

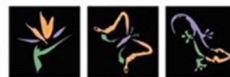


environment, forestry
& fisheries
Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SANBI

Biodiversity for Life

South African National Biodiversity Institute



**United Nations Development Programme
Global Environment Facility**

South Africa

*Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the
Municipal Scale*

**GEF Full-size Project
(PIMS 4719)**

TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Date: 05/11/2021

i. Opening page

Title of the UNDP supported GEF financed project

Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale

Project ID#S

UNDP Atlas Project ID: 00083075

UNDP PIMS ID: 4719

GEF Project ID: 5058

Project start date

March 2015

Project end date

Planned: March 2020

Actual: September 2021

Project duration

Planned 5 years (60 months), revised 6 years and half (78 months)

GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program

Biodiversity

BD-2 Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors

Region

Africa

Country

The Republic of South Africa

Implementing Partner

South Africa National Biodiversity Institute

Other Partners

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism, Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency, Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife, Ehlanzeni District Municipality, uMgungundlovu District Municipality, Drakenstein Local Municipality, NCT Forestry Cooperative Ltd World Wildlife Fund-South Africa and CapeNature

Evaluation timeframe

August/November 2021

Date of the Evaluation Report

05 November 2021

International Evaluator

Giacomo Morelli

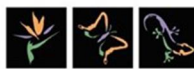
ii. Acknowledgement

A deep thanks to all the people who have taken the time to provide the author with information utilized for the formulation of this evaluation report. A special thanks to the Mainstreaming Technical Unit for their support in organizing the entire process of remote meetings and interviews that made the evaluation exercise possible.

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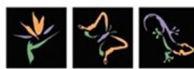
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iv. Acronyms and abbreviations

ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative
BD	Biodiversity
BMP-S	Biodiversity Management Plan for Species
BMP-E	Biodiversity Management Plan for Ecosystems
CPD	Country Programme Document
COGTA	Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DARDLEA	Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs
DBSA	Development Bank of Southern Africa
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEA&DP	Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DM	District Municipality
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
ECPTA	Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency
EDM	Ehlanzeni District Municipality
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FEPA	Freshwater Ecosystem Priority Area
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GTAC	Government Technical Advisory Centre
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
INR	Institute of National Resources
K2C	Kruger to Canyons
LUMS	Land Use Management System
LUS	Land Use Scheme
MISA	Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent
MPTA	Mpumalanga Parks & Tourism Agency
MTU	Mainstreaming Technical Unit



NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGP	New Growth Pact
NIM	National Implementation Modality
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
PGDP	Provincial Growth and Development Plan
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SAFAS	Sustainable African Forestry Assurance Scheme
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
SDF	Spatial Development Frameworks
SIZA	Sustainability Initiative South Africa
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Relevant, Time-bound/Timely/Trackable/Targeted
SPLUMA	Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act
SUSFarms	Sustainable Sugarcane Farm Management System
SWSA	Strategic Water Source Area
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
UDM	uMgungundlovu District Municipality
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFA	Wilderness Foundation Africa
WWF-SA	World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa

1. Executive summary

1.1. Project Information Table

Project Details		Project Milestones											
Project Title:	Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale	PIF Approval Date:	20/11/2012										
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	4719	CEO Endorsement Date (FSP) / Approval date:	07/07/2014										
GEF Project ID:	5058	ProDoc Signature Date:	10/03/2015										
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID:	ZAF, 00083075, 00091721	Date Project Manager hired:	01/02/2015										
Country/Countries:	South Africa	Inception Workshop Date:	26/03/2015										
Region:	Africa	Mid-Term Review Completion Date:	30/11/2017										
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Terminal Evaluation Completion Date:	04/11/2021										
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives:	Climate Change & Disaster Resilience, Inclusive & Sustainable Growth / BD2 Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors	Planned Operational Closure Date:	30/09/2021										
Trust Fund: [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]		GEF TF \$8,177,730											
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity):		Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa National Biodiversity Institute											
NGOs/CBOs involvement		WWF-SA, Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region, BirdLife SA, Wilderness Foundation Africa											
Private sector involvement:		CT Forestry Cooperative Ltd SAPPI Forests											
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:		<table><tr><th>Latitude</th><th>Longitude</th></tr><tr><td>32°34'32" S</td><td>27°28'33" E</td></tr><tr><td>33°19'59" S</td><td>19°40'00" E</td></tr><tr><td>25° 26' 60" S</td><td>30° 58' 58 " E</td></tr><tr><td>29° 34' 59" S</td><td>30° 21' 59" E</td></tr></table>		Latitude	Longitude	32°34'32" S	27°28'33" E	33°19'59" S	19°40'00" E	25° 26' 60" S	30° 58' 58 " E	29° 34' 59" S	30° 21' 59" E
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29° 34' 59" S	30° 21' 59" E												
Financial Information PDF/PPG		at approval (US\$)	at PDF/PPG completion										
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project		100,000	100,000										
Co-financing for project preparation		- - -	- - -										
Project		at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	at TE (US\$)										
[1] UNDP contribution:		1,000,000	1,000,000										
[2] Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning		1,327,014	2,070,135										
[3] Forestry SA		2,559,242	2,390,139										
[4] World Wildlife Fund-South Africa		1,421,801	3,341,412										
[5] uMgungundlovu District Municipality		428,486	605,591										
[6] Ehlanzeni District Municipality		4,936,019	3,769,230										
[7] NCT Forestry Cooperative Ltd		1,409,953	1,935,971										
[8] Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency		1,770,000	1,299,109										

[9] International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives	47,393	152,847
[10] Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency	383,692	815,389
[11] Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife	1,516,588	
[12] Department of Environment Affairs: Natural Resource Management (Working for Water Programme)	11,739,108	9,436,102
[13] SAPPI Forests	3,365,505	3,446,385
[14] South Africa National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)	18,748,815	16,673,674
[15] Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land & Environmental Affairs	---	346,159
[16] City of Mbombela	---	193,482
[17] BirdLife South Africa	---	20,732,776
[18] Institute of Natural Resources	---	3,026,017
[19] Kruger to Canyons NPC	---	472,269
[20] Table Mountain Fund	---	124,805
[21] Cape Nature	---	392,223
[22] Total co-financing [1-21]:	50,653,616	72,223,715
[23] Total GEF funding:	8,177,730	8,177,730
[24] Total Project Funding [23 +24]	58,831,346	80,401,445

1.2. Brief project description

This project was designed to strengthen cooperation, coordination and capacity of municipal and other regulatory authorities that regulate land use decisions to incorporate criteria to avoid/ prevent, minimize and/or offset impacts on biodiversity, and to improve compliance monitoring and enforcement. It also aimed at introducing mechanisms in collaboration with private and communal landowners to better protect critical biodiversity areas and manage land, while demonstrating the potential of biodiversity to create jobs and contribute to economic growth.

The project worked in four district municipalities in global biodiversity hotspots and national biodiversity priority areas, with very high rates of habitat degradation and conversion, high levels of poverty, and other pressing needs for action: Amathole, uMgungundlovu and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities are located in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany hotspot; while the Cape Wineland District Municipality is located in the Cape Floristic Region and the Succulent Karoo Biodiversity hotspot.

Project's goal:

To enhance the sustainable and effective conservation of globally significant biodiversity in South Africa through exploring, piloting and implementing innovative mechanisms and approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into the regulation and management of land and resource use in the landscape at the municipal scale.

Project's objective:

To mitigate multiple threats to biodiversity by increasing the capabilities of authorities and landowners to regulate land use and manage priority biodiversity at the municipal scale.

The project is organised in two components:

Component 1 - Land Use Management, Regulation, Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement.

Four outcomes refer to component 1:

- **Outcome 1.1:** Regulatory processes for land and natural resource use management incorporate criteria to prevent/minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity.
- **Outcome 1.2:** The capacity of staff of regulatory authorities and other environmental planning professionals to apply criteria to prevent/minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity, is improved.
- **Outcome 1.3:** Municipal land use planning, management and decision making integrate biodiversity priorities.
- **Outcome 1.4:** Financial mechanisms and incentives are enhanced in order to encourage greater investment in biodiversity and ecosystem services and support job creation and sustainable economic development.

Component 2 - Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity on Private and Communal Land

Four outcomes refer to component 2:

- **Outcome 2.1:** Improved security for biodiversity priority areas.
- **Outcome 2.2:** Biodiversity management of threatened medicinal plant species and priority ecosystems enhanced.
- **Outcome 2.3:** Pressure on biodiversity is reduced through better land and natural resource management practices implemented by private and communal landowners.
- **Outcome 2.4:** Financing mechanisms and incentives for biodiversity stewardship improved and capacity to implement incentives is strengthened.

1.3. Evaluation Ratings Table

1. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	<i>Satisfactory</i>
M&E Plan Implementation	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Overall Quality of M&E	<i>Satisfactory</i>
2. Implementing Agency (IA) Implementation	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
3. Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
Effectiveness	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
Efficiency	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Overall Project Outcome Rating	<i>Highly Satisfactory</i>
4. Sustainability	Rating
Financial sustainability	<i>Likely</i>
Socio-political sustainability	<i>Likely</i>
Institutional framework and governance	<i>Likely</i>
Environmental sustainability	<i>Likely</i>
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	<i>Likely</i>

1.4. Summary of findings and conclusions

Main findings

1. The design of the project was well thought through, feasible and responsive to actual needs and interests of all stakeholders involved.
2. The management of the project activities was transparent, inclusive and participative.

3. The management of project funds was transparent and result-oriented.
4. The project was implemented in accordance with the Project Document (ProDoc). The scope of the project was broadened during its implementation. The delineation of SWSAs and the contribution to the EIA screening tools and associated protocols represented that most outstanding contribution of the project, which was not planned in its design. The broadening of the project scope did not happen at the expense of originally planned activities/results; it added to them.
5. The evaluation considered the project as highly relevant. Thematically, the project has responded to needs and aligned with interests of project's stakeholders. Operationally, the approach to work, pursue by SANBI, was holistic and collaborative.
6. All project outcomes were over-achieved.
7. The project was implemented efficiently.
8. The project was effective. The likelihood of the project to generate long -term impacts on biodiversity conservation is high.
9. The evaluation considers the sustainability of the project likely.
10. The project design was gender blind.

Conclusions

1. Biodiversity considerations were actually mainstreamed at different levels, i.e. productive sector, municipal planning tools and national legislation. The project's achieved its goal.
2. The project has turned into an initiative whose importance has gone far beyond the targeted district municipalities, becoming in all its aspects a project of national importance.
3. The project was instrumental for the GEF focal area "biodiversity" and its strategic objective BD2 "Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. GEF funding was well spent.
4. The evaluation considers the two cost-extensions well justified and pertinent.
5. Project displayed the importance of reconciling development with biodiversity conservation.
6. The project was effective in guaranteeing a respectful and fruitful dialogue between stakeholders.
7. The project represented an actual learning space for all those involved.
8. The diversity of actors, i.e. 119 partner organizations, which spanned from public institutions to NGOs and private companies, who participated in the project is considered as outstanding by the evaluation exercise.
9. The acknowledgment/assumption, clearly stated in the ProDoc that, while maps of biodiversity priority areas, at appropriate scales, are critical starting points, if biodiversity mainstreaming is to succeed, most of the effort is needed in advocacy, partnership development, coordination and capacity development processes hold true.
10. The weak articulation of gender approach is the only significant flaw of the project. The achievements of the project are regarded as gender targeted because the project paid attention in targeting women under its component related to job creation.

1.5. Synthesis of the key lessons learned

Lesson learned n. 1

The project resulted highly satisfactory in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency; the overall project outcome rating was, as well, highly satisfactory and sustainability was rated as likely. The following elements emerged clearly during the entire evaluation process, i.e. both from the consultation of documents and from the convergence of the answers obtained from the project

stakeholders interviewed, as key factors for successful implementation of initiatives aiming at mainstreaming biodiversity:

- The active participation of organizations in the formulation of a development initiative is key to ensure a high level of participation and country ownership during the implementation of the initiative.
- The design should build on actual needs and interests of those involved. The topic to be mainstreamed, i.e. biodiversity, should be promoted as an element that adds to and strengthens the actual development agenda of partner organizations.
- The set-up of management arrangements with clear roles for each main project partners already included in the project document facilitate the implementation of activities avoiding institutional misunderstandings.
- The coordination of different capacities and dedicated project staff to follow up the different lines of action with relevant expertise.

Lesson learned n. 2

The thematic relevance of an initiative is evidently the pre-requisite for a development project to be successful. However, those in charge of project management should be able to capture the attention of other stakeholders. Relevant managerial competencies, commitment and capacities to listen and understand different interests, openness to dialogue and personal commitment are key factors to promote an effective engagement of stakeholders in a development initiative. In this regard, a real empowerment of project staff through dedicated time and resources for their capacity development is a key factor to ensure a high degree of project effectiveness.

In brief, the project itself, from its formulation to its implementation, can be regarded as a model. Indeed, as already stated in the MTR report *the BLU project is extremely strong in many respects, and worthy of showcasing as a leading example from the UNDP-GEF portfolio.*¹

1.6. Recommendations Summary Table

#	TE recommendation	Entity/es	Timeline
R1	<p><i>To assess the quality of EIA reports</i></p> <p>The importance of the EIA Screening Tool and associated protocols lies in the fact that EIA practitioners can use a guide that facilitates the task of formulating an EIA taking into account all the relevant elements for the purpose, including those relating to biodiversity conservation. In principle, there is the assumption that a better EIA will lead to better decisions when it comes to authorizing developments. Better decisions will be reflected in a better protection of biodiversity and natural resources.</p> <p>Measuring the impact of the EIA Screening Tool at field level would have cost implications that made the measurement unfeasible from the financial point of view. Instead, comparing the quality of EIA reports pre- and post-establishment of the EIA Screening Tool as a legally binding tool could provide an indication on how the tool contributes to the actual biodiversity conservation at a much lower cost.</p> <p>The recommendation is about comparing the quality (with special focus on inclusion of biodiversity considerations) of a set of EIA reports developed without and with the support of the EIA</p>	SANBI /DFFE / Environmental Provincial Authorities	Within 2 year after the project closure.

¹ MTR report, page 43

	Screening Tool. The size of the samples of reports to be assessed will vary depending on the budget that will be devoted for this activity. The exercise can be carried out in a specific province or across all provinces of the country. The assessment of the quality of EIAs should be based on criteria agreed upon amongst key stakeholders, such as SANBI, DFFE, Environmental NGOs, EIA Practitioners and provincial authorities. In case of budget constraints, it would be worthy to investigate whether the exercise could be of interest to PhD students or other researchers across the country.		
R2	<i>To include a gender specialist in the project design team</i> Women's empowerment and gender equality are essential elements in the approach that UN agencies should follow in all their interventions. Therefore, it is important to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into future projects of UNDP in South Africa. Such mainstreaming exercise requires dedicated financial resources and staff able to produce relevant management tools to support the implementation of a given project from its very beginning (identification and formulation phase).	UNDP CO	During the identification and formulation of project proposals
R3	<i>To target smallholding farmers</i> Smallholding farmers represent a disadvantaged group within the country. They face much bigger constraints for a successful implementation of their entrepreneurial activities than those faced by the medium and large-scale farmers. They often operate informally; have scarce access to market information; and, generally, lack motivation and knowledge to improve the quality of their business. Furthermore, they operate within rural communities and improper natural resource management may actually represent a risk for the whole community. Supporting the development of their entrepreneurial activities is of paramount importance for a just development of the rural areas. Finally, a greater involvement of smallholding farmers may also trigger a process of awareness within the communities to which they belong about the importance of the conservation of natural resources (land, water and biodiversity).	UNDP CO / SANBI / DFFE / DALRRD	During the identification and formulation of project proposals

2.1. Evaluation purpose

The Terminal Evaluation (TE) assessed the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, and drew lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report intends to promote accountability and transparency, and to assess the extent of project accomplishments.

The TE evaluated the results according to the criteria established in the “Guidance for conducting terminal evaluations of projects supported by UNDP and financed by the GEF” (2020). It involved all types of beneficiary actors, as well as those responsible for the execution and implementation of the project indicated in the Project Document (ProDoc).

2.2. Scope of the evaluation

The exercise covered the design, execution and results of the project focusing, therefore, on the following three categories:

- **Project Design/Formulation** including the following sub-categories:
National priorities and country driven-ness; Theory of Change; Gender equality and women’s empowerment; Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards); Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators; Assumptions and Risks; Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design; Planned stakeholder participation and; Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector; management arrangements.
- **Project Implementation** including the following sub-categories:
Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation); Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements; Project Finance and Co-finance; Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry, implementation, and overall assessment; UNDP implementation/oversight and Implementing Partner execution, overall project implementation/execution; and Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards).
- **Project Results and Impacts** including the following sub-categories:
Progress towards objective and expected outcomes; Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Overall outcome; Sustainability (financial, socio-political, institutional framework and governance, environmental, and overall likelihood of sustainability); Country ownership; Gender quality and women’s empowerment; Cross-cutting Issues; GEF Additionality; Catalytic/Replication Effect; and Progress to Impact.

Based upon findings, the TE report exposes conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

2.3. Methodology

A theory-based and utilization-focused approach was used for the TE.

Theory-based evaluations focus on analysing a project’s underlying logic and causal linkages. Indeed, projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve the agreed results through the selected strategy. This set of assumptions constitutes the “program theory” or “theory of change”, which, in UNDP/GEF project is visualized in the Results Framework. The TE was based on the theory of change analysing the strategy underpinning the project, including objectives and assumptions, and assessing its robustness and realism. Instead, the utilization-focused approach is based on the principle that evaluations and reviews should be judged on their usefulness to their intended users; therefore, they should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

As planned in the inception report, the design of the TE included the following research tools to collect relevant data:

- Desk review of project documents and reports
- Individual and group Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

It made use of a “purposeful sampling”² to identify stakeholders to be consulted. The sampling was designed in consultation with the Mainstreaming Technical Unit (MTU). The sampling and the consequent schedule of meetings for interviews and FGDs took necessarily into account the will and availability of stakeholders to participate in the evaluation process.

The evaluation matrix, presented in annex 5, shows how the Evaluator responded to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The matrix identifies the evaluation questions, the indicators adopted, the sources of the data and the methods for data collection and analysis to evaluate the results of the project.

2.5. Ethics

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations”.

2.6. Limitations

The TE took place in the months of August, September, October and November 2021. It foresaw three phases:

- Inception phase;
- Data collection phase; and
- Reporting phase.

Inception phase

It took place from the August 23 to September 6, 2021.

At the beginning of inception phase, the MTU made available to the Evaluator the documents and reports that he will consult during the evaluation exercise.

During the inception phase, the Evaluator held meetings with officers from UNDP and SANBI remotely on ZOOM. The aim of these meetings was to discuss and organize the schedule of the data collection phase.

The Evaluator delivered the Inception Report on September 6, and later, on September 13, 2021, the UNDP CO approved it.

Data collection phase

It took place from September 8 to October 8, 2021. It was split into two stages.

- A remote mission from September 8 to September 21 2021.
- An in-country mission from September 26 to October 9 2021.

² “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.” Patton MQ. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002.

The ToR of the evaluation, presented in annex 1, foresaw only an in-country mission for the data collection. Due to high number of stakeholders involved in the project, the Evaluator proposed, in agreement with UNDP and SANBI, to have an additional remote mission in order to reach a larger number of stakeholders.

The Evaluator worked on close collaboration with UNDP, SANBI and other project partners during the data collection phase. The MTU was in charge of set up the meetings for both the remote and the in-country mission.

During the **remote mission**, the Evaluator held **28 individual** and **10 group interviews** involving **59 individuals (36 women and 23 men)**. Whereas during the in-country mission the Evaluator held **12 individual** and **9 group interviews** and **1 Focus Group Discussion** involving **40 individuals (16 women and 24 men)**. **11 site visits** were also conducted. Excluding duplications between the remote and the in-country mission, the Evaluator met **99 individuals (52 women and 47 men)**.

The Evaluator also had the opportunity to discuss with the people who accompanied him during his mission in the field. Most of them had already been interviewed during the online mission. These discussions took place informally during the car trips necessary to cover the large project area.

Annex 2 presents the complete list of the activities conducted by the Evaluator during the remote and the in-country mission. Annex 3, instead, presents the list of persons that he met.

During the mission, the Evaluator was not able to meet few people, who actually were originally planned to be interviewed on the following days:

September 30:

A Traditional Leader communicated that he could not meet the Evaluator because he was busy with electoral matters for the local government elections that would have taken place in November 2021.

The Evaluator had also to meet field workers (job creation indicator) working at the rehabilitation of wetland in Mpophomeni site. On the planned day for interviews, the site was unsafe for them to work due to heavy rains occurred in the previous days.

