter seeks to determine the extent to which the project outputs, outcomes and objectives, were achieved as planned.

- 1.1 *Effectiveness*: This criterion is designed to determine the achievement of project objectives as a whole, and provides a general bird's eye view of results. It is based on an analysis of planned outputs and outcomes, as designed in planning documents. This is measured by assessing whether the project outputs and activities were delivered, the extent to which the project's objectives and expected outcomes were achieved, and the extent to which the project represents a change (a before/after assessment).
- 1.2 *Relevance*: This criterion aims at evaluating and analysing the overall relevance of the project with regards to the country's national circumstances, policies and priorities. It also includes an analysis of the linkages between the project's outcomes and the objectives of the UNCCD, synergies with country policy and financial priorities. Given that the integration of SLM principles into national policies was an expected outcome of this project, this criterion also helps to determine the extent to which this is explicitly or implicitly measurable.
- 1.3 *Efficiency*: This criterion provides a measure of the cost-effectiveness of the project's management processes, including the possibility of achieving similar results using alternate means. This also includes an analysis of possible delays in output delivery, as well as mitigating factors. It also seeks to analyse the relevance of project interventions in relation to its intended goals and objectives (appropriateness of project design).

2 Sustainability of Project Outcomes

Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of maintaining project outcomes and other benefits in the long-term. It is obvious that it is too soon to measure “realized sustainability” for this project, merely a few weeks after the end of the project. Therefore, the evaluation seeks to identify the conditions or determining factors for sustainability. The evaluation also seeks to identify and assess the degree to which capacity was created or strengthened in the country in relation to sustainable land management, and whether this is attributable to the project itself. Elements of sustainability include:

- 2.1 *Financial*: This criterion evaluates the likelihood of NAP implementation or continued SLM programming through the simple (and perhaps simplistic) lens of financial means. It analyses financial achievements and/or risks to the continuation of project benefits. Indicators include an assessment of the likelihoods of continued resource mobilization, and the extent to which continued benefits are dependent on external funding.
- 2.2 *Socio-Political*: Socio-political elements of sustainability include the degree of country ownership as well as the nature and the strength of the link between SLM principles and overarching policy frameworks. This criterion also includes an assessment of possible political or social events affecting SLM in the country, and seeks to measure the extent to which the project outputs or outcomes are informing national or local decision processes.
- 2.3 *Governance*: This aspect of sustainability is related to the likelihood of achieving desired changes in governance in order to promote SLM. It also seeks to assess the degree of capacity and know-how in place as a result of the project. Given that governance and institutional capacity issues were identified as a potential barrier for SLM in project planning documents, this criterion helps determine whether these barriers were lifted by the project.
- 2.4 *Replication*: This criterion examines whether there is a possibility or evidence of replication of project outputs, outcomes, or lessons learned. Replicability is a key factor of sustainability, particularly in the case where projects include “pilot” or “demonstration” interventions, or when their geographic scope is limited.
- 2.5 *Monitoring and Evaluation*: Monitoring and evaluation is a key tool for individual, organizational, and social learning. The development of adapted M&E systems and practices has been recognized as a mechanism promoting sustainability at project, programme and policy level. Hence this criterion examines the strength of M&E systems and practices. It also contributes to an assessment of the project’s “adaptive management” qualities.

2.6 *Environmental*: This criterion aims at assessing the potential environmental risks and/or benefits from continued SLM programming in Latvia, as well as whether project stakeholders have developed a stronger understanding of the environmental benefits to be derived by maintaining project results.

3 Assessment of processes affecting the attainment of project results

The evaluation also considers a number of factors that may have affected the achievement of project results or the quality of project outputs. This would include the effectiveness and clarity of planning mechanisms from an institutional and financial perspective, as well as the relevance of support, advice and other input received.

3.1 *Preparation/Inception*: This criterion examines the effectiveness of project planning mechanisms, including the appropriateness of project goals and project implementation mechanisms (including project structures, roles and responsibilities), as well as the clarity of financial planning and controls throughout the project.

3.2 *Implementation/Participation*: This criterion seeks to examine the effectiveness of participation and communication mechanisms during project implementation, and also contributes to the analysis of country buy-in referred to above. It also seeks to analyse the extent to which adjustments to the project made, justified and rationalized, thereby testifying to appropriate practices in “adaptive management”.

3.3 *UNDP Backstopping*: this criterion seeks to determine the usefulness, relevance and appropriateness of UNDP’s role in the project, including technical support and advice, as well as project management oversight.

Methods of investigation

A first step in this evaluation was a documentary analysis, which was used to develop a set of preliminary findings and a set of questions to be further explored. A list of consulted documents can be found in Annex 4. The second step in the evaluation was a mission in Latvia from January 14 – 18, 2008, to deepen the understanding of the project’s implementation, fill potential gaps in information and obtain information from key project stakeholders. A total of 22 interviews and meetings were held with project stakeholders and participants to discuss project outcomes and perceived successes and challenges. The Terms of Reference for the evaluation mission and a list of meetings and interviews can be found in Annex 5.

Finally, a third step consisted in integrating additional documentation into the preliminary findings, filling the evaluation matrix according to the set criteria, and in producing this report.

A first version of the report was discussed by the project team, and their input was integrated into the final version of the report.

Project Summary

The main goal of the project was to create sustainable capacity and ownership in Latvia to mitigate land degradation and thereby meet the country's obligations under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The main objective of the project was capacity building and removal of key barriers to sustainable land management in Latvia. It was designed as a follow-up to the "Global environmental issues: National Capacity Self-Assessment project" that was carried out from 2002 to 2004.

The project was funded through GEF and UNDP to the amount of 756,966 US\$, and with an additional 18 million US\$ in declared co-financing (as parallel programming) from the Latvian government and other partners. It was approved in September 2005; activities started during the last quarter of 2005 and were scheduled to end in March 2008 (30 months). The project outputs and outcomes were organized along three inter-related components:

1. The legislation and policy component concerned the analysis of current legislative and policy instruments in order to determine necessary improvements towards the promotion of SLM. This component also includes the formulation of Latvia's National Action Plan under the UNCCD as well as initiatives to integrate SLM into country planning frameworks, policies and programs.
2. The second component consisted in carrying out a set of capacity building initiatives at local level in two communities (Jelgava and Liepāja districts, Svēte and Nīca municipalities). These included the provision of training and training material, awareness raising and technical services such as land vulnerability inventory and mapping, and assistance in the development of land management plans. The purpose of these initiatives was to analyse and test different land management and incentive scenarios that may be applied in the rest of the country.
3. The education and capacity development component included the development of training packages for farmers on topics related to SLM, the development of a study program and curricula on SLM as well as other general awareness activities at local, municipal and national levels, feeding into the other project components.

The project was managed through a collaborative arrangement between various international and Latvian partners, and included participation from NGOs, municipal governments and farmers in Latvia. The Project Implementing Agency was the UNDP, and the project implementation was coordinated by the UNDP Latvia Office. The Latvian Implementing Agency was the Ministry of Environment, and its national executing agency was the Latvian State

Company “Vides Projekti”, who was responsible for day-to-day monitoring of project implementation.

A project team was assembled, comprised of two project staff housed in UNDP and three technical consultants who were tasked with coordinating each of the project’s three outcomes and were supported in their work by the UNDP Project Office Manager, who provided strategic advice. This project team was responsible for ensuring delivery and quality of outputs, as well as for coordinating the work of sub-contracted entities and individuals. The Project Team met on a bi-weekly basis to monitor progress and discuss the path forward. A Project Steering Committee, comprised of government departments, academic and NGO partners, also met regularly to assess progress, review outputs and outcomes, and plan ahead.

The various groups of project stakeholders can be represented as below. Institutions indicated in yellow are also members of the Project Steering Committee; simple lines indicate a coordination relationship, while arrows indicate a line of accountability.

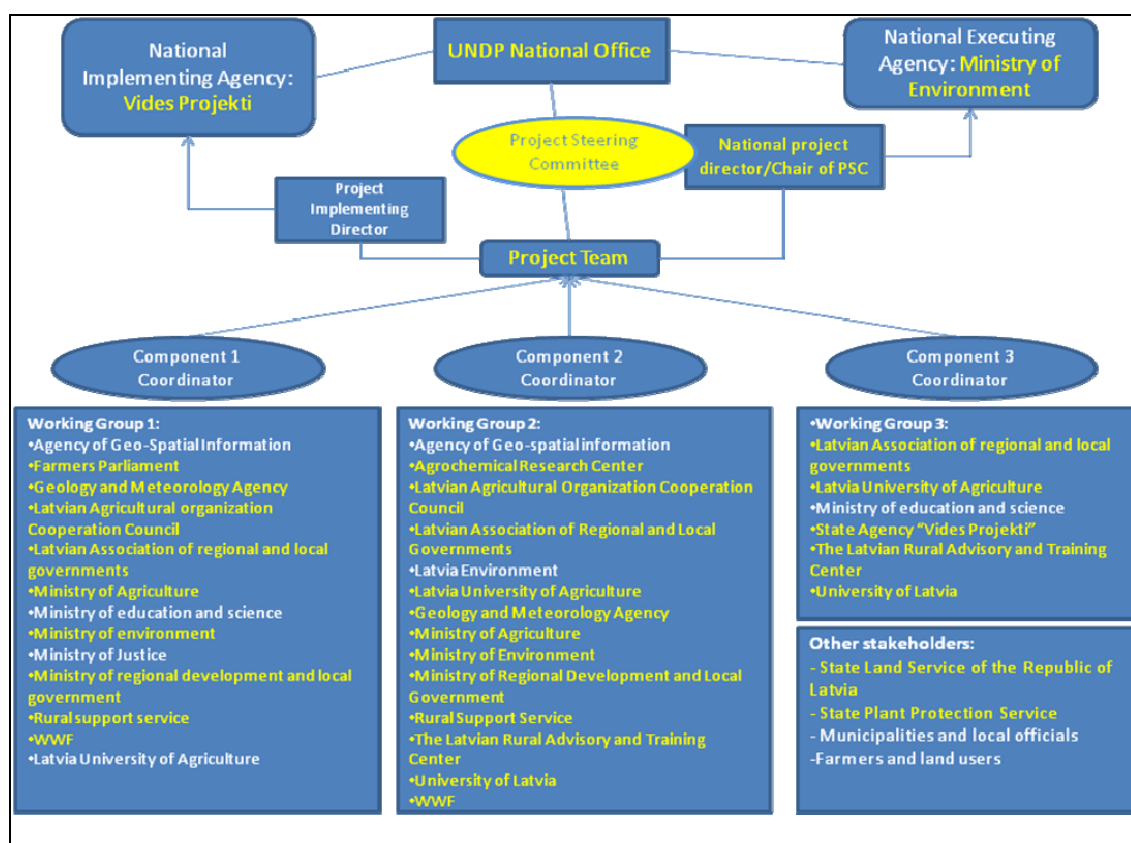


Figure 1: Project participants and stakeholders

Upon the start of the project, an inception workshop was held to establish an annual workplan and to refine the list of deliverables. During this meeting, the list of originally planned outputs and activities underwent considerable revisions, providing additional detail and revised targets where needed. Therefore, for the purposes of this evaluation, the results measured (including any other potential adjustments to the work plans, outputs and targets) will be compared with this revised list of outputs and outcomes. Annex 6 contains a comparative table showing the changes between the original (Project Document) outputs and those planned after the Inception workshop.

In late 2006, an independent mid-term evaluation was conducted; its main findings were:

- The project was well country-driven, fit with the actual needs of Latvia and made a contribution to Latvia's land management agenda;
- The effectiveness of the project may face risks due to the fact that the land reform agenda is yet to be completely achieved in the country.
- The project faced risks with regards to the achievement of some project targets due to lack of time, as well as risks related to the transitional political context in Latvia.
- Project management was undertaken in an efficient way and succeeded in mobilizing technical inputs, using adaptive management, and in developing ownership among project participants.
- There were some gaps with regards to the progress reporting process;
- The capacity building strategy seemed to have been successful and to produce changes, particularly in the level of understanding of land management issues among stakeholders.

In addition, a financial audit was conducted in December 2006, which found that financial controls, reporting systems and evaluation procedures had thus far been adequate, and that expenditures were in line with the approved budget, despite a slightly lower than expected delivery rate of 61%.

This final evaluation builds on these findings, and seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of results achieved and lessons learned throughout the project. The evaluation findings are structured as follows: the first section presents an overview of realized outputs and activities, with a view to comparing these with intended deliverables. The second section presents the evaluation findings according to the main parameters and criteria, as described in the methodology section. A third and final section contains a summary of successes and challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for action.

Evaluation Findings

Overview of outputs and activities and general findings

Overview of achieved outputs and activities

Project activities began in early 2006, following the identification of project team members and staff recruitment. In January 2006, the team convened an inception workshop that brought together all project stakeholders. The workshop served as a venue to establish or launch project structures as well as to revise the project outputs and activities. An additional budget of US\$ 34,450 (from UNDP) was also identified to cover additional costs of the refocused activities, bringing the total budget of the project to US\$ 756,966 (not including co-financing).

The main achieved outputs and activities under Project Component 1 (legislation and policy) included:

- a general stocktaking of land degradation in the country, as well as of policy, legal and institutional factors;
- as a result of this assessment, some recommendations were made and measures were taken to integrate SLM principles into existing laws or policies, for example, the need to include the prevention of land degradation in the Land Policy, and the integration of land-specific monitoring components in the National Environmental Monitoring System⁵;
- An analysis of existing modes of coordination on land degradation issues across governments was also conducted, which led to the development of recommended options – one of which was selected during the project.
- The NAP was drafted, and its costed implementation plan was also developed; however, its approval, publication and official submission to the UNCCD was delayed due to a temporary ‘moratorium’ on the release of new plans or policies.
- Discussions were held on the concept of a Land Information System which culminated in a budget allocation through the 2006 Government declaration (2006) and Land use policy draft.

⁵ Situation Analysis in Latvia concerning UNCCD implementation; suggestions for necessary amendments in policy documents and laws and regulations to fulfill requirements of UNCCD and to ensure SLM recommendations (as per Jolanta Bara translation), Doc 5

Activities under Project Component 2, (capacity building initiatives at local level) were undertaken according to a participatory approach, with the participation of communities in the two pilot sites. In each community, an initial land degradation scoping exercise was undertaken and risk assessments were provided to participating farmers; land quality maps were produced to support on-farm fertilization planning. Some assistance was provided to support the mobilization of additional funds, including for example a project submitted through the EEZ/NFI mechanism (European Economic Zone/Norwegian Financial Instruments). It should be noted that the services and training provided to local land users and farmers was considered particularly relevant in light of evolving EU requirements. Despite the early identification of land tenure and land fragmentation as a barrier to SLM, there is no evidence that innovative land management arrangements, such as innovative land lease agreements, establishment of farmers' cooperatives or other collaborative mechanisms were piloted through the project, as originally intended⁶.

Activities under Component 3 of the project (education and capacity development) included the delivery of SLM training in two communities, involving a total of 43 farmers and 29 municipal officials⁷. Training material was developed by the Rural Advisory and Training Center (RATC) on the basis of participatory needs assessments; this material is now forming a part of the RATC's continued work, and is being integrated into the revisions to the Good Agricultural Practice Code being developed by the Ministry of Agriculture. This material, along with the other educational material produced with the project support (two books for the use of academic institutions), constituted a substantive output in terms of information. It was also supplemented by a number of public-relations initiatives, such as the production of video-clips and newspaper articles that raised the profile of SLM issues in the country and particularly in the two pilot sites.

Annex 6 presents a list of planned outputs and activities, before and after adjustments.

General findings

In general, it can be said that the project significantly contributed to increasing the knowledge base and raising awareness of land degradation issues in Latvia, especially among key government and participating local stakeholders. Whereas land degradation and soil quality were not a major issue for Latvia before the project, participants in the project activities all testified to a higher level of understanding of the issue, as well as of its links to the country's economic and social development. Among those involved in the project, some new capacity seems to have been developed, including through the provision of technical training and services, which is one of the main successes of this project. At the start of the project, Latvia had very limited technical, scientific and human capacity to understand and address land

⁶ See outputs 2.1.11 to 2.1.14

⁷ RATC document, as per Jolanta Bara translation, DOC 7.

degradation issues. In addition to providing direct capacity building efforts, the project appears to have created some of the conditions necessary for the continued development of national and local knowledge, awareness and capacity.

It may also be noted that a number of the projects planned outputs had to be adjusted and sometimes reduced in scope due to a lack of time, or because they might have become irrelevant in the context of the changing policy landscape brought on by the country's accession to the European Union. For example, it was decided that it would be more effective for the project to support the revision of existing educational material rather than to seek to produce entirely new curricula. Another example is the decision to reduce the budgets dedicated to the development of an Information System and Database, taking into account the EU directive and planned expenditures for the INSPIRE information management system (INSPIRE)⁸.

The project benefited greatly from UNDP support and active participation in day-to-day management, as well as from the skills and dedication of the project team, whose efforts ensured that outputs were delivered and that the project achieved its intended results in a timely manner. However, the number of adjustments made to the work plans and planned outputs/outcomes may indicate that the initial plans were somewhat too ambitious for a two year period. These adjustments to the project's plans to accommodate changing realities testify to strong adaptive management abilities as well as to an ongoing learning process among project stakeholders. The revised outputs were for the most part delivered.

