

**FINAL REPORT
TERMINAL EVALUATION
UNDP /GEF MEDIUM SIZED PROJECT
ON
BUILDING CAPACITY AND MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT
IN BHUTAN**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms.....	4
Glossary of Bhutanese Terms.....	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
Executive Summary.....	7
BACKGROUND	12
1.0 The Project.....	12
1.1 Project Context.....	12
1.2 Project Goal, Objective and Outcomes.....	12
2.0 The External Evaluation.....	12
2.1 Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation.....	12
2.2 Methodology.....	13
2.3 Limitations and Constraints	
3.0 Evaluation Findings – Relevance.....	15
3.1 Conceptual Relevance within the Country Development Context.....	15
3.2 Conceptual Relevance within the Global Environmental Management Context.....	16
3.3 Operational Relevance of the Project Components.....	18
3.4 Country Ownership/ Drivenness.....	19
3.5 Implementation Approach.....	20
4.0 Evaluation Findings – Effectiveness.....	21
4.1. Achievement of Project Outcomes and Outputs.....	21
4.2 Stakeholder Involvement.....	31
4.3 Contribution to Capacity Development.....	32
5.0 Evaluation Findings – Efficiency.....	32
5.1 Financial Planning and Management.....	32
5.2 Cost Effectiveness.....	33
5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation.....	34
5.4 Implementing Agency Supervision and Backstopping.....	35
6.0 Evaluation Findings – Sustainability.....	36
6.1 Financial Sustainability.....	36
6.2 Socio-political Sustainability.....	36
6.3 Institutional/ Governance Sustainability.....	37
6.4 Environmental Sustainability.....	37
6.5 Sustainability Planning and Replication Approach.....	38

7.0 Special Cross Cutting Issues.....	38
7.1 Poverty Alleviation.....	38
7.2 Promotion of Gender Equity.....	40
7.3 Governance.....	40
8.0 Addressing Recommendations of the Mid Term Review.....	40
9.0 Lesson Learned.....	41
10.0 Conclusion/ Rating Summary.....	43
11.0 Overall Recommendations.....	47
11.1 Related Outcome 1:NAP.....	47
11.2 Related Outcome 2: Capacity Development for SLM.....	47
11.3 Related Outcome 3: Mainstreaming.....	48
Annexes.....	50
Annex 1: Terms of Reference (TOR).....	50
Annex 1A: Assigning Ratings to Relevance; Effectiveness & Efficiency; M& E Systems and Sustainability.....	61
Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed.....	64
Annex 3: List of People Interviewed/ Consulted.....	66
Annex 4: Mission Itineraries.....	68
Annex 5: Outline of Training for Extension Personnel and Gups.....	70
Annex 6: Key Findings of Studies under the Mainstreaming Component.....	71
Tables	
Table 1: Financial Planning and Co-Financing Table	
Table 2: Impacts outlined in the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy (2008-2018).....	17
Table 3: Budget and Expenditure Overview.....	33
Table 4: Coverage of Geogs.....	39
Table 5: Geogs' Proportion of Households Constraints.....	39

Acronyms

AWP	Annual Work Plan
CO	Country Office
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
EUSPS	DANIDA-funded Environment and Urban Sector Program Support
FACE	Funding Authorization and Certification of Expenditures
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GNHCS	Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat
IFS	Integrated Financing Strategy
LDCF	Least Developed Countries
LMC	Land Management Campaign
MEA	Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements
MoAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forests (formerly MoA-Ministry of Agriculture)
MSP-SLM	UNDP/GEF Medium-size Project on Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan
MTAC	Multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Committee
NAP	National Action Program to Combat Land Degradation
NAPA	National Adaptation Program of Action for Climate Change
NCSA	National Capacity Self assessment for Global Environment Management
NECS	National Environment Commission Secretariat
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSSC	National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture (MoAF)
PPD	Policy and Planning Division
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QBS	Qualitative-based Survey
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
RNR	Renewable Natural Resources
RNRRC	Renewable Natural Resources Research Centre (now known as RNRDC - Renewable Natural Resources Research and Development Centre)
SGP	UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SLMP	World Bank/GEF Sustainable Land Management Project
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UWICE	Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment

GLOSSARY OF BHUTANESE TERMS

Chiwog (also sometimes spelt chiog)	Basically a village; but where a village is too large it may be divided into two or more chiwogs and, where villages are too small, two or more villages may be combined to form a chiwog.
Dzongda	District Administrator/ Governor
Dzongkhag	District
Geog (also sometimes spelt gewog)	Smallest geographic unit of public administration made up of a block of chiwogs
Gup	Head of a Geog, elected by the local community

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The evaluation team wishes to extend their immense appreciation to all who assisted in the terminal evaluation. They owe special thanks to Karma Dema Dorji and Tshering Pem of the National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture, Karma Rapten and Tashi Dorji of UNDP Bhutan Country Office, and Doley Tshering of UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok. Their guidance, logistical assistance, and informational inputs were very useful. Thanks are also due to all the interviewees – government officials, project partners and the local community members in particular – for their time, views and insights.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project aims to strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable land management while ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process. Three key outcomes are expected: the National Action Program (NAP) to combat land degradation is completed; enhanced capacity for sustainable land management; and mainstreaming and harmonization of sustainable land management.

FINDINGS ON RELEVANCE

Project activities directly support key goals set by the Gross National Happiness and Bhutan 2020; the 10th Five-Year Plan; and the National Environment Strategy, among others.

National Action Program (NAP) The NAP is mainly viewed as a means to correct the usual piecemeal approach to address land degradation. It helps take stock of existing measures, identify new ones, and consolidate and direct future actions to combat land degradation problems and their causes in a more strategic and holistic manner.

Capacity Development and Mainstreaming The Project raised interest levels and developed practical skills in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) among government extension staff and local political leaders. It raised institutional capacity for assessing and documenting land resources. It demonstrated low cost SLM best practices. The various technical studies that it supported assisted in the development of policies that enable SLM.

Country Ownership and Implementation approach There is a high level of country ownership and commitment. The project was directly managed and executed by the regular manpower of National Soil Services Centre (Department of Agriculture). At the operational level, the local community members (in the site visited) demonstrated a positive community level response to the SLM interventions. The use of existing institutional set-up within the government for project management and implementation has spared the project of additional costs, develop in-house project management capacity and enhanced sustainability.

FINDINGS ON EFFECTIVENESS

National Action Program (NAP). NAP preparation was at least year behind schedule. The NAP has been technically adopted and endorsed by the MoAF and awaits cabinet approval. The MoAF engaged a highly qualified consultant to facilitate the consultative process at both national and local levels and prepare the draft NAP based on the stakeholder inputs. The local community consultations which MoAF insisted provided a well grounded understanding of the range of land degradation problems and issues.

The NAP content provides a good situation analysis and has identified interlinked strategies for addressing land degradation. It emphasized the practice of Environmental Assessment. However, the strategies and actions identified did not have cost estimates nor were they prioritized. The requirement for the conduct of an Integrated Financing Strategy Study (IFS) was conveyed to MoAF when the NAP preparation process was almost over.

A separate study identified 12 concepts, which if further developed and funded, would provide a foundation for NAP implementation. The concepts, defined the research questions but the study report did not indicate how the concepts would be translated into proposals.

Capacity Building - Human Resources. The training reports and interviews indicated a high level of satisfaction among training participants. Substantive portions of the training were conducted for field extension personnel. Training beneficiaries are confident in applying skills in their respective areas of work. At least 25 professionals, majority of who came from MoAF have undergone a training session for trainers and now provide training support. Three trained GIS personnel are training 5 other personnel in the processing of satellite imagery to support the updating of land cover and use map.

Capacity Building - Best Practices Demonstration. Soil conservation practices have been adopted by 80% of households in one project site visited. Similar levels of adoption are reported in two of 7 other pilot sites. Farmers indicated that once soil conservation structures

were fully established, only one instead of two applications of farm yard manure was needed. They also cited maize yields increases by 25%. The grass strips used to reinforce the stone bunds is used as fodder. Farmers are concerned about the reduced cropping area and the increased labor requirements in cutting the grass regularly. At the moment, the incentive to maintain the grass comes not only for the soil conservation and fodder value; other villages are also buying cuttings for planting materials.

Farmer leaders in the pilot site have been trying to convince other farmers in the upper slopes to establish their soil conservation structures. The Dzongkhag Agricultural officer and Geog extension worker together with the farmers reported that another adjacent village in the same Geog has applied the practice on a community-wide basis. The project also supported Dzongkhag requests for NSSC assistance to conduct a 2-3 day event in each Dzongkhag to demonstrate SLM best practices.

Mainstreaming. As the NAP did not make it to the 10th Five-Year Plan, the Project communicated SLM messages to selected key sectors. Within MoAF, the Project worked closely with the regional research centers in developing pilot SLM demonstrations.

The Land Commission Secretariat took note of proven land conservation technologies (emanating partly from the MSP sponsored discussions) that can help reduce the demand for land exchange or land conversion to other land uses, thereby helping rationalize land markets. The Secretary of the National Environmental Commission expressed strong commitment to incorporate SLM in the EA process, starting with the rural road system. The GHNC representative to the MTAC has shared information that an increasing number of Dzongkags are including SLM activities in their local level planning and budgeting.

Developed by in house staff trained by the Global Mechanism (GM), the IFS document provided a good analysis of funding sources (internal, external and innovative funding) which is a good eye opener to the policy makers on the breadth of resource mobilization options. The IFS document, however did not recommend what financing strategies are to be prioritized and the key next steps that need to be done.

Stakeholder Involvement. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the multi-sectoral Technical Assistance Committee (MTAC) were the primary mechanisms for stakeholder participation at the planning and progress review levels. At the operational level, the key stakeholders are the Renewable Natural Resources-Research Development Centers (RNR-RDC); the Dzongkhag administrations and Geog RNR extension centers. The preparation of the NAP involved a wide range of national and local stakeholders in problem identification and situation analysis.

FINDINGS – EFFICIENCY

Financial Planning and Management. Financial planning and expenditure were satisfactory. The final disbursement rate is 98% of the planned budget. Co-financing commitments were fully realized. The UNDP-TRAC funds of USD 25,000 were used to support the preparation of NAP. The RGoB covered government personnel costs, and most of M & E costs. The Audit Report contains no adverse financial reports.

Cost Effectiveness. Overall, the project was implemented in a cost-effective manner. It used the existing institutional set-up within the government for project management and implementation. Partnership with the larger projects – namely World Bank/ GEF SLMP and Decentralized Natural Resources Management component of the DANIDA-supported EUSPS – enabled the project to deliver more than it would have on its own.

Monitoring and Evaluation. Based on the above analysis and comparing it with the GEF index, the M& E system may be categorized as: "*Satisfactory*." The M & E system was able to capture minimum information required by the project design (log frame). Most of the key

issues were raised to and discussed by MTAC and the PSC and corrective action taken. As a result, there was no major risks that was not attended to.

The operative M & E system undoubtedly generated information about the project's important physical milestones. It did not however, generate sufficient aggregate and trends information that provide the "big picture" of what MSP has done. For instance, in terms of capacity building, aggregate data could have included: total number of villages and farmer adaptors in the 8 pilot districts and trends in adoption rate and related information about early signals on project outcomes. Most reports did not clearly articulate how the inputs and outputs of one project are distinguished from the other (i.e. GEF WB SLM Project and the UNDP MSP).

Implementing Agency Supervision and Backstopping. UNDP Bhutan supported the NEX implementation scheme and correctly focused its role to ensure that the overall outcomes are addressed. The main supervisory mechanisms exercised were the active participation in the PSC meetings; quarterly review prior to quarterly budget releases; and field visits. Project issues and risks raised are logged in the ATLAS for close monitoring.

The inception report cited several actions that needed follow up. While it is naturally the task of the PSC to follow up on this, it is not clear to what extent UNDP monitored the extent to which the PSC followed this up because the reports appeared silent on this.

The decision to implement the project using regular staff was a very prudent one. However, in subsequent project reports, the lack of staff and "multiple responsibilities" were reported. It is not clear how the PSC addressed this and to what extent UNDP reminded the PSC about this so that mitigation measures would be undertaken.

FINDINGS – SUSTAINABILITY

The financial sustainability of the project benefits can be rated as **moderately likely**. Two major mechanisms can continue to finance up scaling the SLM interventions. One is the Land Management Campaign (LMC) which has earmarked annual funding to pursue the SLM field interventions based on local demand. The other is the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program. **Socio-political sustainability** can be rated as **moderately likely**. A major activity taken up by the project is creating clear demand from Gups (Head of Geogs) on SLM concept and practices.

Existing institutional and governance sustainability is **likely** as current frameworks pose no risks. The key actors (NSSC, RNR-RDC and local governments) have high interest levels and reasonable capacity. **Environmental sustainability may be considered likely** at this point of time. It is not clear to what extent landscape level planning was pursued to complement on farm soil and water conservation works. It is thus advisable that the planners continue to be vigilant in monitoring the long term aggregate effects of interventions on fragile landscapes.

Further findings are indicated on Capacity Development (Section 3.3.2); Sustainability Planning and Replication Approach (Section 6.5); and Special Cross Cutting Issues (Section 7.0).

LESSONS LEARNED

The use of existing institutional set-up within the government for the operational management of this project has enabled internalization of project strategies and benefits.

Projects that aim for new policy/ program, such as a NAP, needs to take into account the full range of processes and material time required to secure political and bureaucratic support.

The project inception workshop should be used to review and fine tune the project design, (strategic results framework) taking into account the circumstances at the time of project

inception. An example that could have been addressed through the inception stage is the need to reconcile the timing of NAP preparation with the planning cycle for the 10th Five-Year Plan.

For a project that has a combination of policy and technical objectives, it would have been more effective if the project fostered implementation partnership between Policy and Planning Division of MoAF (for the NAP component) and NSSC (for capacity development).

CONCLUSION /RATING SUMMARY

On the basis of the above, the Evaluation Team rates the following components as follows:

Outcome	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Overall Rating
NAP is completed	HS	S	MS	S
Capacity for SLM is enhanced	HS	S	S	S
Mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM is accomplished	S	S	S	S

HS- Highly Satisfactory; S –Satisfactory; MS –Moderately Satisfactory

The overall rating may be considered as “*Satisfactory*”. An amplified presentation of the above ratings is indicated in Section 10.0. The actual process for determining the above ratings are based on GEF guidance, excerpts of which are provided in Annex 1A.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

For MoAF and future NAP Steering Committee for NAP Implementation

The technical content of the NAP was done nearly a year-and-half back and some very visible policy/ institutional changes have occurred since. Through the MTAC, subject the draft NAP to a quick review and updating (i.e. one to two days). Amendments can be made without taking too much time and still make it to the Cabinet Agenda.

As planned by MoAF, the NAP actions in the current draft should be subjected to prioritization and costing by concerned NAP agencies with the facilitation of the PPD and NSSC. Building on the results of the IFS, define the priority areas of NAP for financing and start working on potential financing mechanisms and sources. Translate the good research questions formulated in 2010 into full blown concepts proposals as basis for early dialogue.

Convene the SLM trainers, identify lessons learned from the 3-year training experience, and develop an action plan for follow-up. Wherever possible, identify farmer trainers who can be supported so that they can influence more farmers effectively. Examine and encourage collaboration with training service providers (e.g. College of Natural Resources, Rural Development Training Centre) wherever possible, in order to combine pedagogic and technical skills involved in SLM training programs.

In collaboration with SLMP, assess the extent to which village level landscape level planning is already incorporated in current training and extension modules. Wherever appropriate, consider including discussion on micro watershed level planning complementing on farm

level planning for soil and water management structures. This will ensure long term stability of on-farm interventions.

Accelerate current NSSC plans to collaborate with RNR-RDCs to document the learnings, provide follow up extension and action research work in the pilot sites. This will ensure that valuable learnings from successful experience are fully captured and used for improving extension delivery systems for more effective up scaling of SLM practices. Share these learnings to the SLM Project as input to their planning for their final years.

Take stock of how the recommendations of various consulting studies/ assessments supported through the project are being used or plan to be used. Develop the action plan for full utilization of the studies.

Identify and establish the advocacy working group within MoAF who can provide leadership in SLM advocacy, since this cannot be done alone by NSSC. The PPD/ MoAF potentially has an equally important role here.

Working with former MTAC members, identify specific policy instruments in each ministry that are entry points for SLM and where advocacy efforts can be focused and monitored more closely even on a semi-formal basis. This could build on the example of close collaboration between NSSC and NLC in the development of the New Land Policy.

Monitor and study recent information from GNHCS about the increase in resources being allocated by Geogs for SLM into their local plans and budgets. Concurrently obtain feedback from Geog leaders on how future MoAF support can be improved to support their SLM initiatives. Based on this feedback, share learning with the DANIDA and related efforts so that this may contribute to the development of better ways to encourage Dzongkhag and Geogs to incorporate SLM in local programs and budgets.

Project design recommendations for future GEF assisted initiatives on SLM

- There may be a need to further synchronize the efforts of UNCCD, GEF and UNDP so that appropriate guidance to NAP preparers is provided adequately and in a timely manner.
- There may be a need to revisit the premise that NAPs can be prepared and adopted in one year's time with a very limited budget (e.g. USD 15,000) and the lack of control on the official process of approval. This current scale of support does not seem to match the new UNCCD requirements (must be strongly science-based; IFS must be done in tandem with the technical studies etc).
- Ensure that the M & E plan is developed at the start of the project (or just before or after the inception workshop), in order to flesh out very general indicators of the project, particularly those involving capacity building and mainstreaming.
- Where future projects involve capacity development, include qualitative-based survey (QBS) as means/ source of verification of improvement in capacity.
- In future instances where a full size and medium sized project of similar nature are simultaneously being implemented, the M & E system cited above should also aim to help project managers and investors (GEF) attribute the right results to the right project.