October 4:

The planned meeting and focus group discussion with the local community, who have access to a communal land, was not possible. ECPTA was not able to communicate with community members to arrange a meeting.

A planned interview with a farmer did not happen, as well. The Evaluator, accompanied by SANBI and ECPTA representatives, went to his farm where he was supposed to meet the farmer. The farmer was not there.

October 8:

The planned meeting with a local municipality representative did not happen. The officer cancelled the meeting that should have taken on a project site. The Evaluator, however, had the opportunity to visit the site, i.e. the Bushbuckridge Donga project site, on his own accompanied by SANBI project staff.

Reporting phase

It took place from October 11 to November 5, 2021.

The deliverables of the reporting phase were the Draft TE Report and the Final TE Report. In the Final TE Report, i.e. the report at hand, the Evaluator addressed the comments received on the Draft Report from UNDP and its partners. In addition, the International Evaluator delivered a TE audit trail form.

2.7. Structure of the TE report

The TE report consists of three core sections:

Project Description and Background Context

The section briefly describes the project and the context in which it was designed and implemented.

Findings

This section provides answers to the three categories of Project Design/Formulation, Project Implementation and Project Results and Impacts.

Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons Learned

The section includes the main findings, evidence-based conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

3. Project description

3.1. Project start and duration

- Start date: March 2015
- Planned end date: March 2020
- Actual end date: September 2021
- Project duration: 6 years and half (78 months)

3.2. Development context

Since 1994 South Africa has been making major strides in protecting its biodiversity having instituted extensive policy reforms and created new institutions both at national and provincial level to manage biodiversity. This transformation has occurred with the assistance of the GEF and other partners, and has resulted in improved capacities. However, South Africa is still experiencing very high rates of biodiversity loss: the recently conducted National Biodiversity Assessment (2018) confirms that *“...Almost half the of the 1,021 ecosystems...are categorised as threatened...Over two-thirds of ecosystem types are represented in the current protected area network, leaving 31% in the Not Protected category”*.

Municipalities play an important role as centres of economic growth and service delivery and are therefore seen as key to the implementation of the New Growth Path (NGP), which was launched by the Government of South Africa in 2010 in order to tackle poverty and unemployment across the country. Moreover, municipalities are important users and managers of biodiversity. They have an increasingly important role to play as managers of the ecosystems of the country: key policies guiding social and economic development in the country (e.g. AsgiSA, the NSDP and PGDPs) have environmental sustainability as a key underlying principle; environmental management and biodiversity conservation are recognized as public goods; and sound management of ecosystems may promote resilience, reduce risks of natural disasters, and help adapt to climate change.

3.3. Problems that the project sought to address

The NGP expanded roles and responsibilities for the municipalities. This may have serious implications for further loss of biodiversity unless clear tools are in place to ensure biodiversity considerations are integrated into implementation of the NGP – particularly the land use permitting process, infrastructure placement and other efforts around job creation. There is a need to strike a balance between short-term acceleration of employment opportunities and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Coordinating and supporting the capacity of municipalities to deliver is seen as key to successful realization of the NGP.

There are several challenges to achieving this. First, capacity at the municipal scale is very weak, and there is little or no coordination amongst the myriad of institutions that regulate land use. Second, less than 7% of land in South Africa is formally protected, which leaves critical biodiversity under threat from degradation and conversion pressure in the absence of effective community-based natural resource management. Lastly, the potential contribution of biodiversity to the Government jobs agenda is not yet clear and thus there is little or no incentive for municipalities to work with landholders to manage land and natural resources in a biodiversity friendly manner.

This project “Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale”, known as well as the BLU Project (Biodiversity and Land Use Project), intends to address these challenges by (a) strengthening coordination and capacity of municipal and other authorities that regulate land use decisions within municipalities to incorporate criteria to mitigate and offset impacts on biodiversity over and above statutory environments for environmental protection; and (b) putting in place a cooperative governance framework in partnership with private and communal land owners

to better manage land, including providing incentives for landholders to engage in biodiversity friendly practices, while also demonstrating the potential of biodiversity to create jobs and contribute to economic growth.

3.4. Immediate and development objectives

The project is in line with the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Objective Two: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors.

More specifically, the project intends to contribute to the achievement of the following GEF's outcome indicators under the following strategic programme areas:

Expected focal area outcomes	Expected focal area outputs	Project contribution to indicators
<p>Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Outcome 2.2: Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>Output 1. Policies and regulatory frameworks for production sectors</p> <p>Output 2. National and sub-national land-use plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation</p> <p>Output 3. Certified production landscapes and seascapes.</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1: Landscapes and seascapes certified by internationally or nationally recognized environmental standards that incorporate biodiversity considerations (e.g. FSC, MSC) measured in hectares and recorded by GEF tracking tool.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2: Policies and regulations governing sectoral activities that integrate biodiversity conservation as recorded by the GEF tracking tool as a score.</p>

3.5. Expected results

Project's goal:

To enhance the sustainable and effective conservation of globally significant biodiversity in South Africa through exploring, piloting and implementing innovative mechanisms and approaches to mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into the regulation and management of land and resource use in the landscape at the municipal scale.

Project's objective:

To mitigate multiple threats to biodiversity by increasing the capabilities of authorities and landowners to regulate land use and manage priority biodiversity at the municipal scale.

The project is organised in two components:

Component 1 - Land Use Management, Regulation, Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement. Four outcomes refer to component 1:

Outcome 1.1: Regulatory processes for land and natural resource use management incorporate criteria to prevent/minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity.

- **Output 1.1.1:** Coordination mechanism for land and natural resource use regulation and compliance monitoring in place, functional and comprises of the relevant national, provincial and municipal regulatory authorities in Ehlanzeni and Cape Winelands District Municipalities;

- **Output 1.1.2:** Land and natural resource use application information requirements of the relevant regulatory authorities are amended to consider biodiversity priorities and incorporate the mitigation hierarchy to avoid / mitigate / off set impacts on biodiversity;
- **Output 1.1.3:** Policy support provided and government endorsed guidelines developed to ensure biodiversity priorities are integrated into assessment and decision making for land and natural resource use that affects biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- **Output 1.1.4:** Compliance monitoring and enforcement of land and natural resource use authorisations reflect biodiversity priorities.

Outcome 1.2: The capacity of staff of regulatory authorities and other environmental planning professionals to apply criteria to prevent/minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity, is improved.

- **Output 1.2.1:** Capacity development that includes training for regulatory authorities is undertaken and institutionalised;
- **Output 1.2.2:** Capacity development on biodiversity priorities for environmental and planning professionals and communities is undertaken; and
- **Output 1.2.3:** Capacity to monitor and enforce compliance with biodiversity permit/authorisation conditions, and/ or identify and successfully prosecute, land use and natural resource crimes, is in place.

Outcome 1.3: Municipal land use planning, management and decision making integrate biodiversity priorities.

- **Output 1.3.1:** Relevant Protocols that guide the implementation of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act SPLUMA in Ehlanzeni & uMgungundlovu District Municipalities include biodiversity priorities;
- **Output 1.3.2:** Environmental layers are incorporated into Integrated Development Plans that comply with protocols developed under SPLUMA;
- **Output 1.3.3:** SPLUMA compliant Land Use Management Systems which contribute to improved land use regulation are developed; and
- **Output 1.3.4:** Municipal decisions on infrastructure placement incorporate the mitigation hierarchy to avoid-mitigate-offset impacts on biodiversity.

Outcome 1.4: Financial mechanisms and incentives are enhanced in order to encourage greater investment in biodiversity and ecosystem services and support job creation and sustainable economic development.

- **Output 1.4.1:** Public sector funding mechanisms that increase resource allocation to biodiversity management are investigated and piloted and the case for them is made to National Treasury.

Component 2 - Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity on Private and Communal Land. Four outcomes refer to component 2:

Outcome 2.1: Improved security for biodiversity priority areas.

- **Output 2.1.1:** Biodiversity stewardship agreements are negotiated and/or concluded on private and communal land in Amathole, Ehlanzeni and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities.

Outcome 2.2: Biodiversity management of threatened medicinal plant species and priority ecosystems enhanced.

- **Output 2.2.1:** Biodiversity management plans that include sustainable use and harvesting thresholds developed for 3 threatened and heavily traded medicinal plant species; and
- **Output 2.2.2:** The development of a biodiversity management plan is piloted and tested for one priority ecosystem.

Outcome 2.3: Pressure on biodiversity is reduced through better land and natural resource management practices implemented by private and communal landowners.

- **Output 2.3.1:** Better land and natural resource management practices are implemented by private and communal landowners in and outside stewardship areas in Amathole, Cape Winelands, Ehlaleni and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities.
- **Output 2.3.2:** Biodiversity considerations are integrated into national or international codes of conduct/ production standards/certification systems for the fruit, sugar and forestry sectors in Cape Winelands and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities.

Outcome 2.4: Financing mechanisms and incentives for biodiversity stewardship improved and capacity to implement incentives is strengthened.

- **Output 2.4.1:** Innovative funding model to expand financial resources for stewardship programmes piloted;
- **Output 2.4.2:** Enhanced income tax deduction incentives for conservation stewardship in place; and
- **Output 2.4.3:** Build capacity among financial/tax advisors and stewardship staff with regard to what the incentives offer and how they can be accessed and applied.

3.6. Main stakeholders

The ProDoc identified the following stakeholders:

Stakeholder	Roles and/or relationship with the project
National level	
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)	Primary executing agency with overall project management and project development responsibilities.
Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), later renamed as Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)	Responsible for environmental policy, legislation and developing and implementing the Biodiversity Act. Primary project oversight.
National Treasury	Responsible for managing the national government finances and budgets. It will support the work on financial incentives and funding mechanisms.
Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC)	GTAC is an externally orientated programme supporting the National Treasury's core business. Its responsibilities include providing technical consulting services to departments and government agencies; advice on the feasibility of infrastructure projects; and knowledge management services for projects undertaken. GTAC will support the establishment of a Biodiversity Mainstreaming Ecological Infrastructure group within its Economies of Regions Learning network (ERLN).
Department of Water Affairs (DWA)	Responsible for managing surface water and groundwater resources in the country, water allocation, and permitting of water use.
Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)	Responsible for facilitating cooperative governance and supporting all spheres of government, promoting traditional affairs and supporting associated institutions. It will participate in cooperation frameworks established in selected target districts.

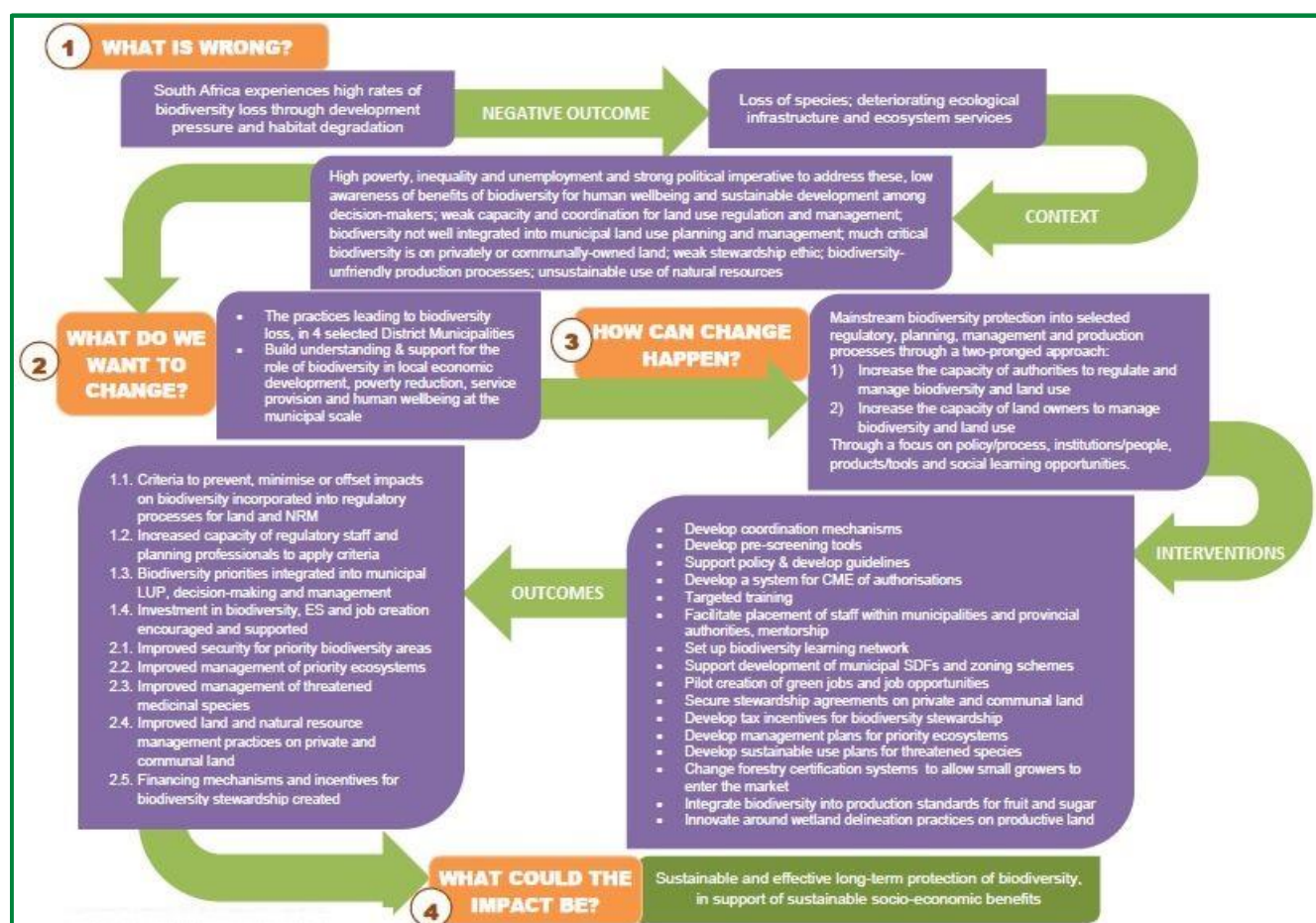
<i>Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA)</i>	MISA is a public entity within the Ministry for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Its principal mandate is to provide technical support to and assist municipalities strengthen their internal capacity for delivery and maintenance of basic service infrastructure. SANBI and the project partners will work closely with MISA to ensure alignment between MISA's work with municipalities and project interventions within the target districts.
<i>South African Local Government Association (SALGA)</i>	Responsible for representing, promoting and protecting the interests of local government.
<i>Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), business development and financing institutions</i>	To be engaged in support of Component 2 of the project particularly through the Sustainability Initiative South Africa (SIZA) process.
<i>Department of Science and Technology (DST)</i>	DST is the national department responsible for coordinating the National System of Innovation.
<i>South African National Parks (SANParks)</i>	The primary mandate of SANParks is to oversee the conservation of South Africa's biodiversity, landscapes and associated heritage assets through a system of national parks. Responsibility for ensuring integration between mainstreaming and protected area interventions supported by GEF will be managed by a joint committee which will focus on Ehlanzeni and Amathole where there will be some spatial overlap. This will ensure that stewardship outreach and inputs into local planning processes are integrated across projects. A further area of joint interest is the active maintenance of healthy ecosystems in order to deliver ecosystem services.
<i>Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). The department no longer exists in this configuration Agriculture was moved to the DALRRD and Land Reform and Forestry and Fisheries merged with DFFE</i>	Responsible for agriculture and forestry regulatory, compliance and enforcement functions in the target District Municipalities. DAFF also provides production and extension support to commercial and emerging farmers, the commercial forestry sector and small growers. Will play a role in the implementation of Components 1 and 2, with particular focus on those activities aimed at supporting emerging farmers and small growers on communal land.
<i>Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), later renamed as Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development DALRRD</i>	Responsible for integrated rural development, land reform and the implementation of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA). The Department will not participate directly in the Project but will support work done in respect of SPLUMA and in particular the development of protocols for environment layer of SDFs.
<i>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)</i>	Research agency that plays a key role in Freshwater Ecosystem Planning and Monitoring. Will be engaged in capacity development activities with regard to FEPAs.
<i>International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Africa</i>	Its core work streams include: Waste, Energy and Climate Change (including Disaster Risk Reduction), Water and Sanitation, Urban Biodiversity, Green Urban Economy, Urban Food Security, Leadership and Governance, and Integrated Urban Planning. Member cities relevant to this project include Buffalo City and the uMgungundlovu District Municipality. Will participate in component 1 outcomes that focus on municipalities. SANBI and the project partners will work closely with ICLEI and ensure incorporation of ICLEI work with municipalities within the target districts.
<i>World Wildlife Fund South Africa (WWF-SA) Conservation South Africa (CSA) Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)</i>	WW-SA and CSA have interests and experience in business and biodiversity programmes throughout South Africa, notably through the WW-SA and CSA Green Choice Alliance partnership. They will play a role in shaping the interventions of Components 2 interventions in targeting the fruit and sugar sectors. WWF-SA will work with production sectors to promote better land management and certification systems EWT's role in the project will be to provide strategic advice (as a member of the project steering committee) and to leverage greater private sector involvement in the compliance monitoring and enforcement activities of the project. EWT's involvement also provides opportunity to align the project activities with the National Biodiversity and Business Network (NBBN).

Fruit SA, NCT Forestry Cooperative Ltd	Commercial producers and operators will be supported to develop biodiversity-compatible approaches.
Provincial Conservation Agencies: Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) CapeNature Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA)	Commenting authorities on environmental authorisations and various other land and natural resource use permits. They will play a role in the implementation of various activities under both Components 1 and 2.
Regional water management authorities such as the regional offices of the Department of Water Affairs (DWA), uMngeni Water, Breede-Overberg and Catchment Management Authority (BOCMA)	Catchment Management Authorities are mandated by DWA to manage a particular region's water resources. This includes continuous engagement with all stakeholders, responsibility for water quality, water allocation reform, administration of registration and licensing. Will play a role in the implementation of Component 1 in selected target districts.
Provincial Departments of Agriculture: Western Cape Department of Agriculture (DoA) KwaZulu Natal Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA) Eastern Cape Department of Agriculture and Land Affairs (DALA) Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP)	Responsible for some regulatory, compliance and enforcement functions in the target District Municipalities. May play a role in the implementation of Components 1 and 2.
Western Cape Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning (DEA&DP); Provincial Departments of Economic Development and Environment Affairs (DEDEA) Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs (DAEA) Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET)	Issuing authorities for environmental authorization in terms of the NEMA EIA Regulations and for ensuring for compliance with environmental policies, legislation and reporting according to the Ministerial Outcome 10 Delivery agreements. DEA&DP is also responsible for determining provincial spatial and land use policy in the Western Cape. The provincial environment departments also play a role in ensuring biodiversity is integrated in municipal scale planning by commenting on IDPs, SDF and development applications that are permitted in terms of planning legislation. These departments may play a role in implementing activities under Component 1.
Bioregional programmes: CAPE Implementation Committee, and CAPE coordination unit Eastern Cape Implementation Committee (ECIC), and ECIC coordination unit Grasslands Coordination Unit	Bioregional programmes and provincial wide governance structures are present in the Cape Winelands and Amathole District Municipalities and will play a role in drawing implementation lessons from project intervention sites to other Municipalities within their areas of jurisdiction.
District Municipalities, including Municipal Councils and local Municipalities: Ehlanzeni District Municipality and Bushbuckridge, Mbombela, Nkomazi, Thaba Chweu, Umjindi Local Municipalities Cape Winelands District Municipality and Langeberg, Breede, Drakenstein, Stellenbosch, Witzenberg Local Municipalities Amathole District Municipality and Buffalo City Metro, Nkonkobe, Nxuba, Ngqushwa, Amahlathi, Mnquma, Greater Kei, Mbashe Local Municipalities uMgungundlovu District Municipality and Impendle, Mpofana, uMngeni, uMshwathi, Msunduzi, Richmond, Mkhambathini Local Municipalities	Responsible for planning, budgeting, service delivery and economic development in the target District Municipalities. Key implementation partners for all components.
Biosphere Reserves: Winelands Biosphere Reserve Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve (K2C)	Involved in mainstreaming and coordination interventions in the District Municipalities. Potential roles in project implementation and ensuring

(Emerging) Amathole Biosphere Reserve	synergy with RESLIM USAID and the Protected Area METT project activities (where appropriate) within the target District Municipalities.
Local communities and community institutions	Local communities will be important beneficiaries of project interventions, and will be the focus of interventions
Commercial producers and operators	Commercial producers and operators will be supported to develop biodiversity-compatible approaches and engaged in important partnerships in Component 2.
Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD)	Significant experience in rural water security, including in wise management and equitable allocation. Lead implementer on the USAID Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin Program (RESILIM).