Finally, the evaluators found that the project's RBM design was sometimes lacking in clarity, with outputs and outcomes formulated in similar terms, which could lead to confusion between the activities themselves and their results. The links between project objectives, outcomes and outputs was not always very clear. In general, the evaluators found that the outcomes were achieved on a smaller scale than could have been expected from original project plans. For example, one of the activities entailed "the formulation of a package of financial and economic investments and incentive measures to implement SLM practices"; this could be interpreted as leading to the development of a comprehensive set of economic measures at national level (taxes, pricing reforms, long-term investments) – in this case, the project would not have achieved this objective. However, the expected output associated with this activity was: "at least three different incentive measures prepared"; upon careful examination of the information available, it was found that the 'three incentives' could represent three funding requests or a set of recommended reforms to the land use support mechanisms whose preparation was indeed supported by the project.

This illustrates what could very simply be a language issue – indeed, the evaluators found that much was lost in translation, and that there was often a different understanding of key terms.

⁸ As per project team meeting March 8, 2007, Doc 9.

For example, the evaluators found that the same “product” or output could be designated by different terms in the project documentation. In the case referred to above, the same project proposals are defined as “incentives”, “financial mechanisms”, “motivation forms” or “funding proposals”. The natural expectation would be to seek evidence for distinct products and therefore some reconstruction was necessary.

Regardless of this linguistic barrier, the evaluators found that the project outputs were nevertheless deployed at a smaller scale than could have been expected. In the case referred to above, the evaluators found that the drafting of three funding requests was not sufficient to constitute a “package of financial and economic investments” or to achieve the expected result of “developed sustainable finance mechanisms”. Nevertheless, if one refers back to the three expected outcomes, it can be said that they were all achieved (e.g. SLM was mainstreamed, local capacity was built, and academic capacity was enhanced). This leads us to conclude that the project’s design was appropriate, but that the project stakeholders had difficulty in expressing this design in a coherent results-based format.

Specific findings according to evaluation parameters, criteria and indicators

Attainment of objectives and planned results

As mentioned earlier, this parameter considers criteria and indicators related to effectiveness, relevance and ownership, and efficiency. A total of nine (9) indicators are used to measure performance under this parameter. The overall rating of the project for this parameter is Satisfactory.

In terms of effectiveness, as mentioned earlier, a number of the planned project outputs were adjusted or revised during the course of the project. Of those revised outputs or activities, it can be said that more than 90% were achieved (see Annex 6 for a list). The project achieved its objectives in terms of mainstreaming SLM issues into national policy frameworks: the initial target was the integration of SLM into five such frameworks or documents; evidence was found that SLM or soil issues were integrated in the National Environmental Monitoring Programme (NEMP), the Rural Development Plan, the Land Policy, the Code of Good Agricultural Practice, and to some extent in the National Development Plan (2007-2013). In some cases, this integration is easily measurable, as in the case of NEMP, where land issues were previously absent; in some other cases, the documents refer to land issues, but these references remain superficial, due to the nature of the document. For example, the National Development Plan 2007-2013, which constitutes the country’s overarching policy document, foresees actions designed:

- To “maintain agricultural land for the production of agricultural products”,
- To “develop creation of higher added value, particularly in the forestry and agricultural sectors by efficient and sustainable use of available natural resources”
- “To support implementation of environmental management systems and other voluntary and environment-protection tools (...) as well as to continue integrating environmental aspects into sectoral policies”.

It should be noted that the National Development Plan was completed while the project was still in its early stages, so it is not clear whether this can truly be attributed to the project.

The project also presented a Highly Satisfactory rating in terms of providing stakeholders with the means and capacity to change behaviour towards SLM. This is true in all categories of project stakeholders and beneficiaries, including farmers and land users who benefitted from the training and project mapping services, as well as in terms of the Project Steering Committee member organizations, who all testified to a higher degree of understanding and knowledge with regards to land issues. Many of the project’s activities contributed to this broader process: for example, the project assisted farmers in at least one of the two pilot territories to produce land maps which are to become mandatory for farmers to access EU agricultural subsidies (e.g. in the Jelgava district, a nitrate-sensitive area, in compliance with the EU Nitrate Directive). Therefore the training and technical assistance provided by the project contributed to creating enabling conditions for beneficiaries: better technical knowledge, an updated set of data, and a stronger capacity to plan. Project beneficiaries at the municipal level testified to being in a better position to adjust to the entry into force of specific land management requirements as a result of the project. While, according to some, the government continues to face significant capacity challenges, including a low number of experts, this challenge appears to be a common thread across all sectors of public service.

The project presented a lower rating in terms of its success in addressing the fundamental barriers to sustainable land management, more specifically the broader policy and systemic barriers such as land tenure and land fragmentation, or the lack of systemic economic incentives for SLM. For example, original project plans foresaw the implementation of alternative land tenure and cooperative arrangements at farm levels (e.g. land lease agreements and coop arrangements). However, during the course of consultations, it was found that this could not realistically be achieved during the course of the project for various reasons: first, farmers would resist cooperative arrangements that were perceived to be reminiscent of soviet-era social arrangements; secondly, the legal ramifications of such undertakings were too broad to be addressed within the scope of this project. Hence, this activity was foregone – however, it can be said that this did not have a significant impact on the achievement of intended outcomes. Indeed, this revised course of action was in line with farmers’ needs in this area, which were of a

more technical nature. In addition, these issues are well integrated into the Land Policy's intended objectives.

Although the project sought to develop financial incentives, the evaluation found that this was targeted at case-by-case development of funding requests to the various available instruments, rather than seeking to provide enabling conditions that could have a broader impact⁹. It was not possible to determine whether national budget allocations to SLM activities were increased as a result of mainstreaming efforts¹⁰. For example, the National Development Plan, which sets overall country directions and investment priorities for 2007-2013 was finalized prior to the start of the project or while the project was still at inception stages. In addition, although SLM principles were indeed integrated into a number of policy and programmes by this project, it is not clear whether this integration actually represents a new direction to these policies or simply business-as-usual. The 2007 Project Implementation Report¹¹ indicates that "indirect mainstreaming into the strategies or plans of MoA, MoE, MRDLG" took place, but this was not defined further in available documentation.

That being said, the project presented very high scores in terms of its relevance and linkages to country priorities, as well as in terms of seeking synergies with ongoing processes, particularly the EU accession process and biodiversity issues. However, the focal points for other Conventions did not appear as members of official project structures – while they may have been involved informally, through other mechanisms, a more formal participation mechanism could have been beneficial for continued synergies and opportunities. The project actively cooperated with other ongoing initiatives in the country, such as for example the "Lake Pape Protection and Development" project, which provided assistance in the implementation of activities in one of the pilot territories, or the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) initiatives targeting soil liming and drainage systems.¹²

In terms of cost-effectiveness, the project presents a satisfactory rating. Although the project presented high levels of financial controls, delays in implementation led to the revision of the output delivery schedule, and in some cases to a downward adjustment in the outputs themselves. At mid-point, the Mid-Term Evaluation and Audit reports both note a lower-than-expected delivery rate. Also, although project achievements appear appropriate in relation to the project budget obtained through GEF funding (US\$ 722,516) and UNDP additional

⁹ As mentioned earlier, this finding could be attributed to language issues. For example, in some cases "financial incentives" are understood as monetary compensations available for specific activities, while in others, they imply systemic changes in the conditions leading to resource mobilization.

¹⁰ An analysis of budgetary allocations to each ministry before and after the project was not possible within the scope of this evaluation. In addition, a comparative analysis of policy documents into which SLM had been integrated was not possible due to lack of information in English.

¹¹ UNDP GEF APR/PIR, June 2007, Doc 18.

¹² Mid Term Evaluation report, p. 11.

contributions (US\$ 34,450), it should be noted that the declared total budget (including co-financing) was US\$ 18.3 million – there does not appear to have been a significant effort to further mobilize the declared co-financing (and co-programming) to achieve synergies or multiplied benefits. Activities listed in the project planning documents as co-programming or parallel programming therefore remained separate and did not have any bearing on the project itself, representing a potentially missed opportunity.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the link between planned interventions and project goals was not always clear to the evaluators. As noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation, the breadth and scope of expected results was very ambitious, and the project Team was occasionally placed in a situation where it had to make adjustments to the project plans. In addition, while each project intervention was well linked to the project outcomes, as a whole it is not clear to the evaluators if the scale of the delivered outputs was sufficient to target the major hurdles to SLM in the country.

Sustainability of project outcomes

This parameter considers elements of financial, socio-political and environmental sustainability as well as factors related to governance and governance changes. It also considers factors related to the replicability of project outcomes and the effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation practices. Ratings are divided along six criteria, themselves measured through the use of 37 indicators. This large number of indicators is due to the fact that it is difficult to measure sustainability so early after the completion of a project – indicators therefore seek to measure the wide array of possible early factors of sustainability. The overall project rating for this parameter was “Moderately satisfactory”.

Financial Sustainability

In terms of financial sustainability, it was difficult to determine whether the project contributed to creating the conditions for long-term financing of sustainable land management. While the financial targets for implementation of the NAP appeared reasonable, these additional resources (5.8 million LVL, or approximately 12 million US\$) may be difficult to mobilize. Given the current policy transformation processes, and even if the NAP had officially been endorsed, the rapid mobilization of this sum from internal or external sources is, in our view, unlikely. It should however be noted that the success of the project in integrating elements of the NAP and of SLM principles into government programmes and plans (such as the Good Agricultural Practice Code, Ministry of Agriculture, or the Rural Development Plan, Ministry of Regional Development) may lead to the increased channelling of EU funding available for agriculture – these resources are likely to be significant and continued. At the time of writing, however, there was no confirmed funding for NAP priority actions beyond what could be considered as pre-established agricultural subsidies.

During the project, funding was mobilized for a few SLM related initiatives through for example the European Economic Area – Norwegian Financial Instrument, the Latvian Environment Protection Fund and the Rural Development Programme¹³.

As mentioned earlier, the project performed an analysis of financial and economic instruments and provided scenarios for financial support to land management¹⁴. This report described the available EU and State subsidies available for agricultural activities, as well as the various positive and negative incentives (for example fees and taxes for constructed areas, or forests). The report also notes some strategic or political issues, notably the fact that these instruments lack coordination and are all targeted towards different objectives. Beyond this analysis, the project seems to have limited its interventions on incentives to the provision of assistance to farmers in fulfilling the conditions towards the mobilization of ad hoc funding¹⁵.

It may be concluded from this that future progress in SLM is still highly dependent on the provision of ad hoc resources, since there is no evidence of specific mechanisms by which to link NAP and SLM priorities to national and ministerial budget plans, other than through the role that individual ministries can be expected to play. In other words, it is left to each individual ministry to integrate SLM into its priorities and budget requests; there is no control mechanism and no specific resource mobilization strategy. Nevertheless, it appears that as a result of the project, the land users' understanding of these available opportunities was increased.

Therefore, in terms of financial sustainability, the evaluators feel that in the absence of a solid coordination mechanism¹⁶ closely linked to the financial resource allocation processes in the country, SLM issues will continue to be addressed in a fragmented or ad hoc manner, depending on the availability of external resources.

Socio-political Sustainability

The project seemed to have fared better in terms of creating the conditions of socio-political sustainability. As a first step, the project succeeded in identifying the potential benefits of SLM, at least among project participants and stakeholders. Many of the analytical products delivered by the project were used, directly or indirectly, to mainstream SLM into national policies and programmes. At local level, the identification of benefits was achieved by building on EU requirements to increase awareness among land users, thereby contributing to creating ownership at all levels.

¹³ UNDP GEF APR/PIR 2007, June 2007. Doc 18. The exact nature and amounts of these projects were not available for analysis at the time of writing.

¹⁴ Analysis of Impact of Financial and economic instruments and recommendations – scenarios for financial support policies for land use in Latvia – as per Jolanta Bara translation, Doc 13.

¹⁵ See also Project Team meeting notes, marc 2007, Doc 9.

¹⁶ The issue of the coordination mechanism is also addressed further in this section.

The project also succeeded in gathering stakeholders from relevant sectors and groups; at government level, most of the relevant ministries and government services were involved in some way or another in the project. It might have been useful to involve ministries that are not traditionally associated with environmental issues, such as Ministries of Finance and Planning, or Economy and Commerce¹⁷. In addition, there was no evidence of any involvement of other project focal points or other convention focal points in the formal project structure – it is assumed that the coordination with these stakeholders may have taken place informally. On the ground, because the project was focussed on agricultural land degradation and soil quality issues, most stakeholders belonged to the agriculture sector.

The project also made some efforts to create higher-level political buy-in, although this may have been prevented in some ways by the processes and priorities pertaining to the broader transition process in the country. This can be exemplified by the moratorium placed on the release of new plans and strategies, which affected the final stages of the NAP and prevented its presentation to the Cabinet of Ministers¹⁸. Within government at working-levels, the project started a process of coordinated discussion among the relevant ministries regarding land degradation and SLM issues, which will likely continue to be active after the project activities have ended.

It is this process which is more likely to ensure that project outputs and outcomes continue to inform national decision processes, as no formal means of achieving this beyond project duration were identified (with the exception of the coordination mechanism foreseen by the project). For example, while the legislative and institutional analysis performed by the project yielded some recommendations in terms of amendments to existing laws and regulations, no legislative changes were implemented during the project¹⁹.

In terms of risks to the continued sustainability of project outcomes, the evaluators found that the main risk could be the loss of focus and leadership that could be associated with a delay in setting up permanent coordination mechanisms and NAP implementation. Uncertainties due to broader policy reform processes in the country seem to have been the main events affecting the project and are likely to put continued pressures on project participants in the short-term. However, this could result in opportunities in the mid to longer-term.

Finally, the project presented a moderately satisfactory rating in its risk assessment and management components. Indeed, assumptions made at the start of the project regarding government commitment do not appear to have been sufficiently researched. The impacts of

¹⁷ Although this is not current practice in Latvia, this has been demonstrated in most countries to promote mainstreaming and resource mobilization.

¹⁸ At the time of writing it was unclear whether this moratorium applied to all government departments or if this was only relevant to the Ministry of Environment, which acted as the lead on the NAP.

¹⁹ This is also perhaps due to the above mentioned ban on new policies.

the political transition on the project outcomes were largely un-documented, and although their impact became visible towards the mid-term point, there was no explicit attempt to analyse further their implications on specific project results. This may be due to the fact that formats provided for periodical reviews of risks and assumptions did not permit in-depth analysis or detailed description of risks to individual outputs or activities.

Governance and Replication

The long-term governance factors of sustainability include the Coordination mechanism that was to be setup by this project, as well as other governance changes related to the way SLM issues are addressed in the countries. As mentioned earlier, legal changes and other (new) policy measures were not enacted during the duration of the project, however some of these issues, which are related to broader national governance issues, were identified as potential barriers to SLM.

Both the NAP and the legal and institutional analysis identify governance changes and possible means of enhancing inter-ministerial coordination for land issues. All selected options appear feasible, if not in the short-term, at least in the mid- to long-term, provided there is political will to put them in place. Among the options for the coordination mechanism, one option was selected by the project team as the most achievable (to entrust SLM coordination issues to the Agriculture and Environment Protection Council). It was noted that several members of this Council were already involved in the project, but that this council might only perform partial functions of the coordination mechanism²⁰. Other avenues for coordination are explored in the NAP, for example entrusting the lead responsibility to the Ministry of Environment, and the coordination of land degradation prevention activities to the Latvian Environmental Management Agency (LEGMA). The NAP notes that both these initiatives would require changes in statutes, which were not achieved by the time the project ended.

Although the initial recommendations and analysis contained provisions for Terms of Reference and mandate of the coordination mechanism, it was not possible for the evaluators to assess the scope of proposed changes. The effectiveness of this coordination mechanism and of the way in which SLM issues will be addressed will depend on the extent to which the issues fall within the scope of its existing mandate barring any changes to statutes or composition. It should be noted that all options considered for the coordination mechanism were based on existing institutions and structures, so as to not duplicate efforts and to increase mainstreaming potential.

The evaluation noted that there was a definite increase in scientific and technical capacity in place as a direct result of this project. In addition to a greater understanding of the challenges

²⁰ From Project team meeting notes, March 8, 2007.

to SLM in the country, the production of durable training material and the initiation of an inter-ministerial dialogue on land issues, the project also created renewed academic and scientific interest through discussions on methodologies. Another example of this increased interest is the increase in the number of doctoral students researching SLM issues that was achieved during the course of the project.

Finally, the project presented low ratings on replicability aspects, although there may be opportunities to address this shortcoming. For example, there was no evidence²¹ of a replication plan at government level that would extend the mapping and training services to other localities, beyond the willingness of the Rural Advisory and Training Center (RATC) to continue to provide these services. While the work of the RATC may constitute a natural replication mechanism, it is not clear to what extent the services of the RATC are available to all on an equal basis²². At the same time, it can be expected that the NAP and its associated activities are building on the achievement of this project – however, its status as well as the prospects for its implementation remains uncertain, at least in the short-term. Finally, at the time of writing, plans were still being developed to follow-up on project achievement, through continued coordination, and by the development of an inter-ministerial work plan. Mechanisms for the continuation of project outputs and outcomes appear rather informal at the moment.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Adaptive Management

The project's Monitoring and Evaluation systems were very highly rated, as well as the project's adaptive management practices, with regular checks being performed through the use of the UNDP's reporting systems and with lessons learned and results achieved being regularly incorporated into iterative project plans. The project's M&E system met the GEF's minimal requirements, for example through the use of SMART indicators, the identification and planning of M&E events, or the description of project baseline and targets. A thorough Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) was undertaken in 2006, and submitted to the project team in early 2007. Its results were discussed with the Project Steering Committee and a response action plan was devised. All of the recommendations of the evaluation were addressed in the second year of the project, including the development of the NAP and the documentation of lessons learned from pilot sites.

