

**UNDP/GEF/GTZ/MNP PROJECT: CAPACITY BUILDING AND ON-THE-GROUND INVESTMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT IN TURKMENISTAN (Project 3188/TKM10)**

# **TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**PHILIP TORTELL, *Consultant***

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**Philip Tortell**

CONSULTANT

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT LIMITED

P O Box 27 433, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND

Tel +64-4-384 4133, Fax +64-4-384 4022, Email <[tortell@attglobal.net](mailto:tortell@attglobal.net)>

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Performance Report
CACILM	Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management
CDP	Community Development Plan
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CO	Country Office (of UNDP)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
EA	Executing Agency
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German aid agency)
IA	Implementing Agency (for the GEF)
LogFrame	Logical Framework Matrix
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNP	Ministry of Nature Protection
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NEX	National Execution (for UNDP projects)
NGO / NGOs	Non-Government Organization/s
NIDFF	National Institute for Deserts, Flora and Fauna
NPC	National Project Coordinator (also called National Project Director)
NSec	National Secretariat (of CACILM)
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant (of the GEF)
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QPR	Quarterly Project Report
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor (for UNDP/GEF, in Bratislava)
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound (qualities of Indicators)
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (of the EC)
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TPR	Tri-Partite Project Review
UNCCD	United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The Project

This is the independent Terminal Evaluation of the Project on *Capacity Building and On-the-Ground Investments for Sustainable Land Management* in Turkmenistan. The project was executed by the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan (MNP) and project activities have been implemented by a Project Management Unit (PMU) based in Ashgabat.

The Project's Immediate Objective was: *Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users.*

The project was meant to run for 36 months and the total project budget was US\$2.089 million (including the PPG). Of this, US\$1.0 million was from UNDP/GEF and US\$1.074 million from co-financing. Of the co-financing, US\$0.5 million was from GTZ, US\$0.429 million was from UNDP, and US\$0.145 million was a contribution in kind from the Government.

## The Evaluation

The purpose of the Mid-Term Evaluation is to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project by assessing its design, its process of implementation and its results vis-à-vis the project Objective and Outcomes endorsed by the GEF. The approach adopted was participatory which, while safeguarding the independence of the evaluator, included self-assessments by the Project Management Unit. A six-point rating system was applied to various elements of the Project, in particular on progress towards the Objective and Outcomes.

## Key Findings and conclusions

**Concept and design** Project concept and design are rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** particularly as a result of its unrealistic timeframe.

**Country ownership** *"This project belongs to us, to the people"* – the establishment of Local Project Management Teams selected from among local community members, the Local Steering Committees who have a meaningful say in project activities, the participatory approach employed by the project and the use of local experts as consultants to the extent possible, have ensured the high level of ownership at the community level.

**Relevance** The project is relevant in general to the needs of Turkmenistan and relevance is deemed **Satisfactory (S)** even though the project does not address some significant root causes of the identified problems.

**Stakeholder participation in the formulation phase** As a result of the on-going GTZ/MNP project on SLM which served as a precursor to this project, stakeholders that were consulted felt that they had been involved at the project formulation stages and this is considered **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Project governance** The project implementation framework is uncomplicated and appears effective. Collaboration and cooperation is enshrined in a tripartite MoU which is simple and straightforward and which recognizes the separate but complementary contributions from UNDP/GEF, the GTZ and the Government, each according to its comparative advantage. The highest level of governance is provided by the PSC which is adequately representative and chaired at very senior levels. Project governance is seen as **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Project administration and management** The project has a large staff complement of some 25 positions, including field positions, of which all but three are funded by GTZ. The structure is risky. Lines of reporting and accountability run from UNDP to the PM, and from him to the positions of

Project Administrator and Project Financial Assistant and they virtually stop there. Without a cooperative GTZ counterpart serving as Senior Advisor, which in effect manages the rest of the staff, the PM could well be powerless. This is of particular concern since the entire complement of field staff are on the GTZ payroll and report to the GTZ Senior Advisor. However, it is a credit to all involved that this risk has remained only on paper. Management style has been reasonably low key and democratic, and in general, effective – all staff reported receiving whatever support, advice and guidance they required, whenever they required it, and regardless of whether they were in the UNDP/GEF group or the GTZ group. Project management and administration is **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Stakeholder participation in implementation** The most effective participation by stakeholders in project implementation was under Outcome 2 as a result of its local community focus. Under other Outcomes, participation has been patchy and some opportunities have been missed. Stakeholder participation in project implementation is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Risk management** In spite of the lack of effective consideration of Risks by the ProDoc, the LogFrame and the PIRs, the PMU has shown that it has a good appreciation of what the Risks are, what their probability is and what is needed to address them. The Project's consideration of risks is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Information management** Project outreach has been somewhat limited to its immediate stakeholders and it has not made much effort towards managing information and knowledge so that they can contribute towards the replication of its results. Information management is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

**Financial management** – The relative allocations by Outcomes changed significantly with the greatest changes under Outcome 1 and the Project Management and Administration component. The former is grossly underspent whereas the Project Management and Administration allocation has blown out by over 100%. The reduction in total allocation/disbursement to Outcome 1 could be the result of a concentration of in-kind contribution to this Outcome, which unfortunately remains invisible. However, the blow-out in Project Management and Administration is actual and is of concern.

**Disbursement and delivery** – Expenditure to date for GEF funds, as deduced from ATLAS records provided by UNDP, is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**, however, this rating could have been different if cash co-funding from GTZ and UNDP could have been disaggregated to Outcome level in the original allocations.

**Co-financing** – There are discrepancies in reporting on co-financing, and figures in the PIR2010 Financial Information table do not coincide with the figures provided in the ATLAS print-outs from UNDP. The total disbursed from the UNDP commitment is said to be US\$10,246 (which is reasonably close to the ATLAS figure), however, the total disbursed from the GTZ commitment is given as US\$196.73 which is absurd. These discrepancies are significant, and even if they can be explained, their existence in the first place does not inspire confidence in the accounting system applied to co-financing. It is a requirement on the PMU, the EA and the IO to be fully accountable for co-financing resources and co-financing is **Unsatisfactory (U)**.

**Attainment of Original Objective** – The original Objective sought the application of sustainable land use practices by land users, leading to improved land use. Progress towards the original Objective based on the Indicators and as reported by the PIRs, is **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Attainment of Revised Objective** – The revised Objective sought improved land use and enhanced sustainability and the project has performed reasonably well and it can claim more credit than reported by the PMU. Overall progress towards the Revised Objective is **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 1** – as reported by the PMU and as ascertained by the Evaluator at each of the three sites, there is good local awareness of SLM, concepts are understood and some capacity is evident. There is also a fair degree of confidence tempered with the knowledge that outside help may be

needed for some time yet. Whether this capacity is stronger than before is not possible to tell in the absence of good Indicators. Progress towards Outcome 1 has been **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Outcome 2, Nokhur** – the PMU reports work still in progress in terms of stock number reductions; longer lead times needed to see the results of the dams on vegetation cover; the leasing of garden plots in Konegummez appears to be very successful, but it has yet to start in Garawul; and, reforestation with Junipers has proceeded well but more is planned although there are difficulties with sourcing good quality saplings. There is also a need for 1-2 years follow-up after planting. Progress towards Outcome 2 in Nokhur has been **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 2, Karakum** – the project has dug new wells and repaired existing ones, but it is not certain that this has had the desired effect of reducing stock numbers; sand stabilization has proceeded well and some house owners emulated the project and stabilized dunes behind their houses; the conversion of the school heating system in Bokhurdok from fuel wood to diesel has saved around 2ha per year of saxaul. Progress towards an improvement in land use practices in Bokhurdok is rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 2, Sakar Chaga** – the desalination measures employed by the project had the desired effect and productivity increased; the capacity building reported by the PMU for gardening techniques is not a measure of improved land use practices as targeted by the Outcome. This assessment has yet to come. Progress towards the sought improvement in land use practices in Sakar Chaga is considered to have been **Satisfactory (S)**

**Outcome 3** – Community Development Plans have yet to address pasture management and as they stand currently, do not relate well to the improvement in the knowledge base for SLM targeted by the Outcome. The PMU reports that a targeted research programme was developed and that the programme was implemented, leading to an improved knowledge basis for SLM but the publication of research results has yet to take place. Progress towards this Outcome has not been impressive and is rated as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**. This rating could improve when research results are made available to local stakeholders.

**Outcome 4** – The PMU reports little progress, if any, towards this Outcome and this is considered as **Unsatisfactory (U)**.

**“Outcome” 5** – This is not truly an Outcome but comprises the Project Administration and Management activities at central (Ashgabat) level as well as at local level. The PMU report of the successful and effective operation at local level, was confirmed by the Evaluator who noted the excellent rapport that both the local teams as well as the visiting project personnel had with the local community members. The Evaluator has also noted the collaborative and effective way in which the PMU operates.

**Status of delivery and effectiveness** Taking into account the level of achievement of the project Objective and Outcomes, effectiveness is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**M&E planning** The M&E design, plan and LogFrame for this project leave some room for improvement, and are considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Monitoring and adaptive management** Monitoring applied by the project and the use of the results of monitoring to inform management and take corrective action, have been **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Prospects for Sustainability** The legislation base and the policy for SLM are not strong and as a result, Institutional Sustainability of project benefits is **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**. Likewise, the unavailability of easy credit and the distorted market values for product make Financial sustainability **Unlikely (U)**. On the other hand, Socio-economic sustainability is **Highly Likely (HL)** at the immediate local level but not very strong outside project sites. Risks to sustainability remain high and a robust Exit Strategy/Sustainability Plan is essential and the project does not have one to date. There is justification for an extension to the project to provide the time necessary to consolidate some of the project products and enhance the chances of their sustainability.



## **Recommendations** (numbering has been retained as in the full Report to avoid confusion)

**7.1.1** It is recommended that the Ministry of Nature Protection take steps to initiate a review of the approach/philosophy, policy, legislation and institutional framework for land management in Turkmenistan with the aim of removing barriers that are standing in the way of SLM.

**7.2.1** It is recommended that the PMU accept that some of the project activities cannot be carried out in the remaining time (in spite of the extension recommended below) and that instead of persisting with starting new activities, the time should be devoted to securing benefits and products that have already been achieved. More specifically –

- **In Nokhur** – continue the pursuit of stock number reductions and the leasing of garden plots in Garawul; but desist from planting more Junipers and ensure those already planted receive the care they require to survive
- **In Karakum** – work to resolve the issue of wells/stock numbers/land degradation; persuade the school to invest some of the funds saved through the new heating system into planting of saxaul
- **In Sakar Chaga** – proceed with the printing of the planned handbooks on aspects of SLM and make sure that they will be available for those you expect to replicate the project results
- **Under Outcome 3** – proceed with the publication of research results, not as scientific publications, but as sources of information and guidance to land use managers
- **Under Outcome 4** – there has been little progress towards this Outcome and it is a bigger task than the project can attempt – abandon the remaining activities under this Outcome

**7.2.2** It is recommended that the PMU review all the reports and similar informative material that has arisen from the project, translate as appropriate so it can reach identifiable beneficiaries, record all in a searchable and accessible database to be located in, and managed by, the NIDFF. Hardcopies of relevant documents should be placed, for reference (*i.e.* accessible) in school libraries, local administration offices, Daikhan offices and similar key locations.

**7.2.3** It is recommended that the PMU organize an Exit Strategy Workshop as proposed in this report and with the participation of all project personnel as well as those identified as being in a position to continue with the work of the project. The Workshop should achieve consensus on who is taking over the responsibility both for unfinished work as well as for products and benefits that need to be “adopted” and sustained by someone else.

**7.2.4** It is recommended that, as part of the Exit Strategy, the PMU identify those entities that can be expected to replicate its approaches to other parts of the country; alert them to the benefits of the approaches through sponsored visits to the project demonstration sites and prepare them so they can emulate the project successfully.

**7.3.1** It is recommended to the MNP/UNDP/GTZ partnership that in any future partnership arrangement for a project, management responsibility for resources (personnel, financial, etc) should be vested in one project manager.

**7.3.2** It is recommended that subject to funding support being available and the agreement of the Government, the project duration should be extended to around September 2011 so as to provide the time necessary to consolidate project products, develop and implement an effective Exit Strategy, and enhance the chances of sustainability for the project benefits and services.

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

## 1.1 The Project

The ProDoc of the Project on *Capacity Building and On-the-Ground Investments for Sustainable Land Management* in Turkmenistan was signed in July 2007 and implementation commenced in January 2008 with the first disbursement. Although project duration was given as three years in the ProDoc, the PIR2010 gives its planned operational closure as the end of October 2010.

The project is executed by the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan (MNP). Project activities are coordinated by a Project Management Unit (PMU)<sup>1</sup> based in Ashgabat and implemented at three project pilot sites viz, Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga.

The project follows on from pilot interventions carried out by GTZ with the MNP and comes under the aegis of the broader CACILM programme. It is funded by the GEF Trust Fund under GEF-3, the GTZ, the UNDP CO and the Government.

The ProDoc showed two different project **Objectives** as follows:

- para 8, page 4 – *to improve the capacity of land users for sustainable management of their land resources*
- LogFrame, page 19 – *Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users*

The project's five Outcomes were as follows:

- **Outcome 1** *Land users have stronger capacities for SLM*
- **Outcome 2** *Best land use practices have been developed in three project sites*
- **Outcome 3** *Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites*
- **Outcome 4** *Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM*
- **Outcome 5** *Adaptive management and learning introduced for sustainability of project results*

The Project's Objective and Outcome 2 were revised during the inception phase and the original versions are shown above. This is discussed in various appropriate places in this report.

The total project budget was US\$2.089 million (including the PPG) of which, US\$1.0 million was from UNDP/GEF and US\$1.074 million from co-financing. Of the co-financing, US\$0.5 million was from GTZ, US\$0.429 million was from UNDP, and US\$0.145 million was a contribution in kind from the Government.

## 1.2 The Evaluation

### 1.2.1 Evaluation scope and basis

According to the formal contract and ToRs, this was billed as the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project. However, the project was well beyond the mid-point of its planned implementation time at the time of the evaluation and was due to close operationally by the time the evaluation was to be completed. In the event, the period for comments was nearly two months long (to allow for translation) and this final report is being released well after the planned project closure. This evaluation is therefore the Terminal Evaluation and the approach and scope applied are those of a terminal evaluation.

The departure point for a mid-term or terminal evaluation is the Project Document (ProDoc) which is the manifestation of project design in response to threats and identified barriers and which is the

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<sup>1</sup> As will be discussed elsewhere, the Project Management Unit (PMU) is comprised of staff recruited through both the UNDP/GEF and the GTZ resources; and whenever the PMU is mentioned in this report, it is on the basis of this comprehensive understanding.

signed contract for delivery of certain agreed results, products and services. Signatories bind themselves through the ProDoc and are accountable on that basis. As noted by GEF, *“the results framework included in the project document submitted to the GEF for approval/endorsement by the CEO establishes project outcome expectations. At the time of project completion, these ex-ante expectations generally form a yard stick for assessment of outcome achievements.”*<sup>2</sup>

However, as the GEF guidance continues, *“in some instances during the course of project implementation the implementing agency may make changes to the results framework”* which is also known as the LogFrame (Logical Framework Matrix) and which captures the essence of the ProDoc and the project. It is not possible to change the Objective and Outcomes, however, Outputs and Activities can be changed to reflect changing circumstances or a better understanding of the feasibility of certain activities. There is some contention on the changes to the LogFrame carried out during the life of this project and this is discussed in section 3.5 below.

This evaluation covers the entire scope of the project namely, the ProDoc, project management and implementation, project results, and their sustainability.

### **1.2.2 Evaluation objectives and Terms of Reference**

The Terminal Evaluation is intended to provide a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and serves as an opportunity to critically assess administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints. The Evaluation will also provide recommendations for strategies, approaches and/or activities to improve the potential of the Project to achieve expected outcomes and meet the Objective in the time remaining before closure. The findings of this Terminal Evaluation will lead to recommendations for the structured closure of the project as well as any follow-on activity that may be necessary.

The ToRs expect the Evaluation to carry out the following tasks:

- Evaluate the overall project activities in relation to the objectives and expected outcomes as stated in the project document and the other related documents
- Evaluate the project effectiveness and cost-efficiency
- Critically analyze the arrangements of project management and implementation
- Evaluate the progress attained so far in relation to the project outcomes
- Investigate the strategies and plans intended for the timely achievement of the overall project goal
- List and document the first lessons learned in respect of the project design, its implementation and management
- Assess the sustainability of project interventions
- Assess the relevance in relation to the national priorities
- Provide recommendations for the future project activities and, where necessary, for the project implementation and management arrangements

According to the ToRs, the Evaluation will also assess progress with creating the basic information, and the alleviation of threats and identification of any constraints to the project implementation and their causes. The Evaluation will also provide recommendations for any corrective measures.

The full Terms of Reference are in Annex 1.

### **1.2.3 Key issues addressed by the Evaluation**

According to GEF guidance<sup>3</sup>, key issues that terminal evaluations must address, are:

- An assessment of the level of achievement of outputs and outcomes, and rating of the targeted

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<sup>2</sup> GEF Evaluation Office (2009) *Annual Performance Report 2008*. GEF Council Paper GEF/ME/C.35/Inf.5, May 28, 2009

<sup>3</sup> *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. Global Environment Facility, Evaluation Office. Evaluation Document No.3. 2008

objectives and outcomes (the assessment of the outcomes for relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, is a priority);

- Identification of the risks to sustainability of project outcomes;
- Determination on whether the project met the minimum requirements for project design in terms of M&E (minimum requirement 1) and the implementation of the project M&E plan (minimum requirement 2).

In addition, the project presented other issues and the main ones that needed to be addressed by this Evaluation were: project timescale, changes to the LogFrame, the institutional context for SLM, and replication of the project benefits.

#### **1.2.4 Mission activities and assignment timeline**

Work on this assignment commenced from homebase in August with planning and documents review, and I travelled to Ashgabat on 17-18 September 2010. After a few days for briefing and consultations, I commenced a series of brief visits to the three project sites between 22 and 29 September. I returned to Ashgabat and following further consultations, debriefing with Government officials and UNDP, and a presentation of preliminary findings to the Project Steering Committee, my mission ended on 03 October.

The draft Report was made available for comments in mid-October. Translation into Russian took longer than expected and on UNDP's advice, comments were accepted until mid-December. Comments were received only from GTZ and UNDP. This final Terminal Evaluation Report, which takes into account the comments received, was presented towards the end of December 2010.

### **1.3 Methodology and approach**

#### **1.3.1 The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Principles**

In accordance with the monitoring and evaluation policy of the GEF<sup>4</sup>, this Evaluation is guided by, and has applied, the following principles:

**Independence** The Evaluator is independent and has not been engaged in the Project activities, nor was he responsible in the past for the design, implementation or supervision of the project.

**Impartiality** The Evaluator endeavoured to provide a comprehensive and balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the project. The evaluation process has been impartial in all stages and taken into account all the views received from stakeholders.

**Transparency** The Evaluator conveyed in as open a manner as possible the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of the findings. This evaluation report aims to provide transparent information on its sources, methodologies and approach.

**Disclosure** This report serves as a mechanism through which the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation are disseminated to policymakers, operational staff, beneficiaries, the general public and other stakeholders.

**Ethical** The Evaluator has respected the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and the sources of specific information and opinions in this report are not disclosed except where necessary and then only after confirmation with the consultee.

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<sup>4</sup> Global Environment Facility (2006) *The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*.

**Competencies and Capacities** The credentials of the Evaluator in terms of his expertise, seniority and experience as required by the terms of reference (Annex 1) are provided in Annex 2; and methodology for the assessment of results and performance is described below.

**Credibility** This evaluation has been based on data and observations which are considered reliable and dependable with reference to the quality of instruments and procedures and analysis used to collect and interpret information.

**Utility** The Evaluator strived to be as well-informed as possible and this ensuing report is considered as relevant, timely and as concise as possible. In an attempt to be of maximum benefit to stakeholders, the report presents in a complete and balanced way the evidence, findings and issues, conclusions and recommendations.

### **1.3.2 The approach adopted**

Three basic tools were used in the search for primary data and information – firstly, documents review; secondly, face-to-face consultations; and, thirdly, written comments. Face-to-face consultations were the preferred method of consultation and were carried out with a wide catchment of stakeholders. Triangulation was used to ensure that empirical evidence collected from one source, for example documentation such as reports, was validated from other sources, for example through interviews. Sometimes, the information was not available in document form and only available from consultations. In this situation, the Evaluator sought to corroborate opinions expressed and information given, by posing the same questions to more than one consultee. Anecdotal evidence was taken into account only if in the judgment of the Evaluator the information was important and the source was considered reliable. In such cases, the possible limitations of this information are noted.