3.7. Description of the project's Theory of Change

The ProDoc does not present any formal description of the Theory of Change (ToC). A ToC was developed in 2019 following a recommendation of the MTR exercise:



4. Findings

4.1. Project Design/Formulation

4.1.a. Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators

The design of the project addressed country priorities and resulted to be country driven. Actually, SANBI was in charge of its formulation and made sure that the alignment with country's priorities was there.

An explicit Theory of Change was not included in the ProDoc. However, following the related MTR's recommendation, a ToC was formulated later during the implementation of the project.

The project design included features related to:

- Development of regulatory and planning tools;
- Support to direct implementation; and
- Awareness promotion and capacity development.

These features are typical of technical cooperation support projects that aim at improving the quality of aid effectiveness in the long term.

Expected results were linked to the achievement of the Project outcomes, and activities were logically sequenced.

The strategy underpinning the Project was robust and logic: the outcomes and the general objective of the Project were conceptually related to each other. Furthermore, indicators were SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attributable, Relevant, Time-bound/Timely/Trackable/Targeted).

Finally, it is important to notice, that no indicators took into consideration the gender dimension of the project.

4.1.b. Assumptions and Risks

The Result Frameworks of the BLU project included fourteen elements under the column "assumptions and risks" split throughout project objective and outcomes. Almost all of these elements are neither assumptions nor risks³ and, therefore, have no utility to help/guide the implementation of activities and achieve expected results.

The table below presents the evaluation considerations about the elements identified as "risks" in the ProDoc:

#	Risks	TE's considerations
1	Poor coordination between institutions and cooperative governance mechanisms and structures with regard to biodiversity-inclusive planning, financing, review and decision-making are weak.	Elements n° 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 identified as "risks" are not actual risks. Instead, they represent the actual challenges of the project to mainstreaming biodiversity at different scale and within different target groups.
2	Shrinking budgets for natural resource management at provincial and municipal levels.	

³ Assumptions and risks are elements, included in the design of a project, which are out of the sphere of control of the project management team. Usually, they are accompanied by mitigation measures, i.e. what the management team/project can do in order to mitigate/enhance their negative/positive effect on project implementation in case an assumption, identified in during the project identification phase, does not held true or a risks materializes. This definition of "assumption and risks" is acknowledged both in the "UNDP - Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results" (2009) and in the GEF document "Theory of Change Primer" (2019).

3	Poor capacity for extension work, compliance monitoring and enforcement.	They are the <i>raison d'être</i> of the project itself. They are the problems the project aspires to solve/mitigate to achieve its desired outcomes.
4	Regulatory challenges and blockages	
5	Conflicts between different stakeholder groups	
6	Low level of community willingness to take up the biodiversity economy	Instead, the element n° 2 can be regarded as a risk that may jeopardize the implementation of the project.

The table below presents the evaluation considerations about the elements identified as “assumptions” in the ProDoc:

#	Risks	TE's considerations
1	Project partners will work together effectively with one another and key stakeholders to meet objectives	<p>Elements n° 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 identified as “assumptions” are not actual assumptions. Instead, they are a sort of description of what should be done in the course of the implementation of the project.</p> <p>Elements n° 4 and 7 are actual assumptions as for their formulation. However, their formulation is very general and do not provide any guidance for the implementation.</p>
2	Willing champions of projects will be acceptable to all stakeholders	
3	Individual projects will be successful in 'making the case' for biodiversity mainstreaming (i.e. will not be perceived to be 'anti -development')	
4	There is institutional readiness and adequate capacity as a foundation to implement projects and build additional capacity	
5	Project partners are committed to embedding project impact into institutional systems to deliver enduring outcomes	
6	There is mobilisation and participation in learning networks	
7	There is an adequate 'good governance' foundation and management systems in place to minimise institutional risk	
8	Investments will be layered to achieve synergies and traction, value gain - multiple mutually reinforcing gains	

4.1.c. Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design

As described in the MTR report, an experienced Project Preparation Grant (PPG) team with considerable GEF experience supported and enriched the formulation with lessons and experiences. However, only one element that can be defined as lesson learned applicable to the implementation of the BLU Project emerges clearly in its design: the focus of the design derived from the acknowledgment that, *while maps of biodiversity priority areas, at appropriate scales, are critical starting points, if biodiversity mainstreaming is to succeed, most of the effort is needed in advocacy, partnership development, coordination and capacity development processes*⁴.

The Project Identification Form (PIF) mentions three previous GEF-funded UNDP-implemented projects, i.e. the CAPE Programme, the Grasslands Programme, and the Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative. They represent the most recent experience of UNDP and SANBI in terms of biodiversity management. Specifically, the Cape and the Grasslands Programmes contributed to building the practice of biodiversity stewardship in South Africa, which is at the core of the BLU project.

⁴ ProDoc, page 13

4.1.d. Planned stakeholder participation

The participation of a wide array of national, provincial, district and municipal institutions and the involvement of NGOs who actually later took part in project implementation was already envisaged in the ProDoc.

A dedicated chapter of the ProDoc defined the roles of each stakeholder (refer to section 3.7. “Main stakeholders”) that later would have participated in the project implementation. In addition, to ensure an active participation of stakeholders, the ProDoc included a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. In it, the modalities to engage with each project partners were briefly described. The modalities were about how to communicate officially with all project partners, how to document the discussion amongst partners and how to get to a signed agreement to initiate the actual partnership in the frame of the project. The engagement plan was straightforward and defined the main steps to follow to agree on a formal contract between the parties, i.e. SANBI and each partner.

It is important to highlight that the main partners have also committed themselves to making significant co-financing contributions to the BLU project.

The high level of participation of stakeholders was already and undoubtedly a characteristic feature of the project design.

4.1.e. Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

The project was designed to support the National Municipal Biodiversity Programme in order to strengthen coordination and capacity of municipal and other regulatory authorities that regulate land use decisions within municipalities to incorporate criteria to avoid/ prevent, minimize and/ or offset impacts on globally important biodiversity, and improve compliance monitoring and enforcement.

The design of the project did not identify any other well-defined complementarity with any projects run by UNDP and/or SANBI. Instead, the ProDoc identified 23 projects implemented by a variety of organizations, included SANBI and DFFE that may mutually benefit from coordination and collaboration with the BLU project.

Finally, the ProDoc states that UNDP would be expected to ensure the linkages and knowledge transfer between the project and other biodiversity-mainstreaming investments in Southern Africa supported by UNDP and GEF.

4.1.f. National priorities and country driven-ness

The formulation of the ProDoc was very much country driven. In fact, as already mentioned, the need to mainstream biodiversity at local scale, through direct engagement with municipalities, was a need identified in the course of the implementation of the GEF projects, i.e. the CAPE Programme and the Grassland Programme. The wide range of stakeholders identified in the ProDoc speaks for itself in regard to the country driven-ness of the BLU project: the needs at national, provincial and municipal scale are well identified. In addition, the ProDoc foresaw the engagement with communities, productive sector, and NGOs. The high number (14) of co-financing entities is, as well, a clear sign of the importance of the project for the country.

The alignment of the project to the SANBI’s institutional mandate is obvious having the institute a leadership role in generating, co-ordinating and interpreting the knowledge and evidence required to support policies and decisions relating to all aspects of biodiversity.

The design of the project was fully aligned with the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan (2011-2014) of the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), specifically, to its priorities n°1 “Enhancing systems for integrated planning and implementation”, n°2 “Sustaining our ecosystems and using natural resources efficiently” and n°3 “Towards a green economy”.

Finally, the project was as well aligned with the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) for the Republic of South Africa (2013-17), specifically with the outcomes “Increase in the number of sustainable ‘green jobs’ created in the economy” of the Strategic Plan Focus Area “Environment and Sustainable Development/ Poverty Eradication”.

4.1.g. Theory of Change

The ProDoc did not present any formal description of the Theory of Change (ToC).

A ToC have been developed later on in the course of the implementation following a specific recommendation of the MTR. The TOC was robust: it included all elements to understand the importance of the project and identified paths to achieve desired outcomes. The ToC identified two risks, which had not have been identified during the formulation of the project and reflected in the ProDoc. These two risks are considered relevant by the present evaluation exercise:

- Participating partner organisations are negatively affected by (non-BLU) budget and/or capacity constraints.
- Biodiversity is threatened by broader issues outside of the scope of the project, particularly mining and climate change.

4.1.h. Gender responsiveness of project design

The word “gender” is not mentioned in any part of the ProDoc. The project design is not gender responsive. Actually, a gender analysis was not yet a mandatory requirement to include in the GEF-5 project document template. As a result, the project design is considered as gender blind according to the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES), which applies to assess the effectiveness and quality of the gender-related results of UNDP initiatives.

The gender-blindness of the project design is not aligned with the UNDP GEF policies that, instead, require a gender-responsiveness approach. However, it is worth mentioning that at the time of project formulation, funded under the GEF -5 cycle, the gender was not a key element to be incorporated in the project design.

4.1.i. Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

The environmental and social screening checklist included as annex in the ProDoc did not identify any risks associate with the implementation of the BLU project. The TE concurs with the results of such screening exercise.

4.1.j. Management arrangements.

The project was implemented under the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM). SANBI was the executing agency. As such, the MTU, in charge of project management, was composed by SANBI employees.

The project was implemented through a broad array of partnership arrangements with district and local municipalities, other national and provincial authorities, and NGOs. Each partnership was regulated by a contract, which specified deliverables, timelines and reporting requirements. Financial and narrative reporting requirements were aligned to SANBI and UNDP procedures. NIM arrangements were well executed. No requests to UNDP for any advice, form of execution support services, including technical support.

4.2. Project Implementation

4.2.a. Adaptive Management

The project design did not undergo any extensive modifications changing the expected results, indicators and targets level. MTU and project partner substantially adhered to the Results Framework included in the original ProDoc. Actually, the findings of the MTR exercise were very positive. The MTR

report explicitly states that *...the BLU project is extremely strong in many respects and worthy of showcasing as a leading example from the UNDP-GEF portfolio...* In other words, there was no need to modify the Results Framework.

The development of the ToC, as recommended by the MTR, constituted a moment for a collective reflection on the project status and its ways forward. In fact, the ToC was developed through deep involvement of project partners that entailed focus group discussions and a final workshop.

The focus of the ToC was on the overall intention and approach, as well as the way the different project components fit together and influence each other. Detailed Theories of Change for the five project focus areas (environmental management, capacity development, land use planning, stewardship, and certification and standards) were drawn for this purpose. The ToC developed was robust: it included all elements to understand the importance of the project and identified paths to achieve desired outcomes.

Two no-cost extensions were needed to implement the project successfully. The TE considers that the decision to have two no-cost extensions was well rooted in the reality that characterized the implementation of the project. The first was needed following a specific recommendation of the MTR, whereas the second was necessary following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and in the country.

Finally, the project over-achieved many of its indicators. The project's scope resulted as well broadened and contributed to achievements that were not originally planned in the ProDoc (refer to section 4.3.a "Progress towards objective and expected outcomes" for details). The evaluation exercise identifies the managerial capacity of SANBI, and specifically of the MTU, as a key element that allowed that.

4.2.b. Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

The BLU project worked with a core team of partners, including its formal implementing partners and established collaborations with a very broad group of stakeholders. A total of 119 institutions and organisations were involved in the project to different extent:

- **54 government entities**
 - 14 municipalities;
 - 17 provincial entities;
 - 7 different national government departments; and
 - 14 other government entities (ranging from specific protected areas to catchment management agencies, including the South African Local Government Association).
- **31 NGOs**
NGO partners ranged from small local organisations, through national organisations to large international organisations.
- **23 private sector partners**
Environmental impact practitioners, biodiversity specialists, private companies, consultants and private nature reserves.
- **7 research institutions**
These included governmental research institute and universities.
- **Public groups**
Important connections were made with different types of public entities. This included more than 50 landowners and more than 30 communities who were involved in the project.

The collaboration with so many diverse partners ensured that the implementation processes resulted country driven. Different views on how mainstreaming biodiversity at different scale were incorporated in the way, in which the project was managed. The role of each project partners was respected, and every institution/organization was able to organize its work in full autonomy. SANBI engaged with each project partner in substantial accordance with the engagement plan defined in the ProDoc.

The coincidence of interests between parties was the key factor that allowed the implementation to take place without problems. Collaborations between SANBI and project partners were regulated by contracts (denominated “Collaboration Agreements”) and the role of consultants was limited: consultants were hired to deliver specific technical outputs (e.g. guidelines, management plans, trainings). They supported the project, did not lead it. SANBI aimed at promoting the actual involvement of project partners to develop organizational capacities.

The project was overseen by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and progress of implementation was discussed through Quarterly Meetings. The meetings, as a means of active participation, promoted a fruitful exchange of learning and networking. This feature of project implementation resulted to be appreciated by each stakeholder interviewed on the matter. Participation and consultation were at the core of the SANBI’s approach to work.

As already mentioned, the Results Framework did not undergo any changes. The necessity of having two no-cost extensions⁵ are the two main significant decisions of the PSC.

The evaluation agrees with the MTR’s finding that *to a large degree of the project’s success is based on the excellent set of partnerships established. These build from a strong baseline, real co-financing, often leveraging long-term relationships, and part of a continuum of projects that are coherent in their strategy. Some partnerships are new, and individuals and institutions are not always used to collaborating with each other*⁶.

Due to the gender blindness of the ProDoc, the implementation of activities did not include any focus on gender issues. It did not foresee any gender responsive activity related to project results. The project promoted gender equality and women’s empowerment within the partners’ organizations. However, this has very little to do with the core activities of the project. It is represent supplementary activities aiming at promoting women’s empowerment within the organizations, but it is detached from project results, whose contribution to gender equality remained unknown. It is important to highlight, however, that the job creation component involved a high number of women (55%) as end beneficiaries. From this perspective, the project can be considered as gender targeted.

4.2.c. Project Finance and Co-finance

External financial audits were commissioned by UNDP and conducted by Independent Auditors in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. All audits reported satisfying results and no major recommendations were made. Financial management of the project was in line with relevant procedures.

⁵ No-cost extensions do not require additional funds from the GEF. However, they entail unplanned additional efforts/costs for UNDP to follow up the implementation for a longer period than the original.

⁶ MTR report, page 17

Project finance:

Project finance table (consolidated as per May 31st, 2021)

Component	Total GEF funds (US\$)	Total GEF funds (ZAR)	Cumulative Actuals (ZAR)	Balance of GEF funds	% spent
Outcome 1.1 Regulatory Advice	1.608.458,00	22.888.357,40	21.386.174,76	1.502.182,64	93%
Outcome 1.2 Planning Advice -SANBI (GFPA)	1.078.498,00	15.347.026,54	12.963.322,46	2.383.704,08	84%
Outcome 2.1 Stewardship	1.019.107,00	14.501.892,61	16.121.120,19	-1.619.227,58	111%
Outcome 2.2 Pressures on Biodiversity	194.595,00	2.769.086,85	2.070.635,20	698.451,65	75%
Outcome 2.3 Land under better management	1.823.273,00	25.945.174,79	25.089.278,28	855.896,51	97%
Outcome 2. Mainstreaming Technical Unit (GFTU)	2.065.001,00	29.384.964,23	29.106.787,27	278.176,96	99%
Outcome 2.1 Stewardship- BirdLife	0,00	0,00	1.470.225,92	-1.470.225,92	0%
Outcome 2. Project Management Unit (GFPM)	388.798,00	5.532.595,54	2.747.833,69	2.784.761,85	50%
Total	8.177.730,00	116.369.097,96	110.955.377,77	5.413.720,19	95%

The project funds were used to accomplish the activities related to the outcomes of the projects.

Project co-finance:

Co-financing table

Source of co-financing	Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment mobilized	at CEO Endorsement (US\$)	at TE (US\$)
UNDP	UNDP	In kind	Recurrent	1,000,000	1,000,000
Government	Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	1,327,014	2,070,135
Private Sector	Forestry SA	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	2,559,242	2,390,139
Civil Society Organization	World Wildlife Fund-South Africa	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	1,421,801	3,341,412
Government	uMgungundlovu District Municipality	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	428,486	605,591
Government	Ehlanzeni District Municipality	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	4,936,019	3,769,230
Private Sector	NCT Forestry Cooperative Ltd	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	1,409,953	1,935,971
Government	Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	1,770,000	1,299,109
Government	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	47,393	152,847
Government	Mpumalanga Parks and Tourism Agency	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	383,692	815,389

Government	Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	1,516,588	---
Government	Department of Environment Affairs: Natural Resource Management	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	11,739,108	9,436,102
Private Sector	SAPPI Forests	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	3,365,505	3,446,385
Government	South Africa National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	18,748,815	16,673,674
Government	Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land & Environmental Affairs	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	346,159
Government	City of Mbombela	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	193,482
Civil Society Organization & Private Sector	BirdLife South Africa	In kind	Investment mobilized + recurrent expenditure	---	20,732,776
Private Sector	Institute of Natural Resources	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	3,026,017
Private Sector	Kruger to Canyons NPC	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	472,269
Private Sector	Table Mountain Fund	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	124,805
Government	Cape Nature	In kind	Recurrent expenditure	---	392,223
Total	Total co-financing			50,653,616	72,223,715

The actual co-financing contributions exceed the commitments (+42.6%).

4.2.d. Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry, implementation, overall assessment of M&E

The Project's M&E plan foresaw all the relevant elements for the purpose:

- The Results Framework as the main monitoring tool with baseline line and target values well defined;
- Three milestones included in the project evaluation plan, i.e., an inception report, a mid-term review, and this terminal evaluation.

Two were the minor shortcomings identified in the M&E design at entry: the lack of the incorporation of gender considerations and the lack of a well-defined Theory of Change. However, the most important element of the M&E, i.e. the Results Framework, was clear, well-articulated, and presented SMART indicators.

The M&E activities and tools were well defined. They were the typical activities that characterizes the UNDP/GEF project worldwide. They included:

- Measurement of means of verification for project progress and results;
- Project Implementation Reports, as main annual tool for M&E and reporting;
- Field visits;
- M&E and Knowledge exchange Forums;
- Quarterly reports;
- Audits; and
- Project Terminal Report

*The TE rates the **M&E design at entry** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

M&E activities did not face any important challenges. The MTU was very much dedicated to the implementation and monitoring of activities on a daily basis through direct communication with project partners.

To monitor regularly the implementation, the BLU project made use of the two common UNDP tools:

- Quarterly Monitoring Reports
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs)

To inform the report the MTU collated the data coming from the reports that SANBI received from its project partners. The financial and narrative reports from project's partners were aligned to the GEF/UNDP requirements. Consequently, there was no need for a large budget dedicated to M&E activities. It is also noted that the baselines and targets of each indicator of the Results Framework were easy to measure and/or calculate.

To ensure that project partners could comply with reporting requirements from SANBI and UNDP, the MTU supported the project partners through direct communication on any relevant issue that could have arose during the implementation of their respective contracts.

Project partners monitored their own activities and results in a very strictly and timely manner.

Finally, through the establishment, prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, of a rotational PSC committee meetings and quarterly technical meetings, the MTU made sure that the project progress was shared. Once movement and work restrictions were put in place by the Government, these meetings were instead conducted on-line.

As per the M&E plan, the GEF Tracking Tool compiled at the time of the Mid-Term Evaluation and again at the Terminal Evaluation (i.e. the present exercise). The two evaluation exercises were carried out in a timely manner.

*The TE rates the **M&E Plan Implementation** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

*The TE rates the **Overall Quality of M&E** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

4.2.e. UNDP implementation/oversight, Implementing Partner execution and overall assessment of implementation/oversight and execution

Being a project implemented through the National Implementation Modality (NIM), UNDP CO did not have to be involved deeply in the daily implementation of the project. Its role was mainly related to the following activities:

- Participating in the PSC;
- Supervision the implementation of activities;
- Ensuring the accountability of expenses;
- Granting no-cost extensions;
- Making sure that the project delivered its outputs and achieve its outcomes;
- Ensuring the alignment of the project with UNDP's Country Programme Document;
- Promoting exchange of learnings and experiences across its projects portfolio (Nature, Climate and Energy) whenever relevant.

Briefly, UNDP provided its expertise in term of overall management supervision. UNDP did not face any problems in playing its supervising role; the project did not need any corrective actions. The implementation was smooth. UNDP was responsive in granting two no-cost extensions that were necessary for the project to achieve its outcomes.