In terms of adaptive management, the project team succeeded in considering various scenarios and adjusting project activities to adapt to changing realities. For example, when considering the most appropriate forum for continued SLM coordination, the team had to consider the possible outcome of upcoming institutional changes (e.g., ministerial restructuring) and propose scenarios adapted to each situation.

²¹ Although plans may exist informally.

²² The RATC's services are paid for through the mobilization of external funds.

The Final Evaluation agrees with many of the MTE's findings in terms of adaptive management. For example, the MTE noted some weaknesses in the RBM system – specifically with the use of quantitative or “binary” indicators which, although useful to monitor the rate of progress of the project, do not provide a characterization or a qualification of results. Measurements against project “targets” (e.g. “SLM mainstreamed in five development frameworks”) may not be sufficient to understand the true breadth of results achieved²³. This is also related to the point made earlier regarding the link between project goals and project interventions: due to the nature of some of the projects’ interventions, which were designed to achieve behavioural or capacity changes, the use of qualitative indicators could have provided additional insight.

In addition, many of the outputs in the revised project plan (after inception) were formulated as indicators or targets (e.g. “completion of the assigned activities”, or “at least three financial mechanisms prepared”), which also gave the impression that a large number of distinct documentary products (reports, involvement plans, financial mechanisms) would result from the project. However, evidence was lacking for many of these outputs, despite the fact that they were achieved. For instance, there was no documentary evidence of an “involvement plan” as a separate document – however a strategy for participation of local stakeholders was de facto implemented. This is perhaps due to the fact that many activities were broken down to varying levels of detail, which made the use of indicators more difficult, occasionally leading to repetitions.

The use of project management software also provided a useful tool for the day-to-day tracking of progress. The evaluation found some differences between initial and final work plans, testifying to revisions to the project plan and activities structure during the course of the project. This can be taken as a proof of adaptive management. However, the evaluators must caution that adaptive management must be balanced with the maintenance of project expectations, and warn against the excessive use of revisions to project targets as the sole risk management approach. In this case, however, the revisions to project outputs did not have an overly significant impact on the achievement of outcomes.

Environmental Sustainability

Because there are no large-scale physical interventions as a result of this project or among the activities in the pilot sites, this criterion becomes slightly less relevant. However, it should be noted that the NAP – which includes a set of future programming – is intended to achieve environmental benefits, therefore it is assumed that the environmental benefits of SLM are well understood by project participants. In addition, it can also be said that the project significantly contributed to increasing the knowledge and understanding of the environmental impacts of land degradation in Latvia.

²³ This is also likely due to the application of the SMART framework for indicators.

In conclusion, in terms of overall sustainability, it can be said from this evaluation that some of the conditions for lasting impact were achieved by this project, although some further work might be needed to consolidate achievements. As mentioned earlier and as raised in the Mid-Term Evaluation report, the main barrier to SLM in Latvia was most certainly attributed to a general lack of understanding of land management issues. Because of this project, government partners as well as local participants benefited from increased understanding of SLM issues – this creates a condition for longer-term impact on the ground, as well as in terms of potential policy changes.

Assessment of processes affecting the attainment of project results

This portion of the evaluation considers the manner in which the project was implemented, including project management practices, and their impact on the results achieved.

As noted earlier, this project rates very high in its planning elements, including in the use of adaptive management techniques and processes. Project goals and objectives were clearly determined and organized along a results-based framework in the Project planning documents. Despite challenges in the definition of outputs and indicators, the use of a results-based system indicates an emphasis on monitoring and documenting results achieved. The evaluation found some slight weaknesses in the description of baseline conditions, which were then used to compare against project targets: for example, when describing the baseline with regards to SLM coordination mechanisms, the project documentation notes that “no mechanisms exists”; for accuracy, and in order to provide insight into project activities and goals, this could have been nuanced to note that, among the existing mechanisms, none addressed SLM appropriately. While this is not a major issue, the formulation of appropriate RBM elements helps clarify expectations and measure both qualitative and quantitative changes.

In terms of implementation mechanisms, the evaluation found that the project perhaps experienced some difficulties in dividing work among project partners, and that the roles and responsibilities of participants were not always clearly understood. For example, project planning documents implied that the day-to-day operations of the project would be run from the State agency “Vides Projekti”, however, the team’s expectations of what this would entail were not clear. Whereas the project team was housed in UNDP offices, Vides Projekti’s contribution seems to have been limited to contractual, legal and administrative tasks (book-keeping) as well as the delivery of specific work items such as publicity clips. The difference between a “state executing agency” (Ministry of Environment) and an “implementing agency”, and similarly the distinction between the Project Implementing Director, Project Manager, and National Project Director’s functions were not clearly evident to the evaluators.

Regardless, the evaluation found that a great deal of capacity was created among project stakeholders and within the broader project team. Arrangements for a transfer of the capacity created by this project should therefore be sought, so as to ensure continued ownership of the project outcomes. It will be particularly important to ensure that the leadership demonstrated by the project team is not lost when the project is closed.

The project also obtained a satisfactory rating in terms of participation and consultative mechanisms, and a highly satisfactory rating in terms of internal and external communication. The evaluation found that significant efforts were made to create consultative fora at the local level whereby local land users could express their needs in terms of SLM; the 'before-and-after' assessments of knowledge performed during training were found to be particularly useful – both in terms of monitoring project results and in terms of consolidating learning processes. The evaluation found no evidence of specific consultative fora dedicated to gathering the input of local stakeholders during the development of the NAP, but it is assumed that the experience gathered from the two pilot territories served this purpose.

Internal and external communications aspects of this project were considered among the best strengths of the initiative. Most interviewed project participants testified that communications among project stakeholders, the project team and the PSC were open, frank and constructive. Similarly, the use of public awareness tools such as newspaper articles, the publication of books, guidelines and manuals²⁴, as well as televised broadcasts were useful means to create larger awareness of SLM and land degradation issues among the general public. The use of internet also provides a useful avenue for continued awareness raising.

²⁴ See Doc 12, as per Jolanta Bara translation, which reported 35 instances of newspaper articles, press releases or other publications.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this project was to create or build SLM capacity in Latvia and to promote greater awareness and knowledge of SLM issues. As a general finding, the evaluators found that the project achieved this goal within its scope and limits: greater understanding and awareness was found among project stakeholders and participants, which has in turn led to increased ownership of land management issues.

This project provided a useful indication as to the barriers to SLM in Latvia as well as a potential model for future efforts to address them. Project team members and stakeholders all testified that no “socially-accepted” definition of SLM existed in Latvia before the project, and that there were no inter-sectoral discussions of land issues, despite a multiplicity of actors (government departments, services, NGOs, and private sector alike). The project also uncovered gaps in the technical knowledge base, ongoing data and information needs, as well as low levels of capacity among stakeholders which may need to be addressed in an ongoing fashion.

This evaluation found that the project’s key successes were the creation of awareness and knowledge among a cadre of key government stakeholders across departments, as well as of an increased understanding of SLM and of the role of each ministry in promoting it. Capacity at the local level was also created, and is likely to continue to increase through the continued services of agencies such as the Rural Advisory and Training Center, as well as through the gradual integration of SLM issues into government programmes and policies.

The project team was also capable of taking advantage of emerging opportunities arising mainly from the EU accession process and related financing instruments, although the policy reform process may have created some untimely hurdles. In a climate of ongoing transition, the project was successful in adapting to changing realities, and to integrate the product of learning by the project team itself into evolving work plans and activities.

The project also contributed to the identification of potential new barriers to SLM, including the lack of data and information on soil. This issue will likely have to be addressed in the near future, and will also entail that a national discussion is initiated on methodological and scientific aspects. There remains limited technical and scientific capacity on land and soil degradation in Latvia – but this aspect will not likely be resolved until the longer-term.

From a management perspective, there was a good participatory approach to the management of the project. Most relevant stakeholders were involved in the project, and constant efforts were made to mobilize as many partners as possible. Notably absent was the Ministry of Finance, whose participation in the project could have been useful for future mainstreaming efforts.

In terms of adaptive management, as mentioned earlier, the project team was able to adapt to emerging opportunities and constraints and revised outputs were, for the most part, produced. However, the evaluation found that some of the outputs were not achieved or were, in some cases replaced by less formal activities. This may have resulted in an excessive downscaling of the project activities, even though the outcomes appear to have been achieved through other means. In our view, this is most likely due to the fact that the initial project plans were ambitious and that risk assumptions were not completely studied.

Finally, in terms of sustainability, the project has contributed to the establishment of some of the basic conditions for SLM in the long term, including a body of knowledge, capacity, commitment and awareness among a group of national stakeholders and potential experts, as well as a set of test cases that can be useful for the future. Materials produced, including educational documentation, training packages and public relations documents can also be used to a larger scale when the conditions are ripe.

Lessons learned

Based on the analysis of project documentation, as well as on the interviews and meetings conducted during the mission, the following lessons can be learned which may be applicable to similar projects in Latvia or in other countries.

Project Design

- Projects in which the declared aim is capacity building should be based on a precise and thorough analysis of baseline capacity, both from a qualitative and a quantitative perspective. In this regard, the information gathered during the National Capacity Self Assessment has proven useful.
- In addition, projects where baseline capacity is low, should be planned along longer timelines, so as to allow for normal delays in gathering and raising the awareness of stakeholders. For example, in a case such as this one, the rate of delivery of project output accelerated in the second year, after significant efforts were made by the project team to inform project participants of the major land issues.
- Some training in results based management, specifically on the formulation of indicators, outputs outcomes and risks, might be beneficial to project designers during the inception phase.

Project Implementation and Management

- It is useful to document the roles and responsibilities of national and local participants, such as through the use of terms of reference, as in the case of project Component

Coordinators under this project. Similar practices can also be applied to project committees and structures that are intended to last beyond the project. This helps delineate accountabilities and clarify expectations.

- It is also useful to keep records of meetings and decisions regarding the project, as done throughout the duration of this project. This is particularly useful when using adaptive management techniques, and where the goal of the project is to create a learning process, as it feeds into ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation processes.
- Adaptive Management should be carefully balanced with the need to maintain project expectations. This project demonstrates that it is possible to adjust project activities according to evolving circumstances and still achieve the expected outcomes, but that this approach is inherently risky.
- In the case of projects that include “pilot” or “demonstration” interventions, project completion strategies (or exit strategies) may be useful tools to ensure continued ownership and replication. These strategies could be developed at the last project meeting, along with a follow-up workplan.

Sustainable Land Management

- Each country and organization will have a different understanding of sustainable land management. It would be useful, at the beginning of similar projects, to ensure that the accepted definition and scope are agreed and recorded. This may help at early stages in identifying stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities, as well as in the identification of policy or programme gaps.
- When developing National Action Plans that include costed projects or programmes, the early identification of resources can be an important leveraging mechanism. In this regard, resource mobilization strategies should form part and parcel of NAPs so as to avoid delays in their implementation.
- Systemic policy barriers to sustainable land management, such as land tenure or economic policies, are a challenge to address in most countries. In countries where processes are underway to reform land tenure policies, project of this type should seek the active participation of relevant ministries (e.g. justice, economy, territorial planning, or decentralization).

Recommendations

In order to maintain the momentum created by this project in terms of SLM in Latvia, as well as to take advantage of emerging opportunities, the evaluators make the following suggestions for action in the short and longer-term.

1. It will be important to decide on a follow-up course for at least the next 6 months to a year, so that project achievements are not lost. Although the project is officially closing in March 2008, and the UNDP office in Latvia is also set to close in the short term, a number of initiatives can still be undertaken by project participants. Participants in the project committees should meet to decide which activities they can each deliver within the scope of their regular functions. For example, the Ministry of Environment could revise and finalize the NAP, and communicate its achievements in this regard to the UNCCD Secretariat.
2. Additionally, each ministry representative could decide on a set of concrete activities it will undertake to integrate project achievements and SLM in general into their ongoing work. These activities could be collated in a shared workplan. The project members should also agree on a focal point for SLM issues in order to maintain leadership and focus, and to continue coordinating mechanisms that were created during the course of this project.
3. Regarding the coordinating mechanism for SLM, its terms of reference as well as its role and responsibilities should be formalized through the adoption of terms of reference or revised statutes. Membership should be as inclusive as possible, including Ministry of Finance representation to ensure that SLM goals are reflected in national financial allocations.

It should be noted that, at the time of writing, plans were underway to hold a follow-up planning meeting supported by the UNDP office.

4. Products derived from the legal, institutional and policy analysis should be published to serve as continued awareness raising tools and to build on the mainstreaming efforts that will be necessary in an ongoing fashion to ensure long-lasting conditions for SLM in the country.
5. The National Action Plan could be revised to adjust the financial plan, taking into account the likelihood of additional resource mobilization, or the Ministry of Environment could define a strategy for mobilizing NAP resources. It may be useful to gather information on continued investments into SLM-related policies and programs from national and EU resources.

6. The project team and other project participants should continue in their efforts to raise awareness of SLM issues among their broader circles.

In the longer-term, it may also be useful to consider a set of actions designed to remove the remaining barriers to SLM uncovered by this project. For example, the scientific debate initiated by this project regarding the methodological and technical issues related to soil mapping, soil quality monitoring and classification issues, should continue. This will also be useful in designing a full-fledged and operational environmental monitoring system.

It may also be beneficial to continue to encourage the Rural Advisory and Training Center to pursue its activities in the areas of training at local level, integrating SLM principles into their material. Continued outreach to local land users will be of paramount importance in order to replicate project achievements and to achieve broader impact at local level. In terms of continued awareness raising, the RATC can also continue to play a key role, and it is recommended that, if possible, the information generated by this project be used to produce simplified guidelines or brochures for the use of farmers and broader dissemination.

It should be noted that many of the above recommendations were already being discussed and, in some cases, plans for their implementation were also underway by the project team and Steering Committee members.

List of Annexes

1. Terms of Reference for the Final Evaluation of the UNDP-GEF project “Building sustainable capacity and ownership to implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia”
2. Evaluation matrix
3. Methodological notes
4. List of consulted documents
5. Mission terms of reference and list of meetings
6. Comparative table of outputs and activities
7. Curriculum vitae of the evaluators
8. Management response to the evaluation

ANNEX 1

Project Final Evaluation

Terms of Reference

UNDP/GEF Project

“Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD Objectives in Latvia”

Introduction

The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

The final evaluation is intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It looks at early sign of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. It will also identify/document lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of the national policy as a follow-up to the UNDP/GEF project initiatives.

The evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with the “GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy”(see <http://thegef.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/mepoliciesprocedures.html>).

Evaluations in the GEF explore five major criteria:

- (i) Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
- (ii) Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
- (iii) Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
- (iv) Results – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
- (v) Sustainability – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

The implementation of the ***UNDP/GEF Project “Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD Objectives in Latvia”*** began in December 2005 with a goal to raise and strengthen the capacity at the local level to ensure that obligations under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (the UNCCD) are met. The main objective of the Project is capacity building and removal of key barriers to sustainable land management in Latvia.

The Project has three main areas of intervention (components):

1. Legislation and policy, where the analysis of the current legislative and policy instruments as well as necessary amendments/improvements, its formulation and mainstreaming into respective legislative and policy documents are to be conducted. At the same time the Project is to provide a base upon which the UNCCD National Action Plan is to be prepared, assists and ensures that it is

formulated and approved and establishes an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism to ensure land management issues are addressed in sustainable manner;

2. Pilot territories, where, detailed inventory on land vulnerability and degradation risks are to be carried out, at the same time different management and incentive scenarios are to be analysed and tested to address vulnerable areas in the management practices both on the ground and in terms of institutional support and control; further resulting in the development of management plans that incorporate sustainable land management practices; and based on findings and lessons learned in pilot territories general guidelines for replication are to be developed to sustain the ongoing process nationally. Project territories are Nica municipality in Liepaja district, chosen as representative area for polder territories and Svete and Gluda municipalities in Jelgava district, chosen as representative area of intensive agricultural production land; and

3. Education and capacity development, where a training package for farmers on different topics related to the implementation of sustainable land management (SLM) practices will be produced and applied based on a participatory assessment of needs; development of a study program, a model curriculum on Sustainable Land Management will be produced in collaboration with the University of Latvia and the Latvian University of Agriculture; general public awareness activities will be carried out during the time of the project, using campaigns, project web page to communicate and inform at various levels (national, municipal, general public).

In September 2005 the Ministry of the Environment and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Latvia signed the Project Document “Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia” (hereinafter -- Project).

The total project budget is US\$ 722 516, which are funded by GEF and additional amount of US\$ 34 450 funded by UNDP/TRAC that are based on issues identified during inception phase and are described in Annex E of the Project Document. The Executing Agency for the project is the Limited Liability Company of State “Vides Projekti”.

The mid-term evaluation was conducted in February 2006 and its main recommendations (in short) were as follows:

Strategic Directions of the Project

1. It is recommended that the main focus during the second (and last) year of implementation be on supporting the formulation and approval of the NAP.
2. The process to develop the NAP should start with an extensive assessment review of land management issues in Latvia.
3. It is urgent that the project and the partners finalize the establishment of a national coordination mechanism to continue the coordination mechanism currently being performed by the project through its PSC and the working groups.
4. The findings from the pilot areas should be documented and disseminated in Latvia; particularly in similar areas: polders and intensive agriculture areas. It is time to strategize the dissemination of these results; including the incorporation of these results into existing policies, programmes and guidelines related to the agricultural sector and the spatial planning process in Latvia.

Management of the Project

5. The project management team organizes a retreat to review its implementation

progress, its work plan until the end of the project, the analysis of the assumptions and risks and the necessary implementation strategies and tactics to complete the project on time and on budget. As part of this review, the project management team should also identify an exit strategy for all project initiatives to avoid “cutting” project support in the middle of a particular initiative.