BACKGROUND

1.0 THE PROJECT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

1.1 Project Context

Bhutan is predominantly an agrarian country with 69% of the population living in rural areas and subsisting mainly on agriculture, livestock rearing and use of a wide range of forest products. Furthermore, the integrity of agriculture and forest landscapes is critical for the protection of many watersheds that feed the country's hydro-power industry, the country's main source of revenue. Consequently, sustainable management of agriculture, grazing and forest lands has immense bearing on the Bhutanese economy. However, there is immense pressure on land as usable land resource is limited, owing to difficult and high mountain terrain and vast areas of snow and barren rocks. Arable land makes up less than 8% of Bhutan's territory, most of it located in the central valleys and southern foothills. Pastures are at mere 3.9%. Forests cover 64.4% of the country but are increasingly under pressure from anthropogenic factors such as forest fires, conversion to other land use, overgrazing, mining, and excessive collection of forest products.

1.2 Project Goal, Objective and Outcomes

The project **goal** is stated as:

"The agricultural, forest and other terrestrial land uses of Bhutan are sustainable, productive systems that maintain ecosystem productivity and ecological functions while contributing directly to the environmental, economic and social well being of the country."

The project **objective** is: "To strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable land management while ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process."

The project was designed to deliver three key **outcomes** stated below:

Outcome 1: National Action Program to combat land degradation (NAP) is completed. Expected outputs under this outcome included completion of draft NAP, followed by finalization, adoption and nation-wide dissemination.

Outcome 2: Capacity for sustainable land management is enhanced. Expected outputs under this outcome were: human resources development; enhanced institutional capacity for assessing, monitoring and documenting land resources; best practices for promoting sustainable land management in the country; and project ideas/concepts for sustainable land management based on NAP.

Outcome 3: Mainstreaming and harmonization of sustainable land management is accomplished. Expected outputs under this outcome were: the inclusion of SLM in the Tenth Five-Year Plan; policy and legal reform recommendations relating to SLM; harmonization of SLM with other national development and environmental frameworks; and development of funding mechanisms for SLM Programs and projects, including incentives for private sector involvement.

2.0 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF M & E policies and procedures, all projects must undergo terminal evaluation at the end of the project. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts, ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and

improvement; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

Specifically, the Terminal Evaluation assessed the extent to which planned project outcomes and outputs have been achieved, as well assessed the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project as defined in the GEF Evaluation Office guidelines for Terminal Evaluations.

The evaluation also evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of project design, implementation, monitoring and adaptive management and sustainability of project outcomes, The GEF and UNDP rating system was used making ratings for:

- Degree of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency
- Effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system
- Degree of sustainability

The evaluation period covered 15 days. The International Consultant spent 9 days in Bhutan for interview and field visits together with the National Consultant. The remaining six days were spent for drafting the report in the respective country stations Annex 1 presents the terms of reference for the evaluation.

2.2. Methodology

The evaluation is based on analysis of a combination of first-hand and pre-existing information obtained progressively through the following approaches and sources:

- **desk study** of existing documentary materials;
- **interviews** of key informants, including project management staff, UNDP Bhutan staff, relevant government officials, field staff, and recipients of project support;
- **focus group discussion** with local community beneficiaries at the field site:
- **direct observation** of project sites and activities.

The review was carried out by Mr. Eduardo Queblatin and Mr. Ugen P. Norbu. Mr. Queblatin is an international consultant with expertise and experience in natural resources management and local governance. He has worked on project designs, project managements and evaluation concerns in South and Southeast Asia through consulting assignments with the World Bank, IFAD, GTZ, EC, UNDP, USAID, US Forest Service, OXFAM, ACIAR and ICRAF. Mr. Norbu is a planning and evaluation consultant with a professional background in the field of conservation and related community development issues. He has completed numerous consulting assignments for UNDP, UNEP, DANIDA, World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Development Fund of Norway, and WWF.

2.2.1 Desk Review

A wide range of documents were reviewed during the course of the evaluation. These primarily included the project document, the project inception report, the annual project work plans, quarterly and annual progress reports, the final draft of the National Action Program to combat land degradation (NAP), and minutes of the Project Steering Committee and Project Multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC)/ Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meetings.

Additional documents such as technical/ consultancy reports, training materials, 10th Five-Year Plan documents, policy documents, and project publications were also reviewed to

acquire supplementary information, insights and clarifications. A complete list of documents that were reviewed or referred to is provided in Annex 2.

2.2.2 Key Informants' Interviews

Information and views on the project were secured from key informants through interviews using the project's Strategic Results Framework as the introductory basis. The interviews were held with the project management staff, officials in various relevant government agencies, field staff in the project sites, and staff of UNDP Bhutan Country Office, as well as the Regional Technical Specialist for Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management of the UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre. Altogether, key informant interviews were held with 18 people. In addition, telephonic interviews were conducted with a few people because of time and distance constraints. These included an Assistant Dzongkhag Agriculture Officer and two Gups (locally elected heads of a geog), who had received SLM training from the project, and an official of the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat (who is a member of the Project MTAC/ TAG). Further information was obtained by multiple e-mail communications with the Project Manager, other NSSC staff, and one of the GIS training recipients. The full list of people who were interviewed/consulted is provided in Annex 3.

2.2.3 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was held with the local project beneficiaries during the field visit to Loduma village (Trashiding geog, Dagana Dzongkhag), one of the sites where project support was provided for SLM field interventions. This discussion was attended by 30 local community members, including 10 local women, and focused on the project benefits, key constraints, lessons learnt, and future plans to sustain the project benefits. The names of the local community members present for the focus group discussion are provided in Annex 3.

2.2.4 Field Visit

After the focus group discussion with the local project beneficiaries, a tour of the sites in Loduma where SLM interventions (terracing, fodder grass strip plantation, stone check dams, and village nursery) were implemented was undertaken. On-site discussions were held with the accompanying local people and extension staff to reinforce or supplement the information acquired through the focus group discussions. It must be noted that the project management considered Loduma the most advanced among all the field sites supported by the project. This was later confirmed by a Bhutanese consultant, who was involved in an internal project evaluation and had visited the two other sites where multi-year support was provided by the project.

2.2.5 Debriefing on Preliminary Findings and Observations

Upon completion of the key informant interviews and the field site visit, a debriefing meeting was organized by the National Soil Services Centre for the evaluation team to present their preliminary findings and observations to a group of people representing various government agencies and the UNDP Bhutan Country Office. The debriefing meeting, chaired by the Agricultural Specialist of the Department of Agriculture, provided the evaluation team with an opportunity to elicit initial feedback, and seek additional information and clarifications. The names and organizations of the attendees are listed in Annex 3. A separate meeting was held with the Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Bhutan to discuss with him the preliminary evaluation findings and elicit his views on them.

2.2.6 Report writing

A zero draft of the evaluation findings and recommendations was produced and circulated to an internal group for quick initial comments. This was followed by preparation of a full

draft evaluation report, which was circulated to a larger group of project stakeholders for review and comments. The report writing was done by the individual consultants from their respective countries of residence using email exchanges.

3.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS – RELEVANCE

3.1 Conceptual Relevance within the Country Development Context

3.1.1 Gross National Happiness and Bhutan 2020

Development in Bhutan is guided by the overarching development philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH). The GNH development concept is based on the premise that true development of human society takes place when material, spiritual and emotional well-being occur side by side to complement and reinforce each other. Bhutan 2020 – the vision document to maximize GNH – elucidates the environmental sustainability, equitable socio-economic development, good governance, and the cultural preservation as the four GNH pillars. The project primarily contributes to the environmental sustainability by supporting policy development, training, information, and field practices for sustainable land management. It also contributes to: equitable socio-economic development through its focus on farmlands, which is the most vital asset for economic development of the rural communities that make up 69% of the country's population; and good governance by enhancing the capacity of field extension agents and local community leaders to promote sustainable land management concept and practices at the grassroots community level using participatory approaches that facilitate local decision-making.

3.1.2 Tenth Five-Year Plan

The overall objective of the country's 10th Five-Year Plan (July 2008 - June 2013) is poverty reduction, with the target to reduce the proportion of population living below the poverty line from 23.2% (at the beginning of the plan period) to less than 15% by the end of the plan period. Majority of the country's poor live in the rural areas, subsisting on agriculture and use of surrounding natural resources. The project, in promoting sustainable land management practices in rural lands through training, extension support and policy development, aids the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and its development partners in meeting the poverty reduction target. In addition, the project contributes to the following thematic and sector objectives outlined in the 10th Five-Year Plan¹:

Environmental objectives (as a cross-sectoral development theme):

- Mainstreaming environmental issues in development policies, plans and programs;
- Addressing country's multi-lateral environmental agreements;
- Strengthening institutional capacity for environment management.

Renewable Natural Resources sector objectives:

- Enhancing sustainable rural livelihoods through improved agricultural and livestock productivity;
- Promoting sustainable utilization of arable agriculture and pasture land resources;
- Enhancing food security through sustainable and enhanced food production and availability;
- Creating an enabling policy and legal framework for participatory and sustainable management of natural resources.

3.1.3 National Environment Strategy

The National Environment Strategy titled "The Middle Path" – launched in 1998 – was derived through an inter-sectoral and consultative process. The Strategy, which is

¹ The 10th Five-Year Plan environment sector and RNR objectives are cited with slight adaption (for clarity and brevity) respectively from p 87 and p 94-95 of the 10th Five-Year Plan: Main Document.

equivalent to a National Sustainable Development Strategy in essence, enshrines the concept of sustainable development and identifies agricultural development based on sustainable practices as one of the three main avenues for sustainable development. The project directly supports this avenue. In addition, it relates to the integration of environmental considerations into economic development planning and policy-making, which is recognized as one of the key cross-sectoral needs in the National Environment Strategy.

3.1.4 United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Bhutan (2008-2012)

The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Bhutan comprises five broad outcomes. The project directly corresponds to UNDAF Outcome 5: By 2012, national capacity for environmental sustainability and disaster management strengthened. Within the aforesaid outcome, it relates specifically to Country Team Outcome 1: National capacity to mainstream environmental concerns into policies, plans and Programs enhanced. In addition, the project partially contributes to the UNDAF Outcomes 1 and 4, which respectively pertain to income generation/poverty alleviation and people's participation/good governance.

3.1.5 NCSA and NAPA

With support from the Global Environment Facility, Bhutan carried out a National Capacity Self Assessment for Global Environmental Management (NCSA) in 2005. The NCSA identified the capacity development needs and priorities pertaining to global environmental management based on the three Rio Conventions and corresponding thematic areas of biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation. The project responds to the following capacity development needs identified in the NCSA: development of a National Action Program for sustainable land management; training of staff and local communities in agricultural soil conservation and land management; and strengthening of the National Soil Services Centre to effectively fulfill the role and functions of a UNCCD national focal agency.

Bhutan prepared its National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) in 2005-2006. The NAPA identifies a number of options for adaptation to hazards and risks posed by climate change. A key adaptation option recommended in NAPA is soil conservation and land management, which was pursued by this project.

3.2 Conceptual Relevance within the Global Environmental Management Context

3.2.1 UNCCD

Bhutan became a party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in August 2003. By acceding to the Convention, the country commits to implement a wide range of national actions to address desertification and land degradation. The project supports Bhutan to address the following UNCCD requirements:

- Adoption of an integrated approach addressing the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of the processes of land degradation;
- Establishment of institutional mechanisms to combat land degradation and its effects;
- Establishment of strategies and priorities to combat land degradation and mitigate its effects within the framework of national sustainable development plans and/or policies;
- Awareness building and facilitation of the participation of local communities;
- Development and implementation of a national action program to combat land degradation and mitigate its effects, and its enhancement through a continuing participatory process on the basis of lessons learned from field action and results from research.

Furthermore, as shown in the table below, the project corresponds to all the strategic objectives and contributes to six of the seven expected impacts outlined in the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy (2008-2018):

Table 2: Impacts outlined in the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy (2008-2018)

Strategic Objective/ Expected Impacts	Relevance
Strategic Objective 1: To improve the living conditions of affected populations	✓
Expected impact 1.1. People living in areas affected by desertification/land degradation and drought to have an improved and more diversified livelihood base and to benefit from income generated from sustainable land management.	✓
Expected impact 1.2. Affected populations' socio-economic and environmental vulnerability to climate change, climate variability and drought is reduced.	✓
Strategic objective 2: To improve the condition of affected ecosystems	✓
Expected impact 2.1. Land productivity and other ecosystem goods and services in affected areas are enhanced in a sustainable manner contributing to improved livelihoods.	✓
Expected impact 2.2. The vulnerability of affected ecosystems to climate change, climate variability and drought is reduced.	✓
Strategic objective 3: To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD	✓
Expected impact 3.1. Sustainable land management and combating desertification/ land degradation contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the mitigation of climate change.	✓
Strategic objective 4: To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors	Partially
Expected impact 4.1. Increased financial, technical and technological resources are made available to affected developing country Parties, and where appropriate Central and Eastern European countries, to implement the Convention.	
Expected impact 4.2. Enabling policy environments are improved for UNCCD implementation at all levels.	✓

3.2.2 UNDP/GEF Framework

Targeted Portfolio Approach for SLM in LDC and SIDS

The project was a part of the UNDP/GEF Targeted Portfolio Approach for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management in Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It is designed to develop capacity for mainstreaming sustainable land management at various planning and implementation levels in Bhutan. It addresses all the three outcomes under Operational Principle (OP) -15 of the umbrella project:

- Cost-effective and timely delivery of GEF resources to target countries;
- Individual and institutional capacity development for SLM;
- Systemic capacity development for mainstreaming SLM principles in national policies, plans and programs.

Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4

The Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4 (2007-2010) contains two strategic objectives: (a) to develop an enabling environment that will place SLM in the mainstream of development policy and practice at regional, national, and local levels; and (b) to upscale SLM investments that generate mutual benefits for the global environment and local livelihoods. The project outcomes correspond to both the objectives.

GEF Operational Program on Sustainable Land Management (OP 15)

The project corresponds to the GEF Operational Program 15 which pertains to sustainable land management and contains the following expected outcomes:

- Institutional and human resource capacity is strengthened to improve sustainable land management planning and implementation to achieve global environment benefits within the context of sustainable development;
- The policy, regulatory, and economic incentive framework is strengthened to facilitate wider adoption of sustainable land management practices across sectors as a country addresses multiple demands on land resources for economic activities, preservation of the structure and functional integrity of ecosystems, and other activities;
- Improvement in the economic productivity of land under sustainable management and the preservation or restoration of the structure and functional integrity of ecosystems.

Project outcome 1, (NAP) addresses the first and second expected outcomes of OP 15. Project outcome 2, addresses the first and third expected outcomes of OP 15. And project outcome 3, partially addresses the second expected outcome of OP 15.

The project covered the two of the three types of interventions outlined in OP 15 for GEF support. These were capacity building and on-the-ground investment. The first was pursued through training, policy development (NAP) and information development (various consulting studies) and the latter through promotion of physical SLM interventions at the local community level (three focal villages with multi-year support and five supplementary villages with one-time single-year support).

3.3 Operational Relevance of the Project Components

3.3.1 National Action Program

In becoming a party to the UNCCD in 2003, Bhutan committed itself among other things to the preparation and implementation of a NAP. However, the relevance of a NAP in Bhutan is not limited to, but goes beyond, the UNCCD obligation as enunciated by the following statements in the NAP document:

“The RGoB has been implementing various programs and projects to combat land degradation since the advent of Five-Year Plans in the early 1960s but these have been largely taking place in a piecemeal fashion within individual sector plans and basically without macro-level strategic perspective.”

“...NAP, regardless of being an obligation under the UNCCD, is an opportunity for us to take stock of existing measures, identify new ones, and consolidate and direct future actions to combat land degradation problems and their causes in a more strategic and holistic manner using participatory approaches that capture the insights, experience and views of various stakeholders.”

3.3.2 Capacity Development for Sustainable Land Management

This project component has been basically pursued through training of government staff and local political leaders in SLM, institutional capacity development for assessing,

monitoring and documenting land resources, and demonstration of SLM best practices in selected sites. In directing a large part of the SLM training programs towards field extension staff and local political leaders, the project added impetus to the national policy pursuit of improved local governance and decentralized management of development activities. Institutional capacity development for assessing, monitoring and documenting land resources was also critical given the rapid land use changes that are taking place and the constant pressure on land resources due to competitive land use.

The previous land use and cover mapping exercise took place in the early 1990s but since then there has been significant changes in the demographic and economic landscapes. An updated land use and cover mapping exercise is currently taking place and the project support for GIS capacity has fitted in well with this initiative. The SLM best practices supported by the project were mainly low-cost soil conservation interventions applied in farmlands in mountainous terrain. Farmers and field extension staff interviewed during the evaluation were generally positive about the usefulness of these interventions to their needs for farmland protection, soil fertility management, and enhanced food productivity.

3.3.3 Mainstreaming and Harmonization of SLM

Sustainable land management and land degradation issues cuts across various government sectors. There is a need to mainstream and harmonize SLM across these sectors and their programs. However, lack of data and well-researched information often impede mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM. This project component, which was largely made up of research, consulting studies and knowledge development to aid policy decisions for mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM, attempted to address this impediment.

3.4 Country Ownership/ Drivenness

The evaluation mission noted a high level of country ownership and commitment. Unlike in many other countries where generally UNDP projects rely on a dedicated project management unit supported by project funds, in Bhutan the management and execution of UNDP projects are integrated within the existing government set-up. In the case of MSP-SLM, the project was managed and executed by the National Soil Services Centre (Department of Agriculture) which is the designated national focal agency for the UNCCD.

The Program Director of the National Soil Services Centre (under the Department of Agriculture) served as the Project Manager with advisory support from a Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was chaired by the Director of the Department of Agriculture, who is also the national focal person for the UNCCD and current chair of the UNCCD's Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Other members who made up the PSC included representatives from various government agencies namely the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs, National Environment Commission Secretariat, Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, and the Policy and Planning Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

Representatives from UNDP Bhutan and the Liaison Office of Denmark represented the international development community in the PSC. The PSC met annually to review and approve the annual work programs and budgets, discuss project progress and related issues, and ensure project alignment with national development policies and priorities during the course of implementation. Member participation at the PSC meetings ranged between 63 to 76%.

To provide inter-agency technical coordination and guidance, the project was supported by a technical advisory group (TAG) made up of mid-level officers from various relevant government agencies. To avoid duplication and ensure inter-project synergy and given the compatibility of project objectives, the multi-disciplinary technical advisory committee (MTAC)

that existed for the World Bank/GEF Sustainable Land Management Project was used as the TAG for the MSP-SLM. During the course of project duration, a total of nine MTAC meetings were held—one every 3 to 5 months. Average number of attendees per MTAC meeting was 12.