*The TE rates the **Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight** of the project as **Satisfactory**.*

The work of SANBI, and specifically of the MTU, was highly appreciated by all stakeholders interviewed on the matter. Main feature of the work approach of SANBI were the following:

- The MTU has dedicated members to environmental management, stewardships, and planning and land use management. The MTU was led by a Project Lead and a Project Coordinator. In this way, MTU was able to follow up the implementation of each component of the project and project partners had a clear focal point within the MTU.
- Respect of the role of each partner and timely support to them whenever it was needed.
- Promotion of networking and exchange of experience and learning amongst partners
- The delivery of funds resources to its partners did not encounter any kind of problem.
- Capacity to broaden the scope (EIA Screening Tool and SWSAs) of the project that emerged throughout the implementation and to make intelligent use of the favourable exchange rate USD/Rand.

The technical and relational capacities of the members of the MTU were appreciated by those interviewed on the matter. In this regard, it is important to highlight the internal capacity development effort put in place by SANBI following the acknowledgement that mainstreaming biodiversity is a social process in which relationships are the basis for integrating biodiversity into other sectors.

Furthermore, SANBI properly managed the project funds in accordance to transparent procedures: all audits confirmed that the financial management was in line with relevant procedures and adhered to the objective and scope of the project.

Finally, it is important to note that in the first years of project implementation the PIRs were rated as “moderately satisfactory” (2017). Instead, as far as the project progressed into its late years of implementation, PIRs were rated as “highly satisfactory” (2021). From the MTU’s side, there was a constant ambition to strive for improvements.

*The TE rates the **Implementing Partner execution** of the project as **Highly Satisfactory**.*

*The TE rates the **Overall Implementation/Oversight and Execution** of the project as **Highly Satisfactory**.*

4.2.f. Risk Management

The project did not entail any risks that were out of the sphere of direct control of SANBI or its partners. As already mentioned, the Results Framework did not identify any relevant and significant risks. In addition, the environmental and social screening checklist included as did not identify any risks associate with the implementation of the BLU project. As a matter of fact, no major events and circumstances, with the obvious exception of the COVID-19 pandemic (which obviously should be considered as an extraordinary event) threatened the smooth implementation of project activities.



4.3. Project Results and Impacts

4.3.a. Progress towards objective and expected outcomes

Component 1 - Land Use Management, Regulation, Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement.			
Outcome 1.1 - Regulatory processes for land and natural resource use management incorporate criteria to prevent/minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity.			
1.1 - Regulatory processes incorporate biodiversity criteria in two District Municipalities			
Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project (August 2021)
1.1.1 Coordination mechanism in place	1.1.1 No coordination mechanisms	1.1.1 Intergovernmental cooperation forum and/or framework in two target districts	1.1.1 Ehlanzeni district. The Ehlanzeni Intergovernmental Forum was re-established on December 4 2018. Its members are DARDLEA (EIAs, CME, and Agriculture), MTPA, DAFF (Forestry and Agriculture), SANBI and various local municipalities. It was established to strengthen professional networks among stakeholders, share information, offer training on respective mandates and encourage collaborative decision-making. The forum is expected to continue its activities under the leadership of the Inkomazi Usuthu Catchment Management Agency. Cape Winelands District. Different legislation crossing agriculture, water, environmental and heritage laws govern regulation of land clearing. It is usual that each of these requires different application and approval processes. Most of the signatories have signed the Agreement with the exception of the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) and the Department of Housing and Water and Sanitation (DHWS). The Western Cape Environmental Authorisation synchronisation agreement aligns provincial procedures with the requirements of national legislation in an effort to streamline decision making in the province. The Environmental Management Working Group 5 will take the lead (DFFE, SANBI and DEA&DP). DFFE has advised that the issue should be discussed at national level. Then the agreement may be applied across the provinces (this is the hope) In addition to the two target districts, biodiversity issues were also mainstreamed into an existing District Task Team in uMgungundlovu. Officials involved in various aspects of environmental planning, management and regulation are the members of the Task Team.
1.1.2 Application forms incorporate biodiversity information	1.1.2 Biodiversity information included in one target district	1.1.2 Biodiversity information included in authorisation application forms of two target districts	1.1.2 The project has worked with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) on its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Tool and the development of biodiversity protocols, which sets out the requirements upfront for development in areas with high sensitivity. Four biodiversity protocols, namely, Aquatic, Terrestrial, Plant and Animal Protocols, have been developed and gazetted for implementation. The end of project target has been exceeded as biodiversity information has been included in the pre-application process for authorisation applications nationally and not just in the two target districts. This is a significant mainstreaming achievement, as the protocols provide a minimum set of assessment and reporting criteria that must form the basis of specialist investigations required for the Environmental Authorisation process and must be completed for all development applications nationally.



			<p>Additional work, not originally part of the BLU project deliverables, came in the form of efforts to secure Strategic Water Resource Areas (SWSAs). SANBI has been mainstreaming the concept of SWSAs, which are the 10% of South Africa's land area that delivers more than 50% of the country's water. The mainstreaming efforts were increasingly bearing results as the concept was incorporated into national policy, such as the National Spatial Development Framework, and the National Water and Sanitation Masterplan. Importantly, following a call that SWSAs needed additional protection, a target to secure 11 of the 22 SWSAs by 2024 was placed on the DFFE Medium Term Strategic Framework. The BLU project stepped forward to support the DFFE in achieving this target, undertaking the process to delineate the SWSAs at a scale suitable for protection and then a prioritisation exercise to determine the 11 SWSAs to be protected. A project concept aimed at securing SWSAs nationally is under development for submission to the Green Climate Fund and aims at building on the work of the BLU project work.</p>
1.1.3 Biodiversity guidelines developed	1.1.3 Guidelines exist on fynbos, grasslands, mining & biodiversity	1.1.3 Biodiversity guidelines for 1 new sector & 1 new biome	<p>1.1.3</p> <p>Two Biome guidelines for Savana and Albany Thicket completed. Species Environmental Assessment guideline supporting the Species Protocols completed. - Clearing of indigenous Veg for orchard development in Ehlanzeni DM guideline developed. - Offsets guideline currently under development with draft having been submitted to DFFE's Working Groups for comments. - Ecosystem Environmental Assessment Guideline in support of Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecosystems Protocols.</p>
1.1.4 Database & system for compliance monitoring and enforcement of authorisations reflect biodiversity priorities	1.1.4 Existing compliance and enforcement database and system is not integrated or systematic and does not adequately reflect biodiversity priorities	1.1.4 Updated database and integrated compliance and enforcement system in at least in 1 target district	<p>1.1.4</p> <p>In the Cape Winelands District Municipality, the existing compliance database was updated to record five additional biodiversity parameters, including protected areas, Critical Biodiversity Areas, watercourses, vegetation types and ecosystem threat status. The BLU project also made possible the hiring of six additional compliance monitoring staff in project-funded contract positions at the Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, where it is institutionalized and will be use across the whole province of Western Cape. This included the appointment of a specialist botanist to provide scientific knowledge around impact to the distinctive Fynbos vegetation in the district. The staff were provided with national environmental inspector training. These additional staff enhanced the enforcement system. Furthermore, with support from the BLU legal advisor, efforts were made to improve the wording of conditions in development approvals, ensuring that enforcement would be more straightforward if needed.</p>
<p>Outcome 1.1 is considered over-achieved by the evaluation exercise. All target levels were achieved. Actually, the actual achievement of three indicators (out of four) exceeded the target. In addition, the work related to the delineation of SWSAs represent a significant broadening of project scope, which is fully in line with the overall goal of the project.</p>			



Outcome 1.2 - The capacity of staff of regulatory authorities and other environmental planning professionals to apply criteria to prevent/ minimise and offset impacts on biodiversity is improved.			
1.2 - Capacity to apply biodiversity criteria evident among regulatory authorities and environmental and planning professionals, as indicated by survey to be conducted with key personnel at start and end of project			
Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
1.2.1 Number of staff of regulatory authorities applying biodiversity criteria in review and decision making processes	1.2.1 0	1.2.1 20% increase on baseline value	1.2.1 The BLU project developed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) training course as a step towards improving capacity among those involved in EIA to work with biodiversity matters. The course was accredited by the South African Council for Natural Scientific Professions and was promoted via the South African chapter of the International Association of Impact Assessors. The training course was offered through six sessions, two in-person sessions that occurred prior to the COVID pandemic, and four online sessions thereafter, which together reached more than 200 EIA officials and practitioners countrywide. Main subject matters of the training were: “understanding biodiversity and ecosystem services”; “planning for biodiversity and development”; “EIA process and application”; and “public participation, application review and decision making”. In addition to the EIA training course, a wide range of other project interventions had a capacity development dimension. These included informal advisory engagements, the provision of knowledge resources, involvement in policy processes, partner efforts at capacity building, on-the-job guidance by the seconded employees and more. As a result, 195 different capacity development sessions were held covering a range of themes and reaching more than 5,500 participants. Capacity interventions spanned the whole project, including the biodiversity stewardship component and the work with farmers in the sugar, fruit and forestry sectors. The indicator was calculated in terms of (1) compliance monitoring and enforcement officials within the Mpumalanga (DARDLEA) and Western Cape (DEA&DP) provincial departments, (2) EIA officials within the Mpumalanga (DARDLEA) provincial department, and other EIA authorities, and (3) environmental impact practitioners who attended the EIA training. This target was assessed by asking survey participants if they relied less on their respective biodiversity commenting authority since undergoing BLU capacity interventions. A positive response means that these officials feel more confident in understanding biodiversity issues, and do not have to wait for their provincial conservation authorities to provide information. ↑54% monitoring and enforcement officials DARDLEA Mpumalanga ↑75% monitoring and enforcement officials DEA&DP Western Cape ↑75% EIA officials DARDLEA Mpumalanga
1.2.2 Improvement in capacity of staff in regulatory authorities to apply criteria	1.2.2 0	1.2.2 20% increase on baseline value	1.2.2. This indicator was measured by asking participants a comprehensive set of questions relating to how they incorporated biodiversity into their everyday work. Questions covered access to biodiversity information, understanding of biodiversity map categories, and the level of interactions with other regulatory authorities. Answers were scored for the periods prior to, and following, their involvement in the BLU project. ↑22% monitoring and enforcement officials DARDLEA Mpumalanga



1.2.3 Quality of biodiversity information provided by applicants	1.2.3 0	1.2.1 20% increase on baseline value	<p>↑28% monitoring and enforcement officials DEA&DP Western Cape ↑31% EIA officials DARDLEA Mpumalanga ↑48% planning officials Ehlanzeni ↑31% planning officials uMgungundlovu 1.2.3 This target was assessed using an online survey sent to environmental impact practitioners and specialists who attended the EIA training course. The survey asked a series of questions relating to accessing biodiversity information, identifying biodiversity priorities and applying the mitigation hierarchy. Responses were scored and compared to a baseline of zero. ↑56% EIA practitioners and specialists</p>
Outcome 1.2 is considered over-achieved by the evaluation exercise. The achievement of all indicators (three out of three) exceeded the target.			

Outcome 1.3 - Municipal land use planning, management and decision making integrate biodiversity priorities.

1.3 - Municipal land use planning frameworks in two target District Municipalities incorporate biodiversity criteria

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
1.3.1 Number of IDPs where environmental layer of SDF is SPLUMA compliant	1.3.1 0, SPLUMA is promulgated but has not come into force yet	1.3.1 6 IDPs with environmental layers in the SDFs that are SPLUMA compliant	<p>1.3.1. A set of biodiversity review criteria was developed to help assess whether SDFs adequately integrated the relevant biodiversity spatial data, and whether they were compliant with the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA). The results revealed that biodiversity featured only weakly in existing SDFs. The project then supported the development of the “Minimum Standards for the Consideration of Environmental Aspects in the Preparation/Review of Municipal Spatial Development Frameworks”, i.e. the the minimum level of environmental information that is needed within an SDF in order for it to be legally compliant. The minimum standards show how Protected Areas, Critical Biodiversity Areas, Ecological Support Areas and Strategic Water Source Areas must be included. The Minimum Standards have been gazetted for public comment as a guideline under the National Environmental Management Act. The BLU project contributed to the development of twelve SDFs, ensuring that biodiversity information is effectively taken up into these planning products, exceeding the project target of six SDFs. In the Cape Winelands DM, SDFs have been completed for (1) Drakenstein local municipalities In Ehlanzeni DM, SDFs have been completed for (2) Bushbuckridge, (3) Mbombela and (4) Nkomazi local municipalities as well as the District SDF (5). In uMgungundlovu DM, an SDF has been completed for (6) Mkhathini, (7) Msunduzi, (8) Richmond and (9) uMgeni local municipalities. In Mpumalanga, the project also provided comments on the final municipal SDFs in the Gert Sibande District (not a project district) namely (10) Dr Pixely Ka Isaka Seme, (11) Msukaligwa, and (12) Dipaleseng Local Municipalities developed by Mpumalanga Parks & Tourism Agency (MPTA). In addition to municipal level SDFs, the BLU project also made representations into several provincial SDFs as well as the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF). The NSDF was developed through a 5-yr</p>



<p>1.3.2 SPLUMA complaint LUMS which contribute to improved land use regulation</p>	<p>1.3.2 0</p>	<p>1.3.2 1,741,937 ha under improved land use regulation through SPLUMA complaint LUMS in 6 local municipalities</p>	<p>research and consultation process, during which the BLU project maintained involvement, providing ongoing feedback about which biodiversity datasets should be included. Ultimately, the final draft of the NSDF includes Protected Areas, Critical Biodiversity Areas and Strategic Water Source Areas, recognising the importance of these areas in the country's spatial development vision.</p> <p>The Ehlanzeni Bioregional Plan was finalised and successfully reviewed by the National Bioregional Plan Review Committee. It has since been submitted to the Mpumalanga Member of Executive Council (MEC) for Environment for gazetting. Its purpose is to inform and guide planning, environmental assessment and natural resource management by a wide range of sectors whose policies and decisions impact on biodiversity. A bioregional plan is a legal instrument under the Biodiversity Act.</p> <p>1.3.2 2 353 900 ha under improved land use regulation in eight local municipalities: Drakenstein, Thaba Chweu, Nkomazi, Mbombela, uMshwathi, Mkhathini, iMpendle, Mpofana.</p> <p>In process: 1 024 800 ha in Bushbuckridge.</p> <p>A Land Use Scheme (LUS) gives effect to spatial plans by conferring actual land rights within certain zoned areas. The BLU project was able to assist municipalities in its target districts to develop SPLUMA compliant LUSs that adequately incorporated biodiversity information. This area of work began with a review of biodiversity content in existing LUSs, which informed how these could be improved. The "National Land Use Scheme Guidelines" were published in 2017, and although they noted that biodiversity should be included, they failed to say how this should be achieved. Therefore, the BLU project developed a "Guideline for Incorporating Biodiversity into Land-Use Schemes: An addendum to the National Land Use Scheme Guidelines". It shows how Critical Biodiversity Area maps can be used to inform the categories for recommended Open Space Zones and an Environmental Management Overlay. The Guideline will be included as an official addendum to the "National Land Use Scheme Guidelines". The BLU project then provided support and input towards the revision or development of LUSs within its target municipalities. An early achievement was made when the BLU financially supported the development of the LUS for the City of Mbombela local municipality, the capital city of Mpumalanga province. Since then, a further seven SPLUMA compliant LUS have been supported, with another in progress. Support was also given towards Rural Land Use Policies for two municipalities that had already developed LUSs for their urban components.</p>
<p>Outcome 1.3 is considered over-achieved by the evaluation exercise. The actual achievement of all indicators (two out of two) exceeded the target.</p>			



Outcome 1.4 - Financial mechanisms and incentives are enhanced in order to encourage greater investment in biodiversity and ecosystem services and support job creation and sustainable economic development

1.4 - At least one new funding mechanism in place, increasing resource allocation

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
1.4.1 - Percentage increase in resources allocated to biodiversity management	1.4.1 0	1.4.1 50% increase in resources allocated to biodiversity management	1.4.1 The increased resource allocation for the BLU target was measured from municipal IDPs. A baseline assessment in 2014 revealed that a total of R16.7 million was allocated to biodiversity management across two of the target district municipalities. Through the Ecological Infrastructure Challenge Fund (EICF) and other large scale biodiversity and climate change adaptation projects, this increased to R57.1 million, an increase of more 240%.
1.4.2 Number of jobs (including temporary and permanent jobs) created in target municipalities to support ecosystem restoration and maintenance	1.4.2 0 in UDM and 6 in EDM	1.4.2 600 jobs (including temporary and permanent jobs) created in target municipalities to support ecosystem restoration and maintenance	1.4.2 1045 job were create in targeted district municipalities. More than half (55%) of these jobs have benefitted women and youth. The project created 915 jobs through direct employment (Ecological Infrastructure) and leveraged employment through project partners, with a further 130 still planned, as they are projections related to the completion, expected by March 2022, of two ecological infrastructure projects.

Outcome 1.4 s considered over-achieved by the evaluation exercise. The actual achievement of all indicators (two out of two) exceeded the target.

Component 2 - Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity on Private and Communal Land.

Outcome 2.1 - Improved security for biodiversity priority areas.

2.1 - New biodiversity stewardship agreements cover 62,464 ha of biodiversity priority areas

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
2.1.1 Number of Ha under negotiation	2.1.1. Amathole - 0 ha Cape Winelands - 4,118 ha Ehlanzeni - 7,900 ha uMgungundlovu -10,500 ha	2.1.1 20,000 Ha under negotiation	2.1.1 23,091 ha under negotiation Amathole: 5,600 ha Cape Winelands: 500 ha Ehlanzeni: 16,991 ha
2.1.2 Number of Ha submitted for declaration		2.1.2 14,495 Ha submitted for declaration	2.1.2 19,314 ha submitted for declaration Amathole: 2,636 ha Cape Winelands: 9,359 ha Ehlanzeni: 4,848 ha uMgungundlovu: 2,472 ha
			2.1.3



2.1.13 Number of Ha declared		2.1.3 27,969 Ha declared	37,766 ha declared Amathole: 9,800 ha Cape Winelands: 0 Ehlanzeni: 24,563 ha uMgungundlovu: 3,403ha
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Outcome 2.1 is considered over- achieved by the evaluation exercise. The achievement of all indicators (three out of three) exceeded the target.

Outcome 2.2 - Biodiversity management of threatened medicinal plant species and priority ecosystems enhanced.

2.2 - Biodiversity management plans that reflect gazetted norms and standards for 3 medicinal plant species and 1 priority ecosystem in place

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
2.2.1 Number of Biodiversity Management Plans for threatened and highly traded medicinal species (BMP-S)	2.2.1 A BMP-S for a medicinal plant species (<i>Pelargonium Sidoides</i>)	2.2.1 3 new BMP-S	2.2.1 Biodiversity Management Plan and Resource Assessment completed for six threatened and highly traded medicinal plant species in Ehlanzeni DM. Species included in the BMP: (1) <i>Bowiea volubilis</i> ; (2) <i>Alepidea cordifolia</i> ; (3) <i>Warburgia salutaris</i> ; (4) <i>Dioscorea sylvatica</i> ; (5) <i>Haworthiopsis limifolia</i> ; (6) <i>Siphonochilus aethiopicus</i> . In addition, a resource assessment for <i>Aloe Ferox</i> was also undertaken, in support of the Scientific Authority's Non-Detriment Finding.
2.2.2 - Number of Biodiversity Management Plans for priority ecosystem (BMP-E)	2.2.2 Zero BMP-E exist	2.2.2 1 BMP-E	2.2.2 The Parsonslei ecosystem in Gqeberha, consisting of Critically Endangered and Vulnerable Thicket vegetation types, as well as priority freshwater ecosystems, was completed.

Outcome 2.2 is considered over- achieved by the evaluation exercise. All target levels were achieved. Actually, the actual achievement of one indicator (out of two) exceeded the target.

Outcome 2.3 - Pressure on biodiversity is reduced through better land and natural resource management practices implemented by private and communal land owners.

2.3 -- Biodiversity considerations integrated into sector standards in 3 production sectors

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
2.3.1 Number of ha of priority biodiversity areas under better land & natural resource management practices implemented by private and communal land owners	2.3.1 63,628 ha (Amathole – 0 ha; Cape Winelands – 22,924 ha; Ehlanzeni – 0 ha; uMgungundlovu – 4,704 ha)	2.3.1 161 000 ha (new) under better land & natural resource management practices	2.3.1 273,620 ha (new) under better land & natural resource management practices of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20,818 ha - Management plans developed for eight different properties with both communal and private landowners as part of Biodiversity Agreements under the biodiversity stewardship programme (ECTPA) 45,629 ha - Management plans developed for the Blyde River Canyon reserve complex with multiple private and communal landowners, and the Berlin reserve complex with a forestry sector landowner (Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Reserve) 108,371 ha - Management plans developed for numerous farms in the sugar and fruit sectors. 98 802 ha - Small grower plantations certified under the value-based certification scheme.