The evaluation process comprised three phases. The first phase was one of data and information gathering. It started with a review of relevant documents made available electronically by UNDP and the Project Management Unit. In addition, relevant websites were also visited and studied. The Evaluator received extensive briefings and documentation on arrival in Ashgabat. Following this, the Evaluator embarked on a broad programme of consultations with key stakeholders in Ashgabat and at each of the three project pilot sites. The aim was to capture as broad a catchment of views and opinions as possible within the time available.

The second phase focused on analysis, discussion and drafting by the Evaluator operating from home base. This phase concluded with the production of the draft version of the report which was forwarded to the PMU and UNDP to be released for comments.

The third and final phase refined the draft in the light of the comments received, and produced the final report. Information provided in the comments received was used substantially in revising the draft.

Guidance provided by GEF and UNDP, was adhered to by the Evaluator in undertaking this evaluation. As noted in the Acknowledgements, the Evaluator benefited greatly from the wide spectrum of views, opinions and advice received during the course of his work. However, the conclusions reached and the recommendations made, represent the independent views of the Evaluator alone.

### **1.3.3 Documents and websites reviewed and consulted**

The Terms of Reference provided an initial list of documents to be reviewed and additional documentation was sought by the Evaluator to provide the background to the project, insights into project implementation and management, a record of project outputs, etc. A desk review of all relevant documentation was carried out and key documents referred to directly in this report are

noted in footnotes. The list of salient documents reviewed and/or consulted by the Evaluator is in Annex 3.

#### 1.3.4 Consultation with key stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for this Project are considered to be the Ministry of Nature Protection (as Executing Agency), UNDP (as the GEF Implementing Agency), its funding partner GTZ, and the Project Management Unit together with Project Site Teams who are charged with the day-to-day implementation and management of Project activities. Other stakeholders include other Government agencies (both Central and local level) and farmers' agricultural collectives (Daikhan). The full list of persons consulted is in Annex 4.

The greater majority of stakeholders and beneficiaries were consulted in person. The Evaluator met with and/or consulted 62 individuals in total. The draft report was distributed widely for comments, but comments were only received from two organizations.

Confidentiality of individual interviewees has been maintained to the extent possible. It is felt that in general, the specific sources of specific comments do not add anything to the argument. However, it is sometimes necessary to quote the organization or the institution. If this, inadvertently, indicates an individual, this is regretted and the decision to quote is not taken lightly.

#### 1.3.5 The rating system

The Terms of Reference identified the following project elements which needed to be analyzed and rated:

- Project concept and design
- Stakeholder participation in project formulation
- Implementation approach
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Stakeholder participation
- Attainment of Outcomes and achievement of Objective

These elements formed the framework for the Evaluation. They have been augmented as considered necessary to also address other issues that arose during the evaluation.

Each of the aspects has been rated separately with brief justifications based on findings. In addition, the project as a whole has also been rated.

The standard GEF rating system was applied, namely:

**Highly Satisfactory (HS):** The project has no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

**Satisfactory (S):** The project has minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

**Moderately Satisfactory (MS):** The project has moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):** The project has significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

**Unsatisfactory (U):** The project has major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

**Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):** The project has severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency

## 1.4 Structure of this report

The Evaluator made an effort to keep this report brief, to the point and easy to understand. It is made up of four substantive parts. Following the executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report, the first part provides the introduction and the background to the assignment. It starts with a brief introduction to the project and it then explains the purpose of the evaluation, what was evaluated and the methods used.

The next part is the main substantive part of this report and comprises four inter-related sections. It presents the findings of the evaluation exercise in terms of the basic project concept and design, its implementation, administration and management, its achievements and limitations, and the potential for sustainability of the products and services that it produced. As is normally required, the findings are based on factual evidence obtained by the Evaluator through document reviews, and consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries. While commentary and analysis are presented to the extent possible it has not always been possible to substantiate the findings to the desired level.

The third part is the conclusions section which gathers together a summary of the ratings given and conclusions that had been reached throughout the rest of the report and augments them to create a cohesive ending arising from the investigation. This section in turn leads to the final section comprising the recommendations.

A number of annexes provide supplementary information.

## 2 FINDINGS: PROJECT DESIGN, OWNERSHIP AND RELEVANCE

### 2.1 The Project Document and design

The Project Document (ProDoc) is the legal agreement between UNDP, GTZ, the Government and the Executing Agency (the Ministry of Nature Protection). It is also the main source of guidance for the project implementers (the National Project Coordinator, the Project Manager and his team, and the Project Steering Committee), and the basis for this evaluation.

The format and style adopted by this project's ProDoc are not always clear and logical (e.g. the problems to be addressed and their root causes, assumptions and risks, global benefits). The essential elements are present but they are not always explicit. The case for GEF support is not strong although the reflection of GEF priorities by the project is well discussed.

The Stakeholders are well identified and an account is given of their involvement in the preparatory stages, however, an annex which was supposed to show "*Record of stakeholder involvement in project preparation*" is absent from the ProDoc version available to the Evaluator and could not be located. The list of stakeholders together with the indication of their potential role or interest in SLM is helpful, however the ProDoc does not indicate how most of these potential stakeholders will be engaged by the project. This was apparently covered in two important annexes<sup>5</sup> which unfortunately could not be made available to the Evaluator. Section 3.4 below discusses stakeholder involvement in more detail.

Implementation Arrangements, especially the roles of the key players, are clearly stated and include the relative responsibilities of UNDP, the Executing Agency and GTZ as the partner organization. It goes into some detail regarding the role and functions of the Project Steering Committee and also

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<sup>5</sup> Paras 135 and 136 of the ProDoc state - *Assessment of importance and impact of stakeholders for the project at all levels in given in Annex 3; and Stakeholder analysis in regard to the project, possible effects of the project, their importance for success of project activities and possible influence on project decision making is given in Annex 4.*

refers to the MoU which was planned between UNDP and GTZ as the main sponsors. Reference is also made to the Inception Workshop which is planned at project commencement. The Implementation Framework is discussed in section 3.1.1 below.

The comprehensive section on Monitoring and Evaluation is full and detailed and the summary table of monitoring activities which also includes budgetary allocations can be considered as an M&E Plan although it does not satisfy all the GEF requirements for such a plan. Monitoring and evaluation are covered in section 3.5 below.

A full LogFrame Matrix complete with Indicators, Baselines, Targets, Sources of Verification and Risks and Assumptions is presented in the ProDoc. The Matrix is taken down to the Outputs level which is not usually required. The LogFrame Matrix and particularly the use of Indicators are discussed below in sections 3.5.2 and 4.2.

The Budgetary allocation is presented in full on an Outcome basis and the sources of funds are clearly identified. Outcome 5 (project administration and management) is somewhat unclear in that according to one table it has a total allocation of \$355,000, whereas the table that follows shows a total of \$251,000.

The Budget tables refer to co-financing contributions and a separate table provides detail of co-financing of just over \$1 million all of which is noted as confirmed. Unfortunately the information in this table is not in conformity with information given elsewhere (the contribution of \$429,000 from UNDP is listed as a cash contribution, whereas elsewhere this is described in some detail as being made up of cash and in-parallel co-financing). A full discussion of the Budget is in section 3.3.

Sustainability is well covered and the section addresses social, financial, ecological, economic and institutional sustainability. It proposes ways through which the project will attempt to enhance the sustainability of project benefits. Sustainability is discussed below in Section 5.

The timescale of three years is unrealistically short and is considered a serious flaw in project design. Many of the plantings carried out by the project (gardens, fruit orchards, Juniper forest, etc) require active care and protection for 1-2 years, particularly regular watering until they are established. Considering the time needed for establishing the project, getting communities on board, negotiating for land allocation, sourcing or growing saplings, planting them, and then cultivating the plantings, a timescale of five years would have been more realistic.

The project design comprises a “package” of four elements, namely:

- capacity building (training)
- wise land use pilots (investments)
- research and knowledge management
- institutional and policy framework

all targeting an improvement in land use on a sustainable basis.

From what can be ascertained, all but the institutional and policy framework are focused on the three chosen sites which had been originally the locations of GTZ/MNP pilot projects. The design might have been better had it focused more explicitly on the three sites with a specific Outcome expected from each. The institutional and policy element of the project has not been strong.

Project staff reported that they found the ProDoc a useful document even though they referred to it and the LogFrame somewhat irregularly, mainly when setting the Annual Work Plan.

Project concept and design are rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** particularly as a result of its unrealistic timeframe.



## 2.2 Project ownership

This is a project of the Government of Turkmenistan with the assistance of UNDP/GEF and GTZ. The high level of ownership of the project by the government side was illustrated by the personal involvement of the then Minister for Nature Protection in the Project Steering Committee. But the project is also owned and wanted by the local communities – as one Local Steering Committee unhesitatingly asserted, *“this project belongs to us, to the people”*.

The establishment of Local Project Management Teams selected from among local community members, the Local Steering Committees who have a meaningful say in project activities, the participatory approach employed by the project and the use of local experts as consultants to the extent possible, have ensured the high level of ownership at the community level.

## 2.3 Project relevance to Turkmenistan’s needs

Relevance, according to the OECD<sup>6</sup> is a measure of the extent to which the objective and outcomes of a project are consistent with *“beneficiaries’ requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies.”* UNDP<sup>7</sup> sees Relevance as the extent to which a project and its outputs or outcomes are consistent with national and local policies and priorities and the needs of intended beneficiaries. In the case of GEF projects, the scope of Relevance must also include global environmental benefits. UNDP continues ... *“relevance concerns the congruency between the perception of what is needed as envisioned by the initiative planners and the reality of what is needed from the perspective of intended beneficiaries.”*

Furthermore, according to GEF guidance<sup>8</sup>, *“Relevance and effectiveness will be considered as critical criteria. The overall outcome rating of the project may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria. Thus, to have an overall ‘Satisfactory’ rating for outcomes a project must have at least ‘Satisfactory’ ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.”*

This Evaluation must therefore assess the relevance of the project and in order to do this it needs to answer the simple question –

Does the project address the problem of degraded land in Turkmenistan and, more importantly, its root causes?

The ProDoc identifies the most pressing environmental problems in the country as pollution of groundwater and surface water sources and the deterioration of soils due to irrational agricultural practices. The ProDoc continues that degradation of pasture vegetation is caused by overgrazing and destruction of forests while wind and water erosion accentuate this. Salinization of land is caused by inappropriate water use practices.

However, there is no causal chain analysis nor any structured and explicit identification of the root causes of the identified problems.

Analysis of the baseline led to some conclusions by the ProDoc regarding “gaps” and in the absence of anything else, these can be considered as the root causes that the project needed to address if it was to remedy the serious land degradation situation. These “key problems” and “root causes” are summarized in the following table which also shows the attempt of the Evaluator to link them to one or more of the project Outcomes and/or Activities.

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<sup>6</sup> DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris.

<sup>7</sup> *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results*. United Nations Development Programme, New York. 2009.

<sup>8</sup> GEF Evaluation Office (2008) *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations*. Evaluation Document No.3

**Table 1. Project design response to identified problems and possible root causes**

PROBLEMS AND ROOT CAUSES (as in the ProDoc)	PROJECT RESPONSE THROUGH OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS AS IN THE AMENDED LOGFRAME (as identified by the Evaluator)
<b>Key problems:</b>	
<p>The overall impact of land degradation in the project area reveals itself through the worsening of living conditions of local people due to the degradation of land resources. This negative situation is mainly influenced by two key problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low productivity of agricultural lands, pastures and forests resulting mainly from anthropogenic degradation processes</li> <li>• The insufficient participation of land users in decision making on land management at the local level mainly due to a low degree of organization and information/know-how and due to absence of enabling institutional environment</li> </ul>	<p>The Project attempted to break the cycle of &lt;land-degradation – poverty – land degradation&gt; through alternative income generation activities to reduce the pressure on land resources, mainly under Outcome 2.</p> <p>Irrational water use, overstocking, excessive fuel wood gathering are all addressed under Outcome 2.</p> <p>Local Steering Committees and other mechanisms for involving community members in decision-making; capacity building under Outcome 1</p>
<b>Possible Root Causes:</b>	
The Government services assisting land users in rational land use planning and management need much improvement	Partly addressed under Outcome 4
There is a lack of systematic information, research and monitoring, particularly of irrigated agriculture, at the local level	Attempted under Outcome 3
Projects implemented under different ministries and institutions in cooperation with donor organizations lack an inter-sectoral approach and positive experiences of these projects have not been replicated	Some work under Outcome 4 but the problem remains
The calculation of budgets of projects and programmes is not based on market prices and low commodity and producer prices distort real operational expenditures of development activities and the real market value of agricultural production	Not addressed directly
The existing normative-legislative base does not encourage involvement of local communities, farmers' associations and land users into the process of sustainable land management	Not addressed directly
Available scientific and technical knowledge is not sufficiently tied up with on-the-ground programmes through training and education activities as well as targeted research	Could arise from Outcome 3 but not obtained yet
The local level has insufficient access to sources of information needed for improved land management	Quality and sources of information improved through Outcome 3
The database on land resources is insufficient and not accessible to land users	Land d-base attempted

The project attempts to address the physical, on-the-ground root causes, at community level and also at local administration level and as such it is very relevant to the needs of Turkmenistan. However, a significant root cause of these problems is the national policy/strategy/planning situation which exists for land and water use – the project does not address this, at least not directly.

In fact, the ProDoc is ambivalent regarding policy, strategy and planning for SLM in Turkmenistan. On the one hand it says that these are adequate and that there is also awareness at higher levels; on the other hand it identifies policy, planning and legal basis as barriers. Unless the existing inconsistencies and disconnections between the policy and legal frameworks for land management and the actual needs of land users and community level are addressed, the gains made by the project are in jeopardy. The project has initiated a participatory dialogue between key ministries, local government and local land users, but the Government needs to take this further and institutionalize it.

The project is relevant in general to the needs of Turkmenistan and relevance is deemed **Satisfactory (S)** even though the project does not address some significant root causes of the identified problems.

## 3 FINDINGS: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

### 3.1 Project governance

#### 3.1.1 The project implementation framework

The project is being implemented in the NEX modality with MNP as the Executing Agency. Governance is provided by the Project Steering Committee (chaired by the National Project Coordinator) and day to day management and operations are provided by the Project Management Unit in Ashgabat, assisted by the Project Site Teams at Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga.

The Ministry of Agriculture participates through its membership on the PSC, and although the Ministry of Water Economy is not a member of the PSC, it advised the Evaluator that it feels adequately involved in the project. This is especially so at the local level.

#### 3.1.2 The Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC)<sup>9</sup> is the highest level of governance for the Project. As noted in the ProDoc, the role of the PSC is to “*provide supervision for the project in all its facets and monitor its performance on the basis of agreed benchmarks and indicators*”. The PSC is also charged with advising on:

- The annual work plans of the project on the basis of the log frame matrix
- Matters concerning project organization and management
- The project's monitoring and evaluation plan
- Definition of M&E responsibilities of the project team
- Mainstreaming of project results into national policy making
- All aspects concerning the smooth cooperation between the different parties involved in the project implementation

It is also important to acknowledge that one of the roles of the PSC is to support UNDP which maintains the ultimate accountability to the GEF for the delivery of project products and the administration of project funds.

According to the ProDoc, the PSC membership was to comprise the following:

- NPC
- Representatives of the Ministry of Nature Protection
- UNCCD Focal Point for Turkmenistan
- UNDP CO
- Coordinator of GTZ/CCD Project

It was also noted that other participants could be invited to attend meetings and provide advice. These could come from national ministries and institutions, local administrations, representatives of local groups or CBOs from the project area, NGOs involved in project implementation, etc. The Project Manager and the Project team are expected to attend and advise the PSC meetings as required.

In the event, the basis of membership of the PSC was discussed at some length at the first few PSC meetings and was one of the issues that prevented the ToRs of the PSC from being agreed to for quite some time<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> The Project Steering Committee (PSC) is meant to be a steering committee not a coordination committee, and this point is often lost in the Russian translation.

<sup>10</sup> The ToRs for the PSC were still being discussed at the Ninth Meeting in June 2010.

Examination of the minutes of meetings shows that most members attended consistently, every one of the nine meetings. During the time of the previous Minister, meetings were chaired by either the Minister himself or the Deputy Minister of Nature Protection which indicates the high level of Government commitment to the project. The new Minister has appointed a senior official (Head of the International Department) as both NPC and Chair of the PSC. It is good to note that representatives from the project sites, either the Head of Daikhan Association or the Archyn, or both, also attended. CACILM was also represented at all meetings, as was UNDP CO and GTZ. The Ministry of Agriculture was represented at every meeting, however, the Ministry of Water Economy is not a member.

From the ToRs (as finally adopted) and what can be seen from the minutes of its meetings, the PSC for this project has the right focus – it is operating effectively and providing the “steering” required for the project.

In this context it is also important to mention the Local Steering Committees set up by the project at each of the three locations and which function effectively in Nokhur and Karakum. The situation in Sakar Chaga is different and there is a perception that there is less need for a participatory approach. This view is not shared by the Evaluator.

### **3.1.3 The Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding**

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Nature Protection, the GTZ and UNDP, was signed in March 2008 to “*regulate the cooperation*” between the three parties in the execution of the project.

The MoU stipulates the financial procedures that are to be applied. There is recognition that UNDP and GTZ project funds are to remain separate, and while expenditure on each will be planned according to the Annual Work Plan, they will be managed separately and regulated by the respective donor’s procedures. However, there is a commitment to full transparency and to the presentation of full reports to the PSC.

It was agreed that the reporting for the project is to follow standard GEF procedures and that recruitment of project personnel will be done jointly by the three partners and that facilitation of visa and other formalities for international recruits would be provided by the Ministry.

Provision was also made for the ownership of project materials and equipment and the copyright on project publications but the MoU does not address salary scale or M&E which, according to the ProDoc, it was expected to do.

The agreement is simple and straightforward. It enshrines the separate but complementary contributions that are to be made by UNDP/GEF and GTZ each according to its comparative advantage, and according to a common Work Plan – all with the collaboration of the Ministry.

### **3.1.4 The role of Government as Executing Agency**

This is a Project of the Government of Turkmenistan, executed in the NEX modality by the Ministry of Nature Protection with formal agreements in the form of the Project Document, signed by MNP on behalf of the Government. It is being implemented at three localities. GTZ is serving as executing partner to the Government.

The ProDoc does not go into any detail on the role of Government in this Project. At the policy level, as noted elsewhere, the Government’s commitment to the project was illustrated by the chairing of the PSC by the Minister in the initial stages. Later on, the Deputy Minister of Nature Protection assumed this role. At the operational level, the link between the Government and the Project is through the National Project Coordinator who currently is the Head of the International

Department of the MNP. Collaboration between the project and Local Government is effective but the roles are still those of a beneficiary and a benefactor and government ownership of the project at the local level is not seen as very strong.

Some of the critical barriers in the government “system” which are affecting SLM in Turkmenistan, are not within the possibilities (or the brief) of the Project to address, and need to be addressed by the Government. This will ensure sustainability of some of the project’s products and benefits. The barriers range from the weak policy and legislative base for SLM, the lack of opportunities for inclusion and participation by local farmers and households, the lack of flexibility in terms of land use decisions, products targeted, and duration of tenure, etc. It is a system which is still very centralized and these barriers are within the Government’s power to address.

### **3.1.5 The role of UNDP as GEF Implementing Agency**

As implementing agency, UNDP is responsible to the GEF for the timely and cost-effective delivery of the agreed project outputs. It achieves this through its understandings with the Government of Turkmenistan, its agreement with the Ministry of Nature Protection as executing agency and its further agreement with GTZ as its co-funding partner. UNDP has an obligation to ensure accountability, and its efforts in this respect are spearheaded by the Country Office in Ashgabat which has legal responsibility for the GEF funds.

The ProDoc does not provide an explicit description of the UNDP role and function in project implementation. It does however, note that UNDP will make available the GEF funds and its own as pledged; and it will manage disbursements, procurements and other administrative support matters at the request of the NPC according to the approved work plan.

The UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan may approve, following consultation and agreement with the UNDP/GEF Regional Office and the Government signatories to the project document, revisions or additions to any of the annexes of the ProDoc. He/she may not instigate changes to the Objective and Outcomes, however, Outputs and Activities of the project can be reviewed. Likewise, the Resident Representative can approve mandatory annual budget revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or reflect increased expert or other costs due to inflation or to take into account agency expenditure flexibility. The UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan also chairs the Annual Tripartite Review, coordinates inputs into the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) for submission to UNDP/GEF, ensures that project objectives are advanced through the policy dialogue with the Government, and undertakes official transmission of reports to the GEF national focal point.