The regularity with which the PSC and MTAC/ TAG meetings were held under leadership of government officials demonstrates that there was a high level of country ownership/ drivenness of the project and associated processes.

At the operational level, the local community members (in Loduma village) that the evaluation team interacted with displayed a very positive response to the SLM interventions. Their commitment was evident from the community approach – this approach basically involved participation of all the resident households in the local community rather than individual households – they had adopted for SLM. It was inferred that the more aware households took it upon themselves to sensitize the less aware households about SLM interventions and related benefits to foster more comprehensive local participation and response to SLM needs.

Another evidence of commitment to the project interventions by the local people of Loduma village was the transfer of SLM knowledge to the local community in neighboring Hathikharra village. While the evaluation team was unable to visit other project field sites for want of time, interactions with key informants (particularly the consultant engaged for internal evaluation and the former Dzongda of Trashiyangtse) suggest positive local response to SLM needs and a high level of local ownership of the SLM interventions.

3.5 Implementation Approach

The project implementation approach in general was found to be satisfactory. The use of existing institutional set-up within the government for project management and implementation has spared the project of additional costs, helped develop in-house project management capacity, and aided implementation of project activities in conjunction with planned government program for integrated soil fertility and sustainable land management. Interactions with NSSC and Dzongkhag/ Geog extension staff involved in the project suggested improved capacity for planning and implementing SLM interventions.

However, the quarterly project reports submitted by NSSC recurrently cited staff shortage (or the inability of the staff to focus sufficiently on project work due to multiple tasks) as a major constraint in managing the project. These reports often made reference to the need for separate project staff. The evaluation team infers that while a separate unit dedicated to project management would have been useful for the immediate delivery of project results, such an arrangement would very likely have created an institutional lacuna and affected the continuity of project benefits after the conclusion of the project.

The evaluation mission also reckons that the project would have benefitted from an implementation partnership between the NSSC and MoAF's Policy and Planning Division particularly for outcome 1 (NAP) as the latter has a stronger mandate and influence on the policy and planning processes than the NSSC which has more of an operational function. Furthermore, better linkages between outcome 1 (NAP) and outcome 3 (SLM mainstreaming) during planning and implementation would have enhanced the project results.

4.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS – EFFECTIVENESS

4.1. Outcome 1: National Action Program (NAP) is completed.

Key Indicator: NAP is used as a guideline, among other tools, to implement SLM program.

Milestones towards Target Indicators

Target: NAP draft completed during the 1st 6 months. Preparation for the NAP started in October 2008, i.e. 18 months after the start of the project. A budget of USD 15,000 was allocated from the Project budget. UNDP raised another USD 10,000 to top up the fund and a senior national consultant was engaged for 5 months (spread over 9 months) to facilitate the consultation processes, analyze stakeholder inputs, review literature and on this basis, prepare draft text of the NAP. Sample NAPs from other countries notably that of South Africa, Nepal and Brazil were reviewed.

MoAF conducted a NAP inception workshop in October 2008 to reach common understanding among stakeholders on the rationale, technical and consultation requirements for NAP preparation. Workshop participants included key National Government agencies and an NGO representative. In December of the same year, MoAF conducted a Process Framework Workshop to agree on the process and those stakeholders to be consulted. The gap between October and December was due to the national preparation for centenary/coronation celebrations.

In both the Inception workshop and process framework workshops, the participants highlighted the need for a full consultation process particularly at the grassroots level and full multi – sectoral inputs, within January to March. Local community consultations were held in 13 Geogs (representing different parts of the country) to identify a wide range of land degradation problems and issues.

Results of the Geog level community consultations were then used as a key input for a series of four regional stakeholder consultation workshops in April 2009 involving Dzongkhag officials responsible for agriculture, livestock development, forestry, environmental assessment, engineering, and development planning, as well as regional RNR-RC researchers and chief forest officers of territorial forest divisions. Based on these inputs, the consultant then prepared the Draft NAP. The latter was then presented to a multi - sectoral workshop in June 2009 which coincided with the World Day to Combat Desertification. Copies were distributed to 20 Dzongkhags and all key stakeholders. Comments were then considered and based on this: a final draft was presented to a high-level meeting, chaired by the Honorable Minister of Agriculture, in mid August 2009.

In May 2009, the UNCCD through the Global Mechanism provided support to train staff from MoAF, GNHC, MoF for the formulation of the Integrated Financing Strategy. The output was then incorporated into the NAP. This section is also discussed under fund generation indicators under the Mainstreaming Component.

Target: NAP adopted by RGoB by Y1. The status of this targeted activity at the time of evaluation was that the NAP final draft had been reviewed by the PPD/ MoAF and endorsed to the GNHCS for review and approval. The GNHCS are presently reviewing it but the process has been slowed down by the recent mid-term review of the sector plans for the Tenth Five-Year Plan. The MoAF aims to secure Cabinet approval by December 2010. (See also discussion on mainstreaming to national policy)

Target: NAP widely disseminated by Y2. This has not been done yet because the NAP has not yet been approved.

Target: NAP document contains a minimum of ten priority projects (research/ demonstration) that address SLM priorities. MoAF engaged an international consultant in 2010 to identify at least 10 priority topics that would implement selected NAP components.

The consultancy identified 12 sets of topics for future project preparation and a set of research questions for each topic. These were identified based on the stakeholder consultations and review of documents (including the NAP) produced by both MSP and SLMP.

4.1.1 Findings on effectiveness of NAP component:

Process and Content of NAP. The MoAF provided a good start up by making sure the rationale and process were fully understood by all key stakeholders. It also engaged a highly qualified consultant to facilitate the consultative process and analyze the resultant inputs. The NAP in Bhutan was prepared in a participatory manner involving consultations with the stakeholders at all levels, i.e. national, regional and local. The local community consultations were a very useful first step to identify on a first-hand basis a wide range of land degradation problems and issues. The MoAF leadership also advocated that the preparation process took into full consideration the location-specific and multi-sectoral concerns at the grassroots level (January to March in 13 Geogs).

The Regional stakeholder workshops were helpful in terms of problem identification, analysis and the confirmation of problems identified at the local levels. The workshops should have gone beyond problem identification and analysis into identification of strategies and solutions (i.e. objective-oriented planning). Time and funding constraints were major impediments. Only one day was allotted for each regional workshop. Two days were required to cover the entire process of problem analysis and identification of key strategies and solutions. At the national level, the validation was somewhat rapidly done through a couple of half-day presentations. The draft NAP was circulated to all the participants of the regional stakeholder workshops and several additional people, including the Dzongdas of all the twenty Dzongkhags.

The NAP finalization was also substantially delayed by the requirement for the conduct of an Integrated Financing Strategy Study (IFS) which was conveyed when the NAP preparation process was almost over. The preparation of IFS took some time as IFS-trained, staff belonged to various agencies (i.e. MoAF and GNHC), had other commitments and, therefore, were difficult to mobilize. In addition, comments on the IFS from GM took considerable time. (A discussion on the content and process for IFS is described under the Section on Mainstreaming.)

No NAP guidelines were made available to the preparation team at the time of NAP preparation. In their absence, samples of NAP of other countries were reviewed. However, they varied significantly in quality, approach, structure and content. The ones that were good-Brazil and South Africa -appeared to have spent more time and larger technical/financial resources and therefore, could not be used for Bhutan which had limited resources for NAP preparation.

The NAP content reflects good discussion of the situation (problems and issues) and has identified relevant strategies that take into account not only the direct concerns of SLM but also inter-related concerns articulated by other UN Multilateral Environmental Agreements (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Convention on Biological Diversity). It also took into account the fact that SLM is affected not only by practices in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Sector but also by other sectors such as public works that involve earthworks. The NAP document pointed out that land degradation issues are not solely the responsibility of MoAF. Rather, land degradation issues are caused by the aggregate of actions in various sectors (agriculture, industry, mining, urban development, roads, etc) and therefore, the solutions to land degradation also lie across various sectors.

It had a strong emphasis on the practice of Environmental Assessment – an important development planning tool that seeks to reconcile developmental and environmental concerns in a mutually-reinforcing manner, an important concern in modern day Bhutan that wants to grow well economically but in a very sustainable way.

However, the strategies and the sets of actions identified did not have cost estimates (even with ball park figures) nor were they prioritized. This was reportedly due to the delayed receipt of guidelines from GM on how to conduct the IFS. The MoAF plans to address the above gaps after the approval of the NAP. No documentation was available however to support this plan.

Approval and dissemination. The Project has envisioned that the NAP will be approved in the first year and disseminated from the second year onwards to guide subsequent capacity building and mainstreaming actions of the MSP in the final two years. RGoB opted to lengthen the process of consultation with all key sectors to foster broad ownership. The NAP has been technically endorsed by MoAF but is yet to secure formal RGoB approval. While the concept of SLM has been introduced into the national dialogue (see Outcome on Mainstreaming), the NAP itself as a program of action has not yet been disseminated.

It is difficult to determine if NAP or the various analysis made by the NAP preparation process benefited the design of the other components of the NAP. Most of project activities were already in midstream when the NAP preparation process fully started in 2009.

Conversely, could the results of the various studies done under the mainstreaming component be useful to help in the NAP analysis? The list of references in the NAP does not indicate that. It is however likely that those who led these studies and participated in NAP discussions may have shared their results during the discussions.

10 Projects. The NAP document did not exactly identify the 10 priority projects. Rather, a separate study conducted in June 2010, identified 12 concepts that if further developed and funded, would provide a good foundation for NAP implementation. The concepts, done in consultation with different sectors, defined the objectives and basic nature of the project and research questions and potential implementers.

Examples of practical topics include:

- Developing the communication strategy for NAP in order to optimize stakeholder participation
- Providing diagnostic information on land use;
- Practical mechanisms for Implementing NAP through local Governments
- Developing tools for personnel involved in SLM planning and in the conduct of EA
- Specific investigations on irrigation and road construction to develop short and long term mitigation measures

The study report however did not indicate how the concepts would be translated into discrete proposals. The MoAF foresees optimal use of these concepts for future project preparation, however there is no immediate action yet on the proposals while the WB SLM Project is still being implemented.

4.1.2 Capacity Building

Key Indicators:

- Active participation of stakeholders at all levels (central, Dzongkhag, Geog and chiog) in SLM.
- Central level institutions actively providing technical support to SLM Programs and projects.
- SLM best practices are widely implemented.
- Projects ideas to test validate and demonstrate new and innovative SLM practices readily available for consideration by funding agencies.

Milestones towards achieving target indicators

Target: Human resources capacity strengthened in SLM at local, Dzongkhag and national levels –(6 officers trained at regional institutions by Y3; 100 local level politicians trained in SLM by Y3; 35 extension agents trained in SLM by Y2).

MoAF engaged a professional group in 2007 to conduct a human resources capacity assessment in SLM at the Central, Regional and Dzongkhag levels. The study identified manpower training needs and topics for both formal and non-formal training. Some aspects of the study were used as basis for planning some of MSP's training modules. Most of the in-country training for extension personnel and local political leaders were done by the NSSC.

An internal evaluation in mid 2010 confirmed the various training courses conducted to address both National and Local Staff. Twenty-eight training events were implemented. The following mix of interventions was made:

- Exposure to management systems of other countries (Thailand, Philippines etc) for providing national SLM support services
- Principles and technical strategies for SLM practices to prevent landslides and soil erosion and improve soil fertility
- SLM for local political leaders, namely gups
- Land management planning and decision support tools– GIS , laboratory, documentation (e.g. WOCAT)
- Training of trainers for SLM

Eighteen of the 28 training events (co-financed mostly by SLM) went to international training. However in terms of number of beneficiaries training for extension personnel required the highest attention (245 participants).

Target: Institutional capacity for assessing, monitoring and documenting land resources achieved by upgrading GIS facilities by Y3.

The NSSC is co- leading the preparation of an updated nationwide land cover and use map. The information will help provide benchmark information for SLM planning. To process satellite imagery, three GIS personnel from various Departments of the MoAF were provided with a two-week basic image processing training on ALOS satellite imagery at Kasetsart University Thailand and Kathmandu in Nepal.

NSSC also updated its old soil database system (BHUSOD) developed through a DANIDA Project in early 2000 to increase reliability and enhance the efficiency of the system. An international consultant was hired jointly by the MSP, DNRM and SLMP for this work. A critical mass of soil fertility data would contribute to the development of a soil fertility map in the near future.

Target: Demonstration of SLM best practices established in 20 Dzongkhags and additional demonstration sites for up-scaling demonstrations identified Y3.

The project set up farmer level demonstrations of SLM practices in 8 selected Dzongkhags instead of 20 Dzongkhags in order to provide more focused support and to not overly stretch out the limited human and financial resources. The sites were set up in each of 4 regions. Within each region, sites were chosen in terms of their representativeness of the regional situation (from comparatively low to high incidence of land degradation. The Project provided

support to three of these sites more intensively (i.e. for a longer duration and with more funds) while others were supported through a campaign type of activity somewhat similar to the Land Management Campaign.

NSSC personnel in collaboration with respective SLMP and RNR centres interacted with 158 villages to collect and analyze information on traditional soil fertility measures implemented by the Project. They worked with farming communities to set up farm based demonstration of soil and water conservation practices (stone bunds, grass strips, etc). Community civil works such as gully checks were also supported.

Three kinds of extension approaches were tried: at Chiwog level (example: Loduma in Trashiding Geog, Dagana); at the Geog level (example in Ramjar, Trashy Yangtse) and a onetime demonstration (example in Pangkhey, Doban). The title of the categories implies the entry point (Chiwog, Geog or Dzongkhag) used by Project personnel for working with farming communities. The internal evaluation done in the 3 sites recorded the range of project interventions: participatory action planning, mobilization of group work to establish SLM structures; and support for the setting up of village savings funds. The intensity of intervention (e.g. frequency of visits) would vary from site to site.

The Evaluation team visited one site (Loduma in Trashiding). This particular site utilized the intervention approach used for a sustainable land management project in nearby Salamjee village in Tshangkha Geog, Dagana Dzongkhag, supported by the RNR-RDC Bajo and UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program. The RNR-RDC Bajo was involved in developing the methodology in Salamjee and in adapting the same in one of the sites of MSP. The intervention approach consisted of community planning; learning and applying proven SLM practices on- farm and in vulnerable common areas; and the development of a savings fund. The project also adapted relevant aspects of the extension delivery system used by the WB SLM Project which involved participatory SLM planning (it has a published guide in English.)

Target: Manuals, guidelines and pamphlets of SLM prepared and disseminated by Y3.

The project also produced and disseminated fourteen leaflets and two booklets on soil erosion control and related topics. 300 copies for each of the above were distributed to Geogs and Dzonkhags. The types of materials produced were primarily for extension personnel.

Target: Project ideas and project concepts prepared for SLM projects identified in the NAP. The Project regards the same concept papers produced under Outcome 1 as the accomplishment of this particular indicator. Please see also discussion on "Project ideas" under the section on NAP (Effectiveness)

Findings on Effectiveness of Capacity Building

Human Resources. The training reports of the various trainings conducted indicated a high level of satisfaction among training participants. A post-training evaluation would be very useful to measure the effectiveness in terms of actual application of the knowledge and skills but this is not available. It is also not required in the log frame.

Substantive portions of the training were conducted for Geog level extension personnel. The NSSC reports that at least 5 batches of extension personnel were trained. Interviews with selected training beneficiaries (including a review of some of their work related outputs) indicated a strong interest in the topics and confidence in applying the same in their respective areas of work. According to the NSSC, one indicator of successful training is the increased submission of proposals on SLM from extension personnel at Dzongkhag and Geog levels.

An Assistant Dzongkhag Agricultural Officer indicated that he went through training on basic principles and techniques in soil and water conservation. He found the techniques highly relevant and is currently applying these in at least three Geogs. He is using the successful

approach used in one site called Loduma as his model for applying the process in these Geogs. The approach called for participatory planning and implementation by groups.

He suggested that road engineers also undergo similar training as it had a module on civil works which has application value for the engineers. Another extension officer appreciated the emphasis on hands-on style of training provided by NSSC trainers.

A Gup (Geog Head) from the Western Part shared his satisfaction with the 3-day training conducted in 2010. Before, he and his fellow local leaders took land degradation for granted. He appreciated that such a simple tool as the A Frame could be so helpful. His Geog committee of leaders is now actively deliberating on SLM activities that will be included in their forthcoming programs.

A Gup from the Eastern region (more prone to land degradation) said that they were exposed to earlier Land management campaigns (LMCs) and that SLM is not an entirely new concept. However the recent training they received through MSP-SLM deepened their understanding and confidence to pursue SLM in local development plans and programs. They also had more opportunity for hands-on exercises. His Geog is actually now implementing SLM oriented projects. His committee wants to be regularly updated about new developments in SLM. This may be done either by receiving the information from the District Office or directly from the MoAF itself

The Gups interviewed received a copy each of the project publication on soil erosion control. Both desire to receive more publications especially those that had plenty of pictures and illustrations.

A former Dzongda (now the Secretary of the National Environment Commission Secretariat) who also attended one of the SLM training workshops, recounted how the SLM training inspired him to think of an innovative technique that would have better chance of preventing landslides in one of the most vulnerable geogs in his Dzongkhag. They constructed several small diversion canals that would involve the disposal of excess run-off not on the natural waterway (which would be scoured further) but gradually on the side slope and ridges that are covered by bush and grass. They also facilitated the formulation of community land use rules (controlled grazing, etc). The MSP helped him design and implement their successful innovation.

Training Modules and Trainers. The training modules represent a good mix of topics, catering to different levels of needs: national managers/planners, centrally based support providers; local extension agents; and local political leaders. Among the training modules developed are one for extension officers (5 days with plenty of diagnostic practicum) and one for the Gups (3 days orientation with hands-on exposure) Please see Annex 5 for a brief description of the basic training design for the Gups and extension workers..