<p>2.3.2 Biodiversity considerations integrated into production sectors</p>	<p>2.3.2 Codes of practice/ certification standards exist for forestry, wine and red meat commercial sector</p> <p>Baseline for fruit - 0</p> <p>Baseline for sugar - 0</p>	<p>2.3.2 Biodiversity considerations integrated into 3 (new) production sectors for communal/ small growers (fruit, sugar, small scale forestry)</p> <p>- 30% of fruit producers from the target district comply with codes of practice/certification standards (SIZA)</p> <p>- 100% of commercial and small scale sugar producers in the target district comply with codes</p>	<p>2.3.2</p> <p>The BLU project worked to include biodiversity into three emerging certification schemes or production standards for the forestry, fruit and sugar sectors.</p> <p>Fruit sector: development of Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA's) Environmental Standard, which was equivalence rated by the Rainforest Alliance. SIZA is the sustainability arm of the fruit sector body Fruit SA. Prior to the involvement of the BLU project, it had an existing social standard that covered aspects such as fair labour practices. With the help of the BLU project, through its implementing partner WWF-SA, a separate environmental standard was developed that covers aspects such as soil, water, ecosystems, biodiversity, energy, materials and waste. The standard has been equivalency rated against a number of other international systems for certification, so that a range of fruit buyers as evidence of sustainable practices accepts it. In particular, engagement with international retailers to accept the SIZA standard were productive, and have led to further investment in fruit producing catchments in South Africa.</p> <p>Sugar sector: update and implementation of the Sustainable Sugarcane Farm Management System (SUSFarms) which has been equivalence rated with the international sugar standard BONSUCRO. SUSFarms was an existing certification system developed by the South African Sugar Research Institute. With support from BLU implementing partner WWF-SA, the standard was updated to include additional biodiversity criteria within its best practice codes, such as pulling planting back from watercourses.</p> <p>Forestry: development of the Sustainable African Forestry Assurance Scheme (SAFAS) which has been endorsed by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forestry Certification. At the start of the BLU project it was understood that small plantation operations, including community plantations, were effectively excluded from established certification schemes due to the onerous costs and administrative requirements. To address this, the BLU project worked with NCT Forestry Co-operative to develop SAFAS. It follows a value-based approach that identifies all the risks that an operation could pose to ecological and social values, and then only assesses those that are relevant to the land parcel being certified. SAFAS received international endorsement from the Programme for Endorsement of Forestry Certification (PEFC) in 2018, and the first plantations have been certified under the scheme during 2021. A separate membership-based entity has been established to administer the certification.</p> <p>- Since the launch of the environmental standard by SIZA in 2019, as many as 1 642 producers have completed the Environmental Self-Assessment Questionnaire, which amounts to almost 55% of all fruit producers, considering that industry statistics estimate that there are 3,000 fruit producers in the country.</p> <p>- 100% of the commercial growers within the target district, uMgungundlovu, and supplying the Illovo mill are using SUSFARMS and submitting annual progress trackers. 100% of the small-scale producers have started using SUSFARMS as well. The SUSFARMS Progress Tracker has been adopted and is supported by 342 growers in the target area, representing 87,500 ha. 443 land use plans have been completed (target</p>
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	Baseline for forestry - 0	<p>of practice/ certification standards (SUSFarms)</p> <p>- 20% of small grower/communal foresters from the target district comply with codes of practice/ certification standards</p>	<p>was 300) with 192 biodiversity posters developed and delivered. In addition, land use plans were developed for small-scale growers representing 1,633 ha.</p> <p>- Only 1.7% of small growers in the district have been certified under SAFAS</p>
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Outcome 2.3 is considered achieved by the evaluation exercise. Three (out of four) target levels were achieved. Actually, the actual achievement of two indicator (out of two) exceeded the target. The target of an indicator instead was not achieved,

Outcome 2.4 - Financing mechanisms and incentives for biodiversity stewardship improved and capacity to implement incentives is strengthened.

2.4 - At least one funding mechanism or tax incentive in place for biodiversity stewardship)

Indicators	Baseline value	Target value	Progress at the end of project
2.4.1 Amendments made to existing tax incentives for biodiversity	2.4.1 Amendments made to existing tax incentives for biodiversity	2.4.1. Biodiversity tax incentives amended	2.4.1. A tax incentive was developed in partnership with the BirdLife South Africa's Fiscal Benefits Project, and in close consultation with the National Treasury and the South African Revenue Services. The result was an amendment to the Income Tax Act to introduce section 37D, which works by providing an income tax deduction based on the value of the declared portion of land. The section 37D was the first positive tax incentive for biodiversity anywhere in the world. Its innovation was recognised by a special commendation from the UN Pathfinder Awards in 2018 presented to project lead Candice Stevens and the Government of South Africa.
2.4.2 Number of land owners using tax incentives	2.4.2 0	2.4.2 5 land owners make use of tax incentives 2.4.3. Guidelines for tax consultants developed	2.4.2 13 biodiversity stewardship sites made use of the newly developed tax incentive 2.4.3 An official Interpretation Note has been developed and submitted to the South African Revenue Services to aid implementation of the section 37D incentive. The work has also been widely presented at many conferences and workshops to spread awareness about the incentive. Tax training sessions, accompanied by detailed technical examples, and capacity building sessions, have been held with landowners, implementers, and the private sector. A wide range of resources have been developed, including factsheets, flowcharts, testimonials and more.

Outcome 2.4 is considered over- achieved by the evaluation exercise. All target levels were achieved. Actually, the actual achievement of two indicators (out of three) exceeded the target.

4.3.b. Relevance

A broad variety of stakeholders engaged with the project. The participation of each of them, was motivated by the pursue of their interests. All of them saw conserving biodiversity and natural resources as a priority area of intervention.

For farmers dealing with biodiversity and, more broadly, with environmentally friendly practices is as well a necessity to better market their products, especially concerning exports: big retailing companies in UK and Europe are increasingly demanding for sustainably grown produces.

The importance of biodiversity and environment for securing ecosystem services was understood by all local public stakeholders interviewed

For public institutions, the participation to the project was key to develop relevant tools and policy and to develop capacities. All work done was fully aligned with their institutional mandates. This consideration applies to SANBI as well, being the institute the main target beneficiaries of the project.

The evaluation acknowledges that the relevance of the project was not only thematic, i.e. addressing needs and promoting interests of stakeholders. The BLU project resulted to be relevant also in terms of approach and stakeholders engagement. The approach to work was holistic and the actual work was done on three level: at policy/ level, at technical level and at field level. Stakeholder engagement was characterized by a deep and transparent consultation process, which eventually resulted to be key for project achievements. Representatives of project partners interviewed on the matter agreed that the quarterly project meetings promoted transparency, mutual learnings, and networking.

Finally, it is important that the overall relevance of the project is strictly related to the way the project was conceived and designed. The idea to mainstreaming biodiversity at municipal level and the acknowledgement that *while maps of biodiversity priority areas, at appropriate scales, are critical starting points, if biodiversity mainstreaming is to succeed, most of the effort is needed in advocacy, partnership development, coordination and capacity development processes*⁷ resulted to be key elements for the success of the project. The project was definitively well designed.

During the implementation period, the BLU project collaborated with many initiatives (15) that were on-going in South Africa carried out by SANBI, UNDP and other institutions or organizations. For reasons of brevity, the following are mentioned:

- *The Expanded Public Works Programme* (Working for Water, Working for Wetlands and Working on Fire), implemented through DFFE: Natural Resource Management Programmes, that aims to create socially meaningful work for the unemployed. Many of these jobs are in the green sector.
- *Improving Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network* funded by GEF and implementation is led by UNDP/SANParks.
- *The Biodiversity Stewardship programme* which is driven by the Provincial Conservation agencies
- *Making the Case* which aims to secure recognition for biodiversity as a driver of South Africa's economy and an important source for job creation. It aims to secure substantial additional support for state institutions with a natural resource mandate by demonstrating the value of investment in ecosystem services. It is led by SANBI and DFFE.
- *Ecological Infrastructure uMngeni Partnership* that promotes better collaboration and co-ordination of ecological infrastructure investments for the development of water security in the greater uMngeni catchment.

- *BIOFIN Initiative*, an international programme under the UNDP that aims to help countries reduce the finance gap required to implement their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

*The TE values the **relevance** of the implementation of the project as **Highly Satisfactory***

4.3.c. Effectiveness

The project undoubtedly contributed to the SDG 8 – “Decent work and economic growth”; SDG 12 – “Responsible production and consumption”; and SDG15 – “Life on land”.

The project actually contributed effectively to the achievement of the following GEF’s outcome indicators under the following strategic programme areas.

Expected focal area outcomes	Expected focal area outputs	Project contribution to indicators
<p>Outcome 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes and seascapes that integrate biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Outcome 2.2: Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>Output 1. Policies and regulatory frameworks for production sectors</p> <p>Output 2. National and sub-national land-use plans that incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services valuation</p> <p>Output 3. Certified production landscapes and seascapes.</p>	<p>Indicator 2.1: Landscapes and seascapes certified by internationally or nationally recognized environmental standards that incorporate biodiversity considerations (e.g. FSC, MSC) measured in hectares and recorded by GEF tracking tool.</p> <p>Indicator 2.2: Policies and regulations governing sectoral activities that integrate biodiversity conservation as recorded by the GEF tracking tool as a score.</p>

The project was aligned with Country Programme Document (CPD) for South Africa 2020-2025. Specifically, it contributed to its Outcome 3 “Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises” and specifically to Output 3.2 Natural resources are sustainably managed, utilized and contribute to the livelihoods of the population, whose indicators are:

- Indicator 3.2.1: Number of innovative sustainable development solutions rollout
- Indicator 3.2.2: Natural resources that are managed under sustainable use, conservation, access and benefit sharing regime:
 - b) Area of existing protected area under improved management

As per the aspirations of its design, the project contributed to the objectives of the DEA National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan (2011-2014) related to its priorities n°1 “Enhancing systems for integrated planning and implementation”, n°2 “Sustaining our ecosystems and using natural resources efficiently” and n°3 “Towards a green economy”. Furthermore, it also contributed effectively to all six strategic objective of the South Africa’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan:

1. Management of biodiversity assets and their contribution to the economy, rural development, job creation and social wellbeing is enhanced.
2. Investments in ecological infrastructure enhance resilience and ensure benefits to society
3. Biodiversity considerations are mainstreamed into policies, strategies, and practices of a range of sectors.

4. People are mobilised to adopt practices that sustain the long-term benefits of biodiversity.
5. Conservation and management of biodiversity is improved through the development of an equitable and suitably skilled workforce.
6. Effective knowledge foundations, including indigenous knowledge and citizen science, support the management, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Moreover, it demonstrated again the necessity of working through establishing partnerships and promoting holistic approach to the challenges that the attainment of SDGs pose to governments and international institutions: *the 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability*⁸.

The achievements of the project went well beyond the expectations as per the indicators included in the Results Framework. All targets were met, and, additionally, other achievements were recorded. These achievements were not planned originally.

It is as well acknowledged that the favourable exchange rate fluctuations (USD vs RAND), that occurred during the implementation period contributed to the overall project performances. The exchange rate trend was not offset by any inflationary process. Consequently, the budget available for implementation increased significantly.

The BLU project over-achieved its targets for a variety of reasons. The evaluation exercise summarizes the most important as follows:

- The project was well thought since its conception by SANBI. It was not designed by an external consultant with few inputs from those, who would later had implemented it. The project originated from past experiences of UNDP and SANBI and identified precise thematic areas of intervention.
- The high level of relevance for all stakeholders involved. The ideas behind each component of the project sparked a genuine enthusiasm amongst all project partners, whether they were public institution or NGOs. It also addressed real needs of farmers and communities. The BLU project was designed to fill existing gaps in South Africa and in the target district municipalities to promote a better conservation of biodiversity in the country. The project contributed to make possible activities and strategies that had already been thought (partially or totally) by the different partners. The ability of the project to act as a catalyst of processes was confirmed by all the stakeholders interviewed on this matter during the data collection phase.
- The approach to work adopted by the MTU. The approach refers mainly to the acknowledgement that *mainstreaming biodiversity is a social process in which relationships are the basis for integrating biodiversity into other sectors*⁹. The approach also involved an initial internal capacity development for the MTU staff.
- The reliance on the technical capacities of project partners and on their experience in targeting relevant groups.
- Lessons learned and constraints were documented by MTU and project partners to improve the implementation of each project component in each project area.

⁸ <https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

⁹ Case study: “Mainstreaming biodiversity is a social process” by SANBI

- The relational and technical capacity of the MTU staff. In this regard, all stakeholders interviewed on the matter agreed in defining the MTU as a professional group of people able to support the partners and facilitate implementation processes in an effective way respecting the roles and the responsibilities of all actors involved.

The evaluation did not identify any major constraining factors that posed at any serious risks to the likelihood of achieving the project targets. The occurrence of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic, obviously, could have created obstacles to the implementation. However, the implementation resulted to be successful. The on-line modalities of work replace partially the field activity that were resume once the movement restrictions were relaxed and work in presence was again permitted. The extended period of implementation, gained through the requests of two no-cost extensions, played a crucial role for the project to achieve its targets.

The project was designed and implemented with the aspiration to fill existing gaps to effectively mainstreaming biodiversity at scale and to building on experiences and capacities of the main partners involved. Opinions, of those interviewed on the matter, converged in defining the way to implement the project as appropriate to achieve the set goals. Due to this convergence of views and the degree of achievement of the objectives, which, as mentioned, go beyond the set targets, the evaluation was not able to identify different approaches or strategies that could have led to better results. Actually, most of the interviewees stated that the BLU was one of the best projects in terms of implementation and achievements, in which they had ever participated during their professional careers.

The project, through the work done with the productive sectors, i.e. sugar, timber and fruit, has promoted the adoption of practices that not only promote greater respect for the environment. In fact, certification processes and management systems promote respect for workers' rights. From this point of view, the work has responded in a manner appropriate to the needs of the UNDP in terms of promotion of human rights, decent work and the principle of leaving no one behind.

Only the component related to SAFAS certifications did not achieve its target for two main reasons:

- COVID-19 pandemic did not allow the international accreditation, which was obtained only at the beginning of 2021
- Small-holder farmers operate in informal settings. This makes it difficult for them to comply with the social standards of certification schemes.

*The TE values the **effectiveness** of the implementation of the project as **Highly Satisfactory***

4.3.d. Efficiency

As mentioned, the BLU project's achievements exceeded its planned outcomes. This occurrence is deemed as an element of efficiency.

The project was able to make use of the financial resources available in order to profit from a favourable contingency represented by an advantageous exchange rate USD/RAND. That was possible because the organization of the work allowed the MTU to have a grab the chances that emerged throughout the implementation. The project was instrumental to each stakeholder involved: it pushed ahead strategically the work of all those involved. In addition, the period of its implementation perfectly suited to the needs of the development agendas of the institutions and organizations involved. Actually, the many partnerships, established within the BLU Project, provided windows of opportunity for the project to build on ongoing or recently concluded partners' initiatives. This element promoted a great level of enthusiasm amongst the participants.

The Project Steering Committee and the Quarterly Project Meetings demonstrated to be effective tools for the achievement of the outcomes.

The delivery of funds resources from UNDP to SANBI and from the Institute to its partners did not encounter any kind of problem. These deliveries occurred transparently upon the receipt of relevant reporting documents and in a timely manner. The management of funds has been transparent and efficient. As mentioned earlier in the report (refer to section 4.2.c “Project Finance and Co-Finance”) all audits conducted confirmed that the financial management was in line with relevant procedures and with the scope and objectives of the project.

The M&E systems put in place by SANBI and its partners resulted to be efficient as well. Each staff member of the MTU was in charge of a thematic area of the project and worked in strict collaboration with project partners. The latter were responsible to monitor the activities included in their contracts with SANBI and reported regularly to the MTU.

The use of consultants for specific tasks and the constant commitment of the partners in carrying out the activities of the project also represent an element of efficiency. The project was intended as a learning opportunity for each party involved in which everyone could contribute in compliance with his mandate, relying on his own skills and at the same time taking advantage of developing / expanding his own technical and organizational capacities.

Two no-cost extensions were needed. The first was recommended by the MTR, the second was needed in response to the exceptional operational circumstances created by the pandemic. The evaluation exercise considers that these extensions were unavoidable . Actually, without the extension the project would have not reached its objectives . Consequently, did not value them as element of inefficiency On the contrary, they represent an acknowledgment of the reality on the ground by PSC members, SANBI, UNDP and project partners.

*The TE values the **efficiency** of the implementation of the project as **Satisfactory***

4.3.e. Sustainability: financial, socio-political, institutional framework and governance, environmental, overall likelihood of sustainability

Financial sustainability

Most probably, provincial and municipal institutions will experience a reduction in their operational budget (they will not enjoy any longer the financial support of the GEF), but they will still engage in relevant activities to protect biodiversity obviously from their institutional standpoint.

NGOs, instead, will continue their engagement through their fundraising activities. Also, SANBI and project partners will continue to finance activities to build on project achievements. Actually, SANBI is already implementing a project, titled “Unlocking biodiversity benefits through development finance in critical catchments” and financed by the GEF, which is taking the SWSAs work forward.

Now of the present evaluation exercise, SANBI is working on two project proposals, expected to be financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF):

- A project, titled “Scaling up ecosystem-based approaches to managing climate-intensified disaster risks in vulnerable regions of South Africa” will scale up the work done by the BLU project to work of mainstreaming biodiversity at municipal scale.
- Another project “Ecosystem Based Adaptation for Water Security in South Africa” will work on the SWSAs delineated during the BLU Project.

The TE acknowledge as well, that the partnerships shaped during the project implementation have the potential to generate “ad hoc” arrangements, which may result important to keep building on project achievements. As an example, it is worthy highlight the WWF-SA may support financially the

“Ecosystem Based Adaptation for Water Security in South Africa” the Environmental Law Enforcement Team of DEA&DP in the Western Cape.

The work done with SIZA, SUSFarms and SAFAS is financially sound. The certification schemes are thought, and actually, they are, to be financially sustainable, i.e. each farmer pays fees that sustain financially the certification mechanism.

*The TE assesses the **financial sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

Socio-political sustainability

The evaluation did not identify social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes. All stakeholders interviewed, including end beneficiaries, expressed their willingness to collaborate along the line drawn by the project.

*The **socio-political sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

Institutional framework and governance sustainability

There are no Institutional framework and governance risks for the sustainability of the achievement of the project. On the contrary, the project worked on strengthening institutional capacities, governance mechanisms, and planning and programming tools. In some case, the tools even have a status of law (e.g. EIA screening tool and associated protocols).

Each governmental and non-governmental partners has very clear ideas on next steps to build on project achievements.

*The TE assesses the **institutional framework and governance sustainability** the project as **Likely**.*

Environmental sustainability

The evaluation did not identify any environmental risks, which can jeopardize the achievement of the project. On the contrary, actions put in place with the support of the project aimed at improving the environmental sustainability of new developments and existing initiatives.

*The TE assesses the **environmental sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

Overall likelihood of sustainability

*The TE assesses the **overall likelihood of sustainability** of the project as **Likely**.*

4.3.f. Country ownership

Since the project identification phase, SANBI made sure that the project would have been aligned with national sectoral and development priorities to preserve biodiversity in the country. Later during the implementation, the project envisaged the participation of a great number of stakeholders covering a broad spectrum of institutions, organizations and communities.

As already mentioned, 119 partner organisations and entities were involved in the project (refer to section 4.2.b. “Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements” for details). The diversity of actors should be considered as exhaustive for a project with the duration and the budget of the BLU project: it would be a hard exercise to imagine having more stakeholders on board.

Biodiversity considerations have been substantially mainstreamed in all project results and outcomes. Biodiversity related issues are now part of legally binding requirements that will guide the development of infrastructure and economic activities in the country. They are also part of voluntary standards for productive sectors (fruit, sugar and timber) that will regulate the access to market in the coming years: there is an increasing awareness that environmental sustainability is and will be at the core of the agricultural businesses.

The involvement of all main project partners was promoted by the MTU through the organization of quarterly project meetings that ensured that all were aware of the progress of the different activities and provided all with the opportunity to exchange experiences and opinions.

The high level of co-financing, which exceeded the commitments, is considered by the TE as an additional element to confirm the high degree of country ownership of the BLU project.

The project resulted to be country-owned in all its components.

4.3.g. Gender equality and women's empowerment

The TE did not find any elements that may allow at least a superficial assessment of the project in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. The project is, therefore, considered gender targeted and no additional considerations can be drawn on this matter. A gender analysis was undertaken during the project implementation in response to an MTR recommendation. However, its recommendation "to strengthen the Project Results Framework to enable it to capture Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Indicators" was not implemented. The work done by the project in terms of gender issues and women's empowerment was mainly related to discussions on how to mainstream gender related issue in project partners' organizations. It was mainly done through discussions held during the Quarterly Project Meetings. However, how the project results affected gender relations and women's empowerment remained a question without an answer, since it was not neither discussed nor reported.