Staff in the UNDP Environment Unit are expected to work closely with the Project Manager and the GTZ Senior Advisor as well as with the National Project Coordinator and facilitate project coordination at central level. Members of the PMU acknowledged to the Evaluator the support and guidance that they receive from UNDP Environment & Energy Unit. Some PMU members were given specific training by UNDP in their various administration and finance roles, and they learnt further as they went along. It is pleasing to note that the GTZ-supported staff from the PMU were invited together with their UNDP-supported colleagues to the annual retreat held by the UNDP Environment & Energy Unit for staff of its projects portfolio.

However, a different point of view was also reported by GTZ – the PMU did not receive the full support and guidance initially expected from the UNDP Environment Unit to successfully implement the project (communication and administrative support were not provided), but support was obtained from the management of the UNDP office in order to address urgent issues.

UNDP is also expected to provide guidance and oversight of the project through its monitoring of implementation; field visits to project areas; PSC co-chairing; the preparation and circulation of reports; helping to resolve problems; reviewing and revising project reports and providing feedback; and providing technical support. It also has a role in financial management and reporting by

ensuring annual audits are carried out, approving budget revisions, and coordinating final financial closure. Furthermore, UNDP oversees the evaluation of results achieved by the project through APRs, TPRs, PIRs and by arranging independent evaluations.

As far as can be ascertained, management and control over financial operations have been carried out successfully by UNDP, albeit at times somewhat tardy – the Evaluator was made aware of some delays in procurement and disbursement which have affected the project at times (and which necessitated that GTZ remedy the gap in the interest of project continuity). The independent financial audit was commissioned and recruitment and contracting have been carried out in accordance with UNDP/GEF procedures and rules. However, as there is no project website, it is not known whether and how progress reports, evaluation reports and annual financial reports were made available publicly in the interest of transparency.

The work of the UNDP Country Office is supported by the UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Office in Bratislava, specifically the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA), who also provides coordination within the whole UNDP/GEF portfolio of projects for the region. More specifically, the UNDP/GEF RTA provides technical support to the UNDP Country Office and the GEF National Operational Focal Point, approves the project inception report and terminal reports, reviews budget revisions prior to signature, follows up closely on implementation progress, assures the eligibility of project interventions in light of GEF policy guidance and approved project design, represents UNDP/GEF on the PSC, and approves Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), including performance ratings, for submission to GEF.

### **3.1.6 Conclusions on project governance**

The project implementation framework is uncomplicated and appears effective. Collaboration and cooperation is enshrined in a tripartite MoU which is simple and straightforward and which recognizes the separate but complementary contributions from UNDP/GEF, the GTZ and the Government, each according to its comparative advantage.

The highest level of governance is provided by the PSC which is adequately representative of the key stakeholders and chaired at very senior levels. It functions effectively by providing guidance and directions to the PMU and requiring accountability.

The role of UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency is effectively executed as is that of the Government, through the Ministry of Nature Protection, as the project owner. The GTZ serves as a co-funding partner to UNDP and as executing partner to the Government.

Project governance is seen as **Satisfactory (S)**.

## **3.2 Project administration and management**

### **3.2.1 The Project Management Unit**

#### **3.2.1.1 The PMU structure and staff resources**

According to the ProDoc ..... *“A Project Coordination Office will be established within the lead executing agency, NIDFF, to insure day-to-day project management, liaison with stakeholders, and coordination among the cofunded components. The Office will also manage storage, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of data and information”.*

The ProDoc continues ..... *“It will be headed by the Project Manager who will be supported by a Project Assistant, Project Secretary, Consultant on capacity building and on-the-ground investments, Consultant on targeted research and public awareness, and other staff members as a core project team if required, which will form Project Management Unit (PMU)”.*

The ProDoc does not mention a Project Advisor position nor does it make any reference to the local area Project Managers and their respective teams in each of Sakar Chaga, Nokhur and Karakum. Neither is there any discussion on the nature of recruitment and support (from either GTZ or UNDP/GEF) of individual staff positions.

In the event, the project has a large staff complement of some 25 positions, including all the field positions, of which all but three are funded by GTZ. From the organogram provided by the PMU, the PM and his two colleagues in the PMU who are engaged through UNDP/GEF funds appear somewhat swamped.

The PMU structure arose from the agreements reached in the MoU and was necessitated by the fact that GTZ is not eligible to manage GEF and/or UNDP funding; and UNDP is not eligible to manage German bilateral cooperation budgets entrusted by the German government to GTZ.

The structure is risky. Lines of reporting and accountability run from UNDP to the PM, and from him to the positions of Project Administrator and Project Financial Assistant and they virtually stop there. Without a cooperative GTZ counterpart serving as Senior Advisor, which in effect manages the rest of the staff, the PM could well be powerless. This is of particular concern since the entire complement of field staff are on the GTZ payroll and report to the GTZ Senior Advisor.

However, it is a credit to all involved that this risk has remained only on paper. With minor exceptions, the PMU and the entire staff complement including the field teams appears to operate in harmony and as a single team. This is due to a great extent to the collaborative spirit and leadership shown by the GTZ Senior Advisor and the UNDP/GEF Project Manager<sup>11</sup>.

### **3.2.1.2 Project Site Teams**

There are three Project Site Teams, one in each of Sakar Chaga, Garawul/Konegummez (Nokhur), and Bokhodur/Mammetyar (Karakum). Each is led by a Local Project Manager recruited locally, and an equally local set of team members. The Local Project Managers are engaged full-time, whereas some of the team members are part-time. It is laudable that the project recruited its local teams from within the local community; it is also smart to do so. The incumbents are respected individuals from within the community and they are conversant with the real needs of the local community (to which they belong) and they have a good understanding of, and rapport with, the “main actors” in the community.

Each of the Project Site Teams operates out of office premises provided by the local administration or the community, and although they were renovated and equipped collaboratively by UNDP/GEF and GTZ, they are free from rent, services costs or other overheads – they are rightly seen as part of the Government contribution in-kind.

The Project Site Teams maintain close contact (including through regular visits) with the central PMU personnel in Ashgabat. However, even closer collaboration is effected with the local administration and community leaders, mainly through the Local Steering Committee.

### **3.2.1.3 Management style and the PMU as a team**

Management style has been reasonably low key and democratic, and in general, effective – all staff reported receiving whatever support, advice and guidance they required, whenever they required it,

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<sup>11</sup> GTZ advised the Evaluator that it “assumes that a successful implementation of a co-managed project is rather a question of a common will to implement the project in the most effective and efficient manner with joint focus on the expected results, professional team play and cooperation between the respective management staff of the different parties based on frequent and reliable communication, joint decision making as far as possible and needed for such a joint project as well as proper mechanisms to deal with any problems and conflicts in a constructive manner.”

and regardless of whether they were in the UNDP/GEF “group” or the GTZ equivalent. Management maintained that irrespective of which group they belong to, the best can be obtained from all staff members. Staff maintain that “*it is a team ... feels like a team ... and operates as a team*”, this is in spite of the fact that some admit that communication at times could be better and maybe roles need to be clearer.

Some staff acknowledged that they feel they have two masters, but quickly added that it is “*not a problem – both are helpful, advisory, supportive*”. One felt that having one PM over all staff would be less risky – “*no problem with two budgets, but one person should be managing both*”.

Staff appraisals, which are carried out jointly by the PM and the Senior Advisor, are appreciated by most staff, and so are the staff training and team building events organized by management.

Many staff expressed their satisfaction with the regular staff meetings (“*to resolve problems*”), the democratic way in which they were run, and the opportunity they provided to hear what others have been doing and to make your own contribution (“*everyone has equal opportunity*”). Some lamented that although they were meant to take place weekly, sometimes weeks pass without the staff meeting taking place. This is because there is an unwritten understanding that all should be present and inevitably some members cannot avoid being away on official project business. The Evaluator feels that while it is ideal that all staff are present at the meeting, the absence of one or two should not jeopardise the whole meeting. It is suggested that a regular fortnightly meeting should be scheduled and held as long as a majority of staff are available. Any staff member wishing to absent themselves should obtain the concurrence of the PM or the Senior Advisor as the case may be.

Project management and administration is **Satisfactory (S)**.

### 3.2.2 Risk management

The ProDoc warns that “*The project, throughout its implementation phase, will have to be aware of a number of assumptions and risks which the project will not be able to directly influence*” and it then outlines a number of assumptions. The LogFrame then mentions some of these assumptions and identifies the risks associated with them. However, neither in the text nor in the LogFrame table does the ProDoc mention any mitigation measures that the project will put in place to address, minimize or mitigate the risks – this is a deficiency.

The Inception Workshop Report, in its revision of the LogFrame, mentions risks – “*The assumptions and risks were relieved from general and not easy to prove remarks; they were reduced to the essential and show real risks of the project*”. It then identifies four risks, but it stops there – there is no discussion, no mitigation measures.

Following the Inception Workshop, the revised LogFrame is presented in a different format and it made the identified risks even more prominent, although it presented them as assumptions rather than risks. The Assumptions/Risks are carried in the various Indicator Matrices produced by the project and indicators are assigned to them in the same way as to Outputs. In effect, the Assumptions/Risks are dealt with as *de facto* Outputs/Targets of the project and the Evaluator finds this confusing<sup>12</sup>.

The PIRs format has a specific dedicated section on Risks which includes a Risk Management Response, but in both the PIR2009 and PIR2010 this section is blank.

In an attempt to assess the level of risk management, the Evaluator invited the PMU to indicate how key risks have been dealt with and managed and if the risks associated with the project are considered significant. The full answer from the PMU is shown in the following table which shows

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<sup>12</sup> GTZ is disappointed that “*Indicators which were formulated for project risks (integrated into the LogFrame) were evaluated against the outcome not the actual risk for which they were formulated.*” The Evaluator believes that risks need mitigation measures and not indicators; and that in an evaluation Outcomes are paramount.



the identified assumptions/risks, any mitigation measures applied or planned by the PMU, and comments on whether the risk has materialized or is still likely. It also shows comments/reactions from the Evaluator.

**Table 2. Managing the risks**

RISKS	MITIGATION MEASURES PLANNED BY PMU (if any)	COMMENTS BY PMU ON WHETHER RISK HAS MATERIALIZED OR IS STILL LIKELY	COMMENTS BY THE EVALUATOR
R1: The fulfilment of the agreements for protection of the reforested areas is kept effectively (Nohur).	Participation of the local population in the decision making on selection of areas for reforestation, the reforestation work itself (as Subotniks organized without payments) and already at early stages about the protection of the areas itself. Furthermore, joint discussions and finding of solutions about future management of the reforested areas as an integrated part of the projects activities in this frame. Support to the local population to organize themselves accordingly and identify and agree on future management perspective which provide the needed incentives and means for protection and sustainable management of the areas.	The management responsibilities are still taken over by the project (local guards are paid by GTZ). The project envisages to ask the Farm to rent the land to private users and link the lease contract to concrete management requirements (e. g. hay may be harvested; cows in limited number allowed, no goats,...). But this still has to be discussed and elaborated with the stakeholders in Nohur. It should be noted here, that the local administration does not have the needed means to control the state of the area regularly or even protect the non-fenced reforested lands by any suitable means. Therefore, it would not suffice in terms of sustainability to hand the lands over to the Archynlyk. The same applies for the stabilized sand dune areas in the Karakum project region. <b>As long as concrete agreements, which assure incentives for the sustainable management, have not yet been drawn and people are not yet able to plan such a management, this risk remains high.</b>	This continuing risk has been identified well and the measures put in place by the project to mitigate against it are well-described. There is a reliance on raised awareness and appreciation, a sense of ownership and responsibility, and credibility of the project in the eyes of the communities. Each of these elements takes time to establish and the project timeframe may not be adequate for this. However, the ultimate deciding factor is the level of poverty and the choices available to the community, and while the project has attempted to address this, its contribution is modest and may not be long-lasting.  Indeed, the risk remains.
R 2: The land users are ready to reduce the number of their animals, if they have other sources of income as compensation (Nohur, Karakum).	At the early stages of the project, the actual aim to contribute to a more sustainable pasture management in both project regions was to be communicated and awareness on the issue raised. Especially for Karakum, concrete agreements with the farmers association are to be agreed on the stocking rates among the newly constructed and renovated wells (as a minimum).	This holds true for Nohur and materializes in the high participation rate in Konegümmez on contracts for livestock stabilization and reduction (in return for gardening plots). The risk for Karakum is vivid because of a different setting due to which a high incentive exists to still increase livestock numbers. Additionally, it is very difficult to control the stocking of animals around the individual wells in the desert. In order to lower the risk, the project will have to link the official handover of the renovated and newly constructed wells to stocking rates around those wells but actually also to (reduced) stocking rates on other wells which are still overstocked. This has so far not happened and the risk is still high, that the construction and renovation of wells rather opened the way for further degradation of pasture lands on distant pastures instead of a more sustainable pasture management. <b>For the project region of Karakum the risk is still too high and should be reduced with means as described above.</b>	The same comment as above applies to this risk. In Nokhur, the project provided choice and the risk abated. In Karakum, the additional wells are no guarantee of the result sought and there is a possibility that the project may need to supplement the wells with other incentives for the reduction of stocking rates.  This risk remains.
R 3: There is a risk that the short leasing time of land is a disincentive for private investments (Sakar Chaga).	Already at an early stage of the project, the administration of the Etrap was to be involved in discussions of land lease contracts. The project results in this project region should target not only on private farmers but on the Daikhan Farms and the local, regional and national Administration itself who take over major responsibilities of land management under the given situation (e. g. maintenance of drainage infrastructure; preparation of new arable land; advises to the farmers...)	Actually, the project managed to receive a very small pilot site of 5 ha (besides the remaining 700 ha farmland) on which the project could test: a) Longer term lease contracts for private farmers; b) Freedom of farmers to decide on the crops, crop rotation and investments in the land  This was to be used to show how the land management could become more sustainable in all dimensions of sustainability. Nevertheless, unfortunately, the administration decided this year to take the land back under their control in order to grow cotton there again (cotton price increased...). The project aims therefore in Sakarchaga for results which may be used especially in discussions and negotiations with the administration and government on the legal and institutional frames. <b>This risk is still considerably high.</b>	This is not exactly a risk to the project but more of a fundamental barrier to SLM in Turkmenistan which the project design has not addressed adequately. It requires land reforms and the project cannot address these within its timescale. As the barrier remains, some of the project results are in jeopardy. The best that the project can do is identify this barrier as something that must be addressed by the Government possibly with the assistance of a future project.

<p>R 4: The stakeholders at the national level have an interest in mainstreaming SLM into policy making and development programs and in a revised NAP.</p>	<p>The PMU may not claim to change by itself the policy framework and program development of the Turkmen government. The approach of “Learning Cycles” from Bottom-up was therefore used in order to be able to contribute concrete recommendations to national discussions and/or have a good basis to initiate discussions on important topics of land management.</p> <p>The SLM-Project is a project under the CACILM umbrella. The institutional structures of CACILM at national level are such that the NCC with support of the NSEC should actively support the project in mainstreaming its messages and best practices.</p>	<p>There is a moderate interest of the MoN in a revision of the outdated UNCCD NAP. Currently, one staff member and policy expert is reviewing national strategies, NAPs of CBD and CCD as well as the concept of NAPAs in order to develop recommendations where the best practices developed under the project may fit best and how they could be integrated. The results will be the basis for discussions at national level planned for later this year.</p> <p>The SLM project so far could not benefit from active support of the national CACILM structures for mainstreaming purposes.</p> <p><b>If the project will be successfully interesting national level decision makers for its basic messages and results, this risk may be reduced. Currently, it still holds as the project has not yet reached this phase of active communication of its best practices and results.</b></p>	<p>The reliance on the CACILM NCC/NSec was justified because a 3-year project could not be expected to address all the barriers to SLM in Turkmenistan. In the event, CACILM did not complement the project as expected and there is a risk that without a robust national level framework for SLM (<i>i.e.</i> without mainstreaming of SLM), the project’s benefits will not be sustainable.</p> <p>This risk remains.</p>
<p>Lack of motivation of local administration and local land users in at least 1 pilot area</p>	<p>Considerable efforts on awareness raising were planned, regular travels to the project regions and meetings with the local administration and LSC.</p>	<p>Lack of motivation to critically assess and considerably improve the situation of pasture management in Karakum and Nohur without other incentives still visible.</p>	<p>The exact nature of this risk is not clear, especially its reference to one pilot area. It would seem that the risk hints at a donor-driven approach, and that is risky.</p>
<p>There is a risk of targeted research deviating towards basic research without taking into account requirements of local land users</p>	<p>The PMU conducted inception workshops in each project region at the beginning of the project and already there tackled the question of needed information for the land users. Furthermore, the PMU made a targeted brainstorming with national experts of different institutes in order to direct the discussions toward actual needs in order to improve management of irrigated zones, pastures, forests and water resources towards more sustainability. A ranking was to be done accordingly and the meeting was moderated in such a way.</p>	<p>The risk did not materialize.</p>	<p>The real risk here was that the project is not well-managed – which is not the case, hence no risk.</p>
<p>Land users might not be interested in applying results if these are too costly, too complicated, too labor-intensive, not understandable by untrained land users and if the results are not applicable under existing land ownership system</p>	<p>The risk itself already lists the needed activities in order to maximise chances that the land users will take up recommendations and results of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- acceptable costs;</li> <li>- easy to apply;</li> <li>- accessible for the untrained;</li> <li>- adapted to the local situation and needs.</li> </ul> <p>It was already decided during the project development phase, that the project would actively involve its beneficiaries during the elaboration of its “results” and recommendations. Considerable efforts were invested into awareness raising and the distribution of information as well as concrete trainings in order to allow for the accessibility of project messages and recommendations.</p>	<p>Some of the results of the project will point towards changes of the existing frame conditions of land management. Here, the project will have to initiate discussion processes at national level in order to provide a platform for discussion of changes. As the project is part of CACILM, it was foreseen already during the preparation period that the NSEC of CACILM should support the project with this work.</p>	<p>If this risk really existed, it would have been the result of the project producing futile products. The involvement of the prospective beneficiaries made sure that the benefits fitted their needs and the risk was avoided. The reliance and involvement of CACILM NSec is not relevant here – the project had the means to avoid this risk.</p>

In conclusion, in spite of the lack of effective consideration of Risks by the ProDoc, the LogFrame and the PIRs, the PMU has shown that it has a good appreciation of what the Risks are, what their probability is and what is needed to address them. The Project's consideration of risks is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

### 3.2.3 Information management

Information management and knowledge transfer are pre-requisites for raising awareness, effective replication and sustainability. To date, this project has generated a modest amount of data, information and knowledge. However, information management has not featured highly in project activities and although some publications are known to be in the pipeline, the knowledge and information output from the project is not impressive. The Evaluator requested a list of project publications and similar products from the PMU and the response is in the following table.

**Table 3. Project publications and similar products, as supplied by the PMU**

PRODUCT	TYPE	DISTRIBUTION	DATE	LANGUAGE	PRINT RUN
Information lists (3 project regions)	Information lists	exhibitions, scientific-research institutes, all interested stakeholders, Ministry of Nature Protection, local population of the project regions	31/07/2008	Russian/ English	500
Information stands (9 stands)	Information stands	9 stands were installed in all project regions for increasing the awareness of the local population about the project activities	12/07/2010	Turkmen	9
Pasturable and agricultural seasons (Календарь сельскохозяйственных и пастбищных сезонов Туркменистана)	a brochure	exhibitions, scientific-research institutes, all interested stakeholders, the Ministry of Nature Protection, the local population of the project regions	20/07/2010	Russian	500
Materials (a booklet and breadboard model of experience of sand fixation and afforestation) for the national exhibition of Turkmenistan in Tashkent	a booklet	the national exhibition of Turkmenistan in Tashkent	17/03/2010	English/ Russian	300
An article published on <a href="http://www.undptkm.org/">http://www.undptkm.org/</a> and <a href="http://www.turkmenistan.ru">www.turkmenistan.ru</a>	an article	the article devoted to the occasion of the International Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.	24/06/2010	English/ Russian	n/a
The article on "Capacity building and on-the-ground investments for sustainable land management"	an article	for CACILM brochure	2008-2009	Turkmen/ English/ Russian	
Information stands (3 stands)	Stands	"Turkmenagro - 2008" International exhibition	2008	Russian	3
The "Capacity building and on-the-ground investments for sustainable land management"	a leaflet	exhibitions, scientific-research institutes, all interested stakeholders, the Ministry of Nature Protection, the local population of the project regions	2008	English/ Russian	300
Booklets (collector, cotton, potato (gardening) and land (gardening)). Prepared by the Local Project Manager of the Sakarchaga Project site.	a booklet (in process i.e. not yet published)	exhibitions, scientific-research institutes, all interested stakeholders, the Ministry of Nature Protection, the local population of the project regions	2010	Turkmen	500 (planning)
Remote Sensing analysis of vegetation change in Nohur and Bachardoc, Turkmenistan	Final report	all interested stakeholders	28/10/2009	English	n/a
Sustainable use of pasture lands - training manual for L4S Workshop on sustainable pasture management (Kopet-Dag Region)	Methodological document	Participants of Training of Trainers for the L4S Workshop on sustainable pasture management	Sept. 2009	Russian	n / a

Sustainable use of pasture lands - training manual for L4S Workshop on sustainable pasture management (Karakum Region)	Methodological document	Participants of Training of Trainers for the L4S Workshop on sustainable pasture management	Sept. 2009	Russian	n / a
(contribution to:) Loosing Ground... The global problem of desertification	information video	Distribution material of the GTZ Convention Project to Combat Desertification	2010	Russian, English, (German, Spanish, French)	n / a
(contribution to:) Acting locally - cooperating regionally	information brochure of the GTZ Regional Program on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Central Asia	Distribution to the general public and partners of the program	2010	Russian, English, German	n / a

The table shows very meagre information outputs – two “handbook” type of products were produced but distribution was limited to participants of training sessions; one consultant’s analytical report was obtained and made available only to “interested stakeholders”; four brochures/booklets were produced with print runs of between 300 and 500.