At least 25 professionals, majority of who came from MoAF have undergone a training session for trainers (often referred to as TOT). The plan of the NSSC is to support these trainers to continue to provide training to other extension personnel. They constitute an active pool that can be tapped by MoAF to provide training services². The NSSC indicated that the trainers continue to provide various trainings. This was also confirmed by some of the national level trainers. However, there is no aggregate written information yet on the subsequent training provided by the trainers.

The Program Director and a senior officer of NSSC received a "Best Poster" Award during a recent International Conference on SLM in the Highlands in China for their work to promote biological soil conservation strategies in mountain agriculture³.

² The training of trainers was conducted in September 2009 by the NSSC for 25 staff from the NSC and Research Centres. A resource person was invited from ICIMOD. The training discussed principles and practices in supporting the adult learning process

³ The work that was recognized is a poster on biological strategies (e.g. hedgerows) for soil conservation and livestock.

GIS Capacity. The 3 trained GIS personnel are training 5 other personnel in the processing of satellite imagery to support the updating of land cover and use map. The trained GIS personnel are currently involved in the production of detailed land cover/ land use map and statistics at the Geog level to Dzongkhag level and then to National level. This initiative is being pursued as a national program of the MoAF with bulk of the funding from the WB SLM Project. At the time of evaluation, the GIS team had completed 183 of the 205 Geogs and 17 of the 20 Dzongkhags.

Best Practices Demonstration. Interactions with farmers at the field site visited for the evaluation reported that soil conservation structures were constructed more correctly (following contour lines) than before, using simple instruments such as the A frame. Soil conservation practices have been adopted by 30 of the 40 households. The 10 households, which are not participating, are absentee households who have temporarily out-migrated for better economic opportunities. The participating 30 households include four households who had earlier left the village but came back upon hearing about improved farming conditions as a result of the SLM interventions and improved water supply by the government's Rural Water Supply Scheme. Farmers indicated that they used to apply farm yard manure twice a year. After the soil conservation structures were fully established, only one application was needed. They also cited that maize yields increased by 25%. Farmers also benefited nurseries.

The grass strip used to reinforce the stone bunds (vetiver grass) is used as fodder. The local farmers reported about the reduced cropping area and the increased labor requirements in cutting the grass regularly. At the moment, the incentive to maintain the grass comes not only for the soil conservation and fodder value; other villages are also buying cuttings for planting materials..Farmer leaders have been trying to convince other farmers in the upper slopes to establish their soil conservation structures. In one gully network in Loduma, 33 Gulley stone check-dams were constructed by group work, benefitting at least 17 farm households.

The Dzongkhag Agricultural officer and Geog extension worker together with the farmers reported that another adjacent village in the same Geog has applied the practice on a community-wide basis.

The case of Loduma and two other sites reported by an internal evaluation process indicate that best practices have been demonstrated well. Due to the lack of time, the evaluation team could not ascertain if this was the same situation in other sites. There is no data yet on household adoption rate of technologies in the villages reached within the 8 districts. Geog officials and extension staff in the MSP demonstration sites as well as the earlier internal terminal evaluation study of July 2010 indicated that adoption rate has been generally favorable but no figures are available for verification. No information is also available on the possible spread to other districts. Please see also discussion under the mainstreaming component on observed increased Geog funding for SLM activities.

Demand driven - Land Management Campaign. The project also supported another modality of extension for SLM practices. This aligns with an ongoing MoAF Program called Land Management Campaign (LMC). The approach involves a Dzongkhag requesting NSSC assistance to conduct a 2 to 3 day event in one Geog to build awareness and demonstrate SLM best practices.

With NSSC's assistance, the Dzongda convenes the GUPs in his Dzongkhag and together with community leaders and citizen volunteers implement SLM practices in a pilot farm or in a common area to demonstrate how it can help prevent soil erosion and landslides. NSSC officers report that the number of requests from dzongkhags for this type of support has been increasing over the years. Various reasons have been advanced. First, is the use of simple technologies. Second is the reported improved ability of District and Geog extension staff to prepare good proposals and avail of the WB SLMP micro grants program. The awareness building events and trainings conducted for the Gups in 2009 and 2010 were also instrumental in stimulating interest to request for support.

Extension Materials. The focus of publications was on extension workers. Some Geog leaders are also using the same materials. A major publication is the soil erosion manual which has a striking cover design showing the "before and after" situation when a specific SLM technique (check dams) is applied⁴

Another publication discusses soil conservation strategies with students from farming families in mind. This particular publication was jointly developed with the Ministry of Education's Non Formal Education Program (see also discussion under the Mainstreaming component).

What the project has done quite well in terms of providing hands – on training to farmers, is not matched by the quantity of farmer level publications. To illustrate, the wall in the Lodume Village Hall contained bond paper size pictures (desktop printouts) of the early days of interventions demonstrating the SLM structures. This is good, however English posters of agronomic and soils topics dominated the same wall. Yet majority of the villagers were not fully literate. More of farmer level materials are obviously needed to help them recall the many new topics learned during the hands on training.

Documentation and follow on. Site level accomplishments at the project sites are being prepared by the Agricultural extension staff, the report dwelled mostly on the physical accomplishments and technical innovations. While the number of sites were reduced from 20 to 8 to provide more quality inputs, this did not necessarily result into adequate documentation of the social processes that transpired in response to the extension interventions. If this type of information were captured, they could have been used to contribute to the discussions to improve agricultural extension approaches for SLM (different from agricultural commodity based extension) and enhanced the value of MSP-SLM in terms of developing extension strategies and approaches for up scaling SLM.

Follow on measures is also affected by the recent turnover of staff, as observed in the field site visited during the evaluation. The NSSC leadership is now discussing with RNR-RDCs how this can be addressed better so that the results can be used to guide in improving extension strategies of the MoAF.

4. 1. 3 Mainstreaming

Key Indicators:

- SLM is recognized in national economic planning, e.g. 10th FYP..
- SLM is incorporated into policy and legal reforms, e.g. Land Act, Forest Policy, National Grazing Policy, etc.
- SLM integrated into national development and environmental frameworks (e.g. NCSA, NAPA and NBDAP).
- Funds available to implement SLM Programs and projects.

Milestones towards target indicators

Target: Recommendations for inclusion of SLM into the 10th Five-Year Plan completed by Y2.

The 10th Five-year draft plan was already completed by the time the implementation of the MSP-SLM got underway. The results of project studies (see also next section) and the various dialogues including those related to NAP preparation were perceived as the Project's main mechanism for communicating SLM messages into the national planning effort. Apart from NAP, this dialogue consisted of regular formal an informal dialogue within the MTAC

⁴ The Erosion Control Manual (in Black and white) containing simplified, step by step description of SLM technologies for on farm soil conservation and community level checks dam construction. It has accompanying well prepared illustration.

and other specialized task forces such as the National Land Policy Technical Working Group. Further discussion may be found under the subsequent sub section on "Findings."

Target: Recommendations for SLM policy and legal reform to be incorporated into relevant national policy documents completed by Y3 and SLM harmonized with other national development and national and international environmental frameworks by Y3.

The Project supported the conduct of several studies to better understand the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks that will be targets of mainstreaming. The studies and their key findings include:

- The link between land degradation, SLM and poverty
- Understanding the wet land fallow system
- Understanding the indigenous grazing system
- Review of current programs and institutions working on SLM and recommendations
- Benchmark review of the extent SLM mainstreaming in current policy /legal frameworks

Annex 6 describes the key findings from the above studies

Partly based on the above findings the NSSC indicated that the Project communicated SLM messages derived from the above studies to the key sectors and institutions. The results of the effort are cited under the subsequent section on " Findings" .

- The RNR Research sector within the MoAF
- The Livestock Dept in reviewing the policies on rangelands
- The NLC towards preparation of the new Land Policy
- The Geogs towards incorporation of SLM in local planning efforts
- The informal school sub sector of the Education Sector

Target: Consultations held with line ministries and donors on new mechanisms for mobilizing resources for SLM projects by Y2; Existing funding mechanisms reviewed by Y3 and New funding mechanisms to mobilize resources for SLM projects formulated by Year.

The Project developed a draft Integrated Financing Strategy (IFS) to be able to understand the benchmark situation on fund flows to SLM and identify source of financing for mainstreaming SLM including specific activities supported by the NAP. However, the IFS was completed after the technical part of the NAP technical content was done. This was due to perceived delay in advice on requirements from GM and the subsequent delayed start. The IFS was not part of the formal presentation made on NAP to the MoAF leadership.

Findings on Effectiveness of Mainstreaming

Tenth-year plan. As the NAP did not make it to the 10th-Year Plan, the PPD has proposed that the MoAF aim to mainstream the NAP in the 11th FYP by 2013. Aiming for the midterm review of the 10th-Year Plan was also deemed too late as the mid-term review is already ongoing and has even been completed for some sectors. To address this gap, the Project communicated SLM messages in various sector specific venues. These are described in subsequent sections.

Mainstreaming within the MoAF. The Project worked closely with the RNR-RDCs in developing pilot demonstrations on SLM. The results of project studies provided an array of ideas to the researchers on the research topics that may be pursued. Research managers

interviewed expressed enthusiasm to expand their initial work on upland/ sloping agriculture and to use the initial demonstration sites as platforms for action research on conservation agriculture.

The Project also cites that MoAF already uses the term SLM in its formal documents where as before, the addressing land degradation was primarily through soil conservation activities. The term SLM would now connote an interdisciplinary effort from other MoAF sectors e.g. soils, agronomy, livestock, forests and watersheds among others.

Land Management. NSSC brought land conservation issues into the list of concerns of the preparers of the National Land Policy. It participated in the dialogue between the NLC and Geogs (over 100 participants from local governments participated). It shared the results of the above studies into the inter-agency working group preparing the new Land Policy initiated by the NLC Secretariat.

The NSSC through a competent senior officer participated in the NLC working group discussions and shared various SLM strategies, practices and field learnings to the discussion agenda on land policy amendments. The Land Commission Secretariat has taken note of proven land conservation technologies (emanating partly from the MSP sponsored discussions) that can help reduce the demand for land exchange or land conversation to other land uses, thereby helping rationalize land markets. Apart from this, the NSSC representative to the working group preferred not to pinpoint particular sections in the draft policy that can be solely attributed to NSSCs contributions, emphasizing that it was a group effort. A copy of the new Draft policy could not yet be made available by the NLC to the Evaluation Team.

Infrastructure Planning. According to the MTAC member representing the Department of Roads (DoR), road connectivity is crucial for economic development but at the same time environmentally challenging due to terrain and unstable geologic conditions. The DOR is promoting environment-friendly road construction concept and approach. The MTAC member indicated that DOR has shared inputs in terms of information on bio-engineering and slope stabilization works to control and mitigate land degradation risks from roads. Partly based on the discussions from NAP, the DOR has stressed on the importance of engaging the DOR in activities related to sustainable land management (also already reflected in the NAP).

Environmental Planning. The Secretary of the National Environmental Commission expressed strong commitment to incorporate SLM in the EA process starting on the rural road system particularly at the local levels.

Local Level Planning. NSSC responded to demand-driven request from the Dzongkhags to conduct land management campaigns in their areas that would help marshal community action to prevent landslides (primarily) and promote conservation agriculture. A former Dzonkhag Governor and two Gups interviewed indicate high interest among its members of their respective local development/legislative councils.(Please see also earlier Section on Effectiveness in Capacity Building)

The GHNC representative to the MTAC has shared information than an increasing number of Dzongkags are including SLM activities in their local level planning, in the recent years. While it is difficult to attribute the extent of MSP's contribution, it has been generally noted by various key informants that the exposure of Geogs to the dialogue on SLM could have been a key contributing factor. These included the discussion during NAP preparation; dialogue with the NLC (where NSSC participated), and during the land management campaign events done for each of the 8 Dzongkhags. The training on SLM for the Geogs was done only in 2010.

There is limited evidence about proactive collaboration between the MSP and the DANIDA EUSPS particularly on the latter's Decentralized NRM component. This is partly because the EUSPS project ended earlier. The mid term review of the EUSPS indicated that EUSPS –

DNRM was not able to produce the appropriate "model" for decentralized planning and implementation in the NRM sector" which could have been also used as entry point for SLM, mainstreaming. It was noted however that EUSPS contributed mostly to the development of approaches for Dzongkhag work on supporting Community forestry

The Evaluation team also looked at the website of the GEF SGP program and noted that there were several approved projects for SLM in various sites. This also means that the concept of SLM has somehow also been picked up by the local non civil society sectors.

Education System. Together with the Non Formal Education Department of the Ministry of Education, the Project developed course modules on SLM for delivery as a part of the non-formal education program. A publication for students entitled soil erosion control was prepared as guide for teachers. The evaluation team was not able to identify early signs of outcome due to the limited time.

At the same time, the project supported awareness building events for students in at least 80 schools. This usually coincided with the annual World Day celebrations on SLM. Activities included poster and essay making with prizes awarded to outstanding products by students. Students were also exposed to practical SLM skills. In 2007, 3 schools participate in land management campaigns by actually implementing SLM in the school premises.

Financing. The project conducted the Integrated Financing Strategy (IFS) study as part of the NAP preparation process. The underlying strategy for the IFS is that investigating sources of financing should be embedded in the NAP preparation process and not to be done only after the technical components are formulated.

Developed by in house staff trained by the Global Mechanism (GM), the IFS document provided a good analysis of funding sources (internal, external and innovative funding) and is a good eye opener to the policy makers on the breadth of resource mobilization options. The GM shared its comments on how this may be improved but it is not clear to what extent this has been addressed. The IFS document also almost stopped short of making strong recommendations on what financing strategies are to be prioritized and what would be the key next steps.

The NSCC also conducted a start up dialogue with the WB Portfolio officer on prospects for financing portions of the NAP.

4.2 Stakeholder Involvement

The PSC and MTAC/ TAG were noted to be the primary mechanisms for broader stakeholder participation in the project at the planning and progress review levels. At the operational level, Regional RNR-RDCs in Bajo and Wengkhari, and Dzongkhag administrations and Geog RNR extension centres covering the project-supported field sites were the key stakeholders involved in the project activities.

Key weaknesses in terms of stakeholder participation were: inadequate involvement of non-governmental organizations; lack of implementation partnership with training service providers (e.g. College of Natural Resources and Rural Development Training Centre); and lack of implementation partnership with MoAF's Policy and Planning Division particularly with respect to NAP. The evaluation team considers these weaknesses were largely due to shortcomings in project design which failed to recognize the potential partnerships between NSSC and other key institutions during project implementation.

The preparation of the NAP involved a wide range of stakeholders in problem identification and situation analysis. Local community consultations were held in 13 Geogs followed by a series of four regional consultative workshops participated by Dzongkhag staff from the agriculture, livestock development, forestry, planning, engineering, and environment sectors, and staff from the territorial forestry divisions and regional RNR-RDCs. At the national level, two workshops were held – one for the presentation of the first draft NAP and the other was a final review workshop attended by a high-level group chaired by the Honorable Minister of

Agriculture. The NAP preparation also involved a number of one-to-one meetings with relevant individuals in various government and non-government organizations, including those who were nominated as NAP inter-agency group members. NGO participation in the NAP preparation process was limited to the national-level workshops as NGOs in Bhutan, being a nascent and small fraternity, do not have extensive presence at the regional and local levels.

4.3 Contribution to Capacity Development

The project is inherently a capacity development project. It basically addresses capacity development needs for SLM at the systemic, institutional and individual levels. Systemic capacity development has been pursued mainly through the formulation of NAP, which is expected to become a key policy instrument for mainstreaming SLM and other interventions to combat land degradation on a holistic scale. In addition, there is now improved information on SLM as a result of various studies carried out through the project. The recommendations from these studies are expected to be useful inputs for policy-making and planning on SLM-related issues and for SLM mainstreaming.

Institutional capacity development has taken place through the strengthening of soil data bank at NSSC and GIS capacity of MoAF for land use and management. Various training programs supported by the project have contributed to individual capacity development. A total of 253 staff have received training in various aspects of SLM. These included 136 field extension staff in three separate training programs and 86 local community leaders in two separate training programs.

The series of stakeholder consultations undertaken for NAP preparation involved 327 local community members, 77 Geog staff and 113 Dzongkhag staff for problem identification and situation analysis. At the central level, more than 75 representatives from various government, non-government and UN agencies took part in the various meetings and workshops at various stages of NAP preparation. The draft NAP report was circulated to all the participants of the regional stakeholder workshops, NAP inception workshop and process framework workshop, and several additional people, including the Dzongdags of all the 20 Dzongkhags, for their feedback. The NAP consultative process is expected to have created increased professional and public understanding of land degradation and SLM issues.

5.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS – EFFICIENCY

5.1 Financial Planning and Management

UNDP Bhutan Country Office managed the external financing of the project, using the UN-ATLAS system. Annual project budgets were planned at the time of preparing Annual Work Plans (AWPs), and accordingly reflected in the AWPs. Project funds were released to the project executing agency on a quarterly basis through the Department of Public Accounts of the Ministry of Finance based on advance/ cash transfer requests made through Funding Authorization and Certification of Expenditures (FACE) forms. The FACE forms were supported by quarterly progress reports on project implementation. Budget release and reporting on a quarterly basis have been useful for the UNDP CO in keeping regular track of project finances and project progress.

Table 3: Budget and Expenditure Overview

Year	Planned Budget (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Expenditure % against Planned Budget	Cumulative Exp % of External Project Funds
2007	85,200.00	66,323.34	77.8	12.6
2008	160,000.00	111,762.37	69.9	33.9
2009	170,275.00	165,826.93	97.4	65.5
2010	180,067.29	177,206.55	98.4	99.3

Source: Planned budget and expenditure figures were provided by the Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP Bhutan CO, by email dated 13 Dec 2010

Note: The expenditure figure for 2010 is provisional as the final quarterly report was pending at the time of evaluation.

^a External project funds comprised GEF funds and UNDP-TRAC funds

Based on the above table, it is surmised that financial planning and expenditure were satisfactory throughout the project duration with at least 70% of the planned budget being spent in the initial years, followed by increase in financial expenditure (97-98% of the planned budget) in the third and fourth years (extended at no cost) of the project. Quarterly reports reflect occasional non-achievement of planned activities due to delays in fund release caused by procedural requirements of reporting and fund requisition.

Co-financing commitments were fully realized. The UNDP-TRAC funds of USD 25,000 were used to support the preparation of NAP only. An in-kind contribution from the RGoB and Dzongkhag administrations covered government personnel costs, travel costs, and pro rata costs of office space, mobility and overheads pertaining to project management and implementation.

The project accounts have been audited in August 2010 by the Royal Audit Authority, which is the national auditing agency for all public expenditures in the country. The Audit Report contains no adverse financial reports against the project.

5.2 Cost Effectiveness

Overall, the project was implemented in a cost-effective manner. Partnership with the larger projects – namely World Bank/GEF SLMP and Decentralized Natural Resources Management component of the DANIDA-supported EUSPS – enabled the project to deliver more meaningfully than it would have on its own. For instance, the three GIS technicians trained by the project are now a part of the larger eight-member MoAF-GIS team engaged with support from the WB/GEF SLMP to prepare updated national land cover and use maps and statistics which will have coverage up to dzongkhag and geog levels. Also, the use of a common MTAC/TAG with World Bank/GEF Sustainable Land Management Project would have reduced logistical costs besides enabling better coordination and linkages between the projects. From time to time, MSP also benefitted from the expertise of the long term international land management specialist of the SLMP.

There has also been very limited use of external technical assistance. Except for one consulting assignment on development of research proposals and priorities, all consulting studies under the project were carried out by national consultants. Besides building national consulting capacity, this is expected to have considerably reduced the overall cost of technical assistance because in general, in Bhutan, external technical assistance cost more than double the national technical assistance.

Project training records show that a large number of people were trained within the country. Where overseas training courses and study tours were involved, training institutions and venues within South Asia and South-east Asia sub-regions were used largely. This is expected to have reduced training costs and contributed to the achievement of the training targets in excess of what was initially planned. For instance, 136 field extension staff were trained against the initial project target of 35 extension staff.

Furthermore, as already mentioned in Section 3.4, the use of existing institutional set-up within the government for project management and implementation has spared the project of additional costs that would have been incurred in setting up and running a separate project management unit.

It was also encouraging to note that the project was building up on earlier and ongoing SLM initiatives. Many of the field interventions supported by the project were tried and tested in other areas by the Land Management Campaign (launched in 2005) or through other support such as the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program. For instance, the SLM interventions in Loduma village were a replication of the Salamji Sustainable Land Management Project supported by the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program. The use of existing examples from various initiatives including LMC and SLMP, which have been tried and tested in similar local circumstances, would have reduced initial costs of promoting and introducing SLM interventions.

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Apart from the log frame, the approved annual work plans served as guide for monitoring of activities and outputs. Based on these, tasks were allocated to different implementing units within the NSSC, among partners (research centres and District personnel) and among consultants.

Tracking of implementation of activities were done through regular quarterly reporting by operating personnel at national and local levels and by field visits of NSSC leadership who then prepared Back to Office Reports (BTORs). Post training reports were submitted containing participant assessments. Parts of reports that had key program implications were regularly forwarded and discussed by the MTAC and the Board.

Technical issues and consultant reports of studies were analyzed by the NSCC officers and discussed by the MTAC occasionally in conjunction with activities of the sister project SLM. Among the major topics of discussion at the MTAC levels were preparations of land cover maps, stakeholder participation in NAP preparation, and nature of training events.

There was no major issue raised on the lack of monitoring budgets. RGoB in fact, used its own counterpart resources to co-finance the cost of personnel travel.

NAP preparation milestones were closely monitored. In support of the Capacity Building-best practices component, the BTORs from field personnel indicate serious monitoring of the actual performance of technologies on the ground. The reports provide information on the results at 3 pilot sites in terms of actual performance of SLM technologies. Except for the work in 3 of the 8 districts, there was comparatively less information provided on how the demonstration of best practices is actually producing results (e.g. households adopting) in the 8 districts covered by the MSP.

Comparatively less information was available on how mainstreaming activities were monitored especially on how the results of the various studies were utilized. The synergistic relationship between the GEF WB SLM Project and the UNDP MSP is undoubtedly producing many results. However, most reports did not clearly articulate how the inputs of one project are distinguished from the other.

The NSSC plans to continue to monitor technical developments on the ground through its network of contacts as well as through its partners in the research centres. The reports do not indicate the extent to which participatory monitoring and evaluation is done (note: this is not a requirement of the project design). The reports do indicate regular interaction between agricultural extension personnel, Geog political leaders and farmer leaders during the project. The interaction is evidenced among others by the farmers' reasonable awareness of the benefits and limitations in the technologies and the initial innovations that they have introduced.

The M & E system was able to capture minimum information required by the project design (log frame). Its gaps notwithstanding, most of the key issues were raised to and discussed by MTAC and the PSC and corrective action taken. As a result, there was no major risk that was not addressed. A possible exception to this observation was the unclear action on the issue of lack of manpower that was raised several times in the quarterly reports.

While overall, the operative M & E system undoubtedly generated information about the projects important physical milestones. It did not generate sufficient aggregate information and trends information that provide the "big picture" of what MSP has done. For instance, in terms of capacity building, aggregate data could include: total number of villages and farmer adaptors in the 8 districts and trends in adoption rate; approximate area covered by SLM practices (number of households multiplied by average farm size in each site etc.). Other types of information may be processed information such as gender and youth participation, status of capital build up, planning efforts of Geogs, more analysis of training activities, etc. This type of information provides early signals on project outcomes.

The above type of information (aggregate information and trends information) is not explicitly required in the project design nor is project management formally accountable to this. However, it could have "added value" to the output of the project particularly as the project was perceived to be an important mechanism for up scaling the results of the GEF SLMP.

The UNDP PIR report provides a quick annual "snapshot" of the overall project situation and "big picture" but because of space limitations, there are important programmatic information that usually can not be covered anymore. The recently produced internal evaluation report is a step in the right direction. It organized aggregate information against log frame requirements.

Based on the above analysis and comparing it with the GEF index on M & E systems, it can be said that Monitoring and Evaluation system may be categorized as "*Satisfactory*."

5.4. Implementing Agency Supervision and Backstopping

UNDP Bhutan supported the NEX implementation scheme and correctly focused its role to ensuring that overall outcomes are addressed. The main supervisory mechanisms exercised were the active participation in the PSC meetings; quarterly review or reports prior to quarterly budget releases, and two field visits. Project milestones and issues and risks raised are logged in the ATLAS for close monitoring.

The major issues in the early part were budgetary delays and momentary delays during elections and centenary/coronation preparations. Corrective actions were taken by the PSC with UNDP participating in the decision making.

UNDP contributed in providing project design guidance during the project inception workshop and on the nature of NAP. The inception report cited several actions that needed follow up. While it is naturally the task of the PSC to follow up on this, it is not clear to what extent the UNDP monitored the extent to which the PSC followed this up because the reports appeared silent on this (e.g. what aspects of MSP can be mainstreamed in the 10th-Year Plan given

the NAP delay; jumpstarting the dialogue with potential financing sources based on the IFS, it is also not clear how the attribution of accomplishments between MSP and SLM P was to be clarified).

The decision to implement the project using regular staff was a very prudent one. However, in subsequent project reports, the lack of staff and "multiple responsibilities" were reported. It is not clear how the PSC addressed this (not in the copies or minutes made available to evaluation team) and to what extent UNDP reminded the PSC about this so that mitigation measures may have been undertaken.

6.0 Evaluation Findings – Sustainability

6.1 Financial Sustainability

The financial sustainability of the project benefits can be rated **moderately likely**. The project did not involve any high-cost interventions that would have made continuation of project benefits financially unviable. There are two major vehicles through which the SLM field interventions supported by the project can be continued and enhanced. One is the Land Management Campaign which has earmarked annual funding to pursue the SLM field interventions based on demands of the local communities, field extension staff and local government authorities. The other is the UNDP/GEF Small Grants Program which has a longer term programmatic presence than individual externally-funded projects. Basically all the SLM field interventions supported by the project possess considerable funding potential through the SGP. Furthermore, the project outcomes and benefits are recognized in the country's 10th Five-Year Plan, giving a good indication of continuity of the project outcomes beyond the project duration. There are also signs that SLM is being increasingly recognized in local development plans. The Project MTAC/TAG member from the GNHCS informed that during the preparation of the Integrated Financing Strategy for NAP, he had browsed through the annual budget proposals of geogs and dzongkhags over the past 5-6 years and he observed a trend of increasing appearance of SLM related activities in the more recent annual budget proposals.

Further opportunity to enhance financial sustainability of the project benefits exist in the form of the World Bank/GEF SLM project which will be active until 2012. It is anticipated that SLM interventions, including those supported by MSP-SLM, would be mainstreamed more strongly by the time the World Bank/GEF SLMP closes. This would likely lead to more allocation of funds for SLM programs and activities.

A key risk that can be envisaged to financial sustainability of project benefits is the possible inability of the RGoB to take up the NAP in its entirety. Some of the activities outlined in the NAP would entail huge investments and, therefore, RGoB may not be in a financial position to take them up on a significant scale. These particularly include activities (environment-friendly road construction, sustainable mining, sustainable urban development, and solid waste management) for environmental management of development activities that pose land degradation risks. This risk could be minimized through financial gap analysis of NAP and identification of potential mechanisms/sources to address the gaps and more proactive advocacy for SLM mainstreaming by non-MoAF agencies based on the NAP.

6.2 Socio-political Sustainability

This aspect of sustainability of project benefits can be rated **moderately likely**. A major activity taken up by the project is the training of Gups (Head of Geogs) on SLM concept and practices. Eighty-six Gups have received SLM training. The Gup holds the most important political position at the grassroots community level and has immense influence on local development plans and programs. Gups, who were interviewed during the course of the

evaluation, exuded considerable understanding of the benefits of sustainable land management and the importance and opportunities of pursuing it through local development plans and programs.

There was also good ownership of project outcomes by the government agencies as well as the local communities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has endorsed the NAP to the Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, the apex policy-coordination and approval authority within the government system, for review and approval. The Secretary of the National Environment Commission (NEC) has also expressed support to the further incorporation of SLM concerns in the ongoing updates of the EA field level reporting procedures.

Socio-political acceptance of the project benefits is also likely, because the project objectives and outcomes are in line with national development policies, plans and priorities to pursue economic development in environmentally sustainable ways. However, social factors such as out migration from villages and land fragmentation due to breaking up of joint family system pose some risks to SLM interventions. For instance, it was noted in Loduma, that there were many absentee households whose lands were not covered by SLM interventions. Local people felt that such lands could trigger soil erosion/ landslides and affect other lands where SLM is taking place.

6.3 Institutional/ Governance Sustainability

Existing institutional and governance frameworks pose no risks to the sustainability of project outcomes. Therefore, sustainability is **likely**. In fact, current institutional environment is favourable for advancement of sustainable land management interventions and continuation of project benefits. The RNR sector, within whose remit most SLM issues and interventions fall, has the most widespread institutional presence in the country. Each Geog, which is the administrative unit closest to local communities, is linked to a Geog RNR extension centre staffed by field extension agents for agriculture, livestock development and forestry. At the Dzongkhag (district) level, the RNR sector has a major presence with sets of staff for agriculture, livestock development and forestry extension in each Dzongkhag.

In addition, since 2006/2007, a Dzongkhag Environmental Officer has been placed in each Dzongkhag for decentralized environmental assessment and clearance of development projects. At the regional level, there are four regional RNR research and development centres (RNR-RDCs). These centres have the regional mandate to conduct research services and backstop extension activities including those pertaining to sustainable management of farmlands.

At the central level, the Department of Agriculture and specifically within it the NSSC are mandated to plan and implement integrated soil fertility and sustainable land management as a regular national program. Also, the Department of Forests and Park Services and the Department of Livestock have regular programs for watershed management, social forestry, forest rehabilitation, and rangeland management which encompass SLM elements.

Furthermore, the governance set-up for development planning and management in Bhutan is increasingly on the 'decentralization' path. The Geog development committees, chaired by the Gup and made up of deputy Gup and several local community representatives, decide development priorities at the Geog level. Similarly, the Dzongkhag development committees, chaired by one of the Gups and made up of all Gups from the Dzongkhag, decide development priorities at the Dzongkhag level. This decentralized governance set-up provides an enabling environment for enhancing local ownership and more efficient implementation of SLM interventions. By having engaged the Gups, Geog RNR extension agents and Dzongkhag authorities through training and awareness programs, the project is likely to have enhanced the institutional sustainability of project benefits at the local level.

6.4 Environmental Sustainability

The project is inherently aimed at enhancing environmental sustainability of land use and management practices. Experience in other countries indicate that a sole focus on SLM at farm or household level may bear certain unintended environmental risks if on-farm works are done in steep landscapes and done spontaneously without coordination among neighboring farmers or without technical supervision. For example, the drainage structures that protect certain farmlands may if poorly planned, inadvertently trigger land degradation in another part of the landscape. This doesn't mean that this will happen in Bhutan but to prevent such risks to happen, the feasibility of a micro-watershed or local landscape approach to SLM planning may be examined. The team took note of the fragile landscapes (e.g. steep watersheds) and incidence of landslides but did not have sufficient time to determine the adequacy of current measures to ensure long term viability of on-farm structures including the prevention of unintended effects. At this point of time, overall environmental sustainability of SLM practices may be considered **likely**. It is advisable that planners continue to be vigilant in monitoring the long term aggregate effects of on-farm structures on fragile landscapes.

6.5 Sustainability Planning and Replication Approach

While the likelihood of sustainability can be ascertained to a certain degree at this point, (see above sections 6.1 to 6.4) one can ask if a sustainability strategy or exit strategy has been actually articulated to translate the "likelihood" into reality.

The NAP itself when adopted and enforced can be a de facto sustainability plan, because it lays out interrelated activities and actors. However, certain actions to improve the NAP must be done to make it an effective sustainability plan (e.g. prioritization, costing, etc which is described under the sections on Effectiveness and Recommendations).

Certain actions are being undertaken that lead to sustainability and are indicated in various parts of this Evaluation Report, especially under the sections on Effectiveness and Efficiency. These actions may have been planned independently of each other but they nonetheless could have a long term cumulative effect towards sustainability.

Examples include: a) deciding to implement the project through regular NSSC staff; b) promoting a demand driven approach among Geogs and c) engaging the RNR Centres to help in the follow up planning and extension work in the pilot sites. The NSSC also perceives itself as a long term champion for most of the good practices that have been introduced under the project.

The NAP contains actions that would also enhance replication of experience and practices. Several of the concept papers prepared in 2010 on NAP priorities also indicate how the process of replication may be made possible

7.0 OBSERVATIONS ON SPECIAL CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

7.1 Poverty Alleviation

The project was not designed to address poverty alleviation directly, although conceptually it is very much expected to contribute to poverty alleviation as a result of focus on sustainable management of land, which is the most critical development asset in the rural areas where majority of the country's poor live. The project has supported a study on the linkages between sustainable land management and poverty. The study provides an analysis of factors affecting, or contributing to, adoption of SLM practices by the poor households and offers recommendations to address constraints of the poor households to adopt SLM

practices. At the operational level, there were no distinct SLM field interventions targeted directly to address poverty. However, it was found that 6 of the 11 Geogs, where SLM field interventions were supported by the project, had a negative income balance and three had only marginally positive income balance (see Table below). This indicates that the project had inadvertently a significant coverage of poor Geogs for field-level support of SLM interventions.

Table 4: Coverage of Geogs

Geog	Income from farm and forest products (Nu million)	Expenditure on food (Nu million)	Income balance (Nu million)
Ramjar (Trashhi Yangtse)	3.06	4.72	(-)1.66
Trashiding (Dagana)	2.83	2.82	0.01
Doban (Sarpang)	4.31	10.28	(-)5.97
Dekiling (Sarpang)	4.95	5.79	(-)0.84
Hiley (Sarpang)	4.69	9.45	(-)4.76
Jigmechhoeling (Sarpang)	2.20	4.60	(-)2.40
Tang (Bumthang)	10.74	4.20	6.54
Korphu (Trongsa)	2.95	2.61	0.34
Phangyuel (Wangdi)	6.13	2.56	3.57
Semjong (Tsirang)	3.68	3.09	0.59
Yoeseltse (Samtse)	7.11	7.92	(-)0.81

Source: Income and expenditure figures have been cited from the RNR Statistics 2009, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

Furthermore, it was noted that several Geogs, particularly Ramjar, Doban, Yoeseltse, and Trashiding, supported by the project for field-level SLM interventions have a high proportion of households constrained by unproductive land and land shortage, which can be considered poverty-inducing factors (see Table below).

Table 5: Geogs' Proportion of Households Constraints

Geog	% households reporting constraint of unproductive land	% households reporting constraint of land shortage
Ramjar (Trashhi Yangtse)	35.86	17.30
Trashiding (Dagana)	15.97	23.96
Doban (Sarpang)	16.82	35.17
Dekiling (Sarpang)	15.20	19.41
Hiley (Sarpang)	9.70	25.61
Jigmechhoeling (Sarpang)	5.82	29.31
Tang (Bumthang)	4.55	10.33
Korphu (Trongsa)	5.47	25.87
Phangyuel (Wangdi)	6.83	19.88
Semjong (Tsirang)	10.68	21.35
Yoeseltse (Samtse)	22.71	28.54

Source: % figures have been cited from the RNR Statistics 2009, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests.

7.2 Promotion of Gender Equity

There were no specific project interventions aimed at promoting gender equity. Field project interventions were carried out on an all-inclusive basis making no distinction between the genders, thus making gender equity indiscernible. The only key instance of promotion of gender equity was evident in the local community consultations for NAP preparation. Project staff had stressed to the community mobilizers that the participants for the local community consultations should be a balanced mix of youth, elders, and women. Of the total 404 participants in the NAP local community consultations, 91 (22.5 %) were women.

7.3 Governance

The delivery of field project interventions were conducted through the local institutions namely the Geog administrations and Geog RNR extension centres. This would have contributed to the improved capacity for local governance and public service delivery pertaining to sustainable land management. In addition, several SLM training programs were targeted at individuals who are a critical part of the local governance structure. These included Dzongkhag RNR staff, Geog extension staff, and Gups who are elected heads of their Geogs. Interactions with a few of these training recipients during the evaluation suggested that they now had better understanding of SLM issues and SLM practices, and were constantly in dialogue with the local communities to incorporate SLM activities in the local development plans. Some of the field interventions supported by the project have bolstered local government leadership for activities to address land degradation. A case in point is the ability of the Dzongkhag administration to provide demonstrable leadership for land degradation risk reduction work in Ramjar Geog as a result of the support from the project.

8.0 ADDRESSING RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MID TERM REVIEW

A Joint Mid Term Review for the Danish Environment and Urban Sector Program Support (EUSPS) Project, the WB SLM Project and the UNDP assisted SLM–MSP project was done in September 8-19, 2008. In addition to the normal objectives of a midterm review, the rationale for the joint review was to highlight on the prospects of harmonization.

The review was slanted to reviewing the EUSPS Project and how it can contribute to, as well as benefit from, the WB SLM and UNDP MSP projects. Nonetheless, there are some aspects of the JMTR that are relevant to the MSP.

The MTR acknowledged increased understanding of natural resources management issues through the conduct of several studies. It noted that in EUSPS sites, there was a strong demand for short term agriculture oriented investments vis a vis investments in NRM. Training activities under EUSPS were not result based and therefore actual benefits were difficult to track. The review acknowledged that the EUSPS could not generate the model for decentralized NRM planning.

A major recommendation was for the EUSPS to be included in the purview of existing institutional mechanisms of the SLMP and MSP Project. This would be the entry point for promoting the incorporation of SLM concerns in efforts to develop decentralized NRM planning and investments at the local government level. It was also hoped that this mechanism would be sustained in a new Danish assisted program that would continue its support to decentralized NRM.

The JMTR's recommendations focused on the need for harmonized planning through the institutional mechanisms such as the MTAC. There were no specific recommendations for the MSP to address. The evaluation team noted that both the MTAC and Board begun to include EUSPS concerns in its discussions. After the MTR, NSSC submitted 15 SLM proposals to EUSPS in 2008 and 10 were funded. The funded projects involved training, database development, facilities improvement and SLM extension work with some Dzongkhags among others. It is assumed that the resulting information was used by the EUSPS for their work.

Available plans and reports did not however indicate discrete collaborative activities to further **develop** local government based NRM planning methods, an interest of the EUSPS. This is largely because the Project is already terminated in 2009. However, there is an increasing overall awareness of the feasibility of mainstreaming SLM at the local levels through the Dzongkhag and Geog level planning processes.

9.0 LESSONS LEARNED

- The more mainstreamed the implementation of a project is within a recipient institution, better are the chances of internalization and sustainability of project benefits. The use of existing institutional set-up within the government for the operational management and implementation of this project has enabled internalization of project benefits. For instance, the recipients of GIS training support from MSP-SLM are now a part of the larger team involved in preparing land use and cover maps for all Dzongkhags and Geogs. Similarly, the process of adoption and the operationalization of the NAP are being facilitated at the upstream policy level by the Policy and Planning Division of the MoAF, the same parent ministry as the NSSC which managed and implemented the project.
- The design of projects that aim to achieve a new policy/ program product –such as a NAP in the case of this project –need to realistically take into account the full range of processes and time required to secure adequate participatory, political and bureaucratic support. The processes and time required are often under-estimated resulting in partial accomplishments during project implementation.
- Project design is sometimes affected by changes in institutional, policy and political circumstances as a result of the time gap between project formulation and project inception. A key missed opportunity in the case of MSP-SLM was the use of the project inception workshop to review and revise the project design, (strategic results framework) taking into accounts the circumstances at the time of project inception. Consequently, there was some incongruity in the project design. For instance, the project had targeted to mainstream SLM recommendations in the 10th Five-Year Plan by year 2 of the project. However, by the time the project got underway the 10th Five-Year Plan formulation was basically completed and by the time the series of consulting studies providing SLM recommendations were completed, the 10th Five-Year Plan was well on course of implementation.
- The implementation schedule/ timetable of projects that seek to mainstream a particular concept; approach or practice in national development policies and plans needs to fully consider the national development planning cycle. This particular project started towards the end of Bhutan's Ninth Five-Year Plan and ended well before the mid-term of the 10th Five-Year Plan. Consequently, the pursuit of SLM mainstreaming as a project deliverable was late for the ongoing 10th Five-Year Plan and a bit too early for the oncoming Eleventh Five-Year Plan.
- Implementation partnerships between institutions are critical for projects that have a combination of policy and technical objectives. In the case of this project, it would have been more effective and the project benefits more enhanced had it fostered implementation partnership between Policy and Planning Division of MoAF (for the NAP component, which was basically policy and program oriented) and NSSC (for the field interventions and capacity development components).
- Land degradation issues may be better addressed through a landscape approach than farm/ household-level approach, more so in a country like Bhutan because of its mountainous terrain and complex natural drainage. During the interactions with the local communities of Loduma village (Trashiding Geog), it was noted there was to a certain

extent a natural recognition among them of the landscape approach for sustainable land management. They intended to construct structures to protect lands of absentee households as they felt that the unprotected lands may trigger landslides/ soil erosion and affect other lands including the ones where land protection/SLM measures have been applied. This also goes to reinforce that the local people can be very perceptive on how to address land degradation in their given environments.

10. CONCLUSION /RATING SUMMARY

Overall Progress towards Achieving Project Objective and Outcomes and Outputs (Preliminary Only)

Objective of the Project:

To strengthen the enabling environment for sustainable land management (SLM) while ensuring broad-based political and participatory support for the process.

Project Outcomes	Description of Target Indicator	Status as at October 2010	R	Eff e	Effi c	Overall Rating
Outcome 1: National Action Program(NAP) is completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAP draft completed during the 1st 6 months. • NAP adopted by RGoB by Y1. • NAP widely disseminated by Y2 • NAP document contains a minimum of ten priority projects (research/ demonstration) that address SLM priorities. 	<p>-Tech Draft of NAP completed in June 2010, i.e. 15 months after the initially targeted date.</p> <p>-NAP is based on substantive consultations on problem identification and situation analysis at the national, regional and local levels. –</p> <p>- Solution identification and validation were rapid and somewhat incomplete.</p> <p>-Relevant Interdisciplinary and multi sectoral NAP components identified but without costing and prioritization. MoAF plans to address after NAP approval</p> <p>- Endorsed by MoAF to GHNCS, presently under review. PPD advocating adoption by December 2010 and mainstreaming in the 11th Five-Year Plan.</p> <p>-12 project sets of good research questions identified but</p>	HS	S	Ms	S

		project scope not well defined				
<p>Outcome 2: Capacity for Sustainable Land Management is enhanced</p> <p>Indicator :</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources capacity strengthened in SLM at local, Dzongkhag and national levels –(x number of personnel trained .(1) • Institutional capacity for assessing, monitoring and documenting land resources achieved by upgrading GIS facilities by Y3. • Demonstration of SLM best practices established in 20 dzongkhags and additional demonstration sites for up-scaling demonstrations identified Y3. • Manuals, guidelines and pamphlets of SLM prepared and disseminated by Y3. • A minimum of six project ideas and project concepts on SLM completed by Y3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Capacity of MoAF staff improved- they provided most of training services - Good mix of training modules developed complemented with fairly good quality content of training materials - Team of trainers developed through Training of Trainers (TOT) - GIS capacity improved. 3 trained staff train another 5; nation-wide land cover map being updated - soil data base developed; technical gaps identified and being addressed - Best practices demonstrated in at least 8 Dzongkhags - Farmers in pilot sites attest to effectiveness; SLM structures in place - Replication in adjacent villages reported by farmers (in site visited) - High demand from Geogs for NSS services attested by increased requests for NSSC visits - Two extension modalities are being used: a) onetime event in a Dzongkhag in response to a Dzongkhag 	HS	S	S	S

		<p>request that focuses on awareness building and demonstration of remedial actions on landslide prone areas ; and b) multi- year presence in an area demonstrating on farm SLM practices and group work</p> <p>- Unclear follow up program through NSSC working at arrangement with RNR centres to sustain follow up in demonstration sites</p> <p>(note :documentation of learning's are insufficient to recommend improvements in extension system (not required in Log frame)</p> <p>-x publications ,mostly for extension personnel</p>				
<p>Outcome 3: Mainstreaming and harmonization of sustainable land management is accomplished.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations for inclusion of SLM into the 10th Five-Year Plan completed by Y2. • Recommendations for SLM policy and legal reform to be incorporated into relevant national policy documents completed by Y3 • SLM harmonized with other national development and national and international environmental frameworks by Y3. • Existing funding mechanisms reviewed by Y3 	<p>- NAP did not make it to the 10th Five-Year Plan ; however the PPDO has suggested that the MoAF aim for inclusion to the 11th FYP.</p> <p>-11 Technical studies supported to better understand constraints to SLM mainstreaming in different sectors.</p> <p>- Active engagement of the National Land Commission to incorporate SLM in Nat land Policy and Programs</p> <p>- GHNCS indicates that Geogs have increased their planning efforts and budget allocation for SLM. This is evident to GHNCS from the review of annual budget proposals over the past 5-6 years.</p> <p>-NEC Secretary (a former Dzongda and SLM practitioner with MSP support) indicates commitment to ensure SLM is incorporated in updated EA procedures starting with the</p>	S	S	S	S

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations held with line ministries and donors on new mechanisms to mobilizing resources for SLM projects by Y2 • New funding mechanisms to mobilize resources for SLM projects formulated by Year 	<p>reporting system from EA implementers at Geog level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching modules for the non formal training program of the Ministry of Education have been developed and presently being piloted <p>Funding Sources :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Integrated Financing Strategy report provides good benchmark of funding situation but does not provide recommendations on priority actions - NSSC started dialogue with the WB on possible support to selected items of NAP 				
--	---	---	--	--	--	--

(1) 6 officers trained at regional institutions by Y3; 100 local level politicians trained in SLM by Y3; 35 extension agents trained in SLM by Y2].

11.0 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

11.1 Related to Outcome 1: NAP

- The technical content of the NAP was done nearly a year-and-half back and some very visible policy/ institutional changes have occurred since (e.g. change of institutional names such as MoAF; movement of RNR-RDCs from CoRRB to DoA, formulation of National land Policy etc.). It is thus recommended, that the NAP undergo a quick review (one to two days) and if necessary, key sections updated before adoption; the MTAC support may be tapped for this purpose and prioritize amendments that should be made without taking too much time and still make it to the Cabinet Agenda.
- As planned by MoAF, the NAP actions in the current Draft should be subjected to prioritization and costing by concerned NAP agencies with the facilitation of the PPD and NSSC.
- Building on the results of the IFS, define the priority areas of NAP for financing and start working on potential financing mechanisms and sources (internal, external). Determine measures on how to translate the good research questions formulated in 2010 into full blown concepts (see Section 4.1.1) project proposals since the gestation period for project approval will take time.
- Current UNCCD expectation is for NAPs to be aligned with the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy (2008-2018). It is too late in the process to expect a full-scale, structured alignment. However, it would be useful to develop a matrix showing the linkages between NAP and the UNCCD Strategy and incorporate it as an annex to the NAP.
- Plan for active advocacy of NAP needs to be developed and implemented to take the NAP beyond MoAF given that many NAP activities pertain to sectors/ agencies outside the MoAF. This can be started even before formal adoption takes place. In this connection, MoAF should identify the unit to co – lead the advocacy process together with the NSSC since this now deals with agencies external to MoAF. This would naturally be the PPD.

11.2 Related to Outcome 2: Capacity Development for SLM

Human Resources Capacity

- Convene trainers who received ToT and together with other resource persons, identify lessons learned from the 3 year training experience. Develop an action plan for a) follow-up information support to former training participants b) fine-tuning the training modules for future application and c) support and incentive system for the trainers so that they can effectively do their roles on a long term basis.
- Where possible, identify farmer trainers who can be supported so that they can influence more farmers more effectively and help in the further dissemination of SLM practices.
- Examine and encourage collaboration with training service providers (e.g. College of Natural Resources, Rural Development Training Centre, and UWICE), wherever possible in order to combine pedagogic and technical skills involved in SLM training programs.

- Where future projects involve capacity development, the log frame/ strategic results framework needs to include qualitative-based survey (QBS) as means/source of verification of improvement in capacity. Physical targets, e.g. 35 extension agents trained, 10 SLM training events conducted, will not mean much if it is not known what proportion of the training recipients can actually apply or have applied their knowledge and skills imparted by the training.

Best Practices

- In collaboration with SLMP, assess the extent to which village level landscape level planning is already incorporated in current training and extension modules. Where appropriate, consider including discussion on micro watershed level planning to complement on farm level planning for soil and water management structures. This will ensure long term synchronization and stability of on-farm interventions together with other earthworks (rural roads). This could also "elevate the image" of on – farm soil and water conservation works as important small infrastructure works for flood control and thus worthy of priority public investments.
- Accelerate current NSSC plans to collaborate with RNR-RDCs to document the learnings, provide follow up extension and action research work in the pilot sites. This will ensure that valuable learnings from successful experience are fully captured and used for improving extension delivery systems for more effective up scaling of SLM practices. Share these learnings to the SLM Project as input to their planning for their final years. This act can help better articulate the value added of the capacity building work of MSP to that of the WB SLM Project.
- Future training support for SLM should include development and dissemination of the training and communications materials (which are low on text and high on visuals given the low literacy level of rural communities) that can be used by local communities without having to frequently depend on extension agents for interpretation.
- Where future projects involve capacity development, the log frame/ strategic results framework, there is a need to include qualitative-based survey (QBS) as means/source of verification of improvement in capacity. Physical targets, e.g. 35 extension agents trained, 10 SLM training events conducted, will not mean much if it is not known what proportion of the training recipients can actually apply or have applied their knowledge and skills imparted by the training.

11.3 Related to Outcome 3: SLM Mainstreaming

- Take stock of how the recommendations of various consulting studies/ assessments supported through the project are being used or plan to be used. Develop the action plan for full utilization of the studies.
- Identify and establish the advocacy working group within MoAF who can provide leadership in SLM advocacy, since this cannot be done alone by NSSC. The PPD/MoAF potentially has an equally important role here.
- Working with former MTAC members, identify specific policy instruments in each Ministry that are entry points for SLM and where advocacy efforts can be focused and monitored more closely even on a semi formal basis. This could build on the example of close collaboration between NSSC and NLC in the development of the New Land Policy.
- Monitor and study recent information from GNHCS about the increase in resources being allocated by Geogs for SLM into their local plans and budgets. Concurrently obtain

feedback from Geog leaders on gaps that they perceive and how future MoAF support can be improved to support their SLM initiatives. Based on this feedback, share learning with the DANIDA and related efforts to develop NRM oriented local level planning so that this may contribute to the development of better ways to encourage Dzongkhag and Geogs to incorporate SLM in local programs and budgets.

- Complete the IFS study by developing recommendations on which actions may be prioritized and provide detailed next steps.

Cross cutting / project design recommendations for future GEF assisted initiatives on SLM:

- There may be a need to further synchronize the efforts of UNCCD, GEF and UNDP so that appropriate guidance to NAP preparers is provided adequately and in a timely manner.
- There may be a need to revisit the premise that NAP can be prepared and adopted in one year's time with a very limited budget (USD 15 K) and the official process of approval for which the Project does not have control of. This scale of support does not seem to match the new UNCCD requirements i.e. must be strongly science-based; have identified hot spots and bright spots; highly participatory; IFS must be done in tandem with the technical studies etc. Such requirements need time and some resources for them to materialize. (Note: The PSC was right when it advocated at the start of the project not to rush the NAP preparation process. UNDP Bhutan also provided supplemental resources).
- Ensure that the M & E plan is developed at the start of the project (or just before or after the inception workshop), in order to flesh out very general indicators of the project, particularly those involving capacity building and mainstreaming. For instance, the project activity entitled "demonstration of best practices" could benefit from further elaboration. The terms "demonstration" and "best practices" have different meanings to different sectors. One view could simply imply physical demonstration of practice; while another view could imply developing the extension and technology diffusion process or of local governments picking up on the process.
- In future instances where a full size and medium sized project of similar nature are simultaneously being implemented, the M & E system cited above should also aim to help project managers and investors (GEF) attribute the right results to the right project.
- Define more clearly the interdependence and phasing between the NAP and mainstreaming components, so that overall objectives are addressed in a comprehensive and integrated manner. For instance, there is a need to elaborate why the NAP should be prepared and completed at the first year of the project i.e. so that it can also guide the mainstreaming component. On the other hand the mainstreaming component considers immediately "do-able" activities to introduce the SLM concept into the public dialogue even as the NAP is still being organized.
- In designing project management schemes, there is a need to specify as much as possible agencies that will be involved in implementing multiple concerns. Offices handling soil management support services are the natural targets to become executing agencies. In reality the nature of an SLM Project involves a lot of policy level work (NAP). It is often beyond the natural strengths of a service oriented such as the Soil Services Department /Bureau /Unit of a country. Therefore, the role of Planning offices or equivalent units (within the Ministry of Agriculture) that deal with policy, should be clearly set during project design. The Soil Service Unit would still be the best overall implementing agency but the role of planning units should be factored.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Terms of Reference (TOR)

Terminal Evaluation

Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan (Medium Sized Project)

Project/Award Number: 00053783/00045516

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Medium Sized Project (MSP) on Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Project through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Project is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests through the National Soil Services Centre (NSSC) under the Department of Agriculture. The project is implemented over three years (2007-2009). The Project duration has been extended till the end of October 2010. The Project receives guidance from the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Multi-Sectoral Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC).

The UNDP/GEF MSP compliments the ongoing GEF FSP implemented by World Bank and the lessons learned from the pilot activities under the Bank's SLMP have directly fed into the preparation of the National Action Plan (NAP) to combat land degradation under the completed MSP. Capacity building efforts under MSP mainly focused on Dzongkhags (districts) that were not covered under SLMP. The collaboration between the two projects facilitated mainstreaming of SLM approaches in different sectors and levels of government and influenced policies and regulations pertaining to land resource utilization and management. In addition, the MSP and the GEF/World Bank SLMP share one MTAC.