4.3.h. Cross-cutting Issues

The project was instrumental in showcasing the poverty-environment nexus: how the environmental conservation activities may contribute to poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods of rural communities through the creation of temporary and permanent jobs in the green economy.

In addition, through the support of certification schemes the project promoted human rights, decent work and the principle of leaving no one behind, which are at the core of UNDP engagement worldwide.

4.3.i. GEF additionality

The BLU project generated additionalities for each of the six areas of GEF's interest.

Areas of GEF's additionality	Elements identified by the evaluation exercise
Specific Environmental	The capacity of the country to protect its biodiversity increased. 1. Biodiversity considerations were actually mainstreamed at different levels, i.e. productive sector, municipal planning tools and national legal tools. The project achieved its goal.
Legal / Regulatory	The ambition to change to environment sustainable legal /regulatory forms and to promote an improved environment institutional governance was at the centre of project design and implementation, which result ultimately in the essential achievement to mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into planning and regulatory tools.
Institutional / Governance	The support for establishment of relationships between project partners, the set-up of relevant fora for discussing environmental, biodiversity and developmental matters, is actually an important achievement of the project. In addition, capacity development efforts put in place by the project had an incremental effect on all organizations that participated in the project.
Financial	The work done with the tax incentive represents an important element in terms of financial additionally. It actually mobilizes resource for biodiversity conservation.
Socio-economic	The socio-economic dimension of the project is important. The engagement with farmers to support more sustainable practices is important to secure in the medium and long term a better access to international markets.

Innovation	The BLU project was innovative. Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations at district and local municipality level represented a novelty countrywide. The project also managed to reach higher level: under this perspective, the project's contribution to the national EIA Screening Tool and protocols, and to the tax incentive represents beyond a shadow of a doubt the greatest added value of the project.
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The TE cannot state with certainty whether or not these elements would have been generated if the intervention had not taken place. However, the project contributed undoubtedly and enormously in speed up the processes that led to the relevant achievements under each component. As already mentioned, the project networked and collaborated with organizations that have common interests: the high level of relevance, country ownership at all levels and the additionally of the intervention are inter-connected with each other.

4.3.j. Catalytic/Replication Effect

The catalytic effect of the BLU project was very significant. According to the classification of GEF/UNDP evaluation guidelines, this effect falls into the following categories:

Categories	TE's considerations
Scaling up	The development of the EIA Screening Tool, the contribution to the development of National Spatial Development Framework, and the support for the formulation of Tax Incentive for Biodiversity Stewardships are legal instruments that will continue having beneficial effects of biodiversity conservation in South Africa.
Replication	The diverse array of guidelines is an element that is expected to build on the existing efforts to conserve biodiversity at country level. The establishment of fora to push ahead the biodiversity conservation agenda at district level are, instead, elements that add to the existing efforts and may contribute to a better conservation of biodiversity at local level.
Demonstration	The contribution for a better understanding of the nexus between development and environment at local level is unquestionable through the efforts of the projects in terms of capacity building and demonstration sites (ecological infrastructures and job creation).
Production of public good	The contribution to the consolidation to certification scheme and management system with the integration of biodiversity considerations is an element, which will generate benefits in terms of biodiversity conservation following the market demand for sustainable agricultural products that is currently characterizing the international markets.

4.3.k. Progress to Impact

The BLU project is likely to contribute the long-term impact stated in the project ToC "sustainable and effective long-term protection of biodiversity in support of sustainable socio-economic benefits".

In fact, the achievement of the projects have clear implications for biodiversity conservation.

The evaluation consider the following two as direct project impacts:

- The stewardship agreements, already declared and covering 37,766 ha, represent the measurable direct impact of the project that has already happened at field level. The agreements under negotiation and already submitted may add to this number in the near future.
- The work done with local municipality, i.e. the development of twelve SDFs and the ecological infrastructure projects, represents as well a direct impact of the project that has already happened at field level.
- The work done with the SWSAs represent an important impact as well.

The evaluation identified the following elements that support the likelihood of the project to contribute positively to biodiversity protection:

- The EIA screening tool and the Guideline for Incorporating Biodiversity into Land-Use Schemes are legally binding tools. The screening tool obliges developers, belonging either to the public or to the private sector, to take into consideration biodiversity in the EIA necessary to get an authorization for land use change and new developments. Whereas, the guideline will be included as an official addendum to the “National Land Use Scheme Guidelines”, which are the guiding document for municipality to be SPLUMA compliant when it comes to land use planning. The direct and positive impact of the two tools on biodiversity status is self-evident.
- At district level, namely in the Cape Winelands DM, the update of compliance database with five additional biodiversity parameters, including protected areas, Critical Biodiversity Areas, watercourses, vegetation types and ecosystem threat status has a well the potential to improve the protection of biodiversity.

All other achievements of the project constitute neither legally binding tools nor measurable facts that already happened on the ground. However, their importance to move ahead biodiversity conservation efforts in South Africa is out of question: awareness and knowledge around the importance of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources increased. This represent a self-evident prerequisite for a more sustainable development of the country.

5. Main findings, conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned

5.1. Main findings

The TE identified the following main findings:

- MF1** The design of the project was well thought, feasible and responsive to actual needs and interests of all stakeholders involved. A minor flaw of the design was represented by the lack of identified risks that could be resulted harmful for the achievement of the project outcomes.
- MF2** The management of the project activities was transparent, inclusive and participative. In this regard, it is important to highlight that technical and inter-personal capacities of MTU members played a key role.
- MF3** The management of project funds was transparent and result-oriented. Decisions were made to protect the interests of the project and ensure that the results and outcomes could be fully achieved.
- MF4** The project was implemented in accordance with the ProDoc. No need for substantial changes of the project design emerged during the implementation. The scope of the project was broadened during its implementation. The delineation of SWSAs and the contribution to the EIA screening tools represented that most outstanding contribution of the project, which was not planned in its design. The broadening of the project scope did not happen at expenses of originally planned activities/results; it added to them.
- MF5** The evaluation considered the project as highly relevant. Thematically, the project has responded to needs and aligned with interests of project's stakeholders. Operationally, the approach to work, pursue by SANBI, was holistic and collaborative. Therefore, the project generated enthusiasm amongst stakeholders. The great level of participation to project activities is a project's feature that emerged as the most outstanding both by consulting available documentation and throughout the whole process of interviews.
- MF6** All project outcomes were over-achieved. Only the target of one indicator "20% of small grower/communal foresters from the target district comply with codes of practice/certification standards" was not achieved. All other indicators were overachieved.
- MF7** The project was implemented efficiently. GEF funds were used to effectively pursue the achievement of project results
- MF8** The project was effective. The likelihood of the project to generate log-term impacts on biodiversity conservation is high.
- MF9** The evaluation considers the sustainability of the project likely. As expected in its design, the initiative paved the way for an improved conservation of the biodiversity in the country and for a better management of natural resources.
- MF10** The project design was gender blind. However, during the implementation efforts were made to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

5.2. Conclusions

Main conclusions of the present TE are:

- C1** Biodiversity considerations were actually mainstreamed at different levels, i.e. productive sector, municipal planning tools and national legislation. The project's achieved its goal.

- C2 The project, which was formulated as a project with a clear, locally defined geographical scope, has turned into a project whose importance has gone far beyond the targeted district municipality, becoming in all its aspects a project of national importance.
- C3 The project was instrumental for the GEF focal area “biodiversity” and its strategic objective BD2 “Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. GEF funding was well spent.
- C4 The evaluation considers the two cost-extensions well justified and pertinent. The represented solid management decisions aiming at achieving project’s results and outcomes.
- C5 Project displayed the importance of reconciling development with biodiversity conservation. It promoted the identification of environmental conservation activities as an economic sector worth to invest in, i.e. able to generate jobs while preserving ecosystem services for the benefit of communities.
- C6 The project was effective in guaranteeing a respectful and fruitful dialogue between stakeholders. All persons interviewed on the matter reported that this characteristic (i.e. the open and articulated dialogue between project stakeholders), for the intensity of the opportunities of discussion and participation, represented a key element for the success of the project.
- C7 SANBI aimed at promoting the actual involvement of project partners to develop organizational capacities. The project represented an actual learning space for all those involved.
- C8 The diversity of actors, i.e. 119 partners organizations, which spanned from public institutions to NGOs and private companies, who participated in the project is considered as outstanding by the evaluation exercise. There are no doubts about the country ownership of the BLU project: productive sector, environmental practitioners, NGOs, universities, national, provincial and municipal institutions had an actual interest in project activities.
- C9 The acknowledgment/assumption, clearly stated in the ProDoc that, *while maps of biodiversity priority areas, at appropriate scales, are critical starting points, if biodiversity mainstreaming is to succeed, most of the effort is needed in advocacy, partnership development, coordination and capacity development processes* hold true.
- C10 The lack of articulated gender approach is the only significant flaw of the project. On this regard, it is opportune to highlight that the TE could not dig into the issue. The project staff did not comprise a dedicated officer, partially or fully, to gender issues. The achievements of the project are regarded as gender targeted because the project paid attention in targeting women under its component related to job creation. Actually more than half of end beneficiaries were women, In addition, the evaluation values as very significant the efforts to promote a gender equality on the workplaces within the partners’ organizations. However, these efforts did not have any significant repercussions on project results, whose contribution to gender equality remained unknown.

5.3. Recommendations

The evaluation findings and conclusions of the present terminal evaluation are very positive. Recommendations to improve the course of action of the project by the end of its implementation are not needed.

Recommendation n° 1

⇒ To assess the quality of EIA reports

The importance of the EIA Screening Tool lies in the fact that EIA practitioners can use a guide that facilitates the task of formulating an EIA taking into account all the relevant elements for the purpose, including those relating to biodiversity conservation. In principle, there is the assumption that a better EIA will lead to better decisions when it comes to authorizing developments. Better decisions will be reflected in a better protection of biodiversity and natural resources.

Measuring the impact of the EIA Screening Tool at field level would have cost implications that made the measurement unfeasible from the financial point of view. Instead, comparing the quality of EIA reports pre- and post-establishment of the EIA Screening Tool as a legally binding tool could provide indication on how the tool contributes to the actual biodiversity conservation at a much lower cost.

The recommendation is about comparing the quality (with special focus on inclusion of biodiversity considerations) of a set of EIA reports developed without and with the support of the EIA Screening Tool. The size of the samples of reports to be assessed will vary depending on the budget that will be devoted for this activity. The exercise can be carried out in a specific province or across all provinces of the country. The assessment of the quality of EIAs should be based on criteria agreed upon amongst key stakeholders, such as SANBI, DFFE, Environmental NGOs, EIA Practitioners and provincial authorities. In case of budget constraints, it would be worthy to investigate whether the exercise could be of interest to PhD students or other researchers across the country.

Responsible entities: SANBI

Timeline: Within 2 year after the project closure

Recommendation n° 2

⇒ To include a gender specialist in the project design team

Women's empowerment and gender equity are essential elements that the approach that UN agencies should follow in all their interventions. Therefore, it is important to ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into future projects of UNDP in South Africa. Such mainstreaming exercise requires dedicated financial resources and staff able to produce relevant management tools to support the implementation of a given project from its very beginning (identification and formulation phase). Actually, as from GEF-6 cycle, there is corporately a well-defined gender framework in place that CO is mandated and adhere to. The recommendation should be applied also to project financed by different donors that may not require explicitly a focus on gender issues.

Responsible entity: UNDP CO

Timeline: during the identification and formulation of other proposals

Recommendation n° 3

⇒ To target smallholding farmers

Smallholding farmers represent a disadvantaged group within the country. They face much bigger constraints for a successful implementation of their entrepreneurial activities than those faced by the medium and large-scale farmers. They often operate informally; have scarce access to market information; and, generally, lack motivation and knowledge to improve the quality of their business.

Furthermore, they operate within rural communities and improper natural resource management may actually represent a risk for the whole community. Supporting the development of their entrepreneurial activities is of paramount importance for a just development of the rural areas.

Finally, a greater involvement of smallholding farmers may also trigger a process of awareness within the communities to which they belong about the importance of the conservation of natural resources (land, water and biodiversity).

Responsible entities: SANBI, DFFE, DALRRD and UNDP CO

Timeline: during the identification and formulation of other proposal

5.4. Lessons learned

The TE exercise identifies the following lessons learned:

Lesson learned n. 1

The project resulted highly satisfactory in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency; the overall project outcome rating was, as well, highly satisfactory and sustainability was rated as likely. The following elements emerged clearly during the entire evaluation process, i.e. both from the consultation of documents and from the convergence of the answers obtained from the project stakeholders interviewed, as key factors for successful implementation of initiatives aiming at mainstreaming biodiversity:

- The active participation of organizations in the formulation of a development initiative is key to ensure a high level of participation and country ownership during the implementation of the initiative.
- The design should build on actual needs and interests of those involved. The topic to be mainstreamed, i.e. biodiversity, should be promoted as an element that adds to and strengthens the actual agenda of partner organizations, who ultimately do not have to perceive themselves as mere contractors and/or beneficiaries, but active actors shaping the project according to their priorities.
- The set-up of management arrangements with clear roles for each main project partners already included in the project document facilitate the implementation of activities avoiding institutional misunderstandings.
- The coordination of different capacities and dedicated project staff to follow up the different lines of action with relevant expertise.

In brief, the project itself, from its formulation to its implementation, can be regarded as a model. Indeed, as already stated in the MTR report *the BLU project is extremely strong in many respects, and worthy of showcasing as a leading example from the UNDP-GEF portfolio*.¹⁰

Lessons learned n° 2

The thematic relevance of an initiative is evidently the pre-requisite for a development project to be successful. However, those in charge of project management should be able to capture the attention of other stakeholders. Relevant managerial competencies, commitment and capacities to listen and understand different interests, openness to dialogue and personal commitment are key factors to promote an effective engagement of stakeholders in a development initiative. In this regard, a real empowerment of project staff through dedicated time and resources for their capacity development is a key factor to ensure a high degree of project effectiveness.

¹⁰ MTR report, page 43

6. Annexes

Annex 1 - TE ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

Terms of Reference

Terminal Evaluation for the UNDP-GEF Project South Africa: Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale

Location: South Africa
Application Deadline: 19 July 2021
Type of Contract: Individual Contract
Languages Required: English
Duration of Initial Contract: eight weeks
Expected Duration of Assignment: eight weeks

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full- and medium-sized UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project. This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the TE of the full-sized project titled *Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale*, known locally as the *Biodiversity and Land Use Project* (PIMS #4719, for ease of use, hereinafter referred to as the 'Biodiversity Land Use' Project, BLU Project, implemented through the South African National Biodiversity Institute. The project started on the 10 March 2015 and is in its 6th year of implementation. The project has undergone two extensions.

The TE process must follow the guidance outlined in the document 'Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects' http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

South Africa has exceptional biodiversity of global significance. Since 1994 it has made major strides in protecting that biodiversity. However, it still experiences very high rates of biodiversity loss due to development pressure and habitat degradation. Furthermore, South Africa has persistently high levels of poverty and unemployment.

Municipalities play an important role as centers of economic growth and service delivery; they regulate land use at local scale and are also important users and managers of biodiversity and ecosystem services. However, municipalities are often faced with many burgeoning and often conflicting tasks, with poverty alleviation, local economic development and service provision justifiably occupying top priority on most local council agendas. Awareness amongst decision makers of the positive links between improved biodiversity management, human well-being and sustainable development is often low, as are levels of capacity for meaningful incorporation of biodiversity priorities into integrated development planning and land-use management. Since less than 7% of land in South Africa is formally protected, critical biodiversity is under threat from degradation and transformation. There is thus a need to strike a balance between development and job creation, and conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The 'Biodiversity and Land Use' (BLU) project was designed to address these challenges by (a) strengthening cooperation, coordination and capacity of municipal and other regulatory authorities that regulate land use decisions to incorporate criteria to avoid/ prevent, minimize and/or offset impacts on biodiversity, and improve compliance monitoring and enforcement, and (b) introducing mechanisms in collaboration with private and communal land owners to better protect critical biodiversity areas and

manage land, while demonstrating the potential of biodiversity to create jobs and contribute to economic growth.

The project's overall objective is to mitigate multiple threats to biodiversity by increasing the capabilities of authorities and landowners to regulate land use and manage priority biodiversity at the municipal scale. The project has two components:

Component 1: *Land-use regulation and environmental management.* This component deals with land-use management, regulation, compliance and enforcement. The project aims to encourage the uptake of biodiversity considerations into municipal planning and decision-making, with an emphasis on strengthening biodiversity content in Integrated Development Plans and Spatial Development Frameworks. The project aims to illustrate the possible financial gains from biodiversity and ecosystem services, to promote increased budget allocation for relevant investments by municipalities.

Component 2: *Incentives on private and communal land.* This component focuses on improving the management of land and natural resources. Most of the biodiversity priority areas in the target districts are on land that is either privately or communally owned. Thus, the project involves the implementation of biodiversity stewardship agreements on both private and communal land. Other interventions deal with for example certification, tax incentives and other mechanisms to incentivise or enable land users to sustainably manage biodiversity.

The BLU Project has been complex, working in an environment of uneven capacity, operating across a range of sectors and in diverse environments with a wide set of partners, some of whom were very new to the mainstreaming approach.

The project has been at work in four district municipalities in South Africa's global biodiversity hotspots and national biodiversity priority areas, with very high rates of habitat degradation and conversion, high levels of poverty, and other pressing needs for action: Amathole (Eastern Cape Province), uMgungundlovu and Ehlanzeni District Municipalities are located in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany hotspot (Kwa-Zulu Natal Province); and the Cape Winelands District Municipality is located between the Succulent Karoo and the Cape Floristic Region hotspots (Western Cape Province).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown in March 2020 followed by the phased lifting of restrictions halted certain project activities. The lockdown affected the following activities and the linked targets: engagement with landowners for securing biodiversity stewardship and land under better management sites; fieldwork and stakeholder engagement for the development of the Biodiversity Management Plans for heavily traded Medicinal Plant Species and a priority Ecosystem; and project capacity development activities. To this end, the project was granted a second extension, the most recent being for 6 months from 01 March 2021- 31 August 2021.

3. TE PURPOSE

The TE report will assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency, and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.

The TE report results will be utilized by UNDP, SANBI and project implementation partners to focus in on the aspects of the project's work that need to be continued into the future, and will guide how this is done.

4. TE APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

The TE report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The TE team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP) the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, lesson learned reports, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The TE team will review the baseline and midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at the CEO endorsement and midterm stages and the terminal Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the TE field mission begins.

The TE team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), Implementing Partners, the UNDP Country Office(s), the Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful TE. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to: executing agencies, senior officials and task team/component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project beneficiaries, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the TE team is expected to conduct field missions to Amathole, Cape Winelands, Ehlanzeni and uMgungundlovu District Municipalities (COVID-19 situation permitting).

The stakeholders include but are not limited to the following:-

Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
Mpumalanga Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Land and Environmental Affairs
Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning
Ehlanzeni District Municipality
uMgungundlovu District Municipality
Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency
CapeNature
WWF-SA
NCT Forestry Co-operative
Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region

The specific design and methodology for the TE should emerge from consultations between the TE team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the TE purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The TE team must use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the TE report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the TE Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, SANBI and the TE team.

The final report must describe the full TE approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.

4.1 COVID-19 implications in South Africa and impact on project components

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious challenge to South Africa and it has drastically affected its development trajectory. The government has put several measures such as restricted movements within the country, and from abroad to South Africa. On 23 March 2020, the President of South Africa announced a national lockdown at national alert level 5 that was lowered to national alert level 3 from 1 June 2020, to 2 from 17 August and 21 September 2020, restrictions were lowered to alert level 1. In December 2020, the country experienced a second wave of COVID-19 infections. The lockdown was tightened from an adjusted level 1 to an adjusted level 3 starting on 29 December 2020. The lockdown was lowered from an adjusted level 3 to an adjusted level 1 starting on 1 March 2021. On 17 February 2021, the national COVID-19 vaccination program was officially rolled out. As of May 2021, South Africa has the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Africa and 10th highest number of confirmed infections worldwide (26 May 2021). As at June 2021, the country is currently entering a 3rd COVID-19 wave. The Assignment will follow the UNDP corporate guidelines on the pandemic.

5. DETAILED SCOPE OF THE TE

The TE will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project's Strategic Results Framework (see ToR Annex A). The TE will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the Guidance for TEs of UNDP-supported GEF-financed Projects http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/GEF/TE_GuidanceforUNDP-supportedGEF-financedProjects.pdf

The assignment is estimated to run over 2 months. COVID-19 is a major concern, so with flexibility, the assignment is preferred to run over July-August, but can also run through August-September. It is however envisaged that the bulk of the TE effort will run through much of August 2021, with a field work component.