6. It is recommended that a proper project exit point from the NAP process should soon be identified to avoid disrupting the NAP process in Latvia.
7. It is recommended that the closing date of the project be linked with the budget status and not only with the ending planned date of March 2008.
8. It is important that the project team weighs need to deliver against the capacity development approach emphasizing ownership, institutionalization and partnerships. Some trade-offs may be necessary.
9. The overall project progress needs to be carefully monitored during this second year to constantly assess what will be achieved by the end of the project and update the measures to be implemented to compensate for any slippage in project delivery.
10. Recommendations on opportunities for better reporting and documentation on project progress and results.

Evaluation Audience

This Final Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project “Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD objectives in Latvia” is initiated by UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency. It aims to provide managers (at the Ministry of Environment, Vides Projekti, project, UNDP-Latvia Project Office and UNDP-GEF levels) with strategy and policy options for more effectively and efficiently replicating successful project initiatives or for filling gaps not covered in the policy area by the project. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

Objectives of the Evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities in relation to the stated objective and to produce possible recommendations on how to improve the management of the project until its completion in March 2008.

As this is the final evaluation and as the mid-term evaluation report /Attachment ../ discussed the project concept and design at length, the emphasis should assess:

Project indicators

The evaluator will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation

The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular the evaluation is to assess the Project team’s use of adaptive management in project implementation.

Project outputs, outcomes and impact

The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

The Final Evaluation will also cover the following aspects:

1. Progress Towards Results

Changes in development conditions. Address the following questions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:

- Have identified barriers for SLM in policy, legislation and institutional setup been substantially addressed to ensure their removal?
- Have there been changes in local stakeholder behavior (i.e. threats) that will contribute to improvement in land management? If not, why not?
- Is there adequate land management planning in place, or in progress, ensuring sustainability in preserving and improving land quality?
- Can there be identified changes (or activities in progress) that indicate improvement in knowledge capacity and awareness addressing importance of land quality preservation to prevent land degradation.

Measurement of change: Progress towards results should be based on a comparison of indicators before and after the project intervention. Progress can also be assessed by comparing conditions in the project site to conditions in similar unmanaged sites.

Project strategy: how and why outcomes and strategies contribute to the achievement of the expected results:

- Examine their relevance and whether they provide the most effective route towards results.

Sustainability: Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy;

Gender perspective: Extent to which the project accounts for gender differences when developing and applying project interventions. How are gender considerations mainstreamed into project interventions? Suggest measures to strengthen the project's gender approach.

2. Project's Adaptive Management Framework

(a) Monitoring Systems

- Assess the monitoring tools used:
 - Do they provide the necessary information?
 - Do they involve key partners?
 - Are they efficient?

- Reconstruct baseline data if necessary¹. Reconstruction should follow participatory processes and could be achieved in conjunction with a learning exercise²
 - Ensure the monitoring system, including performance indicators, at least meets GEF minimum requirements³. Apply SMART indicators as necessary.
 - Apply the GEF Tracking Tool and provide a description of comparison with initial application of the tool.
- (b) Risk Management
- Validate whether the risks identified in the project document and PIRs are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate. If not, explain why. Describe any additional risks identified
 - Assess the project's risk identification and management systems:
 - o Is the UNDP-GEF Risk Management System⁴ appropriately applied?
- (c) Work Planning
- Assess the use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to it
 - Ensure the logical framework meets UNDP-GEF requirements in terms of format and content
 - What impact did the retro-fitting of impact indicators have on project management?
 - Assess the use of routinely updated workplans.
 - Assess the use of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities
 - Are work planning processes result-based⁵?
 - Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Any irregularities must be noted.
- (d) Reporting
- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management
 - Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

3. Underlying Factors

- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.
- Re-test the assumptions made by the project management and identify new assumptions that should be made
- Assess the effect of any incorrect assumptions made by the project

¹ See p.67 of UNDP's "Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluation for Results", available at <http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

² See Annex C of "Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: approaches to sustainability", available at <http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

³ See section 3.2 of the GEF's "Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures", available at <http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

⁴ UNDP-GEF's system is based on the Atlas Risk Module. See the UNDP-GEF Risk Management Strategy resource kit, available as Annex XI at <http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.html>

⁵ RBM Support documents are available at <http://www.undp.org/eo/methodologies.htm>

4. UNDP Contribution

- Assess the role of UNDP against the requirements set out in the UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. Consider:
 - Field visits
 - Steering Committee/TOR follow-up and analysis
 - PIR preparation and follow-up
 - GEF guidance
- Consider the new UNDP requirements outlined in the UNDP User Guide⁶, especially the Project Assurance role, and ensure they are incorporated into the project's adaptive management framework
- Assess the contribution to the project from UNDP "soft" assistance (i.e. policy advice & dialogue, advocacy, and coordination). Suggest measures to strengthen UNDP's soft assistance.

5. Partnership Strategy

- Assess how partners are involved in the project's adaptive management framework:
 - Involving partners and stakeholders in the selection of indicators and other measures of performance
 - Using already existing data and statistics
 - Analysing progress towards results and determining project strategies.
- Identify opportunities for stronger substantive partnerships;
- Assess how local stakeholders participate in project management and decision-making. Include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project.
- Consider the dissemination of project information to partners and stakeholders and if necessary suggest more appropriate mechanisms.

Scope of the evaluation

Most of the project activities are very integrated and therefore give impact for other outcomes of the project. In this respect, it is in the interests of the Project team and UNDP Latvia that the evaluators dedicate their effort to evaluate individual activities in much broader scope than outcome level these activities has been assigned for.

This project is considered as launching field and the launching engine for sequential activities in the area of SLM in Latvia as well as will provide a base for SLM activities in our region. Therefore evaluators are expected to pay significant attention and give evaluation on projects contribution to ensure sustainability towards SLM in Latvia and also for significance, if relevant, of project's achievements in regional context (UNCCD Annex 5 countries).

Due to the fact that issue of land management concerns wide variety of institutions and involves many various stakeholders with differing, sometimes opposing interests, it would be valuable to the Project success and sustainability for the evaluation team to assess the involvement of the stakeholders (partnerships) and to make any suggestions on their involvement on specific project results to achieve sustainability.

⁶ The UNDP User Guide is currently only available on UNDP's intranet. However UNDP can provide the necessary section on roles and responsibility from <http://content.undp.org/go/userguide/results/rmoverview/progprojorg/?src=print>

Ownership of the project processes and outcomes by the key stakeholders will be one of the key factors in project success to achieve project sustainability and thus the evaluators are asked to make an objective assessment of the ownership of the project outcomes/results by the key stakeholders.

Products expected from the evaluation

The key product expected from this final evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the following contents:

Please note that some of the categories in the findings and conclusions need to be rated in conformity with the GEF guidelines for final evaluations.

1. Executive summary

- Brief description of project
- Context and purpose of the evaluation
- Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

2. Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Key issues addressed
- Methodology of the evaluation
- Structure of the evaluation

3. The project(s) and its development context

- Project start and its duration
- Problems that the project seek to address
- Immediate and development objectives of the project
- Main stakeholders
- Results expected

4. Findings and Conclusions

In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (R) should be rated using the following divisions: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory

4.1. Project Formulation

- Conceptualization/Design (R). This should assess the approach used in design and an appreciation of the appropriateness of problem conceptualization and whether the selected intervention strategy addressed the root causes and principal threats in the project area. It should also include an assessment of the logical framework and whether the different project components and activities proposed to achieve the objective were appropriate, viable and responded to contextual institutional, legal and regulatory settings of the project. It should also assess the indicators defined for guiding implementation and measurement of achievement and whether lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) were incorporated into project design.

- Country-ownership/Driveness. Assess the extent to which the project idea/conceptualization had its origin within national, sectoral and development plans and focuses on national environment and development interests.
- Stakeholder participation (R) Assess information dissemination, consultation, and “stakeholder” participation in design stages.
- Replication approach. Determine the ways in which lessons and experiences coming out of the project were/are to be replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects (this also related to actual practices undertaken during implementation).
- Other aspects to assess in the review of Project formulation approaches would be UNDP comparative advantage as IA for this project; the consideration of linkages between projects and other interventions within the sector and the definition of clear and appropriate management arrangements at the design stage.

4.2. Project Implementation

- Implementation Approach (R). This should include assessments of the following aspects:
 - (i) The use of the logical framework as a management tool during implementation and any changes made to this as a response to changing conditions and/or feedback from M and E activities if required.
 - (ii) Other elements that indicate adaptive management such as comprehensive and realistic work plans routinely developed that reflect adaptive management and/or; changes in management arrangements to enhance implementation.
 - (iii) The project's use/establishment of electronic information technologies to support implementation, participation and monitoring, as well as other project activities.
 - (iv) The general operational relationships between the institutions involved and others and how these relationships have contributed to effective implementation and achievement of project objectives.
 - (v) Technical capacities associated with the project and their role in project development, management and achievements.
- Monitoring and evaluation (R). Including an assessment as to whether there has been adequate periodic oversight of activities during implementation to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan; whether formal evaluations have been held and whether action has been taken on the results of this monitoring oversight and evaluation reports.
- Stakeholder participation (R). This should include assessments of the mechanisms for information dissemination in project implementation and the extent of stakeholder participation in management, emphasizing the following:

- (i) The production and dissemination of information generated by the project.
 - (ii) Local resource users and NGOs participation in project implementation and decision making and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the approach adopted by the project in this arena.
 - (iii) The establishment of partnerships and collaborative relationships developed by the project with local, national and international entities and the effects they have had on project implementation.
 - (iv) Involvement of governmental institutions in project implementation, the extent of governmental support of the project.
- Financial Planning: Including an assessment of:
 - (i) The actual project cost by objectives, outputs, activities
 - (ii) The cost-effectiveness of achievements
 - (iii) Financial management (including disbursement issues)
 - (iv) Co-financing ⁷
 - Sustainability. Extent to which the benefits of the project will continue, within or outside the project domain, after it has come to an end. Relevant factors include for example: development of a sustainability strategy, establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms, mainstreaming project objectives into the economy or community production activities.
 - Execution and implementation modalities. This should consider the effectiveness of the UNDP counterpart and Project Co-ordination Unit participation in selection, recruitment, assignment of experts, consultants and national counterpart staff members and in the definition of tasks and responsibilities; quantity, quality and timeliness of inputs for the project with respect to execution responsibilities, enactment of necessary legislation and budgetary provisions and extent to which these may have affected implementation and sustainability of the Project; quality and timeliness of inputs by UNDP and GoC and other parties responsible for providing inputs to the project, and the extent to which this may have affected the smooth implementation of the project.

4.3. Results

- Attainment of Outcomes/ Achievement of objectives (R): Including a description *and rating* of the extent to which the project's objectives (environmental and developmental) were achieved using Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory ratings. If the project did not establish a baseline (initial conditions), the evaluators should seek to determine it through the use of special methodologies so that achievements, results and impacts can be properly established.

⁷ Please see guidelines at the end of Annex 1 of these TORs for reporting of co-financing

- This section should also include reviews of the following:
- Sustainability: Including an appreciation of the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain after GEF assistance/external assistance in this phase has come to an end.
- Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

5. Recommendations

- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
- Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
- Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. Lessons learned

This should highlight the best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success.

7. Evaluation report Annexes

- Evaluation TORs

The length of the final evaluation report shall not exceed 50 pages in total (not including annexes).

Evaluation team

A team of independent experts will conduct the evaluation. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The evaluation team will be composed of one International Consultant or team leader and one National Consultant. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Former cooperation with GEF is an advantage.

Team Qualities:

- (i) Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- (ii) Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- (iii) Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- (iv) Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- (v) Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures;
- (vi) Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to natural resource management projects;
- (vii) Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of land;
- (viii) Familiarity with land management policies and coordination structures in Latvia;
- (ix) Demonstrable analytical skills;
- (x) Work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years;
- (xi) Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported projects on SLM;

- (xii) Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- (xiii) Excellent English communication skills.

Specifically, the international expert (team leader) will perform the following tasks:

- Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
- Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
- Assist in drafting terms of reference of the national consultant(s)
- Decide the division of labor within the evaluation team;
- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
- Draft related parts of the evaluation report; and
- Finalize the whole evaluation report.

The National Consultant will provide input in reviewing all project documentation and will provide the International Consultant with a compilation of information prior to the evaluation mission. Specifically, the national expert will perform tasks with a focus on:

- Review documents;
- Prepare a list of the outputs achieved under project;
- Organize the mission programme and provide translation/interpretation when necessary;
- Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
- Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
- Draft related parts of the evaluation report;
- Assist Team leader in finalizing document through incorporating suggestions received on draft related to his/her assigned sections.

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for a position. Applications are welcome from anyone who feels they can contribute to the team because they possess three or more of the listed qualities. Obviously the more qualities that can be demonstrated, the better the chance of selection.

Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. Or alternatively, proposals will be accepted from recognized consulting firms to field a complete team with the required expertise within the evaluation budget.

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles⁸:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities

⁸ See p.16 of the GEF's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

- Credibility
- Utility

The evaluators must be independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. Therefore applications will not be considered from evaluators who have had any direct involvement with the design or implementation of the project. Any previous association with the project, the Ministry of Environment, UNDP-Latvia or other partners/stakeholders must be disclosed in the application. This applies equally to firms submitting proposals as it does to individual evaluators.

If selected, failure to make the above disclosures will be considered just grounds for immediate contract termination, without recompense. In such circumstances, all notes, reports and other documentation produced by the evaluator will be retained by UNDP.

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

Methodology or evaluation approach

An outline of an evaluation approach is provided below; however it should be made clear that the evaluation team is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards (as adopted by the UN Evaluation Group⁹). They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining period of project duration.

The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The methodology to be used by the evaluation team should be presented in the report in detail. It shall include information on:

- Documentation review (desk study) - the list of documentation to be reviewed is included in the Annex A to the Terms of Reference);
- Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at minimum: UNDP – Latvia, UNDP/GEF RTA, UNCCD national focal point, project team, Project Steering Committee representatives: Ministry of Environment, Latvian Association of Regional and Local Governments, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Regional Development and Regional Governments, Agrochemical Research Center, Agricultural University of Latvia, University of Latvia, representatives of pilot municipalities, farmers NGO's, ;
- Field visits to both pilot sites;
- Questionnaires;
- Participatory techniques and other approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

⁹ See <http://www.uneval.org/>

Implementation Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with UNDP-Latvia. The UNDP Latvia Project Office is the main operational point for the evaluation responsible for liaising with the project team to set up the stakeholder interviews, arrange the field visits and co-ordinate with the Executing Agency and other counterparts. UNDP-Latvia will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project implementation unit will be responsible for liaising with the project team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements.

Timeframe for submission of first draft of the report: 7 weeks upon signing the contract. The evaluation should be completed by 29/02/2008.

The report shall be submitted to the UNDP Latvia Projects office (Ms. Silvija Kalnins, address: Pils 21, LV 1167 Rīga, tel. 7503688, fax 750 3601)

Prior to approval of the final report, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to government counterparts and project management: The Project Director Mr. Rolands Bebris, The Project Executive Director Mr. Ivars Ozoliņš and members of the project steering group representing the following institutions:

- The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia
- Agrochemical Research Center
- Farmers Parliament
- Latvia University of Agriculture
- Latvian Agricultural Organization Cooperation Council
- Latvian Association of Regional and Local Governments
- "Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Agency"
- Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government
- Rural Support Service
- State Agency "Vides Projekti"
- State Land Service of the Republic of Latvia
- State Plant Protection Service
- The Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
- UNDP Latvia
- University of Latvia
- World Wildlife Fund in Latvia
- The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia

If any discrepancies have emerged between impressions and findings of the evaluation team and the aforementioned parties, these should be explained in an annex attached to the final report.

The activity and timeframe are broken down as follows:

Activity	Timeframe and responsible party
desk review	2 days by the international expert, 4 days by the national consultant
briefings for evaluators	1 day by the team
visits to the field, interviews, questionnaires, de-	5 days by the international consultant, 6 days by

briefings	the national consultant
validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of initial reports for comments, meetings and other types of feedback mechanisms	4 days by the evaluation team
Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on first draft)	2 days by the international evaluator, 1 day by the national

Working Days:

Team Leader (international expert) – 14 working days

Technical experts (national experts) – 16 working days

The proposed dates for the in-country mission to Latvia are suggested for mid January (14-18), 2008. The assignment is to commence no later than 12/12/2007.

APPLICATION: Please send your applications and a brief concept paper (no more than 5 pages outlining the approach and methodology you will apply to achieve the assignment) to Mr. Janis Germanis, project manager; address: Pils iela 21, Rīga, LV1167, LATVIA; e-mail: janis.germanis@undp.org . Deadline for applications is 28/11/2007.

Annex 1. Explanation on Terminology Provided in the GEF Guidelines to Terminal Evaluations

Implementation Approach includes an analysis of the project's logical framework, adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), partnerships in implementation arrangements, changes in project design, and overall project management.

Some elements of an effective implementation approach may include:

- The logical framework used during implementation as a management and M&E tool
- Effective partnerships arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project implementation
- Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management.

Country Ownership/Driveness is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements where applicable. Project Concept has its origin within the national sectoral and development plans

Some elements of effective country ownership/driveness may include:

- Project Concept has its origin within the national sectoral and development plans
- Outcomes (or potential outcomes) from the project have been incorporated into the national sectoral and development plans
- Relevant country representatives (e.g., governmental official, civil society, etc.) are actively involved in project identification, planning and/or implementation
- The recipient government has maintained financial commitment to the project
- The government has approved policies and/or modified regulatory frameworks in line with the project's objectives

For projects whose main focus and actors are in the private-sector rather than public-sector (e.g., IFC projects), elements of effective country ownership/driveness that demonstrate the interest and commitment of the local private sector to the project may include:

- The number of companies that participated in the project by: receiving technical assistance, applying for financing, attending dissemination events, adopting environmental standards promoted by the project, etc.
- Amount contributed by participating companies to achieve the environmental benefits promoted by the project, including: equity invested, guarantees provided, co-funding of project activities, in-kind contributions, etc.
- Project's collaboration with industry associations

Stakeholder Participation/Public Involvement consist of three related, and often overlapping processes: information dissemination, consultation, and "stakeholder" participation. Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the GEF-financed project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by a project.

Examples of effective public involvement include:

Information dissemination

- Implementation of appropriate outreach/public awareness campaigns

Consultation and stakeholder participation

- Consulting and making use of the skills, experiences and knowledge of NGOs, community and local groups, the private and public sectors, and academic institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities

Stakeholder participation

- Project institutional networks well placed within the overall national or community organizational structures, for example, by building on the local decision making structures, incorporating local knowledge, and devolving project management responsibilities to the local organizations or communities as the project approaches closure
- Building partnerships among different project stakeholders
- Fulfillment of commitments to local stakeholders and stakeholders considered to be adequately involved.

Sustainability measures the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain, from a particular project or program after GEF assistance/external assistance has come to an end. Relevant factors to improve the sustainability of project outcomes include:

- Development and implementation of a sustainability strategy.
- Establishment of the financial and economic instruments and mechanisms to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends (from the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and market transformations to promote the project's objectives).
- Development of suitable organizational arrangements by public and/or private sector.
- Development of policy and regulatory frameworks that further the project objectives.
- Incorporation of environmental and ecological factors affecting future flow of benefits.
- Development of appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) .
- Identification and involvement of champions (i.e. individuals in government and civil society who can promote sustainability of project outcomes).
- Achieving social sustainability, for example, by mainstreaming project activities into the economy or community production activities.
- Achieving stakeholders consensus regarding courses of action on project activities.

Replication approach, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, replication proper (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or scaling up (lessons and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources). Examples of replication approaches include:

- Knowledge transfer (i.e., dissemination of lessons through project result documents, training workshops, information exchange, a national and regional forum, etc).
- Expansion of demonstration projects.
- Capacity building and training of individuals, and institutions to expand the project's achievements in the country or other regions.
- Use of project-trained individuals, institutions or companies to replicate the project's outcomes in other regions.

Financial Planning includes actual project cost by activity, financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. If a financial audit has been conducted the major findings should be presented in the TE.

Effective financial plans include:

- Identification of potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing¹⁰.
- Strong financial controls, including reporting, and planning that allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, allows for a proper and timely flow of funds, and for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables
- Due diligence due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits.

Co financing includes: Grants, Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate), Credits, Equity investments, In-kind support, Other contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries. Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6.

Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector. Please briefly describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective.

Cost-effectiveness assesses the achievement of the environmental and developmental objectives as well as the project's outputs in relation to the inputs, costs, and implementing time. It also examines the project's compliance with the application of the incremental cost concept. Cost-effective factors include:

- Compliance with the incremental cost criteria (e.g. GEF funds are used to finance a component of a project that would not have taken place without GEF funding.) and securing co-funding and associated funding.
- The project completed the planned activities and met or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of Global Environmental and Development Objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned.
- The project used either a benchmark approach or a comparison approach (did not exceed the costs levels of similar projects in similar contexts)

Monitoring & Evaluation. Monitoring is the periodic oversight of a process, or the implementation of an activity, which seeks to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct the deficiencies detected. Evaluation is a process by which program inputs, activities and results are analyzed and judged explicitly against benchmarks or baseline conditions using performance indicators. This will allow project managers and planners to make decisions based on the evidence of information on the project implementation stage, performance indicators, level of funding still available, etc, building on the project's logical framework.

Monitoring and Evaluation includes activities to measure the project's achievements such as identification of performance indicators, measurement procedures, and determination of baseline conditions. Projects are required to implement plans for monitoring and evaluation with adequate funding and appropriate staff and include activities such as description of data sources and methods for data collection, collection of baseline data, and stakeholder participation. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that are sustainable after project completion.

¹⁰ Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6. The following page presents a table to be used for reporting co-financing.

Financial Planning Cofinancing

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
- Grants										
- Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate)										
- Credits										
- Equity investments										
- In-kind support										
- Other (*)										
<i>Totals</i>										

* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

Leveraged Resources

Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector. Please briefly describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective.

Annex A. List of documents to be reviewed by the Evaluators


Following documents can be used as a basis for evaluation of the project (titles underlined are available in Latvian with an English annotation):

Document	Description
Project document	The Project Document and Revisions
Project reports	Project Inception Report
Annual Project Report to GEF	Project Implementation Report
Minutes	<u>Steering group meetings</u> <u>Meetings with experts, team staff etc.</u> <u>Project implementation planning meeting minutes</u>
Information materials produced by the project activities	<u>Inception reports for separate project components;</u> <u>Progress reports for implementation of project activities;</u>

ANNEX 2

EVALUATION MATRIX - RATINGS PER CRITERIA AND INDICATORS

criteria	sub-criteria	indicators	rating	Score	Explanatory notes
1. attainment of objectives and planned results					
1.1 Effectiveness					
1.1.1 Extent to which objectives were achieved					
	1.1.1a	project outputs are completed by set date	Moderately Satisfactory ▼	2	The NAP exists in draft form but had not been endorsed or submitted to the UNCCD by the time the evaluation took place. It is unlikely that it will be done by the planned end date of the project due to uncertainties in the overall policy framework. All other outputs (as per revised LFA) appear completed, with some delays in some cases
	1.1.1b	SLM and CCD objectives are appropriately mainstreamed	Satisfactory ▼	3	National Development Plan mentions need to manage land adequately in forest and agriculture region, but does not mention actions that will be taken to achieve this goal. SLM principles are somewhat integrated into national programmes such as NEMP; efforts were made to integrate SLM into RDP and National Development Plan
	1.1.1c	barriers to SLM are adequately addressed	Moderately Satisfactory ▼	2	land tenure issues were not addressed by the project and a lot seems to have been riding on the land policy which is not yet complete - Financing barriers seem to have been addressed in an ad hoc fashion, through the drafting of (successful) project proposals as well as through the provision of services in pilot areas that will facilitate mobilization of EU funding. It appears that during the project, the barriers identified were deemed to exceed the scope of possible intervention by project activities. they were included to some degree as part of the objectives of the Land Policy
1.1.2 Extent to which planned outputs/outcomes were delivered					
	1.1.2a	Number of planned outputs vs number of delivered outputs	Satisfactory ▼	3	a number of adjustments were made at the start of the project to reduce the number of planned outputs (eg manual on SLM not produced, but replaced by educational materials). Some planned outputs were delayed, or revised, or adjusted to take into account evolving national circumstances and needs. Of the revised outputs, a significant majority were produced.
	1.1.2b	Planned outcomes vs. Realized outcomes	Moderately Satisfactory ▼	3	expected outcomes were perhaps too ambitious and not enough attention was paid to the overarching policy issues that caused hindrance. Major outcome achieved was ownership, and a stronger understanding of the SLM problem in Latvia, as well as some awareness among stakeholders - but capacity remains an issue.
	1.1.2c	Targets are achieved	Satisfactory ▼	3	revised targets in project plans were mostly achieved (Approx. 85%)
1.1.3 Extent to which project represents a change					
	1.1.3a	new knowledge is generated re SLM and national/local land issues	Highly Satisfactory ▼	4	knowledge products, awareness and buy-in for SLM issues were among the main outcomes achieved (educational materials, public awareness campaigns) - interviewees testify that SLM was not a well understood issue before the project
	1.1.3b	new directions to existing policies are in effect	Moderately Satisfactory ▼	2	during the project, the release of new plans, programs, policies and the creation of institutional mechanisms was placed under moratorium by the GoL. There are no major new directions to existing policies or plans in effect to date, although they may be expected in the medium-term.
	1.1.3c	stakeholders have the capacity to change behaviour	Highly Satisfactory ▼	4	trained farmers now have a set of concrete tools, as well as access to continued targeted technical support and training (including plans from the RATC to replicate training), as well as maps and information tools, which may enable them to change land management practices. Government still experiences capacity issues, including lack of available scientific expertise.
			32	26	81.25
1.2 Relevance/Ownership					
1.2.1 Links between project objectives and national policies, programmes and projects					
	1.2.1a	project plans contains explicit linkages to country priorities	Highly Satisfactory ▼	4	rural development action plan (2004-2006, unclear if similar exists for duration of project), environmental action plan and relevant laws are mentioned in Project documentation
	1.2.1b	Synergies with country priorities are appropriate (at output or outcome level)	Highly Satisfactory ▼	4	linkages and synergies with country priorities are well understood and communicated.
	1.2.1c	NAP and project interventions avoid duplication with ongoing programs and projects	Highly Satisfactory ▼	4	based on summary of NAP, projects under the NAP would be considered "additional" or "complementary" activities to ongoing national programmes and projects.

1.2.1d Project outputs and outcomes provide dynamic linkages with UNCCD priorities	Satisfactory		3	Since the NAP is not finalized or approved, it is difficult to know whether it can evolve in parallel with UNCCD policy evolution. However, there are high degrees of concordance between objectives of the convention and the overall project objectives - in addition, review of legislative and institutional issues also covers requirements for UNCCD implementation, which was used in NAP development
			16	15
				93.8

1.3 Efficiency

1.3.1 degree of cost-effectiveness of project interventions					
1.3.1a planned vs spent budget	Highly Satisfactory	▼	4	planned budget : 722,516 US\$ (GEF) 17,582,293 Co-\$ + additional 34,450 from UNDP - Total project 18.3 M\$. Of the total GEF Grant and UNDP contribution, expenditures appeared in line with planned expenditures.	
1.3.1b relevance of project interventions in relation to goals and objectives	Moderately Satisfactory	▼	2	logic link between project activities and project objectives occasionally unclear - somewhat of a possible disconnect between 'barriers to SLM' identified in ProDoc and actual project interventions. Also project interventions are on a different scale (magnitude) than the barriers identified.	
1.3.2 timeliness of implementation					
1.3.2a planned vs real timelines	Satisfactory	▼	3	some delays in first year of project led to re-evaluation of delivery schedule, some revisions in expected outputs, as well as some outputs not being fully delivered by the time the evaluation took place.	
1.3.2b mitigating factors and delays	no rating				
			12	9	75
			60	50	83.3

2. Sustainability of Project Outcomes

2.1 Financial

2.1.1 likelihood of resources being available after UNDP & GEF project support					
2.1.1a appropriateness of financial objectives for NAP implementation/SLM programming	Moderately Satisfactory	▼	2	It is difficult to determine from the NAP's financial objectives whether their achievement is realistic. Cost of projects under the NAP appear in line with regular cost of activities in Latvia - however, given the current country context, it may be difficult to mobilize resources that don't flow through the EU accession process. total additional requested amount is 5 million LVL	
2.1.1b confirmed financing obtained for continued SLM programming	Moderately Unsatisfactory	▼	1	There is no confirmed financing for NAP activities, however the activities that were integrated into national programmes are more likely to be financed. It is not clear from available information whether national budget allocations to SLM related activities have increased as a result of project. EU resources seem like the main projected source of income towards land related activities - in addition to the 3 project proposals that were developed and approved through this project	
2.1.2 extent to which continued benefits are dependent on availability of external funding					
2.1.2a NAP contains assessment of costs of inaction	Moderately Unsatisfactory	▼	1	From available information there does not appear to be an assessment of impacts in terms of economics or social costs in the NAP or in any other project documentary products.	
2.1.2b assessment of internal financial risks	no rating			SLM not likely mainstreamed in national budget - also see analysis of financial incentives; however, the EU accession process may lead to this in the longer-term	
2.1.2c effectiveness and impact of incentive frameworks for SLM	Moderately Satisfactory	▼	2	The project did not sufficiently address this component in the pilot areas. However, it appears that farmers taking part in the project now have a clearer understanding of their potential benefits from implementing SLM	
2.1.3 financial risks					
2.1.3a assessment of external financial risks (GEF, IA, Donors) to NAP implementation	no rating				
			16	6	37.5

2.2 Socio-Political

2.2.1 level of stakeholder buy-in					
2.2.1a incentives of SLM are identified	Satisfactory	▼	3	The incentives of SLM were indirectly identified by the project, namely by building on EU requirements to increase awareness among pilot territory land users. In addition, training material and other documentation produced by the project (guidelines, etc...) can be used to identify incentives of SLM	
2.2.1b incentives to SLM are understood by stakeholders	Highly Satisfactory	▼	4	interviewees testify that incentives were not understood before project- but that project contributed to creating an understanding of benefits of SLM among project participants.	

2.2.1c project identifies stakeholders from all sectors	Satisfactory	3	the project attempted to identify stakeholders from various land-related sectors and achieved this integration at least at government level. On the ground, most participants were from the agriculture sector, due to the project's emphasis on soil management issues. Notably missing were ministry of finance and planning, and other convention focal points
2.2.2 level of political buy in			
2.2.2a level of consultation/endorsement for NAP	Moderately Satisfactory	2	NAP not endorsed at time of evaluation; endorsement was intended at Cabinet of Minister level. Was presented at State Secretary level. Does not appear to have been broad-based consultative fora for NAP specifically.
2.2.2b types of instruments identified for NAP implementation/ continued SLM programming	Moderately Satisfactory	2	there are no specific mechanisms identified for continued SLM beyond NAP implementation and the continued coordination among ministries. However, EU requirements are likely to strengthen policy and programmatic instruments in the medium-term
2.2.3 extent to which project helps inform national/local decision processes			
2.2.3a mechanisms are identified to mainstream SLM into national decisions	Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	Beyond the identification of a coordinating body, no specific mechanism or process was identified to strengthen the integration of SLM into national decision-making.
2.2.3b legislative changes (if applicable) are in effect	Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	no legislative changes were enacted - changes to laws were recommended in the legislative and institutional study - could be due to moratorium.
2.2.3c Local development plans integrate project findings and SLM priorities	Unsatisfactory	0	no evidence to that effect.
2.2.4c National Environmental Monitoring System includes LD	Satisfactory	3	NEMP includes a chapter on soil quality - it appears to be addressed in terms of pollution; however, the NEMP is not fully operational.
2.2.4 political, social and economic risks affecting sustainability of project outcomes			
2.2.4a assessment of possible political events affecting or delaying implementation	no rating		Uncertainties due to the EU accession process were the main events affecting the project and are likely to continue to exert pressures on project impacts in the short-term. In the longterm, this is likely to become an opportunity for the continued project impacts.
2.2.4b Effectiveness of risk management strategy	Moderately Satisfactory	2	assumptions of project preparation did not appear to grant much importance to the impact of the politics of accession. Similarly, the assumptions made in project preparation and inception phases did not appear to include areas such as local community resistance to new land management arrangements.

40 21 52.5

2.3 Governance

2.3.1 degree of change in governance needed to achieve SLM			
2.3.1a long-term governance mechanisms for change are identified (incl. land lease/land tenure)	Highly Satisfactory	4	NAP proposes new ways of dealing with SLM from an organizational/institutional perspective. Project document and legal/institutional analysis recognizes the necessary governance changes
2.3.1b changes in governance are realistic and attainable	Highly Satisfactory	4	the governance changes in themselves do not appear to be excessive. however, because of immediate circumstances due to EU accession priorities, they do not appear to be realistically attainable in the short-term; however, opportunities are likely to arise in the mid- to long-term, provided leadership of SLM issues is maintained
2.3.2 degree of capacity and knowhow in place after project			
2.3.2a institutional and technical achievements as a result of project	Satisfactory	3	Greater understanding of institutional and policy barriers to SLM, as well as of mechanisms whereby SLM can be coordinated from within government; other achievements include increased knowledge, production of durable training material; and the start of an interministerial dialogue on land issues.
2.3.2b policies and processes in place as a result of project	Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	NAP and SLM coordination mechanism could be considered as policy and process in place as a result of this project. No other broad-based processes or policies appear to have been adopted as a result of this project
2.3.2c Effectiveness of training and information material in building local capacity	Highly Satisfactory	4	Project appears to have greatly benefitted farmers and local land users, as well as local administration. Training, ongoing support from RATC and mapping exercises deemed very useful by project participants.
2.3.2d results of testing of new land planning schemes are integrated in ongoing learning at local/national level	Unsatisfactory	0	new land planning schemes were not tested.
2.3.2e Degree of technical or scientific capacity in place as a result of project	Highly Satisfactory	4	for example, project participants reported a modest increase in number of doctoral students researching SLM. A discussion on methodologies for land monitoring was initiated among the scientific and academic partners to the project; RATC increased its own capacity to deliver good science-based training on SLM. Existing capacity at scientific and technical levels was very low in the country; this continues to be a potential challenge

28 20 71.4

2.4 Replication

2.4.1 planned replication of outcomes, lessons or projects

2.4.1a mechanisms for replication of project achievements are identified	Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	There is no evidence of a replication plan - no plans for the continuation of mapping services or training - however, RATC does plan to continue to include SLM issues into its ongoing work. Mechanisms to replicate project achievements appear informal.
2.4.1b NAP implementation mechanisms include a Long-term Monitoring framework	Satisfactory	3	NAP provides for a mid-term (2.5 years) and final evaluation
2.4.1c project follow-up plans provides for iterative revisions to main outcome documents and plans	Unsatisfactory	0	no project follow-up plans were in place at time of writing.
2.4.2 replicability of pilot projects			
2.4.2a lessons learned from pilot projects at local level are documented	Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	at the time of writing this was not completed. However, plans were in place to discuss the compilation of best practices and lessons learned. Lessons learned from land assessments in the pilot sites were incorporated into the design of training material.
2.4.2b other sites for replication are identified	Unsatisfactory	0	no evidence to this effect.
		20	5 25.0

2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation- Adaptive Management

2.5.1 M&E planning			
2.5.1a Project planning documents contain M&E Plan	Moderately Satisfactory	2	yes; however, the project experienced some challenges in identifying indicators; there was a confusion between outputs and indicators, and most of the indicators used were of a quantitative or "yes/no" nature
2.5.1b Appropriateness of budget for M&E	Highly Satisfactory	4	ongoing M&E activities incorporated into day-to-day operations of project team. Project management was highly adaptive. Total planned budget for M&E was 38,000 US\$ or nearly 20% of project budget.
2.5.2 M&E implementation			
2.5.2a results are reported as per M&E plan	Highly Satisfactory	4	results were reported according to plan as per UNDP practices - M&E system meets GEF Minimal requirements.
2.5.2b Planned vs spent budget for M&E	Highly Satisfactory	4	planned and spent budgets appear to be consistent.
2.5.2c Reported results incorporated into iterative project plans (adaptive management - including response to MTE)	Highly Satisfactory	4	project adapted successfully to evolving circumstances. Project attempted to integrate recommendations from the mid-term evaluation. A specific response action plan was developed in response to the MTE, however, the action items are not very clear. Most of the targeted actions in this response plan have indeed been implemented. In a few cases, there appears to have been a revision to the project output list and project implementation plans, eg by transferring responsibility to ministries, outside scope of project...
		20	18 90.0

2.6 Environmental

2.6.1 Environmental risks and opportunities			
2.6.1a project outcomes include identified environmental risks from future interventions	N/A	0	no future interventions are identified - NAP identifies environmental benefits of SLM"
2.6.1b environmental benefits from planned interventions (incl. Synergies) are identified	Moderately Satisfactory	2	benefits from NAP interventions are presumably identified; project fostered a better understanding of environmental benefits of SLM and of planned NAP interventions.
2.6.1c environmental risks from non-implementation are clear	Moderately Satisfactory	2	project participants testify to a stronger understanding of the risks of not addressing land degradation;
		8	5 62.5

132 75 56.8

3. Assessment of processes affecting the attainment of project results

3.1 Preparation (inception)

3.1.1 project planning			
3.1.1a Preparatory documents set clear goals	Highly Satisfactory	4	goals, objectives were clearly determined in project documentation.
3.1.1b Project design documents identify baseline capacity	Satisfactory	3	yes - baseline capacity and "baseline levels" were identified in the project documents, but baseline capacity was not described in much detail. Baseline data used in Project Inception report appears not entirely accurate (eg no frameworks integrate SLM approach).
3.1.1c project implementation mechanisms are clear and address actors, timelines, resources	Moderately Satisfactory	2	implementation mechanisms are described in the project documents but remain unclear in the field (ie relationship between actors, organizations) - also, significant changes in the work distribution and division of responsibilities among main project partners

3.1.3 financial planning

3.1.3a Financial management structures/processes are clearly set before start of project

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

UNDP processes for financial management clear and well established. Spending authorities well understood.

3.1.3b Financial reporting occurs at set timelines

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

yes, and documented as per UNDP processes and tools

3.1.3c standards of due diligence in financial management are maintained

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

according to KPMG audit report.

24

21

87.5

3.2 Implementation

3.2.1 extent to which implementation mechanisms were maintained

3.2.1a planned implementation mechanisms vs. Used implementation mechanisms

Satisfactory ▼

3

Project was well managed, but evaluation found a somewhat blurred line between undp and the Vides Projekti implementing agency - project was run out of UNDP and implementing agency assisted with ad hoc tasks such as public awareness, proposal development, book-keeping and contracting.

3.2.1b adjustments to implementation mechanisms and plans

Satisfactory ▼

3

adjustments were made according to evolving needs and circumstances; however, there did not appear to be sufficient tracking of the reasons behind these decisions (beyond the production of revised workplans)

3.2.2 Effectiveness of participation mechanisms

3.2.2a participation mechanisms allow for local participation

Satisfactory ▼

3

participation appeared adequate, however it is unclear whether participation extended beyond the provision of training.

3.2.2b public consultations are open and allow for feedback

Satisfactory ▼

3

participation appeared adequate, however it is unclear whether participation extended beyond the provision of training.

3.2.2c local participation is facilitated by project implementers (\$, transport, language)

Satisfactory ▼

3

participation of local land users was facilitated by the production of documentation (flyers) in local language, as well as by ensuring that the training was tailored to knowledge needs (through before/after surveys)

3.2.2d participants represent all sectors and vulnerable groups

Moderately Unsatisfactory ▼

1

farmers appear to have been the only targeted group... NGOs and other non-farm private sector do not appear to have participated very much.

3.2.3 Effectiveness of communication mechanisms

3.2.3a stakeholders understand project goals

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

project participants seem to understand project goals (maybe that was even a result of the project itself, as this does not seem to have been the case at the beginning.

3.2.3b information is available in local languages

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

3.2.3c public awareness campaigns are launched and maintained

Moderately Satisfactory ▼

2

public awareness campaign was launched, but it is not clear whether it will be maintained after project. In addition, its impact was not assessed.

3.2.3d internal communication among project implementors is open

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

all participants testified this was one of the main strengths of the project

3.2.3e feedback is incorporated into project implementation (adaptive management)

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

there was a strong feedback loop between project activities and project ongoing planning, as can be seen from the adjustments to project outputs.

44

34

77.3

3.3 UNDP backstopping

3.3.1 Appropriateness of technical support

3.3.1a channels of communication with UNDP are perceived as clear and open

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

projec team was very closely associated to UNDP - communication was clear.

3.3.1b UNDP identifies problems and necessary project adjustments in timely manner

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

yes - adjustments made by project team respond to needs of project.

3.3.1c technical assistance and advice is available in timely manner

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

according to interviews, project team has provided much assistance and dedication

3.3.1d required resources are mobilized by UNDP to support country objectives

Highly Satisfactory ▼

4

UNDP has made significant controbition to the project

3.3.1e UNDP-generated knowledge products are relevant

N/A ▼

0

no evidence of any use of UNDP products

3.3.2 Efficiency of program management

3.3.2a effectiveness of UNDP technical and financial oversight	Highly Satisfactory	▼	4		
3.3.2b consistency of policy decisions by UNDP and GEF	Highly Satisfactory	▼	4		
3.3.2c clarity of GEF guidance	N/A	▼	0		
			24	24	100.0
			92	79	85.9

TOTAL POINTS	284	204	71.8
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hs	4	90 to 100
s	3	70 to 90
ms	2	50 to 70
mu	1	30 to 50
us	0	below 30

ANNEX 3

Annex 3

Notes on the Evaluation Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project and thereby to document and disseminate lessons learned. The project was evaluated against a set of parameters, criteria and indicators. The criteria were derived from the evaluation parameters included in the Terms of Reference and specific indicators were developed according to the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Relevant and Trackable), and in line with the GEF and UNDP's requirements for Monitoring and Evaluation.

The performance of the project was rated according to each indicator. Ratings are obtained through a combination of qualitative and quantitative scales. Qualitative ratings were then translated using a simple point-based system, to facilitate a synthetic rating per criterion and a total rating for the project.

Ratings were classified as follows:

Individual criteria rating	Points	Parameters and Overall Rating	Percentage
Highly Satisfactory	4	Highly Satisfactory	90-100
Satisfactory	3	Satisfactory	70-90
Moderately Satisfactory	2	Moderately Satisfactory	50-70
Moderately Unsatisfactory	1	Moderately Unsatisfactory	30-50
Unsatisfactory	0	Unsatisfactory	Less than 40

When an indicator did not apply, it was removed from the overall rating. The equivalent of an Unsatisfactory rating (0 pt) was attributed when there was no substantiating evidence.

Methods of Investigation

A first step in this evaluation was a documentary analysis, which was used to develop a set of preliminary findings and a set of questions to be further explored. A list of consulted documents can be found in Annex 4. The second step in the evaluation was a mission in Latvia from January 14 – 18, 2008, to deepen the understanding of the project's implementation, fill potential gaps in information and obtain information from key project stakeholders. Finally, a third step consisted in integrating additional documentation into the preliminary findings, filling the evaluation matrix according to the set criteria, and in producing this draft report. A first version of the report was discussed by the project team, and their input was integrated into the final version of the report.

Limits to the Methodology

This methodology aims at producing neutral and measurable opinions based on evidence. In some cases, documentary evidence of outputs (e.g, reports, meeting notes, or publications) were not available

for analysis. In other cases, documents were not available in English, and summaries had to be produced and translated by the local consultant. Due to the large volume of information, it was not possible to translate full documents; therefore there are limits to the analysis of certain products. The information gathered during on-site interviews and meetings has been integrated into the analysis, but was not attributed to specific individuals for reasons of confidentiality.

The list of planned and achieved outputs presented in Annex 6 is based on the lists found in the approved Project Document and the Inception Report. Indications of achievement are based on available evidence, as well as, to some extent, a reconstruction of project results by the evaluators.

ANNEX 4

Annex 4

List of Relevant Documents

1. UNDP Project Document: Building Sustainable Capacity and Ownership to Implement UNCCD Objectives in Latvia, 2004.
- 1bis. Project Inception Report, February 2006.
2. Mid-Term Evaluation Report, Jean Joseph-Bellamy & Ekoncepti Ltd., February 2007
3. Independent Auditors Report on the Project for the year ended 31 December 2006, KPMG Baltics.
4. National Action Plan, translated summary with tables
5. Legislation Issues, Gita Rutina, translated summaries
 - a. Situation Analysis in Latvia Concerning UNCCD implementation
 - b. Requirements of UNCCD concerning development of NAP
 - c. Suggestions for necessary amendments in policy documents and laws and regulations to fulfill requirements of UNCCD and to ensure SLM implementation
 - d. Recommendations for establishment of coordination mechanism for SLM
6. “Vietejas Kapacitates celsana pilot teritorijas Nicas pagasta un Jelgava rajona”, InfoSab, 2006. translated summary,
7. Development of recommendations for sustainable land management and elaboration of training program package for local stakeholders, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Center, 2007.
8. Development of recommendations for sustainable land management and elaboration of training program package for local stakeholders, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Center, 2007 Translated summary.
9. Project Team Meeting, Notes, 08/03/2007
10. Project Steering Committee Meeting, Notes, April 27/2007
11. Workplans
 - a. Workplan after inception meeting
 - b. Workplan 5, January 2008
12. Translated summary, List of publications and newspaper articles
13. Analysis of impact of financial and economic instruments and recommendations – scenarios for financial support policies for land use in Latvia, Daina Saktina, January 2008. Translated summary
14. Land Policy, Translated summary and table
15. Contents of RATC Training Programme, translated summary
16. SLM Latvia project MTE de-briefing, 2007.

17. Financial Mechanism Application Form – Part 1 (reconstruction of boiler-house in Nica Municipality)
18. UNDP-GEF APR/PIR 2007, June 2007.
19. Annual UNDP Combined Delivery Report by Activity with Encumbrance, 2005/2006/2007/2008
20. Latvian National Development Plan 2007-2013
21. Quarterly Project Reports and Progress Reports
 - a. January-March 2006
 - b. January-April 2006
 - c. October-December 2006
 - d. April-June 2007
 - e. July-September 2007
22. Terms of reference – Project Component Coordinator

ANNEX 5

Annex 5

Terms of Reference and List of Meetings

Evaluation Mission, Latvia, January 14-18, 2008

Objectives

The objectives of the mission are

- To validate the preliminary findings derived from the desk study of the project
- To fill any information gaps as per the evaluation framework.
- To share lessons learned with project stakeholders

Mission Plan

The mission will be organized as a series of meetings and one-on-one interviews with key project participants. The purpose of the meetings will be to determine whether:

1. Project participants, stakeholders and beneficiaries have acquired new or stronger capacity to achieve SLM.
2. Project outputs and outcomes are sustainable, or if the conditions for sustainability are in place.
3. Project participants, stakeholders and beneficiaries are satisfied that their goals have been achieved.
4. Project participants, stakeholders and beneficiaries are satisfied of the effectiveness of the technical and advisory backstopping received from UNDP.
5. Any additional measures are recommended in order to complete, consolidate and/or follow-up to the project.

A questionnaire will be circulated prior to the mission to assist interviewees and to guide discussions. A brief mission summary will be shared with interviewees in order to validate the results of discussions.

Proposed list of meetings

- Briefing with the project team: discuss mission TORs and preliminary findings
- Individual meetings with project team members (or by component?)
- UNCCD focal point
- Vides Projekti
- Members of the Project Steering Committee, including

- Environment Ministry
- Farmers Parliament
- University of Latvia + Latvian University of Agriculture + Agrochemical research center (possible group meeting?)
- Ministry of regional development and regional government
- Ministry of Agriculture + Rural support service
- Association of regional and local governments
- Ministry of Education and Science
- representatives from municipalities
- representative from NGOs having participated in the project (WWF)
- Project participants (farmers) (participants in local training) (or through questionnaire)

**Schedule for the Evaluation Mission
January 14-18, 2008**

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
Monday Jan 14		Rīga	
9:00- 10:00	Briefing with Project Team	Jānis Ģermanis (Yanis Germanis), Project Manager Linda Kalniņa (Linda Kalnina), Project assistant	UN House
10:00-11:00	Meeting (project staff – 1 st component)	Gita Rūtiņa, Lelde Grantiņa, Ilmārs Lustiks	UN house
11:00 – 12:00	Meeting (project staff 2 nd component)	Ansis Grantiņš, Inga Šķendere-Drēģere	UN house
12.00-14.00	Lunch		
14.00-15.00	Meeting	Prof. Oļģerts Nikodemus (Olgers Nikodemus), Dean of Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Latvia, Raimonds Kasparinskis, Executive Director of Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, University of Latvia	Faculty of Geography and Earth Sciences, Alberta 10
15.30-16.30	Meeting	Silvija Kalniņš (Silvija Kalnins), Head of UNDP Latvia Project Office	UN House
16.30-17.30	Meeting (project staff)	Aija Jakubovska (Aiya Yakubovska), PR specialist	UN House
Tuesday Jan 15		Rīga – Jelgava – Svēte (?)	
9:00-10:00	Meeting	Ivars Ozoliņš (Ivars Ozolins), Executive Director of Project, Chairman of the Board of enterprise “Environmental Projects” Ltd (“Vides projekti”) (Project Implementing Agency)	Vides Projekti, Pils street
10:00-11.30	Travel to Jelgava		
11.30-12.30	Meeting	Prof. Aldis Kārklis (Aldis Karklins), Latvian University of Agriculture	Jelgava, Lielā street 2
12.30-13.30	Lunch		
14.00 – 15.00	Meeting in Svēte municipality	Head of Svēte municipality Sandra Viniarska	Svēte
16.00.17.00	meeting	Ilze Skudra, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre, senior specialist, Ingrīda Grantiņa Head of Crop farming	Ozolnieki

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
		Division, Andris Kursītis, Head of training division	
Wednesday Jan 16		Rīga	
8.15-8.45	Phone conference	Rolands Bebris, Ministry of Environment, Director of Department of Environmental Protection, Project Director	Republikas square 2 2213 room
9.00-10.00	meeting	Valentīna Mičurova (Valentina Mitsurova), Ministry of Agriculture, Deputy head of department of Rural development	
10.30 -11.30	meeting	Ministry of regional development and regional government - Vladislavs Vesperis Deputy Head of LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DEPARTMENT , Edvīns Kāpostiņš (Edvins Kapostins), Head of Land use policy Division	
12.00-13.00	Lunch		
13.00-14.00	meeting	Dace (Datse) Ozola, Deputy head of Division, Ministry of Environment (MOE), Evisa Āboliņa (Abolina), Convention Focal point, MOE	MoE
15.00-16.00	meeting	Agris Petermanis, mayor of Nīca municipality	UN House
16.00-17.00	Phone conference	Ints Mednis, WWF LIFE project manager	
Thursday Jan 17	Driver Arvis Vilciņš +371 29226728	Nīca	
			Struktoru Street 14a (2th floor)
		Site visit – Svēte, farmers	
16.00-17.00	meeting	Agrochemical Research Center - Regīna Timbare (Board member)	
Friday Jan 18		Rīga	
9.00 (8.30??– 10.00		Jānis Ģērmanis (Yanis Germanis), Project Manager Linda Kalniņa (Linda Kalnina), Project assistant	UN HOUSE
10.00-11.00	meeting	Jānis Piešiņš, advisor, Latvian Association of Regional and	Mazā Pils street 1

Date / Time	Event	People	Location
		Local Governments	Republikas square 2, 903 room
11.30-12.30	meeting	Ēriks Krēsliņš (Eriks Kreslins), Rural Support Service	
12.30 – 13.30	meeting	Rita Sīle, Ingmārs Sniedze, Farmer Parliament	Republikas square 2 319 room
14.00-15.00	Lunch and meeting	Silvija Kalniņš (Silvija Kalnins), Head of UNDP Latvia Project Office Ivars Ozoliņš	