Despite growing official recognition of the problem of land degradation in Bhutan, SLM objectives have not been adequately mainstreamed into policies, regulations, strategies, plans, educational systems, etc prior to the 10th Five-Year Plan. There is no general recognition on the part of decision makers that land degradation is a significant barrier to sustained economic development. Although integrated farming systems are a way of life for local communities, the planning of local resource utilization is mostly guided by more specific sectoral objectives and policies. This suggests a strong need to create awareness and build capacity for integrative dialogue and land-use planning among all stakeholders, including farmers.

The common capacity gaps in land degradation include: i) individual level - lack of technical capacity (mostly at the regional and Dzongkhag level, for implementation); ii) institutional level - financial and human resources, monitoring capacity for enforcement of its rules and regulations; and, iii) systemic level – there is a lack of common understanding and mechanism to coordinate and address common land management issues.

Project Budget & Duration:

The total approved budget for the project is US\$ 1,010,000

Global Environmental Facility	US\$
GEF: Project	500,000
Sub-total GEF	500,000
Co-financing committed	
Royal Government of Bhutan	350,000
UNDP	25,000
Dzongkhags	85,000

AMEPP	50,000
Sub-total co-financing	510,000
Project duration	3.9 years (January 2007 to September 2010)

Goal:

The Project contributes towards the achievement of the following long term goal: The agricultural, forest and other terrestrial land uses of Bhutan are sustainable, productive systems that maintain ecosystem productivity and ecological functions while contributing directly to the environmental, economic and social well-being of the country.

Objective:

The objective of the project is to build capacity in SLM in appropriate government and civil society institutions and user groups and mainstream SLM into government planning and strategy development.

Outcomes and Outputs:

The Project has three outcomes and eleven outputs:

Outcome 1: National Action Program (NAP) is completed.

Output 1.1: Draft NAP document on land degradation;

Output 1.2: Draft NAP finalized and adopted by RGoB;

Output 1.3: Nation-wide dissemination of the contents of NAP, among all levels of Bhutan's society.

Outcome 2: Capacity for SLM is enhanced.

Output 2.1: Enhanced human resources capacity for SLM at local, Dzongkhag and national levels;

Output 2.2: Enhanced institutional capacity for assessing, monitoring and documenting land resources;

Output 2.3: Best practices for promoting SLM in the country;

Output 2.4: Project ideas and project concepts prepared for SLM projects identified in the NAP.

Outcome 3: Mainstreaming and harmonization of SLM is accomplished

Output 3.1: 10th FYP includes Sustainable Land Management;

Output 3.2: Policy and legal reform recommendations relating to SLM prepared; 3

Output 3.3: SLM harmonized with other national

Output 3.3: SLM harmonized with other national development and environmental frameworks (e.g. Biodiversity Action Plan);

Output 3.4: Funding mechanisms developed for SLM Programs and projects, including incentives for private sector involvement.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF M & E policies and procedures, all projects must undergo terminal evaluation at the end of the project. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts, ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvement; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iv) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned.

Terminal Evaluations (TE) are intended to provide an objective and independent assessment of project implementation and impact, including achievement of global environmental

benefits and lessons learned to guide future conservation efforts including the design and implementation of other UNDP and GEF projects. Specifically, the TE will assess the extent to which planned project outcomes and outputs have been achieved, as well as assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the project as defined in the GEF Evaluation Office guidelines for Terminal Evaluations. The evaluation will also evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of project design, implementation, monitoring and adaptive management and sustainability of project outcomes, including the project exit strategy. The evaluation covers the entire project including non-GEF financed components.

3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The TE should cover the following areas:

Appropriateness of the project concept and design

- a. Project relevance and consistency with country priorities and the GEF Land Degradation Focal Area (specifically Strategic Objective 1 & 2 in GEF 4, i.e. to develop an enabling environment that will place Sustainable Land Management in the mainstream of development policy and practices at the regional, national, and local levels; and To upscale SLM investments that generate mutual benefits for the global environment and local livelihoods).
- b. Ownership of the project at the national and local levels.
- c. Stakeholder participation at national and local levels.
- d. Effectiveness in realizing project immediate objectives, planned outcomes and outputs, and the extent to which these have contributed towards strengthening the institutional, organizational and technical capability of the government in achieving its long-term sustainable development objectives (including environmental management goals).
- e. Sustainability of project achievements and impacts, including financial and institutional sustainability, and an assessment of planned replication and exit strategies
- f. Review management arrangements and the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System, including the quality and timeliness of inputs, activities, responsiveness of project management to changes in the project environment and other monitoring feedback. Evaluate whether project design allowed for flexibility in responding to changes in the project environment.
- g. Financial planning and sustainability, including the timely delivery and use of committed co-financing.
- h. Implementing Agency's Supervision and Backstopping
- i. Cost-effectiveness: were project outputs and outcomes achieved in the most cost-effective manner? Were there any delays that affected efficiency?
- j. Monitoring and evaluation and the application of adaptive management principles (including effective use of log frame, UNDP risk management system, the annual Project Implementation Reviews, and other monitoring tools and mechanisms as appropriate)
- k. Completion of the Tracking Tool for Strategic Priority 1 & 2.

Issues to be considered:

1. Review the achievements of the project and assess its effectiveness in solving/mitigating the land degradation problem that was to be addressed;
2. Determine the effect of the project on target groups or institutions (the national level stakeholders, Dzongkhag, Geog and research staffs, communities of the pilot sites, school students etc.)
3. Review the recommendations of the MTR and assess how the MTR had helped adaptive management of the project.
4. The GEF, UNDP and other donors are paying particular attention to risk analysis and management. UNDP has developed a risk management system within ATLAS and guidance on using this system, which is also now incorporated in the annual PIR. The evaluators are requested to determine how effectively the risk management system is being used as an adaptive management tool. Risks may be of a financial, socio-political, institutional, operational, environmental (or other) type.
5. Considering that UNDP is concerned about poverty reduction, local governance and promotion of gender equity, the review will be required to look at these cross cutting issues.
 - Poverty reduction: How has the project contributed to poverty reduction of communities through SLM initiatives in the pilot sites and enhanced sustainable livelihoods?
 - Governance: How has the project facilitated the participation of the local communities in natural resource management and decision making processes?
 - Promotion of gender equity: Has the project considered gender sensitivity or equal participation of man and women and boys and girls in decision making processes?
6. Describe the main lessons that have emerged in terms of:
 - strengthening country ownership;
 - strengthening stakeholder participation;
 - application of adaptive management strategies;
 - efforts to secure sustainability;
 - knowledge transfer;
 - role of M & E in project implementation and its effectiveness.
 - etc. (e.g. fostering community investments in NRM)
7. Capacity Development: Assess the extent to which national project implementers have been adequately trained and enhanced capacity to take over technical and professional responsibilities as envisaged in the project design.

Ratings of Key Review Criteria

In accordance with GEF Guidelines for Terminal Evaluations, the evaluators will provide ratings for the following as indicated broadly below:

1. Rate the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of different Project Outcomes as:

HS: Highly Satisfactory

S: Satisfactory

MS: Moderately Satisfactory

MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory

US: Unsatisfactory
HS: Highly Unsatisfactory

2. Rate the sustainability of project outcomes along 4 key dimensions, **Financial Resources, Socio-Political, Institutional Framework & Governance and Environmental** using the following scale:

Likely (L)
Moderately Likely (ML)
Moderately Unlikely (MU)
Unlikely (U)

3. Rate the Project's M & E system as follows:

HS: Highly Satisfactory
S: Satisfactory
MS: Moderately Satisfactory
MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory
US: Unsatisfactory
HS: Highly Unsatisfactory

Additionally, the evaluators will examine the following questions:

- Did this project contribute to the establishment of a long term monitoring system? If it did not, should the project have included such a component?
- If it did, what were the accomplishments and short comings in establishment of this system?
- Is the system sustainable, i.e. is it embedded in a proper institutional structure and has financing?
- Is the information generated by this M & E system being used as originally intended?

4. PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION

The main products expected from the evaluation are:

- presentation(s) to key stakeholders;
 - an interim draft report;
 - a final comprehensive terminal evaluation report
 - an updated Tracking Tool for Strategic Priority 1 & 2 of GEF 4.
- a. The presentation on the conduct of TE and its preliminary findings will have to be made.
- b. Reporting: The main final output of the evaluation will be an independent and comprehensive Terminal Evaluation report with annexes as needed. The minimum requirements for the content of the final TE report are given below:

Summary

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

Introduction

- a. Purpose of evaluation
- b. Key issues addressed
- c. Methodology of the evaluation
- d. Structure of the evaluation

The project and its development context

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

Findings and Conclusions

1. Project formulation

- Implementation approach
- Country ownership/Drivenness
- Stakeholder participation
- Replication approach
- Cost-effectiveness
- UNDP comparative advantage
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Indicators
- Management arrangements

2. Implementation

- Financial planning
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Execution and implementation modalities
- Management by UNDP country office
- Coordination and operational issues

3. Results

- Attainment of planned objectives & outcomes
- Sustainability of impacts (including policy impact and evidence of mainstreaming biodiversity conservation approaches into sustainable development strategies and programs)
- Contribution to national capacity development

4. Recommendations

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

Lessons learned

- Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

Annexes

- TOR
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaires used and summary of results
- Co-financing and Leverages Resources (see Table 1 attached)

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

Lessons learned

- Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

5. Evaluation Team Composition & Responsibilities

The TE mission for SLM project will comprise of an international and a local consultant. The international consultant, who will have in depth understanding of UNDP and GEF projects including evaluation experience, will be the team leader and will have the overall responsibility for developing the evaluation methodology, leading the evaluation and delivering the key products expected from the evaluation, including coordinating the inputs from the national consultant. The national consultant will provide supportive roles both in terms of professional back up, translation and conduct of local meetings.

Under the guidance and close consultations with NSSC/MoAF and UNDP, the consultants will be responsible in desk research of existing management plans, survey/research/evaluation reports and database. Besides, the consultants will consult all the partners and institutions and gather information and opinions on implementation processes like management and coordination; fund release mechanism and project management capacity and see whether this has improved project delivery. They will visit field sites and consult extension agents and communities and directly record issues, benefits and gaps and relate them to the project achievements. Finally, they will compile them into a report highlighting both constraints and opportunities suggesting recommendations and lessons learnt for future directions of both the donor and implementer.

The consultants will sign an agreement with UNDP Bhutan and will be bound by its terms and conditions set in the agreement.

6. Methodology

The evaluation methodology will be determined by the evaluation team, guided by the requirements of GEF and UNDP as articulated in various guidelines, policies and manuals on the conduct of evaluations for GEF projects as well as key project documents such as the approved GEF project brief, the final UNDP project document, the inception workshop report, the project log-frame and annual budgets and work plans, the annual Project Implementation Review, Project Board, and PMT meeting minutes as available, and other technical reports and documents as relevant. The evaluation methodology should be clearly documented in the final evaluation report including comprehensive details of the following:

- Documents reviewed
- Interviews conducted
- Consultations held with all key stakeholders
- Project sites visited
- Techniques and approaches used for data gathering, verification and analysis

7. Conduct of the Evaluation

Under the leadership of the Team Leader, the Evaluation Team will work independently but will liaise closely with UNDP CO, and NSSC/MoAF. The evaluation mission will also liaise periodically with the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) at the UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok to ensure that UNDP-GEF and GEF requirements are being met.

The team will visit the project site to ensure adequate consultation with all key stakeholders. Towards the end of the field evaluation, presentation will be made to all key stakeholders in Thimphu. After the presentation the team will take note of verbal and/or written responses to its presentation and consider these in preparing an interim draft evaluation report that will be provided to NSSC/UNDP before the team leaves Bhutan for distribution to stakeholders. NSSC/UNDP will circulate the draft report to all stakeholders requesting written feedback and finalized by the evaluators within the dates reflected in the TE schedule.

While the evaluation team is free to determine the actual layout of the final evaluation report, this must include the minimum content requirements mentioned earlier. The Team Leader will forward the final report by e-mail to UNDP CO Bhutan and the UNDP-GEF RTA in Bangkok for onward distribution to all stakeholders. The evaluators will be responsible for the contents, quality and veracity of the report.

Tentative Schedule for the TE

The consultant's input will be required for 15 days (9 days in the field and 6 days to work from home) with the terminal evaluation tentatively scheduled to begin from 2 November 2010. The tentative Program is given below.

Dates	Time	Program	Remarks
01 Nov. 2010	0930-1200	Arrive Thimphu and sort out programs with the national consultant	Paro to Thimphu
02 Nov. 2010		Meeting with stakeholders in Thimphu:	Thimphu.
03 Nov 2010		Meetings with stakeholders continued in Thimphu	
04 Nov 2010		Travel to Field – One site	Field
05 Nov 2010		Field work – consultation with dzongkhag, gewog, research staff and communities.	Field
06 Nov 2010		Field Work Continued	
07 Nov 2010		Return to Thimphu	
08 Nov 2010		Consultation and preparation of the briefing.	MoA Conference hall.
09 Nov 2010		De-briefing to the stakeholders	
10 Nov 2010		International Consultant leave Bhutan	
11-16 Nov 2010		Work on the draft report from home.	National consultant input via email.
22 Nov 2010		Submit the first draft to UNDP, NSSC and UNDP-GEF RTA electronically.	Via email
1-5 Dec 2010		Revise the document based on the comments of the stakeholders and IA/EA.	
10 Dec 2010		Submit the final document.	

Focal persons

Focal Persons:

UNDP Country Office, Bhutan

Karma Rapten, Head- Energy, Environment and Disaster Management Unit

karma.rapten@undp.org

Tashi Dorji, Project Support Officer, Energy, Environment and Disaster Management Unit

tashi.dorji@undp.org

UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok

Doley Tshering, Regional Technical Advisor, Ecosystems and Biodiversity

doley.tshering@undp.org
National Soil Services Centre
Karma Dema Dorji, Program Director
kddorji@gmail.com

Annex 1: Co-financing as on 30 June 2010

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (mill US\$)		Government (mill US\$)		Other* (mill US\$)		Total (mill US\$)		Total Disbursement (mill US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants										
Loans/Concessions (Compared to market rate)										
- Credit										
- Equity investments										
- In-kind support										
- Other (*)										
TOTALS										

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

REQUISITE QUALIFICATIONS

The candidates should have at least MSc or higher degree in Environment, Natural Resource Management or related fields and should have adequate experience in evaluation of GEF project. The candidate should be physically fit.

International consultant

1. Professional background in natural resource management or related fields with experience in land management, with in-depth understanding of land issues as well as community-based natural resource management. A minimum of 10 years of working experience is required;
2. Highly knowledgeable of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, and experience in evaluation of technical assistance projects with major donor agencies; previous evaluation experience of UNDP-GEF projects is an advantage.
3. Familiar with SLM approaches in Asia-Pacific either through management and/or implementation or through consultancies in evaluation of land related projects. Understanding of local actions contributing to global benefits is crucial;
4. Demonstrated ability to assess complex situations succinctly distills critical issues, and draw forward-looking conclusions and recommendations;
5. Ability and experience to lead multi disciplinary and national teams, and deliver quality reports within the given time.
6. Writing and communication will be in English, and must have excellent communication skills in English. The consultant must bring his/her own computing equipment.

Local consultant

1. Professional background in Environment, Natural Resources Management, and related fields with a minimum of 8 years of relevant experience;
2. Demonstrated skills and experience in SLM project implementation and management, and related policies and legislations in relation to land degradation and management;
3. Proficient in writing and communicating both in English and Dzongkha. Ability to interpret for the international counterpart and also to translate necessary written documents to English.

Specific Tasks

In particular, the consultants will be responsible for:

International Consultant/ Team Leader

The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the work and operation of the evaluation team, including the coordination of inputs from different team members. The TL will also have overall accountability for the production of the agreed outputs. Additionally, the TL is responsible for the following:

- (i) Desk research of existing management plans, survey/research/evaluation reports and database.
- (ii) Conduct fieldwork together with counterpart and interview stakeholders, extension agents and communities to generate authentic information/opinions.
- (iii) Write and compile reports.
- (iv) Make a presentation of key findings highlighting achievements, constraints and make practical recommendations to decision makers and stakeholders.
- (v) Finalize the evaluation report

Local Consultant

- (i) The local consultant will assist and collaborate with the team leader in all the tasks mentioned above including field work, desk based translation, report writing as agreed with Team Leader and assist with translation in the field.

ANNEX 1A Assigning Ratings to Relevance; Effectiveness & Efficiency;

M& E Systems and Sustainability

Excerpts of GEF publication entitled “Guidelines for GEF Agencies
in Conducting Terminal Evaluations

The following are selection sections that explain the process for assigning a rating for particular aspects of a project as part of a terminal Evaluation. Item numbers are lifted directly from the Guide.

Assessment of Project Results

16. The evaluation of relevancy, effectiveness, and efficiency will be as objective as possible and will include sufficient and convincing empirical evidence. Ideally, the project monitoring system should deliver quantifiable information that can lead to a robust assessment of project effectiveness and efficiency. Since projects have different objectives, assessed results are not comparable and cannot be aggregated.

Outcomes will be rated as follows for relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

a. **Highly satisfactory (HS).** The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.

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

c. **Moderately satisfactory (MS).** The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.

d. **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU).** The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.

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

f. **Highly unsatisfactory (HU).** The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency.

Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of Project Outcomes

19. The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, minimum requirement 3, specifies that a terminal evaluation will assess, at minimum, the “likelihood of sustainability of outcomes at project termination, and provide a rating for this.” Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of continued benefits after the GEF project ends. Given the uncertainties involved, it may be difficult to have a realistic a priority assessment of sustainability of outcomes. Therefore, assessment of sustainability of outcomes will give special attention to analysis of the risks that are likely to affect the persistence of project outcomes. This assessment should explain how the risks to project outcomes will affect continuation of benefits after the GEF project ends. It will include both exogenous and endogenous risks. The following four dimensions or aspects of risks to sustainability will be addressed:

a. **Financial risks.** Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once GEF assistance ends? (Such resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors or income-generating activities; these can also include trends that indicate the likelihood that, in future, there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project outcomes.)

b. **Socio-political risks.** Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership

(including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?

c. **Institutional framework and governance risks.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits? Are requisite systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know-how, in place?

d. **Environmental risks.** Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? The terminal evaluation should assess whether certain activities will pose a threat to the sustainability of the project outcomes. For example, construction of a dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project.

Assessment of M & E Systems

23. The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy specifies that a terminal evaluation will assess whether the project met the minimum requirements for project design of M & E (minimum requirement 1) and the implementation of the project M & E plan (minimum requirement 2).

24. **M & E design.** Projects should have a sound M & E plan to monitor results and track progress toward achieving project objectives. An M & E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results and adequate funding for M & E activities. The time frame for various M & E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.

25. **M & E plan implementation.** A terminal evaluation should verify that an M & E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of progress toward project objectives by collecting information on chosen indicators continually throughout the project implementation period; annual project reports were complete and accurate, with well-justified ratings; the information provided by the M & E system was used during the project to improve performance and to adapt to changing needs; and projects had an M & E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M & E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure.

26. **Budgeting and funding for M & E activities.** In addition to incorporating information on funding for M & E while assessing M & E design, the evaluators will determine whether M & E was sufficiently budgeted for at the project planning stage and whether M & E was funded adequately and in a timely manner during implementation. Project M & E systems will be rated

27. As follows on quality of M & E design and quality of M & E implementation:

- a. **Highly satisfactory (HS).** There were no shortcomings in the project M & E system.
- b. **Satisfactory (S).** There were minor shortcomings in the project M & E system.
- c. **Moderately satisfactory (MS).** There were moderate shortcomings in the project M & E system.
- d. **Moderately unsatisfactory (MU).** There were significant shortcomings in the project M & E system.
- e. **Unsatisfactory (U).** There were major shortcomings in the project M & E system.
- f. **Highly unsatisfactory (HU).** The project had no M & E system.

28. The overall rating of M & E during project implementation will be based solely on the quality of M & E plan implementation. The ratings on quality at entry of M & E design and sufficiency of funding during planning and implementation will be used as explanatory variables.

Annex 2: List of Documents Reviewed

Project Documents

Project Document: UNDP/GEF Medium-size Project for Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan, January 2007, UNDP/RGoB.

Project Inception Report: UNDP/GEF Medium-size Project for Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan, March 2007, UNDP/RGoB.

Project Annual Work Plans for 2008 and 2009, UNDP Annual Project Reports for 2008 and 2009.

Minutes of Project Steering Committee meetings.

Minutes of Project Multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Committee meetings.

Project Implementation Reports for 2008 and 2009, UNDP.

Quarterly Operational Reports, UNDP-GEF.

Technical/ Programmatic Reports

Assessment of Human Resource Capacity in Sustainable Land Management at the Central, Regional and Dzongkhag Levels, December 2007, MoAF/RGoB.

Evaluation (internal) report of UNDP/GEF Medium-size Project for Building Capacity and Mainstreaming Sustainable Land Management in Bhutan, undated, MoAF/RGoB.

National Action Program to combat Land Degradation (full, final draft), 2010, MoAF/RGoB.

Review of Existing Land Resource Management Program and Practices, December 2007, MoAF/RGoB.

Review of Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management in Government Policies and Plans in Bhutan, Final Report, October 2008, MoAF/RGoB.

Study on Poverty-Sustainable Land Management Linkages in Bhutan, Consultancy Report, 2009, MoAF/RGoB.

Sustainable Land Management Interventions, Cost-Benefit Analysis Report, 2009, MoAF/RGoB.

Various reports of training supported by the MSP-SLM project.

Various technical reports on Priority themes (Fallow, Range Management etc

Evaluation Guidelines/Policy

Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation, 2008, GEF.

The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2006, GEF.

Other Relevant Documents

Atlas of Bhutan: Land Cover and Area Statistics of 20 Dzongkhags, Land Use Planning Project, MoAF/RGoB.

Bhutan 2020: A vision for peace, prosperity and happiness, 1999, RGoB.

Bhutan National Adaptation Program of Action, undated, NECS.

Bhutan's National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management and Action Plan, September 2005, NECS/RGoB.

GEF Operational Program (OP 15) on Sustainable Land Management, December 2003.

Land Degradation Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4, September 2007, GEF.

Poverty Analysis Report 2007, National Statistics Bureau, Royal Government of Bhutan.

Renewable Natural Resources Statistics 2009, MoAF/RGoB.

Tenth Five-Year Plan (2008-2013): Main Document, 2008, RGoB.

Tenth Five-Year Plan (2008-2013): Program Profiles, 2008, RGoB.

The Middle Path: National Environment Strategy for Bhutan, 1998, NECS/RGoB.

The Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the Convention (2008-2018), October 2007, UNCCD.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Final Text of the Convention, September 1994, UN General Assembly.

United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Bhutan (2008-2012), RGoB/UN.

Annex 3: List of People Interviewed/ Consulted

UNDP

1. Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Bhutan
2. Mr. Doley Tshering, Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP-Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok
3. Mr. Tashi Dorji, Program Officer, Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP Bhutan

Royal Government of Bhutan

1. Ms. Karma Dema Dorji, Program Director, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture (Project Director of MSP-SLM)
2. Mr. Tashi Wangdi, Project Manager, World Bank/GEF Sustainable Land Management Project, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture
3. Mr. Tshering Dorji, Deputy Chief Soil Survey and Land Evaluation Officer, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture
4. Mr. Chencho Norbu, Director, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
5. Ms. Tshering Pem, Soil and Plant Nutrient Supervisor, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture
6. Dr. Ugyen Tshewang, Secretary, National Environment Commission Secretariat
7. Mr. Dorji Tshering, Chief Survey Officer, National Land Commission Secretariat
8. Mr. Tenzin Chopel, Head, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
9. Mr. Tashi Jamtsho, Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
10. Mr. Gyambo Tshering, Officiating Program Director, Regional Renewable Natural Resources-Research and Development Centre, Bajo, Wangduephodrang
11. Mr. Sangay Wangdi, Deputy Chief Research Officer, Plant Protection, Regional Renewable Natural Resources-Research and Development Centre, Bajo, Wangduephodrang
12. Mr. Yeshey Zangpo, Research Assistant, Farming Systems, Regional Renewable Natural Resources-Research and Development Centre, Bajo, Wangduephodrang
13. Mr. Passang Tshering, Dzongkhag Agriculture Officer, Dagana
14. Mr. Tikaram Thapa, Geog Agriculture Extension Agent, Trashiding Geog, Dagana
15. Mr. Tshiteem, Assistant Dzongkhag Agriculture Officer, Samdrup Jongkhar (telephonic interview)
16. Mr. Norbu Wangchuk, Planning Officer, Gross National Happiness Commission Secretariat, Project MTAC member (telephonic interview)
17. Mr. S.N. Rai, former MTAC member from the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement (telephonic interview)

Local community members, Ludoma village, Trashiding Geog, Dagana Dzongkhag

1. Mr. Bhim Bahadur Shangba
2. Mr. Hasta Bahadur Shangdan
3. Ms. Dhan Maya Shangdan
4. Ms. Birumaya Shangdan
5. Ms. Bir Maya Shangdan
6. Mr. Amrit Shangdan
7. Mr. Birman Shangdan
8. Mr. Purna Bahadur Shangdan
9. Ms. Chhoekhi Maya Bomzan
10. Ms. Lachhi Maya Dumzan
11. Ms. Ganga Maya Dumzan

12. Ms. Chhimi Maya Dumzan
13. Mr. Chatur Singh Glan
14. Mr. Man Bahadur Bomzan
15. Mr. Sartap Singh Glan
16. Mr. Lal Bahdur Tamang
17. Mr. Nar Bahadur Dumzan
18. Ms. Man Maya Glan
19. Mr. Jutdra Bir Tamang
20. Mr. Phalam Singh Tamang
21. Mr. Lain Bahadur Rai
22. Mr. Tek Bahadur Rai
23. Mr. Santa Bahadur Shangba
24. Ms. Phul Maya Shangba
25. Mr. Dhanjit Shangba
26. Ms. Karna Maya Shangba
27. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Shangdan
28. Mr. Harka Bahadur Glan
29. Mr. Prem Singh Lho
30. Ms. Jas Maya Waiba

Local community leaders (SLM training recipients)

1. Mr. Tshewang Penjor, Gup, Katsho Geog, Haa Dzongkhag (telephonic interview)
2. Mr. Ugyen Dorji, Gup, Kanglung Geog, Trashigang Dzongkhag (telephonic interview)

Other People

1. Mr. Pelzang Wangchuk, Millennium Consultancy

Attendees of the Debriefing on Preliminary Findings and Comments

1. Mr. Ganesh B. Chhetri, Specialist, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
2. Mr. K.N. Ghimirey, Forestry Officer, Social Forestry Division, Department of Forests and Park Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
3. Mr. Doley Tshering, Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP-Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok
4. Mr. Tashi Dorji, Program Officer, Energy and Environment Unit, UNDP Bhutan
5. Mr. N.K. Pradhan, Specialist, Council for RNR Research of Bhutan, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
6. Mr. Jigme Wangchuk, Deputy Chief Livestock Officer, Department of Livestock, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests
7. Mr. Tshering Tashi, Environmental Specialist, National Environment Commission Secretariat
8. Mr. Jamyang, Chief Lab Officer, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture
9. Ms. Karma Dema Dorji, Program Director, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture
10. Ms. Yeshey Dema, Deputy Chief Soil Fertility and Plant Nutrient Officer, National Soil Services Centre, Department of Agriculture

Annex 4: Mission Itinerary

Date	Activity
11 Nov 2010 (Thursday)	Mr. Ed Queblatin, international consultant, arrives in Bhutan .Ed and Mr. Ugen P. Norbu, national consultant have preparatory meeting.
12 Nov. 2010 (Friday)	Meeting with UNDP officials including RTA from Bangkok at the UN House, Thimphu. Meetings with NSSC officials: Ms. Karma Dema Dorji, Program Director (also functions as the MSP-SLM Project Manager) Mr. Tashi Wangdi, Project Manager, WB/GEF SLMP Mr. Tshering Dorji, Deputy Chief Soil Survey and Land Evaluation Officer.
13 Nov 2010 (Saturday)	Field travel: proceed to Damphu (Tsirang) and overnight.
14 Nov 2010 (Sunday)	Project site visit: Loduma village, Trashiding (Dagana). Overnight at Damphu (Tsirang).
15 Nov 2010 (Monday)	Return travel to Thimphu. On the way visited the Regional RNR Research and Development Centre at Bajo and met the Officiating Program Director of the Centre and his staff.
16 Nov 2010 (Tuesday)	Meetings with government officials: Mr. Dorji Tshering, Chief Survey Officer, National Land Commission Secretariat; Dr. Ugyen Tshewang, Secretary, National Environment Commission Secretariat
17 Nov 2010 (Wednesday)	Follow-up meeting in the morning with Ms. Karma Dema Dorji (Project Manager), NSSC. Afternoon meetings with: Mr. Pelzang Wangchuk, Millennium Consultancy; Mr. Tenzin Chopel, Head, Policy and Planning Division, MoAF; Mr. Tashi Jamtsho, Planning Officer, Policy and Planning Division, MoAF.
18 Nov 2010 (Thursday)	Preparation of preliminary observations and comments, followed by a debriefing meeting after lunch at the NSSC for presentation and discussion of preliminary observations and comments.

19 Nov 2010 (Friday)	<p>Various telephone interview and email exchanges with key informants (NSSC, Geog, Extension Personnel)</p> <p>Evaluation team meeting to discuss preparation of the Terminal Evaluation Report.</p> <p>Meeting with Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative.</p> <p>Dinner with MoAF officials and World Bank Mission</p>
20 Nov 2010 (Saturday)	Mr. Ed Queblatin depart from Bhutan
22-26 Nov 2010	Work on the draft report from home. Submit a zero draft on 25 th Nov to an internal group for preliminary feedback.
30 Nov 2010	Submit the full draft to UNDP and NSSC.
1-5 Dec 2010	Revise the report, incorporating comments on the draft.
6 Dec 2010	Submit the final document.

Annex 5: Outline of Training for Extension Personnel and Gups

Synopsis and Impressions: Training Sessions for Extension Personnel and Gups

Introduction

As part the evaluation process, the Evaluation team reviewed training reports and interviewed selected persons who attended 2 types of training modules: for extension officers and for Gups. The following are key observations that serve as input to the analysis in the main report. The lists of persons interviewed are presented in Annex 3.

Training Sessions for Extension Personnel

Synopsis of sessions: A total of 70 Field Extension staff underwent training SLM in 2007. Two sessions were held that year. Another set of sessions were conducted in 2008 for 54 extension staff. Each session would last for 6 days and cover the following topics. Each session would consist of theory (key concepts and principles) and practice. The sessions were designed and conducted by NSSC staff as well as collaborating staff from the Research Centres. These were held in the RNR-RDC Research Centres

Topics include soil conservation, fertility enhancement. Practice would involve hands on construction of the various structures soil conservation structures involved. A major highlight towards the conclusion of the session would be field work that involves groups analyzing the land degradation status of specific areas, make a report and a proposal to address the issues. The training reports indicated that participants were generally satisfied with the topics covered, the delivery and the physical environment.

The evaluation team interacted with the Senior Officer of NSSC responsible for the design of the module. We also had the chance to have a quick walkthrough of the series of PowerPoint presentations representing the series of sub modules. The senior officer has already conducted 17 sessions on SLM since 2005. The MSP allowed them to generate more information and enrich their modules He acknowledged that he also learned a lot from participants. Together with the NSSC director, he won a "Best Poster" award from a recent international conference on upland agriculture for their poster on biological soil conservation measures.

Impressions: The topics are appropriate and match the documented needs of communities as well as the MoA's mandates and priorities. The topics also build on the recent documentation of indigenous SLM practices. The NSSC knows what its priorities are as well as its strengths and areas to improve on. Two possible areas to consider as the NSSC moves on to a new chapter: First consider the possibility of incorporating practical landscape level planning in the design of soil conservation strategies in any particular site. Second where possible consider incorporating a brief session on how to disseminate SLM technologies and practices that use adult learning principles

Training Sessions for Local Political Leaders

Some 86 local leaders (Gups) attended 3 days sessions in 6 Eastern and 3 Western Dzongkhags all in 2008. The first day was devoted to facilitated discussion of the local issues, best practices available and lessons learned. Gups who had a head start were asked to share vital experience; the second day was the actual hands on try out of the various technologies involved. The third day was devoted to the overall national plans and enabling policies and potential funding support such as the small grants from the WB SLMP. The training sessions were designed by NSSC staff.

The training report indicated high appreciation of the session. At the start of the session many did not realize the situation was serious. They previously took the problem for granted particularly those far from the Eastern region.

The evaluation team interviewed two Gups (see also main section on capacity building). They both appreciated the sessions and have put SLM in the agenda of their current planning and budgeting process. They expressed interest in follow up information support like regular updates on technologies and practices. Gups in the Eastern region are generally perceived to be the most active in translating knowledge gained into action.

Impressions: The audience of the seminars was newly elected political leaders under a newly installed democracy. The timing of the sessions (2010) had its advantages and disadvantage. A possible advantage: being in office for approximately 2 years, they can begin to better focus on the governance of the environment after attending to basic governance/ administrative concerns in the early years. The disadvantage is that the MSP could no longer monitor the effects of the sessions.

The topics and method of delivery (as indicated in the training report) are appropriate for the type of audience. Peer to peer sharing is important to political leaders. The training design concludes with a discussion of funding sources including the immediate possibility of tapping into the WB Small Grants Fund. This would make the module a very attractive activity for the local government participant to invest his /her time for a 3 day session.

Future sessions can take advantage experience by pioneering Gups which can be communicated more effectively to their peers, with the help of a learning facilitator. /

Annex 6: Key Findings of Studies under the Mainstreaming Component

Quick Description of Studies Conducted by the Project to Support NAP preparation and Mainstreaming Strategies

Between 2007 to 2010, NSSC supported the conduct of 16 studies (excluding the NAP). Of these eleven were funded by MSP while 6 were funded by the SLM Project. The following is a list of the MSP supported projects. Brief descriptions are provided for the seven of the eleven studies.

Studies about the current situation at the community level

1. Study on Poverty – Sustainable land Management linkages, 2009

Poor farmers with small landholdings would tend to be less attracted to SLM practices unless some subsidy is provided e.g. agric support services. High value crops on increasingly limited farm land holdings combined with better livestock management systems would be essential forms of support. Subsidies for labor inputs would be important for poor farmers. (Note: this can serve as rudimentary forms of Payment for Environmental Services of PES).

2. Study of Fallow wetland in Eastern Bhutan, 2007

The lack of agricultural support services e.g. water and other factors has led many farmers to leave their wetlands (rice lands) to fallow thereby affecting food production.

A lack of policy and NRM research attention, is threatening the biophysical status and viability of rangelands. Poorly, managed they can contribute to land degradation. A coordinated reform involving clearer rules, adaptation of appropriate silvipastoral management and social capital formation are essential.

Studies about current policies, programs and institutional framework

3. Review of existing land resource management programs and practices 2007

There is a broad range of interest groups / stakeholders that can make a meaningful contribution to SLM in terms of technical knowledge, best practices, human and financial resources. But one must first understand them well so they can be fully tapped to support NAP implementation

4. Review of the extent SLM mainstreaming in Government policies and plans, 2008

There is more SLM oriented program in the 10th FYP than the 9th FYP. However this continues to be tipped towards the green sector. There is also a lack of cross – sectoral mechanism that can mainstream SLM.

5. Assessment of human resource capacity in SLM at the Central, Regional and District levels, 2007

Several institutions at the Central level do not have the mandate for SLM and thus no human capacity. MoAF has the mandate but still lack human resource capacity. A critical gap would be the capacity at the District and Geog levels. The presence of non government sector is currently limited. Previous and ongoing efforts were identified upon which future programs can build on.

6. Evaluation of the GEF UNDP MSP Project

This review was sponsored to partly assemble all accomplishments and key learning's as well as provide an independent review that can be of immediate use for MoAF in its future planning. This would be different from the external review conducted.

Other studies supported by MSP

7. Available information on land degradation issues in Bhutan, 2007
8. A guide to fertilizer recommendations for major crops, 2008.
9. A guide to nutrient deficiency toxicity symptoms in Citrus, 2008.
10. Indigenous technical knowledge of soil and soil fertility management, 2010