The Findings section of the TE report will cover the topics listed below. A full outline of the TE report's content is provided in ToR Annex C.

The asterisk "(*)" indicates criteria for which a rating is required.

Findings

i. Project Design/Formulation

- National priorities and country driven-ness
- Theory of Change
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
- Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators
- Assumptions and Risks
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g. same focal area) incorporated into project design
- Planned stakeholder participation
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Management arrangements

ii. Project Implementation

- Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)
- Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements
- Project Finance and Co-finance
- Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), and overall assessment of M&E (*)
- Implementing Agency (UNDP) (*) and Executing Agency (*), overall project oversight/implementation and execution (*)
- Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

iii. Project Results

- Assess the achievement of outcomes against indicators by reporting on the level of progress for each objective and outcome indicator at the time of the TE and noting final achievements
- Relevance (*), Effectiveness (*), Efficiency (*) and overall project outcome (*)
- Sustainability: financial (*), socio-political (*), institutional framework and governance (*), environmental (*), overall likelihood of sustainability (*)
- Country ownership
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Cross-cutting issues (poverty alleviation, improved governance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster prevention and recovery, human rights, capacity development, South-South cooperation, knowledge management, volunteerism, etc., as relevant)
- GEF Additionality
- Catalytic Role / Replication Effect
- Progress to impact

Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

- The TE team will include a summary of the main findings of the TE report. Findings should be presented as statements of fact that are based on analysis of the data.
- The section on conclusions will be written in light of the findings. Conclusions should be comprehensive and balanced statements that are well substantiated by evidence and logically connected to the TE findings. They should highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project, respond to key evaluation questions and provide insights into the identification of and/or solutions to important problems or issues pertinent to project beneficiaries, UNDP and the GEF, including issues in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Recommendations should provide concrete, practical, feasible and targeted recommendations directed to the intended users of the evaluation about what actions to take and decisions to make. The recommendations should be specifically supported by the evidence and linked to the findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation.
- The TE report should also include lessons that can be taken from the evaluation, including best practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success that can provide knowledge gained from the particular circumstance (programmatic and evaluation methods used, partnerships, financial leveraging, etc.) that are applicable to other GEF and UNDP interventions. When possible, the TE team should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation.
- It is important for the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the TE report to incorporate gender equality and empowerment of women.

The TE report will include an Evaluation Ratings Table, as shown below:

ToR Table 2: Evaluation Ratings Table for the Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale, known locally as the 'Biodiversity and Land Use' (BLU) Project

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating ¹
M&E design at entry	
M&E Plan Implementation	
Overall Quality of M&E	
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	
Effectiveness	
Efficiency	
Overall Project Outcome Rating	
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	
Socio-political/economic	
Institutional framework and governance	
Environmental	
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	

6. TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the TE will be approximately 30 working days over a time period of eight weeks starting on 5 July 2021. The tentative TE timeframe is as follows:

Timeframe	Activity
30 June 2021	Application closes
7 July 2021	Selection of TE team
13 to 16 July 2021	Preparation period for TE team (handover of documentation)
16 July 2021 (4 days)	Document review and preparation of TE Inception Report
23 July 2021 (2 days)	Finalization and Validation of TE Inception Report; latest start of TE mission
26 July - 15 August 2021 (15 days)	TE mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits, etc.
12 August 2021	Mission wrap-up meeting & presentation of initial findings; earliest end of TE mission
23 August 2021 (7 days)	Preparation of draft TE report
23 August 2021	Circulation of draft TE report for comments
1 September 2021	Incorporation of comments on draft TE report into Audit Trail & finalization of TE report
10 September 2021	Preparation and Issuance of Management Response
30 September 2021	Expected date of full TE completion

¹ Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, Implementation/Oversight & Execution, Relevance are rated on a 6-point scale: 6=Highly Satisfactory (HS), 5=Satisfactory (S), 4=Moderately Satisfactory (MS), 3=Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), 2=Unsatisfactory (U), 1=Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability is rated on a 4-point scale: 4=Likely (L), 3=Moderately Likely (ML), 2=Moderately Unlikely (MU), 1=Unlikely (U)

Options for site visits should be provided in the TE Inception Report.

7. TE DELIVERABLES

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	TE Inception Report	TE team clarifies objectives, methodology and timing of the TE	No later than 1 week before the TE mission: (23 July 2021)	TE team submits Inception Report to Commissioning Unit and project management
2	Presentation	Initial Findings	End of TE mission: (15 August 2021)	TE team presents to Commissioning Unit and project management
3	Draft TE Report	Full draft report (using guidelines on report content in ToR Annex C) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of end of TE mission: (23 August 2021)	TE team submits to Commissioning Unit; reviewed by RTA, Project Coordinating Unit, GEF OFF
5	Final TE Report* + Audit Trail	Revised final report and TE Audit trail in which the TE details how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final TE report (See template in ToR Annex H)	Within 1 week of receiving comments on draft report: (30 August 2021)	TE team submits both documents to the Commissioning Unit

*All final TE reports will be quality assessed by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). Details of the IEO's quality assessment of decentralized evaluations can be found in Section 6 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines.²

8. TE ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing the TE resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's TE is the *UNDP Country Office South Africa*.

The Commissioning Unit will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the TE team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the TE team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

9. TE TEAM COMPOSITION

A team of two independent evaluators will conduct the TE – one team leader (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions) and one team expert, resident in South Africa. The team leader will be responsible for the overall design and writing of the TE report, engagements and interviews with principal stakeholders. The team expert will work with the Project Team in developing the TE itinerary and conduct field visits to project sites, review budget allocations and co-financing and tracking tools.

² Access at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-6.shtml>

The evaluator(s) cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation and/or implementation (including the writing of the project document), must not have conducted this project's Mid-Term Review and should not have a conflict of interest with the project's related activities.

The selection of evaluators will be aimed at maximizing the overall "team" qualities in the following areas:

Team Leader:

Education

- A minimum of a Master's degree in *Biodiversity Conservation, Development, Public Administration, Environmental Governance* or other closely related field;

Experience

- Relevant experience with results-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to GEF focal area of *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors*;
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience working in *SADC region*;
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least *10 years*;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and GEF focal area of *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors*; experience in gender responsive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experience within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.

Team Expert:

Education

- Master's degree in *Biodiversity Conservation, Development* or other closely related field;

Experience

- Relevant experience with results-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to GEF focal area of *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors*;
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience working in *South Africa*;
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least *10 years*;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and GEF focal area of *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors*; experience in gender responsive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication skills;

- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experience within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- *Fluency in a South African language would be an asset.*

10. EVALUATOR ETHICS

The TE team will be held to the highest ethical standards and is required to sign a code of conduct upon acceptance of the assignment. This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation'. The evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluator must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners.

11. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft TE report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final TE report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of completed TE Audit Trail

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%³:

- The final TE report includes all requirements outlined in the TE TOR and is in accordance with the TE guidance.
- The final TE report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other TE reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

12. APPLICATION PROCESS⁴

(Adjust this section if a vetted roster will be used)

³ The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the TE team as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the TE team, the Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, Procurement Services Unit and Legal Support Office will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details:

https://popp.undp.org/layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

⁴ Engagement of evaluators should be done in line with guidelines for hiring consultants in the POPP

<https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx>

Recommended Presentation of Proposal:

- a) **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the [template⁵](#) provided by UNDP;
- b) **CV and a Personal History Form (P11 form⁶)**;
- c) Brief description of **approach to work/technical proposal** of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment, and a proposed methodology on how they will approach and complete the assignment; (max 1 page)
- d) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price and all other travel related costs (such as flight ticket, per diem, etc), supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template attached to the [Letter of Confirmation of Interest template](#). If an applicant is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

All application materials should be submitted to the address (insert mailing address) in a sealed envelope indicating the following reference "Consultant for Terminal Evaluation of *Biodiversity and Land Use Project*" or by email at the following address ONLY: bid.pretoria@undp.org by 19th July 2021). Incomplete applications will be excluded from further consideration.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposal: Only those applications which are responsive and compliant will be evaluated. Offers will be evaluated according to the Combined Scoring method – where the educational background and experience on similar assignments will be weighted at 70% and the price proposal will weigh as 30% of the total scoring. The applicant receiving the Highest Combined Score that has also accepted UNDP's General Terms and Conditions will be awarded the contract.

13. TOR ANNEXES

- ToR Annex A: Project Logical/Results Framework
- ToR Annex B: Project Information Package to be reviewed by TE team
- ToR Annex C: Content of the TE report
- ToR Annex D: Evaluation Criteria Matrix template
- ToR Annex E: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators
- ToR Annex F: TE Rating Scales
- ToR Annex G: TE Report Clearance Form
- ToR Annex H: TE Audit Trail

⁵<https://intranet.undp.org/unit/bom/pso/Support%20documents%20on%20IC%20Guidelines/Template%20for%20Confirmation%20of%20Interest%20and%20Submission%20of%20Financial%20Proposal.docx>

⁶http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/Careers/P11_Personal_history_form.doc

Annex 2 – Data collection phase – List of activities

Remote mission (on-line)

Thursday, September 9

1. 09:00 am – 10:00 am: on-line interview with Ms. Azisa Parker
2. 10:00 am – 11:00 am: on-line interview with Mr. Sagwata Manyike
3. 11:00 am – 11:30 am: on-line interview with Ms. Natasha Wilson
4. 12:00 pm – 01:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Abigail Bahindwa
5. 02:00 pm – 03:30 pm: on-line interview with Mr. Mthobisi Nzimande; Ms. Rosina Masango; Ms. Mpho Gumula; Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak; Ms. Ntembo Bam; and Ms. Thobile Nyathi

Friday, September 11

6. 09:00 am – 10:00 am: on-line interview with Ms. Azisa Parker
7. 10:00 am – 10:40 am: on-line interview with Ms. Eleanor Marks
8. 11:00 am – 11:45 am: on-line interview with Mr. Tertius Carinus

Monday, September 13

9. 11:00 am – 12:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Amanda van Reenen, Mr. Stanley Tshitwamulomoni, Mr. Yakeen Atwaru, Officer, and Ndileka Mohapi
10. 02:00 pm – 02:45 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Robyn Luyt and Mr. Gavin Cowden
11. 03:00 pm – 04:00 pm: on-line interview with Mr. Nithzaam Albertyn; Ms. Leigh Kelly, Ms. Princess Gogo, Mr. Phil McLean, and Ms. Tashreeqah Sadan

Tuesday, September 14

12. 9:00 am – 10:00 am: on-line interview with Ms. Dee Fischer (PhD)
13. 10:00 am – 10:40 am: on-line interview with Mr. Mervyn Lotter (PhD)
14. 11:00 pm – 12:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Fahiemah Daniels, Ms. Abulele Adams, Ms. Melissa Lewis, Mr. Zakariyya Oumar (PhD)
15. 12:00 pm – 12:30 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Domitilla Raimondo
16. 02:00 pm – 03:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Philippa Huntly and Ms. Alana Duffell-Canham
17. 03:00 pm – 03:45 pm: : on-line interview with Ms. Toneka Tanda
18. 04:00 pm – 05:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Pamela Ntuli

Wednesday, September 15

19. 09:00 am – 09:40 am: on-line interview with Ms. Khetiwe Malaza
20. 10:00 am – 10:50 am: on-line interview with Mr. Umesh Bahadur
21. 01:00 pm – 01:30 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Flora Mokgohloa
22. 02:00 pm – 03:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Telly Chauke

Thursday, September 16

23. 09:00 am – 09:50 am: on-line interview with Mr. Tshifhiwa Nekhwevha and Mr. Magezi Enoch Mhlana
24. 10:00 am – 11:00 am: on-line interview with Mr. Brian Mdakane and Mr. Mdini Msomi
25. 11:00 am – 11:40 am: on-line interview with Mr. Maarten Coetzee

Friday, September 17

- 26. 09:00 am – 10:00 am: on-line interview with Ms. Fonda Lewis
- 27. 10:00 am – 11:00 am: on-line interview with Mr. Nicholas Theron
- 28. 01:00 pm – 01:45 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Deshni Pillay
- 29. 02:00 pm – 03:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Azisa Parker
- 30. 03:00 pm – 04:00 pm: interview with Ms. Shelly Fuller and Ms. Shela Patrickson,

Monday, September 20

- 31. 09:00 am – 10:00 am: on-line interview with Ms. Candice Stevens
- 32. 10:00 am – 10:30 am: on-line interview with Mr. Steve Germishuizen
- 33. 11:00 am – 11:50 am: on-line interview with Ms. Pam Kershaw
- 34. 02:00 pm – 15:00 pm: on-line interview with Mr. Jeff Manuel, Ms. Amanda Driver, Mahlodi Tau and Ms. Jenifer Zungu

Tuesday, September 21

- 35. 09:00 am – 09:50 am: on-line interview with Mr. Simon Moganetsi
- 36. 10:00 am – 10:30 am: on-line interview with Mr. Craig Norris
- 37. 11:00 am – 12:00 pm: on-line interview with Ms. Azisa Parker
- 38. 01:00 pm – 02:00 pm: on-line interview with Mr. Sabelo Malaza

In-country mission

Sunday, September 26

Arrival of the Evaluator in South Africa (Cape Town)

Monday, September 27

Morning:

Western Cape Province, Cape Winelands Municipality

- 1. Site visit to an Environmental Management site (Distell Facility). Ms. Philippa Huntly exposed to the Evaluator the work done at the site.
The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Azisa Parker (SANBI), Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak (SANBI), and Mr. Nithzaam Albertyn (DEA&DP), and Mr. Phil McLean DEA&DP, and Ms. Philippa Huntly (Cape Nature).
- 2. Site visit to an Environmental Law Enforcement site (Wolfseley). Mr. Phil McLean exposed to the Evaluator the work done at the site.
The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Azisa Parker (SANBI), Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak (SANBI), and Mr. Nithzaam Albertyn (DEA&DP).

Afternoon:

Western Cape Province, Cape Winelands Municipality

- 3. Interview with three landowners (Twee Rivieren Nature Reserve) in Koue Bokkeveld.
The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak (SANBI), and Ms. Shelly Fuller (WWF-SA). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.
- 4. Site visit to the Twee Rivieren Nature Reserve
The Evaluator was accompanied by a Landowner, Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak (SANBI), and Ms. Shelly Fuller (WWF-SA).

Tuesday, September 28

Morning:

Western Cape Province, Cape Winelands Municipality

5. Interview with two farmers/landowners (Waboomsberg Conservancy) in Witzenberg
The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak (SANBI), and Ms. Shelly Fuller (WWF-SA). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

Afternoon:

Western Cape Province, Cape Town city

6. On-line interview with Ms. Retha Louw (SIZA) and Mr. Henko Vlok (SIZA)
The Evaluator worked with his own laptop within the premises of SANBI in Cape Town.

Wednesday, September 29

Morning:

Western Cape Province, Cape Town city

7. Interview with Mr. Achamad Bassier and Mr. Ayub Mohamed
The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Azisa Parker (SANBI). She introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

Afternoon:

Flight from Cape Town to Durban + car drive to Pietermaritzburg

Thursday, September 30

Morning:

Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, Pietermaritzburg

8. Interview with Ms. Mandisa Khomo, Ms. Nosipho L. Byela, and Nokulunga Nxumalo
The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI). He introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.
9. Interview with Ms. Abulele Kulu, Mr. Marc Hettings, and Mr. Walter Jobe.
The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI). He introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

Afternoon:

Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, Donovan Farm

10. Interview with Mr. Anthony Edmonds and Ms. Jen Watson
The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI). He introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

Friday, October 1

Morning:

Kwa-Zulu Natal Province, Hermannsburg, Office of the NTE Company

11. Interview with Mr. Eza Mapipa.
The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI) and Mr. Steve Germishuizen (Independent Consultant). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee without assisting to the interview.
12. Interview with Ms. Zodwa Bengui
The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI), Mr. Steve Germishuizen (Independent Consultant). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee. Mr. Eza Mapipa act as a translator.
13. Interview with Mr. Robert Danzi

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI), Mr. Steve Germishuizen (Independent Consultant). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee. Mr. Eza Mapipa act as a translator.

14. Site visit to Mr. Danzi s timber farm.

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Sagwata Manyike (SANBI), Mr. Steve Germishuizen (Independent Consultant) and Mr. Eta Mapipa (NTE Company).

Saturday, October 2

No work

Sunday, October 3

No work

Flight from Durban to East London

Monday, October 4

Morning:

Eastern Cape Province, East London

15. Interview with Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebana

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Mpho Gumula (SANBI). She introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee without assisting to the interview.

16. Sites visit at Mile End (Biodiversity Stewardship site)

The Evaluator was accompanied by by Ms. Mpho Gumula (SANBI), Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona (ECPTA)

17. Site visit at Cathcart - Thomas River landscape (Land under Better Management)

The Evaluator was accompanied by by Ms. Mpho Gumula(SANBI), Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona (ECPTA).

Evening:

Eastern Cape Province, East London

18. On-line interview with Ms. Sakhile Koketso

The Evaluator worked from the hotel where he was hosted.

Tuesday, October 5

Morning:

Eastern Cape Province, East London

19. On-line interview with a Ms. Sheryl Meyer

The Evaluator worked from the ECPTA office.

Eastern Cape Province, Buffalo City Municipality, Gqunube Green Eco Village

20. Interview with Mr. Oliver Ive

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Mpho Gumula (SANBI), Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona (ECPTA) and Mrs. Eleanor van den Berg-McGregor (ECPTA). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee without assisting to the interview.

21. Site visit to the Gqunube Green Eco Village.

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Mpho Gumula(SANBI), Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona (ECPTA) and Mrs. Eleanor van den Berg-McGregor (ECPTA).

Eastern Cape Province, Buffalo City Municipality, Municipal Nature Nahcun Point Reserve

22. Interview with Mr. Jason McDowell and Mr. Kevin Cole

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Mpho Gumula (SANBI), Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona (ECPTA), and Ms. Eleanor van den Berg-McGregor (ECPTA). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

Afternoon:

Flight from East London to Johannesburg and then car-trip to Pretoria

Wednesday, October 6

Morning:

Pretoria

23. On-line interview with a Dr. Janice Golding

The Evaluator worked from the hotel in Pretoria where he was hosted.

24. On-line interview with Ms. Mukondi Masithi

The Evaluator worked from the hotel in Pretoria where he was hosted.

Afternoon:

Car drive to Johannesburg and flight to Nelspruit

Thursday, October 7

Morning:

Mpumalanga Province, Nelspruit

25. Interview with a Ms. Nocawe Nkosi

Mpumalanga Province, Barberton

26. Interview with Mr. JD Hoffman

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Nocawe Nkosi (DARDLEA). She introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee without assisting to the interview.

27. Site visit to Mr. Hoffman's farm (NEMA EIA Application: Clearing of indigenous vegetation for purpose of cultivation)

28. Interview with Mr Brian Morris

The Evaluator was accompanied by Ms. Abigail Bahindwa (SANBI), and Rosina Masango (SANBI). They introduced the Evaluator to the interviewee without assisting to the interview.

29. Site visit to Komatiland Forestry's Berlin site

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Brian Morris (MPTA), Ms. Abigail Bahindwa (SANBI), and Rosina Masango (SANBI).

Afternoon:

Car drive to Hoedspruit

Friday, October 8

Morning:

Mpumalanga Province, Hoedspruit

30. Interview with a Ms. Lucy Mokone and Mr. Nkosi Hezekiel Thandaso

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Nick Theron (K2C). He introduced the Evaluator to the interviewees without assisting to the interview.

31. Site visit to the Blyde River Canyon.

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Nick Theron (K2C), Ms. Abigail Bahindwa (SANBI), and Rosina Masango (SANBI).

32. Focus Group Discussion with Ms. Phale Pomtsho, Ms. Kgotlelo Seerane, Ms. Suzan Moeng, Mr. Pebane Tiayishego, Mr. Oky Sibashi, and Mr. Jeff Sekgobela

Afternoon:

Mpumalanga Province, Bushbuckridge

33. Site visit to Bushbuckridge Donga project

The Evaluator was accompanied by Mr. Nick Theron (K2C), Ms. Abigail Bahindwa (SANBI), and Rosina Masango (SANBI).

Saturday, October 9

Departure of the Evaluator from South Africa.