ANNEX 6

Planned outputs/activities (as per ProDoc)		Planned outputs/activities after inception workshop	Achieved (Yes/No/Partially/ Unknown)
1. SLM Mainstreamed		1. Legislation and its implementation strategy and practice	
1.1 harmonized and improved legislative and regulatory framework		1.1 coordinated and improved legislation and regulatory system	
1.1.1 general stocktaking and inventory of LD, national policy and legislation and development of guidelines for a comprehensive inventory for all of Latvia		1.1.1 Enumeration of the land degradation issues and prioritizing them according to the LD definition stated by the Convention and its relevance to the situation in Latvia - OUTPUT: report including enumeration of the LD issues and proposals for the priority issues	yes
1.1.2 NAP preparation, validation and completion		1.1.2 Approval of the identified LD issues relevant to the situation in Latvia and approval of the corresponding future project activities in the Work Group; Output: LD issues to be included in the National Action Plan (NAP) identified; LD issues to be included within the scope of this project identified	yes
1.1.3 support to multistakeholder consultations for NAP preparation and validation		1.1.3 The general assessment of the pertinent LD issues, their identifying parameters and influencing factors in relevance to Latvia's situation; development of the Work Plan including the specific tasks in order to assess and control the identifying parameters on a regular basis; Output: Report: issue, influencing factors => parameters => how they are measured/identified/controlled => what is needed to ensure that;	unknown
1.1.4 preparation of proposals for legislative changes in relation to land tenure and land consolidation		1.1.4 The evaluation of the National policy and legislation linked to the establishment of the sustainable land management (SLM) principle; Output: Report of the current analysis of the policy and legislation; prepared list of legislative acts and policy documents, where the changes are needed;	yes
1.1.5 incorporation of land monitoring factors into the overall national environmental monitoring framework		1.1.5 Development of the guidelines for the inventory of the identified LD issues and their influencing factors covering all Latvia; Output: Developed guidelines, list of activities, methodology and the required result	unknown
1.1.6 preparations for appropriate modifications for mainstreaming, with particular focus on spatial and rural development plans		1.1.6 Development of the criteria for the prioritizing of the LD influencing factors within the particular conditions in the pilot territories; Output: Criteria including instructions developed	no
		1.1.7. Development of the proposal for the legislation modifications in relation to the land ownership and land consolidation ; Output: Summary about the required modifications in legislation	yes
		1.1.8. Prepare proposal and include the appropriate land/soil (including LD risk) monitoring events in general national environment monitoring system; Output: Land/soil monitoring chapter changed according to the National Environment Monitoring Plan (NEMP)	yes
		1.1.9. Preparation and integration of the respective changes related to the sustainable land management (SLM) in particular legislative acts, plans and programmes, especially focusing on Spatial and Rural development plans, as well as the National Development Plan; Output: relevant changes/additions integrated in at least four programmes	yes
		1.1.10. Elaboration of sustainable objective for scientific research and activities; Output: Objective defined for the scientific research and activities	unknown
		1.1.11 NAP elaborated	partially
		1.1.11.1. Elaboration of the objectives and strategy of the NAP; elaboration of the objectives and the strategy of the SLM implementation principles ; Output: Defined and formulated NAP and SLM objectives and strategy	yes
		1.1.11.2. Elaboration of the NAP; determination of the elaboration of the plan and time-frame for the NAP; Output: NAP prepared	yes
		1.1.11.3. Support provided to the Ministry of Environment in preparing the NAP; Output: Activities taking place according to the time-frame	unknown
		1.1.11.4. Organizing Working Group Meetings, Preparation of the NAP during the process and the approval of the final draft; Output: Working Group Meetings organized	yes
		1.1.11.5. Promote discussions of the NAP at the Sustainable Development Strategy Council (SDSC), Agriculture and Environment Protection Consultancy Council (AEPCC), on the level of the State Secretary; Output: NAP discussed at the (AEPCC) and on the level of the State Secretary	yes
		1.1.11.6. Follow up on the approval of the NAP; Output: NAP approved	no
		1.1.11.7. Control of the NAP completion within the scope of the project; Output: completion of the assigned NAP activities within the set time frame	no

1.2 Incentives and sustainable funding mechanisms elaborated		1.2. Developed motivational and sustainable finance mechanisms	
	1.2.1 preparation of package of financial and economic instruments for investments and incentives in land productivity and sustainable land management practices	1.2.1. Analysis of the existing LM financing mechanism, that promotes the SLM practices; Output: Summary about the working and effectiveness of the existing finance mechanisms	yes
	1.2.2 development of funding scenarios for collaborative financing (ef consolidated funding for drainage system, etc...)	1.2.2. Preparing the package of financial and economical investments and incentive measures to implement SLM practices; Output: At least three different incentive measures prepared	partially
	1.2.3 organization of consultation rounds with key stakeholders on NAP financing	1.2.3. Elaboration of the financial scenarios; Output: At least three financial mechanisms prepared	partially
		1.2.4. Organizing discussions about the NAP financial implementation forms, including the participation of all stakeholders and donors; Output: At least three financial proposals for implementing NAP prepared; Meetings organized	unknown
		1.2.5. Elaboration of the NAP financial plan, including review on possible co-financing for scientific activities and research; Output: NAP finance plan prepared (including co-funding plan for the scientific research)	yes
1.3 coordination mechanism established to address land degradation		1.3 Established coordination mechanism to address the land degradation issues	
	1.3.1 establishment of multi-stakeholder working group to decide on optimal mechanisms for inter-sectoral coordination	1.3.1 Elaboration of the summary/assessment of the existing cross-sectoral coordination mechanism; Output: Summary about the current situation	yes
		1.3.2 Elaboration of the optimal cross-sectoral coordination mechanism; Output: Functioning coordination mechanism established	partially
	1.3.2 establishment of information system (a land management database) for shared use and management	1.3.3 Elaboration of the information system (LD data base for the common use and management); Output: Established SLM data base	partially
2. local capacity built for participatory integrated land planning and collaborative financing		2. Building the local capacity in pilot territories: Nica Municipality and Jelgava District	
2.1 local capacity built for participatory integrated land planning and collaborative financing		2.1 Local capacities established to provide involving and integrated land planning and cooperation to find possible solution	
	2.1.1 Scoping and inventory of land vulnerability and degradation risk assessment in pilot areas (Nica municipality and Jelgava district)	2.1.1. Involving local municipalities and district representatives (mainly farmers) in the plan development; Output: Involvement plan developed prepared	no
	2.1.2 Development of criteria for prioritization of land degradation factors	2.1.2. Involvement of the sustainable land owners in development of the incentive measures ; selection criteria for the farms to be involved; Output: At least one incentive measure prepared	yes
	2.1.3 Organizing municipal meeting with local stakeholders to validate priorities	2.1.3. Informative seminar about the Project, it's developments, Work Plan and foreseen activities/events in pilot territories; preparing the list of representatives from local municipalities for the potential participation in the Work Groups; their approval ; Output: Seminar organized; Work Group composition approved	yes
	2.1.4 Investigation of current incentive measures for reforestation, development and maintenance of drainage systems etc and prepare concrete modifications for improvement	2.1.4 Seminar on preparing inventory; informing the work performers, preparation and training; Output: Training provided	yes
	2.1.5 Preparation of model rental agreements and preparation of guidelines for such agreements	2.1.5. Inventory of the LD levels and risks based on previously established guidelines/methodology; Output: Report about the inventory results; Results package prepared	yes
	2.1.6 Assessment of the costs and benefits as well as other socio-economic consequences of various management options (including organization of farmers cooperatives etc).	2.1.6. Detailed Report about the LD and its risks, as well as listing the influencing factors; proposal developed to prioritize the factors; Output: Report about the inventory results; Results package prepared	yes
	2.1.7 Testing and modeling participatory land planning mechanism for the selected municipalities; development of land management plans	2.1.7. Seminar held to assess the Working Group results and prioritizing of the LD influencing factors ; Output: Report about the inventory results and prioritized LD factors	
		2.1.8. Preparation of the report about the inventory results and prioritizing factors; perform analysis of the existing management activities and prepare specific suggestions to improve the situation ; prepare analysis of different scenarios, including analysis of expenditures-benefits; Output: Report about the inventory results and prioritized LD factors; Report about the current situation and analysis/ suggestions of management scenarios	yes
		2.1.9. The analysis of the current land management incentive measures (polder management, forest restoration, afforestation, etc.) as well as the elaboration of the necessary changes in order to improve the situation; Output: at least 3 different motivation forms prepared	no

		2.1.10 Draft the Lease Agreement and prepare the guidelines; <i>Output: the Lease Agreement and guidelines prepared</i>	no
		2.1.11. Evaluation of institutional and management/output costs as well as the evaluation of other socially economical consequences (including establishment of farmers cooperatives, etc.); analysis of its provisional financial plan if necessary; drafting of the proposal modules for the pilot territories; Output: at least 3 modules developed; Report including elaborated proposals	no
		2.1.12. Establishment of the Work Plan to test proposed modules; Output: Work Plan for the local authorities	no
		2.1.13. The Work Group evaluates the Work Plan and approves the commencement of the Plan; Output: Work Plan approved	unknown
		2.1.14. Testing and development of the land planning scheme: Output: 5 farmers have signed the innovating Lease Agreements; 5 farmers introduce the innovating cooperation agreements	no
		2.1.15. Development of the Land Management Plan as well as actual testing; Output: Land Management Plan developed	no
	JELGAVA DISTRICT	2.1.16. Informative seminar about the Project, its developments, Work Plan and foreseen activities/events in pilot territories; preparing the list of representatives from local municipalities for the potential participation in the Work Groups; their approval ; Output: Seminar organized; Work Group composition approved	yes
		2.1.17. Seminar on preparing inventory, informing work performers, preparation and training; Output: Training provided	yes
		2.1.18. Inventory of the LD levels and risks based on the previously established guidelines/methodology; Output: Report about the inventory results; Results package prepared	yes
		2.1.19. Detailed Report about the LD and its risks, as well as listing the influencing factors; proposal developed to prioritize the factors; Output: Report about the inventory results; Results package prepared	yes
		2.1.20. Work Group Seminar organized to evaluate the results and to prioritize LD influencing factors ; Output: Report about the inventory results and prioritized LD factors	
		2.1.21. Preparation of the report about the inventory results and prioritizing factors; perform analysis of the existing management activities and prepare specific suggestions to improve the situation ; prepare analysis of different scenarios, including analysis of expenditures-benefits; Output: Report about the inventory results and prioritized LD factors; Report about the current situation and analysis/ suggestions of management scenarios	yes
		2.1.22. The analysis of the current land management motivation mechanisms (polder management, forest restoration, afforestation, etc.) as well as the elaboration of the necessary changes in order to improve the situation; Output: At least 3 different motivation forms prepared	no
		2.1.23 Draft the Lease Agreement and prepare the guidelines; <i>Output: the Lease Agreement and guidelines prepared</i>	no
		2.1.24. Evaluation of institutional and management/output costs as well as the evaluation of other socially economical consequences (including establishment of farmers cooperatives, etc.); analysis of its provisional financial plan if necessary; drafting of the proposal modules for the pilot territories; Output: at least 3 modules developed; Report including elaborated proposals	no
		2.1.25 Establishment of the Work Plan to test proposed modules; <i>Output: Work Plan for the local authorities</i>	no
		2.1.26. The Work Group evaluates the Work Plan and approves the commencement of the Plan; Output: Work Plan approved	unknown
		2.1.27. Testing and development of the land planning scheme; Output: 15 farmers have signed the innovating Lease Agreements; 15 farmers introduce the innovating cooperation agreements	no
		2.1.28. Development of the LM Plan as well as actual testing ; Output: LM Plan developed in at least two municipalities	no
	2.2 Knowledge sharing and Replication plan has been produced		2.2. Knowledge Exchange; Replication Plan established

2.2.1 Produce the case studies and lessons learned for each pilot sub-project	2.2.1. Preparation of the specific task analysis and lessons learned from each pilot sub-project; Output: Report	unknown
2.2.2 Develop the participatory and integrated land management “How to guide” and checklist for replication	2.2.2. Preparation of the practical guidelines and Replication Plan throughout the Project for continuous implementation in other regions of Latvia; provide coordination institution and its future role in the implementation of the plan; Output: Guidelines and Methodology prepared; Replication Plan prepared	no
	2.2.3. Preparation of the results of the best practices; description from the pilot territories; Output: The Catalog of the Best Practices	no
3. Improved technical skills of local farmers, other land users and local decision-makers for sustainable land management		
3.1 Improved technical skills of local farmers, other land users and local decision-makers for sustainable land management		
3.1.1 Preparation of training package for farmers on practical issues of sustainable land management tailored to specific circumstances of the pilot areas; model curriculum on SLM	3.1.1. Develop the training program for farmers about practical issues related to SLM in relation to specific conditions of the pilot territories ; develop training program/model of SLM; Output: Training program developed for the local farmers of Nīca Municipality and Jelgava District; Training program/model prepared	yes
3.1.2 Organizing targeted training workshops for farmers, other land users, environmental inspectors and municipal decision-makers	3.1.2. Organize thematic seminars for farmers, other land users, environmental inspectors and decision makers of local municipalities ; Output: At least 35 farmers and 20 employees from municipalities are trained	yes
3.1.3 Organizing field days to demonstrate appropriate sustainable land practices to local farmers and farmers from other municipalities	3.1.3. Organize seminars including on-site visits in order to demonstrate appropriate usage of SLM practice for the local farmers as well as farmers from other municipalities; Output: At least 35 farmers and 20 employees from municipalities are trained	yes
	3.1.4. Carry out targeted initial inquiry amongst the potential training participants regarding their scope of knowledge about the particular themes of their interest and the repeated assessment inquiry after the completion of the training program; Output: Inquiry carried out	yes
3.2 Enhanced academic capacity to improve knowledge of sustainable land management and raised awareness		
3.2.1 Preparation of curriculum and curricular materials for the University of Latvia and Latvian Agriculture University in the area of sustainable land management	3.2.1. Prepare educational module and educational materials for the University of Latvia, Latvia Agriculture University and the Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Center about the sustainable land management; Output: Educational program developed; Text-book about the sustainable land management published	yes
3.2.2 General awareness raising campaign for public and school children using “project week competitions” as a mechanism	3.2.2. Inform the Ministry of Education and Science about the project plan and achievements on a regular basis, inviting to participate in the exchange of views regarding the events planned as well as the achieved results; Output: Involvement of the employees of the Ministry of Education and Science in the Work Group or sent conclusions of the Work Group to the Ministry	yes
3.2.3 Project website, to be transferred to an appropriate institution after project completion	3.2.3. Agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science and Universities about the development of educational module and it's implementing in educational program; Output: Agreement reached	yes
	3.2.4 Assessment of the events required to raise public awareness about the LD and SLM issues; Output: Campaign plan for the promotion of the public awareness	yes
	3.2.5. Development and approval of the plan for the public awareness promotion events ; Output: Plan for the promotion of the public awareness promotion events	yes
	3.2.6. Campaign for the public awareness promotion carried out; Output: Campaign carried-out according to the approved plan	yes
	3.2.7. Development of the Project home page, which, after the implementation of the project, will be handed over to the appropriate institution ; Output: Project home page developed	yes

ANNEX 7

CURRICULUM VITAE OF THE EVALUATORS

CURRICULUM VITAE

JOLANTA BARA

- 1. Family name:** Ms. Bāra
- 2. First names:** Jolanta
- 3. Date of birth:** 09.04.1971.
- 4. Nationality:** Latvian
- 5. Civil Status:** Single
- 6. Education** MSc.

Year(s)	Qualification	Subject	Institution
1997-2000	M.Sc.	Environmental Sciences	University of Latvia, Centre of Environmental Science and Management Studies
1996-1999	M.Sc.	Biology	University of Latvia, Faculty of Biology
1990-1996	B.Sc	Biology	University of Latvia, Faculty of Biology

7. Key Qualifications:

- Experience in project evaluation and preparation of reports, previous co-operation with UNDP in project evaluation
- Good overview and detailed knowledge on the land use, spatial planning and nature conservation issues;
- Good communication and management abilities to stakeholders on nature conservation and environmental protection issues in Latvia and other Baltic States as well as EU;
- Management skills, experience in supervising of contract execution, coordination of activities;
- Practical experience in public information;
- Experience in facilitation and chairing of workshops, leading of discussion in meetings as well as public hearings, good presentation skills.

8. Membership of Professional Bodies: none

9. Training courses:

Year(s)	Qualification	Subject	Institution
2005	Certificate	Presentation skills	Latvian School of Public Administration, Riga, Latvia
2002-2003	Certificates	Training Program for governmental institutions concerning biodiversity protection (Handling of controversial issues, Logical Framework analysis, EU Project Cycle Management, Environmental Law and Administration, Habitats Directive Article 6 – a stronger instrument for nature protection than	DANCEE financed project “Implementation of Latvian Biodiversity Action Plan: Institutional Development and Capacity Building”

	EIA/SEA, Negotiation skills)	
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10. Language Skills: (competence levels 1 low to 5 high)

Language	Reading	Writing	Spoken
LATVIAN	Mother tongue	Mother tongue	Mother tongue
ENGLISH	5	5	5
RUSSIAN	5	4	5

11. Other Relevant Competencies or Skills:

- organisation of the meetings, seminars
- chairing and facilitation skills
- translations (into Latvian, English, Russian)
- computer literacy: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- INTERNET
- report writing

12. Specific Country Experience:

EU	Denmark
Eastern Europe	Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania
CIS/NIS	
Central Asia	
South East Asia	
Africa	
Other	

13. Professional Career Record:

Dates	Since April 2007 - currently
Location	Latvia
Organisation	Development Agency of Vestiena Protected Landscape Area
Position	Project manager
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFE-Nature project „The improvement of habitats management in Natura 2000 site- Vestiena”, Project manager

Dates	May 2007 – June 2007
Location	Latvia
Organisation	Ministry of Environment of Latvia
Position	Contractor – evaluation of project proposal for EEA/Norwegian Bilateral Financial Instrument, priority “Environmental Protection”
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing of project documentation • Qualitative evaluation • Evaluation by specific criteria

Dates	February 2007 – March 2007
Location	Latvia
Organisation	United Nations Development Programme
Position	National assistant for the mid-term evaluation – UNDP/GEF Project Biodiversity Protection in North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve LAT/03/G31/A/1G/99

Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing of all project documentation • Organising mission programme, translation/interpretation • Analysis of outcome, outputs, partnership strategy • Draft parts of report • Assist in finalizing report
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Dates	March 2006 – April 2007
Location	Latvia/Lithuania
Organisation	Baltic Environmental Forum
Position	Nature protection expert
Description	<p>INTERREG IIIA project: “Cross-border cooperation on integrated nature and water resource management between Bauska and Biržai districts”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of management plan for Natura 2000 site - nature park “Bauska” • Preparation and carrying out of public hearings on management plan for protected area. • Program development and organizing of seminars and workshops on EU policy on water to local authorities • Communication with the stakeholders: Latvian authorities, municipalities, landowners, experts; BEF team as well as Lithuanian partners

Dates	March 2006 – April 2007
Location	Riga, Latvia
Organisation	Baltic Environmental Forum
Position	Project manager
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management and communication with the stakeholders: Latvian authorities, municipalities, landowners, experts • Development of management plan for Natura 2000 site - nature reserve “Raķupes meži” (part of LIFE project “Restoration of floodplains” LIFE04NAT/LV/000198”) • Preparation and carrying out of public hearings on management plan for protected area.

Dates	2002-2006
Location	Riga, Latvia
Organisation	Latvian Nature Protection Board
Position	Head of Species and Habitat Division
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of management plans for Specially protected nature territories • Management of Specially protected nature territories (including development of tourism infrastructure in Natura 200 sites) • Contract execution supervision • Organisation of workshops and seminars about nature protection issues, lectures about nature protection • Stakeholder involvement, communications, consultations.

Dates	2003 august-september
Location	Riga, Latvia
Organisation	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation – project “Formulation of Strategic Targets for the Forest Sector and Human Resource Development in Strategic Planning” (TCP/LAT/2901 (A))
Position	Biodiversity expert
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation of workshops for stakeholders, facilitation • Stakeholder involvement, communications, consultations • 1st phase report development

Dates	1999-2002
Location	Riga, Latvia
Organisation	State Environmental Inspectorate
Position	Senior inspector, Head of Sector of Species and Habitat Control
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control of forest use according legislation • control of endangered species of plants and animals protection according legislation

Dates	1996-1999
Location	Riga, Latvia
Organisation	Medical Academy of Latvia, Dept. of Medical Biology and Genetics
Position	Assistant - lecturer
Description	Lectures and practical works for students in genetics and general biology.

14. International Activities Undertaken:

As main target group – Nature Protection Board of Latvia employee involved in activities, consultations and planning of DANCEE financed project “Implementation of Latvian Biodiversity Action Plan: Institutional Development and Capacity Building” (2001-2003). Participation in preparation of study tour to Denmark. Presentations in project seminars. Participation in international seminars and conferences.

Date: December 2007

Jolanta Bāra

CURRICULUM VITAE

MARC PAQUIN, LL.B., LL.M., MBA

Marc Paquin is the Executive Director of Unisféra International Centre. He is a lawyer and MBA specialising in international and comparative environmental law and policy. Throughout his career, he has worked on a number of institutional evaluation and strategic development assignments for national governments and international organizations.

Marc Paquin has extensive knowledge of the UNCCD (including the GM) having worked on various assignments related to its adoption, deployment and review. In 2003, he was a member of the independent team mandated by the World Bank Development Grant Facility to evaluate the Global Mechanism. He has also assisted the UNCCD Secretariat in the preparation of COP-related background papers. He recently co-edited a seminal book on the UNCCD published by Ashgate Press and financed by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Marc Paquin has also contributed to several institutional reviews and strategic planning exercises conducted by governments as well as by international organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).

PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Unisféra International Centre, Sustainable Development Law and Policy, Montreal (2001 to this date), *Executive Director*

Sherbrooke University, Montreal (2002-...), *Lecturer and Trainer (Sustainable Development Law, Policy and Management)*

Biotika Inc., Consulting, Montreal (2000-2002), *Director Environment*

North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), Montreal (1995-2000), *Lawyer, Secretary of the Council of Ministers, and; Manager - Special Legal Projects*

Hydro-Québec, Environment Department, Montreal (1991-1995), *Adviser - Governmental and Regulatory Affairs*

International Academy of the Environment, Geneva (1994), *Visiting Fellow - Trade and Environment Programme*

McGill University Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law, Montreal (1990-1991), *Research Associate - Corporate and Environmental Law*

Mackenzie, Gervais, Lawyers, Montreal (1988-1990), *Lawyer*

EDUCATION

Master in Business Administration (MBA) (2004)

Université du Québec à Montréal, École des sciences de la gestion, Montréal

Master of Law (LL.M.) (1992)

McGill University, Faculty of Law, Institute of Comparative Law, Montreal.

Awarded the Chief Justice R.A. Greenshields Memorial Scholarship and the Young Bar Association of Montreal Scholarship

Professional Training – Lawyer (1988)

Bar of Quebec, Montreal

Bachelor of Law (LL.B.) (1987)

Université de Montréal, Montreal

OTHER QUALIFICATION

Environmental, Health and Safety Auditing: Fundamentals, Skills, and Techniques
(Certification, 2002), Arthur D. Little - Environmental, Health and Safety Training Institute

MEMBERSHIPS

- Bar of Quebec
- Environmental Assessment Advisory Group, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada
- Fellow of the LEAD International Program (Leadership for Environment And Development)
- International Association on Impact Assessment (IAIA)

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Citizenship: Canadian
- Languages: Fluent in English and French
Spanish (working knowledge)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS

JOHNSON, Pierre Marc, Karel Mayrand & Marc Paquin (eds.), *Governing Global Desertification – Linking Environmental Degradation, Poverty and Participation*, London, Ashgate Press, 2006.

MAYRAND, Karel, Marc Paquin & Stéphanie Dionne, *From Boom to Dust? Agricultural trade liberalization, poverty, and desertification in rural drylands: The role of UNCCD*, Montreal, Unisfera International Centre, 2005.

MAYRAND, Karel, Marc Paquin, Stéphanie Dionne & Isaak Pageot-Lebel, *The Economic and Environmental Impacts of Agricultural Subsidies: An Assessment of the 2002 US Farm Bill & Doha Round*, 2003.

PAQUIN, Marc, dir., *North American Environmental Law and Policy Series (volumes 1 to 4)*, North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) and Éditions Yvon Blais, 1998-1999-2000 et URL: <http://www.cec.org> (published in English, French and Spanish).

PAQUIN, Marc et al., dir., *Summary of North American Environmental Law*, North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), URL: <http://www.cec.org>, 1996 and 1997, revised in 2003 (published in English, French and Spanish).

PAQUIN, Marc & Karel Mayrand, *Les nouvelles approches en matière de protection de l'environnement dans les pays de l'OCDE*, 2002. Étude réalisée pour le compte du ministère de l'Environnement du Québec (non publiée).

PAQUIN, Marc, Karel Mayrand & Andrée-Claude Bérubé, La Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement : Présentation et contexte, 2003. Étude réalisée pour le compte du ministère de l'Environnement du Québec (non publiée).

PAQUIN, Marc & Karel Mayrand, Regard sur la Loi sur la qualité de l'environnement et les autres composantes du régime environnemental québécois à la lumière des nouvelles tendances en matière de protection de l'environnement dans les pays de l'OCDE, 2002. Étude réalisée pour le compte du ministère de l'Environnement du Québec (non publiée).

PAQUIN Marc, Le droit de l'environnement et les administrateurs d'entreprises, Éditions Yvon Blais, Cowansville, 1992, 96p.

PAQUIN, Marc, K. Mayrand & C. Sbert 2004. JPAC and Public Participation in the Activities of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC): Discussion Paper, Montreal, Unisféra International Centre.

PAQUIN, Marc, K. Mayrand & C. Sbert 2004. The Evolution of the Program and Budget of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC): Discussion paper, Montreal, Unisféra International Centre.

PAQUIN, Marc, K. Mayrand & C. Sbert, 2004. The Effectiveness of the Articles 14 & 15 Process of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation: Discussion Paper Montreal, Unisféra International Centre.

PAQUIN, Marc, K. Mayrand & C. Sbert 2004. The Articles 14 & 15 Citizen Submission Process of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation: Discussion Paper, Montreal, Unisféra International Centre.

CURRICULUM VITAE

JOANA TALAFRÉ

SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

- Project development, management, and evaluation including Results-Based Management
- National/international environmental law and policy analysis and development
- Intergovernmental negotiation and stakeholder consultation
- Advocacy and representation
- Excellent research, writing, organizational, and communication skills
- Fluently bilingual in French and English, intermediate Spanish

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2007 - present Unisféra International Centre (research and consulting)
Director, International Programmes

2007 - present TerrAllience International (consulting)
Director

2006 Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Senior Advisor to the Ambassador for the Environment

Policy analysis and development; project development, with a focus on Polar issues: Arctic climate change, adaptation and science; public relations and representation; speechwriting.

2004 to 2007 **Environment Canada**
International Affairs Branch, Multilateral Affairs Division
Senior Policy Analyst

Policy Analysis, Coordination and Development: Develop policies, strategies and frameworks on international environmental issues (e.g., chemicals, water, financing). Provide policy advice on achieving international objectives. Contribute to the development of Canadian positions at international meetings. Provide ongoing analysis and input into the development of Canadian foreign policy on environmental issues. Participate as a member of Canadian delegations to international negotiations and meetings. Liaise with other departments, donors, international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

Major achievements:

- Led development of Environment Canada's strategy for international engagement on chemicals and wastes
- Provided input on international environmental issues for the 2005 International Policy Statement
- Coordinated Canada's participation in the International Conference on Chemicals Management (2006) and Canada's Ministerial participation in the Fourth World Water Forum (2006)
- Delegate to meetings of the UNEP Governing Council, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, OAS Ministerial on Sustainable Development, Global Environment Facility Council.

2000 to 2004

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Policy Branch, Environment Division
Policy Analyst (sustainable land management)

Policy Analysis and Development: Developed policies for CIDA on sustainable land management. Provided policy and technical advice to programming officers. Policy analysis towards the development of Canadian positions at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Project Development and Management: Developed and managed strategic project initiatives on sustainable land management (full project cycle, from inception to final evaluations according to CIDA standards). Delivered and managed Canada's contributions to the UNCCD. Provided advice for the development of bilateral and multilateral projects on sustainable land management and the implementation of the UNCCD.

Negotiation, Advocacy and Representation: As Canadian Focal Point for the Convention, developed and negotiated Canadian positions at the UNCCD. Represented Division and/or CIDA at internal, interdepartmental and international fora related to sustainable land management. Liaised with other departments, donors, international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

Research and Communication: Developed and implemented communications strategies and training and tools on sustainable land management and the UNCCD. Led the development of Canadian reports to the UNCCD. Researched and analysed issues related to land degradation in developing countries.

Major Achievements:

- Developed CIDA's Strategy on Sustainable Land Management, including internal and external consultations (released in 2004)
- Created the Desertification ToolKit (released in 2003)
- Led Canada's strong international policy role on land degradation issues and the governance of the UNCCD
- Provided advice that led to land degradation country programmes in Ghana, China, Central Asia and Hispaniola

May - September 2000

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Canada Climate Change Development Fund (CCCCDF)
Research Analyst

Policy Analysis and Development: Co-developed overall positions for the CCCDF.

Project Development and Management: Co-developed the Business Plan and supporting documents for the CCCDF. Developed criteria for project selection. Participation in the analysis and selection of projects.

Research and Communication: Research and analysis on vulnerability to climate change in developing countries. Intranet and Internet publishing and maintenance.

Major Achievements:

- Developed a methodology for assessing and selecting projects under the Fund, particularly with regards to assessing the vulnerability of developing countries

1999 – 2000

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
Africa and Middle East Branch
Research Assistant, Desertification

Policy Analysis and Development: Analysis of potential CIDA programming on desertification in Africa. Policy analysis towards developing Canadian positions at the UNCCD.

Negotiation, Advocacy and Representation: Delegate to the UNCCD.

Research and Communication: Research and analysis on the extent and impact of desertification in Africa. Research on various environmental issues in Africa.

Major Achievements:

- Played a key role in negotiations at the UNCCD on institutional and financial issues
- Developed a methodology and criteria for the selection of priority countries for desertification programming in Africa

1991 - 1992

Development Volunteer

Project development and implementation in the area of social development for children, adults, and senior citizens in arid urban areas in the Middle East. Fundraising.

LANGUAGES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mother tongue: French Other languages: English (Fluent)
Spanish (intermediate)

Citizenship: Canadian, French

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2003 “Public Service Training for Managers,” Gatineau

2002 “Environmental Economics” (CIDA-World Bank course), Ottawa

2002 M.Sc., Environmental Science (& International Relations)

1997 M.Sc., Political Science, Université de Montréal (course work completed)

1994 B.Sc., Political Science (Strategic Studies & International Relations)
Université de Montréal, Montréal

JOURNALISM

1998 to 2002 *Objectif Terre:* Lead writer on desertification and the UNCCD,
(Université de Québec à Montréal, Institut de l’énergie pour la francophonie)

1992-1996	Writer for <i>La Voix Sépharade</i> and <i>BleuBlanc</i> (community magazines)
1995	Journalist at the Paris headquarters of Radio France Inter (current affairs division)

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- “Can the UNCCD really change the framework of development cooperation?”, with Charles Bassett, in *EU Courrier*, 2003.
- “Implementing the UNCCD: A Recipe for Success,” with Charles Bassett, in *Review of European Community and International Environmental Law*, 2003.
- “Bonn: la Croisée des Chemins,” in *Objectif Terre*, IEPF 2000.
- “Le Nationalisme Québécois,” in *La Voix Sépharade*, 1994.

AWARDS

- Best Performance in Values and Ethics (2003), CIDA Policy Branch Award, for developing Canada’s strengthened role on the governance of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- President’s Award of Excellence (2002), CIDA, for excellent performance in leading preparations to the UNCCD’s Fifth Conference of the Parties
- Best Article, Association des Médias Écrits Culturels du Québec (1994), for an article on the impacts of nationalism on cultural communities in Quebec

Selected recent assignments, consulting mandates

- Development of a GEF project proposal on Sustainable Land Management and Surface Water Harvesting (UNDP-Djibouti)
- Development of a project proposal on Capacity Building and Early Action for Protected Areas in Djibouti (UNDP)
- Development of a project proposal for implementation of Djibouti’s National Adaptation Plan of Action (Government of Djibouti)
- Contribution to the drafting of the 10-year strategic plan for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification for the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group of the UNCCD (Unisféra)
- Final Evaluation of the National Adaptation Plans of Action supported by UNEP in 13 Least Developed Countries (Haiti, Afghanistan, Liberia, Lesotho, Central African Republic, Senegal, Mauritania, The Gambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Djibouti, Comoros) (UNEP)

- Contributed to drafting of a negotiator's guide to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (Unisféra - IEPF)
- Final evaluation of the UNDP/GEF project "Building sustainable capacity and ownership to implement the UNCCD in Latvia" (Unisféra – UNDP Latvia)
- Drafting of the Manual on Capacity Development for Sustainable Land Management for LDCs and SIDS (under the UNDP/GEF Targeted Portfolio Program) (Unisféra - UNDP/GEF)
- Drafting of the Primer on Integrated Financing Strategies for Sustainable Land Management for LDCs and SIDS (under the UNDP/GEF Targeted Portfolio Program) (Unisféra – UNDP/GEF)

ANNEX 8

Annex 8

Management Response

The project management team would like to give the following comments on the conclusions given in the evaluation:

1. Scope of the evaluation:

The evaluation report does not include evaluation of the efforts performed in the pilot territories, land degradation assessment (inventory), mapping, and planning examples. Based on these activities and their results many discussions have commenced that developed the general awareness on the barriers for SLM and demonstrated practical examples on how these barriers should be dealt with. This experience serves as a base for replication actions recommended by the project.

2. Stakeholder representation: The evaluation holds that stakeholder participation is rather limited to agricultural sector.

The main driving force of the project is the Ministry of Environment, which has had active involvement in the project from the UNCCD focal point and the Department of Environment. The Ministry of Regional Development and Local Governments (MoRDLG) has been among the most crucial stakeholders within the work on policy and legislative frameworks, coordination mechanism and information system. The Ministry of Defence has not been identified, although it has had its role during all project especially within the discussions and decisions regarding data base and information needs. This conclusion is true to only one part of the project -- the field work done in the project pilot territories that involved inventory and gathering of information on the agricultural land, however this represents that result and making this conclusion to the project on the whole is misleading.

3. Analysis of political transition and its impact on project outcomes: The evaluation contents that the analysis has been insufficient.

Since the Mid-term evaluation in February, 2007, extensive efforts have been made by the project team to analyse risks connected to the political situation and to plan its implementation activities accordingly. A project mid-term evaluation de-briefing meeting was held where all the risks were identified and strategy to manage these risks was developed, further this strategy implementation has been monitored and adjusted during frequent project planning meetings (every second week) and has been very well documented. For example, inclusion of need for National Action Programme (NAP) in the land use policy developed by the MoRDLG was to strengthen the political support for NAP approval.

4. Input of local stakeholders in the National Action Plan (NAP). The evaluation report concludes that there has been lack of evidence of the input of local stakeholders in the NAP.

There is clear evidence in the form of meeting minutes from meetings with local stakeholders in 2006 and 2007 which document issues raised by local stakeholders on sustainable land use. Comparison of these issues raised and issues included in the NAP indicate that 5 issues raised by local stakeholders have been included in the final version of the NAP.