The project does not have its own website and the PMU advised the Evaluator that it has used the websites of GTZ, UNDP and the MNP to reach its constituents. The Evaluator attempted to access information on the project through these websites but has not been successful.

The dissemination of project information, such as progress reports, consultants’ reports, training manuals and guidelines, etc, is presumed to have been through the project’s “network” to targeted beneficiaries and to other parties who were expected to be interested. Efforts for reaching out beyond the immediate confines of the project to those who will ultimately be replicating the approach and products of the project were limited to media coverage of major project milestones.

Project outreach has been somewhat limited to its immediate stakeholders and it has not made much effort towards managing information and knowledge so that they can contribute towards the replication of its results. Information management is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

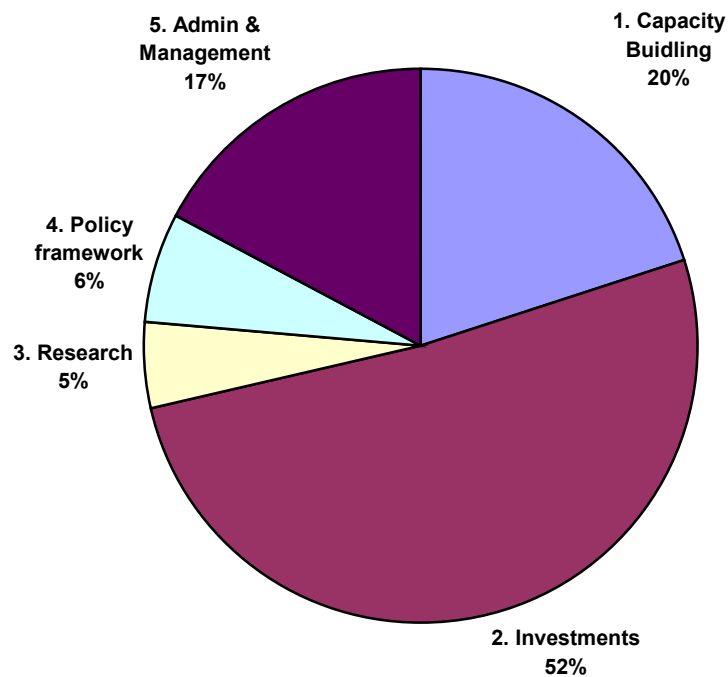
### 3.3 Financial management

According to the tripartite MoU, project funds are administered according to the relevant sponsor. Funds originating from GTZ support are administered according to GTZ procedures; whereas those originating from the GEF are administered according to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between UNDP and the Government of Turkmenistan, which governs the use of UNDP funds. All funding commitments were reflected in the AWP which was discussed by the PSC and signed off by the MNP, UNDP and GTZ.

#### 3.3.1 Budget and financial planning

The project has a total budget of US\$2.089 million (including the PPG) of which, US\$1.0 million is from UNDP/GEF and US\$1.074 million is from co-financing. Of the co-financing, US\$0.5 million is from GTZ, US\$0.429 million is from UNDP, and US\$0.145 million is a contribution in kind from the Government.

Figure 1 below shows the original comparative amounts allocated to each Outcome from the GEF contribution and that expected from co-funding (including in-kind), according to the ProDoc. Table 4 on the next page shows the same information as well as expenditure to date which is discussed further below (section 3.3.2).



**Figure 1. Original relative allocation (from GEF and co-funding) to project components according to the ProDoc**

The greater part (76%) of original GEF funds were allocated to Outcome 2, while Project Administration and Management was allocated 14%, and minor allocations were made to the other Outcomes.

Co-Financing funds are also focused on Outcome 2 (29%), but this is second to the co-financing allocation to Outcome 1 (36%). The co-financing allocation to Project Administration and Management is once again one of the high ones (17%). Co-financing is discussed in more detail below, but if these figures from the ProDoc are taken as they are (and they include co-financing in-kind), the original relative total allocation to the project Outcomes/Components is as in Figure 1 above.

While the priority accorded to Outcome 2 is seen as justified, the substantial allocation of over 50% of resources may be on the high side. Conversely, the allocation of a mere 6% and 5% respectively to the Policy/Strategies/Legislation component and the Research component is somewhat low. This is particularly of concern for Outcome 4 which is almost totally reliant on co-funding. Conversely, at 17%, the budget for Project Management & Administration in the ProDoc appears on the high side, however, with a project office in Ashgabat and three others at project sites, it is not excessive.

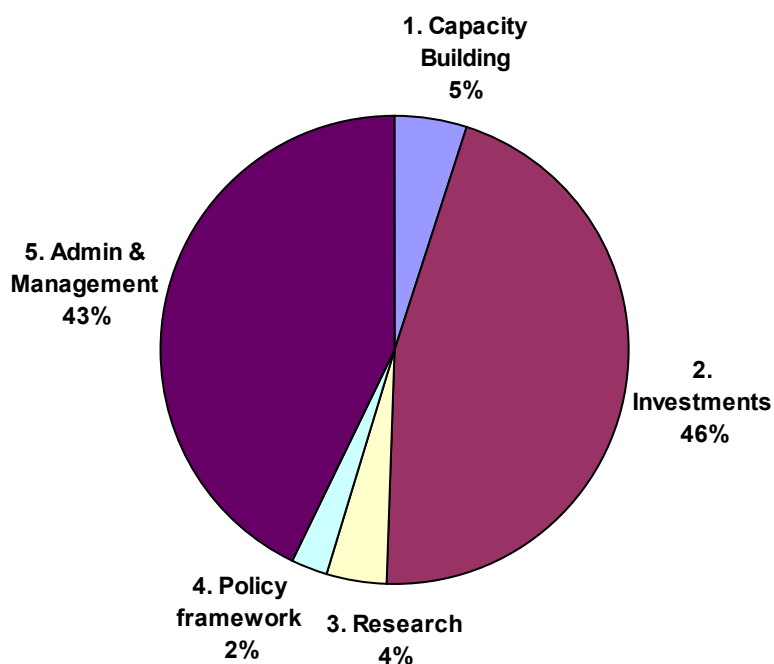
The Evaluator was not able to obtain corresponding figures for expenditure to date, by Outcome, for co-financing in-kind. This means that the second lot of columns in the table below are not strictly comparable with those depicting the original allocations. However, and unless the co-financing in-kind is influencing distributions inordinately, some comparisons can still be made between the two sets of figures. While keeping this proviso in mind, it can be noticed that during project implementation, and according to expenditure figures (up to end of June 2010) provided by GTZ and UNDP, the relative allocations by Outcomes have changed significantly. As the comments in the last column indicate, the greatest changes have taken place under Outcome 1 and the Project

**Table 4. Comparison of the original allocation to project Outcomes/components and actual disbursements to date**

OUTCOME	ORIGINAL ALLOCATION				EXPENDITURE TO DATE (to end June 2010)					COMMENT
	GEF	CO-FINANCING (incl in-kind)	TOTAL		GEF	CO-FINANCING (excluding in-kind)		TOTAL		
						GTZ	UNDP			
Outcome 1: Land users are strengthened for SLM through capacity building	20,000	387,000	407,000	20%	13,716	39,809	2,629	56,154	5%	This component has dropped from a 20% share of the total to a mere 5% and is grossly underspent
Outcome 2: Land use practices have been improved in three pilot sites	742,000	316,000	1,058,000	52%	459,454	51,034	5,207	515,695	46%	Although this component is still the highest, actual spending is half of what was predicted
Outcome 3: Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites	70,000	32,000	102,000	5%	29,408	20,104	239	49,751	4%	The relative ranking for this component has remained steady however, expenditure is less than half of what was forecast
Outcome 4: Institutional and policy framework for sustainable land management strengthened	10,000	117,000	127,000	6%	9,074	17,332	540	26,946	2%	This component has retained its low rank position and expenditure is trivial
Adaptive management/Project management budget/cost (originally Outcomes 5 and 6)	133,000	222,000	355,000	17%	158,310	322,178	5,561	486,049	43%	This component is the only one to be overspent, and it has now climbed to almost first equal in terms of expenditure. At 43% of the budget, this is very high and the margin of difference between planned and actual expenditure is excessively high.
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>975,000</b>	<b>1,074,000</b>	<b>2,049,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>669,962</b>	<b>450,457</b>	<b>14,176</b>	<b>1,134,595</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Management and Administration component. The former is grossly underspent whereas the Project Management and Administration allocation has blown out by over 100%. The reduction in total allocation/disbursement to Outcome 1 could be the result of a concentration of in-kind contribution to this Outcome, which unfortunately remains invisible. However, the blow-out in Project Management and Administration is actual and is of concern.

The new relative allocations/disbursements, per Outcome, but not including in-kind co-financing contributions are as follows:



**Figure 2. Actual disbursements to project components up to 30 June 2010.**

### 3.3.2 Disbursement and delivery

The original project duration according to project design was 36 months and the first disbursement was made on 01 January 2008. According to PIR2009 the original closure was planned for the end of October 2010 – a duration of only 34 months. This was revised to the end of November 2010 giving a duration of 35 months. Discussions/agreements during the evaluation, which were still subject to Government approval, proposed that project closure be shifted to the end of December 2010 and the duration returned to the original 36 months. In the event, the project appears to have dragged on at least until the end of December and the extension has been achieved by default.

The latest financial data available gives expenditure up to the end of June 2010. This means that if the extension to the end of December 2010 is taken into account, the milestone is at 83% of project duration. And, although expenditure is only a crude measure of activities and progress, disbursements should be close to this figure. As can be seen from the table below, expenditure for Outcome 4 is the only one close to the correct level of delivery. Of the rest, three Outcomes are behind in delivery and one, Project Management & Administration, is overspent. However, this analysis can only be done for GEF funds since GTZ and UNDP funds were not disaggregated clearly in the original budget<sup>13</sup>. If they could be added to the information available for GEF funds, they may well influence the result depicted below.

<sup>13</sup> GTZ advised that this was a strategic decision “in order to assure flexibility for spendings. This proved highly important during project implementation as GTZ several times had to take over costs on short notice, e.g. because the UNDP/GEF budget was not yet opened for the New Year”.

**Table 5. GEF original allocation by Outcome and expenditure to end of June**

OUTCOME	ORIGINAL ALLOCATION	SPENT TO 30 JUNE	% SPENT	COMMENTS
Outcome 1: Land users are strengthened for SLM through capacity building	20,000	13,716	69%	Somewhat underspent but expected to catch up as a result of capacity building activities known to be planned
Outcome 2: Land use practices have been improved in three pilot sites	742,000	459,454	62%	Underspent and of some concern that if there is extra effort to deliver at this late stage, and without effective exit strategy, the expenditure could be wasted
Outcome 3: Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites	70,000	29,408	42%	Seriously underspent and unless the remaining funds are intended for the printing and dissemination of research results, this Outcome will remain under-delivered
Outcome 4: Institutional and policy framework for sustainable land management strengthened	10,000	9,074	91%	Very close to forecast even though the results are not that significant
Adaptive management/Project management budget/cost (originally Outcomes 5 and 6)	133,000	158,310	119%	Overspent and a serious concern because it could go higher
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>975,000</b>	<b>669,962</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>With 83% of the project duration gone, delivery is well below plans and is of concern</b>

Expenditure up to June for GEF funds, as deduced from ATLAS records provided by UNDP, is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

### 3.3.3 Co-financing

According to the ProDoc, the amount of co-funding expected for this project was US\$1.074 million thus satisfying the 1:1 ratio required by the GEF. Expected cash co-financing was US\$0.5 million from GTZ and US\$0.225 million from UNDP. The project also benefited from co-financing in-kind or in parallel from the Government (US\$0.145 million), from UNDP (US\$0.204 million), and from GTZ (originally undisclosed amount but since advised to be in the order of US\$484,100)<sup>14</sup>. According to the ProDoc, all co-funding had been confirmed at the time of ProDoc signature.

The table below is a summary of the co-financing situation as reported by the PMU, GTZ and UNDP. It starts with the amounts committed, then the amounts actually disbursed up to August 2010, and finally the amounts expected to be disbursed by the end of the project. The UNDP cash contribution is enigmatic – delivery of over US\$200,000 must be made before project closure to honour the pledged amount. This is not considered feasible by the Evaluator.

<sup>14</sup> GTZ in-kind co-funding includes: (a) Contributions of international staff of the Regional GTZ Programme on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Central Asia, including long-term staff (*salaries, travel costs...*); (b) Administrative and logistical support provided mostly by the GTZ office in Turkmenistan and the headquarters in Eschborn (*charges by the offices in dependence on the services provided*); (c) Additional overhead costs (percentage of the individual expenses accounted for as agreed per contract with the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development).



**Table 6. Co-financing pledged, disbursed and expected (according to the PMU, GTZ and UNDP)**

PARTNER OR CONTRIBUTOR	NATURE OF CONTRIBUTOR	NATURE OF CONTRIBUTION	AMOUNT (in millions US Dollars)		
			PLEGDED (according to ProDoc)	DISBURSED TO AUGUST 2010	TOTAL EXPECTED TO END OF PROJECT
GTZ	Bilateral org.	cash	500,000	450,457	500,000
		in-kind <sup>15</sup>	-	484,100	513,169
UNDP	GEF IA	cash	225,000	11,531	236,531
		parallel	204,000	185,000	389,000
Ministry of Nature Protection	Government	in-kind	145,000	125,000	145,000
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>1,074,000</b>	<b>1,256,088</b>	<b>1,783,700</b>

According to the above figures the co-funding delivery has exceeded expectations, however, this is due entirely to the GTZ in-kind contribution which had not been taken into account at the ProDoc stage. And, this is offset by the lack of delivery of the UNDP cash co-funding.

There is a separate section on Co-Financing in PIR2009, but it is blank. However, in the table headed Financial Information, under “Cash Cofinancing – UNDP managed” it shows \$430,000 pledged by UNDP itself, \$150,000 pledged by the Government, and \$500,000 pledged by GTZ. This information is incorrect and misleading – the amounts quoted are not all cash and neither are they all UNDP-managed. As if to underline the mistake, the table shows “n/a” under ‘Cash Cofinancing – partner managed’ and another “n/a” under ‘In-kind Cofinancing’. It is of concern that this erroneous PIR2009 was signed off by the Project Manager, UNDP CO and UNDP/GEF RTA. The same errors are inexplicably displayed again in the PIR2010 Financial Information table. In addition, the figures provided under ‘Estimated Total Disbursement to 30 June 2010’, do not coincide with the figures provided in the ATLAS print-outs from UNDP which also are claimed to be accurate to the end of June 2010. The total disbursed from the UNDP commitment is said to be US\$10,246 (which is reasonably close to the ATLAS figure as in the above table), however, the total disbursed from the GTZ commitment is given as US\$196.73 which is absurd.

These discrepancies are significant, and even if they can be explained, their existence in the first place does not inspire confidence in the accounting system applied to co-financing (by the PMU, the EA and the IA). This is considered as **Unsatisfactory (U)** but this is not a reflection on GTZ, the co-financing partner.

### 3.4 Partnership strategy and stakeholder participation

#### 3.4.1 Partners and partnership strategy

The OECD<sup>16</sup> considers Stakeholders as “Agencies, organizations, groups or individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in the development intervention or its evaluation”. This definition is all-embracing and includes Partners and Beneficiaries which are defined in turn as: “Beneficiaries - The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit, directly or indirectly, from the development intervention”; and “Partners - The individuals and/or organizations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives”. In the case of Partners, the OECD adds that “the concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations”.

<sup>15</sup> Figures for GTZ co-financing include the availability of the Senior Technical Advisor and other similar inputs.

<sup>16</sup> DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris.

For this project the key **stakeholders** are MNP, the communities living in or near the three project sites, the local administration at each of the sites as well as local farmers associations, UNDP/GEF and GTZ who are co-funding the project – they all have a direct interest in the project as do the stakeholders identified in the ProDoc and listed in the table below:

**Table 7. Stakeholders identified in the ProDoc**

<p><b>At the national level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan</li> <li>• Council (Gengeshi) on Agroindustrial Complex (CAC)</li> <li>• State Commission on the implementation of commitments of Turkmenistan on UN environmental programmes and conventions (SC)</li> <li>• Ministry of Nature Protection (MNP)</li> <li>• Ministry of Agriculture (MA)</li> <li>• Ministry of Water Economy (MWE)</li> <li>• Land Resources Service at the Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>• “Gek Gushak” Joint-Stock Company</li> <li>• National Institute for Desertification, Flora and Fauna (NIDFF)</li> </ul> <p><b>At the local Level:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and provincial administrations (Velayat, Etrap)</li> <li>• Local administrations (archynlyks)</li> <li>• Village councils (gengechi)</li> <li>• Farmers Associations (Daikhan)</li> <li>• Local land and water users</li> <li>• A few non-governmental organizations</li> <li>• Livestock breeders</li> </ul>
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The most obvious direct **beneficiaries** are the Daikhan Associations and their members at the three project sites. The ultimate beneficiaries, if project results are replicated as planned, will be the people of Turkmenistan and the global community in view of the sustainable land management results that are expected to accrue.

The major **partners**, through co-funding as well as implementation, are UNDP/GEF and GTZ together with the MNP. All three share common objectives and aspirations for this project, they are collaborating financially and operationally, they accept common responsibility for the outcomes and they have reciprocal obligations according to their MoU.

Referring back to the OECD definition of partnership, the relationship between the project and local organizations does indicate shared goals and some common responsibility for outcomes, but there are no clear and distinct accountabilities on the community side and few, if any, reciprocal obligations, although these might be achieved before project closure. However, from the rapport displayed between project management and the organizations/communities visited during the consultation process in the field, the Evaluator can confirm that local institutions are genuinely interested and involved in the project even if this cannot be considered as full partnership.

### 3.4.2 Participation at the project formulation phase

The ProDoc states that “*involvement of stakeholders is an essential element for the implementation of the project.*” It then refers to the preliminary stakeholder analysis which was carried out right at the outset and the participation of “*relevant future stakeholders*” in a planning workshop to discuss root causes of land degradation, the objectives and main expected outputs of the future project and the selection of project sites. This was followed by a second workshop to discuss the first draft of the project proposal and according to the ProDoc, this lead to an improved version of the project. At the same workshop an in-depth stakeholder analysis was carried out “*which will enable the project*

*management to elaborate a strategy for active participation of stakeholders in the implementation process”.*

In addition, the ProDoc continues with a descriptive list of the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders at both central and local levels. The ProDoc ends with reference to an assessment of the importance and impact of stakeholders for the project at all levels which was intended to be in Annex 3 – but the ProDoc version available to the Evaluator did not have this annex and the PMU could not locate one. Similarly, an Annex 4 is mentioned which is supposed to comprise a Stakeholder analysis in regard to the project, the possible effects of the project, their importance for success of project activities and possible influence on project decision-making – this annex is also not available.

As a result of the on-going GTZ/MNP project on SLM which served as a pre-cursor to this project, stakeholders that were consulted felt that they had been involved at the project formulation stages and this is considered **Satisfactory (S)**.

### **3.4.3 Participation during the implementation phase**

Without the two annexes referred to above, the ProDoc did not have a Stakeholder Involvement Plan which would have identified the key stakeholders and described in some detail how they would be involved in specific project implementation activities. Instead, the ProDoc provides a comprehensive list of the roles and responsibilities of organizations that had been identified as having an interest in the project at both the national as well as local levels. The discussion outlines what each agency does within its brief but fails to link these activities with specific project activities.

The Evaluator is aware of a significant level of involvement by stakeholders, especially at local level, in the activities of the project. Therefore, in an attempt to relate this to specific project activities (as would have been covered by a plan had there been one), the Evaluator sought this information from the PMU. Their answer is in Table 8 on the next page together with the Evaluator’s comments.

As can be seen from the table, the most effective participation by stakeholders in project implementation was under Outcome 2 as a result of its local community focus. Under other Outcomes, participation has been patchy and some opportunities have been missed.

Stakeholder participation in project implementation is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

## **3.5 Monitoring and evaluation**

### **3.5.1 The GEF M&E requirements**

The GEF requires that all projects must include “a concrete and fully budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan by the time of Work Programme entry for full-sized projects”<sup>17</sup> and stipulates that the M&E Plan should comprise a number of minimum requirements. This project is only a MSP and not strictly required to comply, however, it has by and large satisfied the GEF requirements which are listed in Table 9 below together with the Evaluator’s summary observations. These are then discussed further in the following sections.

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<sup>17</sup> See - <http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/meptstandards.html>

**Table 8. Assessment of stakeholder involvement in project implementation according to the PMU, with comments from the Evaluator**

OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOMES	PLANS AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE PMU FOR PARTICIPATION	ACTUAL STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	
		ACCORDING TO THE PMU	EVALUATOR'S COMMENT
<p><b>Project Objective:</b> Land use improved towards more sustainability</p>	<p>Formation of a project steering committee which includes members representing the MoA; CACILM-Secretariat; Archyn from each project site; UNDP; GTZ and being hosted by the MoN.</p>	<p>The project steering committee (PSC) meets twice a year. The PMU reports to the PSC and the PSC has the overall steering authority for the project – it approves the annual work plan; the quarterly work plans and the respective reports. Concrete ToR regulate the work of the PSC and a MoU regulates the cooperation among the core PSC members (MoN, GTZ, UNDP).</p>	<p>Stakeholder participation is normally focussed at the Outcome/Output level where the activities are. The PSC meetings can be considered as examples of stakeholder participation .</p>
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> Land users have stronger capacities for SLM</p>	<p>Partly according to the plans under Outcome 2. Regarding the national level, the project envisages to work in the logic of learning cycles. (green the extent of involvement of the national decision makers and partners)</p> <p><b>i) best practices are developed and tested at local level</b> (e. g. participatory village development planning in Nohur and Karakum); Agreement with MoN on general approach and contents of the activities at local level. Agreement as well with the local administration, where needed also with the regional administration (Sakarchaga). Quarterly information on and joint discussions of proceedings.</p> <p><b>ii) local best practices are being generalized and adapted for wider use</b> (e. g. village development planning methodology for Turkmenistan); involvement of the local stakeholders in order to reflect with them on the applied methodologies and how to improve them.</p> <p><b>iii) incorporation of the best practices into national policies is being discussed</b> (e. g. envisaged round table discussions at national level on integrating the methodology into different national strategies resp. using them as instrument for their implementation) Intense involvement of the MoN and other relevant national institutions.</p> <p><b>iv) joint review and adaptation if necessary. Possible new testing of adapted best practices if needed.</b> Joint discussions with the national level decision makers.</p>	<p>Is being implemented as described on the left hand side. Our basic principle hereby is that we identify the needs directly with our stakeholders and always try to actively discuss and jointly decide with them.</p>	<p>The participation of the MNP in project activities under Outcome 1 is confirmed as relevant and effective. However, the involvement of Min Agriculture and Min Water Economy should have been specifically planned and executed.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Land use practises improved in three project sites <b>A. Nohur -</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the project, the project management decided that (in the frame of local inception workshops with wide participation of the local population and administration) stakeholders of each project region should be asked to form a local steering committee which should</p> <p>a) represent the major stakeholders of the project and b) should lead the decision making process at local level.</p>	<p>The LSC is well organized and works very actively. From each separate region (2 settlements of which one settlement is relatively small and one is subdivided into 3 sub-parts) members are represented but no woman participates. Separate meetings and discussions with different “groups of women” showed that they have little interest to participate in the work. The PMU had to accept this. In consequence, the “gender aspect” was included in team building and trainings for the local teams in order for them to consider chances and consequences of project activities for women in the project region.</p>	<p>The participation of local community members and Daikhan Association members has been very effective. The Local Steering Committees appear to be functioning comparatively well and serve as a good example of stakeholder participation in project implementation</p>

	The local project team should support the local steering committee by organizational and advisory means and with the communication with the project management. Also then, in April 2008, it was decided to put some efforts into organizational capacity building of the local steering committees (self-organization such as internal rules on decision making; communication; meetings; dealing with conflicts etcpp.).	Due to very complex project activities and situation in the project region, the formation of 4 "Sub-LSCs" will be discussed with the stakeholders in Nohur. The PMU believes that this may result in even more effective work.	
<b>B. Karakum -</b>		The LSC has been reformed several times, recently a new archyn and a new head of the farmers association were announced. The LSC used to work actively with a strong focus on the project investments (positioning of investments such as wells, sand dune fixation and others). The ownership of the overall project approach in Karakum (improved pasture management) remains not 100% clear.	
<b>C. Sakar Chaga -</b>		The LSC in Sakarchaga does not play such a significant role as in both other project regions which are characterized by relatively strong open access resource challenges. Nevertheless, also in Sakarchaga challenges exist which only may be solved by joint efforts (e. g. self organization of water users in maintenance of drainage canals and water management planning). The LSC helps to set priorities for project investments on drainage channel cleaning and maintenance; leveling activities and water management planning. Nevertheless, especially in Sakarchaga, the project has to work with individual farmers or different land user groups in an approach of extension/advisory services rather than joint development planning.	
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites	A program for "Targeted Research on SLM in Turkmenistan" was to be worked out jointly with national experts and researchers.	A roundtable with national experts was conducted in September 2008 in order to identify jointly with them major priorities for targeted research. Those results were used as basis for developing a "targeted research program" which the PMU developed and which has the major focus on supporting the project implementation and monitoring.	The PMU advised that the research was indeed problem-oriented and the local farmers and communities were part of the dialogue. Most of the experts were working in the project regions together with the local steering committees and the actual beneficiaries.
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM	Please see the approach under Outcome 1.	In all cases, the project has not yet reached the phase where it concretely may provide recommendations for stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM. Therefore, not a lot may be said regarding the actual participation in the frame of this outcome. Planned are several high level round tables in order to discuss recommendations for the incorporation of developed best practices into national strategies and legislation (e. g. Rural Advisory Service – experiences from Sakarchaga to be used for a national strategy on RASs which the MoA is to develop; Decentralized and Participatory Village Development Planning as means for implementing the UNCCD; UNCCBD and (potentially) NAPA for the MoN.)	Participation in activities under this Outcome could have focussed on the identification of institutional and legal barriers that stood in the way of SLM.
<b>Outcome 5:</b> Adaptive management and learning introduced	Regular Team Building Measures (planned once per year); Capacity building of the local project teams regarding their ability to perform from project management point of view but also thematically. Yearly internal evaluation workshops to be conducted which are moderated by an external consultant. Regular meetings of the PMU with the local administrations in the project regions in order to support the local project teams in their work and reflect jointly on project performances and needed adaptations.	Due to the big project team (21 employees of GTZ of which 16 work in the project regions; 3 employees of UNDP), the PMU decided to conduct team building meetings half-yearly. One of those meeting mainly served for internal evaluations and first conclusions for next years planning. Furthermore, training needs were identified each year and the PMU organized the conduction of trainings as prioritized. Otherwise, traditional team building aspects are being discussed during those meetings (roles and functions; dealing with conflicts; communication; work organization and time management). Thematic trainings were conducted according to the identified needs of the project team, resp. representatives of the project team. The local project teams were always actively involved in planning and monitoring of the project activities.	As this is not an Outcome, it is difficult to see how stakeholder participation could apply.

**Table 9. GEF M&E minimum requirements**

GEF M&E REQUIREMENTS	EVALUATOR OBSERVATIONS
SMART indicators for project implementation, or, if no indicators are identified, an alternative plan for monitoring that will deliver reliable and valid information to management	Indicators were selected for the project right from the original LogFrame and these have been amended as necessary. Not all exhibit SMART characteristics. The project has employed an impressive Indicators Matrix as its measure of project implementation.
SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators	The project is basically a foundational intervention and cannot be expected to have significant impacts. Indicators for Outcomes achievement have however been selected, although they are not always SMART.
A project baseline or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation	Baseline data was not available at the outset. And, while some of this data was obtained in the course of project implementation, gaps remain. As the majority of project Outcomes/Targets are couched in cumulative terminology (e.g. "improved", "stronger", "more sustainable", etc), a departure baseline was an essential element, but this was not always available.
An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities	The ProDoc has a comprehensive discussion of M&E activities planned for the project including a commitment to include stakeholders in the monitoring process using questionnaire surveys. The Evaluator is also aware of the detailed Indicator Matrix developed by the PMU. This satisfies the requirements for an M&E Plan for the project.
An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation	The M&E budget in the ProDoc is too low to be effective and it is hoped that these figures were revised to more realistic levels. The Indicator Matrix serves as the organizational setup for monitoring of project progress.

### 3.5.2 The Logical Framework Matrix

The Logical Framework Matrix (LogFrame) can be expected to comprise a summary description of what the project is attempting to do (Objective and Outcomes), how it will do it (Outputs and Activities), and how we will know when it is done (Indicators and Targets). It should also identify Assumptions and note the Risks.

The original LogFrame in the ProDoc for this project comprised these essential elements. Unfortunately, when the Inception Workshop revised the LogFrame, many of these elements were omitted or changed in the table labelled Logical Framework and it is this version that has persisted into the project's M&E system, albeit with the addition of the Indicators Matrix. There are two issues that arise from this action – firstly, according to GEF procedures, the wording of the Objective and the Outcomes cannot be changed; and, secondly, changes to the Outputs and Activities, which are allowed, must be approved formally by the PSC and/or and UNDP Resident Representative.

The First PSC Meeting took place on 21 November 2007, one day after the Inception Workshop, but it did not discuss the LogFrame or the proposed changes. Reference to the LogFrame appeared in the minutes of the Second PSC Meeting (January 2008) – *"The Logical Framework and the Results and Resources Framework have been revised ... the final version of these documents will be presented in March"*. However, the minutes of the Third PSC Meeting which took place in April 2008, made no mention of the LogFrame. And neither has there been any mention of the LogFrame in any minutes since then – in other words, the LogFrame was never discussed by the PSC and the changes that arose at the Inception Workshop were never formally approved. This is confirmed by the fact that the PIRs (which are signed off by the PM, the UNDP and the RTA) retained the original wording (or, more precisely, one of the two versions of the original wording).

The Indicators Matrix has already been alluded to above as an impressive tool which, when coupled with the Survey Plans, complements the LogFrame and allows the PMU to keep track of progress. However, the use of indicators for Outputs (and Risks) and the exclusive focus on indicators created an impression that the project was setting out to achieve the Indicators rather than the Outcomes. In addition, also as noted above, some of the Indicators set up by the project are not considered to be effective and the focus on them could have been counter-productive.

The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures of January 2002 define Indicators as: *quantitative or qualitative statements that can be used to describe situations which exist and measure changes or trends over a period of time. (In the context of the logical framework approach, an indicator defines the performance standard to be reached in order to achieve an objective.)* It is a GEF requirement that the Indicators used in project design should conform to the **SMART**<sup>18</sup> criteria. An assessment of the Indicators adopted by the project, and comments on their usefulness, are to be found below in section 4.2.1 for the Objective and section 4.2.2 for the Outcomes.

The M&E design and plan for this project are considered as Satisfactory (S); however, the confusion that exists regarding the wording of the Objective and Outcomes, and the unapproved changes to the LogFrame which in effect set the project implementation on a different track to that approved by the GEF, require a rating of **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

### 3.5.3 Project monitoring and adaptive management

Project monitoring usually refers to performance monitoring, which is a regular assessment of progress towards the project Objective and Outcomes often using Indicators. And, the results of performance monitoring are used to guide project implementation and revise and refine implementation plans through adaptive management.

Adaptive management is a formal, systematic, and rigorous approach to learning from the outcomes of management actions, accommodating change and improving management. It involves an analysis of the situation (the result of monitoring), exploring alternative actions and making explicit adjustments to the implementation strategy and the LogFrame.

This project does have a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan which meets the GEF requirements, and although the Plan is not entirely complete, it identifies what is to be done, by whom and when.

The LogFrame is the basic tool for project monitoring and adaptive management. It was reviewed and revised following the Inception Workshop and the management team have indicated that they use the revised LogFrame for guidance when setting the Annual Work Plan. The AWP's contain a lot of detailed planning but as can be expected, they look forwards rather than back to the past year and contain no analysis of what might have led to a change or refinement (adaptive management). That look backwards was carried out by the internal evaluation which the project has carried out annually with facilitation by an external expert. The SWOT analysis carried out in a "Past to Present" two-day Workshop for project staff, is the focus of the internal evaluation and is seen as an excellent exercise in evaluating past performance in order to inform the way forward.

In the internal evaluation as well as other project activities that assess progress, the selected indicators feature highly. The Indicators in the project's Indicator Matrix have already been referred to above and a more thorough assessment is in sections 4.1 and 4.2 below on an Outcome basis. Of the 32 Indicators used by the project, seven are not considered indicators at all; and of the remainder, the majority (14) are considered as only partly meeting the SMART criteria, and four do not. On the other hand, seven do satisfy the criteria.

The PIR often serves as a key mechanism for reporting on progress and its section on *Rating of Project Progress towards Meeting Objective*, which is written by the Project Manager, the UNDP CO

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<sup>18</sup> **SMART INDICATORS** GEF projects and programs should monitor using relevant performance indicators. The monitoring system should be "SMART":

**Specific:** The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective, and only that objective.

**Measurable:** The monitoring system and its indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what the system covers and there are practical ways to measure the indicators and results.

**Achievable and Attributable:** The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.

**Relevant and Realistic:** The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.

**Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted:** The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group to be impacted by the project or program

and the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor<sup>19</sup>, should be analytical and should consider the trend in results observed over a period of time, identify shortcomings and possible reasons and explore corrective action – this is adaptive management. The PIRs available to the Evaluator dwell almost exclusively on Outcome 2 and it would seem that the project has not engaged in any assessment of its slow delivery on the other Outcomes. Such an assessment and analysis could have led to adaptation.

The monitoring processes applied by the project and the use of the results of monitoring to inform management and take corrective action, have been **Satisfactory (S)** overall.

## **4 FINDINGS: RESULTS AND IMPACTS**

### **4.1 Measuring progress and success**

As discussed above, the ProDoc is the departure for an evaluation, with any changes recorded in the changed LogFrame. Also as already discussed, the original LogFrame in the ProDoc for this project was reviewed at the Inception Workshop, and according to GTZ, the Objective and its Indicators as well as one of the Outcomes and many of the Indicators, were changed. It is a tenet of GEF projects that the Objective and Outcomes cannot be changed once GEF approval has been obtained since this means a new project and this position is upheld by UNDP. The Evaluator is therefore faced with a predicament – while the original Objective and Outcomes are the correct ones in the eyes of the GEF, the PMU have proceeded on the basis of the changed versions.

In an effort to be reasonable, the Evaluator has strived to give credit for all the progress achieved, however, the ultimate achievement has been assessed against the original Objective and Outcomes. A key measure of progress has been the PMU self-assessment of progress (see Annex 5) towards the Objective and the Outcomes. This formed the principal source of information for the following sections, validated as appropriate through the review of various key documents, field visits and consultations.

Among the key documents, the Evaluator can usually rely on the PIR for clarification. There have been two PIRs for this project. The first is dated September 2009, whereas the second PIR, as available to the Evaluator, is undated but it covers the period to June 2010. The PIRs have adhered to the original wording of the Objective as well as to the original Indicators, and this is strange since it is the PMU that starts off the PIR exercise and assesses progress. This brings into question the validity of the PIRs.

The Evaluator therefore resorted to a further measure of the progress made towards the project Outcomes – achievement of the Outputs. In the hierarchy of project elements, Outputs are tangible products and/or services achieved by the project – they are the building blocks that make up the Outcome and if achieved (which should be straightforward to determine and does not require Indicators), the Outcome should be achieved.

### **4.2 Results achieved to date**

#### **4.2.1 The Project Objective**

There are three versions of the project Objective. The ProDoc has two different versions, viz :

- According to the ProDoc narrative (page 4): *to improve the capacity of land users for sustainable management of their land resources*

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<sup>19</sup> The same analysis by the Government and the Executing Agency is optional, but it is rarely done and GTZ, as an executing partner and co-funder, advised the Evaluator that it would have welcomed an opportunity to participate.



- According to the LogFrame in the same ProDoc (page 19): *Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users*

The first one aims to improve capacity, the other one aims to improve land use. The first one gives a purpose for the improvement in capacity; the second indicates how the improvement in land use will be achieved. This inconsistency is unacceptable and calls into question the efficiency of the project formulation stage and the vetting and approval process applied by UNDP and the GEF.

The PIR adopted the original LogFrame version and that is the one that has been the focus of this evaluation<sup>20</sup>. Three Indicators were selected to assess progress towards the Objective, as follows:

1. Number of Local land users and local authorities are empowered and applying SLM practices
2. Number of ha under Sustainable land use practices
3. Planning instrument incorporating SLM implemented

Following the Inception Workshop, a third version of the Objective was proposed which, although never formally approved, has been the one followed by the PMU. According to this revision, the Objective has been:

- *Land use improved towards more sustainability*

The change to the Objective wording, after a project has been approved, is not permitted for a GEF-supported project and there is some contention as to whether and how this change came about. UNDP maintains that it was unaware of the change and in fact the PIRs still used the original wording. GTZ explained that the change was discussed at the Inception Workshop where all future members of the PSC were present and although there was no formal approval, there was no objection either. As a result, the PMU seems to have been operating with two versions of the Objective and two different sets of Indicators – one lot for its day-to-day monitoring of project performance (e.g. for its Indicators Matrix), the other for its contribution to the annual PIR.

The changed wording of the Objective now seems to target sustainability, however, by aiming for “more” sustainability, it assumes that some sustainability already exists, which according to the ProDoc is not the case.

In an effort to help measure progress towards the Objective, the revised LogFrame (post Inception Workshop) proposed the following three Indicators.

1. Area at risk to erosion decreased (Erosion risk class) in the project region (2.528km<sup>2</sup>)
2. Vegetation cover in Karakum increased
3. Production of cotton t/ha, production of wheat t/ha on the concrete project area of Sakarchaga (700 ha) has increased

The following table takes each of the Indicators, critiques them as Indicators, reports on progress as assessed by the PMU against the Indicators and adds the comments of the Evaluator in the context of the original targets and informed by the documents reviewed and consultations carried out.

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<sup>20</sup> The ToRs for this evaluation quote the first version from the ProDoc, namely the one on p.4

**Table 10. Progress towards the Project Objective according to the PMU in self-assessment, together with comments from the Evaluator**

Objective (as in original LogFrame): <i>Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users</i>			
Changed Objective: <i>Land use improved towards more sustainability</i>			
INDICATORS OF PROGRESS/RESULTS TOWARDS THE OBJECTIVE	CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS	PROGRESS/RESULTS ACHIEVED AS AT THE END OF AUGUST 2010	
		ACCORDING TO PIR2010 FOR ORIGINAL INDICATORS AND THE PMU FOR THE REVISED INDICATORS	COMMENTS BY THE EVALUATOR
<b>Original Indicator 1:</b> Number of Local land users and local authorities are empowered and applying SLM practices	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved land use through the application of SLM practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> (if "empowering" can be measured) and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project; it is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is a nearly SMART Indicator	The schedule and program for knowledge extension on eleven modules of training programs were prepared and 8 (eight) training modules of training programs were conducted. The majority of these modules correspond for use in all three project sites. Training seminars are conducted for local teams and local population of project regions on: increasing of information awareness, negotiating, communications, on distribution of positive experience, on computer skills and use of office equipment.	The Indicator looked for "empowerment" of locals and application of practices. The PIR reported a significant amount of training and capacity building and this could be interpreted as "empowerment". However, there is no information on the application of SLM practices and the skills imparted through training do not seem to be directly relevant to SLM.
<b>Original Indicator 2:</b> Number of ha under Sustainable land use practices	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for the application of SLM practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project; it is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	The project has entered into its "investments" implementation phase in all 3 project sites. The "investments scheme" has been developed with the assistance of the international consultant, the relevant funds under this component are advanced to project sites.	The Indicator is specifically seeking numbers of hectares under SLM practice. The PIR reported that investment schemes have been developed and funds have been advanced – there is no information on number of hectares under sustainable land use practices
<b>Original Indicator 3:</b> Planning instrument incorporating SLM implemented	This Indicator is not <b>Specific</b> to either improved land use or SLM practices by land users; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> . But may not be <b>Attributable</b> to the project; it is only partly <b>Relevant</b> and it may not be <b>Trackable</b> . This is not a SMART Indicator.	The NAP was revised and submitted to the government authorities.	This Indicator does not relate well to the application of SLM by land users and would be much more relevant to the institutional framework for SLM. It is also important to note that while the Indicator wanted "implementation" of SLM, the PIR could only report a revision and submission to Government – it is not even adopted, let alone implemented.
<b>Revised Indicator 1:</b> Area at risk to erosion decreased (Erosion risk class) in the project region (2.528km <sup>2</sup> )	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved land use and enhanced sustainability of land; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project; it is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	Concrete changes which may be directly linked to the project activities may not yet be shown. This may also not be expected after not even two years of on-the-ground activities in the fields (water retention dam construction; reforestation; fruit tree gardening, reduction of pasture pressure). It takes more than two or three years for the highly degraded lands to recover	The Indicator sought a reduction in the area at risk of erosion according to the standard classification. The PMU has focused on the need for a longer timeframe before results can be claimed as attributable to the project. It would have been acceptable for the PMU to report what has been done by the project in order to decrease the area at risk of erosion, thus improving land use towards more sustainability as the Objective requires.
<b>Revised Indicator 2:</b> Vegetation cover in Karakum increased	Not very <b>Specific</b> for land use but may indicate enhanced sustainability; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b>	This may be shown for the concrete areas which were stabilized and reforested with Saxaol. The development of the conditions of the pasture lands as a result of project interventions are only via an indirect way and may therefore not be directly and only linked to the project (but	The PMU commentary makes only a slight reference to vegetation cover as targeted by the Indicator, and then focuses on the cause of pasture degradation and whether the perceived improvement can be attributed to the project. The activities carried out by the project to

	and very <b>Attributable</b> to the project; but only partly <b>Relevant</b> ; it is a <b>Trackable</b> process Indicator which almost satisfies the SMART criteria	rather to a sharp decrease in animal numbers in 2008 due to harsh drought conditions).	stabilize sand dunes, re-forest degraded land, avoid the cutting of saxaul for firewood, and attempt to decrease overgrazing are confirmed by the Evaluator and all contribute to an increase of vegetation cover which in turn is evidence of improved land use.
<b>Revised Indicator 3:</b> Production of cotton t/ha, production of wheat t/ha on the concrete project area of Sakarchaga (700 ha) has increased	Very <b>Specific</b> for improved land use but says nothing about sustainability; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> . It is not necessarily <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is an almost SMART Indicator	On the concrete plots where the project intervened by means on land levelling, improvement of water drainage and irrigation pattern, the yields increased already	The Evaluator can confirm the impressive results achieved in Sakar Chaga and the satisfaction of stakeholders ranging from farmers to Heads of Daikhan and local Government. However, the PMU assessment fails to recognize here that the improvements in productivity cannot be attributed to the project activities alone, although this acknowledgement is made elsewhere.
<p><b>Overall comments on progress towards the Objective:</b> The original Objective sought the application of sustainable land use practices by land users, leading to improved land use. Indicators needed to focus on land users and their application of SLM leading to improved land use. In fact, Indicators 1 and 2 do this and between them can indicate whether progress has been made towards the Objective. Indicator 3 is not SMART and is redundant for this Objective. Progress towards the original Objective based on these Indicators and as reported by the PIRs, is deemed to be <b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>.</p> <p>The revised Objective sought improved land use and enhanced sustainability and the Indicators selected focused on land prone to erosion, vegetation cover and enhanced productivity. The project has performed reasonably well in all three areas and it can claim more credit than reported by the PMU. Overall progress towards the Revised Objective is considered to be <b>Satisfactory (S)</b>.</p>			

## 4.2.2 The five Outcomes

### 4.2.2.1 Outcome 1: Land users have stronger capacities for SLM

The wording for this Outcome is very precise and clear and it has not changed from the original in the ProDoc LogFrame. However, the Outputs and Indicators have changed and although these have not been formally approved, they are used here for assessment purposes.

According to the amended LogFrame, the Outcome is expected to be achieved by obtaining three Outputs which are displayed in the following Table together with comments from the Evaluator:

**Table 11. Outputs under Outcome 1 and Evaluator's assessment**

OUTPUT	EVALUATOR'S COMMENT
1.1 Technical know-how of local land users is improved	From what has been observed, the Evaluator feels that the technical know-how of local land users has indeed been improved, especially in Sakar Chaga and Bokhodur, however, the proof of how convinced they are, will only come when they are required to invest in maintenance and renewal of their technical facilities.
1.2 Local stakeholders enabled to elaborate Community Development Plans	The elaboration of Community Development Plans appears to have been carried out by expert consultants so far, albeit with local participation. The Evaluator believes that local stakeholders have been introduced to CDPs, but they have not been enabled yet.
1.3 Information and know-how on SLM disseminated to stakeholders for replication	This Output appears to be very ambitious – dissemination to the broader constituency of land users Turkmenistan-wide. If the information and knowhow produced by the project on SLM is disseminated country-wide, this Output would indeed have been successfully obtained. However, there is no evidence that the project has done this as yet.

The Evaluator agrees that if these three Outputs are obtained, they will go a long way towards making land users in Turkmenistan better able to manage land sustainably because their capacities would have been improved and strengthened – in other words, the Outputs are relevant to the Outcome and this, in turn, is relevant for the Objective.

It would seem that of the three Outputs, one has been obtained and the other two are either on the way to being obtained or may turn out to have been elusive. This is not very impressive progress.

In order to confirm or change this view, the Evaluator examined the Outcome more directly, guided by the three Indicators as in the amended LogFrame. Of the three Indicators, one was not an Indicator at all and the other two were not very SMART and therefore not very helpful in providing an answer to the question –

*Do land users at the project sites have stronger capacities for SLM as a result of the project?*

Therefore, in a further attempt to find an answer to this question, the Evaluator relied on information gleaned from the PMU self-assessment, his consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries and his review of documentation.

The table on the following page is a summary of the analysis carried out by the Evaluator and the rating reached.

**Table 12. Progress towards Outcome 1, showing the self-assessment of the PMU and observations by the Evaluator**

<b>OUTCOME 1: Land users have stronger capacities for SLM</b>			
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS</b>	<b>PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)</b>	
		<b>ACCORDING TO PMU</b>	<b>EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS</b>
(4) Minutes of regular meetings of three functioning local steering committees	This Indicator is not very <b>Specific</b> for stronger capacities; it may be <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	Two of the three existing local steering committees are working actively, jointly discussion all relevant topics and make decisions. As the situation in Sakarchaga is different than in the other two regions, the local steering committee is not as much needed and therefore is not as strong as the other two committees. Therefore, decisions on the project investments were jointly done with the local steering committee but all those questions which regarded capacity building of the local farmers were jointly discussed and decided with the lease holders in Sakarchaga (different brigades) ( The reason: in Sakarchaga the solution of land degradation problems relies rather on the behaviour of each single farmer than on joint decision making of several land users)	The three "Indicators" provided are not very helpful in determining whether <i>land users have stronger capacities for SLM</i> as a result of the project. They are either not Specific or not Relevant; and one is not even an indicator at all.  However, as reported by the PMU and as ascertained by the Evaluator on site, at each of the three sites, there is good local awareness of SLM, concepts are understood and some capacity is evident. There is also a fair degree of confidence tempered with the knowledge that outside help may be needed for some time yet. Whether this capacity is stronger than before is not possible to tell without good Indicators.
(5) Community development plans agreed upon by local steering committees	This Indicator is quite <b>Specific</b> for stronger capacities but not necessarily for SLM; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project; but only partly <b>Relevant</b> . It is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not really an Indicator but a project Output	For the villages of Garawul, Konegümmez (both Nohur project region) and Mamedyar, village development plans were drawn up in partnership with the local population (very intense participation). They are currently being finalized. The next necessary steps will be to provide support with regard to the implementation. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capacity development (CD) for successful attraction of funds where needed,</li> <li>- CD for the concrete organization of the implementation of the plan;</li> <li>- CD for the organization of regular participatory review and adaptation;</li> <li>- CD for the active communication of the local committee responsible for the implementation of the plan with all other stakeholders;</li> <li>- Co-financing of those planned activities which have a direct positive impact on the land management towards more sustainability;</li> </ul> If the project does not provide the above mentioned, it runs the risk that the people may not benefit from the plans to the extent envisaged	As the PMU reports against Indicator 5, much essential capacity still has to be built and this is of concern at this late stage in the project time scale.  Indicator 6 is not very relevant to the Outcome target, but it could serve as a very good Indicator for replication.  Progress towards Outcome 1 has been <b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
(6) Awareness of relevant stakeholders in other (adjacent) areas about the information disseminated	This Indicator is not <b>Specific</b> for stronger capacities (it targets awareness); it is difficult to <b>Measure</b> , but it is <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not <b>Relevant</b> and not easily <b>Trackable</b> .	In Nohur and Sakarchaga, neighbouring communities are already aware of the project activities and repeatedly showed interest in participating. The Karakum project region is very big (nearly 840000ha). Therefore, it has simply not been noticed yet, whether neighbouring communities or farms are aware of the project being implemented	

#### 4.2.2.2 Outcome 2: Land use practices improved in three project sites – namely Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga

The original wording for this Outcome in the ProDoc LogFrame was –

- *Best land use practices have been developed in three project sites*

The changed Outcome wording (contrary to GEF procedures and not formally approved) was –

- *Land use practices improved in three project sites – namely Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga*

The differences are subtle but significant. The original wording focused on the ‘development of best land use practices’, whereas the changed wording presumes that such practices do exist and they are merely to be ‘improved’.

This Outcome is the core of the project and was allocated by far the largest proportion of the budget both from GEF as well as GTZ funds. It is the Outcome under which, actual investments are made on the ground and therefore through it, the project has been visible to the local communities.

The original Outcome was assigned two Indicators to be applied across the three sites but neither satisfied the SMART criteria. The revised LogFrame made a clear distinction between the three sites and set 11 Outputs in total which were also adopted for the PIRs. The following table shows the new Outputs and adds the Evaluator’s comment on whether the Outputs have been achieved.

**Table 13. Outputs under Outcome 2 and Evaluator’s assessment**

SITE	OUTPUTS	EVALUATOR’S COMMENT
Nohkur	2.1 Better pasture management introduced	Confirmed that better pasture management was introduced but the uptake and impact are unknown
	2.2 Water retention assured	Measures to enhance water retention have been implemented but it might be too early to claim that retention is assured
	2.3 Vegetable gardening extended	Confirmed in Konnegummez but impact still unclear
	2.4 Afforestation extended	Confirmed that reafforestation by endemic Junipers has been carried out
Karakum	2.5 Better pasture management introduced	Confirmed that better pasture management was introduced but the uptake and impact are unknown
	2.6 Dune fixation around settlements	Confirmed as having been carried out successfully, and already replicated by local community members
	2.7 Alternative energies for heating purposes supported	Confirmed that in the case of the school and the hospital, the project provided an alternative to saxaul as a fuel for heating
Sakar Chaga	2.8 Better drainage and irrigation techniques introduced (prevention of degradation)	Confirmed that techniques have been introduced which can be expected to prevent degradation
	2.9 Better drainage and irrigation techniques introduced (rehabilitation)	Confirmed that techniques have been introduced which will rehabilitate degraded land
	2.10 Viniculture rehabilitation and development in wastelands proposed	Proposed but not carried out because pledged land was withdrawn
	2.11 Dissemination of diversified gardening techniques	It is unclear whether this Output can be claimed to have been obtained

As the above table shows, seven out of the 11 Outputs have been obtained; progress can be claimed on three Outputs although impact is still unclear; and one Output had to be abandoned.

Therefore, in order to get confirmation that “land use practices have been improved” at each of the three project sites, as required by the Outcome wording, the Evaluator turned to the 11 Indicators (one tagged to each Output) selected for this Outcome by the revised LogFrame. The assessment of progress in the table below, is specific for each of Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga, and takes into account the PMU self-assessment, consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries and the documents reviewed.

**Table 14. Progress towards Outcome 2, showing the self-assessment of the PMU and comments by the Evaluator**

<b>OUTCOME 2: Land use practices improved in three project sites - (A) Nokhur</b>			
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS</b>	<b>PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)</b>	
		<b>ACCORDING TO PMU</b>	<b>EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS</b>
(7) Number of small ruminants in the Farmer's Association (FA) "Yengish" (9.000 ha)	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improvement in land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	The number of small ruminants was only slightly reduced since the beginning of the project. This is mainly due to the fact that the project could only start to implement the envisaged investments for water supply and gardening plots in 2009. Gardening plots so far could only be provided to Konegümmez. Livestock holders in Garawul have not yet been provided with support to move to other income alternatives and, hence, have so far only marginally reduced the amount of animals due to the awareness raising campaigns of the project.	Three of the Indicators provided are SMART and very useful to measure whether land use practices have been improved at the Nokhur site. The other one is helpful but not entirely SMART.  The PMU reports work still in progress in terms of stock number reductions; and longer lead times needed to see the results of the dams on vegetation cover.
(8) impact of dams on vegetation growth in close vicinity	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices, but not much; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and may be <b>Attributed</b> to the project. It is somewhat <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	The constructed dams do increase the water retention in those valleys and gullies where they were installed. Yet, a vegetation cover, which eventually would take over the reduction of water runoff after high rainfall events, has not yet developed because the dams are easily accessible for the animals, are not protected but often used as water points for the animals. The local population knows how to repair those dams and highly value them besides the fact that they do not actively protect them	The leasing of garden plots in Konegummez appears to be very successful, but it has yet to start in Garawul.  Reforestation with Junipers has proceeded well but more is planned although there are difficulties with sourcing good quality saplings and little time is left. There is also a need for 1-2 years follow-up after planting.
(9) Number of lease contracts provided via the Daykhan Farm for gardening plots	This Indicator is not very <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it may be <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. But it is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> although it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	142 families participate in Konegümmez in leasing gardening plots. Those are basically all families which are permanently living in the village. One lease contract is provided to a person committed to control that the agreements on stabilizing and reducing the animal numbers are fulfilled by the benefiting families. He subleases the plots to all participating families.  No gardening plots have been made available for Garawul yet. Therefore, no contracts were provided yet for those inhabitants	Progress towards Outcome 2 in Nokhur has been mixed, but overall it is seen as <b>Satisfactory (S)</b> .
(10) Area (ha) reforested with Juniperus turkomanica around the settlements Konegummez and Garawul (FA "Yengish")	This Indicator may be <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and certainly <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	42 ha of lands have been reforested with <i>Juniperus turkomanica</i> . Further 50 ha of degraded forest areas are planned to become protected and set aside for natural rehabilitation purposes. The project envisages to enhance the rehabilitation by interplanting of juniperus saplings and possibly other plants which provide direct use benefits. Generally, in Turkmenistan the availability of Juniperus saplings which are of good quality (in containers) is very limited.	

**OUTCOME 2: Land use practices improved in three project sites - (B) Karakum**

INDICATORS	CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS	PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)	
		ACCORDING TO PMU	EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS
(11) Number of small ruminants per well (30 wells, FA "Karakum")	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	11 wells were newly constructed in distant pasture lands. 8 were repaired. The stocking rates are still to be determined as the concrete agreements with the Daykhan Farm on the pasture management in the area where not yet concretized and accordingly implemented. Stocking rates on water points, which existed before the project started, are less than in 2008 and pasture lands generally seem to have improved. The main reason for this is the sharp reduction of animal numbers in 2008 - a drought year – which forced the livestock owners (private as well as state) to reduce the amount of animals considerably thus reducing the pasture pressure. The livestock numbers seem to not yet have reached the amount of 2008 again. The current system of leasing herds of livestock from the state, allows the shepherd to earn his income only by means of half of the offspring of the herd each year. This provides for a very high incentive to constantly increase the herd or, at least, have maximum stocking rates. Therefore, concrete commitments of the Daykhan Farm Management and their implementation are crucial to avoid adverse effects of the project investments to pasture land conditions	The three Indicators set for this Outcome are helpful in determining whether land use practices have improved in Karakum as a result of project activities.  The results reported by the PMU are mixed. On one hand the project has dug new wells and repaired existing ones, but it is not certain that this has had the desired effect of reducing stock numbers. This is due to the lack of commitment on the part of the Daikhan Association. One further complication is provided by the drought in 2008 which precipitated a cull by farmers leading to lower stocking density rates per well.  Sand stabilization has proceeded well and some house owners emulated the project and stabilized dunes behind their houses. However, much sand remains to be stabilized.
(12) Fixed and afforested dune area (ha) in the FA "Karakum" and number of thus protected houses in 10 settlements (approximately one ha will protect one house)	This Indicator not entirely <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and certainly <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not a completely SMART Indicator	27 ha were stabilized and reforested in Kekirdak and Bokurdak. Of those, 20 ha were stabilized and reforested as one massive of land whereas 7 ha were reforested behind private houses individually by the house owners. In 2010 additional 30 ha are envisaged in 4 different villages	The conversion of the school heating system in Bokhurdok from fuel wood to diesel has saved around 2ha per year of saxaul. It has also saved the school actual cash. The project could have used this as an opportunity to agree with the school that some of the savings should be invested in replanting some of the hectares of saxaul that the school has destroyed in the past.
(13) Saxaul (lorry loads of fuel) consumption by Bahardok school	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is somewhat <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	The Bahardok school did consume about 150-200 tons of Saxaul each year until the winter 2009/10 when it was provided by a new heating system based on diesel or gas. In future it will not rely on Saxol combustion for heating means anymore such saving the above mentioned amount of Saxaul yearly which equal approximately 2 ha of natural Saxaul stands	Progress towards an improvement in land use practices in Bokhurdok is rated as <b>Satisfactory (S)</b> .



**OUTCOME 2: Land use practices improved in three project sites - (C) Sakar Chaga**

INDICATORS	CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS	PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)	
		ACCORDING TO PMU	EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS
(14) Soil salinity of 624 ha (FA "Zahmet"'s area) according to the international classification in 4 categories	This Indicator may be <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	values by end of 2009: category 1: 509 ha (increase by 35 ha) category 2: 50 ha category 3: 115 ha (target values are applicable)	None of the five Indicators set for Outcome 2 in Sakar Chaga are very helpful in determining progress. Two seem to be targeting the same element and one is more of an Output than an Indicator and it seems to have been abandoned. It is surprising that no Indicator was set with a focus on the productivity of rehabilitated land (as for the Objective).
(15) Soil salinity on 50 ha (FA "Zahmet"'s area) according to the international classification in 4 categories	This Indicator seems identical to the one above. It may be <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	values by end of 2009: category 4 = 0 target values are applicable	The salinity results reported by the PMU are not very indicative on their own and rely on a baseline to show improvement. However, the Evaluator was able to ascertain that the measures employed by the project had the desired effect and productivity increased.  The recall of the promised 5ha deprived the project of yet another opportunity to demonstrate an alternative income generating activity.
(16) Production of table grapes in t/ha (on 5 ha of the area of the FA "Zahmet")	This Indicator may be <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and certainly <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	The five hectares of land were not given to the project by the administration as promised. It was decided to use this area for cotton growing rather.	The capacity building reported by the PMU for gardening techniques is not a measure of improved land use practices as targeted by the Outcome. This assessment has yet to come.  It is disappointing that Indicator 18 has been abandoned since this would have removed one of the main barriers to sustainable land use in Sakar Chaga.
(17) Households using at least one of the newly disseminated gardening techniques (compost, green house and others)	This Indicator may be <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and certainly <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	About 350 land users participated in capacity building measures of the project in the region of Sakarchaga. A survey to measure concretely the impact of the trainings, information days and consultations to individual land users is to be conducted in October and results available at the end of October	However, and in spite of the unhelpful Indicators, The Evaluator was able to ascertain that progress towards the sought improvement in land use practices in Sakar Chaga has been <b>Satisfactory (S)</b> .
(18) Decree governing the leasing time of agricultural land in Sakar Chaga	This Indicator is not <b>Specific</b> for improved land use practices; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and may be <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is an Output not an Indicator		

#### 4.2.2.3 Outcome 3: Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites

The wording for this Outcome has not changed. However, although the number of Outputs also has not changed and remains at four, the actual Outputs have changed slightly. The confirmed/new Outputs are in the following table together with the comments of the Evaluator.

**Table 15. Outputs under Outcome 3 and Evaluator’s assessment**

OUTPUTS	COMMENTS
3.1 A need-oriented programme for trials and targeted research elaborated in partnership with land users	Confirmed as having been carried out
3.2 Applied research work implemented successfully	Confirmed as having been carried out
3.3 Results of applied research available for interested stakeholders	Still awaited
3.4 Thorough and participatory analysis of the various ecosystem services and functions in the 3 pilot sites	This Output is not considered relevant to the Outcome – a more relevant Output would focus on the tolerance levels, vulnerabilities and recovery periods of ecosystems

These Outputs should contribute to the “improved knowledge basis for SLM” sought by the Outcome. There is logic in the first three Outputs targeted – the first identifies the needs, the second carries out the research and the third makes the research results available. Unfortunately, the fourth Output is not very relevant to the Outcome. However, if the first three Outputs are achieved, they can be claimed to contribute to the improved knowledge base for SLM. As can be seen from the table above, the third and crucial Output has yet to be delivered and time is running out for this to be done in the time remaining to project closure.

In an effort to gain a complementary perspective on this Outcome, and determine whether the project has created an “improved knowledge base for SLM” at each of Nokhur, Karakum and Sakar Chaga, the Evaluator explored the four Indicators selected for this Outcome by the revised LogFrame. The assessment of progress also takes into account the PMU self-assessment, consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries and the documents review.

The following table takes each of the Indicators, critiques them as Indicators, reports on progress as assessed by the PMU against the Indicators and adds the comments and ratings of the Evaluator.

**Table 16. Progress towards Outcome 3, showing the self-assessment of the PMU and comments by the Evaluator**

<b>OUTCOME 3: Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites</b>			
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS</b>	<b>PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)</b>	
		<b>ACCORDING TO PMU</b>	<b>EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS</b>
(19) Content and topics of the Community Development Plans	This Indicator is not entirely <b>Specific</b> for improved knowledge basis for SLM; it is difficult to <b>Measure</b> , and determine if <b>Achieved</b> . Difficult to <b>Attribute</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not a SMART Indicator	For three villages CDPs are being worked out – currently the planning phase is finalized. The discussions and planning activities in the villages cover four scope areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Infrastructure;</li> <li>- Natural Resource Management;</li> <li>- Economic development;</li> <li>- Capacity Development for local groups</li> </ul> For all three villages, concrete plans linked to the improvement of the ecological situation were included into the plans. The question of pasture management improvement is not yet included there directly	Of the four Indicators set for this Outcome, two (21 and 22) are very helpful in determining progress (although they seem to be duplicates) and the other two are not entirely Specific or Relevant.  Community Development Plans have yet to address pasture management and as they stand currently, do not relate well to the improvement in the knowledge base for SLM targeted by the Outcome.  The PMU reports that a targeted research programme was developed and that the programme was implemented, leading to an improved knowledge basis for SLM.
(20) Document specifying topics, responsibilities, timeframe and budget of the research	This Indicator may not be <b>Specific</b> for improved knowledge basis for SLM; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> but may not be <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not a SMART Indicator	A program for targeted research was developed in partnership with researchers of different institutions as well as local land users	The publication of research results has yet to take place.  Progress towards this Outcome has not been impressive and is rated as <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b> . This rating could improve when research results are made available to local stakeholders.
(21) Summarising reports with recommendations available and evaluated positively by third parties	This Indicator is <b>Specific</b> for improved knowledge basis for SLM; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and may be <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator	Reports are available which show that the research program was implemented	
22) Presentation and publishing of research results to concerned stakeholders	This Indicator is very similar to the previous one. It is <b>Specific</b> for improved knowledge basis for SLM; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and may be <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and <b>Trackable</b> . This is a SMART Indicator, but may be a duplicate of the one above	This activity was not yet done	

#### 4.2.2.4 Outcome 4: Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM

The wording of this Outcome has not changed although the Outputs have. However, there is concern that even the new Outputs, which are in the table below, do not address the Outcome effectively.

Institutional, policy and legal constraints are among the critical barriers to SLM in Turkmenistan. Some of these constraints are well known, others have been elaborated in the formulation of the NAP and may therefore be captured through the analysis indicated under the first Output. However, Local Action Programmes (as in the second Output) cannot be divorced from central policy and legislation and are unlikely to be successful in the long-term without addressing the barriers at national level. The third Output addresses this, however, it is out of phase with the other activities, and its dependence on NSec makes it uncertain. If the institutional, policy and legal frameworks for SLM are not strengthened, as targeted by this Outcome, the entire project result is at risk.

Even if the three Outputs are obtained, they do not necessarily lead to a “stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM’ in Turkmenistan. Unfortunately, as shown in the table below, very little progress has been made towards the three Outputs under this Outcome.

**Table 17. Outputs under Outcome 4 and Evaluator’s assessment**

OUTPUTS	COMMENTS
Recommendations elaborated for the revision of the NAP	This work has not been carried out and it is too late in the project to be scheduling this work
Local Action Programs are elaborated and accepted as basis for improved land management at local level	Plans are still being formulated at this late stage and although local communities have participated, they still do not own the plans
Recommendations forwarded to the NSEC of CACILM for the amendment of the legal framework governing SLM	This reliance on NSec is fraught with uncertainties and it comes too late in the project timeframe

The Evaluator attempted to obtain a complementary perspective on this Outcome, and its targeted results. The following table takes each of the Indicators set for this Outcome, critiques them as Indicators, reports on progress as assessed by the PMU against the Indicators and adds the comments and ratings of the Evaluator obtained from consultations with stakeholders and beneficiaries and the documents review.

**Table 18. Progress towards Outcome 4, showing the self-assessment of the PMU and comments by the Evaluator**

<b>OUTCOME 4: Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM</b>			
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS</b>	<b>PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)</b>	
		<b>ACCORDING TO PMU</b>	<b>EVALUATOR'S OBSERVATIONS</b>
(23) Written proposals for modifications of the National Action Programme (NAP CCD)	This Indicator is not entirely <b>Specific</b> for institutional and policy framework; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> . Difficult to <b>Attribute</b> completely to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	Planned for the third quarter of 2010	None of the four Indicators set for this Outcome are very helpful in assessing progress and one Indicator (26) seems to have been abandoned.  The PMU reports little progress, if any, towards this Outcome and this is considered as <b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b> .
(24) Community Development Plans (CDPs), which were worked out in a participatory process, approved by the local administration	This Indicator is not entirely <b>Specific</b> for institutional and policy framework; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> . Difficult to <b>Attribute</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator	The approvals are expected in October 2010 after finalizing and agreeing the plans with the population	
(25) Proposals submitted by a consultant team and commented by a third party	This Indicator is not <b>Specific</b> for institutional and policy framework; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> . Can be <b>Attributed</b> to the project. It is not entirely <b>Relevant</b> but it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is not a SMART Indicator	Recommendations for the adaptation of the legal and institutional frame conditions governing land management in Turkmenistan have not yet been systematically worked out	
(26) National policy of meat production as indicated in the National Strategic Development programme 2030.	This Indicator is very <b>Specific</b> for institutional and policy framework; it is difficult to <b>Measure</b> , and determine if <b>Achieved</b> . Difficult to <b>Attribute</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and may be <b>Trackable</b> . This is not an entirely SMART Indicator		

#### 4.2.2.5 Outcome 5: Adaptive management and learning introduced

The above wording is a slight change from the original in the ProDoc and the number of Outputs was increased from two to five. However, the wording is misleading and not even in the changed Outputs is there a clear identification of the real activities hidden within this “Outcome”, namely, the management and administration of the project. This is not an Outcome; it is not transparent; and it hides management costs. It has not been rated<sup>21</sup>.

According to the latest available figures (to the end of June 2010), this component is the only one to be overspent, and it stands almost first equal (with Outcome 2) in terms of expenditure. At 43% of the budget, expenditure on this “Outcome” is excessively high.

Despite the fact that this component is not being rated, it has been subjected to the same analysis as the other Outcomes.

**Table 19. Outputs under “Outcome” 5 and Evaluator’s assessment**

OUTPUTS	COMMENTS
5.1 Outputs and activities regularly scrutinised and adapted if necessary	This is not an Output but an activity which is carried out by the PMU as part of its monitoring strategy leading to adaptive management
5.2 Project’s performance monitored and evaluated.	This is not an Output but a fundamental activity, part of project management
5.3 Project results and lessons learnt disseminated for replication (regional and national level)	This could be considered an Output and it is required from project design since the project relies on replication of its results to achieve impacts. It is not clear whether this has been carried out
5.4 Project units established in the three project sites	This is not an Output but part of the project establishment before it can start implementation
5.5 Internal rules and regulations elaborated for the coordination between all actors of the project	This is not an Output but a mechanism for good project management

As can be seen from the table above, the so-called Outputs are a mixture of activities normally carried out in the course of project management. Only one (5.1) is connected directly with the component target of adaptive management and learning.

The same analysis of Indicators, etc, is carried out in the table below.

<sup>21</sup> According to GTZ, the PMU was required by UNDP to consider this as a separate ‘Outcome’, “*due to administrative reasons*”.

**Table 20. Progress towards “Outcome” 5, showing the self-assessment of the PMU and comments by the Evaluator**

<b>“OUTCOME” 5: Adaptive management and learning introduced</b>			
<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>CRITIQUE OF THE INDICATORS</b>	<b>PROGRESS/RESULTS AS AT MID-TERM OF PROJECT (AUGUST 2010)</b>	
		<b>ACCORDING TO PMU</b>	<b>EVALUATOR’S OBSERVATIONS</b>
(27) Decentralisation and delegation of power (steady learning by doing)	This is not an Indicator of whether adaptive management and learning have been introduced – it is a methodology for project management involving the devolution of responsibility	<p>The project teams may work independent but also know when to contact and to advise with the PMU. There is still potential for improvement of both, optimization of processes and thematic background knowledge. The contact with the local population is very good. The project teams are accepted and respected in all three project regions.</p> <p>Decisions on project implementation in each project regions were jointly done with the local project steering committees (partly delegation of power). The local project teams have an advisory role to the LSCs</p>	<p>This is not truly an Outcome but comprises the Project Administration and Management activities at central (Ashgabat) level as well as at local level. Of the six Indicators set, only one is relevant to adaptive management.</p> <p>The PMU report of the successful and effective operation at local level, was confirmed by the Evaluator who noted the excellent rapport that both the local teams as well as the visiting project personnel had with the local community members.</p>
(28) Quarterly reports to the project steering committee including the revised work plans	This is not an Indicator but a product required of the PMU	Done and documented	The Evaluator has also noted the collaborative and effective way in which the PMU operates.
(29) Evaluation by external expert(s) each year and towards the end of the project phase (MTE)	This could be an Indicator of a step towards adaptive management and learning. It is not entirely <b>Specific</b> ; it is <b>Measurable</b> , and <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is <b>Relevant</b> and it is <b>Trackable</b> . This is an almost SMART Indicator	An internal evaluation was conducted at the end of each year in connection with a joint yearly planning process. This work was moderated by an international expert (Mourad Turki).	
(30) Contributions to different web sites, leaflets for each project site, video	This is not an Indicator of whether adaptive management and learning have been introduced – it is an indicator of outreach. It is not <b>Specific</b> for adaptive management; it is <b>Measurable</b> , <b>Achievable</b> and <b>Attributable</b> to the project. It is not <b>Relevant</b> but <b>Trackable</b> .	<p>General project leaflets exist. The project was represented at least three international and several national exhibitions. In the frame of the field work of the project several information leaflets (technical leaflets; information on activities etc.) were developed. A video was not started as the project did never have a PR-specialist and the PMU did not manage to arrange the work themselves. Several publications are still planned during the last phase of the project (e. g. VDP methodology; Summary of Targeted Research Results under Outcome 3).</p> <p>The project did contribute to different web sites of UNDP, the Ministry of Nature Protection and GTZ as well as the CACILM-Website</p>	
(31) Project offices and personal in place	This is not an Indicator of whether adaptive management and learning have been introduced – it is an indicator that the project is alive and functioning	Satisfied	

<p>(32) Rules and regulations exist in a written form. Financial and administrative commitments delivered in due time.</p>	<p>This is not an Indicator of whether adaptive management and learning have been introduced – it is an indicator that the project is alive and functioning</p>	<p>Rules and regulations exist but not always in a written form (with regard to team work). Especially in the beginning of the project, financial commitments were delayed considerably (UNDP/GEF commitments) due to difficulties of the UNDP-office Ashgabat to find a suitable solution to provide finances to the regions for local investments which could not be tendered. Mainly because of this, the project lacks behind with the implementation of all scheduled activities and achievement of sustainable results (status quo: investments will be almost completely done by the end of the year but management questions still have to be solved.)</p>
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## 4.3 Project impacts

### 4.3.1 Impact analysis

**Outputs** are the **immediate products** of the project's activities usually within the direct control of the project to deliver; **Outcomes** are the **short to medium term effects** of a project's outputs and are expected to outlive the project; whereas **Impacts**, are the **long-term effects** resulting from a project.

The achievements of Outputs which lead to Outcomes is assessed by LogFrame analysis which is mainly carried out by the Project M&E System, and confirmed by the MTE/TE with reliance on good Indicators. The conversion of Outcomes to Impacts often requires an Intermediate stage and this is assessed mainly by TE methodology. It is predicated by Assumptions, and is dependent on Impact Drivers which include Relevance, Sustainability and Catalytic effects.

This project targeted modest pilots at three different localities with different land management problems. Having tested the innovative approaches, the project could be expected to evaluate the results, confirm/fine tune the approaches and write them up so they can be replicated throughout Turkmenistan. It is only this replication that will achieve impacts, and until that happens the project results can only be considered as foundational and intermediate.

One way through which the impact of the project can be assessed, is by seeking an answer to the following question which arises from the Goal and Objective of the project:

*Have the living conditions of local people been improved and has land use been improved towards more sustainability as a result of the project?*

In answer, it can be said that by the end of the project, the living conditions of some local people will indeed have been improved and in some areas land use will be more sustainable. Therefore the project has had some impact, however, these benefits will be on an extremely limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. The Pilots tested by the project and the models it has set up, enhance the chances of replication, but many other barriers remain.

### 4.3.2 Global environmental impacts

This project was part of the portfolio of Land Degradation projects under GEF-3. The Strategic Objectives under this focal area were:

- Mitigate the causes and negative impacts of land degradation, especially desertification and deforestation on the structure and functional integrity of ecosystems through sustainable land management practices
- Foster system-wide change and remove policy, institutional, technical, capacity and financial barriers to SLM
- Demonstrate and up-scale successful SLM practices for the control and prevention of desertification and deforestation
- Generate and disseminate knowledge addressing current and emerging issues in SLM
- Demonstrate cross focal area synergies and integrated ecosystem approaches to watershed-based sustainable land management

Of these GEF SLM objectives, the project addressed the first one by addressing the negative effects of land degradation, counteracted desertification and deforestation and promoted sustainable land management practices. However, as noted above, its scope has been at a pilot scale and impacts can only accrue as a result of replication by others.

The project therefore cannot claim to have achieved any global environmental impacts, but it has set the foundations for such impacts to be achieved.

### 4.3.3 National level impacts

Although on a limited and local scale, the project has had significant impact at the three project sites. It has had a positive impact on some communities, farmers associations (Daikhan) and local authorities. It has raised awareness of SLM issues, introduced new methodologies for combating land degradation and tested various approaches for reducing the stress on land without a reduction in the quality of life and standard of living of the communities affected. This legacy of the project can be replicated and the impacts at national level can be multiplied.

### 4.4 Status of delivery and effectiveness<sup>22</sup> of project execution

The OECD<sup>23</sup> defines effectiveness as “the extent to which the development intervention’s objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance” and the ProDoc synthesizes the project’s aims and targets by identifying specifically the targets that the project “wants to achieve”. However, these targets were superseded by End-of-Project Targets set up in the PIRs<sup>24</sup>.

The following table summarizes the above assessments of progress towards the original Objective and the five Outcomes, adds comments where appropriate, and ends with the Status of Delivery<sup>25</sup> as seen by the Evaluator. The Targets used in the table are from the PIR2010 and unfortunately they are not all relevant to the end-of-project situation. In fact some of the anomalies indicate a misunderstanding of what is required under this heading – e.g. no targets are set for the most significant Outcome; and some targets are much earlier than end-of-project. Where appropriate targets are not available, the Status of Delivery has been determined based on consultations, documents reviewed and the PMU self-assessment.

**Table 21. Status of Objective and Outcomes delivery**

OBJECTIVE/ OUTCOMES	TARGETS FOR END OF PROJECT (as in PIR2010)	COMMENTS	STATUS OF DELIVERY
OBJECTIVE: <b>Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 land users apply SLM by end of year 2 and 750 by the end of the project, at least 3 villages in project sites apply PLUP</li> <li>• 10% or more reduction over two years starting from intervention time</li> <li>• 5-10% reduction over two years starting from intervention time</li> </ul>	Progress made but PLUP not yet secure. Project has provided know-how, but there is no quantitative measure of uptake. Sustainable land-use practices achieved to a limited extent.	B
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By the end of the project, sustainable land use practices will be used in three pilot sites covering 300,000 ha</li> <li>• By year 2 of the project revised NAP approved by Government</li> </ul>	Revised NAP has not been approved.	
		While the Targets have not been totally achieved, strictly speaking the Objective will be met by the end of the project, albeit on a very limited scale.	
OUTCOME 1: <b>Land users have stronger capacities for SLM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant number of land users apply new land management practices based on the training and knowhow provided</li> <li>• At least 6 CBOs effectively promote land use planning technique in rural areas</li> </ul>	Some land-users are applying newly-learned practices, but it is questionable whether this is significant.	B – C
	1500 land users trained in first two years of the project, 6 CBOs and actively participating in decision making and landscape approach based land use planning by the end of the project	No clear indication of “active participation in decision-making” or “land use planning”. Committees established but empowerment is uncertain.	
	3 Community Development Committees established and empowered for implementation of PLUP		
	4 courses per year with annually 60 trainees in 2010, 6 regular course per year and 90-100 trainees in 2011 and 4 annual courses on demand	The Outcome sought “stronger capacities” and the project delivered training – whether this has resulted in stronger capacities remains to be seen.	

<sup>22</sup> According to GEF guidance, “Relevance and effectiveness will be considered as critical criteria. The overall outcome rating of the project may not be higher than the lowest rating on either of these two criteria. Thus, to have an overall satisfactory rating for outcomes a project must have at least satisfactory ratings on both relevance and effectiveness.”

<sup>23</sup> DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (2002) *Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management*. OECD, Paris.

<sup>24</sup> The PIRs are the latest and most up to date documents on the status and delivery. They are initiated by the PMU and confirmed by the UNDP-CO and the UNDP/GEF RTA.

<sup>25</sup> Status of Delivery: A = Indicators show successful achievement; B = Indicators show expected completion by end of Project; C = Indicators show poor achievement - unlikely to be complete by end of Project

	Upon the end of the project training course on PLUP is adapted and included into curriculum of Subregional training program on Land Management for Central Asian Countries.	It is possible to secure this Outcome by the end of the project	
OUTCOME 2: <b>Land use practises improved in three project sites</b> <b>A) Nokhur</b>	No end-of-project targets set	Land use practices in Nokhur have improved, at least for the moment. However, sustainability and replication are still uncertain  Need to be addressed in Exit Strategy	B
OUTCOME 2: <b>B) Karakum</b>	No end-of-project targets set	Improvements in land use practices in Karakum were not observed. However, sand stabilization methodology has been replicated already	B
OUTCOME 2: <b>C) Sakar Chaga</b>	No end-of-project targets set	Land use practices in Sakar Chaga have improved and the results are impressive. However, sustainability and replication are threatened by the institutional, policy and legal barriers.  Need to be addressed in Exit Strategy	B
OUTCOME 3: <b>Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites</b>	At least 3 programmes established promoting research and trials, incorporating GIS capabilities and information outreach in the form of publications 3 need-oriented programs elaborated in the first year of the project 1 pilot GIS system in place to facilitate and promote further research by project year 2 • At least five systematic field trials will furnish detailed information on methods of management and improvement of pasture • At least one study tour or knowledge sharing event provided to enhance knowledge and practical experience of specialists and land users on global pastoral systems, application of landscape approach and their applicability nationally 3 publications distributed to key stakeholders Local land users in the 3 pilot areas trained to use this analysis for devising their land use plans taking into account landscape approach	These are not End-of-Project Targets, but Outputs which collectively are meant to achieve the Outcome.  The knowledge base can be claimed to have been improved, especially when the research results are disseminated locally, but it is uncertain whether this will lead to SLM because of other barriers.  Need to be addressed in Exit Strategy	B - C
OUTCOME 4: <b>Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM</b>	• NAP/CD will be revised to incorporate SLM principles • At least three local action programmes will be developed and launched The actual NAP/CD is not used for mainstreaming SLM into Government policies and strategies 5 Local Action Programs including the principles and procedures of PLUP and landscape approach to SLM prepared and discussed among stakeholders upon the end of the project	The Outcome sought stronger institutions and policies – this has not been achieved. Project relied partly on NSec.  This task is best handled by another project and Exit Strategy can explore	C
"OUTCOME" 5: <b>Adaptive management and learning introduced</b>	• adapted work plans as needed • all indicators and targets to comply with SMART principles by the end of the first year • office operative by month 3 • according to M&E plan • strategy drafted and discussed at national level • participation of at least 10 experts throughout life of project Number of media and advocacy events held throughout the project cycle Three employed LPM and support staff, offices equipped with necessary machines, including telephones, computers Adequate conditions for successful project work of the team are created	As noted elsewhere, this is not an Outcome and these are not End-of-Project Targets  The project has been managed and administered successfully	-

Although the project is in its final few weeks, no Targets/Indicators are considered as having been achieved successfully enough to merit an 'A' rating but the majority are expected to be achieved by the time of project closure, and rated 'B'. However, some are at risk of non achievement or lack of sustainability, hence the importance of the Exit Strategy.

One Outcome is rated as 'C' and therefore considered unlikely to be achieved by the time of project closure. In fact, the Evaluator believes that this Outcome should be the focus of a new project.

Taking into account the level of achievement of the project Objective and Outcomes, effectiveness is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

## 5 FINDINGS: SUSTAINABILITY

The ProDoc addresses sustainability at some length, including social, financial, ecological, economic and institutional sustainability. The discussion focuses on how project design and activities will enhance the chances of sustainability for the project results. However, the ProDoc discussions seem to lead to a repeated conclusion that “*sustainability also depends to a certain extent on factors which cannot be influenced at all by the project*”. This is a matter of concern because it seems to place the results of the project at high risk.

### 5.1 Sustainability Plan

The UNDP/GEF as well as the GTZ funding support has virtually come to an end and although an extension to the end of December had been agreed, and the Evaluator is proposing extending even further, the project must eventually prepare for closure.

However, for most project activities, this is not really an exit, but a metamorphosis, because many of the activities funded by the project must continue. Project close-down must therefore be well planned and managed to safeguard the various gains made by the project.

The present situation indicates that the legislation base and the policy for SLM are not strong and that as a result, the Institutional Sustainability of project benefits is **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**.

Likewise, the unavailability of easy credit and the distorted market values for product make Financial Sustainability **Unlikely (U)**.

On the other hand, Socio-economic Sustainability is **Highly Likely (HL)** at the immediate local level but not very strong outside project sites.

Risks to sustainability remain high and a robust Exit Strategy or Sustainability Plan is essential and the project does not have one to date.

An effective Exit Strategy / Sustainability Plan should aim for:

- a structured close-down of the project
- a managed handing-over of responsibilities
- a rational allocation of assets with recognition and receipts
- an exchange of appreciation and commitment letters
- a financial sustainability strategy
- an effective knowledge management system
- more recognition of the abilities of the communities

It is suggested that some of the remaining funds be used to organize an Exit Strategy Workshop. The Exit Strategy Workshop, which should be held sooner rather than later, must bring together all project personnel as well as those organizations and individuals who are identified as being in a position to continue with the work of the project. These must include key central as well as local government organizations as well as Daikhan and other farmers associations and community groups. At the Workshop, each project team member needs to outline the work accomplished in their particular area of responsibility, and the outstanding work that still needs to be done. It is also necessary to identify the products/benefits/results achieved by the project and whether they can “live” on their own, or require a champion. Consensus then needs to be reached on who is taking over the responsibility both for unfinished work as well as for products and benefits that need to be “adopted” and sustained by someone else. It is most important that to the extent possible, a source of funding support is identified to ensure financial sustainability. GTZ has indicated that it “*strongly supports*” an Exit Strategy Workshop.

## 5.2 Project timeframe

The project duration of 36 months has already been noted above as a design flaw. This unrealistic timeframe was trimmed even further when in PIR2009 the original closure was shown as the end of October 2010 – a duration of only 34 months. This was revised to the end of November 2010 giving a duration of 35 months. During the course of this evaluation, and still subject to Government approval, the project closure was postponed to the end of December 2010. But this merely returns the duration to the original, unrealistic 36 months.

Almost all those consulted by the Evaluator support an extension of the project, and this includes the PMU and local project teams. The Evaluator invited project staff to provide justification for a project extension and the general consensus is that more time is needed to secure the investments made by GEF and GTZ and to put in place an effective Exit Strategy – the Evaluator supports this and subject to funding support being available, sees justification for an extension to around September 2011. Such an extension would provide the time necessary to consolidate some of the project products and enhance the chances of their sustainability – e.g. Reforestation with Junipers has proceeded well but there is a need for 1-2 years follow-up after planting.

The PMU has identified those project activities that are still on-going and which merit continuation. It has forecast that the majority of these will be finalized by the end of December, and that some will need to go on until the end of March 2011. From past experience, it would seem that this timescale is still short of what might be required, hence the proposal to extend the project to around September 2011. This will allow recognition of seasonal constraints and by then new project proposals should be in place to continue the work and implement the project's benefits through replication in other localities.

## 6 COLLECTED CONCLUSIONS, RATINGS AND LESSONS

### 6.1 Conclusions

#### 6.1.1 Overall conclusion

By the end of the project, the living conditions of some local people will indeed have been improved and in some areas land use will be more sustainable. Therefore the project has had some impact. However, these benefits will be on a very limited scale and the project relies on others to replicate and upscale its results to a significant level. The Pilots tested by the project and the models it has set up, enhance the chances of replication, but many other barriers remain. The project overall is considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

#### 6.1.2 Project design, formulation and relevance

##### Concept and design

Project concept and design are rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)** particularly as a result of its unrealistic timeframe.

##### Country ownership

*"This project belongs to us, to the people"* – the establishment of Local Project Management Teams selected from among local community members, the Local Steering Committees who have a meaningful say in project activities, the participatory approach employed by the project and the use

of local experts as consultants to the extent possible, have ensured the high level of ownership at the community level.

### **Relevance**

The project is relevant in general to the needs of Turkmenistan and relevance is deemed **Satisfactory (S)** even though the project does not address some significant root causes of the identified problems.

### **Stakeholder participation in the formulation phase**

As a result of the on-going GTZ/MNP project on SLM which served as a pre-cursor to this project, stakeholders that were consulted felt that they had been involved at the project formulation stages and this is considered **Satisfactory (S)**.

## **6.1.3 Project implementation**

### **Project governance**

The project implementation framework is uncomplicated and appears effective. Collaboration and cooperation is enshrined in a tripartite MoU which is simple and straightforward and which recognizes the separate but complementary contributions from UNDP/GEF, the GTZ and the Government, each according to its comparative advantage. The highest level of governance is provided by the PSC which is adequately representative and chaired at very senior levels. Project governance is seen as **Satisfactory (S)**.

### **Project administration and management**

The project has a large staff complement of some 25 positions, including all the field positions, of which all but three are funded by GTZ. The structure is risky. Lines of reporting and accountability run from UNDP to the PM, and from him to the positions of Project Administrator and Project Financial Assistant and they virtually stop there. Without a cooperative GTZ counterpart serving as Senior Advisor, which in effect manages the rest of the staff, the PM could well be powerless. This is of particular concern since the entire complement of field staff are on the GTZ payroll and report to the GTZ Senior Advisor. However, it is a credit to all involved that this risk has remained only on paper. Management style has been reasonably low key and democratic, and in general, effective – all staff reported receiving whatever support, advice and guidance they required, whenever they required it, and regardless of whether they were in the UNDP/GEF “group” or the GTZ equivalent. Project management and administration is **Satisfactory (S)**.

### **Stakeholder participation in implementation**

The most effective participation by stakeholders in project implementation was under Outcome 2 as a result of its local community focus. Under other Outcomes, participation has been patchy and some opportunities have been missed. Stakeholder participation in project implementation is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

### **Risk management**

In spite of the lack of effective consideration of Risks by the ProDoc, the LogFrame and the PIRs, the PMU has shown that it has a good appreciation of what the Risks are, what their probability is and what is needed to address them. The Project’s consideration of risks is seen as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

### **Information management**

Project outreach has been somewhat limited to its immediate stakeholders and it has not made much effort towards managing information and knowledge so that they can contribute towards the replication of its results. Information management is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**.

### **Financial Management**

**Financial planning** – The relative allocations by Outcomes changed significantly with the greatest changes under Outcome 1 and the Project Management and Administration component. The former is grossly underspent whereas the Project Management and Administration allocation has blown out by over 100%. The reduction in total allocation/disbursement to Outcome 1 could be the result of a concentration of in-kind contribution to this Outcome, which unfortunately remains invisible. However, the blow-out in Project Management and Administration is actual and is of concern.

**Disbursement and delivery** – Expenditure to date for GEF funds, as deduced from ATLAS records provided by UNDP, is seen as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**, however, this rating could have been different if cash co-funding from GTZ and UNDP could have been disaggregated to Outcome level in the original allocations.

**Co-financing** – There are discrepancies in reporting on co-financing, and figures in the PIR2010 Financial Information table do not coincide with the figures provided in the ATLAS print-outs from UNDP. The total disbursed from the UNDP commitment is said to be US\$10,246 (which is reasonably close to the ATLAS figure as in the above table), however, the total disbursed from the GTZ commitment is given as US\$196.73 which is absurd. These discrepancies are significant, and even if they can be explained, their existence in the first place does not inspire confidence in the accounting system applied to co-financing. It is a requirement on the PMU, the EA and the IO to be fully accountable for co-financing resources received for the project and co-financing is considered as **Unsatisfactory (U)**.

#### 6.1.4 Results and impacts achieved

##### Attainment of Objective and Outcomes

**Original Objective** – The original Objective sought the application of sustainable land use practices by land users, leading to improved land use. Progress towards the original Objective based on the Indicators and as reported by the PIRs, is deemed to be **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

**Revised Objective** – The revised Objective sought improved land use and enhanced sustainability and the project has performed reasonably well and it can claim more credit than reported by the PMU. Overall progress towards the Revised Objective is considered to be **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 1** – as reported by the PMU and as ascertained by the Evaluator on site, at each of the three sites, there is good local awareness of SLM, concepts are understood and some capacity is evident. There is also a fair degree of confidence tempered with the knowledge that outside help may be needed for some time yet. Whether this capacity is stronger than before is not possible to tell without good Indicators. Progress towards Outcome 1 has been **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**

**Outcome 2, Nokhur** – the PMU reports work still in progress in terms of stock number reductions; longer lead times needed to see the results of the dams on vegetation cover; the leasing of garden plots in Konegummez appears to be very successful, but it has yet to start in Garawul; and, reforestation with Junipers has proceeded well but more is planned although there are difficulties with sourcing good quality saplings. There is also a need for 1-2 years follow-up after planting. Progress towards Outcome 2 in Nokhur has been **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 2, Karakum** – the project has dug new wells and repaired existing ones, but it is not certain that this has had the desired effect of reducing stock numbers; sand stabilization has proceeded well and some house owners emulated the project and stabilized dunes behind their houses; the conversion of the school heating system in Bokhurdok from fuel wood to diesel has saved around 2ha per year of saxaul. Progress towards an improvement in land use practices in Bokhurdok is rated as **Satisfactory (S)**.

**Outcome 2, Sakar Chaga** – the desalination measures employed by the project had the desired effect and productivity increased; the capacity building reported by the PMU for gardening techniques is not a measure of improved land use practices as targeted by the Outcome. This assessment has yet to come. Progress towards the sought improvement in land use practices in Sakar Chaga is considered to have been **Satisfactory (S)**

**Outcome 3** – Community Development Plans have yet to address pasture management and as they stand currently, do not relate well to the improvement in the knowledge base for SLM targeted by the Outcome. The PMU reports that a targeted research programme was developed and that the programme was implemented, leading to an improved knowledge basis for SLM but the publication of research results has yet to take place. Progress towards this Outcome has not been impressive and is rated as **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**. This rating could improve when research results are made available to local stakeholders.

**Outcome 4** – The PMU reports little progress, if any, towards this Outcome and this is considered as **Unsatisfactory (U)**.

**“Outcome” 5** – This is not truly an Outcome but comprises the Project Administration and Management activities at central (Ashgabat) level as well as at local level. The PMU report of the successful and effective operation at local level, was confirmed by the Evaluator who noted the excellent rapport that both the local teams as well as the visiting project personnel had with the local community members. The Evaluator has also noted the collaborative and effective way in which the PMU operates

#### **Status of delivery and effectiveness**

Taking into account the level of achievement of the project Objective and Outcomes, effectiveness is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

### **6.1.5 Monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management**

#### **M&E planning**

The M&E design, plan and LogFrame for this project leave some room for improvement, and are considered as **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**.

#### **Monitoring and adaptive management**

The monitoring processes applied by the project and the use of the results of monitoring to inform management and take corrective action, have been **Satisfactory (S)**.

### **6.1.6 Sustainability**

The legislation base and the policy for SLM are not strong and as a result, Institutional Sustainability of project benefits is **Moderately Unlikely (MU)**. Likewise, the unavailability of easy credit and the distorted market values for product make Financial sustainability **Unlikely (U)**. On the other hand, Socio-economic sustainability is **Highly Likely (HL)** at the immediate local level but not very strong outside project sites. Risks to sustainability remain high and a robust Exit Strategy or Sustainability Plan is essential and the project does not have one to date.

Subject to funding support being available, there is justification for an extension to the project to around September 2011. Such an extension would provide the time necessary to consolidate some of the project products and enhance the chances of their sustainability.



## 6.2 Ratings summary

Table 22. Ratings summary

CRITERION	RATING
<b>PROJECT FORMULATION</b>	
Concept and design	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
Relevance	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
Stakeholder participation in formulation	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</b>	
Project Governance	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
Project Administration and Management	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
Stakeholder participation in implementation	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
Financial disbursement and delivery	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>
Co-financing	<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>
Information management	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>
Risk management	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
M&E Design, Plan and LogFrame	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
Monitoring and adaptive management	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>PROJECT RESULTS</b>	
<b>Original Objective:</b> Improved land use through application of sustainable land management practices by land users	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
<b>Revised Objective:</b> Land use improved towards more sustainability	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Land users have stronger capacities for SLM	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Land use practices improved in three project sites- <b>Nokhur</b>	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Land use practices improved in three project sites- <b>Karakum</b>	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Land use practices improved in three project sites- <b>Sakar Chaga</b>	<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved knowledge basis for SLM exists in three project sites	<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Stronger institutional and policy framework for SLM	<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>
<b>“Outcome” 5:</b> Adaptive management and learning introduced	<b>Not rated</b>
Delivery and effectiveness	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
Institutional sustainability	<b>Moderately Unlikely (MU)</b>
Financial sustainability	<b>Unlikely (U)</b>
Socio-economic sustainability	<b>Highly Likely (HL)</b>
<b>OVERALL PROJECT RATING</b>	<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>

## 6.3 Lessons emerging

There are many lessons that can be drawn from the conclusions above and while most of these are applicable primarily to this project, some may be of broader value.

The **timescale** of three years was unrealistic. The time allowed for GEF projects is often too short.

Guidance is required on setting and using **Indicators** so as to ensure their usefulness. Often, project implementers set about trying to achieve the Indicators rather than the Objective and Outcomes.

The **timing of MTEs and TEs** needs to be reconsidered. It would probably be most effective if it is carried out soon after a PIR is available.

**Co-funding** needs to be taken more seriously and the GEF rules and procedures surrounding co-funding must be rationalized. In-kind contributions by government must be based on reality and must then be accounted for.

**Collaboration** between UNDP and a bilateral partner (such as GTZ) has many advantages, but it is also risky. Project resources such as budget and personnel are best managed by one and the same project manager.

The importance of a robust **Exit Strategy and Sustainability Plan** cannot be over-stated and there is a need for guidance on what is exactly required. In particular, a project must identify a champion and nurture it/him/her so the project legacy can be passed on.

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Recommendation addressed to the Ministry of Nature Protection**

#### **7.1.1 Issue:** Barriers to SLM in Turkmenistan

The project was unable to make progress on the barriers to SLM posed by the existing institutional framework, policies and legislation and until these barriers are removed, the benefits of projects such as this one are unlikely to be sustainable.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Ministry of Nature Protection take steps to initiate a review of the approach/philosophy, policy, legislation and institutional framework for Land Management in Turkmenistan with the aim of removing barriers that are standing in the way of Sustainable Land Management.

### **7.2 Recommendations addressed to the PMU**

#### **7.2.1 Issue:** Unfinished work

The project has suffered from an unrealistically short timeframe and while it has achieved a lot in the short time available, some work has yet to be carried out and work which has been completed needs to be consolidated to enhance its chances for sustainability.

#### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the PMU accept that some of the project activities cannot be carried out in the remaining time (in spite of the extension recommended below) and that instead of persisting with starting new activities, the time should be devoted to securing benefits and products that have already been achieved. More specifically –

**In Nokhur** – continue the pursuit of stock number reductions and the leasing of garden plots in Garawul; but desist from planting more Junipers and ensure those already planted receive the care they require to survive

**In Karakum** – work to resolve the issue of wells/stock numbers/land degradation; and persuade the school to invest some of the funds saved through the new heating system into planting of saxaul

**In Sakar Chaga** – proceed with the finalization for printing of the planned handbooks on aspects of SLM and make sure that they will be available for those you expect to replicate the project results

**Under Outcome 3** – proceed with the publication of research results, not as scientific publications, but as sources of information and guidance to land use managers

**Under Outcome 4** – there has been little progress towards this Outcome and it is a bigger task than the project can attempt – abandon the remaining activities under this Outcome

### **7.2.2 Issue: Information management**

Project outreach has been limited to its immediate stakeholders and it has not made much effort towards the broader land management constituency outside the three project sites. Neither has the project engaged in effective management of information and knowledge so that they can contribute towards the replication of its results

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the PMU review all the reports and similar informative material that has arisen from the project, translate as appropriate so it can reach identifiable beneficiaries, record all in a searchable and accessible database to be located in, and managed by, the NIDFF. Hardcopies of relevant documents should be placed, for reference (*i.e.* accessible) in school libraries, local administration offices, Daikhan offices and similar key locations.

### **7.2.3 Issue: Exit Strategy/Sustainability Plan**

The risks to sustainability of the project benefits remain high and project impacts rely on replication. In the circumstances, a robust Exit Strategy or Sustainability Plan is essential and the project does not have one to date.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the PMU organize an Exit Strategy Workshop as proposed in this report and with the participation of all project personnel as well as those identified as being in a position to continue with the work of the project. The Workshop should achieve consensus on who is taking over the responsibility both for unfinished work as well as for products and benefits that need to be “adopted” and sustained by someone else.

### **7.2.4 Issue: Replication**

The project has been successful in testing pilot approaches to sustainable land management but its impact will only accrue if the approaches are replicated widely throughout Turkmenistan.

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that, as part of the Exit Strategy, the PMU identify those entities that can be expected to replicate its approaches to other parts of the country; alert them to the benefits of the approaches through sponsored visits to the project demonstration sites and prepare them so they can emulate the project successfully.

## **7.3 Recommendations addressed to the MNP/UNDP/GTZ partnership**

### **7.3.1 Issue: Project management**

The project management structure has benefited from the comparative advantage enjoyed by each of the partners, but the structure is risky. Lines of reporting and accountability, as well as budget management responsibilities which are split between two individuals have been made to work in this instance by the collaborative spirit of the individuals concerned. However, such an auspicious situation cannot be assured.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that in any future partnership arrangement for a project, management responsibility for resources (personnel, financial, etc) should be vested in one project manager.

**7.3.2 Issue: Project extension**

The original project duration of 36 months was unrealistic and this was reduced further by events. The agreed extension (subject to Government approval) to the end of December 2010 will only return to the original 36 months duration and this is not considered adequate for what remains to be done.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that subject to funding support being available and the agreement of the Government, the project duration should be extended to around September 2011 so as to provide the time necessary to consolidate project products, develop and implement an effective Exit Strategy, and enhance the chances of sustainability for the project benefits and services.