Annex 3 - List of persons met

List of persons interviewed during the remote mission (on-line)

1. Ms. Azisa Parker – Project Lead, SANBI
2. Mr. Sagwata Manyike - Specialist Advisor (Planning and Land Use Management), SANBI
3. Ms. Natasha Wilson – former Biodiversity Stewardship Advisor, SANBI
4. Ms. Abigail Bahindwa, Specialist Advisor (Environmental Management), SANBI
5. Mr. Mthobisi Nzimande, Assistant Director: Biodiversity Planning & Implementation, SANBI
6. Ms. Rosina Masango, Environmental Officer, SANBI
7. Ms. Mpho Gumula, Land Reform and Biodiversity Stewardship Officers, SANBI
8. Ms. Marilyn Martin-Vermaak, Project Coordinator, SANBI
9. Ms. Ntembo Bam, Project Administrator, SANBI
10. Ms. Thobile Nyathi, Project Compliance Officer, SANBI
11. Ms. Kristal Maze, former Vice Director for Biodiversity and Policy, SANBI
12. Ms. Eleanor Marks, Project Accountant, SANBI
13. Mr. Tertius Carinus, GEF 5 Protected Areas Project Manager, SANParks
14. Ms. Amanda van Reenen, Legal Support Unit Director, DFFE
15. Mr. Stanley Tshitwamulomoni, Water Sources and Wetlands Conservation Director, DFFE
16. Mr. Yakeen Atwaru, Reserve Determinations Director, DWS
17. Ms. Ndileka Mohapi, Director, DWS
18. Ms. Robyn Luyt, Environmental Impact Management Deputy Director, DARDLEA
19. Mr. Gavin Cowden, Environmental Policies Deputy Director, DARDLEA
20. Mr. Nithzaam Albertyn, Environmental Control Officer, Environmental Law Enforcement DEA&DP
21. Ms. Leigh Kelly, Environmental Officer, Environmental Law Enforcement DEA&DP
22. Ms. Princess N Goqo, Environmental Officer, Environmental Law Enforcement DEA&DP
23. Mr. Phil McLean, Botanist, DEA&DP
24. Ms. Tashreeqah Sadan, Environmental Officer, Environmental Law Enforcement DEA&DP
25. Ms. Dee Fischer (PhD), Chief Director for Integrated Environment Management Support, DFFE
26. Mr. Mervyn Lotter (PhD), GIS and Biodiversity Planning Manager, MPTA
27. Ms. Fahiema Daniels, Conservation Manager, SANParks
28. Ms. Abulele Adams, EIA Practitioner, CSIR
29. Ms. Melissa Lewis Policy and Advocacy Programme Manager, BirdLife SA
30. Mr. Zakariyyaa Oumar (PhD), Chief GIS Officer, DFFE
31. Ms. Domitilla Raimondo, Threatened Plant Programme Manager, SANBI
32. Ms. Philippa Huntly, Biodiversity Mainstream Specialist, Cape Nature

33. Ms. Alana Duffell-Canham, Landscape Conservation Intelligence Manager, Cape Nature
34. Ms. Toneka Tanda, Deputy Director Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement, DARDLEA
35. Ms. Pamela Ntuli, Chief Director of Environmental Affairs, DARDLEA
36. Ms. Khetiwe Malaza, Environmental Management Officer, Mbombela Local Municipality
37. Mr. Umesh Bahadur, Director of the Working for Wetlands Unit, DFFE
38. Ms. Flora Mokgohloa, BIOFIN Programme Manager South Africa, DFFE
39. Ms. Telly Chauke, Environmental and Climate Change Portfolio Lead, SALGA
40. Mr. Tshifhiwa Nekhwevha, Chief Town and Regional Planner (Land Use Planning), DALRRD
41. Mr. Magezi Enoch Mhlanga, Chief Town and Regional Planner (Environmental Services), DALRRD
42. Mr. Brian Mdakane, Strategic Planning Unit R&D Manager, Ehlanzeni DM
43. Mr. Mдини Msomi, Disaster Management Unit Manager, Ehlanzeni DM
44. Mr. Maarten Coetzee, Development Control Manager, Mbombela LM
45. Ms. Fonda Lewis, Chief Scientist, INR
46. Mr. Nicholas Theron, Landscape Stewardship Programme Manager, K2C
47. Ms. Deshni Pillay, Chief Director Biodiversity Information and Policy Advice, SANBI
48. Ms. Shelly Fuller, Sustainable Agriculture - Fruit & Wine Programme Manager, WWF-SA
49. Ms. Shela Patrickson, Public Sector Partnerships Coordinator, WWF-SA
50. Ms. Candice Stevens, Head of Innovative Finance, WFA
51. Mr. Steve Germishuizen, Independent Consultant
52. Ms. Pam Kershaw, Biodiversity Planning and Stewardships, DFFE
53. Ms. Amanda Driver, Senior Biodiversity Advisor
54. Ms. Jenifer Zungu, Ecological Infrastructure for Water Security Project Leader
55. Mr. Jeff Manuel, Biodiversity Information Management and Planning Director, SANBI
56. Mr. Mahlodi Tau, Biodiversity Mainstreaming Director, SANBI
57. Mr. Simon Moganetsi, Integrated Environmental Management and Tools Director, DFFE
58. Mr. Craig Norris, Manager, NCT
59. Mr. Sabelo Malaza, Chief Director of Integrated Environmental Authorization, DFFE

List of persons met during the in-country mission

1. Ms. Azisa Parker – Project Lead, SANBI
2. Ms. Marilyn Martin, Project Coordinator, SANBI
3. Ms. Philippa Huntly, Biodiversity Mainstream Specialist, Cape Nature
4. Mr. Nithzaam Albertyn, Environmental Control Officer, Environmental Law Enforcement DEA&DP
5. Mr. Phil McLean, Botanist, DEA&DP
6. Ms. Shelly Fuller, Sustainable Agriculture - Fruit & Wine Programme Manager, WWF-SA

7. Mr. Peter Stoffberg, Landowner
8. Mr. Jonhatan Lang, Landowner
9. Mr. John Hanckom, Landowner and farmer
10. Mr. Stefan Theron, Twee Rivieren Nature Reserve and Waboomsberg Conservancy Manager
11. Mr. Hennie van Naardurjle, Koelfontein Farm Manager
12. Mr. Pietie Wolfaardt, Montana Farm Owner
13. Mr. Achmad Bassier, Director of the Environmental Law Enforcement Directorate, DEA&DP
14. Mr. Ayub Mohamed, Chief Director of Environmental Governance, Policy Coordination and Enforcement, DEA&DP
15. Mr. Sagwata Manyike, Specialist Advisor (Planning and Land Use Management), SANBI
16. Ms. Mandisa Khomo, Development Planning Manager, uMgungundlovu District Municipality
17. Ms. Nosipho L. Byela, Town and Regional Planner, uMgungundlovu District Municipality
18. Ms. Nokulunga Nxumalo, Senior Environmentalist, uMgungundlovu District Municipality
19. Ms. Abulele Kulu, Environmental Officer, Msunduzi Local Municipality
20. Mr. Marc Hettings, Officer, Environmental Manager, uMgeni Local Municipality
21. Mr. Walter Jobe, Local Economic Development Manager, Mpofana Local Municipality
22. Mr. Anthony Edmonds, Farmer (Donovan Farm Owner)
23. Ms. Jen Watson, SusFarms Coordinator
24. Mr. Steve Germishuizen, Independent Consultant
25. Mr. Eza Mapipa, Forestry Development Officer, NTE company
26. Ms. Zodwa Bengui, Smallholder timber farmer
27. Mr. Robert Danzi, Smallholder timber farmer
28. Ms. Mpho Gumula, Land Reform and Biodiversity Stewardship Officers, SANBI
29. Mr. Malaika Koali-Lebona, Stewardship Manager, ECPTA
30. Ms. Sakhile Koketso, RTA, UNDP
31. Ms. Sheryl Meyer, Landowner
32. Ms. Eleanor van den Berg-McGregor, Executive Director: Biodiversity and Conservation, ECPTA
33. Mr. Oliver Ive, DT Hudson Christian Eco-Village Trust, Director
34. Mr. Jason McDowell, Principal Natural Scientist, East London Museum
35. Mr. Kevin Cole, Buffalo City Municipality, Ward 18 Councillor
36. Ms. Janice Golding (PhD), Focal Point: Nature, Climate and Energy, UNDP
37. Mr. Frederick Mbundzuka Shikweni, M&E Officer, UNDP
38. Ms. Mukondi Masithi, Biodiversity Director, DFFE
39. Ms. Nocawe Nkosi Assistant Director: Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement, DARDLEA
40. Mr. JD Hoffman, Farmer

41. Ms. Abigail Bahindwa, Specialist Advisor (Environmental Management), SANBI
42. Ms. Rosina Masango, Environmental Officer, SANBI
43. Mr. Brian Morris, Head of Protected Areas Expansion, MPTA
44. Mr. Nick Theron, Landscape Stewardship Programme Manager, K2C
45. Ms. Lucy Mokone, Public Relations Officer, Maorabiang Communal Property Association / Treasurer, Blyde 04 CAP (Property Associations that owns Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve)
46. Mr. Nkosi Hezekiel Thandaso, Moletele Land Claim Committee Member / Secretary, Blyde 04 CAP (Property Associations that owns Blyde River Canyon Nature Reserve)
47. Ms. Phale Pomtsho, Environmental Monitor, K2C
48. Ms. Kgotlelo Seerane, Environmental Monitor, K2C
49. Ms. Suzan Moeng, Environmental Monitor, K2C
50. Mr. Pebane Tiayishego, Environmental Monitor, K2C
51. Mr. Oky Sibashi, Environmental Monitor, K2C
52. Mr. Jeff Sekgobela, Environmental Monitor, K2C

Annex 4 - List of documents consulted

Documents:

- ✓ A Theory of Change for the Biodiversity and Land Use Project (October 2019)
- ✓ Biodiversity and Land Use Project - The story of the project's achievements through the Strategic Results Framework (August 2021)
- ✓ Close out reports from project partners
- ✓ Co-financing commitment letters
- ✓ Collaboration Agreements between SANBI and project partner
- ✓ Consolidated financial report SANBI BLU Project 31 May 2021
- ✓ Country Programme Document for the Republic of South Africa (2020 - 2025)
- ✓ Evaluating the effectiveness of CBA maps and systematic conservation planning in limiting the loss of priority biodiversity areas outside of protected areas
- ✓ External audit reports
 - 2016
 - 2017
 - 2018
 - 2019
 - 2020
- ✓ Mainstreaming biodiversity as a social process: relationships are the basis for integrating biodiversity into other sectors. Biodiversity and Land Use project case study series. South African National Biodiversity Institute, Pretoria(2021).
- ✓ Mid Term Review
 - Report and annexes
 - Management response
- ✓ Minutes of the Project Steering Committee
- ✓ National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan (2011-2014)
- ✓ Presentation of the BLU project communication strategy
- ✓ ProDoc and annexes
- ✓ Project Identification Form
- ✓ Project Implementation Reviews:
 - 2016
 - 2017
 - 2018
 - 2019
 - 2020
 - 2021
- ✓ Project Inception Report
- ✓ Project GEF LD Tracking Tool

- ✓ Protocols (Aquatic, Terrestrial, Plant and Animal)
- ✓ Screening Tool Features
- ✓ South Africa's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2015 – 2025)
- ✓ Jobs Report of Biodiversity and Land Use Project

Websites:

- ✓ www.thegef.org
- ✓ www.za.undp.org
- ✓ <https://safas.org.za>
- ✓ <https://screening.environment.gov.za/screeningtool/#/pages/welcome>
- ✓ <https://sdgintegration.undp.org>
- ✓ <https://siza.co.za>
- ✓ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>



Annex 5 - Evaluation Question Matrix

Key evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of data	Methodology
Criterion of relevance : how does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF Focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national level?			
Was the project aligned with the national development priorities?	Extent to which the project's objectives were in line with the national development priorities	ProDoc, PIRs, National policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP Officers, Public Officers, NGOs	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews
Was the implementation of the project responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?	Extent to which the project was appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country	ProDoc, PIRs, National policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews
Was the project formulated in accordance to national and local strategies to advance gender equality?	Extent to which the project was formulated according to national and local strategies to advance gender equality	ProDoc, PIRs, National policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Was the project in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF strategic programming?	Extent to which the project was in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF strategic programming	ProDoc, PIRs, UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF strategic programming, UNDP officers	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews
Did the project contribute to the Theory of Change for the relevant country programme outcome?	Extent to which the project contributed to the Theory of Change for the relevant country programme outcome	ProDoc, PIRs, CPD, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did project stakeholders participate actively in the project?	Extent to which relevant stakeholders participated in the project	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Was the project formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted and/or relevant stakeholder groups?	Extent to which the project was formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted and/or relevant stakeholder groups	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs



Was the project informed by needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders through in-depth consultation?	Extent to which the intervention was informed by needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders through in-depth consultation	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Were lessons learned from other initiative considered in the project's design?	Extent to which lessons learned from other relevant projects were considered in the project's design	ProDoc, UNDP and SANBI Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews
Criterion of effectiveness: to what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
Did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities?	Extent to which the project contributed to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities.	PIRs, UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF strategic programming, UNDP officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
What are factors that contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs?	Identification of factors that contributed to the achieving or not achieving intended outcomes and outputs?	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did the project achieve expected results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits)?	Extent to which the project's actual outcomes/outputs were commensurate with what was planned. Extent to which the intervention achieved, or expects to achieve, results (outputs, outcomes and impacts, including global environmental benefits) taking into account the key factors that influenced the results.	PIRs, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs - Site's visits
What are the Areas in which the project had the greatest and fewest achievements? And what were the contributing factors?	Identification of areas in which the project had the greatest and fewest achievements; and the contributing factors	PIRs, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs - Site's visits
What were the constraining factors for project achievements?	Identification of constraining factors, such as socio-economic, political and environmental risks; cultural and religious festivals, etc. and how they were overcome	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs



Were there alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?	Identification of alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and to the promotion of a human rights-based approach?	Extent to which the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and to the promotion of a human rights-based approach	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did the project incorporate gender responsive and human rights-based approach in its design and implementation?	Extent to which a gender responsive and human rights-based approach were incorporated in the design and implementation of the intervention.	ProDoc, PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
How did the COVID-19 pandemic influence the capacity of the project to achieve its results?	Identification of the constraints for project implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Criterion of efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in line with international and national norms and standards?			
Was the use of financial, human resources, and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes of efficient and economical?	Extent to which there was an efficient and economical use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes	ProDoc, PIRs, Project Budget and Disbursements, National policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did the project achieved expected outcomes according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned in the ProDoc?	Whether the project completed the planned activities and met or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of global environmental and development objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned	ProDoc, PIRs, National policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Were resources at disposal of the project adequate for integrating gender equality and human rights in the project as an investment in short-term, medium-term and long-term benefits?	Provision of adequate resources for integrating gender equality and human rights in the project as an investment in short-term, medium-term and long-term benefits	ProDoc, PIRs, Project Budget, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did the allocation of resources to targeted groups took into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized?	Extent to which the allocation of resources to targeted groups took into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized	ProDoc, PIRs, Project Budget, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, Beneficiaries	- Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews



Was the project extension necessary?	Extent to which a project extension could have been avoided (for cases where an extension was approved)	ProDoc, PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?	Extent to which the project management structure as outlined in the project document was efficient in generating the expected results	ProDoc, PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Were project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?	Extent to which project funds and activities were delivered in a timely manner	ProDoc, PIRs, Project Budget, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Did M&E system in place ensure effective and efficient project management?	Extent to which M&E systems ensured effective and efficient project management	ProDoc, PIRs, M&E system, Project Budget, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
How did the project adapt in order to face the COVID-19 health restrictions put in place by the national government?	Identification of adaptation strategies.	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Criterion of sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-political, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
Sub-criterion: financial sustainability			
What is the likelihood that financial resources will be available once the GEF assistance ends to support the continuation of benefits (income generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project outcomes)?	Identification of the likelihood that financial resources will be available once the GEF assistance ends to support the continuation of benefits	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
What opportunities for financial sustainability exist?	Identification of opportunities for financial sustainability	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs



What additional factors are needed to create an enabling environment for continued financing?	Identification of enabling factors	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Has there been the establishment of financial and economic instruments and mechanisms to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends?	Identification of financial and economic instruments to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Sub-criterion: socio-political sustainability			
Are there any social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes?	Identification of social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
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?	Identification of 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	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?	Identification of stakeholders' interest and perception of it.	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Is there sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?	Extent to which public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project exist	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis?	Identification of documentation of lessons learned	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews
Are the project's successful aspects being transferred to appropriate parties, potential future beneficiaries, and others who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?	Extent to which project's successful aspects of the project have been transferred to appropriate parties, potential future beneficiaries, and others for replication or upscaling	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Indicate whether the gender results achieved are short-term or long term.	Identification of circumstantial evidences related to gender issues	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs



Sub-criterion: institutional framework and governance sustainability			
Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits?	Indetification of threats to the continuation of project benefits which derive from legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes	PIRs, other project documentation, public policies and programmes Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Has the project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure?	Extent to which project put in place frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that will create mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer after the project's closure	PIRs, other project documentation, public policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
How has the project developed appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?	Extent to which project developed appropriate institutional capacity that will be self-sufficient after the project closure date?	PIRs, other project documentation, public policies and programmes, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
How has the project identified and involved champions (i.e. individuals in government and civil society) who can promote sustainability of project outcomes?	Identification of champions who can promote sustainability of project outcomes	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Has the project achieved stakeholders' (including government stakeholders') consensus regarding courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date?	Identification of defined courses of action on project activities after the project's closure date	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Does the project leadership have the ability to respond to future institutional and governance changes (i.e. foreseeable changes to local or national political leadership)?	Identification of evidences around the ability of project leadership to respond to future institutional and governance changes	Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Can the project strategies effectively be incorporated/mainstreamed into future planning?	Identification of incorporation of project strategies into future planning	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Is the institutional change conducive to systematically addressing gender equality and human rights concern?	Extent to which gender equality and human rights concern are mainstream into the institutional change promoted by the project.	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs



Sub-criterion: environmental sustainability			
Are there environmental factors that could undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits?	Identification of environmental factors that could undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits	PIRs, other project documentation, public policies and programmes Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs
Will certain activities in the project area pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes?	Identification of threats and activities that pose a threat to the continuation of project benefits	PIRs, other project documentation, Project staff, UNDP officers, Public Officers, NGOs, End-Beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desk review - Individual interviews - Group interviews - FGDs

Annex 6 - TE Rating scale

Ratings for M&E, IA & EA Execution and Assessment of Outcomes (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Overall Project Outcome Rating)	Rating for Sustainability
<p>6= Highly Satisfactory (HS): exceeds expectations and/or no shortcomings</p> <p>5= Satisfactory (S): meets expectations and/or no or minor shortcomings</p> <p>4= Moderately Satisfactory (MS): more or less meets expectations and/or some shortcomings</p> <p>3= Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): somewhat below expectations and/or significant shortcomings</p> <p>2= Unsatisfactory (U): substantially below expectations and/o major shortcomings</p> <p>1= Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):severe shortcomings</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A): available information does not allow an assessment</p>	<p>4= Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>3= Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks to sustainability</p> <p>2= Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks to sustainability</p> <p>1= Unlikely (U): severe risks to sustainability</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability</p>

The ratings will be derived from the findings described in the relevant section of the final TE report. Instead, The Overall Project Outcome rating will be calculated. Such calculation will be based on the ratings for relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical.

The rating on relevance will determine whether the overall outcome rating will be in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU = unsatisfactory range). If the relevance rating is in the unsatisfactory range then the overall outcome will be in the unsatisfactory range as well. However, where the relevance rating is in the satisfactory range (HS to MS), the overall outcome rating could, depending on its effectiveness and efficiency rating, be either in the satisfactory range or in the unsatisfactory range. The overall outcome achievement rating cannot be higher than the effectiveness rating. The overall outcome rating cannot be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria.

In cases where a project's result framework has been modified and approved, and if the modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the TE team should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

Annex 7 - UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators

Independence entails the ability to evaluate without undue influence or pressure by any party (including the hiring unit) and providing evaluators with free access to information on the evaluation subject. Independence provides legitimacy to and ensures an objective perspective on evaluations. An independent evaluation reduces the potential for conflicts of interest which might arise with self-reported ratings by those involved in the management of the project being evaluated. Independence is one of ten general principles for evaluations (together with internationally agreed principles, goals and targets: utility, credibility, impartiality, ethics, transparency, human rights and gender equality, national evaluation capacities, and professionalism).

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study imitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.
8. Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained, and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.
9. Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated and did not carry out the project mid term review.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of the International Evaluator: Giacomo Morelli

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Bern, Switzerland on August 23, 2021

Signature:

