

Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood Project

UNDP Project ID: PIMS 5000

TERMINAL EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT

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8 December 2020



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Resilient nations.*

Project Identification

Title:	Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood Project (PAN)
UNDP Project ID:	PIMS 5000
ATLAS Project ID:	00089259
GEF Project ID:	5529
TE time-frame:	August – November 2020
Date of TE Report:	8 December 2020
Region:	RBA
Country:	Gambia
GEF-5 Focal Area:	Biodiversity
GEF-5 Strategic Programmes:	BD-1, BD-2
GEF Agency:	UNDP
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources – Department of Parks and Wildlife Management
Evaluation Team:	Crawford Prentice and Amadou Camara

Acknowledgements

This terminal evaluation took place during the exceptional circumstances of the COVID19 pandemic, which necessitated a largely remote approach to conducting the information collection, consultations and analysis. As such, the international consultant (Crawford Prentice) was unable to visit The Gambia to meet the project proponents and stakeholders. This weakened the overall exercise, including the important aspect of getting to know those involved, the journey they experienced while implementing this project, and being able to empathize with their personal situations and the professional challenges involved. Also, there is no substitute for visiting the project sites and seeing the local conditions first-hand.

The Terminal Evaluation Team wishes to express sincere thanks to all those involved with the UNDP/GEF PAN Project in the Gambia who provided their assistance, time and views during the process of this terminal evaluation. All those who participated in the evaluation are listed in **Annex 3** at the end of this report. In particular, we wish to acknowledge the great assistance of Dr Almamy Camara and colleagues at the UNDP Country Office for their coordination and facilitation of the evaluation process. We also acknowledge the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management Director, Mr. Momodou Lamin Kassama, (Project Director), for his logistical support during the evaluation, and the invaluable support of the Project Management Unit staff, especially Mr. Kawsu Jammeh (Project Coordinator), who was very helpful during the field visit to the project sites.

Following completion of the Draft Report on 9 November 2020, review comments were received that have been used to inform revisions for its finalization. The comments and our responses are given in the Audit Trail in **Annex 12**. We thank the reviewers sincerely for their feedback, which has undoubtedly improved the report.

The views expressed in this Terminal Evaluation report are intended to provide the opportunity to learn from the UNDP/GEF PAN Project. We have tried to provide an objective, fair and balanced assessment based on the project documentation, our own observations and the interviews with a wide range of individuals who have been deeply involved in the project's implementation.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFA	Administration and Finance Assistant (PMU staff)
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANRWG	Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group
APR	Annual Progress Report
BBWR	Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resources Management
CHM	Clearing House Mechanism
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSRP	Sub-regional Fisheries Commission
DCD	Department of Community Development
DEC	District Extension Centre
DoA	Department of Agriculture
DPWM	Department of Parks and Wildlife Management
EDF	European Development Fund
EoP	End of Project
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FIBA	International Foundation for the Bank d'Arguin
FSP	GEF Full-Sized Project
FTS	Food Technology Services
GamPAN	Gambia National Protected Area Partnership and Network
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAP	Gambia Environment Action Plan
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMD	Gambian Dalasi (Exchange Rate at 31 July 2020 USD1 = GMD 51.80)
IC	International Consultant (for the Terminal Evaluation)
ICAM	Integrated Coastal Area Management (Project)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
ITA	International Technical Advisor (PMU staff)
JNP	Jokadu National Park
KWNP	Kiang West National Park
LAC	Local Advisory Committee (for each project site)
LDC	Least Developed Country
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MDI	Management Development Institute
MDFT	Multi-Disciplinary Facilitation Team
MECCWW	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Wildlife (at project start)
MECCNAR	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Natural Resources (from 2017)

METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MSP	GEF Medium-Sized Project
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action (Climate Change)
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NAP	National Action Programme (to combat desertification)
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NC	National Consultant (for the Terminal Evaluation)
NEA	National Environment Agency
NEMA	National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Park
NPD	National Project Director
NR	Nature Reserve
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NTA	National Training Authority
PAGE	Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PA	Protected Area
PEB	Project Executive Board (Project Steering Committee)
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PoWPA	Programme of Work for Protected Areas
PRCM	Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme for West Africa
RAMPAO	Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (WWF tool)
RF	Results Framework
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor (UNDP)
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SESP	Social and Environmental Safeguards Procedure
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SRF	Strategic Results Framework
SWMS	Soil and Water Management Services
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TEEB	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP CO	UNDP Country Office
UNDP IEO	UNDP Independent Evaluation Office
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UTG	University of The Gambia
VDC	Village Development Committee
VEC	Village Environment Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

1. Executive Summary

Project Details	Project Milestones	
Project Title: Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood Project	PIF Approval Date: 13 March 2014	
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #): 5000	CEO Approval date (MSP): 31 March 2015	
GEF Project ID: 5529	ProDoc Signature Date: 27 July 2015	
UNDP Atlas Business Unit, Award ID, Project ID: 00089259	Date Project Manager hired ¹ : Project Coordinator seconded by the Government in April 2015	
Country: The Gambia	Inception Workshop ² Date: 14 July 2015	
Region: RBA	Mid-Term Review Completion Date: N/A	
Focal Area: Biodiversity	Terminal Evaluation Completion date: 8/12/2020	
GEF Operational Programme or Strategic Priorities/Objectives: BD-1, BD-2	Planned Operational Closure Date: 26 July 2019	
Trust Fund: GEF TF	Actual Operational Closure Date: 31 July 2020	
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Entity): Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources – Department of Parks and Wildlife Management		
NGOs/CBOs involvement:	N/A	
Private sector involvement:	N/A	
Geospatial coordinates of project sites:	Survey Coordinates of KWNP, BBWR JNP.docx	
Financial Information		
PDF/PPG	at approval (US\$M)	at PDF/PPG completion (US\$M)
GEF PDF/PPG grants for project preparation	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Co-financing for project preparation	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000
Project	at CEO Endorsement (US\$M)	at TE (US\$M)
[1] UNDP contribution:	\$ 120,000	\$ 163,843
[2] Government:	\$ 4,570,909	\$ 4,975,000
[3] Other multi-/bi-laterals:	0	0

¹ Accordingly to UNDP CO this was by email from the head of the Department to indicate agreement for the secondment of the Project Coordinator as it was assumed that he was already in the department and could simply continue in that role.

² This meeting did not meet the full UNDP requirements for a project inception workshop.

[4] Private Sector:	0	0
[5] NGOs:	0	0
[6] Total co-financing [1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5]:	\$ 4,690,909	\$ 5,138,843
[7] Total GEF funding:	\$ 1,324,310	\$ 1,321,891
[8] Total Project Funding [6 + 7]	\$ 6,015,219	\$ 6,460,734

1.1 Brief Project Description

- S1. This GEF Medium-Sized Project was designed to strengthen the overall national protected areas network, and in particular the management effectiveness of a **cluster of priority protected areas (PAs)** namely, Jokadu National Park (JNP, 15,028 ha), Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (BBWR, 22,000 ha), and Kiang West National Park (KWNP, 11,526 ha). The project has a focus on the adjacent communities that exert significant pressure on the integrity of these PAs, totalling some 70,000 people. Working closely with and through the National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, the project aimed to introduce biodiversity-friendly sustainable land and natural resource management practices to surrounding areas. This was intended to counter significant **threats to biodiversity** including habitat conversion, land degradation, over-grazing, fires, hunting and unsustainable use of natural resources such as collection of timber and fuel-wood from diminishing forests. The project sought to address six **key barriers**: inadequate PA network planning; insufficient financing for the national PA system; inadequate PA operationalization; small size of PAs, edge effects and risks of fragmentation; high resource exploitation and land conversion pressures; and limited integration of environmental sustainability.
- S2. The **Project Objective** was to ***expand and strengthen the management of priority protected areas in The Gambia, including through enhanced community-based natural resource management.***
- S3. The project intervention consisted of **two Components**:
- 1** - Strengthen national PA network planning and PA management effectiveness in a cluster of priority PAs;
 - 2** - Improve land and natural resource management in and around the targeted cluster of priority PAs.
- S4. The project **Outcomes** to be achieved by the two Components and seven Outputs were:
- 1** - Gazettement of a c.5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of a c.10,000 ha expansion of KWNP.
 - 2** - Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and additional PA areas.
 - 3** - Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and surrounding landscapes (c.60,000 ha).
 - 4** - Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods.
- S5. The **global environmental benefits** from successful implementation of the project included contributions towards ecosystem conservation for the globally significant ecoregions: Guinean Forest – Savannah Mosaic, West Sudanian Savannah, and Guinean Mangroves. One

project site, BBWR, is a Ramsar Site. Through extension of the national PA system by 15,000 ha, improved management of the targeted PAs, and reduction of threats from adjacent land uses, the project aimed to benefit important wetland, forest and grassland habitats, diverse species, and globally threatened species such as African Manatee, Hippopotamus, African Dwarf Crocodile, Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, Red Colobus and Leopard.

1.2 Evaluation Ratings Table

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating ³
M&E design at entry	MU
M&E Plan Implementation	MU
Overall Quality of M&E	MU
Implementation & Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	MS
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MU
Overall quality of Implementation/Execution	MU
Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	S
Effectiveness	MS
Efficiency	MU
Overall Project Outcome Rating	MU-MS
Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	UL
Socio-political/economic	ML
Institutional framework and governance	ML
Environmental	ML
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	UL

³ 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)

1.3 Summary of findings, conclusions and lessons learned

1.3.1 Findings

- S6. The terminal evaluation in August-November 2020 examined all aspects of the PAN Project – strategy and design; supervision and management arrangements for implementation; project finances; use of basic project management tools; and implementation progress and achievements over the five years from July 2015 to July 2020. The evaluation has rated the quality of Monitoring and Evaluation at entry, during implementation and overall; and the quality of Project Implementation/Oversight provided by UNDP, Project Execution by the Implementing Partner and Overall Implementation/Execution. The main evaluation criteria for project Outcomes were the Relevance, necessity or importance of the project in the Gambia; the Efficiency with which the Project has been organised, supervised, financed, administered and activities delivered, considering the time and resources available; the Effectiveness of Project design, management and implementation, in contributing to achievement of the agreed objectives and expected or planned results; the Results/Impacts achieved by the Project; and the Sustainability of the achievements and impacts of the Project, after the Project has been concluded. In addition, the evaluation examined the project's contributions to Gender and Women's Empowerment, and Cross-cutting Issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation, capacity development, and the poverty-environment nexus. The ratings for each of the evaluation criteria are summarized in the table above, based on the detailed findings in **Section 4** and explained in **Table 12**.
- S7. **M&E at entry** – the Results Framework was seriously inadequate in a number of respects, including indicators that were not SMART, absent baselines and targets, and confusing structure. Measurement methodologies for the indicators were also not fully described. The implementation of M&E during the project diverged from the project document M&E plan in several respects, including delayed inception review, gaps in reporting documentation, no project terminal report and delayed information to inform the terminal evaluation. The PEB was not effective in providing timely guidance, constraining responsive decision-making. No mid-term review was conducted for the project⁴, and there was little attention to gender, social inclusion and safeguards in progress reporting.
- S8. The **implementation** of this project was subject to a succession of challenges, right from its very inception. Some of these were external, such as the West Africa Ebola Outbreak in 2014-15, the political instability in 2016-17 and the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, while others were internal, notably the chronic capacity challenges within the IP, and application of UNDP bureaucratic rules in the context of the prevailing conditions in-country. Much of the implementation did not go smoothly, as reflected in the successive PIR ratings (**Table 7**), therefore the TE has to reflect this accordingly.

⁴ While there is no mandatory requirement for a Mid-term Review (MTR) for GEF Medium-Sized Projects, there was GEF budget allocated and ambiguous reference made in the project document. Given the serious challenges experienced during the initial years of implementation, the TE considers that a MTR would have been helpful in this case and should have been seriously considered.

- S9. **Relevance:** the project responded to a clear conservation need and the project design responded appropriately to the identified threats and barriers through the twin strategies proposed in the two Components. The project design was well aligned with the selected GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies BD-1 and BD-2. It also supported CBD's PoWPA objectives and was well aligned with CBD Aichi Targets 5, 11 and 12; SDG 15 - Life on Land, with lesser contributions towards other SDGs; the UNDP strategy for The Gambia and the 2012-2016 UNDAF Outcome 3.0; and the 2012-2016 CPAP, Outcome 2 and Output 2.3. The project's objectives were also well aligned with national development priorities, policies and plans. Its contribution to biodiversity mainstreaming in the agriculture sector was almost negligible however⁵. The SLM and livelihood interventions were directly relevant to local needs, although limited by resource constraints.
- S10. **Effectiveness:** The table of project achievements against results framework indicator targets in **Annex 14** and the conclusions in section **4.3.1** on progress towards objectives describe progress against planned targets, summarized in **Table 9**. This reveals that both Objective-level impact indicators were achieved; one out of five IRRF sub-indicators (treated at Objective-level) was fully achieved, three partially achieved and one cancelled; the single impact indicator for Outcome 1 was achieved; indicators for Outcome 2 were mixed, with one achieved, one partially achieved and one cancelled; Outcome 3 results were also mixed with two achieved, two partially achieved and one not achieved; and for Outcome 4 one indicator was achieved and one partially achieved. In total, eight indicators (44.4%) were considered fully achieved, seven (38.9%) partially achieved, one not achieved (5.6%) and two cancelled (11.1%). Thus overall, 83.3% of indicators showed full or partial progress towards the planned targets. Five of the seven Outputs were partially achieved and two were cancelled.
- S11. **Efficiency:** the management of the project cannot be described as efficient due to significant delays in implementation, difficulties in disbursing GEF funds in a timely manner, and ineffective adaptive management. Disbursement of project funds was impacted by factors including the weak capacity of the PMU to prepare documentation to UNDP standards, the absence of the financial administrator⁶ position in the PMU for extended periods, the disunity and poor communications between project management partners, and bureaucratic delays within UNDP associated with the reported inability of the Implementing Partner to follow UNDP rules and procedures. There were also significant weaknesses in M&E design and application that UNDP was slow and ineffective in addressing. Audit reports noted substantial variance in both under and over-spending of budget lines related to unrealistic planning estimates. The support for SLM and livelihoods was generally cost-effective and had local impact. There was no specific allocation of project resources for integrating gender equality and human rights in the project. There was also no prioritization of marginalized stakeholders,

⁵ Perhaps this reflects, in part, the situation in the institution and agencies in different policy sectors into which biodiversity needed to be mainstreamed as well. This was not just a project shortcoming but a contextual issue.

⁶ UNDP CO commented that the position was Financial Officer. However documents such as PIR 2017 refer to Financial Administrator.

although some would have benefited from project support to the communities surrounding the three PAs.

- S12. **Sustainability:** *Financial sustainability* is of most concern, with current national mechanisms under the PoWPA Action Plan (Rev. 2018) including the Biodiversity Trust Fund representing practical methods for generating and receiving income from PAs, but the BTF remains largely uncapped since it was established in 2015. Secondly, the DPWM annual budget for PA management has been chronically low for years and remains seriously inadequate (currently GMD 6.5 million, about USD 130,000). COVID-19 has also negatively impacted the budget. Consequently, DPWM is unable to fully implement the management plans that have been developed for the project sites, and issues such as maintenance of infrastructure and liaison and support for communities involved in co-management are at risk. Thirdly, collaboration with the NEMA project and other initiatives was not institutionalized, although possibilities for future collaboration on SLM and rural development exist. Finally, the alignment of UNDP Country Programme initiatives could provide some support for sustainability. The project supported revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 in 2020, and the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (Rev. 2018), development of the three PAs and their co-management through the PACs involving some 61 villages represent sustainable *institutional/governance* outcomes. Finally, the creation of JNP, its connection to BBWR through an extension, and the extension of KWNP have secured important habitats, on a co-management basis. This has provided a firm footing for managing external human pressures on the extended PAs and is relatively sustainable if DPWM have the resources to support the PACs going forward.

1.3.2 Conclusions

- S13. **Project Design and Start-up:** The original PAN project concept was planned for a GEF Full-Sized Project of over USD 4 million, but due to delays in completion and submission of the PIF, only USD 1.3 million were finally available in the STAR fund for Gambia and the PIF was submitted as a Medium-Sized Project. During the belated project inception review in September 2016, significant deficiencies in the project design presented in the Project Document were identified: the intervention strategy was overly ambitious for the GEF resources available, the national capacity of DPWM to co-finance the project coordinator and operate the PMU was grossly over-estimated⁷, and the results framework was overly complicated and incomplete. Although the project kicked off in July 2015, the project start-up meeting did not meet UNDP requirements for an inception workshop⁸, hiring of project staff took a long time, and the project struggled to put in place the full PMU, until early 2017. While there were obviously real constraints in play (including political instability around national elections in December 2016), this chaotic start-up period was a set-back for the project. After a belated 'inception review' in September 2016, Implementation picked up in 2017 and progress was made mainly on the first Component in 2017-18, subject to major periodic delays

⁷ Only the project coordinator was to be co-financed from government/DPWM resources as committed to by government. The PMU operationalization was entirely funded by UNDP co-financing and GEF resources.

⁸ See project document paragraph 248. The start-up meeting did not review the Strategic Results Framework, there was no PMU in place at the time, project strategy was not reviewed, etc.

associated with approval of workplans and payment authorizations. In August 2019, a proposal was submitted for a 12 month extension of the 48 month project from its original closing date of 31 July 2019 through to 31 July 2020. The project extension resulted in sharper focus and accelerated progress on the SLM / community livelihoods in Component 2 of the project in particular.

- S14. **Results / Impacts:** The project achieved significant results despite the many challenges it faced during implementation. The table of project achievements against results framework indicator targets in **Annex 14** and the conclusions in section **4.3.1** on progress towards objectives describe progress against planned targets (although many targets were not defined at all, or were vague and difficult to measure). In addition, it is worth noting that some of the indicators were beyond the capacity of the DPWM to actually collect data in both methodology and material/financial resources). Therefore the results are summarized in **Table 9**. This reveals that both Objective-level impact indicators were achieved; one out of five IRRF sub-indicators (treated at Objective-level) was fully achieved, three partially achieved and one cancelled; the single impact indicator for Outcome 1 was achieved; indicators for Outcome 2 were mixed, with one achieved, one partially achieved and one cancelled; Outcome 3 results were also mixed with two achieved, two partially achieved and one not achieved; and for Outcome 4 one indicator was achieved and one partially achieved. In total, eight indicators (44.4%) were considered fully achieved, seven (38.9%) partially achieved, one not achieved (5.6%) and two cancelled (11.1%). Overall, 83.3% of indicators showed full or partial progress towards the planned targets. Five of the seven Outputs were partially achieved and two were cancelled.
- S15. First and foremost, the extensions of the three targeted PAs resulted in an increase in the PA estate of 24,013.41 ha (against a targeted area of 15,000 ha), taking the total from 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha. This increases the PA system's area of coverage of the Gambia's territorial area to 7.4%. While final legal gazettment of JNP is still pending due to COVID19 delays, the extensions to BBWR and KWNP have been completed.
- S16. Secondly, the number of people in target area who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources was targeted to have increased by 50% over baseline. In reality, 61 villages have been directly implicated in the management of the target areas, through the PACs. This represents nearly all the adjacent villages and is therefore over 90%.
- S17. Thirdly, the total number of people benefitting from strengthened livelihoods related to solutions for management of natural resources appears to be significant, although actual figures are not verifiable. This includes several thousand people, the majority of which are female farmers who benefited from sustainable rice production; about 5,000 people expected to benefit from the woodlots programme; over 1,000 energy saving stoves distributed to households to reduce the use of fuel wood benefited over 10,000 people; 20 farmers have been trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products; 15 villages hosted demonstration SLM plots led by individual farmers and 61 villages in total have been involved in the co-management of the three PAs through the PACs, with equal representation of men and women. Seedlings/saplings of multiple use species were successfully established near target communities, including 9,000 in Jokadu, where a 20-bed nursery produced seedlings

that were distributed to communities for planting; an additional 90,000 Gmelina stumps, and 2,500 Acacia seedlings purchased were planted in July 2019 mainly in the 2 woodlots established but also some were given to the communities. A total of 20 communities benefited, making 5,075 seedlings per community.

- S18. The three PAs together with the extensions have had their boundaries properly surveyed and demarcated and formally declared based on the provisions of the Wildlife Act 2003. KWNP and BBWR are already gazetted PAs and covered by the Wildlife Act 2020. So there is no requirement to apply for gazette of the extension areas of these two PAs according to the PMU. Both the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act revision in 2020 and the application for the gazette of JNP (including the extension area) have been submitted to the National Assembly for approval. The approval process of these documents has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Permanent and clear demarcation of borders was ensured through clearing of KWNP extension borders in 2018 and 2019 and 300 pillars erected in JNP and BBWR extension.
- S19. An effective management presence was established in JNP, reflected by the increase in METT score from a nominal baseline up to 51 by project close. METT score changes for BBWR and KWNP failed to reflect improved management effectiveness status, despite obvious advances in terms of PA extension, co-management engagement with surrounding communities, improved facilities, and management plan development. Inconsistent assessment may explain this to some extent.
- S20. **Environmental stress reduction:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, it is likely that the engagement of surrounding communities in the co-management of the three PAs, the associated awareness raising, and support provided for sustainable livelihoods and SLM coupled with marking of PA boundaries on the ground and increased management effectiveness of PA staff will have resulted in shifts in attitudes of local residents towards greater appreciation of the purpose of the PAs, resulting in reduced illegal activities and threats such as fires.
- S21. **Environmental status change:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the addition of over 24,000 ha of lands under PA co-management will help to secure the habitats and wildlife present in these areas. Without such protection, it is quite likely that land conversion will occur, resulting in losses of mangrove, dryland forest, wetland and grassland habitats and their associated species. The project also planted significant amounts of mangrove propagules in some of the degraded wetlands.
- S22. **Changes in policy/legal/regulatory frameworks:** The project achieved positive results in this area, including: revision of the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (Rev. 2018), revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Law 2003 (in 2020), establishment of JNP and extension of BBWR and KWNP, development of management plans for all three sites (BBWR in draft still), also some improvements in infrastructure and management effectiveness of the three PAs – especially Jokadu NP. This included the establishment of PA Committees for the three PAs involving 61 surrounding communities as a basis for co-management. These measures have a high degree of permanence once established, although the PACs will require constant communication and nurturing to remain functional and engaged.

S23. **Changes in socio-economic status:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the 61 communities around the three PAs total an estimated 70,000 people, of which the project benefited a portion through a variety of livelihood-related interventions.

S24. The main **barriers and risks** that may prevent further progress towards long-term impact concern the low financial sustainability and the lack of capacity in DPWM to support the national PA system and management of the three targeted PAs (see 4.3.6) and to maintain support to the surrounding communities for co-management of these areas and continued reduction of external threats. Added to this is the lack of mainstreaming / integration into policy sectors and policy sector operational plans, and across project interventions. The DPWM tries to mainstream across projects but this is done on an *ad hoc* basis and can easily be lost during implementation. In addition, COVID19 has potential to have major negative impacts for the sustainability of the project outcomes, through: reduction in annual budget allocations to DWNP as a result of shifts in government priorities; reduction in tourist visitation to protected areas in Gambia (affecting revenue generation); and local impacts on communities.

1.3.3 Lessons Learned

Improving project design

- Biodiversity mainstreaming is only likely to be effective if specific mechanisms support inter-sectoral collaboration. Therefore, mainstreaming projects need to include a dedicated staff role to take this forward.
- Quality assurance of PIFs and Project Documents should ensure that their baseline capacity, scope, outcomes and indicator targets are consistent with the GEF budget so that the intended project impact is feasible.

Strengthening implementation

- Invest more in the Inception Phase of projects to provide effective re-assessment of design, avoid mismatches, and provide support for project start-up (e.g. through UN Volunteer inputs)
- Invest in the training of IP/PMU staff on UNDP standards for risk management, social and environmental safeguards and gender mainstreaming during the project inception period, and ensure adequate GEF budget provision in the ProDoc.
- Remove bureaucratic obstacles such as multiple signatures and different levels of reviews (eg for staff TORs) – where feasible and in line with UNDP oversight procedures - to facilitate project start-up and smooth implementation.
- Make more effective use of PIRs for adaptive management by proactively and systematically following up on recommendations (currently the emphasis is more for compliance monitoring).
- Review existing UNDP regulations to make allowance for addressing the disparity between government salaries and GEF Project PMU staffing requirements to facilitate smooth implementation and ensure fair and adequate remuneration for professional staff. Such measures must remain consistent with host government recommendations to avoid risks at audit.

Strengthening M&E and reporting

- Revise UNDP Quarterly and Annual Report templates to include mandatory gender mainstreaming and social and environmental safeguards reporting in support of the PIRs and more consistent application of UNDP standards.

- Ensure more rigorous UNDP oversight of M&E design, reporting and remediation, and adherence to UNDP/GEF standards (eg SMART indicators, clear baselines and targets) starting with the project design to avoid obstacles to effective project management and evaluation.

Replication of good practices

- DPWM and UNDP should facilitate replication and upscaling of the SLM farmer field packages, community woodlots, bee-keeping, saline tolerant rice varieties and fuel-efficient cookstoves through engagement with other initiatives such as the IFAD ROOTS project, and the UNDP Rapid Response Facility. These approaches could also be applied to similar settings around PAs in the Gambia, or with some adaptation, to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, cost efficiencies should be built in from the design phase of other projects regarding means of achieving small scale - high impact rural development support.
- The community radio station broadcasts and engagement of local leaders in awareness raising events appear to have been successful approaches that could lend themselves to similar settings around PAs in the Gambia, or with some adaptation, to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- The project design strategy in focusing on a cluster of three PAs in close proximity to each other had a strong rational basis that was likely to result in more sustainable outcomes for biodiversity conservation, creating more momentum for conservation in one locality and likely to achieve greater impact and sustainability than dispersed sites.
- The focus on a cluster of PAs also provided the potential for added value through a networked approach to management and shared learning among the three PAs and their associated stakeholders – although not emphasized in the design, and only partly realized during implementation. This idea of local PA networks, or cluster-level PA management is transferable between regions and countries and has advantages including more cost-effective use human and financial resources and knowledge exchange.

1.4 Recommendations summary table

Relatively few recommendations are made, because the project has already been completed owing to COVID19 related delays in the terminal evaluation. Therefore, the recommendations mainly concern follow-up actions that may assist in bolstering the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time-frame
A	Category 1: Completing critical outstanding deliverables		
A.1	The legal designation of Jokadu NP remains pending due to COVID19-related delays in official approval of the submitted documents. DWNP should follow up on this to ensure that it takes place without delay.	DPWM, GEF OFP	By 31 December 2020
A.2	The management plan for Bao Bolong WR was a key project deliverable that was not fully completed (the draft did not include the extension area). This should be completed as soon as possible to enable effective management of the whole PA.	DPWM	By 31 March 2021
B	Category 2: Resolving outstanding audit queries and safeguard issues		
B.1	According to PIR 2020, there remain some budget deviations to be resolved – these include some PMC discrepancies, misallocation of DPCs under activity budget lines, DPCs being slightly exceeded and the addition of new budget lines not provided for in the Prodoc, and for which no justification has been given, in excess of 5% of the total grant. It is recommended that the UNDP Regional PA works closely with the UNDP CO, IP and project team to resolve these deviations.	UNDP and DPWM	By 31 December 2020
B.2	The independent review report released in March 2020 indicated gaps in the identification and rating of safeguards risks, and recommended that the SESP risk rating should be raised to Moderate. However, it was too	UNDP	By 31 December 2020

	late to address these recommendations, so they should be included in the project's closure report, to assist the IP with ongoing monitoring and management of any safeguard-related risks to sustainability.		
C	Category 3: Facilitating outcome sustainability		
C.1	Facilitate ongoing liaison with and support for PACs and communities adjacent to PAs to maintain harmonious engagement in co-management, and control over external threats to biodiversity.	DPWM	Immediate and ongoing
C.2	Facilitate ongoing collaboration with agricultural, rural development and environmental initiatives around the targeted PAs in order to sustain and replicate livelihood benefits (eg SLM packages, community woodlots, bee-keeping, saline tolerant rice varieties and cookstoves) to surrounding communities (eg through the IFAD ROOTS project); and continued financial analysis (adaptive management) in order to achieve greater value for money on livelihood support activities.	DPWM, GEF OFP	Immediate and ongoing
C.3	Facilitate alignment of UNDP-led projects with the outcomes of this project to support the continued flow of socio-economic and environmental benefits (eg Rapid Response Facility, Small Grants Programme, climate change resilience and governance/democracy projects that empower citizens to take control of their environment, BIOFIN, etc.)	UNDP CO, GEF OFP	Immediate and ongoing
D	Category 4: Follow up strategy		
D.1	A systemic improvement approach is needed to break the lack of progress achieved from project to project in the Gambia. This could be addressed by a programmatic approach that aims to build systemic capacity for biodiversity conservation and PA management so that it can become self-sustaining (perhaps through a regional programme. This should take account of the IUCN Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners) ⁹ .	UNDP, GEF OFP	2021-22

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https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/global_register_of_competences_for_pa_practitioners_e_version_0.pdf

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

1. The four-year UNDP/GEF Medium-sized Project *Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood Project*, which started implementation in July 2015, was completed on 31 July 2020. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) has been conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the *UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2020)*¹⁰. This report presents the conclusions of the Terminal Evaluation (TE), prepared by two independent experts hired by UNDP - the International Team Leader (Crawford Prentice) and National Expert (Amadou Camara). It has been prepared according to UNDP's Terms of Reference (**Annex 1**).
2. The objectives of this TE were to evaluate the project's results and impacts, including an assessment of sustainability; to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use; to provide a basis for decision-making on actions to be taken post-project at both the government and UNDP programming level, and to collate and analyze specific lessons learned and best practices, which might be of relevance to other projects in the country. For this, the TE aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the completed project by assessing its project design, process of implementation, achievements vis-à-vis project objectives endorsed by the GEF including any agreed changes in the objectives during project implementation, and any other results achieved.
3. Evaluations for UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects have the following purposes:
 - To promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose the extent of project accomplishments.
 - To synthesize lessons that can help to improve the selection, design and implementation of future GEF financed UNDP activities.
 - To provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the UNDP portfolio and need attention, and on improvements regarding previously identified issues.
 - To gauge the extent of project convergence with other UN and UNDP priorities, including harmonization with other UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) outcomes and outputs.
 - To contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office databases for aggregation, analysis, and reporting on the effectiveness of GEF operations in achieving global environmental benefits and on the quality of M&E across the GEF system.

2.2 Scope

4. The evaluation assessed the progress of activities against the project's logical framework matrix. In addition, it analyzed adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), partnerships in implementation arrangements, changes in project design, overall project management main findings and key lessons including examples of best practices for future projects in the country, region and GEF. In addition, the evaluation has included assessment of cross-cutting issues including: gender equality and women's empowerment, social and

¹⁰ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml#gef>

environmental safeguards / rights-based approach, climate change mitigation and adaptation, poverty-environmental nexus and capacity development.

COVID-19

5. According to the UNDP IEO guidance on COVID-19, any COVID-19 project or programme interventions that should be included in the scope of the evaluation should be described. In the case of reprogramming detail how the implementation and interventions of a project or programme may have been impacted by reprogramming. In the case of this project, some analyses were conducted by the UNDP CO, which have been taken into account.

2.3 Methodology for data collection and analysis

6. The overall approach and method for conducting this project terminal evaluation follows official guidance for UNDP-supported GEF-financed projects. In particular, the evaluation effort was framed using the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender equality and women's empowerment, and results/impact:
 - **Relevance** – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organisational policies, including changes over time.
 - **Effectiveness** – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
 - **Efficiency** – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
 - **Sustainability** – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.
 - **Gender equality and women's empowerment** – the extent to which the project contributed towards gender equality and women's empowerment.
 - **Results/Impact** – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
7. Accordingly, an evaluation question matrix was prepared that applied a set of questions covering each of these criteria to the project in question, in line with the UNDP TOR (**Annex 1**), and which is annexed to this final TE report (**Annex 5**).
8. The evaluation has sought to provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluation followed a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Regional Technical Advisor based in the region and key stakeholders.
9. During the course of the TE, three sources of primary data and information were examined. Firstly, a wide variety of documents covering project design, implementation progress, monitoring and review (note – no mid-term review was conducted) studies, local and national development plans, policies/ legislation/ regulations on protected area and natural resource management, reserve management plans and community co-management and sustainable land management (SLM) initiatives – among others. This covered and elaborated on the documents listed in the UNDP TOR, and is presented in **Annex 4**. The most recent METT

assessment forms for the three project sites (July 2020) were reviewed, and these are given in **Annex 12**.

10. Secondly, remote, and – in line with COVID-19 Guidance – limited physical consultations were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, using “semi-structured interviews” with a key set of questions, or through completion of a questionnaire tailored for each stakeholder group (**Annex 6**). The questions aimed to provide answers to the points listed in the evaluation matrix in **Annex 5**. An initial list of generic questions was provided in the TE Inception Report, which was adjusted according to specific stakeholder interviews during the field mission and by follow up calls as necessary. Interviews were confidential and the information used discreetly without accreditation in this report to allow freedom of expression. Accordingly, details of interview discussions are not provided in this report. Triangulation of results, i.e. comparing information from different sources, such as documentation and interviews, or interviews on the same subject with different stakeholders, has been used to corroborate or check the reliability of evidence as far as possible.
11. Thirdly, direct observations of project results and activities were conducted at the field demonstration sites of Jokadu National Park, Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve and Kiang West National Park including consultations with local government and park administration staff, local community representatives, SLM project partners, CSOs and participants in field activities. This was constrained by the need to respect COVID-19 restrictions to ensure the safety of TE staff and stakeholders. The field visits were therefore conducted by the National Consultant and contact with stakeholders minimized. Details of locally conducted consultations and a summary of the field visits is attached as **Annex 2**.
12. Gender equality and women’s empowerment was assessed through collecting gender-disaggregated results arising from project activities, inclusion of women participants and relevant women’s groups in the TE interviews and specific questions regarding the extent to which they were included in project implementation and/or benefited from the project. Specific attention has been given to analysing examples, best practices and lessons learned regarding women’s empowerment arising through the project’s scope of activities.
13. COVID-19 related impacts on project implementation and results has been specifically considered during the evaluation process and included in interview questions.
14. The stakeholders interviewed included:
 - GEF Operational Focal Point
 - Responsible staff of the Implementing Partner (MECCNAR, DPWM)
 - UNDP CO and regional UNDP staff with project-related responsibilities (eg RTA)
 - Project team (PMU, national consultants and out-posted staff and consultants including the International Technical Advisor)
 - Project Executive Board members
 - Related national government agencies – Ministry of Agriculture
 - Staff of related projects
 - Regional/local government leaders
 - Protected area and project staff at the demonstration sites
 - Community representatives and community-based organisations (eg women’s groups)
 - NGOs, including relevant women’s organizations
 - Associated technical experts

- Private-sector individuals and organisations, especially collaborators at project sites

15. Throughout the course of the evaluation, the team has taken account of international best practices in PA management, biodiversity conservation and SLM in its assessment of project performance, especially in relation to the related CBD guidance.

2.3.1 Evaluation criteria and ratings

16. An assessment of project performance was carried out based against expectations set out in the Project Results Framework. The evaluation covered the specified criteria of: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, applying the following ratings (**Annex 8**) to the specified performance criteria in the table presented in the Executive Summary:

- 6: **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**: no shortcomings
- 5: **Satisfactory (S)**: minor shortcomings
- 4: **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**: moderate shortcomings
- 3: **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**: significant shortcomings
- 2: **Unsatisfactory (U)**: major problems
- 1: **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)**: severe problems

2.4 Ethics

17. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'¹¹ and the UNEG 'Code of Conduct for Evaluation'¹². Accordingly, the evaluators have signed the UNEG Code of Conduct in **Annex 9** of this report.

2.5 Limitations to the evaluation

18. The most significant limitations to the TE process centered around the global and national response to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic¹³. In particular, no international travel was possible for the international consultant, consequently all consultations involving the IC were conducted remotely. Site visits and consultations with local stakeholders at the project sites were conducted by the national consultant in line with technical guidance from the IC and logistical support and operational guidance from the UNDP CO. The national consultant then reported back to the IC on the results of these field observations and consultations. This required more time than if the IC was able to participate directly in the field mission.

19. In addition, the field mission undertaken by the National Consultant was scaled back to the bare minimum in view of COVID19 concerns, with only two days allocated to cover all three project PAs and travel from Banjul. Consequently, while the project team provided access to PA staff, PAC members and local community members engaged in project-related activities, inevitably this was not as thorough as would normally be expected of a TE, and detailed inspection of the field activities on the ground was not possible. Lengthy delays in the planning of the field mission meant that it only took place on 26-27 September.

¹¹ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

¹² <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100>

¹³ See GoTG Response at: <http://www.moh.gov.gm/> and UNDP response at: <https://www.gm.undp.org/content/gambia/en/home/covid-19-pandemic-response/support-to-national-response.html>

20. The package of documentation specified in the TOR for the TE was not available when the consultant team started work on 27 July 2020, and remained incomplete for much of the assessment process through August and September. Much of the documentation was also of incomplete or of poor quality. No project completion report was available for the project, and the GEF tracking tools at project completion were finally received on 14th October. This represented a significant constraint for efficient conduct of the TE, as the IC was reliant on analysing the paperwork to a much larger degree than normal in the absence of an in-country mission.
21. Overall, it must be emphasized that this TE process has been radically different from the usual one that is centered around a substantive and intensive mission to meet all key stakeholder groups in person, to have time for both focused interviews and lengthy informal discussions about all aspects of the project, and to spend adequate time at field sites to see with one's own eyes the actual differences on the ground that the project has achieved, to hear the experiences of communities and other stakeholders that have often worked hard to make it a success, and to experience the socio-economic conditions and local cultures and traditions that the project is embedded in. Remote evaluation may work to an extent, but it must be clearly recognized that it is not comparable to the in-depth, intensive and personal approach to evaluation that UNDP and GEF standards require.

2.6 Structure of the TE report

22. The structure of the evaluation report follows the ToR for this assignment (see **Annex 1**), which in turn is based on the *UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (2020)*¹⁴. Section 1 summarizes the main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. Section 2 describes the purpose, objectives, scope, methodology, approach and limitations of the evaluation. Section 3 provides the project description and development context for the intervention, including the underlying problem to be addressed, project objectives, expected results and theory of change. Section 4 presents the findings of the evaluation, relating to project design/formulation, implementation and results. Section 5 presents the evaluation's main findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. In addition, supporting information is provided in the annexes.

3. Project Description

3.1 Project start and duration, including milestones

23. The GEF Project Identification Form (PIF) for the project was approved on 13 March 2014. The PPG phase of project preparation started at this time, coordinated by the UNDP Country Office in line with the UNDP PPG Implementation Plan and following Direct Implementation Modality to facilitate rapid implementation. However, the PPG work in 2014 through Q1 2015 was impacted by the Ebola outbreak in West Africa that spread through a number of West African countries (but not directly affecting the Gambia) which prevented the PPG International Team Leader from visiting the country; this was subsequently recognized to have implications for the quality of the

¹⁴ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml#gef>

project document. GEF CEO Endorsement was provided on 24 March 2015 and the Project Document was signed on 27 July 2015 after the first Project Steering Committee / launch meeting on 14 July 2015. The project was planned for a four-year implementation period, but due to slow progress the original completion date of July 2019 was extended by 12 months, with the project eventually terminating on 31 July 2020. While a mid-term review was planned in the project document¹⁵, this was not implemented by UNDP, and the funds were re-allocated within the project.

24. The initial period of implementation from July 2015 through August 2016 was marked by very slow progress, leading up to the engagement of the International Technical Advisor in September 2016, with a first mission report that provided a belated project inception report, including recommendations to address key issues that were obstructing progress. The Project Executive Board meeting of November 2018 initiated the planning for project extension, which was necessary to progress the SLM and community livelihood activities under the project. The extension was approved on 26 August 2019, and implementation continued but this time was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with national restrictions imposed from 17 March 2020 through to its rescheduled completion on 31 July 2020.

3.2 Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope

25. The Gambia is a small, narrow country enclosed by the Atlantic Ocean in the west and Senegal on the three remaining sides (Fig. 1). It can be divided into three major biological regions – the marine system and coastal zone on the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the east-to-west running River Gambia and related freshwater and estuarine ecosystems, and the terrestrial ecosystems in the remaining stretches of land behind the coast and to the north and south of the river. Despite its small size, the Gambia harbours biodiversity that is globally significant as well as of great significance at national and local level. These valuable biodiversity and ecosystem services are not secure and in spite of the significant baseline response by the government, the risk remains, hence the need for GEF incremental assistance to overcome the identified threats.



Figure 1. Location of the Gambia and the Gambia River Catchment

Source: UNDP Project Document

¹⁵ The prodoc was inconsistent on this point – budgeting for the MTR, but not specifying the requirement for one in the M&E Section

26. The Gambia River consists of estuarine and freshwater zones. The tidal estuary is fringed with important mangrove stands as well as saline flats, mudflats, river banks with brackish and fresh water zones, lagoons, marshes, swamps, and other wetland habitats. Mangroves dominate the riverside in the lower estuary, and extensive reed belts the intermediate zone. In the freshwater zone, the banks are lined with gallery forest. The project focused on ecosystems on either side of the River Gambia, inland from the coastal and estuarine zones but still under some tidal influence. The key ecosystems of interest are forests, wetlands and, to a lesser extent, grasslands. Gambian terrestrial habitats fall under the Guinean Forest-Savannah Mosaic Ecoregion in the west and the West Sudanian-Savannah Ecoregion in the east, both of which are of critical/endangered conservation status, with less than 1% of Guinean woodlands remaining in Gambia. Wetlands cover an estimated 20% of the Gambia's total land area, including 6.4% of mangrove forests, 7.8% of uncultivated swamps, and 3.2% of cultivated swamps (NBSAP 1998). Wetlands provide refuge for wildlife species such as Spotted Hyena, Warthog, Roan Antelope, Leopard and migratory waterbirds. The Bao Bolong wetlands in the North Bank Region represent the first of three Ramsar sites in the country. Globally significant species occurring at the project sites include: Hippopotamus VU, African Manatee VU, African Clawless Otter NT, African Dwarf Crocodile VU, Atlantic Humpback Dolphin CR, Guinea Baboon NT, Leopard VU, Western Red Colobus EN, Bateleur NT, and Martial Eagle VU.
27. The Gambia is one of the most densely populated countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with an average population density of 176 per km² in 2013. However, population density varies in different parts of the country. The Gambia is a Least Developed Country (LDC) ranking 172th out of 187 countries in 2013¹⁶. Poverty remains a major challenge with nearly half of the population living on less than US\$ 1.25 per day. The Gambia, like many LDCs, faces the difficult challenge of financing its development priorities without any exploitable natural resources except for the forestry, fishing and biodiversity sectors. The Gambian economy is predominantly agrarian with agriculture accounting for nearly 30% of GDP and providing direct employment for about 63% of the population, primarily through smallholder subsistence agriculture¹⁷. Agriculture is the main source of income for about 72% of the extremely poor rural households. However, agricultural production is highly seasonal and rain-fed.
28. The Gambia has a well-established framework of policies, legislation and regulations for the management of natural resources. In general, these align well with national strategic frameworks including The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE 2012-2015) and other national and donor strategic frameworks. The PAGE objectives are to assist The Gambia in its efforts to achieve the MDGs and the goals in the Vision 2020. The long term goal is to eradicate poverty by significantly increasing national income through sustained economic growth and reducing income and non-income inequalities through specific poverty reduction priority interventions. The implementation of PAGE revolves around five set pillars that embrace the productive, environmental and social aspects of SLM.
29. The environmental sector also has a well-established policy framework, including the Gambia Environmental Act and Action Plan (GEAP-II, 2009-2015) as the national umbrella environmental framework. The Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy (2009-2015) lists the "sustainable and effective management of natural resources" among its strategic objectives and has led to the strengthening of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group (ANRWG) at the National Environment Agency (NEA). Likewise, the National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification in The Gambia (2000) is a comprehensive and integrated framework for addressing

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme (2014) Human Development Report 2014 - Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience. UNDP, New York

¹⁷ Government of The Gambia (2010) *The Gambia National Agricultural Investment Plan (GNAIP- 2011-2015)*. Banjul

desertification, land degradation and drought. The National Climate Change Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA, 2007) recognises the need to promote and strengthen integrated management of the coastal and terrestrial zones and to preserve biological diversity and ecological assets. The Gambia Biodiversity Policy 2003 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 1998) seek to “discourage uncontrolled extension of agricultural land into ...virgin forests, wetlands, marginal areas and other environmentally sensitive areas” and “develop sound grazing management system”.

30. A number of institutions with responsibilities for biodiversity management exist principally under the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Wildlife (MECCWW); the Ministry of Fisheries; the Ministry of Agriculture; the Department of Forestry in the Office of The President and the Ministry of Regional Administration, Lands and Traditional Rulers. Each of these institutions interacts independently with local government at the divisional, district and village levels. As a means of enhancing integration of these different sectors, the government has sought to institutionalize coordination at the policy, sectoral and operational levels. Existing institutional mechanisms for coordination were: the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC), National Water Resource Council (NWRC), Gambia Environmental Action Plan (GEAP) process and the National Environment Agency (NEA) Sectoral Working Groups, Divisional Coordinating Committees (DCC), and Local Government Authorities (District Authorities).
31. **The Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM)**, of the MECCWW, has a mandate to: (1) protect and conserve The Gambia's remaining wild fauna as well as their natural environment for the present and future; (2) create educational and leisure facilities for present and future populations through prudent use of wildlife resources; (3) preserve archetypal natural examples of Gambian flora and fauna with the aim of preserving genetic diversity; (4) accumulate and dispense revenue, which has built up from the use of our wildlife resources to the Government as well as to nearby rural communities; and (5) inform the public about the value of conserving wildlife and get their acceptance of the need for wildlife conservation as a viable alternative to the use of land. The operation and management of the sector is guided by the National Wildlife Policy (MECCWW, February 2013) which also espouses the vision for the sector for the next 20 years in conformity with the maintenance of environmental sustainability and socioeconomic transformation as outlined in The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020¹⁸. The Department had a staff complement of 170 staff, of which 115 were on its permanent pay roll. However, staff capacity included only eight professionals with Diploma level and two with a Masters qualification.
32. Other relevant agencies include the **National Environment Agency (NEA)**, which is responsible for the implementation of The Gambia Environment Action Plan (GEAP), the main national policy framework for the sustainable management of the country's natural resources and the environment. It also has a regulatory function being responsible for directly enforcing environmental legislation.

3.3 Problems that the project sought to address, threats and barriers targeted

33. Under the baseline scenario for the project in 2014-15, PA management was absent or exceedingly weak in an important subset of the country's PA system, notably on the northern side of the River Gambia, where pressures on PAs were becoming critical. This locality comprises the newly-designated Jokadu National Park (JNP) which lacked demarcated boundaries, park infrastructure and management planning. It also includes the Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (BBWR), which was demarcated but with inadequate staffing, infrastructure, equipment and planning. These two PAs, which are separated by a 10 km gap, would have

¹⁸ Government of The Gambia (1996) *Vision 2020, The Gambia Incorporated*. Banjul

become disconnected due to increasing habitat loss between them. In addition, further loss of terrestrial and wetland ecosystem services on the north shore would have led to an increase in cross-river exploitation pressures in Kiang West National Park (KWNP) on the southern bank of the River Gambia. KWNP benefited from relevant investments in the past through a series of projects and is arguably the best managed PA in The Gambia. However, it was under mounting pressure from logging and conversion pressures that the current management could not wholly stem. Lastly, the institutional capacity of the relevant ministerial departments was too limited to develop and implement viable alternatives to the continuing degradation of the natural resource base of The Gambia's PAs. This in spite of the nearly-completed DPWM/World Bank/GEF *Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project*.

34. On the north side of the river, land conversion was expected to advance towards the river, to the BBWR's river-border woodlands, mangroves and wetlands; and to extend into the remaining natural ecosystems in JNP. On the southern shore, KWNP and the surrounding areas of semi-natural ecosystems were suffering increased exploitation and conversion pressures. The PAs in place were unable to stem these pressures, with further habitat fragmentation and degradation expected. In parallel, large-scale agricultural/rural development initiatives – most notably NEMA – continued to advance productivity without duly considering environmental sustainability, biodiversity and PA aspects. While this may have led to gains in community livelihoods and food security, it did not respond adequately to the severe and ongoing deterioration of the natural resource base, and would not help reduce the exploitation and development pressures that local communities exert on biodiversity and the integrity and connectivity of the protected area system.
35. The project sought to allay these threats to biodiversity by overcoming six **key barriers** which were impeding effective PA management and sustainable land and natural resource management in the targeted areas: inadequate PA network planning; insufficient financing for the national PA system; inadequate PA operationalization; small size of PAs, edge effects and risks of fragmentation; high resource exploitation and land conversion pressures; and limited integration of environmental sustainability.

3.4 Immediate and development objectives of the project

36. The project was designed to strengthen the overall national protected areas network, and in particular the management effectiveness of a cluster of priority protected areas (PAs) namely, Jokadu National Park (JNP, 15,028 ha), Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (BBWR, 22,000 ha), and Kiang West National Park (KWNP, 11,526 ha) (**Figure 2**). The project also focused on adjacent communities that exert significant pressure on the integrity of these PAs, totalling some 70,000 people. Working closely with and through the *National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project* (NEMA) of the Ministry of Agriculture, the project aimed to introduce biodiversity-friendly sustainable land and natural resource management practices to surrounding areas.
37. While no development objective *per se* is stated in the project document, it states that the project responds to the significant and growing pressure on natural resources and the conversion of natural ecosystems in The Gambia, including in the country's protected areas, which is increasingly undermining the status of biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

This will be combined with the adoption of more sustainable natural resource utilisation practices. The project will build programmatically on a GEF-funded PA early action grant that led to the creation of The Gambia National Protected Area Partnership and Network (GamPAN).

38. The project aimed to contribute towards achievement of **CBD Aichi Targets 5, 11 and 12**, by increasing the coverage of the national PA system and further strengthening the management of existing PAs, and thereby reducing the loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats and forests, and enhancing the conservation prospects of globally threatened species. It also contributed to Targets 7 and 14, by working towards more sustainable land management (agricultural and grazing/browsing practices), thereby safeguarding and restoring ecosystem services vital for local populations.
39. The project fits the UNDP strategy for The Gambia and is consistent with the 2012-2016 UNDAF Outcome 3.0 *Environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction systems and services operationalised* and Output 3.1 *National policies and laws available on low carbon emission and climate resilient development pathways and natural resources management developed and implemented*. The project equally falls under the 2012-2016 CPAP, particularly Outcome 2 *Sustainable livelihood security enhanced for disadvantaged groups through the promotion of income diversification opportunities and better management of environmental resources*, and Output 2.3 *Sustainable use of environmental resources enhanced*.



Figure 2. Locations of the three targeted PAs and surrounding towns, villages and countryside

Source: Project Document

40. The **Project Objective** was to ***expand and strengthen the management of priority protected areas in The Gambia, including through enhanced community-based natural resource management.*** The project intervention consisted of **two Components**:

- 1** - Strengthen national PA network planning and PA management effectiveness in a cluster of priority PAs;
- 2** - Improve land and natural resource management in and around the targeted cluster of priority PAs.

41. The planned project **Outcomes** to be achieved by the two Components and seven Outputs were:

- 1** - Gazettement of a c.5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of a c.10,000 ha expansion of KWNP.
- 2** - Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and additional PA areas.
- 3** - Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and surrounding landscapes (c.60,000 ha).
- 4** - Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods.

42. The project's results framework provides the hierarchy of objectives, summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Results framework structure of the PAN project, describing the different levels of objectives

Development Goal	<i>No Development Goal per se is described in the Project Document</i>
Objective	<i>To expand and strengthen the management of priority protected areas in The Gambia, including through enhanced community-based natural resource management</i>
Outcome 1	Gazettement of a c.5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of a c.10,000 ha expansion of KWNP
Output 1.1	Revised PA Programme of Work and Action Plan
Output 1.2	Gazettement of the two PA expansions (JNP expansion to connect with BBWR and expansion of KWNP)
Outcome 2	Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and additional PA areas
Output 2.1	Strengthened institutional and technical capacities in the target PAs to address existing and emerging threats
Outcome 3	Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and surrounding landscapes (c.60,000 ha)
Output 3.1	Biodiversity as well as PA aspects as well as sustainable land and natural resources management effectively mainstreamed into the large-scale National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA)
Output 3.2	Recommended NRM and SLM practices implemented by local communities under the community-based management agreements, with extension support provided
Output 3.3	A monitoring system in place in the target areas
Outcome 4	Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods
Output 4.1	Agreements with local communities secured for community-based sustainable land and natural resources management, and related plans, developed

3.5 Expected results

43. The key results expected from the project¹⁹ can be summarized as follows:

Objective: To expand and strengthen the management of priority protected areas in The Gambia, including through enhanced community-based natural resource management

- Extension of the protected estate by an additional 15,000 ha (5,000 in JNP and 10,000 ha in KWNP) making a total of some 79,276 ha protected²⁰
- Increase in number of people in target area who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources of 20% over baseline by mid-term and 50% by end of project

Outcome 1: Gazettement of a c.5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of a c.10,000 ha expansion of KWNP

- Three PAs together with the extensions, have boundaries properly surveyed and demarcated and formally declared through gazettelement

Outcome 2: Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and additional PA areas

- 20% increase over baseline METT scores of 57 and 47 respectively for KWNP and BBWR²¹
- Effective management established in JNP, reflected by METT target score of at least 25
- Recovery or maintenance of the conservation status (as measured by viable populations) of selected key indicator species

Outcome 3: Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and surrounding landscapes (c.60,000 ha)

- Nursery to be developed and 1,000 seedlings/saplings of multi-use species successfully established per target community
- Three farmers per PA successfully using conservation tillage methods
- Stretches of valuable trees planted on at least along 30% of key PA borders exposed to fire and other pressures
- At least 1% of NEMA budget Amount directed to activities supporting conservation in the PA and adjacent buffer zones (in addition to actual SLM investment/support)
- Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Agriculture: Mainstreaming Scorecard shows enhanced implementation, enforcement and monitoring by project completion

Outcome 4: Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods

- An increase in the numbers of producers organizations, women's groups, trade and farmers' associations and CBOs using improved technologies and management practices as a result of project assistance leading to at least 50% uptake
- An improvement of 20-50% in awareness and understanding of the value and vulnerability of natural resources as measured by a repeat survey.

¹⁹ Source: results framework indicator targets in the Project Document

²⁰ Note – the Prodoc target of 74,276 ha is incorrect – baseline of 64,276 ha plus 15,000 ha is 79,276 ha

²¹ Note – these baseline METT scores are very likely to be too high

3.6 Main stakeholders: summary list

44. The main groups of stakeholders related to the implementation of the project are as follows:

- GEF Operational Focal Point for the Gambia
- Relevant staff of the UNDP Country Office and UNDP Regional Technical Advisor
- Implementing Partner (DPWM) staff at national, regional and site levels
- National Project Director (DPWM)
- Project Manager and other Project Management Unit staff (DPWM)
- Project consultants and subcontractors including the International Technical Advisor
- Project Executive Committee members
- Project Technical Advisory Committee members
- Local Advisory Committee members
- Protected Area Management Committee members
- National and local working group members
- Local communities at project sites that have been engaged in project activities
- NEMA project collaborators and representatives of other related projects
- CSOs and CBOs involved in the project
- Key technical experts that provided inputs
- Project beneficiaries including women / women's groups

3.7 Theory of Change

45. The project document does not include a “Theory of Change” *per se* as there was no specific requirement for this (before UNDP/GEF-6 and UNDP/GEF-7 projects). However, the intervention logic can be summarized as follows.

46. The project aimed to expand and strengthen the connections between a cluster of three targeted PAs (Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (BBWR), Jokadu National Park (JNP), and Kiang West National Park (KWNP)) and put in place more effective PA management to provide a refuge for nationally and globally important biodiversity and natural ecosystems through **Component 1**; and to introduce biodiversity-friendly natural resource and land management practices in the communities around the three targeted PAs, primarily farming households, totalling an estimated 70,000 people in **Component 2**, by working closely with the MoA's *National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project* (NEMA). This aimed to reduce the pressures (unsustainable wood extraction; land conversion for shifting cultivation; over-exploitation of NTFPs for commercial purposes; man-made fires, etc.) that these communities exerted on the targeted PAs; and to begin restoring vital resources into the production landscape matrix, improving ecosystem integrity and connectivity.

47. **Component 1: Strengthen national PA network planning and PA management effectiveness in a cluster of priority PAs.** **Component 1** targeted the expansion of the PA system and the improved management of both existing and new PAs, focusing on Jokadu National Park, Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (BBWR), and Kiang West National Park (KWNP). The expansion of the PA system represented **Outcome 1: Gazettement of c.5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of c. 10,000 ha expansion of KWNP**. This was to be accomplished through two Outputs: first, **Output 1.1 Revised PA Programme of Work and Action Plan** – to provide the national strategic context and foundation for the rest of the project work and plans for the immediate future for the DPWM; and secondly **Output 1.2 Gazettement of the two PA**

expansions (JNP expansion to connect to BBWR and expansion of KWNP), supporting expansion of JNP to connect with BBWR and the expansion of KWNP to the west and east.

48. The project also aimed to strengthen the management effectiveness of the three PAs to address existing and emerging threats, leading to **Outcome 2: Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and additional PA areas** through **Output 2.1 Strengthened institutional and technical capacities in the target PAs to address existing and emerging threats**. This included institutional strengthening at central level by increasing human capacity, institutional and human capacity building at community level, and technical and other capacity/facilities at the PA level.

49. **Component 2: Improve land and natural resource management in and around the targeted cluster of priority PAs.** Component 2 had a focus on the communities surrounding the three PAs (*i.e.* in the buffer zones) that exerted significant pressure on their resources and condition, aiming to reduce threats to biodiversity and the integrity of the PAs, in order to achieve **Outcome 3: Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and surrounding landscapes (c.60,000 ha)**. Three Outputs contributed towards this Outcome - **Output 3.1 Biodiversity as well as PA aspects as well as sustainable land and natural resources management effectively mainstreamed into the NEMA Project**, through which biodiversity-friendly strategies and SLM/NRM practices were promoted and rolled out at the project target sites through leveraged support from NEMA's resources. This aimed to start restoring vital resources into the production landscape matrix, by improving natural ecosystem integrity and connectivity through a range of interventions. **Output 3.2 Recommended NRM and SLM practices implemented by local communities under community-based management agreements, with extension support provided** – through support for setting up of Village Environment Committees or similar groups for participatory management of protected areas and buffer zones, to be provided with training on environmental protection and management, SLM and NRM. **Output 3.3 A monitoring system in place in the target areas** - to provide relevant and science-based information on the state of natural resources and socio-economic conditions in the target areas to track progress on the above interventions and support adaptive management decision-making.

50. Finally, **Outcome 4 Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods**, to be achieved through **Output 4.1 Agreements with local communities secured for community-based sustainable land and natural resources management, and related plans developed**, to enable communities to obtain the maximum benefit from their participation in the co-management of PAs and their adoption of sustainable land management approaches, thus contributing to the overall sustainability of the intervention.

51. The expected **global environmental benefits** arising from the project, through extension of the national PA system by 15,000 ha, improved management of the targeted PAs, and reduction of threats from adjacent land uses, include benefits to important wetland, forest and grassland habitats and diverse species, including globally threatened species such as African Manatee, Hippopotamus, African Dwarf Crocodile, Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, Red Colobus and Leopard. These benefits include contributions towards the conservation of

globally significant ecoregions: Guinean Forest – Savannah Mosaic, West Sudanian – Savannah and Guinean Mangroves, and internationally important wetlands (BBWR is a Ramsar Site).

4 Findings

In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with () must be given a rating²²*

4.1 Project Design/Formulation

4.1.1 Analysis of Results Framework: project logic and strategy, indicators

52. While no **development objective** *per se* is stated in the SRF (or project document as a whole), the project does respond to a clear conservation need: the significant and growing pressure on natural resources and the conversion of natural ecosystems in the Gambia, including in the country's protected areas, which is increasingly undermining the status of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The specific threats impacting the three targeted PAs are clearly stated, and the project design responds appropriately to the identified threats and barriers through the twin strategies proposed in the two Components of: 1) strengthening national PA network planning and PA management effectiveness in a cluster of priority PAs, and 2) improving land and natural resource management in and around the targeted cluster of priority PAs.
53. The project design is consistent with the selected **GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies**: *BD-1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems*, by supporting completion of the national PoWPA and by expanding and strengthening the connectivity and management effectiveness of the three targeted PAs in order to safeguard biodiversity-rich habitats and globally threatened species in the Gambia; and *BD-2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors*, by engaging with the agriculture sector (in particular the NEMA project) for sustainable land uses adjacent to the targeted PAs.
54. Overall, the project design was also well aligned towards achievement of **CBD Aichi Targets**²³ 5 (Habitat loss halved or reduced), 11 (Protected areas increased and improved) and 12 (Extinction prevented), by increasing the extent of the national PA system by some 15,000 ha and strengthening the management of three existing PAs, thereby reducing the loss, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats such as wetlands, grasslands and forests, and enhancing the conservation prospects for globally threatened species present at these sites; as well as Targets 7 (Sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and forestry) and 14 (Ecosystems and essential services safeguarded), by working towards more sustainable land management (agricultural and grazing/browsing practices), thereby safeguarding and restoring ecosystem services vital for local populations. No mention is made of the **UN Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) in the project document, although the project is clearly directed towards *SDG 15 - Life on Land*, with lesser contributions towards other SDGs.

²² See Annex 8 for rating scales

²³ <https://www.cbd.int/aichi-targets/>

55. The project design is aligned with the **UNDP strategy** for The Gambia and is consistent with the 2012-2016 UNDAF Outcome 3.0 *Environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction systems and services operationalised* and Output 3.1 *National policies and laws available on low carbon emission and climate resilient development pathways and natural resources management developed and implemented*. The project also addresses the 2012-2016 CPAP, particularly Outcome 2 *Sustainable livelihood security enhanced for disadvantaged groups through the promotion of income diversification opportunities and better management of environmental resources*, and Output 2.3 *Sustainable use of environmental resources enhanced*.
56. According to TE interviews and various comments in project reports, the original project concept was intended to be resourced as a GEF Full-sized Project of over USD 4 million instead of the USD 1,324,310 eventually committed in the approved PIF, which would have been more appropriate for its intended scope. The Project Document was largely consistent with the PIF for the project, in terms of the table of intended Outcomes and Outputs, GEF budget and cofinancing inputs. It is therefore arguable that the PIF should have been more realistic in the Outputs and Outcomes planned for the reduced GEF budget available; and secondly, that the scope of the project should have been adjusted during the PPG commensurate with the GEF budget in the PIF and the known baseline capacity to implement the project. This is reflected in the ITA's report of September 2016, which noted that the project intervention strategy "is extremely ambitious and has, in all likelihood, overestimated the resources and capacities at the national level. The likely cause of this is due to the principal Consultant tasked with producing the Project Document [during] the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) being unable to visit Gambia due to the Ebola crisis at the time of preparation... This has resulted in a number of inconsistencies between the intended outputs, as described in the Project Document, and the reality of achieving these with the resources available... the scale of the intervention does not seem to have been adjusted to reflect the lesser amount of the GEF Fund."
57. The **Strategic Results Framework (SRF)** presented in the Project Document has a number of shortcomings. It is complicated by the inclusion of five *UNDP IRRF Outcome and Output Indicators*, for which no baselines or targets were defined; as well as five *Process Indicators of effective implementation and mainstreaming of UNDP strategic goals*, which do not reflect project Outcomes, were not tracked in the PIRs, and would have been better considered separately. The IRRF Sub-indicators overlap the impact indicators to some degree. The 2018 Annual Report (p13) notes: "the SRF has been hard to follow and is often confusing", while the ITA's mission report of August 2018 notes: "the project's SRF has a number of indicators which still need to be determined because they require either targets or baselines or both. The project's SRF is un-necessarily complicated and pretentious". The TE concurs that the RF is overly complicated and confusing. Observations on individual IRRF Sub-indicators are as follows:
- 1.5.A.1.1 – No. hectares of land managed under an in-situ conservation regime: does not distinguish new PAs / extended PA territory from existing PA management; direct overlap with Impact Indicator 0.1 (extent of PA estate);
 - 1.5.A.2.1 – No. hectares of land managed under a sustainable use regime: the location of such land is not specified – in the case of this project, some lands within the PA

boundaries and new PA extension areas is under community use, therefore there will be overlap with 1.5.A.1.1;

- 1.3.2.A.3.1 - No. additional people benefiting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and waste – is poorly defined, as it potentially includes both direct beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries; it also overlaps Impact Indicator 0.2 (no. people in target areas who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources); no gender disaggregation; no suggestion of focus on poor, marginalized, or vulnerable groups.
- 2.5.1.C.1.1 – Extent to which institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and/or access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems – too broad and vague to be measurable – the project failed to define appropriate measures without a suitable framework to use.

58. That leaves the project Impact Indicators (Outcome indicators), of which there are thirteen in total: two at project Objective level, one for Outcome 1, three for Outcome 2, five for Outcome 3, and two for Outcome 4. The distribution of indicators is not well balanced and does not reflect the full scope of the Outputs under each project Outcome, for example there are no indicators directly reflecting Output 1.1 (*Revised PA Programme of Work and Action Plan*), the full scope of Output 2.1 (*Strengthened institutional and technical capacities in the target PAs to address existing and emerging threats*), or Output 3.3 (*monitoring system in place in the target areas*).

59. During implementation, the first modification of the Results Framework in the Project Document was in response to recommendations by the International Technical Advisor (ITA) in September 2016, regarding specific indicators, baselines, targets and assumptions. Some of these were addressed (evident from the 2017 PIR), while others were adjusted and some not taken up. A systematic review and proposed revisions for the Results Framework were made in July 2018²⁴, yet there is no record of a decision to approve such revisions in the minutes of the next PEB meeting in November 2018 and the proposed revisions were not officially incorporated by UNDP or used in the subsequent PIRs. This represents a failure of adaptive management, as the changes were necessary and important to address the weaknesses in the Results Framework²⁵.

60. TE observations on individual SRF Impact Indicators are as follows:

- **Indicator 0.1:** *Extent of protected area estate:* error in target area (74,276 ha) – this should have been the baseline of 64,276 ha plus c.15,000 ha extensions = 79,276 ha.
- **Indicator 0.2:** *No. people in target area who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources.* This is not consistent with SMART indicator

²⁴ See ITA mission report of August 2018, see p12 and Annex 1.

²⁵ Comment from ITA: The process for approving these changes – PMU – PEB approval – RTA approval – reporting in PIR was outlined but likely reflects a weakness in the PEB meetings which was caught between being inclusive of stakeholders and the need to make executive decisions. A second tier Committee to allow greater participation was tabled early on with a slimmed down PEB (IA, EA, Focal Point, Key Partner with the PC as Secretary) but the second Committee would have been too expensive.

requirements, lacking clear definition of ‘target area’ as a basis for quantification; no baseline was determined. No gender disaggregation was specified.

- **Indicator 2.1:** The METT baseline scores provided in the Project Document SRF (KWNP – 57 and BBWR – 47) were noted by the ITA (September 2016) as not reflecting the real situation at the time– the scores were considered too high. However, these baseline scores were considered by DPWM to be a reflection of previous WB project support, and were not reduced subsequently.
- **Indicators 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2 are not SMART indicators**, with several terms undefined and ambiguous, and methodologies for measuring the indicators are not clearly specified. The target for indicator 3.4 (1% of the NEMA budget) would have been more measurable and meaningful as a specific amount in USD. No gender disaggregation was provided for 3.1, 4.1 and 4.2.

61. **The project design strategy in focusing on a cluster of three PAs in close proximity to each other had a strong rational basis that was likely to result in more sustainable outcomes for biodiversity conservation. The project’s aim to connect JNP and BBWR along the north bank provided impetus for riparian habitat conservation, as did the proposed extension to KWNP on the south bank.** Collectively, the PA cluster has potential to secure significant representative habitats and biodiversity of the upper tidal reaches of the Gambia River and its riparian corridor, and to counter threats related to edge effects and habitat fragmentation that would undoubtedly impact biodiversity if left unchecked. **The focus on a cluster of PAs also provided the potential for added value through a networked approach to management and shared learning among the three PAs and their associated stakeholders.**

4.1.2 Assumptions and Risks

62. Assumptions and risks are presented for the project objective and each outcome in the Project Document SRF. In general, these assumptions have held during the project implementation period, but some remain in question when it comes to the sustainability of the project outcomes. For instance, the assumption for the Objective is: *The Objective assumes that the expansion and strengthening of the protected estate can be carried out, and that this can be done through co-management with communities practicing sustainable land management.* This generally held during implementation, in that proposals for extension of the PAs have been submitted, stakeholders have been engaged and co-management arrangements agreed in principle, **yet JNP and its extension have yet to be gazetted and are therefore not yet binding, and the sustainability of co-management mechanisms with adjacent communities has yet to be fully tested.** However, DPWM note that co-management is being practised for all PAs in the Gambia and the PACs arise naturally from the consultation process and agreement required to establish the PAs initially.
63. For Outcome 2, the risk that *management effectiveness also requires the appropriate policy framework and political commitment and that these are beyond the reach of the project* could be interpreted in terms of adequate capacity and financing for DPWM to develop the PAs under its remit and to support the full implementation of PA management plans. **The capacity**

of DPWM to finance the development and sustainable management of the PA system was recognized as a gap in the project document that should have been flagged as critical risk in the Risk Log, as noted in the ITA report of September 2016. This risk applies strongly to the sustainability of the project outcomes, as DPWM's budget will be reduced by some 30% due to COVID19 impacts.

64. The second assumption for Outcome 2, namely *the reversal of negative land use trends through the mainstreaming of a conservation ethic and embracing of SLM approaches by adjacent communities*, and for Outcome 4 – *that results at community level can be attained through which livelihoods will be enhanced* – are supported to the extent that the project has set up a Protected Area Committee for each of the three PAs including representation from all adjacent villages and some real benefits have been provided in the form of efficient cook-stoves, bee-keeping support, and SLM support. **However, given the very limited project GEF budget, these benefits are limited and are likely to be transient unless mainstreamed support from DPWM / Ministry of Agriculture is possible in the longer term, as intended in the original project design. While the NEMA project has now finished, the IFAD ROOTS project has potential to provide agricultural development support that is climate resilient and includes certain environmental measures. Further, there was a fundamental weakness in the project's design in that it arguably took a technology introduction approach to land use rather than a land and property tenure approach which have been at the root of most successful CBNRM approaches. Thus the project had the challenges of private-common property to overcome in its interventions without being able to do the basic ground work with communities early on.**
65. Six project risks with planned mitigation measures are presented in Project Document section 2.3 *Assumptions and Risks*, but no assumptions are described. **Although the project development period was significantly affected by the West African Ebola outbreak in 2014-15 (no IC country visits were possible during PPG), infectious disease outbreaks were not mentioned as a risk – but became an issue when COVID19 occurred in the Gambia during the final months of the project implementation period.**
66. The SESP at Project Document stage²⁶ identified three social and environmental risks, all of which were rated Low. Part A of the SESP was not completed. Given that the project involved changes in land use through extensions to Protected Areas, involving community-owned lands, and strengthening the management effectiveness of the PAs, **the SESP was not sufficiently rigorous in providing safeguards against potential restrictions on access to land and natural resources and livelihood impacts. This was emphasized during an internal UNDP review of the SESP dated 20 November 2019, which noted that the project was rated Low Risk in the SESP yet the initial screening (ESSP, 2013) was rated 3a (equivalent to Moderate).**

4.1.3 Lessons from other relevant projects incorporated into project design

67. The project document takes into account four projects that were ongoing or closing at the time of project development. The first of these is the World Bank/GEF MSP #3961 *Gambia*

²⁶ The copy shared with the TE team was signed but not dated

Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project (USD 945,000) with DPWM, which closed in October 2014. The project was developed as part of the West Africa biodiversity program. This project provided an important part of the baseline for the current project, as it aimed to strengthen DPWM's capacity and develop a sustainable financing vision, and one of its two targeted PAs was Kiang West National Park, for which the WB/GEF project developed and implemented a participatory management plan, strengthened management effectiveness, conducted community sub-projects and a financial sustainability survey review.

68. The TE rating for GEF project #3961²⁷ was Satisfactory. The project achieved most of its stated objectives and output targets and consolidated the gains made under the former WB/GEF-2 Project #1067 Integrated Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Management (ICAM) Project²⁸ (which included Bao Bolong as a demonstration site). As a result of the project, the DPWM was restructured and strengthened, new public/private partnerships launched, and the participatory approaches closely involved local communities and enhanced the country's prospects for sustainable PA management. In addition, training and technical assistance: (a) built the capacity of local site committees, key stakeholders, and community groups for developing business ventures; (b) reinforced the national capacity for species data collection, monitoring and analysis, and enhanced the integration of a national species data base; and (c) improved the prospects for financing PA management and conservations efforts through the testing of sustainable sources of financing. The level of risk facing the development outcome was Moderate, noting that the PMU was housed within the DPWM which mainstreams project management and implementation experience into national institutions – as for the current project under review.
69. Thus the PAN project benefited substantially from this previous investment by GEF, and sought to build on those outcomes and bring PA system consolidation to a new level through strengthening the management of a cluster of key PAs, which - notably – included one of the demonstration sites from the previous project, Kiang West NP. It aimed to build on the institutional and individual capacity and financial mechanisms developed by the former project, and make use of the presence of the management teams present in Kiang West NP.
70. Another project forming part of the baseline was the Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP, USD 18.9M) under AfDB and the related Sustainable Land Management Project /IFAD (USD 4.4M from GEF), which ran from January 2010 to December 2016 addressing GEF Land Degradation objectives. The GEF project aimed to enable rural resource poor communities to alleviate poverty and food insecurity by preventing and reversing declining land productivity through a community based participatory approach to watershed/landscape management planning, with targeted SLM investments, aimed at increasing the productivity and profitability of their crop, livestock, forestry and ecotourism based enterprises. The current project noted that it had failed to develop national and regional SLM platforms, and its conservation outcomes were weak. The current project together with the NEMA project therefore aimed to learn from this experience and to focus SLM efforts on areas adjacent to PAs to create more explicit links with biodiversity.

²⁷ See: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/3961_WB_ICM.pdf

²⁸ See: <https://www.thegef.org/project/integrated-coastal-and-marine-biodiversity-management>

71. The project *Evolution of PA systems with regard to climate change in the West Africa Region* (UNEP/WCMC/GEF #3781, 2010-2018) (short title Protected Areas Resilient to Climate Change – PARCC²⁹) was a regional project that aimed to develop strategies and tools to increase the resilience of PAs to climate change, and build capacity in the region to implement these new approaches. The project provided a climate change vulnerability assessment for species at regional level, and integrated the vulnerability assessment with species distributions, assess PA system connectivity and identify priority areas for protection. The gap and climate vulnerability analysis was relevant to PA management planning for the targeted PAs in the current project and to inform the national PoWPA (2018) revision, which included PA ecosystem coverage assessment – but noted the PARCC analysis did not fully take account of the national socio-economic and political situation in The Gambia and there were some weaknesses in the quality of data used, also reflecting the lack of ecological capacity in-country to conduct surveys and monitoring.

4.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation

72. The Stakeholder Analysis section of the project document includes *Table 9 – Stakeholder participation in project implementation*. This describes the mandate and role in the project for each stakeholder / stakeholder group, as well as their specific area of involvement which makes reference to specific project outputs. This included local communities, women and vulnerable groups as one stakeholder group, as well as local CBOs, NGOs and the Agency for the Development of Women and Children. Two national workshops were convened during project development, in addition preliminary social assessment activities were conducted and several local stakeholder meetings held at each of the target sites. Local communities and regional authorities were reported to have been involved during project formulation but details were not provided in the project document.

73. The Implementation Arrangements section of the project document (**Fig. 3**) describes the mechanisms through which stakeholders were to be involved at national and local levels. These included: the Project Executive Board (PEB), Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Implementation Teams, and Local Advisory Committees (LAC) at each demonstration PA, including their proposed memberships. The PEB was to comprise the NPD, MECCWW representatives, UNDP, NEMA project and other entities such as beneficiaries, with the PM in attendance. The TAG was to comprise the ANRWG as its core membership supplemented by implementing partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries, and the traditional rulers as representatives of relevant communities. One LAC was to be set up at each of the three demonstration PAs, comprising representatives of park management, district and municipality agencies, relevant central government organizations, private sector, NGOs, communities and experts, chaired by a nominee of the respective District. Overall, adequate scope for stakeholder participation was provided in the project document that embraced the range of stakeholder groups.

74. Section 2.2.4 of the project document on Project Outputs and Activities describes the proposed working arrangements for implementation of each Output. In most cases this

²⁹ See: <http://parcc.protectedplanet.net/en>

involves leadership by a project staff member supported by working groups comprising relevant experts and key partners and stakeholders. Output 3.1 involves MoA and NEMA as hosts for the work; Output 3.2 involves setting up Village Environment Committees or similar groups to support participatory management of PAs and buffer zones. Output 4.1 involves working with Village Development Councils, Village Environment Committees and Environment Coordinators at the sites in order to develop agreements for community based land and NRM.

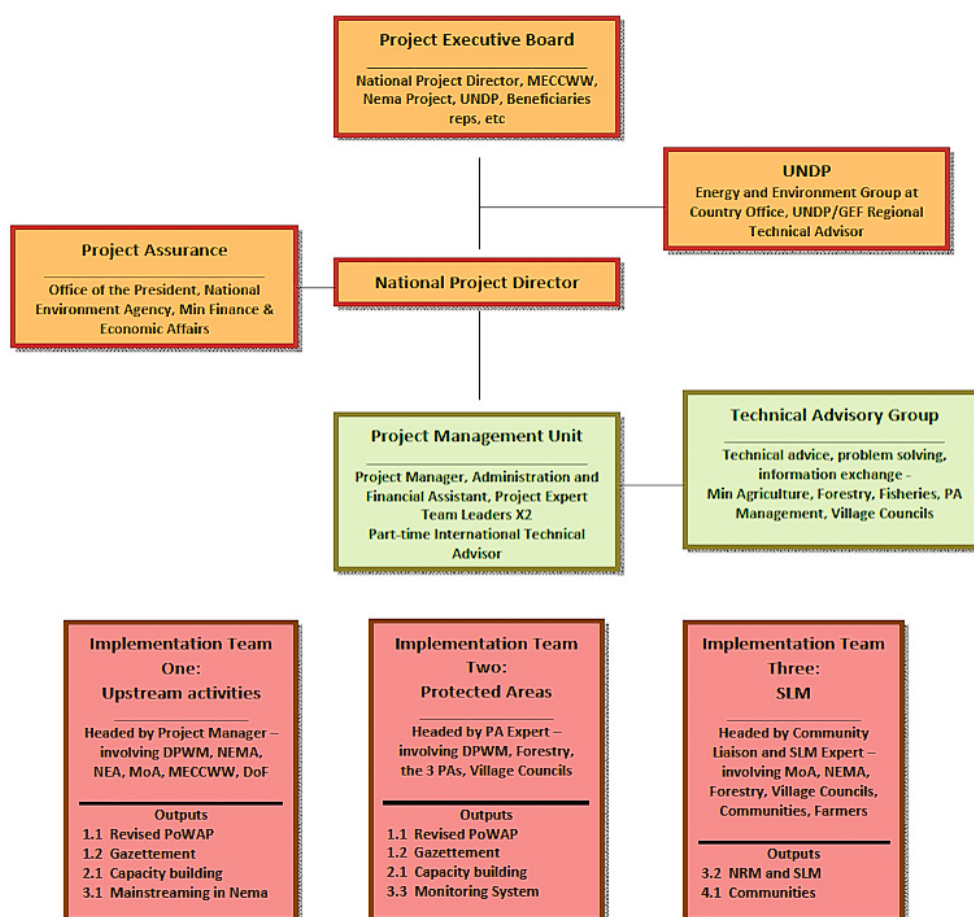


Figure 3. Project implementation and management framework

Source: Project Document

75. The local level of coordination omitted mention of the Local Biodiversity and Wildlife Committees (LBWC) under the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act (2003), which specifically states that: *“The Director of Parks and Wildlife Management shall encourage community participation, in the form of a Local Biodiversity and Wildlife Committee in the management of a Protected Area, particularly the communities in the area and its immediate surrounding.”*³⁰ This omission created a risk that various committees and working groups

³⁰ Biodiversity and Wildlife Act (2003), section 34(1)

named in the Project Document could create confusion or conflict with existing structures or statutory structures with similar purposes³¹.

4.1.5 Linkages between the project and other interventions within the sector

76. The overall provisions for coordination with related initiatives in the project design are described in Section 4.1.4 above. In addition to these, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group (ANRWG) hosted by NEA is highlighted as the umbrella body for development initiatives related to agriculture and natural resources including PA-related matters. This group was planned to provide the core of the project Technical Advisory Group, augmented as necessary to ensure full representativeness, in the project stakeholder analysis.
77. By far the most significant planned linkage with another intervention in the project document is the engagement with the *National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project* (NEMA) under the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) for delivery of *Component 2: Improve land and NRM in and around the targeted cluster of priority PAs*. This included **Output 3.1**, through which the project sought to mainstream biodiversity, SLM and NRM considerations into the NEMA project. The project aimed to achieve this by working from within MoA and NEMA by establishing a Working Group comprising leaders and other key people to be led by the ITA. After identifying and recording the benefits to the country, government and communities of such mainstreaming, particularly in terms of sustainable development and enhanced livelihoods, the WG was to review existing policies, legislation and procedures and identify gaps and opportunities for instilling a natural resources, land, water and biodiversity sustainability ethic into the day-to-day operations of the MoA and NEMA. The identified opportunities were then to be trialled and evaluated before being written up in a guidance handbook. The initiative was then to be “exported” beyond MoA and NEMA to their stakeholders and partners, particularly local authorities, public agencies, NGOs and CBOs through a collaborative process to encourage ownership of the approach. The operations and key decisions of NEMA would continue to be informed and assessed for mainstreaming performance by the project. It was intended to co-locate the project with NEMA so as to facilitate the necessary interaction for mainstreaming³². The NEMA project was also planned to be involved in the implementation of **Output 3.2**, through which recommended NRM and SLM practices were to be implemented by local communities under community-based management agreements, with extension support provided. Importantly, the vast majority of the budget for implementation of Outcome 3 (Outputs 3.1 and 3.2) was planned to be provided through cofinancing from the NEMA project, consisting of USD 289,310 from the GEF budget and USD 3,486,364 from cofinancing. The cofinancing letter from the Ministry of Agriculture committed to parallel cofinancing of USD 3,636,364 under the Gambia National Agriculture and Natural Resources Investment Programme.
78. The Ministry of Fisheries also provided a cofinancing letter committing to cofinancing of USD 200,000 under the national budget for the PA system through the ongoing WWF Fisheries

³¹ ITA Report September 2016

³² This did not happen, as the overall thrust of biodiversity conservation and PA management fell under DPWM

project. However, this Fisheries project is not mentioned elsewhere in the project document, although the Dept. of Fisheries was expected to contribute towards Output 3.2.

79. Coordination with related projects is described in the project document, noting four international donor projects, three of which were supported by GEF. These are:

- The World Bank/GEF Medium-sized Project #3961 *Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project* (USD 945,000) with DPWM, which closed in October 2014 (i.e. before implementation started)
- The Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP, USD 18.9M) under AfDB and the related Sustainable Land Management Project /IFAD (USD 4.4M from GEF), which ran from January 2010 to December 2016.
- The Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), hosted by the NEA/ANRWG and involving FAO, WB, IUCN and IIED. Phase I ran from 2012 to 2018; Phase II from 2018-2023. The FFF is a partnership hosted by the FAO that strengthens forest and farm producer organisations to secure their rights, organise their businesses, sustainably manage their forests, and provide social and cultural services to the poor and marginalised.
- The project *Evolution of PA systems with regard to climate change in the West Africa Region* (UNEP/WCMC/GEF #3781) – known as Protected Areas Resilient to Climate Change – PARCC³³, which ran from 2010 to 2018.

80. The UNDP/LDCF Project #4724 *Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change in the Republic of Gambia* is not mentioned – yet this project was approved in 2013 and undertook interventions within Jokadu NP and Bao Bolong WR during implementation.

4.2 Project Implementation

4.2.1 Adaptive management (changes to the project design and project outputs during implementation)

81. A number of significant deficiencies in the project design presented in the Project Document were identified in the ITA report of September 2016. The intervention strategy in the Project Document was recognized as extremely ambitious for the GEF resources available and capacities at the national level for leading implementation. The likely causes of this are first that the original project concept was planned for a USD 4 million Full-Sized Project; and secondly due to the remote preparation of the Project Document during the PPG due to the West African Ebola crisis that failed to reduce the scale of intervention from PIF stage to match the USD 1.3 million finally approved by GEF.

82. The Results Framework (RF) in the Project Document was reviewed by the ITA at the same time, with the recommendation that a revised RF should be agreed by the PEB at the earliest possible date and before the next PIR to address weaknesses in indicators, baselines and targets. See section 4.1.1 for details of changes to the RF. A systematic review and proposed

³³ See: <http://parcc.protectedplanet.net/en>

revisions for the Results Framework were made in July 2018³⁴, yet these revisions were not raised during the next PEB meeting in November 2018 and the proposed revisions were not officially incorporated by UNDP or used in the subsequent PIRs. This represents a failure of adaptive management, as the changes were necessary and important to address the weaknesses in the Results Framework. Design weaknesses in the RF persisted throughout the project as a result, hampering effecting monitoring and evaluation and the assessment of final results in this TE. Overall, it appears that there were gaps in the communication process and a lack of understanding of the requirements for formal approval of changes to the RF, as proposals for changes to indicators first had to be agreed by the implementing partners, then go to the PEB for approval, then to the UNDP RTA for endorsement before being incorporated in the M&E system going forward. This did not happen.

83. A number of changes were made to the scope of the project intervention as follows:

- Output 3.1 - *Biodiversity as well as PA aspects as well as SLM and NRM effectively mainstreamed into the large-scale National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA)* – was cancelled. This had the consequence that the project was not effectively mainstreamed into agricultural development practices, which represent a major cause of environmental degradation and habitat loss in the Gambia. The project was also not mainstreamed into other NRM sectors, although existing collaboration between DPWM and the related agencies continued.
- Output 3.2 - *Recommended NRM and SLM practices implemented by local communities under the community-based management agreements, with extension support provided* – the project had to substantially scale back its ambitions for Component 2 on SLM, particularly Output 3.2 that still needed to achieve impact rapidly and effectively due to huge delays in getting started – the response in the form of Farmer Field Packages (including boreholes and solar pumps) – was a carefully planned and appropriate response, it was flexible, climate resilient, had local impact, and was replicable/scalable – despite its focus on individual farmers; similarly, the options to support enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods (Outcome 4) were not defined in project design, and the distribution of 1,000 fuel-efficient cookstoves, provision of support for bee-keeping and associated product development leading to the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association, and salt-tolerant rice at JNP were appropriate and well-received activities. These interventions contributed towards reduced use of firewood for cooking, reduction of GHG emissions, food security and income generation.
- Output 3.3 - *A monitoring system in place in the target areas* - was cancelled at the end of 2018 in order to refocus implementation on key priorities and make the best use of limited resources available. No species indicators were adopted for the project sites accordingly (this Output would have built the capacity to conduct the monitoring)³⁵.

³⁴ This noted that: “a number of the indicators would require complex and highly technical expert social and attitudinal surveys. They would also be extremely expensive. Furthermore, there is an alarmingly large number of indicators which would place a significant M&E burden on the project...Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the SRF is reviewed, baselines and targets are recorded and the revised SRF is submitted with the next PIR”.

³⁵ Comment from ITA: However, this was an enormous undertaking which was not supported by a track record of monitoring. Of all the surveys carried out by the DPWM all were in the body of previous projects and externally funded and assisted and only one had ever been repeated (the Water Birds Survey). This is externally funded and the data is analysed externally. This would have assumed that the DPWM had the human resources in terms of qualified ecologists to carry out the work – training might be in survey work but a basic ecology qualification would be necessary. For instance there was an

- Stretches of valuable trees planted to demarcate PA borders was not done in order to reduce the costs. Concrete pillars were used at JNP and BBWR, while a cleared fire-break strip was used at KWNP.
- Output 4.1 – *Agreements with local communities secured for community-based sustainable land and natural resources management, and related plans, developed* – was initially pursued through a consultancy study on reciprocal rights and responsibilities, but then not taken further. According to DPWM, the PA Committees established by the project are consistent with their PA governance system and the signing of individual agreements with communities was not a realistic or efficient approach.

84. In August 2019, a proposal was submitted for a 12 month extension of the 48 month project from its original closing date of 31 July 2019 through to 31 July 2020, which described the major challenges faced by the project during its original implementation period, and noted that to address those issues and the major delays they had caused, the project team had re-organized the activities within the SRF to focus on the key results, namely, finalizing the gazettelement of PAs and infrastructure, and supporting local communities with SLM-based livelihoods in the time remaining. The proposed project extension indicated a clear desire to build on the limited progress during the original implementation period in order to achieve the intended project outcomes with the limited resources remaining. This resulted in sharper focus and accelerated progress on the SLM / community livelihoods in Component 2 of the project in particular (see above points) in line with M&E requirements and adaptive management.

85. Towards the end of the project, further focus on priorities was necessary in view of time and budget constraints. Consequently, at the PEB meeting in January 2020 some activities were passed over to DPWM to implement under their government budget as cofinancing, namely Activity 2.1.2 to replace planned ecotourism facilities (photo hides, shades and benches) with an animal drinking water pond. Apparently this has not yet been implemented.

4.2.2 Actual stakeholder participation and partnership arrangements

86. The **Project Executive Board** was constituted as planned, and met a total of six times during the extended project period of 60 months, as shown in **Table 2**. As such, it provided the intended opportunity for inter-sectoral engagement in project oversight at the national level. However, sitting allowances for the PEB members were not covered by UNDP (although UNDP CO commented that travel costs were reimbursed), which was raised as an issue at the first meeting and was still unresolved at the fourth meeting. Poor attendance was evident in the later PEB meeting minutes, possibly associated with the lack of allowances.

attempt by the ITA to introduce Distance Sampling as an effective methodology but there was no uptake of the opportunity.

Table 2. Summary of Project Executive Board meetings convened

No.	Date	Participants	Source	Minutes available
1	14 July 2015	13, including: MECCWW, DPWM, DoFi, DCD, NEMA, DoF, NEA, Governors offices (2 regions), UNDP	PIR 2017	Yes
2	29 Sept 2016	No information	PIR 2017	No
3	15 Dec 2016	9, including: MECCWW, DPWM, UNDP, NEA, ITA – institutions of other participants not stated	PIR 2017	Yes
4	20 Sept 2017	12, including: MECCNAR, DPWM, DoF, NEA, Governors (2 regions), UNDP	PIR 2018	Yes
5	1 Feb 2018	11, including: MECCNAR, DPWM, Governors (2 regions), UNDP, PAN PA expert, PAN SLM expert, ITA	PIR 2018	Yes
6	7-8 Nov 2018	Not stated: DPWM, UNDP, Governor NBR; poor participation – meeting in Kerawan, incl. field trip	PIR 2019	Yes
7	22 Jan 2020	9, including: MECCNAR, UNDP	PIR 2020	Yes

87. The **Technical Advisory Group** only functioned initially, eventually its role was transferred to the Protected Area Committees for the three project sites³⁶. Overall, national mainstreaming activities were dropped in favour of the planned field activities in order to make focused use of the limited GEF budget. Therefore overall coordination with the Agricultural and Natural Resources Working Group was weak. It should be noted that the DPWM as IP for the project did have its own working relationships with other sectoral agencies, including the MoA and NEMA project – however, these were not reported within the project context. The project also established a Technical Working Group on SLM in July 2017 to facilitate coordination of project activities on SLM but this only met twice apparently.

88. The project had a focus on the communities surrounding the three targeted PAs (i.e. in the buffer zones) that exert significant pressure on the integrity of these PAs. Thus, all the three PAs were manned by a **“Protected Area Committee (PAC)”**. The *First PAC Governance PAN Meeting* was convened on 30 June 2017, attended by 7 participants from each of the three target PA PACs, the PA managers and relevant project staff (30 in total). The meeting aimed to inform or remind the PACs of the PAN project and to solicit their continued support to fulfil their role in decision making in the PA management. The report on the meeting provides an introduction to the PACs for each of the three PAs and their memberships as follows (including a table listing all villages represented, not included here):

- a) KWNP: Presently, the PA is manned by 15 villages. The PAC has 3 members (2 male and 1 female) per village making a total of 45 PAC members. It is worth mentioning that each village has a 10 member village committee made up of 5 male and 5 female.
- b) BBWR: The PA is manned by 28 villages. The present PAC membership is 1 per village making a total of 28 PAC members. Like the case of KWNP, each village also has a 10

³⁶ 2018 Annual Report, p7

member village committee made up of 5 male and 5 female. The joint PAC meeting is suggesting an increase of PAC membership to 2 (male and female) per village.

- c) JNP: The PA is also manned by 15 villages. The present PAC membership is 1 per village making a total of 15 PAC members. Like the case of KWNP, each village also has a 10 member village committee made up of 5 male and 5 female. The joint PAC meeting is suggesting an increase of PAC membership to 3 (2 male and 1 female) per village.

89. The PAC for each PA provides advice and support on administrative and technical aspects, in particular protection, the reviewing and drafting of management plans, by-laws, and all works to be undertaken. The PAC is the entry point for community involvement in PA management. The PAC meets as required and but can also meet *ad hoc*. The PAC regulates its own procedures and the Chair selected by consensus. The PAC is not paid for its services but transport refunds have been paid by DPWM for all sittings. The committees normally meet individually at their own localities with representatives from participating villages. The project reports do not provide a record of the meetings of the PACs for each PA, but DPWM noted that they are supposed to meet on a quarterly basis and expected them to be sustainable as part of the system of PA co-management.
90. The project succeeded in engaging a high percentage of adjacent villages (61 in total) in decision-making relating to park management through community involvement in the PA Committees. This was greatly facilitated by engaging with communities through local opinion leaders and the management committees which have an elected membership – these structures have legitimacy and credibility in the community and play an important role in securing the participation and buy-in of villagers.
91. The project's approach to raising awareness, sensitivity and understanding of the value and vulnerability of natural resources among the targeted communities around the PAs included meetings with opinion leaders known as Alkalos (traditional Gambian Chiefs), politicians and Governors. Five community radio stations and the national radio station were involved in airing weekly radio programmes focused on biodiversity conservation and SLM.
92. The project also invested in community training programmes that have raised awareness of the value of protected areas and biodiversity, developed skills for adoption of SLM and alternative income generation activities, and built the social capital that will be essential for sustainability. Ongoing capacitation of the Management Committees, and awareness-raising among the communities, will be necessary to sustain the effectiveness of participatory PA management into the future. Other stakeholders around the project sites included: DOA field staff trained to monitor conservation or climate smart agriculture; WABSA in mangrove planting; and Sahel Wetland Concern in raising and distributing seedlings. Due to limited funds, other stakeholders could not be engaged. COVID19 also made finalization of all stakeholder engagements difficult in 2020.
93. Overall, beyond participation in the PEB, the engagement of national level sector agencies was weak – initial efforts through the TAG and Technical Working Group on SLM were not sustained, and eventually it was decided not to pursue national level mainstreaming, but to work on this at the local level. Consequently, national partnerships did not develop much

beyond the existing level of engagement between DPWM and related sectors in the ANRWG. It can probably also be said that national government stakeholders gave passive support for the project, rather than actively engaging in collaborative activities. Agencies involved in SLM, agricultural development, community development and natural resources management participated in PA and SLM working group discussions at the local level³⁷.

94. While the intended close engagement of the current project with the NEMA project did not work out (the PMU was initially intended to be embedded in NEMA, but this was not appropriate for a project under MECCWW that primarily aimed to improve PAs, as NEMA is unable to work inside PAs). The NEMA project continued to work outside the PAs and invested in various activities with direct or more indirect alignment with the project's objectives. Most relevant were the establishment of a woodlot in Jokadu and mangroves seedlings planted in buffer zones with a total investment of some USD 65,000. Outside the buffer zones, NEMA has engaged farmers in rice production and horticulture, with obvious livelihood improvements. Most of the rice farmers are women. Overall, parallel cofinancing contributed from NEMA activities was estimated by UNDP CO at some USD 2,960,000.
95. Stakeholder engagement was a key part of the DPWM-led process for extension of KWNP and BBWR, and for the formation of JNP. This involved regional governors, related agency staff, municipalities and community leaders. The consultation process for the extensions led to the formation of the PA Committees for each of the three sites, which now provide a permanent basis for co-management of these areas (the PAs include community-owned lands that are used for sustainable land uses). Outcomes 3 and 4 also involved working closely with the same communities represented on the PACs, supported by awareness raising through community radio broadcasts, engagement of local leaders in project events and training in sustainable livelihood activities. This engagement appears to have been well received overall, and is likely to have provided a platform for reducing local pressures on natural resources in the parks going forward. The fact that co-management is embraced by DPWM as a recognized aspect of park management is positive for the sustainability of the relationship between DPWM, the PA management staff and the communities. The continued access to community owned lands within the parks, and support from DPWM and partner agencies for SLM and community development will be important to ensure this remains a harmonious relationship.
96. The gender section 4.3.8 below provides information on gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation. Overall, there is very little reporting on this so it is difficult to assess accurately, but it does not seem to have received systematic attention in the planning of project activities. One women-focused NGO, the Agency for the Development of Women and Children (ADWAC), was involved in the project site level activities and provided related cofinancing.
97. The main stakeholder organizations involved during project implementation³⁸ are shown in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. Main stakeholder organizations and their means of engagement in project implementation

³⁷ Comment from ITA: It could be argued that, systemically, with this approach to mainstreaming, it is too early to try to develop this. There is still a very strong focus on projects by all interested parties because this where they derive institutional income/budget support. Therefore, projects and budgets are closely guarded. It would take a much bigger intervention (and at a higher level) to change this attitude at this point in time.

³⁸ Main source: Project Document Table 9, checked against progress reports, etc.

Stakeholder Organization	Means of Engagement
National Environment Agency (NEA)	GEF Operational Focal Point; PEB
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources (MECCNAR) ³⁹	Implementing Agency, Chair of PEB
Department of Parks and Wildlife Management (DPWM) of the MECCWW	Lead Executing Partner, including National Project Director, and the PMU embedded in this department
Ministry of Agriculture (MOA): Soil and Water Management Services (SWMS), Department of Agriculture (DOA), and National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA/CHOSSO)	Key partners and co-financiers for implementation of Outputs 3.1 and 3.2.
Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group (ANRWG) of the National Environment Agency (NEA)	Intended core of the project TAG – although this did not function for long
Department of Fisheries (DOFI) of the Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources	PEB member, involved through the TAG; and more specifically in Output 3.2.
Department of Forestry (DOF) at the Office of the President	PEB member, member of TAG, involved in Outputs 1.1 and 1.2 when forest parks and reserves are assessed for biodiversity conservation / PA designation potential.
Department of Community Development (DCD)	PEB member,
Municipalities and local authorities: Governor's Offices of North Bank Region (NBR) and Lower River Region (LRR)	PEB members, Members of PA Committees (PACs) for the three project localities. Particular interest in Outputs 1.2, 3.2, 3.3 and 4.1.
Protected Area staff of Kiang West NP, Jokadu NP and Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve	key implementation staff for demonstration sites
Agency for the Development of Women and Children (ADWAC)	Partner for Outputs 1.2, 3.2 and 4.1; Cofinancier for these activities
Njawara Agricultural Training Centre	Partner for Output 3.2; Cofinancier for these activities
West Africa Birds Study Association (WABSA)	Partner for Outputs 1.1, 2.1 – WABSA focuses on promotion of IBAs and undertakes trainings on ecology and birds. PAN jointly with WABSA undertook mangrove planting and training of DPWM staff.
National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)	Contracted to lead research in particular in the area of SLM under Outputs 2.1, 3.2

³⁹ At project outset, known as: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Water & Wildlife (MECCWW)

Stakeholder Organization	Means of Engagement
University of The Gambia (UTG)	Support for short-term tailor-made module for the DPWM under Output 2.1
Management Development Institute (MDI)	Collaborate with UTG and DPWM on short-term courses to be carried out under Output 2.1
National Training Authorities (NTA)	Under Output 2.1, finalizing training modules and certification
Cashew Growers Association	Participation in Output 1.2 and 3.2
Kiang West Dolla Kaffo – CBO	Involvement in Outputs 1.2 and 3.2
Sahel Wetland Initiative – CBO active at Kiang West,	Focuses on ecosystem management, capacity building and promotion of partnership. Involved in raising awareness and mobilization of youths, particularly in Outputs 3.2, 3.3 and 4.1. The project partnered with them on planting and capacity building activities.
Nyoffelleh Beekeepers – CBO at Jokadu NP	Output 4.1

4.2.3 Project Finance and Co-finance

98. The Project Document⁴⁰ states that a micro-assessment for capacity was done for MECCWW in late 2014/15, which found that MECCWW had moderate risk and therefore was not qualified for Direct Cash Transfer. Therefore, DPWM used the Request for Direct Payment modality for the implementation of (CPAP) activities. The UNDP CO provided Direct Project Services to DPWM in support of project execution according to the Letter of Agreement between UNDP and GoTG in Annex 3 of the Project Document.

99. As GEF IA, the UNDP CO is ultimately accountable and responsible for the delivery of results through the PEB, UNDP CO with the UNDP/GEF Regional Service Center (RSC) will provide oversight and quality control over project delivery and provide ... services that include:

- Approving and clearing budgets and work plans and ensuring that activities, including procurement and financial services, are carried out in compliance with UNDP and GEF procedures, where applicable
- Overseeing financial expenditures against annual and multi-annual project budgets approved by PEB and UNDP
- Providing financial and audit services to the project
- Ensuring that the technical and financial reporting to GEF is undertaken in line with GEF and UNDP requirements and procedures...

100. In a number of documents, (eg Annual Report for 2018 p11), it was mentioned that the GEF budget of \$1,324,310 had been reduced from a larger budget, which had not been

⁴⁰ Implementation Arrangements, p60

reflected in the scope of the project design, thus creating problems for implementation. According to the UNDP CO, the original proposal targeted approximately USD4 million, however, due to protracted negotiations this amount was no longer available at the time of grant approval. The approved GEF grant of USD 1,324,310 was reflected in the PIF, Project Document and GEF CEO Endorsement Request. Therefore, any inconsistency in the scope of the project design with the GEF budget reflects a design flaw during the PPG phase that should have been identified during UNDP and GEF reviews (although this may have been offset by the proposed embedding in the well-resourced NEMA project, which was rejected in favour of DPWM – for good reason - during implementation).

101. Notwithstanding major external challenges in the operating environment, the project experienced significant financial budgeting, disbursement and management challenges during the implementation period, that reflected both on the capacity of the DPWM to manage the project and on the UNDP CO to conduct effective oversight and keep financial management on track. Key issues were as follows:

a) GEF Budget in project document was inadequate to support effective project management

- The GEF project budget for project management costs did not include any salary for the Project Manager, and very limited operational PMU operational costs (\$6,000 for travel)⁴¹. The PMU was embedded in the DPWM and consisted of the National Project Director and the Project Manager initially. While the Project Document stated that co-financing by the MECCWW will be under the national budget for protected areas, in-kind and amounting to US\$ 774,545 over the lifetime of the project, there was no indication of any additional subvention for the PMU (at a time when DPWM was chronically underfunded). Therefore, there was no mechanism to adequately finance the PMU's operations⁴². This was

b) Lack of financial management capacity in the PMU

- The project struggled to put in place a full-fledged PMU, only appointing an ITA in September 2016 and a Financial Administrator in March 2017, with a Project Coordinator seconded by the Government. The lack of financial expertise in the PMU in the first 15 months resulted in an overspend on equipment procurement that subsequently had to be rectified through budget adjustments. The resignation of the Financial Administrator in October 2017 and the approximately six month delay in securing a replacement also impacted the project's delivery. The appointment of a new Financial Administrator in 2018 led to streamlining of procedures and strengthening of administrative capacity. The UNDP CO also established a dedicated delivery support mechanism in 2019, to help project delivery remain on track through the extension period⁴³.

⁴¹ Comment from UNDP CO: The agreement was that the Project Coordinator position will be government contribution under the recurrent budget. The PMU was entirely financed by UNDP and GEF resources. The in-kind co-financing mentioned is under the national budget and should not be reflected under the PMU. Government was not expected to make any subventions for the PMU apart from the in-kind contribution of office space etc. TE: The inadequate cofinancing of the PMU was identified as a critical risk in PIR 2017, p14.

⁴² This point was made in the ITA's inception report of September 2016; See Project Document, Annex 2b, p. 84

⁴³ Source: Project extension request form, 2019

c) Delays in financial approvals impacted rate of implementation progress

- The quarterly reports for Q1 2018 and Q1 2019 both state that there were substantial delays (over six months in 2018) in obtaining approval from UNDP CO for the AWP and budget. This had a serious impact on workplan delivery, reflected in the Audit report findings noted below. The causes of the delays are likely due to a combination of factors – limited capacity of the PMU to prepare the required documentation to UNDP standards, gaps in the presence of a Financial Administrator for the project, iterative revisions to documents including regional UNDP staff comments, communication challenges, etc.

d) Delay in implementation of annual audits

- The first audit report was prepared in March 2019, covering the period 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018, but focusing on activities in the 2018 calendar year. Given the implementation challenges that this project has faced since its outset, it implies weak oversight on the part of UNDP that no annual audits were called for much earlier (eg in 2017), as this would have helped to strengthen financial management and project delivery. The UNDP CO commented that “UNDP managed projects are subjected to external audit as and when they are identified for audit during the year. The external audit decisions are made by random selection of projects to be subjected to an external audit and this only happened in 2019”. However, there was a budget allocation in the ProDoc for audit and it was part of the M&E framework in the same document.
- The second annual audit report was dated 31 March 2020, covering the period 1 January 2019 – 31 Dec 2019. The audit for the remainder of the project period in 2020 has yet to be conducted.

e) Key Audit findings

- The audit report for 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2018 identified 8 high, 1 medium and 1 low risk; while the report for 2019 identified 6 medium and 1 low risk.
- With respect to 2018, the audit report that out of 37 activities in the 2018 Annual Work Plan (AWP), only 12 were completed, 8 were partly implemented and 17 not implemented. It notes that this is indicative of unrealistic or poor planning, with the risk of non-achievement of the overall objectives of the project (High risk). Delivery in 2019 improved on this, with out of 33 planned activities, 25 were implemented, 1 partly implemented and 7 not implemented (Medium risk). In 2019, there was no PEB meeting; and the activity to establish patrol trails, signage, hides, visitor infrastructure for the PAs was transferred to DPWM to implement with their departmental financing⁴⁴.
- Secondly, also with respect to 2018, the comparison of budgeted expenditures in the 2018 AWP against actual expenditures in the Combined Delivery Report (CDR) revealed substantial variance in both under and over-spending of budget lines

⁴⁴ UNDP CO responded that: The decision to re-assign some activities to DPWM was primarily due to the remaining finance being not enough to cover all intended activities. The re-assigned activities now form part of DPWM short term to medium term plans, and with COVID-19 none of those were implemented.

related to unrealistic planning estimates (medium risk). The same risk was identified in 2019.

- Other High risks in 2018 included: single source procurement without GPPA approvals (for cooking stoves); non-maintenance of a fuel register; payment for goods without three quotations; imprests without supporting documentation; contractor accountability / oversight of construction contracts at sites; and no serial numbers or tagging of project equipment. These were subsequently resolved. The 2019 audit's field visit also noted variances between the contracted specifications for delivery of materials and those delivered (eg iron wood fencing), which were also subsequently resolved. No audit for 2020 had been conducted at the time of the TE.

102. At project completion, the RTA noted that financial management has presented some challenges in this project, and the audit query previously raised by the UNDP Office of Independent Audit took a long time to resolve – this involved close liaison between the UNDP CO, the MPSU staff in Addis Ababa and the UNDP RTA, and government counterparts. Currently there are some budget deviations that must be resolved as the project proceeds to closure – these include some PMC discrepancies, misallocation of DPCs under activity budget lines, DPCs being slightly exceeded and the addition of new budget lines not provided for in the Prodoc, and for which no justification has been given, in excess of 5% of the total grant. The UNDP Regional PA will work closely with the UNDP CO, IP and project team to resolve these deviations⁴⁵.

GEF financing

103. The total GEF grant for this Medium-sized Project was USD 1,324,310, plus USD 125,809 agency fee to UNDP and a PPG grant of USD 30,000. The source was the GEF Trust Fund, with USD 1,214,310 aligned with Biodiversity Focal Area Objective BD-1: Improve sustainability of PA systems; and USD 110,000 with BD-2: Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors.

104. The disbursement of the GEF budget for the five 'Activities' in the UNDP Combined Delivery Reports (CDR) across the full extended project period (excluding this terminal evaluation) is shown in **Table 4** below⁴⁶. The variance from the original project budget is shown at right, which is relatively large (i.e. greater than 10%) for all Activities except for 1.5 (PMU), a concern that was reflected in the audit report findings mentioned above.

Table 4. Summary of GEF budget disbursement

Outcome (Atlas AWP Activity)	Project Document Budget	Actual Total Expenditures							Variance	% Variance
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total		
1.1	\$453,000	\$549	\$3,682	\$19,988	\$56,627	\$35,823	\$28,530	\$145,199	\$-307,801	32%
1.2	\$412,000	\$26,611	\$160,734	\$295,226	\$11,154	\$36,352	\$805	\$530,882	\$118,882	129%

⁴⁵ Noted in PIR 2020

⁴⁶ Note – the Project Document budget and Inception Report budget were indicated to be identical by UNDP

1.3	\$277,310	\$9,798	\$6,518	\$33,130	\$24,593	\$121,948	\$235,274	\$431,261	\$153,951	156%
1.4	\$55,000	\$159	\$59,763	\$18,796	\$6,413	\$1,025	\$0	\$86,156	\$31,156	157%
1.5	\$127,000	\$59,008	\$32,469	\$24,506	\$9,846	\$2,756	\$-195	\$124,390	\$-2,610	98%
Totals	\$1,324,310	\$96,125	\$263,167	\$391,647	\$108,634	\$197,904	\$264,414	\$1,321,891	\$-2,419	99.8%

105. Delays in implementation, reflected by low annual rates of disbursement were reported in the PIRs (see **Table 5** and **Figure 4**) and noted in the audit reports. Significant external challenges (political instability and functionality of government) had a strong influence on progress of activities and budget disbursement in the initial years of the project (2015-2017), with internal project/financial management issues delaying implementation progress in 2018-19. Focused attention to key priorities and accelerated implementation during the extension period allowed disbursement of remaining GEF funds to be completed by the end of the project, despite the COVID19 pandemic impacting work at the field level.

Table 5. Cumulative disbursement delivery by year (source: PIRs)

PIR Report>>	2017 (30 June)	2018 (30 June)	2019 (30 June)	2020 (30 June)
Cumulative GL delivery against total approved amount (in prodoc):	31%	58.44%	64.05%	100.2%
Cumulative GL delivery against expected delivery as of project year:	11%	70.36%	78.70%	99.56%
Cumulative disbursement as of date:	\$452,595	\$773,876.92	\$925,127	\$1,485,734

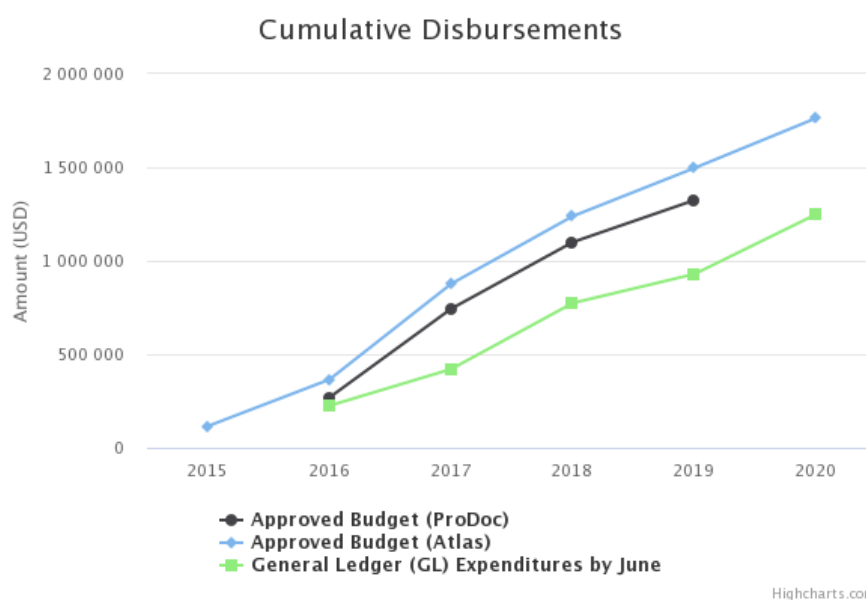


Figure 4. Graph showing cumulative rate of disbursement in GL Expenditures against the approved budget in the ProDoc and Atlas (annually updated budgets). Source: PIR 2020

Note – the Approved Budget (Atlas) shown in Figure 4 includes UNDP cash cofinancing, and hence is greater than the GEF budget shown by the Approved Budget (ProDoc). The GL Expenditures do not include UNDP cash cofinancing.

Co-financing

106. A total of USD 4,690,909 in cofinancing was committed at CEO Endorsement stage (see **Table 6**). Of this, USD 2,756,364 was cash and USD 1,934,545 was in-kind. USD 634,545 of the cofinancing was planned to contribute to Component 1, USD 3,836,364 to Component 2, and USD 220,000 to project management. The ratio of GEF funds to cofinancing was 1 : 3.54. Given that The Gambia at the time was ranked 172 out of 187 LDCs in the 2013 Human Development Index, and conservation is massively underfunded, this was a sizable commitment, made possible through association with the NEMA project.
107. Delivery of cofinancing against the amounts committed at CEO Endorsement are given in **Table 6** below. According to the figures provided by UNDP CO, the amount provided by different sources varied from that committed at CEO Endorsement, but overall the total of cofinancing realized exceeded the committed amount by 9.55%. In particular, UNDP's cash contribution of USD 30,000 per year was critical for the functionality of the PMU, as was support from DPWM. UNDP CO indicated that they did not receive independent co-financing reports from the sources, rather the project SLM expert had consultations with the key institutions and compiled information on their activities at the project PAs within the context of the PAN project (see details in **Annex 7**). According to UNDP CO, the cofinancing figures given in **Tables 6 and 7** below represent a proportion of the total amounts invested by each source. Therefore, the cofinancing inputs have not been verified by the sources according to each year or project activity, but represent estimated contributions.
108. In addition, a letter was received from DPWM dated 24 September 2020 stating that the development of the BBWR Management Plan was financed from non-project sources (in this case, the Regional Network of MPAs in West Africa (RAMPAO)), without indicating the amount of contribution.

Table 6. Co-financing Table

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP financing (US\$m)		Government (US\$m)		Partner Agency (US\$m)		Total (US\$m)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Grants (Cash)	120,000	163,843	2,636,364	0	0	0	2,756,364	163,843
In-kind support	0	0	1,934,545	4,975,000	0	0	1,934,545	4,975,000
Totals	120,000	163,843	4,570,909	4,975,000	0	0	4,690,909	5,138,843

Table 7. Confirmed sources of cofinancing at TE Stage (Source: UNDP CO)

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Cofinancier	Type of Cofinancing	Investment Mobilized	Amount delivered by Project Completion ⁴⁷ (USD)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Water and Wildlife	In-kind	Recurrent / Investment mobilized**	815,000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture (NEMA project)	In-kind	Investment mobilized	2,960,000
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Fisheries (WWF Fisheries Project)	In-kind	Investment mobilized	200,000 ⁴⁸
Recipient Country Government	Agency for the Development of Women and Children (ADWAC)	In-kind	Investment mobilized	1,000,000
Recipient Country Government	Njawara Agricultural Training Centre (NATC)	In-kind	Investment mobilized	
GEF Agency	UNDP*	Cash	120,000	163,843
Total			4,690,909	5,138,843

*UNDP also contributed \$30,000 during the PPG phase, which is not reflected in this table

** Breakdown between types not available

4.2.4 Monitoring & Evaluation: design at entry (*), implementation (*), and overall assessment of M&E (*)

M&E Design at entry*

109. The cornerstone of M&E in GEF projects is the Results Framework, which in the case of this project was inadequate in a number of respects – it had an overly complicated and confusing structure, it lacked baselines and targets for a number of indicators (presumably due to remote preparation of the project document), and several indicators were not SMART

⁴⁷ Source: UNDP CO; **Investment Mobilized** means co-financing that excludes recurrent expenditures.

Recurrent expenditures can generally be understood as routine budgetary expenditures that fund the year-to-year core operations of the entity (they are often referred to as 'running costs' - they do not result in the creation or acquisition of fixed assets), such as wages, salaries and supplements for core staff; purchases of goods and services required for core operations; and/or depreciation expenses.

⁴⁸ UNDP CO commented that the Department of Fisheries was under the purview of the Environment ministry at the commencement of the grant and WWF Fisheries Project was been implemented and had components that fall within the project context.

and as a consequence posed practical difficulties for understanding and measurement (see Section 4.1.1 above for details). In addition, the measurement methodologies for the indicators were not fully described, posing further challenges for efficient implementation.

110. The M&E Plan included the following key elements: **Project Start**: a project inception workshop (including list of issues to be addressed) and inception report; **Quarterly** – monitoring of progress using the UNDP Enhanced Results Based Management Platform, regular updating of the risk log in Atlas, Project Progress Reports based on information in Atlas and use of other Atlas logs; **Annually** – the GEF Project Implementation Reports (PIR); **Periodic monitoring** through site visits; **End of project** terminal evaluation and updating of GEF tracking tools; preparation of a project Terminal Report during the last three months of implementation; **Learning and knowledge sharing** – through existing networks, sharing of lessons learned and coordination with related projects; **Communications** – compliance with UNDP and GEF branding requirements. No provision was made for a mid-term review as this was a GEF Medium-Sized Project (although it could have been included to strengthen M&E). Timeframes and responsibilities for the monitoring activities were specified. There was no specification for keeping the GEF OFP informed of progress.
111. The budget for the M&E plan totaled USD 46,000, or 3.47% of the GEF budget. However, a number of items were not budgeted, including measurement and means of verification of project results at project inception and project progress, and project terminal report. Therefore for perspective, this was within the current 5% GEF-7 limit, but in reality not quite adequate.

M&E Implementation*

112. The UNDP CO administered this project through its Energy and Environment Programme, whose Head was the project Task Manager, supported by two programme staff who provided UNDP CO assurance for the project, and assisted the project team in preparing reports, workplans and preparing for PEB meetings. The UNDP CO staff generally maintained communication with the PMU and participated in occasional site visits. The PMU did not include any dedicated M&E staff, this role being fulfilled by the Project Coordinator and latterly supported by the PA expert. The PMU's Financial Administrator (when this position was filled) supported financial planning, budgeting, reporting and procurement requests to UNDP CO. The Project Coordinator and PA expert covered for this position when it was vacant. The International Technical Advisor (ITA) started in September 2016, and supported implementation – including M&E aspects – through a series of nine missions through to December 2019.
113. The monitoring systems used by the project followed the established UNDP and GEF procedures as laid out in the Project Document, including reports against the annual work plans which are then submitted to UNDP-CO as Quarterly Progress Reports and Annual Reports, accompanied by the more detailed and analytical PIRs, which were completed for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. The PIRs followed the standard GEF format, but in some cases included very limited information from the project team (also note the gaps in the quarterly report series below), and some sections were not completed (eg critical risks for 2018). After the ITA came on board and provided guidance in September 2016, the results framework was

used more effectively to guide work planning, and provided an annual check on progress through the PIR reviews that involved the PC, NPD, UNDP CO and the UNDP RTA. The Project Coordinator made presentations on the activities and performance of the project against the annual work plan at the Project Executive Board meetings, providing members with the opportunity to comment and advise on the following year's workplan and incorporate adaptive management measures.

114. The Results Framework in the Project Document was first reviewed by the ITA in September 2016, with recommended changes to specific indicators, baselines and targets in the mission report (effectively a belated Inception Report). Some of the changes to baselines and targets were taken on board (evident from the 2017 PIR), while others were followed up in subsequent ITA mission reports (e.g. May 2017, July 2017, January 2018, July 2018 and June 2019). Any amendment to the RF indicators themselves requires a formal amendment, which has to be fully motivated, reviewed and endorsed by first the Project Executive Board and then the RTA, whereafter it is uploaded into the PIMS+ system to replace the Prodoc RF. The PIR is auto-populated with the version of the RF that is officially uploaded in PIMS+, which, in the case of this project, remained the Prodoc version as no formal amendment to the RF was requested during the project implementation period. This issue of requesting a revision to the RF was made clear on a number of occasions. There was no formal Theory of Change in the project document, and the overall intervention strategy was not reviewed and refined during implementation except for some focusing of effort on specific Outputs and removal of others⁴⁹.
115. Overall, the implementation of M&E during the project diverged from the project document M&E plan in a number of respects:
- a) The project launch meeting in July 2015 did not fulfil the intended purpose of a project inception workshop⁵⁰, and in fact there was no project team in place at this time to plan and follow up on such an inception workshop. Consequently, it was only in September 2016 – some 14 months later – that the project design was analysed in detail and recommendations made to rectify its shortcomings, when the ITA was engaged (see 4.1.1 above)
 - b) There were no quarterly progress reports for 2015-16.
 - c) Other gaps in M&E documentation include: no annual report for 2017; no quarterly progress reports for Q2 and Q3 2018, all of 2019 and 2020.

⁴⁹ ITA Comment: To review the implied Theory of Change would have necessitated stepping back and taking a property /tenure based approach towards natural resource management including a collective understanding of how common and private property resources were being managed in the project area. This would have been a massive re-focusing of the project's approach which would not have been possible under given the time and other constraints. When the SLM got started they then began to run into these issues – collectively managed woodlots, private farms, common property grazing and private property livestock, "profit maximising" and costs and benefits of collective management. The ProDoc was essentially a blunt instrument which missed some of the key driving forces of land degradation in the area. In some ways the ProDoc spoke more to the international need to develop sophisticated protected areas monitoring systems (or their targets) and less to the inequalities and inefficiencies in land use and the agencies tasked with policy sectors. As such, it was a conventional biodiversity approach bolted to a conventional agricultural development approach. By 2016 the project really had to go with what it had in the ProDoc because there were insufficient resources and time to make any meaningful adjustments and increase the resource governance component of the project strategy.

⁵⁰ RTA comments in PIR 2017 state: The Inception Workshop in 2015 was lighter than what is normally recommended and did not review the Project Document in detail. It was also noted that the Delegation of Authority (DOA) was received late to hold the Inception workshop in PIR 2017.

- d) There was no project terminal report to inform the terminal evaluation, many other reports were not immediately provided, and the updated GEF tracking tools were only made available two months into the terminal evaluation.

116. The Project Executive Board was constituted as planned, and met a total of six times during the extended project period of 60 months, as shown in **Table 2** above (see **4.2.2**). While it provided the intended opportunity for inter-sectoral engagement in project oversight at the national level, the regularity of PEB meetings was inadequate for the needs of the project (for example, there was no PEB meeting in 2019 when planning for the project extension was in progress). The PEB meeting minutes indicate that substantial time was spent discussing allowances initially, and while some structure to the meetings is evident, the minutes lack clearly defined decisions, action points, responsibilities and deadlines for follow up. Therefore, while the PEB was functional it was not effective in providing timely guidance, constraining the ability of the project team to benefit from higher level decision-making on the implementation of project interventions.

117. No mid-term review was conducted for the project, which could be considered a missed opportunity to rectify some serious challenges for implementation at this stage of implementation (2017/18). The minutes of the PEB Meeting of 15 December 2016 state: Mid-term review was budgeted but unnecessary, therefore the allocation assigned for it has been re-allocated to other activities. The RTA comments in PIR 2017 stated: “It is also recommended that it be considered if a light mid-term review would be useful, despite this being a medium-size project, to assist in determining how to proceed. An analysis of the ambitions of the project compared to the resources available should then also be included as a priority in any such MTR”.

118. The PIRs provide the main source of information on data collected for the specified indicators in the RF. The data collection / reporting was challenged by the fact that baselines and targets were not established for a number of indicators until implementation was well underway⁵¹, and that the scope of certain indicators remained unclear throughout the project (see 4.1.1 above). Reporting against most indicators was therefore anecdotal rather than systematic and quantitative.

119. Overall, M&E was weak, with critical risks not well monitored or even recorded in the PIR, as recognized by the RTA. Implementation including M&E was affected fundamentally by chronic capacity challenges and weak ownership of the project on the side of the main IP and weak leadership at the level of the Department, while the UNDP CO should have been more proactive in ensuring that UNDP Results Based Management standards were applied during implementation including training for the relevant project staff involved in M&E.

120. While the project document results framework included Process Indicators for “Participation at village level, and “Involvement of women and youth”, the progress reports

⁵¹ RTA comments in PIR 2017 states: It is noted that implementation of various aspects of this project has begun without the baselines having been established. PIR 2019 states: It is difficult to assess if the number of people empowered to play a role in natural resource management is on track or not. This is because the indicator/target framework in several instances sets no baselines, and targets are vague or difficult to measure – for example, for the extent of land brought under SLM, the target is stated as a 50% improvement, but no baseline is set.

and PIRs do not report on these indicators and give very little impression of attention to monitoring and assessment of the perspectives of women and men involved and affected by the project, or of relevant groups' (including women, indigenous peoples, children, elderly, disabled, and poor) involvement with the project and the impact on them. The project lacked staff capacity for this purpose (no M&E or gender specialist). None of the Impact or IRRF indicators are gender-disaggregated. There is also no evidence of inclusive, innovative or participatory monitoring systems in use.

121. The environmental and social risks as identified through the UNDP SESP were rated "low" and are not mentioned in any monitoring reports. PIR 2020 notes: "The Social and Environmental Safeguards Risk Rating (as per the SESP) at CEO endorsement was given as LOW. However, an independent review by an international safeguards expert indicated some gaps in the identification of risks and the rating of their significance, and recommended that the SESP risk rating should be raised to Moderate. The review report was only released in March 2020, so it was too late to take up the recommendations during the remaining months of implementation – especially after the onset of COVID19 – but it is recommended that the project should build some of these recommendations into the project's exit strategy or final closure report, to assist the IP with ongoing monitoring and management of any safeguard-related risks to sustainability." There was no project exit strategy or final closure report.

Overall assessment of M&E*

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)	Rating
M&E design at entry	MU
M&E Plan Implementation	MU
Overall Quality of M&E	MU

- 4.2.5 UNDP implementation/oversight (*) and Implementing Partner execution (*), overall project implementation/execution (*), coordination, and operational issues

UNDP implementation/oversight*

122. The Project Document was largely consistent with the PIF for the project, in terms of the table of intended Outcomes and Outputs, GEF budget and cofinancing inputs. However, it has been mentioned that the overall project was scaled back from a GEF FSP with a budget of over USD 4 million to a MSP of USD 1.3 million, and that the reduction occurred due to a delay in PIF development, when much of the GEF STAR allocation was used for another project. As the Project Document is largely consistent with the PIF, it is clear that this happened at PIF development stage. It is therefore arguable that the PIF should have been more realistic in the Outputs and Outcomes planned for the reduced GEF budget available; and secondly, that the scope of the project should have been adjusted during the PPG commensurate with the GEF budget in the PIF and the known baseline capacity to implement the project. UNDP's oversight and quality control at these stages should have picked up this issue and ensured in particular that adequate resources were allocated to support project management (within GEF's limit for Project Management Costs).

123. The project start-up was also flawed, with delays in the receipt of Delegation of Authority (DOA) affecting the Inception Workshop (held on 14th July 2015) and recruitment of key project personnel. Consequently, the Inception Workshop in 2015 was lighter than recommended and did not review the Project Document in detail. The Project Document was signed shortly thereafter on Jul 27, 2015, unfortunately without the DOA, which contributed to delaying the beginning of project implementation on the ground. The hiring of project staff took a long time, reportedly due to difficulties in locating suitably qualified staff to meet TOR requirements and because of the relatively low remuneration rate possible under UN rules. The project struggled to put in place a full-fledged PMU, only appointing an ITA in September 2016 and a Financial Administrator in March 2017, with a Project Coordinator seconded by the Government. The resignation of the Financial Administrator in October 2017 and the approximately six months delay in securing a replacement also impacted the project's delivery. The appointment of a new substantive Financial Administrator in 2018 led to streamlining of procedures and provided additional administrative assistance. While there were obviously real constraints in play (including political instability around national elections in December 2016), UNDP must take some of the responsibility for this chaotic start-up period and for not acting more assertively and promptly in resolving these issues.
124. During the main implementation period, UNDP's role in relation to M&E experienced some inadequacies described above in 4.2.4, with weak reporting of indicators and critical risks in the PIRs and follow up on issues identified in the PIRs, infrequent PEB meetings, gaps in other M&E deliverables such as Quarterly Progress Reports, project Terminal Report and timely provision of project results for the TE. Many progress reports and PEB meeting minutes were of poor quality, hindering effective decision-making and follow up. Overall, UNDP should have been more proactive in ensuring that UNDP Results Based Management standards were applied during implementation. Reporting and management of gender mainstreaming and environmental and social risks was inadequate. The weak oversight of project implementation is recognized in the PIRs, noting also that this is also related to the weak capacity and ownership of the IP (see next subsection).
125. One other key area that impacted progress in implementation was the protracted delays experienced in approval of annual workplan budgets (e.g. 6 month delay in 2018), RDPs and procurements. These were impacted by the periods without a project financial administrator and weak ownership and capacity of the IP/PMU to prepare the necessary documentation to the standard required. UNDP CO staff assisted the PMU in completing the necessary paperwork, while delays were also experienced due to different levels of checks within the UNDP system.
126. As a result of the above, the UNDP CO staff invested an unusually large amount of time in administering and supporting project implementation. RTA support to the project was remote, with no in-country visits. Given the significant challenges that the project faced, it is somewhat surprising that the RTAs did not visit to facilitate more direct action in resolving project challenges, especially after poor PIR ratings were given in successive years and risk

levels were rated substantial in two PIRs⁵². Overall, UNDP did make significant effort to keep the project progressing towards its objectives, including TRAC cofinancing to support project management and SLM inputs, meetings with high level IP staff including the Minister and Permanent Secretary of MECCWW, meetings with DPWM staff and support to the PMU, although it is clear that cooperation and communications with the IP were challenging throughout most of the project.

Implementing Partner execution*

127. The IP (MECCWW) recognized that there were obvious capacity issues, in particular project management capacity at DPWM. Understanding and interpreting of planned project outcomes and outputs was insufficient. There were concurrent delays in project implementation as a result of the limited capacity of staff to work within the project timeframe to complete planned activities. One of the key problems with the design of the project was the lack of provision for the remuneration of the project coordinator who led the project and that resulted in serious implementation challenges. Government monthly salaries and associated allowance were considered as a way of addressing this shortcoming but they were ultimately not satisfactory. As a result there were motivational challenges and overall weak ownership of the project by the IP that affected the project direction, coordination, implementation and reporting.
128. The expectation that an existing government staff should play the role of a project coordinator on normal government salary is not a unique situation among GEF projects, and in fact GEF-7 policy strongly expects that participating governments cofinance project management to a much greater degree than before. The difference here is that government salaries in the Gambia are reportedly barely enough to live on, that the demands of a GEF project coordinator go way beyond normal expectations of a mid-level government position, and that there was seemingly no adequate mechanism to compensate for this disparity in professional commitment and a fair level of remuneration. This is illustrated by the fact that a UNDP CO driver in the Gambia receives several times the salary of this position. Surely this is an injustice that demands some attention from the UN and GEF system, at least through a mechanism for allowances to top up the salary of such a key role to an adequate level. It is unfortunate that such a mechanism could not have been applied in this case at an early stage - it could have made a big difference to overall implementation.
129. During implementation, the Ministry's direct oversight included being the Chair to the PSC which held meetings irregularly and by way of overseeing and approving all payment requests, and ensuring that all payments were in line with the budget and approved work plan. The Ministry also moderated specific project in-house consultations to address implementation issues such as delays. Progress reports prepared by DPWM under the PAN project were submitted to Ministry for review and subsequent submission to UNDP including technical and financial reports. A number of meetings were held between UNDP CO and the Ministry / DPWM to liaise on project implementation.

⁵² ITA comment: The first contact that the ITA had with the RTA was through the mapping and the need to provide maps for the PIR, in 2019.

130. As reflected in the PIRs, the project struggled to make progress during certain periods of implementation as it was hit by successive problems. However, overall it retained its focus on achieving key results in terms of the creation of Jokadu NP and extension of Bao Bolong WR and Kiang West NP, development of the park management infrastructure and management plans for these sites, and engagement of adjacent communities in securing the PA extensions and co-management arrangements, supported by limited livelihood inputs, and these were mostly achieved by project closure.
131. Implementation oversight through the PEB was weak, with infrequent meetings, constraining the ability of the project team to benefit from higher level decision-making on the implementation of project interventions, and management of project risks. While this was a shared responsibility with UNDP, the IP as chair of the PEB and host of the PMU should have been more proactive in ensuring these meetings were more regular, focused and productive.
132. The quality of reporting overall was poor, as described above in 4.2.4, with many gaps in progress reports, and extensive copy-pasting of material between reports that made it hard for the TE to determine what had actually been accomplished, and for the RTAs to remotely establish the real status of implementation in the PIRs. Assertions on the benefits of the project activities in the reports often appear to be optimistic. Beyond the ITA's periodic mission reports, there are also very few detailed written technical outputs beyond the progress reports that provide detail and analysis of the work undertaken.
133. In terms of management of funds, the Auditor's reports for 2015-2018 and 2019 listed a number of issues requiring urgent attention from project management (see 4.2.3). Aside from these issues, and an overspend on procurement in 2015-2016 when the project lacked a financial administrator to guide expenditure, the GEF funds were generally used effectively and in line with project annual workplans and budgets, with UNDP oversight. Capacity for financial management within the PMU was challenged by the absence of a financial administrator for extended periods, which UNDP had to cover for, and which were also related to delays in approvals of budgets, RDPs and procurement contracts. The ITA report for June 2019 noted that the project finances are also experiencing delays in approval with the Ministry of Environment, calling for discussion at the next PEB meeting (there were none in 2019) and a strategy for more streamlined approval.
134. At project closure there remained some budget deviations to be resolved – including some PMC discrepancies, misallocation of DPCs under activity budget lines, DPCs being slightly exceeded and the addition of new budget lines not provided for in the Prodoc, and for which no justification has been given, in excess of 5% of the total grant. The UNDP Regional PA is working with the UNDP CO, IP and project team to resolve these deviations.
135. The reporting and management of risks during implementation was largely inadequate according to the PIRs. There was little attention towards social and environmental risks in line with the SESP, although one positive example of risk management was the adjustment of the proposed boundary for KWNP extension in one area where a community had objections. The view of the TE is that UNDP/GEF needs to invest in training of IP/PMU staff in the application of UNDP standards for risk management and especially social and

environmental safeguards and gender mainstreaming during the project inception period, and ensure adequate GEF budget provision in the Prodoc.

Overall project implementation/execution*

136. Overall, the implementation of this project was subject to a succession of challenges, right from its very inception. Some of these were external, such as the West Africa Ebola Outbreak in 2014-15, the political instability in 2016-17 and the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, while others were internal, notably the chronic capacity challenges within the IP, and application of UNDP bureaucratic rules against the prevailing conditions in-country. Much of the implementation did not go smoothly, as reflected in the successive PIR ratings (**Table 8**), therefore the TE has to reflect this accordingly – it was below a satisfactory level overall, although in the end the project was completed and it did achieve some significant results.

Table 8. PIR ratings for 2017-2020

PIR>>	2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall Development Objective Rating	MU	US	MU	MS
Overall Implementation Progress Rating	MU	US	MU	MS
Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	Substantial	Moderate	Substantial

UNDP Implementation/Oversight & Implementing Partner Execution	Rating
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	MS
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MU
Overall quality of Implementation/Oversight and Execution	MU

Coordination and operational issues

137. The project focus on a cluster of three PAs in close proximity provided the opportunity for networking and coordination between sites during implementation. This was constrained by certain factors, for example the effort required to cross the river (at Banjul or Farafenni) to connect north and south bank sites, the differences in their development status, threats levels of degradation, and resources available for adjacent communities. However, the DPWM's experience at KWNP and BBWR did inform the development of the new National Park at Jokadu, and there were some shared training and other activities involving all three PAs. The project enabled a systemic approach for running each PA within the framework of existing governmental structures, guided by the site management plans.

138. The UNDP/LDCF Project #4724 *Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change in the Republic of Gambia* undertook interventions within Jokadu NP (Integrated Farming System at Darsilami including dykes and fish ponds) and Bao Bolong WR (8 plots of 50m² for fish ponds and water management for rice cultivation) at Iliassa village. PAN field inspection visits between May 2017 and May 2018 expressed concern that these developments had not taken into account their potential environmental impacts and

appeared to be inappropriate for their settings. Although approved in October 2013, this project was not identified in the project document for coordination, despite the fact that it was being administered by UNDP and led by NEA, reflecting the larger mainstreaming challenges.

139. The project partnered with the GEF SGP to implement some SLM and community livelihood activities in the Jokadu National Park project site which also happens to be the land/seascape intervention site for the GEF SGP in the Gambia.

4.2.6 Risk Management, including Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

140. The project document listed six risks and noted that further consideration of risks would be carried out during the project inception phase. This does not appear to have happened, although the ITA's report of September 2016 identified the major risk represented by the chronic underfunding of DPWM and its lack of financial capacity to support the PMU staffing and operations, recommending that the UNDP CO risk log should be revised to indicate that the financial sustainability risk of the project's intervention is high.

141. The UNDP CO maintained the risk log in the ATLAS system, which included the six risks described in the prodoc and 4 new risks identified during the course of implementation:

- A financial risk of corruption and fraud rated Moderate on 1/7/2019 that the project attracted a qualified audit from the UNDP Office of Independent Audit.
- A risk concerning disputes over land ownership while working with farmers on packages that requires making physical investments on land, rated Moderate and dated 15/8/2019.
- An operational risk rated Substantial dated 21/1/2020 that the project would not successfully complete key activities and start handover proceedings before the extension period ends.
- An operational risk rated Substantial dated 24/6/2020 concerning the COVID19 global pandemic leading to disruption of project activities.

142. The UNDP Risk Log also tracks the responses and status of the risks, in this case the entries for the original prodoc risks regarding mitigation were largely out of date, with no change in the prodoc wording. Overall, there is limited evidence that the Risk Log was actively used as a tool to inform and track risk management effectively by the UNDP CO, with the PIRs providing the following assessment of project risk management during implementation.

143. **PIR 2017 Risk Rating: Moderate.** There was no change in the ratings provided for the 6 risks in the prodoc in the draft PIR, but the critical risk management measures noted that the political / institutional risks in the Project Document were understated and the relationship between the project co-financing and the project's administration were not fully articulated, especially with regard to two points:

- First, the project was not embedded in NEMA but in the DPWM (because it is essentially a protected areas project). However, this did not take account of the financial constraints faced by the Department. As a result, the co-financing, although considerable, is not available to finance the day to day running and human resource needs of the PMU and Department staff inputs to the project.

- Secondly, the Project Document called for an institutional review (in the narrative but it was never carried through to the outputs and SRF). The logic for an organisational and financial review is highly appropriate but no resources were allocated.
- In addition, the 2017 work plan and budget were delayed due to the elections and subsequent impasse in January resulting in a hiatus in the first quarter. Therefore the project and UNDP developed an ambitious budget for 2017 in order to get things moving.
- Also, the critical risk of the project being implemented without substantive financial personnel in 2015-16 was remedied with a Financial Administrator being recruited. Project systems were also put in place to streamline implementation, with a dramatic improvement in the rate of delivery post the election crisis in early 2017.

144. Unstated in the Project Document risk analysis was the manner in which other organisations and agencies will respond to climate change risks. For instance, conflicts between hard engineering (high input) interventions and soft, adaptive (low input) interventions largely promoted by this project. This refers to the UNDP/LDCF project engineering activities within Jokadu NP involving the construction of dykes and fishponds in Darsilami. The project aimed to address this risk through the NEA.

145. **PIR 2018 Overall Risk Rating: Substantial.** No information was provided on the management of critical risks in this PIR. One new SESP risk was noted in that the new extension of KWNP encountered land ownership issues in the western part of the PA, mainly by two villages, consequently the DPWM director and team held dialogues with the villages. The UNDP-GEF RTA commented that: *Project M&E has generally been weak, with critical risks not well monitored or even recorded.*

146. **PIR 2019 Overall Risk Rating: Moderate.** Only one critical risk is mentioned in the PIR: “The project attracted an audit query from the UNDP Office of Independent Audit. This has now been partially addressed”. With regard to SESP risks listed in the project document: it noted that one new SESP risk occurred – disputes over land ownership related to implementation of activities on farmer packages that require physical investments on land. To mitigate this risk, beneficiary farmers were requested to provide all of their land tenure documents during consultations. These were provided and duly certified by village heads.

147. **PIR 2020 Overall Risk Rating: Substantial.** One new strategic critical risk was described relating to the COVID19 pandemic, which was also reported as an SESP risk. Given the current relevance of this risk and the need to share experiences, this is provided in full: *Project implementation during the extension as the last phase of the project has experienced the greatest risk due to COVID 19 and the total lock down and restriction of movement that could have derailed the whole project and ultimately make the terminal evaluation (TE) impossible or seriously delayed. Notwithstanding, an international consultant was recruited to be supported by a national consultant who will do the field level consultations etc., while the international consultant will virtually engage all relevant stakeholders through Zoom etc to obtain the required information for finalizing the TE report. However, implementation of activities continued satisfactorily though slower as anticipated. Management capitalized on the relaxed procurement options provided at the global, regional and national levels to enter*

into contracts, and procure services of consultants through the various approved rosters. All project related meetings have been conducted virtually..

148. The UNDP Atlas Risk Log shared with the TE did not include the three low risks from the SESP, or the other SESP-related risks mentioned above. An internal UNDP review of the SESP dated 20 November 2019 noted that the project was rated Low Risk in the SESP yet the initial screening (ESSP, 2013) was rated 3a (equivalent to Moderate). It emphasized that the SESP was not sufficiently rigorous in providing safeguards against potential restrictions on access to land and natural resources and livelihood impacts. Yet the fact that this review only took place in November 2019 (in the extension period) meant that it was only able to inform the last eight months of implementation, and no clear response was evident.

4.2.7 COVID19 Impacts

149. Further to the above project risk identified for the COVID19 pandemic, the UNDP CO conducted some analyses of the impacts on COVID19 in the Gambia, and provided the following commentary in relation to the current project: “The project was extended for one year (1st August 2019 to 31st July 2020) to finish the unfinished activities which are critical to the success of the project. By the onset of COVID-19 in February/March 2020, all the remaining funds had been programmed, major contracts concluded and materials/equipment procured and delivered before movement restrictions were imposed by government. The COVID-19 pandemic didn’t have much impact on field activities. Notwithstanding, the contract for the Act review was a bit delayed due to difficulties in identifying a suitable legal firm to undertake the assignment. This activity was undertaken in late June early July and finalized by end of July 2020, and the consultations were done virtually. The TE as one of the activities of the project is also impacted by the pandemic as almost all stakeholder consultations will be done virtually with limited possibilities for face to face field visits which will be discussed on a case by case basis”. Overall, the impression of the TE is that the pandemic had relatively limited impact on the completion of the project, but slowed down remaining field activities and the implementation of the TE. Therefore it has not had a major negative impact on the project results.

150. However, COVID19 has potential to have major negative impacts for the sustainability of the project outcomes, through: reduction in annual budget allocations to DWNP as a result of shifts in government priorities (a 30% budget reduction is anticipated in 2021); reduction in tourist visitation to protected areas in Gambia (affecting revenue generation); and local impacts on communities related to national economic changes (unemployment, economic recession), movement restrictions and direct health impacts.

4.3 Project Results and Impacts

4.3.1 Progress towards objective and expected outcomes (*)

151. The results of the project have been evaluated against the results framework indicator targets, for details see **Annex 14**. In this section, the progress achieved towards the project objective, the four outcomes and related outputs are summarized and evaluated.

Progress towards Objective indicators

152. **Objective Impact Indicator 0.1** – the extensions of the three targeted PAs resulted in an increase in the PA estate of 24,013.41 ha (against a targeted area of 15,000 ha), taking the total from 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha. This increases the PA system's area of coverage of the Gambia's territorial area to 7.4%. While final legal gazettement of JNP is still pending due to COVID19 delays, the extensions to BBWR and KWNP have been completed. **TE Assessment: Target achieved and exceeded.**
153. **Objective Impact Indicator 0.2** – the number of people in target area who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources was targeted to have increased by 50% over baseline (which was not determined, but considered minimal). In reality, 61 villages have been directly implicated in the management of the target areas, through the PACs. This represents nearly all the adjacent villages and is therefore over 90%. **TE Assessment: Target not defined, but can be considered achieved.**

Progress towards IRRF Sub-Indicators

154. **IRRF Sub-indicator 1.5.A.1.1** - Number of hectares of land managed under an in-situ conservation regime. No baseline or target set. The extent of land under protected areas and conservation management has been extended from 64,276 ha to a total area of 88,289.41 ha. The gazettement process was all met but gazettement of JNP delayed due to COVID 19 pandemic. **TE Assessment: Target not defined, but can be considered achieved.**
155. **IRRF Sub-indicator 1.5.A.2.1:** Number of hectares of land managed under a sustainable use regime. No baseline or target set. The additional total area of land brought under sustainable use regimes amount to 18,669 ha in PA extensions, area under woodlots of 10 ha and the 15 ha SLM farmer packages. These figures have multiplying effect though indirect benefits flowing to many other people in the project's target areas. **TE Assessment: Target not defined, but considered largely achieved.**
156. **IRRF Sub-indicator 1.1.3.A.1.1:** Number of additional demonstration schemes which expand and diversify the productive base based on the use of sustainable production technologies. No baseline or target set. The technologies and interventions introduced by the project all promoted sustainable biodiversity management, such as achievements realized in cultivation of rice fields with the use of climate resistant varieties, setting up of woodlots, SLM farmer packages to apply conservation tillage and training in beekeeping across the PAs. These provided real benefits and are largely climate-resilient. However the lack of baseline and target set, and need to scale back project ambitions limited the potential scope of this part of the project. **TE Assessment: Target not defined, but considered largely achieved.**
157. **IRRF Sub-indicator 1.3.2.A.3.1:** Total number of additional people benefitting from strengthened livelihoods through solutions for management of natural resources, ecosystem

services, chemicals and waste. No baseline or target set. The cultivated areas under sustainable rice production benefited several thousand people, the majority of which are female farmers. In addition, 20 farmers have been trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products (soap, body lotion, candles) extending to the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association, and about 5,000 people are expected to benefit from the woodlots programme. The over 1,000 energy saving stoves distributed to households to reduce the use of fuel wood and reduce GHG emissions benefited over 10,000 people considering the extended family system in The Gambian rural setup. Despite the lack of baseline or target set in the project design or subsequently, it is clear that the project has resulted in tangible benefits to the livelihoods of people in communities adjacent to the three PAs. The TE is unable to confirm the number of beneficiaries claimed by the project team due to the lack of available monitoring data. However, the figures provided give an indication of scale. 61 villages in total have been involved in the co-management of the three PAs through the PACs, and 15 villages hosted demonstration SLM plots. Questions that remain include: how many farmers are directly involved in project-supported rice production in each area, how many villagers directly benefit from the woodlots, and is there overlap in the beneficiary totals – eg are the stoves going to the same families that benefit from the woodlots? **TE Assessment: Target not defined but considered largely achieved.**

158. **IRRF Sub-indicator 2.5.1.C.1.1:** Extent to which institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and/or access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems. No baseline or target set. In relation to PA management plans: KWNP and JNP plans were completed and endorsed by stakeholders. BBWR was drafted by April 2020 with RAMPAO project funding, yet to be revised to include the extension area. DPWM are unable to fully fund their implementation. Overall, it is very unclear what this indicator was meant to show and how the project was supposed address it. **TE Assessment: Target not defined, and is not measurable. Progress was made in some contributing areas.**

Progress towards Outcome indicators

159. **Outcome 1 – Impact Indicator 1.1** - the three PAs together with the extensions have had their boundaries properly surveyed and demarcated and formally declared based on the provisions of the Wildlife Act 2003, and the No-Claim declaration together with a request letter for gazettelement submitted to both MECCNAR and Ministry of Justice in November 2019. KWNP and BBWR are already gazetted PAs and covered by the Wildlife Act 2020. So there is no requirement to apply for gazettelement of the extension areas of these two PAs according to the PMU. Both the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act revision in 2020 and the application for the gazettelement of JNP (including the extension area) have been submitted to the National Assembly for approval. The approval process of these documents has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. **TE Assessment: Target achieved (except for final legal approval for JNP).**

160. **Output 1.1: Revised PA Programme of Work and Action Plan.** This document has been revised in 2018 and shared with the TE. It has not been published, but distributed to relevant stakeholders. **TE Assessment: Output largely achieved.**
161. **Output 1.2: Gazettement of the two PA expansions (JNP expansion to connect with BBWR and expansion of KWNP).** Through the setting up of a working group and much engagement with communities and opinion leaders, the three PAs have been extended with the extension areas demarcated. Proposal submitted for gazettement of JNP but delay in final gazettement notification is ongoing due to COVID19; procedure for extensions to BBWR and KWNP completed. **TE Assessment: Output largely achieved.**
162. **Outcome 2 – Impact Indicator 2.1** – targeted enhanced management effectiveness in KWNP and BBWR reflected by a 20% increase in the METT Score over baseline. As can be seen from the results in **Table 9**, there was a marginal increase in the METT score for BBWR up to July 2019, then it dropped back to baseline level in the final year. For KWNP, the score remained level with baseline at July 2019, then actually dropped back in the final year. The reductions in scores are highlighted in **Annex 12**, with the strong possibility of inconsistency in assessment between years contributing to the perceived lack of progress (eg in scoring planning for land and water planning sub-questions, relations with other stakeholders, condition of values). Certainly there were advances in various aspects of PA management, including staff training, engagement of communities in the PACs, management plan development, boundary demarcation, development of PA buildings and equipment. Against that, the human capacity at the PAs remains weak with lack of staff, weak technical capacity and serious operational budget challenges. **TE Assessment: Target not achieved, little measurable progress over baseline in management effectiveness despite some tangible results.**

Table 9. Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool scores for the target sites

Protected Area	Baseline Score (2015)	July 2019 Score	July 2020 Score
Jokadu NP	5 (nominal)	40*	51
Bao Bolong WR	47	56*	47*
Kiang West NP	59	59*	48*

**Corrected scores, based on METT forms*

163. **Outcome 2 - Impact indicator 2.2** - Effective management was established in JNP. This is reflected by the significant increase in METT scores from a nominal baseline up to 51 by project close (exceeding terminal scores for BBWR and KWNP). While the same reservations about METT assessment consistency mentioned above apply, there was a clear trend of improvement at this site that can be considered conclusive. This was supported by completion of a fully furnished headquarters that is equipped, staffed and operational with solar energy

and water supplied. The management plan drafted has been prepared for the site, PAC established, staff taken on and some training provided. As for the other sites, there remain human resource limitations – not enough staff and lacking adequate technical training, and the operational budget will seriously constrain management plan implementation; so while in numerical terms the target can be considered as achieved, management effectiveness at this site has substantial room for further improvement. **TE Assessment: Target achieved.**

164. **Outcome 2 – Impact Indicator 2.3 – this indicator was supposed to measure the recovery or maintenance of the conservation status (as measured by viable populations) of selected key indicator species.** However, the related output to build an ecological monitoring system and capacity was cancelled, and indicator species were never selected. **TE Assessment: Not rated.**

165. **Output 2.1: Strengthened institutional and technical capacities in the target PAs to address existing and emerging threats.** Diverse inputs provided by the project, including: Short training courses for PA staff in PA management; training course on ecological monitoring; Short training courses provided for PAC members and NGOs/CBOs in PA management; engagement of local leaders; PACs established and operational; limited equipment provided for CBNRM; Park HQ office facilities completed for JNP and BBWR including IT equipment and internet, and limited equipment provided for PA management; Participatory management plan for JNP completed, for KWNP revised, and for BBWR drafted with cofinancing support. However, training not adequate to ensure PA management needs – eg METT 2020 indicates only 1% of KWNP staff are considered fairly trained, and staff numbers are inadequate (12 more staff needed); at BBWR only a few staff are trained; at JNP there are 6 staff - need to recruit at least 15 young rangers. **TE Assessment: Output partially achieved.**

166. **Outcome 3 – Impact Indicator 3.1 - Seedlings/saplings of multiple use species successfully established near target communities (target of 1,000/community, but the number of communities was not specified).** Project reports indicate that at least the following seedlings were planted: 9,000 in Jokadu, where a 20-bed nursery produced seedlings that were distributed to communities for planting; an additional 90,000 Gmelina stumps, and 2,500 Acacia seedlings purchased were planted in July 2019 mainly in the 2 woodlots established but also some were given to the communities. A total of 20 communities benefited, making 5,075 per community. Although considerably delayed, the end result of the nursery, planted woodlots and seedlings for communities will exceed the target of 1,000 per community. **TE Assessment: Target not fully defined, but considered achieved.**

167. **Outcome 3 – Impact Indicator 3.2 – aimed to achieve at least 5 farmers per community successfully using conservation tillage methods.** 15 farmers (one per village, with five villages per PA) identified to receive farmer packages (estimated 120 indirect beneficiaries, in terms of farmer household members). See Annex 14 for contents of the

farmer field packages provided by the project. **TE Assessment: Target not fully defined, but considered achieved within the available resources of the GEF budget.**

168. **Outcome 3 – Impact Indicator 3.3** - Stretches of valuable trees planted along 30% of key PA borders exposed to fire and other pressures - Due to budget constraints for purchase of seedlings, physical planting of seedlings as well as their protection, the project decided to move forward with only the fabrication of pillars and clearing for the demarcation. Permanent and clear demarcation of borders was ensured through clearing of KWNP extension borders in 2018 and 2019 and 300 pillars erected in JNP and BBWR extension. KWNP borders were demarcated with concrete pillars before the project was started. The change in methods of boundary demarcation as an adaptation to shortage of funds for the planned activity is considered an acceptable compromise. **TE Assessment: Target not achieved in terms of use of trees, but boundaries demarcated using other methods so considered partially achieved.**
169. **Outcome 3 – Impact Indicator 3.4** – targeted 1% of NEMA investment directed to activities supporting conservation in the PA and adjacent buffer zones (in addition to actual SLM investment / support) – see cofinancing information above, which indicates that at least USD 2,960,000 was provided by NEMA activities that contributed towards this project’s goals. Cofinancing inputs from NEMA and other related initiatives at the project sites are detailed in **Annex 15**. These are quite substantial, although their relationship to the project, and contributions towards its objectives are considered indirect. **TE Assessment: Target not fully defined, but considered largely achieved (although the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation within the NEMA project was cancelled).**
170. **Outcome 3 – Impact Indicator 3.5 - Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Agriculture: GEF Mainstreaming Scorecard shows enhanced implementation, enforcement and monitoring.** There were quarterly meetings with institution/project heads, where mainstreaming was initiated through the engagement of extension staff. See **Annex 15** for a summary of cofinancing inputs from related institutions in relation to their activities at the project sites. While DPWM participates in activities related to the Agriculture and Natural Resources policy, there was little direct project intervention (including mainstreaming within NEMA) due to the downscaling of the project budget from the originally intended FSP to MSP. The GEF BD-2 Tracking Tool at project completion in July 2020 indicates marginal progress over the baseline status. There is little evidence of the originally intended mainstreaming impact on the NEMA project. The related Output 3.1 was cancelled after it was clear that project engagement with NEMA was going to be difficult as NEMA works outside PAs, and the PMU was not embedded in NEMA. **TE Assessment: Target not achieved – very little progress on biodiversity mainstreaming in Agriculture sector.**
171. **Output 3.1: Biodiversity as well as PA aspects as well as sustainable land and natural resources management effectively mainstreamed into the large-scale National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA).** This Output was cancelled after it was clear that project engagement with NEMA was going to be difficult as NEMA works

outside PAs, and the PMU was not embedded in NEMA. **TE Assessment: Output not achieved (cancelled).**

172. **Output 3.2: Recommended NRM and SLM practices implemented by local communities under the community-based management agreements, with extension support provided. The main project contributions included:** 15 farmers received farmer packages for 1 ha SLM demonstration farms (120 indirect beneficiaries); 2 days training was given to pilot beneficiary farmers and agriculture extension workers on conservation farming. 9000 seedlings planted in JNP. 20-bed nursery established at JNP has produced seedlings that were distributed to communities for planting. An additional 90,000 Gmelina stumps, and 2,500 Acacia seedlings purchased were planted in July 2019 mainly in the 2 woodlots established but also some were given to the communities. A total of 20 communities benefited, receiving 5075 stumps/seedlings per community. Overall, it was difficult to quantify due to lack of clear deliverables; in general the scale of intervention was reduced in view of the limited budget available and weak collaboration with the NEMA project, also to ensure that results were achieved in 2019-20 as this Output started very late due to earlier delays. **TE Assessment: Output largely achieved.**

173. **Output 3.3: A monitoring system in place in the target areas.** Output cancelled in order to refocus implementation on key priorities and make the best use of limited resources available. **TE Assessment: Output not achieved (cancelled).**

174. **Outcome 4 – Impact Indicator 4.1 –** targeted at least 50% uptake of improved technologies and management practices by producer organizations, women’s groups, trade and farmers’ associations and CBOs. While the indicator is not SMART and the target not well defined, the project made useful contributions, including: 28 VDCs provided with 1,000 energy-saving cook stoves across BBRW; a bee-keeping group was supported in Jokadu, where 7 bee-hives were procured and training provided to members in addition to the equipping of the 20 farmers who have been trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products (soap, body lotion, candles), extending to the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association; and the project provided two varieties of salt-tolerant rice to 15 women at JNP. These women, in turn, distributed the varieties to more women in their respective communities. The rice cultivation was successful with good quality crops and demand for continuation. **TE Assessment: Indicator target not clearly defined, but considered achieved in view of tangible project results within resource limitations that were aligned with the indicator.**

175. **Outcome 4 – Impact Indicator 4.2 – 20-50% increase in awareness and understanding of the values and vulnerabilities of natural resources.** This indicator lacked baseline and repeat assessments, therefore was not measurable. Activities included weekly broadcasts on biodiversity conservation and SLM from 6 community radio stations, including the national radio station, various opinion leader meetings and the establishment of working groups, contributing towards project sustainability. Therefore, while relevant awareness-raising activities were conducted, it is not possible to assess their impact on awareness levels in a measurable way. Discussions with community members engaged in project activities on the TE field trip indicated that there has been increased awareness, support for conservation,

improved relations with the PAs, and reduced illegal activities (all unquantified). **TE Assessment: Indicator target not defined and real impacts not measured - considered partially achieved in view of tangible project results aligned with the indicator.**

176. **Output 4.1: Agreements with local communities secured for community-based sustainable land and natural resources management, and related plans, developed.** No community conservation agreements have been signed as yet. However, the verbal consent of the respective communities to the extension of the PAs is considered by the DPWM as agreement in principle⁵³. Moreover, the Protected Area Committees (PACs) are considered by DPWM to be an effective coordination mechanism to ensure co-management and sustainable practices in these areas. Notwithstanding the above, the lack of written agreements to underpin resource use and co-management of extension areas seems insecure, especially if DPWM is short of operational budget to engage and support the PACs and communities. **TE Assessment: Output partially achieved.**

4.3.2 Relevance (*)

177. The following considerations were taken into account in assessing the relevance of the project:

Alignment with national priorities:

178. The project's objectives were well aligned with national development priorities, policies and plans, as described in sections 3.2 and 4.1.1 above. Its key contributions in terms of revising the PoWPA Action Plan, supporting revision of the Wildlife Act 2020, and expanding the national PA system at the project sites are highly relevant to national priorities (eg NBSAP, Gambia Biodiversity Policy 2003), before and after national political changes occurred in 2015-16. Its contribution to biodiversity mainstreaming in the agriculture sector was weaker than intended, however. The project document does not make mention of national and local strategies to advance gender equality.

Alignment with UNDP and GEF strategic priorities:

179. The project design was well aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan, CPD, UNDAF, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), SDGs and GEF BD-1 and BD-2 strategic programmes, as described in sections 3.2 and 4.1.1 above. This was evident from the results framework, which included impact indicators relevant to the GEF focal area strategies, as well as UNDP IRRF and process indicators. It directly contributed towards Aichi targets 5, 11 and 12, and indirectly towards 7 and 14. While SDGs are not mentioned in the prodoc, the project was directly aligned with SDG 15 Life on Land, while also contributing towards SDGs 1 No Poverty and 12 Responsible Consumption and Production (through SLM practices) and 13 Climate Action (through ecosystem-based adaptation).

Stakeholder engagement:

180. The extent to which the project was formulated according to the needs and interests of all targeted and/or relevant stakeholder groups is described in section 4.1.4 above. Overall, the design was inclusive, did not notably omit any significant stakeholder groups, and included appropriate mechanisms for stakeholder engagement at different levels. In general, relevant

⁵³ ITA comment: there is an imbalance of power in this relationship and it is very difficult to hold one party accountable (whichever side) with a verbal agreement. Arguably, verbal agreements are not worth the paper they aren't written on. They are also subject to very different expectations and largely un-enforceable in a Court of Law.

stakeholders participated during the project implementation process as intended, with the exception of the proposed TAG which did not function at a national level. Intervention at local level was informed by local stakeholders through the PACs and other activity working groups.

Relevance to and complementarity with other initiatives:

181. The extent to which lessons learned from other relevant projects were considered in the project's design is described in section 4.1.3 above, while linkages with other related initiatives is described in section 4.1.5. Overall, these took into consideration the main relevant initiatives and provided scope for collaboration and alignment during implementation.

4.3.3 Effectiveness (*)

182. Effectiveness is the extent to which the project's objectives were achieved, as well as an aggregate measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional development impact. As such the following issues were assessed, as contributing towards overall effectiveness.

Extent to which the project contributed to the UNDP country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, CBD Aichi targets, the UNDP Strategic Plan, GEF strategic priorities, and national development priorities

183. The project made a positive overall contribution towards the identified UNDP, GEF, global MEA and national development plans and priorities through the global environmental benefits achieved.
184. Through its support for revision of the national PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (2018), revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 (in 2020), creation of JNP and extension of BBWR and KWNP, and support for PA management, the project contributed towards the **UNDP strategy for The Gambia and the 2012-2016 UNDAF Outcome 3.0 *Environmental sustainability and disaster risk reduction systems and services operationalised***, Output 3.1 *National policies and laws available on ... natural resources management developed and implemented*.
185. The project's SLM and community livelihood interventions, which were locally effective though somewhat scaled down according to budget constraints and lacking a confirmed upscaling/replication mechanism, contributed towards the **2012-2016 CPAP Outcome 2 *Sustainable livelihood security enhanced for disadvantaged groups through the promotion of income diversification opportunities and better management of environmental resources***, and Output 2.3 *Sustainable use of environmental resources enhanced*.
186. The project contributed towards the **GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies: BD-1: *Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems***, by supporting completion of the national PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025, revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 (including new provisions relating to PAs), and through the expansion of the national PA system by 24,013.41 ha through the establishment of JNP and expansion of BBWR and KWNP, and limited contributions to their management effectiveness, thereby conserving biodiversity-rich habitats and globally threatened species in the Gambia. The project's contribution towards

BD-2: Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors, was weak and considerably less than originally planned, in that inter-sectoral collaboration mechanisms with the Ministry of Agriculture (eg the ANRWG) were not fully engaged or strengthened, and that while there was liaison with related initiatives in the PA surroundings (including the NEMA project) through working group meetings, and their activities did contribute some cofinancing towards the project objective, these mechanisms were not institutionalized and are unlikely to be sustainable.

187. The project directly contributed towards the following **CBD Aichi targets**:
 - 5 - the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved...: through the expansion of the PA system, support for PA management effectiveness, and engagement and awareness raising among 61 adjacent communities;
 - 11 - at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas... are conserved through PAs...: by increasing the PA system's area of coverage of The Gambia's territorial area to 7.4% through an additional 24,013.41 ha, taking the total from 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha.
 - 12 - the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status... improved...: through extending and strengthening the management of three important PAs that harbour a range of globally threatened species including: Hippopotamus VU, African Manatee VU, African Clawless Otter NT, African Dwarf Crocodile VU, Atlantic Humpback Dolphin CR, Guinea Baboon NT, Leopard VU, Western Red Colobus EN, Bateleur NT, and Martial Eagle VU. However, monitoring was inadequate to show specific changes in the status of any of these species during implementation.
 - The project's community co-management, and support for SLM and livelihoods also contributed towards target 7, while the habitat conservation and restoration in the new and extended PAs contribute towards 14 and 15 through enhanced ecosystem services.
188. The project contributed directly towards **SDG 15 Life on Land** through the same results that supported the above-mentioned Aichi targets. It also provided limited contributions towards **SDGs 1 No Poverty and 12 Responsible Consumption and Production** (through its SLM and livelihood demonstrations), and to **13 Climate Action** (through ecosystem-based adaptation within the new 24,013.41 ha brought under PA management).
189. Its key contributions towards national development priorities include revising the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025, supporting revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 (in 2020), and expanding the national PA system at the project sites directly address the NBSAP and Gambia Biodiversity Policy 2003). Its contribution towards biodiversity mainstreaming in the agriculture sector was much weaker than intended. This was partially a project design issue, in that MECCWW was the Implementing Partner, with project execution led by DPWM – yet Component 2 focusing on the SLM interventions and mainstreaming of biodiversity into the agriculture sector and the NEMA project in particular, was dependent upon the engagement of the Ministry of Agriculture. Yet that agreement for collaboration with MoA was not formalized at design stage and in the end, while normal government inter-agency consultation continued, there was no effective collaboration and eventually the

project dropped its mainstreaming activities. Secondly, the weak ownership of the project by MECCWW/DPWM expressed in several project reports and lack of unified project management hindered effective adaptive management to address such issues effectively.

Extent to which the project's actual outcomes/outputs were commensurate with what was planned

190. The table of project achievements against results framework indicator targets in **Annex 14** and the conclusions in the above **section 4.3.1** on progress towards objectives provide significant information on the extent of progress against planned targets (although many targets were not defined at all, or were vague and difficult to measure). Therefore the results are summarized in **Table 10** below. This reveals that both Objective-level impact indicators were achieved; one out of five IRRF sub-indicators (treated at Objective-level) was fully achieved, three partially achieved and one cancelled; the single impact indicator for Outcome 1 was achieved; indicators for Outcome 2 were mixed, with one achieved, one partially achieved and one cancelled; Outcome 3 results were also mixed with two achieved, two partially achieved and one not achieved; and for Outcome 4 one indicator was achieved and one partially achieved. Thus overall, eight indicators (44.4%) were considered fully achieved, seven (38.9%) partially achieved, one not achieved (5.6%) and two cancelled (11.1%). Thus overall, 83.3% of indicators showed full or partial progress towards the planned targets. Five of the seven Outputs were partially achieved and two were cancelled.

191. Overall, the consistency with the planned Outcomes can be summarized as follows:
- **Outcome 1** – consistent with planned outcome, exceeded target. One conditional point is that the proposal for gazettment of JNP was submitted but delay in final gazettment notification is ongoing due to COVID19;
 - Output 1.1 – PoWPA Action Plan revised, not published, limited distribution
 - Output 1.2 – PA boundaries demarcated, but use of valuable tree species dropped in favour of lower cost concrete posts and firebreak strips;
 - **Outcome 2** – while park facilities and management plans were completed, management effectiveness achievements at BBWR and KWNP were less than targeted, and staff capacity at these sites remains weak.
 - Output 2.1 – reflects the same weaknesses as the Outcome level (being the only Output)
 - **Outcome 3** – mixed achievement across a broad range of subject areas; those that were not commensurate with original plans were the planting of trees along PA boundaries (also related to Output 1.2 above); biodiversity mainstreaming in agriculture sector and NEMA project in particular made almost no headway, missing the opportunity to reduce agriculture-related threats to biodiversity and synergistic collaboration on SLM to benefit agro-ecological resilience.
 - Output 3.1 - biodiversity mainstreaming in agriculture sector and NEMA project was cancelled;
 - Output 3.2 - Difficult to quantify due to lack of clear deliverables identified; in general the scale of intervention was reduced in view of the limited budget available and weak collaboration with the NEMA project, also to ensure that results were achieved in 2019-20 as this Output started very late due to earlier delays.

- Output 3.3 – the ecological monitoring system was cancelled in order to refocus implementation on key priorities and make the best use of limited resources available. The low capacity of DPWM staff to implement such a system was also a contributing factor.
- **Outcome 4** – This was considered largely achieved in view of tangible project results within resource limitations that were aligned with the indicators. The original project design was not specific and provided a wide range of possibilities that the project had to define. The final activities were practical within the project's resource limitations, and achieved some local impact.
- **Output 4.1** – This Output was intended to address the requirements of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 for PA co-management. However, DPWM took a different approach and no community conservation agreements were signed as such. The verbal consent of the respective communities to the extension of the PAs is considered by the DPWM as agreement in principle. Moreover, the Protected Area Committees (PACs) are considered by DPWM to be an effective coordination mechanism to ensure co-management and sustainable practices in these areas. Notwithstanding the above, the lack of written agreements to underpin resource use and co-management of extension areas seems insecure, especially if DPWM is short of operational budget to engage and support the PACs and communities.

Table 10. Summary of results framework target status at terminal evaluation*(see Annex 14 for details)*

Target Status	Target Achieved		Target Partially Achieved		Target Not Achieved		Indeterminate/ Cancelled		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Objective	2	100							2
IRRF Sub-indicators	1	20	3	60			1	20	5
Outcome 1	1	100							1
Outcome 2	1	33.3	1	33.3			1	33.3	3
Outcome 3	2	40	2	40	1	20			5
Outcome 4	1	50	1	50					2
Total	8	44.4	7	38.9	1	5.6	2	11.1	18
Outputs	0	0	5	71.4	0	0	2	28.6	7

Areas in which the project had the greatest and fewest achievements

192. Overall, the project had its greatest achievements in the revision of the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025, Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 revision in 2020, completion of the planned

PA extension areas, the construction of facilities for PA management, the engagement of 61 communities around the three PAs in the PACs, local level awareness raising, and local demonstrations of SLM plots, beekeeping, saline-tolerant rice, community woodlots, and fuel-efficient cook-stoves. Those areas where least was achieved include the mainstreaming of biodiversity into the agriculture sector, engagement and upscaling of SLM results through NEMA, staff capacity development in the PAs, and the advancement of financial sustainability for PA management.

Constraining factors, such as socio-economic, political and environmental risks; and how they were overcome

193. This project experienced significant constraining factors and risks that affected both the project design and the implementation process. These included:

- The West African Ebola Outbreak in 2015 – directly affected the PPG process, with the international consultant compiling the project document remotely, supported by national consultants in-country. This resulted in design flaws that over-estimated the capacity of DPWM to lead project management, inadequate M&E framework and over-ambitious scope of intervention for the GEF budget available;
- Political instability and government paralysis around the Dec 2012 elections – that impacted project management functioning and delayed implementation progress in 2016-17;
- COVID19 pandemic in March 2020 – that slowed implementation of field activities on SLM with communities at the sites, constrained physical meetings with stakeholders and delayed implementation of this terminal evaluation;
- Weak ownership of the project by DPWM related to the inability of UNDP to adequately remunerate the project coordinator as a DPWM staff member.
- Lack of PMU staff capacity – with long delays in recruitment of project coordinator, experts on PAs and SLM, financial administrator, due to difficulties in finding suitable candidates that matched UNDP TOR specifications and accepted the remuneration rates.

194. Overall, the project's adaptive management response was slow and ineffective in identifying and addressing problems during implementation, hindered by disunity among the implementing partners, lack of staff capacity in the PMU, insufficiently frequent PEB meetings, and weak M&E.

Any alternative strategies that would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives

195. It is difficult to suggest alternative strategies that would have been more effective, but recognition of the low baseline capacity in DPWM to lead project implementation could have been reflected by greater investment in project management capacity (although GEF's 10% cap on PMC would still have constrained this). The alternative would have been direct implementation modality (DIM) led by the UNDP CO, which may have avoided some of the collaborative issues. Also, the scope of the project intervention should have been scaled down at CEO Endorsement stage, such as removing Output 3.3 as was done later during

implementation, more clearly defining SLM and livelihood interventions, and being more specific about mainstreaming methods⁵⁴.

Extent to which the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and a human rights-based approach

196. The project's contribution towards gender equality and women's empowerment is described below in section 4.3.8. Overall, there were weaknesses in project design (lack of a gender analysis and action plan, lack of clear gender-responsive indicators), monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and implementation. The PIRs for 2019 and 2020 set the Atlas Gender Marker Rating at GEN1 - some contribution to gender equality. This rating appears fair, as there were indeed some positive contributions (see 4.3.8) – although the project design, reporting framework and M&E system did very little to promote a more systematic and strategic approach towards gender empowerment and the empowerment of women by this project. The UNDP systems and oversight failed to adequately address these shortcomings. Examples of positive outcomes benefitting women include: women have been recognized as important stakeholders in the communities around the PAs, as users of natural resources and farming practices and included in the PACs on an equal footing to the men in their villages; increased environmental awareness amongst women, and introduction of salt-tolerant rice through women farmers at Jokadu; distribution of 1,000 fuel efficient cookstoves reducing fuelwood demands; community woodlots for fuelwood supply; training of women beekeepers; access to certain borehole water supplies for community and farming uses.

4.3.4 Efficiency (*)

197. Efficiency is a measure of how economically resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. It is most commonly applied to the input-output link in the causal chain of an intervention. The TE team has considered the following subject areas:

Resource allocation and cost effectiveness:

o Extent to which there was efficient and economical use of financial and human resources and strategic allocation of resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) to achieve outcomes

198. Due to a combination of factors described below under project management, the overall management of the project cannot be described as efficient due to significant delays in implementation, difficulties in disbursing GEF funds in a timely manner, and ineffective adaptive management. The financial resources available to the project were limited compared to its ambitions, therefore there was an awareness that funds were scarce and needed to be used carefully, especially in the latter stages of implementation. There were some financial issues raised by the auditors reports, for example, with respect to 2018, the comparison of budgeted expenditures in the 2018 AWP against actual expenditures in the Combined Delivery

⁵⁴ Comment from ITA: A process driven approach addressing resource tenure and improved resource governance which engaged with local government and their delivery of services as well as related sector agencies would have been a better starting point. Loosely you could term this approach as addressing tenure and pricing and the inefficiencies and inequalities in the management institutions. This could have drawn on some of the earlier local government capacity building initiatives which had been very successful in establishing VDCs etc., (albeit the selected local governments did not fall in the PAN project area but the approach was very effective in those LGs where the programme had operated). However, that would not be possible in the inception phase through adaptive management. It would have had to be built in from the very start of the design. This comment also applies to the section below.

Report (CDR) revealed substantial variance in both under and over-spending of budget lines related to unrealistic planning estimates (medium risk). The same risk was identified in 2019. In 2016, there was also an overspend on equipment that subsequently had to be addressed in budget revisions.

199. In terms of the field activities, the SLM farmer field packages provided a targeted, flexible and efficient way of providing assistance to individuals within communities as a form of demonstration with potential for replication and upscaling via support from other projects (such as NEMA). The distribution of saline-tolerant rice, cookstoves and beehives to communities, and development of community woodlots were also cost-efficient approaches that had local impact. Contracts for PA buildings were issued following UNDP procurement requirements and were all completed to standard in the end, although there were some issues with contract delivery along the way. Same with the supplies to support the farmer field packages.

o 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

200. There was no gender action plan or budget included in the project document, and no specific allocation of project resources for integrating gender equality and human rights in the project. Women did benefit from certain activities as explained elsewhere (see 4.3.8), but these were not clearly targeted as a means of integrating gender equality and human rights in the project.

o Extent to which the allocation of resources to targeted groups takes into account the need to prioritize those most marginalized

201. The project document, M&E framework and workplans did not specifically prioritize those stakeholders who were most marginalized. However, the project's SLM support was targeted specifically at the local communities surrounding the three PAs in order to engage them in more sustainable use of land and natural resources in order to reduce pressures on the PAs. There did not appear to be any proactive selection of marginalized, vulnerable or particularly poor households in implementation of field activities within these communities. Overall, some of the project assistance would have benefited a wide range of community members, including provision of saline-tolerant rice varieties, fuel-efficient cookstoves, community woodlots, and access to certain borehole water supplies – so these would have included some marginalized members of the communities. Also, because these inputs were being rolled out so late in the project, there was less focus on achieving equitable solutions and more focus on getting something done on the ground to meet the project targets.

Project management and timeliness:

o Extent to which the project management structure as outlined in the project document was efficient in generating the expected results

202. The project management structure described in the project document was far from being efficient in generating the expected results. The main issue in the design was the lack of recognition of the low baseline capacity in DPWM to lead project implementation, with the Project Manager stated as being cofinanced by DPWM as a seconded official, which was the cause of dissatisfaction, lack of ownership and disunity in project management affecting

nearly all aspects of implementation (including M&E, reporting, planning and adaptive management). Other staff were hard to find, with protracted delays in recruitment of a financial administrator (twice), SLM expert, PA expert and International Technical Advisor. None of these positions were in place before late 2016 – more than one year after the project launch in July 2015.

o Extent to which project funds and activities were delivered in a timely manner

203. Both project funds and activities were subject to lengthy delays throughout much of the implementation period, as reported in the PIRs for successive years as well as the audit reports (see 4.2.3 above). Disbursement of project funds was impacted by factors including the weak capacity of the PMU to prepare documentation required for disbursements (contracts, TORs, procurement bids, RDPs) to the standards required by UNDP, the absence of the financial administrator position⁵⁵ in the PMU for extended periods, the disunity and poor communications between project management partners, and bureaucratic delays within UNDP in processing financial requests associated with the reported inability of the Implementing Partner to follow UNDP rules and procedures. There is no question that the financial administration had to be handled by UNDP on account of the fact that the HACT micro-assessment of MECCWW was found to have moderate risk and therefore not qualified for Direct Cash Transfer.

204. Both staffing and financial delays did have an impact on implementation. The project struggled to put in place a full-fledged PMU, only appointing an ITA in September 2016 and a Financial Administrator in March 2017, with a Project Coordinator seconded by the Government. The resignation of the first Financial Administrator in October 2017 and the approximately six months delay in securing a replacement also impacted the project's delivery. The lack of a fully staffed PMU in the first year of the project (2015-2016) meant that the main focus was on procurement of equipment rather than field activities, and the lack of a financial administrator in particular created significant risks for financial management. Delays related to approval of annual workplans and budgets (eg 6 month delay in 2018) were significant and impacted field activities, leading to the need for a 12 month project extension to complete a range of outputs, and especially the SLM activities that were constrained by agricultural seasons.

o Extent to which a project extension could have been avoided

205. The project extension was carefully justified in the proposal submitted to UNDP, quoting the series of challenges and delays that the project experienced during implementation from its launch in July 2015 until mid-2019 when the proposal was submitted. There is no question that the level of project delivery by the end of July 2019 fell far short of the project targets (especially the SLM work), that disbursement of GEF funds was far from complete (\$925,127 or 64.05% had been disbursed by 30 June 2019), and that the extension of 12 months would allow significant progress towards objectives to be achieved – as was the case in reality (notwithstanding the COVID19 outbreak in early 2020).

o Extent to which M&E systems ensured effective and efficient project management

⁵⁵ This position was called Finance Officer according to UNDP CO, although it has been referred to in project reports as Financial Administrator.

206. While the M&E system for this project followed standard UNDP/GEF requirements, there were significant weaknesses in its application that UNDP was slow and ineffective in addressing. This includes: significant weaknesses in the results framework structure, indicators, baselines and targets (see 4.1.1 above); failure to address these weaknesses through adaptive management during implementation; poor standard of quarterly and annual progress reports; poor completion of annual PIRs – often with gaps in certain sections; absence of a project completion report; METTs completed but with questionable consistency between assessments. In addition, PEB meetings were insufficiently frequent, and the minutes do not provide a clear record of decisions taken⁵⁶, actions required, responsibilities and timelines. Follow up to PEB meetings appears to have been weak, and participation dropped off later in the project. There was no mid-term review of the project, despite its troubled start-up period.

4.3.5 Overall Outcome (*)

207. The calculation of the overall project outcome rating has been based on the ratings for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical. Overall project outcome is assessed using a six-point scale, described in Annex 8. The following constraints have been taken into account:

- 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 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.

Assessment of Outcomes	Rating
Relevance	S
Effectiveness	MS
Efficiency	MU
Overall Project Outcome Rating	MU-MS

4.3.6 Sustainability: financial (*), socio-economic (*), institutional framework and governance (*), environmental (*), and overall likelihood (*)

Financial sustainability:

⁵⁶ Comment from ITA: Actually when minutes were taken they reflect pretty accurately what was discussed – it was just that very few strategic and even operational decisions were made by the PEB.

208. The project design intended that the development of the revised POWPA Action Plan and financial mechanism (Biodiversity Trust Fund) under the previous DPWM/World Bank/GEF Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project would provide a good basis for sustainability. The PoWPA Action Plan (2018) does provide a basis for investment in PA system development, and some guidance on sustainable financing of PAs, but this is limited and further constrained by the COVID19 pandemic impacts on government financing priorities, nature-based tourism visitation and related activities (eg sport hunting). The Biodiversity Trust Fund is a practical mechanism for receiving such income, but it remains uncappeditalized at the present time – having made no progress since it was established in 2015. The updated Biodiversity and Wildlife Act, elaborates on income sources to support the BTF. These would include gate fees, hunting licences from January to April, wildlife farming and cropping, fees from private PAs⁵⁷.
209. In addition, the DPWM annual budget for improvement and maintenance of parks was recognized at the project design stage to be chronically low – and this remains the case: the annual budget is seriously inadequate (currently GMD 6.5 million, about USD 130,000). COVID-19 has also negatively impacted the budget. For instance, the government deducted GMD4 billion from the current 2020 national budget due to COVID-19. Moreover, it is projected that the budget allocation in 2021 will be reduced by 32%. Consequently, DPWM is unable to fully implement the management plans that have been developed for the project sites, and issues such as maintenance of infrastructure and liaison and support for communities involved in co-management are at risk.
210. In terms of PA system development, the PoWPA (2018) notes that programmatically, a second phase of the integrated approach promoted by the PAN project is targeting funding from GEF-6. This is manifested as the UNEP/GEF-6 project #9772 Landscape Planning and Restoration to Improve Ecosystem Services, and Livelihoods, Expand and Effectively Manage Protected Areas, (USD 5,644,685) approved for implementation in March 2020, led by NEA.
211. The project design also intended that financial sustainability would be supported by stakeholder recognition of SLM as an approach that made both economic and ecological sense through its application by land users in the project. While the project did achieve some positive collaboration with the NEMA project and other initiatives around the project sites, which provided cofinancing through related activities, the NEMA project has now been completed and the project results on SLM, while positive, are relatively small in scale.
212. There remain possibilities for collaboration with MoA and other bodies on SLM and rural development in the communities around the PAs. DPWM has indicated that it provided input to the design of the large IFAD-funded ROOTS project that covers areas around all three PAs. If collaboration can be ensured and ROOTS activities aligned with the co-management and SLM needs of the three PAs, this could indeed facilitate the replication and upscaling of approaches piloted by PAN such as the SLM farmer field packages. DPWM and NGOs will also continue to conduct mangrove planting, SLM, woodlots, etc.

⁵⁷ Comment from ITA: However, the BTF lacks a meaningful Operational Manual.

213. Finally, the alignment of UNDP Country Programme initiatives could provide some support for sustainability, such as a proposed project under the Rapid Financing Facility includes a focus on PAs in view of COVID impacts on tourism related activities in surrounding communities. UNDP CO is also developing a follow up to the GEF coastal resilience project– this will focus on wetlands and coastal areas, and include community sensitization and education⁵⁸.
214. Overall, the financial sustainability of the project outcomes can only be described as weak due to the chronic lack of government budget for the PA system, although some opportunities exist through the mentioned initiatives.

Socio-political sustainability:

215. The national government went through a major change in December 2016 when the last national Presidential Election was held, causing major disruption. The next Presidential Election is due in December 2021, which could result in further political instability. However, the impact on project outcomes is not clear.
216. During implementation, the level of ownership of the project by MECCWW and DPWM was questioned at times in view of the lack of progress being made. However, the main outcomes of the project – the expansion and strengthening of three PAs – are part of the core DPWM mandate, therefore the Department has an interest in ensuring the sustainability of the project outcomes.
217. Similarly, the 61 communities that are participating in the PACs and who have also benefited from project support for SLM and various livelihood activities also have an interest in maintaining the co-management arrangements. But DPWM would need to continue to engage proactively with the PACs and to facilitate further rural development assistance to them in order to sustain cooperation. The awareness raising conducted by the project has strengthened local support for the PAs and conservation, and again this will need to be sustained by continued efforts by DPWM and NGOs with common interests.
218. The knowledge management and outreach aspects of the project are poorly documented, and it is very unclear what mechanisms would be used to transfer its approaches to other parties or projects.
219. The project did result in positive engagement with women (eg rice farmers, bee-keepers, distribution of cook-stoves). These benefits will persist to an extent, and have the potential to expand if they receive continued support from DPWM and/or NGOs, or other projects (eg ROOTS). However, the project impacts were not transformative in terms of mainstreaming women’s rights and gender equality.

⁵⁸ Comment from ITA: It could be argued that there is an unwillingness in UNDP (in most countries) to link biodiversity and PAs to the ongoing good governance programmes. Lessons from southern Africa demonstrate that while the benefits of more resilient and people-centred land management can be measured in the increased flow of ecosystem goods and services and in improved rural livelihoods “benefit [from CBNRM] should also be understood in non-pecuniary terms, and when economic benefit is linked with authority and responsibility large increments in social capital can result” .

Institutional framework and governance sustainability

220. The project supported the revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 in 2020, which includes new sections on: Mainstreaming of new PAs and expanded PA; Upgrading of Biodiversity Trust Fund⁵⁹; Streamlining of international conventions and agreements; Upgrading community reciprocal right to resource use; Empowering private investment in PA (Public Private Partnership); Expanded scheduled biological resources; and Mainstreaming of wetland policy, wildlife policy and Biodiversity Strategy. In addition, the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (Rev. 2018) sets out an updated strategy for development of the PA system and biodiversity conservation. These provide mechanisms for replication and expansion of the project's approach as it applies to the national PA system. In addition, the development of the proposed Niumi-Saloum Biosphere Reserve by DPWM has potential to embrace the north bank project sites, which would create more momentum for PA management and financing.
221. The capacity development under the project had the greatest impact at the local level, through the development of the three PAs and in particular the basis of their co-management through the PACs involving some 61 villages in total. Some additional PA staff were engaged (eg for JNP) but the technical capacity of PA staff is low and the effectiveness and sustainability of the PA administrations will depend to a large extent on the continued financial support possible from DPWM. Overall, it is clear that institutional strengthening on a systemic level is needed to support the national PA system, which was far beyond the scope of this MSP, and ideally needs to be tackled through a programmatic approach over a longer time-frame, and perhaps on a regional basis.
222. The project was effective in involving local champions, in terms of traditional chiefs and village leaders who can promote sustainability of project outcomes. Also, the mandatory requirement for equal gender representation on the PACs addresses gender equality in co-management. Again, this will need continued liaison and facilitation from DPWM to continue the support.

Environmental sustainability:

223. The project was successful in securing the creation of JNP, its connection to BBWR through an extension, and the extension of KWNP, securing important riparian, mangrove, brackish swamp, grassland and forest habitats. The project worked successfully with local communities to achieve these extensions, on a co-management basis, recognizing the need for local access for certain resource uses, and engaging them through the PACs. This has provided a firm footing for managing external human pressures on the extended PAs and is relatively sustainable if DPWM have the resources to support the PACs going forward.
224. Potential threats to the project's environmental sustainability include: climate change impacts (especially severe drought, that may exacerbate bushfires and wetland

⁵⁹ Comment from ITA: Without the Operational Manual this is questionable? If there are not clear and equitable pathways to access the fund....the Operational Manual as it stands is not fit for purpose. It is not a sinking fund but should be replenished. In short it is a legitimate means to circumvent treasury rules and partially retain revenues. There are a number of dangers in this, not least that Parliament sees it as the means to finance protected areas and thus replace the annual subvention from central chest and the costs of administering the fund are greater than the benefits flowing into it (and out of it...).

encroachment); agricultural development that does not take account of ecological sensitivities (eg interrupting and channeling surface water flows, increasing nutrient loading of wetlands, excessive use of agrochemicals, introduction of invasive species); and infrastructure development (eg roads) that may fragment habitats and disturb wildlife.

Sustainability ratings table:

Sustainability	Rating
Financial resources	UL
Socio-political	ML
Institutional framework and governance	ML
Environmental	ML
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability ⁶⁰	UL

4.3.7 Country ownership

225. The project strategy was well aligned with the national environment and sustainable development policy and planning framework, including The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE 2012-2015), The Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy (2009-2015), and The Gambia Biodiversity Policy 2003 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.
226. One important output that the project supported was the development of the *Action Plan for Implementing the CBD Programme of Work for Protected Areas (2015-2025)* (revised version of 2018), which lays out the strategies, actions and budget needed for the country to develop its PA network. The project has also made major contributions towards its implementation through expanding the area of the national terrestrial PA estate by 15,000 ha to 7.4% of the land area, supporting a sustainable financing analysis for PA system management, conducting ecological surveys and strengthening the management of three key PAs. In addition, the Wildlife Act (2003) was updated with support from the project.
227. Relevant government representatives were involved during project implementation, with the Permanent Secretary / Deputy Permanent Secretary of MECCWW/MECCNAR chairing PEB meetings, and members including the Governors Offices for the two regions hosting the project sites, National Environment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture (NEMA project), Dept of Forestry, Dept of Fisheries, Dept of Community Development and DPWM. A senior staff of DPWM was the National Project Director. While the project document emphasized the role of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group (ANRWG) as the basis for an inter-sectoral project Technical Advisory Group, this did not take off, and there is little evidence of engagement with this working group during project implementation.
228. Overall, the recipient government maintained its financial commitments to the project, evident through the cofinancing analysis in section 4.2.3 above.

⁶⁰ All the risk dimensions of sustainability are critical. Therefore, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rated dimension. For example, if a project has an 'Unlikely' rating in any dimension, its overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than 'Unlikely'.

4.3.8 Gender equality and women's empowerment

229. The Gender Strategy section of the Project Document states that the project will adopt UNDP's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) not only as human rights, but also because they are a pathway to achieving the project's goal of protecting and managing biodiversity and natural resources on a sustainable basis. GEWE will be mainstreamed into project activities, ensuring that women have a real voice in project governance as well as implementation. The involvement of women is listed by project Output, but no targets or indicators are set beyond statements such as "Women will serve on technical, management and advisory committees and working groups as appropriate (Output 1.1)". Results Framework Process Indicator 03 concerns the involvement of women and youth. There is no gender analysis or gender action plan, no UNDP Gender Marker in the Project Document, and Part A of the SESP (which includes a description of the project's approach to gender equality and women's empowerment) was not completed and no SESP risks to women under Principle 2 were identified. This is clearly inadequate.
230. Reporting on gender equality and women's empowerment during implementation was also highly inadequate, making it difficult to understand what was actually contributed by the project in this field. There is no requirement for gender or safeguards reporting in the UNDP Quarterly and Annual Report templates used for this project, which represents an oversight on UNDP's part that should be corrected. Only one quarterly or annual progress report provided to the TE mentions the word "women" (Annual Report 2019). The PIR section on this subject provides just about the only coherent statement on gender as part of the M&E system.
231. In terms of the results areas where the project contributed to gender equality:
- a) *Contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources:* This did not appear to have been a focus for this project, in that there was no gender analysis that identified specific gaps to address, and no clear strategy that aimed to achieve specific changes. Incidental improvements to this subject area may have occurred through the project's contributions to the following categories.
 - b) *Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance:* The project had clear and positive influence on this subject, specifically through introducing the mandatory inclusion of women in the Protected Area Management governance system, with the mandatory requirement to have an equal balance of men and women selected from the surrounding communities in the Protected Area Committee for each PA. As far as the TE can ascertain, this was actually put into practice, and is an important precedent for PAs throughout the country.
 - c) *Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women:* The project made significant contributions in this area, and the project's SLM support targeted as priority women, and in particular women household heads. It was recognized by the project that women are the main natural resource users and they suffer most due to environmental degradation and impacts of climate change. Therefore, the provision of boreholes to allow dry season farming which is predominantly a women's activity was supported (men are predominantly engaged in rainy season production). Assistance to rice farmers also directly benefited women, because the cultivated areas under sustainable rice production are led by women farmers (about 95%). In addition, 20 women were trained in bee-

keeping and secondary processing of by-products (soap, body lotion, candles) extending to the establishment of Nyofelleh Women Beekeepers Association. Other interventions that primarily benefited women were the woodlots, and the distribution of 1,000 energy-saving stoves to reduce the use of fuelwood and cooking time.

In terms of cultivating drought resistant rice varieties, women were given the platform to make their own choice as regards the variety of rice, time to plant and choice of farm land. The women also were the majority in the mangrove planting exercise given that Oyster harvesting is predominantly women enterprise. The training in beekeeping and honey by-honey product value addition concentrated on women to provide them with additional income. Due to the cohesive nature of women groups, these activities contributed to environmental sustainability, income generation, food security and increased resilience to climate related shocks.

232. The PIRs for 2019 and 2020 set the Atlas Gender Marker Rating at **GEN1** - *some contribution to gender equality*. This rating appears fair, as there were indeed some positive contributions as mentioned above – although the project design, reporting framework and M&E system did very little to promote a more systematic and strategic approach towards gender empowerment and the empowerment of women by this project. The UNDP systems and oversight failed to adequately address these shortcomings.
233. Overall, the gender results achieved by the project are expected to help secure the project's environmental and resilience outcomes, in that women have been recognized as important stakeholders in the communities around the PAs, as users of natural resources (eg firewood collection, oyster harvesting) and farming practices (dominating rice farming and dry season cultivation practices) and included in the PACs on an equal footing to the men in their villages. The environmental awareness raising through community radio and meetings, engagement in SLM working groups, and various types of training provided resulted in increased recognition of the value of the PAs and their natural resources amongst women, which can be considered as a positive outcome.
234. The introduction of salt-tolerant rice through women at Jokadu NP is important for climate resilience, as salinization is occurring as a climate change impact, related to increased saltwater intrusion up the Gambia River. The women involved are highly satisfied with the initial results of cultivation, experiencing higher yields than with other varieties of rice and improved income as a result⁶¹.
235. The PACs provide an institutionalized mechanism for continuing the engagement of women in the management of the PAs in the long term, therefore this can be considered a sustainable outcome. This links to the women in the same communities involved in the project-supported SLM and livelihood activities such as beekeeping, providing them with a voice in PA decision making. DPWM are continuing to seek engagement in rural development projects around the PAs (eg the IFAD/ROOTS project⁶²) so that there are further opportunities to support and extend SLM practices and community development. Ideally, it would be helpful to have one or more post-project SLM coordinator / liaison positions to

⁶¹ Note – the yields and income were not monitored, therefore this is a qualitative assessment based on TE interviews with the women concerned.

⁶² <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41384571>

facilitate the development of these connections, and to maintain support to the communities on environmental awareness raising and sustainable livelihood practices.

4.3.9 Cross-cutting Issues

Social and environmental safeguards / rights-based approach

236. The Environmental and Social Safeguards section of the Project Document notes that the project received Pre-Screening in its early stages and full screening at CEO Endorsement submission (ProDoc Annex 4). However, inexplicably, the SESP fails to describe the project's approach towards human rights, environmental sustainability and gender equality and women's empowerment. It identified three risks in the human rights category as low, and there was little or no follow up on these during implementation. The Project Document notes that changes in land use to achieve improved sustainability may affect for example people hunting and gathering firewood, requiring the provision of alternatives. Results Framework Process Indicator 04 concerns human rights, but no baselines or targets were set and no monitoring data are available.
237. Despite these gaps in project design, the project has had an overall positive impact on the communities surrounding the three targeted PAs, through their engagement in PA governance via the PAC for each PA, and direct benefits through targeted SLM and livelihood activities supported by the project, including: 15 SLM demonstration farms across 15 villages, improved access to water supply through boreholes, community woodlots at BBWR and JNP, salt-tolerant rice variety introduction at JNP, bee-keeping at JNP, oyster farming, mangrove planting and the distribution of 1,000 fuel-efficient cook-stoves.
238. A potential risk was identified at KWNP during implementation relating to the extension of KWNP, when land ownership issues were encountered in the western part of the PA, mainly by two villages. The DPWM director and team held dialogues with the villages, resulting in the exclusion of a portion of an existing forest park, which was compensated for by the inclusion of another area in Jali with the consent of the community. No other grievances were reported to the knowledge of the TE.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

239. The Assumptions and Risks section of the Project Document lists one low-rated risk as: 'the diverse impacts of climate change on natural and productive ecosystems and species-level biodiversity may undermine the project objectives'. Mitigation of this risk involved integrating climate change in the planning and execution of project activities, building on the recommendations of the NEA/UNEP-WCMC/GEF PARCC project⁶³, under which climate change was integrated into the management plans of 6 out of 9 PAs in The Gambia at that time (including BBWR and KWNP). However, no national level climate vulnerability assessment was conducted and important questions remained regarding national-scale impacts and adaptation measures.
240. The PoWPA Action Plan (2018) includes a section on climate change resilience and adaptation assessment, which lists a number of initiatives taken by DPWM to address this subject, including planting mangroves (as conducted by the project at JNP and BBWR), restoring degraded farm fields and encouraging climate-smart agriculture (as supported

⁶³ <http://parcc.protectedplanet.net/en/general-project-information/project-background>

under the SLM demonstrations of this project), and the Bio-Climate Education Center, located in Dumbuto Village, Kiang West led by Sahel Wetland Concern - a combination of wildlife sanctuary, bee farm, education center (conference hall, library and office) and nursery. The PoWPA Action Plan also states that METT and RAPPAM are used to assess PA vulnerability to climate change and its related problems in individual PAs. However, this is inadequate in the TE's view, as assessing climate resilience is not the primary purpose of these tools, and it requires more specific attention, informed by climate change vulnerability assessments. The management plans for the three reserves include actions that can be considered climate adaptive (eg planting 200 ha mangroves at JNP), but they all lack an articulated strategy on climate resilience that will respond to specific identified climate-related impacts (eg saline intrusion, more intense drought periods, less predictable rains).

241. Overall, the project has improved the climate resilience of the PAs through measures such as the planting of mangroves. The surrounding communities have also benefited in terms of improved resilience through awareness raising efforts, engagement in PA governance, support for climate-smart agriculture practices, provision of solar-powered borehole water supply for SLM demonstration plots and park headquarter areas, provision of woodlots for fuelwood supply, salt-tolerant rice varieties at JNP, and supplementary income generating activities such as bee-keeping. The project has also assisted community engagement in fire management – a major threat to the PAs that is likely to intensify with climate warming and drought occurrence.

Poverty-environmental nexus

242. The Project Document notes that The Gambia is an LDC ranking 172 out of 187 countries for 2013 according to the Human Development Index, and that poverty remains a major challenge with nearly half of the population earning less than USD 1.25 per day. The Gambia Incorporated Vision 2020, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment provide the national strategic framework and objectives for elaboration of sub-sectoral policies and strategies in the agricultural and natural resources sector, with the latter Program having the objective to eradicate poverty through economic growth, addressing income inequalities and poverty reduction interventions. With very high dependency on land and natural resources for livelihoods, the increasing population size, droughts and poor agricultural practices threaten both livelihoods and the environment. Specific environmental threats related to poverty include: reliance on fuelwood for energy, timber for construction, unsustainable agricultural practices including shifting cultivation, hunting for bushmeat and overgrazing pressures. The project's focus on elevating sustainable land use and co-management of natural resources for communities near PAs sought to address these threats.
243. While there was no stated aim to focus on the most vulnerable members of the communities during the project's SLM interventions, the project's efforts did provide benefits to a substantial number of people within those communities. Examples include: the 1,000 fuel-efficient stoves distributed to households, which assuming an average of ten people per household would have benefited over 8,000 people due to the extended-family system that prevails in rural Gambia⁶⁴; the sustainable production of rice ensured through the supply of

⁶⁴ For example, see:

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/ageing/household_size_and_composition_around_the_world_2017_data_booklet.pdf

appropriate and salinity-tolerant rice varieties for existing farms within PA boundaries, contributing towards food security at the household level - the project claims that several thousand people benefited directly and indirectly from the rice cultivated in these project areas; the project claims that about 5,000 people benefited from the woodlots programme; 20 farmers were trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products (soap, body lotion, candles) extending to the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association as an income generating activity and source of livelihood. There was no monitoring of socio-economic status or incomes among the targeted communities, therefore no quantitative data are available on changes in these conditions. However, it is likely that the project's promotion of sustainable land use and co-management of natural resources for communities near PAs reduced threats such as cutting of trees for fuelwood and timber, and provided more secure income and food security through climate resilient farming practices. While the intended integration of the project with the NEMA project did not happen, collaboration continued with NEMA and a number of other organizations conducting SLM and community development activities around the PAs, and there is potential for such collaborative work to continue in future if it is facilitated effectively by DPWM.

Capacity development

244. This project included a variety of capacity development aims, relating to improving the management effectiveness of protected areas, governance of natural resources management and sustainable land management, broken down across various outputs. The results can be summarized as follows:
245. Output 2.1 aimed to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities for PA governance at central, community and PA levels; this included three training courses on PA management – for PA staff of 8 PAs including the project sites; for 26 community representatives; and for 29 staff of NGO / CBOs, and additional training course on data collection for PA management planning. However, more in-depth training such as professional certification in wildlife management is needed for DPWM staff, as there is a lack of institutionalized professional development. This was clearly beyond the means of this MSP, and it requires attention from a well-resourced programmatic approach, perhaps at a regional level. Similarly, the small increment in METT scores for the two existing targeted PAs over the baseline is an indication that there was little advance in overall management capacity for these sites beyond clear improvements in park infrastructure, co-management arrangements and engagement of surrounding communities. There remains a need for further investment in all three PAs, especially to ensure that the new buildings, water and solar power systems are maintained, and for provision of vehicles for park staff. More in-depth and systematic professional training of the park staff is also an important need.
246. Output 3.1 aimed to mainstream biodiversity, NRM and SLM into the NEMA project – this was cancelled quite early in the project, after it became clear that NEMA could not work within PAs and the PMU was embedded in the DPWM. National mainstreaming efforts through the TAG and ANRWG made little headway.
247. Output 3.2 aimed to build the capacity of local communities for NRM and SLM activities; this included training of 20 people in bee-keeping skills, training of opinion leaders to create an understanding of the value of biodiversity, the need for sustainable management

and the role of the community, a capacity building workshop for 33 participants over 3 days to build capacity of VDC members towards better management of the PAs for the benefit of the communities surrounding the parks, SLM Identification and Planning workshop in Kerewan, and training for the 15 farmers receiving the SLM packages. No information is available in project reports on other NRM and SLM training activities, and it seems likely that this record is incomplete. Overall, the SLM engagement was hugely delayed during project implementation, only really getting started in 2019-20. Once efforts were focused, progress was made and the final results were positive – but it is clear that much more could have been achieved if work had started earlier, been more efficiently coordinated and included stronger measures to secure post-project sustainability.

248. Output 3.3 aimed to build capacity for environmental monitoring - this was cancelled, as it was far too ambitious for the project resources available and existing staff capacity within DPWM. It would not have been sustainable.

249. Output 4.1 aimed to enshrine community-based SLM and NRM through agreements with DPWM, supported by an awareness-raising campaign. The Heads of Agreement were not pursued, as in DPWM's view, their system of consulting with and engaging communities in PA governance as part of PA establishment could be seamlessly continued through the same structures, known as Protected Area Committees. DPWM assert that it would not have been realistic to pursue separate agreements with the more than 60 communities around the PAs. However, the awareness raising was conducted as planned and apparently was quite successful based on reports (again, no indicators were applied to demonstrate changes in awareness levels). The project held three opinion leaders meetings with Alkalos (traditional chiefs), politicians and Governors. The project also established two working groups one for PAs and the other for SLM. Through these mechanisms the awareness and understanding of local communities in PA management has been enhanced. The PACs for each of the three PAs have been established, engaging representatives from all the adjacent communities including equal proportions of women and men, and have received some basic training for co-management.

4.3.10 GEF Additionality

250. GEF additionality is defined as the additional outcome (both environmental and otherwise) that can be directly associated with the GEF-supported project. The text below follows UNDP (2020) guidance questions.

Are the outcomes related to the incremental reasoning?

251. The overall project outcomes are consistent with the original approved project design, the main difference being that some were reduced in scope (eg removal of national level mainstreaming effort with NEMA project and ANRWG, the environmental monitoring output, and Heads of Agreement with communities), or scaled back (SLM and livelihood activities had to be focused on few very specific activities that would still achieve some impact). The tables below substantiate the incremental environmental benefits achieved by the project.

o Are there quality quantitative and verifiable data demonstrating the incremental environmental benefits?

252. The intended global environmental benefits of the GEF Alternative incremental reasoning described in the project document (pp27-28) are supported by verifiable data in a number of cases (**Table 11**).

Table 11. Quantitative and verifiable data demonstrating project global environmental benefits

No.	Global Environmental Benefit	Quantitative and verifiable data demonstrating GEBs
1	National PA system expanded from 64,276 ha to 79,276 ha (+23%).	The national PA system has been expanded by 24,013.41 ha of PA extensions, exceeding the targeted 15,000 ha by 9,013.41 ha. This increases the national PA estate from the baseline figure of 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha. This increases the PA system's area of coverage of the Gambia's territorial area to 7.4%. It should be noted that these expansion areas remain to be legally gazetted, although the extended areas have been surveyed and demarcated on the ground.
2	Improved management effectiveness of the 3 targeted PAs (JNP, BBWR, KWNP), covering 63,554 ha after expansion.	The three targeted PAs have benefited from improved management effectiveness, according to repeat METT assessments conducted in July 2019 (one year before project completion), although the increments for KWNP (up 7 points to = 11.86%) and BBWR (up 9 points to = 16.07%) were below the 20% target, while JNP increased from a nominal 5 to at least 40. Surprisingly, the METT scores at project completion in July 2020 showed declines for KWNP (48 – below the 2015 baseline of 59) and BBWR (47, same as the 2015 baseline of 47), while JNP increased to 51. It is questionable whether the METTs were conducted consistently across years, and that the scores were a true reflection of the status of management effectiveness, yet it is also clear that the human capacity of the PAs remained low at project completion, despite advances in headquarter buildings, equipment, management planning, community engagement, awareness raising and boundary marking.
3	Extent and quality of globally relevant natural habitats, especially closed forests as well as wetlands frequented by resident and migrant bird species, maintained or improved.	Monitoring of habitats and species was not conducted except annual waterbird counts, therefore changes in the extent and condition of habitats, and of species population status were largely not determined.
4	Population status of several globally significant species maintained or increased, e.g. Dry Zone Mahogany, Muninga, Red Colobus.	Systematic monitoring of globally significant species was not conducted, therefore changes in species population status were not determined.
5	Improved land and natural resource management by local communities inside and in buffer of targeted PAs, resulting in a reduction of: unsustainable wood / mangrove extraction; land conversion for	The project provided targeted support to 28 VDCs through provision of 1,000 energy-saving cooking stoves for women's groups across BBRW; a bee-keeping group was supported in Jokadu; 15 SLM farmer field packages, ten boreholes with solar pumping systems and elevated water tanks, and engagement of 61 communities through PACs. It is likely that these measures will result in reduced incidence of illegal activities within the PAs, collection of firewood, land conversion inside the PAs and incidence of

	shifting cultivation; and incidence and severity of wild and forest fires.	man-induced fires, as indicated by local stakeholders to the TE. However, it is too early to say whether these measures have had any influence on reducing threats to biodiversity within the targeted PAs. The related threats were not covered by Results Framework indicators or systematically monitored, therefore no data are available.
6	Protection and restoration of forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster, and of ecosystem goods and services within PAs, including: wood, fish and oyster stocks, fish recruitment zones, biodiversity habitat, tourism attractions, soil protection, water provision (quality and quantity), carbon sequestration.	Protection and restoration of forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster, and of ecosystem goods and services within PAs – this cannot be quantified as relevant monitoring of habitats and ecosystem goods and services was not conducted. In purely qualitative terms, it is likely that the surveyed and demarcated boundaries and gazettement of the PA extension areas, coupled with involvement of adjacent communities in the PACs and awareness raising activities will indeed provide greater protection for natural habitats, allowing their regeneration and connectivity. Mangrove seedlings have been planted at BBWR and JNP.

o Do self-evaluations provide evidence of the outcomes achieved in creating a more supportive environment as envisaged at the endorsement stage?

Table 12. Evidence of Outcome achievement from self-evaluations

Outcome Description	Evidence of achievement from self-evaluations
Outcome 1 - Gazettement of a c. 5,000 ha expansion of JNP to connect to BBWR, and of a c.10,000 ha expansion of KWNP.	<p>This outcome has been achieved through 24,013.41 ha of PA extensions, exceeding the targeted 15,000 ha by 9,013.41 ha, as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. KWNP extension is 12,098.41 ha making total of 11,523.01 + 12,098.41 = 23,621.42 ha (Jali area originally included a portion of an existing forest park which has now been excluded but compensated by the inclusion of another area in Jali with the consent of the community) 2. BBWR extension is 7,650 ha making total of 22,000 + 7,650 = 29,650 ha. 3. JNP extension by 4,265 ha making total of 15,028 + 4,265 = 19,293 ha. <p>The new extensions only become official after legal gazettement.</p>
Outcome 2 - Enhanced management effectiveness in both existing and added PA areas.	<p>The enhanced level of management effectiveness of the three targeted PAs is indicated by increased METT scores recorded in July 2019 (one year before project closure) as follows: KWNP = 66 (up 7 points = 11.86%); BBWR = 56 (up 9 points = 16.07%) – both of which are below the 20% target, while JNP increased from a nominal 5 to at least 40. Thus, the improvements in management effectiveness for KWNP and BBWR are marginal, while JNP has clearly progressed. It remains a question to what extent can DPWM financially support the staffing and operational costs required to fully implement the PA management plans, maintain infrastructure, engage adjacent communities, and provide continuing professional development for PA staff to ensure that PA management effectiveness is maintained and further advanced.</p>
Outcome 3 - Improved forest cover, habitat integrity and connectivity across the targeted PA cluster and	<p>Monitoring data are not available to conclude that significant improvements in natural ecosystem health and integrity have taken place during the project period. However 9,000 seedlings have been planted in Jokadu, where the 20-bed</p>

surrounding landscapes (c. 60,000 ha).	nursery established at Kuntair camp produced seedlings that were distributed to communities for planting. The additional 90,000 Gmelina stumps, and 2,500 Acacia seedlings purchased were planted in July 2019 mainly in the 2 woodlots established but also some were also given to the communities. A total of 20 communities benefited, receiving 5,075 stumps/seedlings per community. Mangrove seedlings have also been planted at BBWR and JNP in collaboration with NEMA.
Outcome 4 - Enhanced diversity, sustainability and reliability of community livelihoods.	In addition to the project support mentioned above, NEMA have established a woodlot in Jokadu and have planted seedlings of mangroves in BBWR and JNP. Outside the PAs, NEMA has also engaged farmers in rice production and horticulture. About 1,000 households within the surrounding communities have been provided with energy saving cook stoves mainly for women's groups across BBWR, contributing to reduced use of firewood. A Bee-keeping group was supported in Jokadu and 7 bee-hives were procured and training provided to members in addition to the equipping of the 20 trained beekeepers. Fifteen farmers supporting about 120 family members spread across three communities, have received assistance packages for SLM demonstration plots and the adoption of conservation tillage. The sinking of 10 boreholes and supply of solar pumping equipment supports these demonstrations and assists their sustainability and local replication.

• **Can the outcomes be attributed to the GEF contribution as originally anticipated?**

253. It is clear that the project has been responsible for preparing outputs that have contributed towards generating the above-mentioned global environmental benefits and socio-economic benefits. These include the revision of the Action Plan for PoWPA 2015-2025, surveying, demarcation and submission of PA extension area boundaries, development of PA management plans, training and awareness activities, SLM support and formation of PA co-management committees with adjacent communities. While NEMA and other initiatives involving NGOs (see Annex 7 on cofinanced activities at the project sites) have supported livelihood activities in particular, these can legitimately be claimed as parallel cofinancing that contributed towards the project objective.

• **Are the outcomes sustainable?**

254. See section 4.3.6 on Sustainability. Some aspects are clearly sustainable – the gazetted extensions to the existing PAs, and creation of Jokadu NP, while the sustainability of others will depend to a large extent on how the IP can continue to provide support through its annual budget and coordination with related projects. Most critically, the maintenance of new infrastructure in the three PAs, implementation of their management plans, and continued communication and support for adjacent communities will require ongoing financial commitments that DPWM is unlikely to be able to provide, especially in view of COVID19 impacts on government budgets. Partnership with related projects such as the upcoming IFAD ROOTS project and NGO initiatives will therefore be important to sustain these outcomes.

o If broader impact was anticipated, is there evidence at the completion stage that such a broadening is beginning to occur, or actions towards the broadening have been taken?

255. The project sought to introduce biodiversity-friendly sustainable land and natural resource management practices into the NEMA project. While this was dropped at a fairly early stage due to valid reasons, collaboration between DPWM and MoA/NEMA continued and some direct and indirect contributions towards the project objective occurred, such as support for mangrove planting, that are included in the cofinancing assessment. DPWM say they have provided input to the design of a follow up project to NEMA called IFAD/ROOTS, which will support climate-resilient agricultural development around the three PAs. In addition, there is evidence of interest in replication of project activities within and beyond the targeted communities, including beekeeping, the SLM farmer field packages, community woodlots and salt-tolerant rice varieties. See next section for further information.

4.3.11 Catalytic/Replication Effect

256. There are several project outputs that offer potential for scaling up or replicating the project's approaches. First is the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 that was revised in 2018, which provides a budgeted plan for the development of the national PA system. It includes measures for sustainable financing of the national PA system based on an analysis supported by the project, as well as ecological survey results that were used to inform PA system gap analysis across the country. Therefore, overall these project supported approaches will enable DPWM to meet its obligations under CBD towards the development of the PA system through their application at national level.
257. Secondly, the PA management plans completed for JNP, in draft for BBWR (co-financed) and revised for KWNP provide useful models for further PAs. The PoWPA Action Plan (2018) notes that eight ICCAs have by-laws and management plan development in progress, and eight out-dated management plans also exist for other parks and reserves, including the three PAN project PAs. The experience gained in developing the management plans under the PAN project provides potential for replication of such plans for other PAs under the PoWPA Action Plan.
258. Thirdly, while the project had limited resources for SLM work in communities adjacent to the three PAs, the concept of the farmer field packages was used to demonstrate SLM/conservation tillage approaches on small, manageable pieces of land that could be better managed and protected from destruction by erosion and degradation, with correspondingly higher yields. These were applied to 1 hectare plots across 15 communities, and were deliberately designed to be replicable, in order to enable DPWM to scale-up the demonstrations after project-end in collaboration with rural development initiatives around the PAs. These packages have had a positive impact for those farming households involved (as far as can be ascertained at project completion), and the inclusion of solar powered boreholes for water supply is attractive for supporting clusters of SLM activities (as far as pumping capacity allows). The IFAD ROOTS project that will start up in early 2021 could offer an opportunity for replicating and scaling up the approach around the PAs as DPWM has provided input to the project plans. In addition, people from other communities around Bao Bolong WR have expressed interest in establishing woodlots in their respective communities, and at Jokadu NP, a community-based beekeeping association (Niofelleh Kumukunda Kafoo)

has been formed, and there has been interest from other people in learning how to practise beekeeping.

259. Regarding knowledge products and knowledge transfer, the project did not conduct any case studies, only stakeholder participatory trainings and consultative meetings on PA management and SLM. The outcomes of numerous training sessions, and lessons learnt, were documented and reports were reportedly deposited in the DPWM Library⁶⁵. Project reports and information made available to the TE are listed in **Annex 4**. However, there is very little that could be described as key knowledge products, and the project's online presence is also minimal – even on MECCNAR's website. Overall, it is clear that the project's communications were focused on the communities and other stakeholders around the project sites, with a strong emphasis on radio broadcasts, meetings and awareness events. Little communication was directed at national level or online, therefore outreach through printed and electronic media were minimal.

4.3.12 Progress to Impact

260. This section evaluates progress towards the long-term impact outlined in the project's intervention logic and the extent to which long-term impact can be attributed to the project.

- *Environmental stress reduction*

261. There were no project indicators or monitoring of environmental stresses, therefore no data are available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, it is likely that the engagement of surrounding communities in the co-management of the three PAs, the associated awareness raising, and support provided for sustainable livelihoods and SLM coupled with marking of PA boundaries on the ground and increased management effectiveness of PA staff will have resulted in shifts in attitudes of local residents towards greater appreciation of the purpose of the PAs, resulting in reduced illegal activities and threats such as fires. The provision of 1,000 fuel efficient cook-stoves and development of community woodlots should reduce fuelwood consumption and related emissions at a local level. It is likely that continued efforts by DPWM to provide communications, awareness raising and facilitate livelihood support will be required to sustain these impacts, which given chronic government budget constraints and COVID19 impacts on this budget, will need to be bolstered by support from other projects and organizations.

- *Environmental status change*

262. There were no project indicators or monitoring of changes in environmental status, therefore no data are available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the addition of over 24,000 ha of lands under PA co-management will help to secure the habitats and wildlife present in these areas. Without such protection, it is quite likely that land conversion will occur, resulting in losses of mangrove, dryland forest, wetland and grassland habitats and their associated species. The project also planted significant amounts of mangrove propagules in some of the degraded wetlands, which provided some shade, habitat, food for aquatic species such as crabs, fish etc. With the restoration of wetland goods and services, the community has indicated that their well-being and economy has grown/improved. The management of the PAs including the new extension areas is guided by the PA management plans, which DPWM can only partially support due to its

⁶⁵ According to PIR 2020 - the TE has not seen these reports.

budget constraints. While these areas are now secure, active management will be needed to ensure enforcement of regulations and to address specific threats such as bushfires.

- *Contributions to changes in policy/legal/regulatory frameworks, including observed changes in capacities and governance architecture, including access to and use of information*

263. The project achieved positive results in this area, including: revision of the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025, revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Law 2003 (in 2020), establishment of Jokadu NP and extension of BBWR and KWNP, development of management plans for all three sites (BBWR in draft still), also some improvements in infrastructure and management effectiveness of the three PAs – especially Jokadu NP. This included the establishment of PA Committees for the three PAs involving 61 surrounding communities as a basis for co-management. These measures have a high degree of permanence once established, although the PACs will require constant communication and nurturing to remain functional and engaged.

- *Contributions to changes in socio-economic status*

264. There were no project indicators or monitoring of changes in socio-economic status, therefore no data are available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the 61 communities around the three PAs total an estimated 70,000 people, of which the project benefited a portion through a variety of livelihood-related interventions, including provision of saline-tolerant rice varieties to 15 women at JNP, who distributed the varieties to more women in their respective communities – this offered food and income directly to farmers and equally provided much needed seed bank for posterity; a bee-keeping group was supported in Jokadu, where training provided to members in addition to the equipping of the 20 farmers who have been trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products, extending to the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association - the tangible economic benefits accrued to these farmers include cash from the sale of honey and its by-products (soap and body lotion), nutritional improvement for the rural people and pollination services of bees, which enhances production and livelihoods; provision of 1,000 energy-saving cook stoves across BBRW, benefiting about 1,000 households – using these stoves will also reduce the burden of having to fetch bundles of firewood on a regular basis, which brings quality-of life improvements, especially for women; 15 farmers identified to receive farmer packages for 1 ha farms (120 indirect beneficiaries) – including fencing, 10 boreholes with solar powered pumps and storage tanks - these model demonstrations focus on small, manageable pieces of land that could be better managed and protected from destruction by erosion and degradation, with correspondingly higher yields; two community woodlots were established, and seedlings given to communities, benefiting some 20 communities, receiving 5075 stumps/seedlings per community. The permanence of these developments will largely depend on the extent to which DPWM is able to facilitate connections with other projects such as the large IFAD ROOTS project starting up in January 2021, as well as NGO activities.

265. The main barriers and risks that may prevent further progress towards long-term impact concern the low financial sustainability and the lack of capacity in DPWM to support the national PA system and management of the three targeted PAs (see 4.3.6) and to maintain support to the surrounding communities for co-management of these areas and continued reduction of external threats through regular communications, awareness raising, and facilitation of SLM and sustainable livelihoods. In addition, COVID19 has potential to have major negative impacts for the sustainability of the project outcomes, through: reduction in annual budget allocations to DWNP as a result of shifts in government priorities (a 30% budget reduction is anticipated in

2021); reduction in tourist visitation to protected areas in Gambia (affecting revenue generation); and local impacts on communities related to national economic changes (unemployment, economic recession), movement restrictions and direct health impacts.

5 Main Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

5.1 Main Findings

266. The terminal evaluation in August-November 2020 examined all aspects of the PAN Project – strategy and design; supervision and management arrangements for implementation; project finances; use of basic project management tools; and implementation progress and achievements over the five years from 2015 to 2020. The evaluation has rated the quality of *Monitoring and Evaluation* at entry, during implementation and overall; and the quality of *Project Implementation/Oversight provided by UNDP, Project Execution by the Implementing Partner* and *Overall Implementation/Execution*. The main evaluation criteria for project Outcomes were the *Relevance*, necessity or importance of the Project in the Gambia; the *Efficiency* with which the Project has been organised, supervised, financed, administered and activities delivered, considering the time and resources available; the *Effectiveness* of Project design, management and implementation, in contributing to achievement of the agreed objectives and expected or planned results; the *Results/Impacts* achieved by the Project; and the *Sustainability* of the achievements and impacts of the Project, after the Project has been concluded. In addition, the evaluation examined the project's contributions to *Gender and Women's Empowerment*, and *Cross-cutting Issues* of climate change mitigation and adaptation, capacity development, and the poverty-environment nexus. The ratings for each of the evaluation criteria are summarized in the table below, based on the detailed findings in **Section 4** above.

Table 13. Evaluation Ratings table

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)		
M&E design at entry	MU	The cornerstone of M&E in GEF projects is the Results Framework, which in the case of this project was seriously inadequate in a number of respects, including indicators that were not SMART, absent baselines and targets, and confusing structure. In addition, the measurement methodologies for the indicators were not fully described, posing further challenges for efficient implementation. No provision was made for a mid-term review as this was a GEF Medium-Sized Project (although it could have been included to strengthen M&E). The M&E budget was within normal limits, but in reality not quite sufficient at USD 46,000, or 3.47% of the GEF budget.

⁶⁶ 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)

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
M&E Plan Implementation	MU	<p>The monitoring systems used by the project followed established UNDP and GEF procedures. The PIRs followed the standard GEF format, but in some cases included very limited information from the project team and some sections were incomplete (eg critical risks). Overall, the implementation of M&E during the project diverged from the project document M&E plan as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project launch meeting in July 2015 did not fulfil the intended purpose of a project inception workshop, and there was no project team in place at this time. Consequently, it was only in September 2016 – some 14 months later – that the project design was analysed in detail and recommendations made to rectify its shortcomings; • There were no quarterly progress reports for 2015-16; • Other gaps in M&E documentation include: no annual report for 2017; no quarterly progress reports for Q2 and Q3 2018, all of 2019 and 2020; • There was no project terminal report to inform the terminal evaluation, many other reports were not immediately provided, and the updated GEF tracking tools were only made available two months into the terminal evaluation. <p>The Project Executive Board was constituted as planned, and met six times during the extended project period of 60 months – this was inadequate for the needs of the project and the minutes lack clear decisions, action points and responsibilities for follow up. Therefore, while the PEB was functional it was not effective in providing timely guidance, constraining the ability of the project team to benefit from higher level decision-making on the implementation of project interventions. In addition, no mid-term review was conducted for the project, which could be considered a missed opportunity to rectify problems.</p>
Overall Quality of M&E	MU	<p>Overall M&E quality was weak, with critical risks not well monitored or even recorded in the PIR. Implementation including M&E was affected by chronic capacity challenges and weak ownership of the project on the side of the main IP and weak leadership at the level of the Department, while the UNDP CO should have been more proactive in ensuring that UNDP Results Based Management standards were applied during implementation including training for the relevant project staff. The progress reports and PIRs do not report on process indicators relating to gender and social inclusion and give very little impression of attention to monitoring and assessment of the perspectives of women and men involved and affected by the project, or of relevant groups' (including women, indigenous peoples, children, elderly, disabled, and poor) involvement with</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		the project and the impact on them. The project lacked staff capacity for this purpose (no M&E or gender specialist). None of the Impact or IRRF indicators are gender-disaggregated. There is also no evidence of inclusive, innovative or participatory monitoring systems in use.
Implementation & Execution		
Quality of UNDP Implementation/Oversight	MS	<p>During the main implementation period, UNDP's role in relation to M&E experienced some inadequacies, including weak reporting of indicators and critical risks in the PIRs and follow up on issues identified in the PIRs, infrequent PEB meetings, gaps in other M&E deliverables such as Quarterly Progress Reports, project Terminal Report and timely provision of project results for the TE. Many progress reports and PEB meeting minutes were of poor quality, hindering effective decision-making and follow up. Overall, UNDP Results Based Management standards were not consistently applied during implementation. Reporting and management of gender mainstreaming and environmental and social risks was inadequate. The weak oversight of project implementation is recognized in the PIRs, noting also that this is also related to the weak capacity and ownership of the IP. Given the significant challenges that the project faced, it is somewhat surprising that the RTAs did not visit to facilitate more direct action in resolving project challenges, especially after poor PIR ratings were given in successive years and risk levels were rated substantial in two PIRs.</p> <p>One other key area that impacted progress in implementation was the protracted delays experienced in approval of annual workplan budgets (e.g. 6 month delay in 2018), RDPs and procurements. These were affected by the periods without a project financial administrator and weak ownership and capacity of the IP/PMU to prepare the necessary documentation to the standard required. UNDP CO staff assisted the PMU in completing the necessary paperwork, while delays were also experienced due to different levels of checks within the UNDP system.</p>
Quality of Implementing Partner Execution	MU	<p>There were significant project management capacity constraints at DPWM, one of the key problems being lack of provision for the remuneration of the project coordinator who led the project and that resulted in serious implementation challenges. As a result there were motivational challenges and overall weak ownership of the project by the IP that affected the whole project direction, coordination, implementation and reporting. As reflected in the PIRs, the project struggled to make progress during certain periods of implementation as it was hit by successive problems. However, overall it retained its focus on achieving key results in terms of the creation of Jokadu NP and extension of Bao Bolong WR and Kiang West NP, development of the park management infrastructure and management plans for these sites, and engagement of adjacent communities in securing the PA extensions and co-management</p>

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		arrangements, supported by limited livelihood inputs, and these were mostly achieved by project closure. Implementation oversight through the PEB was weak, with infrequent meetings, constraining the ability of the project team to benefit from higher level decision-making on the implementation of project interventions, and management of project risks. The quality of reporting overall was poor, hindering effective M&E. Capacity for financial management within the PMU was challenged by the absence of a financial administrator for extended periods, which UNDP had to cover for, and which were also related to delays in approvals of budgets, RDPs and procurement contracts. Project finances also experienced delays in approval with the Ministry, and the two audit reports included a series of issues requiring urgent attention. Some financial issues remain to be addressed.
Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	MU	The implementation of this project was subject to a succession of challenges, right from its very inception. Some of these were external, such as the West Africa Ebola Outbreak in 2014-15, the political instability in 2016-17 and the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, while others were internal, notably the chronic capacity challenges within the IP, and application of UNDP bureaucratic rules in the context of the prevailing conditions in-country. Much of the implementation did not go smoothly, as reflected in the successive PIR ratings (Table 8), therefore the TE has to reflect this accordingly – it was below a satisfactory level overall, although in the end the project was completed and it did achieve some significant results.
Assessment of Outcomes		
Relevance	S	The project responded to a clear conservation need: the significant and growing pressure on natural resources and the conversion of natural ecosystems in the Gambia and the project design responded appropriately to the identified threats and barriers through the twin strategies proposed in the two Components. The project design was well aligned with the selected GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies BD-1 (PA system sustainability) through its aims to expand Gambia's PA network by 15,000 ha and increase management effectiveness of the three targeted PAs; and with BD-2 (mainstreaming) through mainstreaming biodiversity, PAs, SLM and NRM into the NEMA agricultural project. It also supported CBD's PoWPA objectives and was well aligned with CBD Aichi Targets 5, 11 and 12; SDG 15 - Life on Land, with lesser contributions towards other SDGs; the UNDP strategy for The Gambia and the 2012-2016 UNDAF Outcome 3.0; and the 2012-2016 CPAP, Outcome 2 and Output 2.3. The project's objectives were also well aligned with national development priorities, policies and plans. Revision of the PoWPA Action Plan (2018) and Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 (in 2020), and expanding the national PA system at the project sites are highly relevant to national priorities (NBSAP, Gambia Biodiversity Policy 2003). Its contribution to biodiversity mainstreaming in the agriculture

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		sector was almost negligible, however. Stakeholders were engaged during project development, and during implementation, the extensive formal consultation process involving all affected communities during the formation of JNP and extension of BBWR and KWNP took account of local concerns and resulted in the basis of a system for co-management of the three PAs through the PACs. The SLM and livelihood interventions were directly relevant to local needs, although limited by resource constraints.
Effectiveness	MS	The table of project achievements against results framework indicator targets in Annex 14 and the conclusions in section 4.3.1 on progress towards objectives provide significant information on the extent of progress against planned targets (although many targets were not defined at all, or were vague and difficult to measure). Therefore the results are summarized in Table 10 . This reveals that both Objective-level impact indicators were achieved; one out of five IRRF sub-indicators (treated at Objective-level) was fully achieved, three partially achieved and one cancelled; the single impact indicator for Outcome 1 was achieved; indicators for Outcome 2 were mixed, with one achieved, one partially achieved and one cancelled; Outcome 3 results were also mixed with two achieved, two partially achieved and one not achieved; and for Outcome 4 one indicator was achieved and one partially achieved. In total, eight indicators (44.4%) were considered fully achieved, seven (38.9%) partially achieved, one not achieved (5.6%) and two cancelled(11.1%). Thus overall, 83.3% of indicators showed full or partial progress towards the planned targets. Five of the seven Outputs were partially achieved and two were cancelled.
Efficiency	MU	Due to a combination of factors, the overall management of the project cannot be described as efficient due to significant delays in implementation, difficulties in disbursing GEF funds in a timely manner, and ineffective adaptive management. Disbursement of project funds was impacted by factors including the weak capacity of the PMU to prepare documentation to UNDP standards, the absence of the financial administrator position in the PMU for extended periods, the disunity and poor communications between project management partners, and bureaucratic delays within UNDP. Protracted staff recruitment and financial delays did have an impact on implementation progress. The lack of a fully staffed PMU in the first year of the project (2015-2016) meant that the main focus was on procurement of equipment rather than field activities. Delays related to approval of annual workplans and budgets (eg 6 month delay in 2018) were significant and impacted field activities, leading to the need for a 12 month project extension to complete a range of outputs. Project delivery by the end of July 2019 fell far short of the project targets (especially the SLM work), disbursement of GEF funds was far from complete (\$925,127 or 64.05% had been disbursed by 30 June 2019), therefore the extension of 12 months was required to allow

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		significant progress towards objectives to be achieved – as was the case in reality (notwithstanding the COVID19 outbreak in early 2020). There were also significant weaknesses in M&E design and application that UNDP was slow and ineffective in addressing. Audit reports noted substantial variance in both under and over-spending of budget lines related to unrealistic planning estimates. The support for SLM and livelihoods was generally cost-effective and had local impact. There was no specific allocation of project resources for integrating gender equality and human rights in the project. There was also no prioritization of marginalized stakeholders, although some would have benefited from project support to the communities surrounding the three PAs.
Overall Project Outcome Rating	MU-MS	This rating is the average of those given for Effectiveness and Efficiency above (ref. UNDP July 2020 guidelines).
Sustainability		
Financial resources	UL	The PoWPA Action Plan (Rev. 2018) provides a basis for investment in PA system development, and some guidance on sustainable financing of PAs, but this is limited and further constrained by the COVID19 pandemic impacts on government financing. The Biodiversity Trust Fund is a practical mechanism for receiving such income, but it remains largely uncappeditalized since it was established in 2015 and it lacks a functional Operational Manual. The updated Biodiversity and Wildlife Act elaborates on income sources to support the BTF, providing a basis for future development. Secondly, the DPWM annual budget for improvement and maintenance of parks was recognized at the project design stage to be chronically low – and this remains the case: the annual budget is seriously inadequate (currently GMD 6.5 million, about USD 130,000). COVID-19 has also negatively impacted the budget. Consequently, DPWM is unable to fully implement the management plans that have been developed for the project sites, and issues such as maintenance of infrastructure and liaison and support for communities involved in co-management are at risk. Thirdly, the project design intended that financial sustainability would be supported by stakeholder recognition of SLM as an economically viable approach. While the project did achieve some positive collaboration with the NEMA project and other initiatives, the NEMA project has now been completed and the project results on SLM are relatively small in scale. There remain possibilities for collaboration with MoA and other bodies on SLM and rural development. Finally, the alignment of UNDP Country Programme initiatives could provide some support for sustainability, such as a proposed project under the Rapid Financing Facility with a focus on PAs in view of COVID impacts on tourism related activities in surrounding communities. UNDP CO is also developing a follow up to the GEF coastal resilience project - this will focus on wetlands and coastal areas, and include community sensitization and education. Overall, the financial sustainability of the project

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		outcomes can only be described as weak due to the chronic lack of government budget for the PA system and lack of confirmed additional sources, although some opportunities exist through the mentioned initiatives.
Socio-political/economic	ML	The national government went through a major change in December 2016 when the last national Presidential Election was held, causing major disruption. The next Presidential Election is due in December 2021, which could result in further political instability. However, the impact on project outcomes is not clear. During implementation, the level of ownership of the project by MECCWW and DPWM was questioned at times in view of the lack of progress being made. However, the main outcomes of the project – the expansion and strengthening of three PAs – are part of the core DPWM mandate, therefore the Department has an interest in ensuring the sustainability of the project outcomes. Similarly, the 61 communities that are participating in the PACs and have also benefited from SLM and livelihood activities also have an interest in maintaining the co-management arrangements. Continued support from DPWM is required to sustain cooperation of these communities. Awareness raising has strengthened local support for the PAs and conservation, and again this will need to be sustained by continued efforts by DPWM and local NGOs. The knowledge management and outreach aspects of the project are poorly documented, and it is very unclear what mechanisms would be used to transfer its approaches to other parties or projects. The project did result in positive engagement with women (eg rice farmers, bee-keepers, cook-stoves). These benefits will persist to an extent, and have the potential to expand if they receive continued support from DPWM and/or NGOs, or other projects (eg ROOTS). However, the project impacts were not transformative in terms of mainstreaming women's rights and gender equality.
Institutional framework and governance	ML	The project supported the revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act 2003 in 2020, and the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (Rev. 2018) sets out an updated strategy for development of the PA system and biodiversity conservation. These provide mechanisms for replication and expansion of the project's approach as it applies to the national PA system. The proposed Niimi-Saloum Biosphere Reserve has potential to embrace the north bank project sites, and create momentum for PA management. The capacity development under the project had greatest impact at the local level, through the development of the three PAs and their co-management through the PACs involving some 61 villages. Overall, the technical capacity of PA staff remains low and the effectiveness and sustainability of the PA administrations will depend on the level of financial support from DPWM. Overall, institutional strengthening on a systemic level is needed to support the national PA system, which was far beyond the scope of this MSP, and ideally needs to be tackled through a programmatic approach over a longer time-

Evaluation Criteria	Rating ⁶⁶	Comments
		frame, and perhaps on a regional basis. The project was effective in involving local champions, in terms of traditional chiefs and village leaders who can promote sustainability of project outcomes. Also, the mandatory requirement for equal gender representation on the PACs addresses gender equality in co-management. Again, this will need continued liaison and facilitation from DPWM to continue the support.
Environmental	ML	The project was successful in securing the creation of JNP, its connection to BBWR through an extension, and the extension of KWNP, securing important riparian, mangrove, brackish swamp, grassland and forest habitats. The project worked successfully with local communities to achieve these extensions, on a co-management basis through the PACs. This has provided a firm footing for managing external human pressures on the extended PAs and is relatively sustainable if DPWM have the resources to support the PACs going forward. Potential threats to the project's environmental sustainability include: climate change impacts; agricultural development; and infrastructure development (eg roads) that may fragment habitats and disturb wildlife.
Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	UL	This rating is the lowest of those given above for Sustainability components (ref. UNDP July 2020 guidelines).

267. In addition to the rated criteria in the table above, the following findings apply to gender and women's empowerment and relevant cross-cutting issues.

Gender and women's empowerment: How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment?

268. Overall, there were weaknesses in project design (lack of a gender analysis and action plan, lack of clear gender-responsive indicators), monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and implementation. The PIRs for 2019 and 2020 set the Atlas Gender Marker Rating at GEN1 - some contribution to gender equality. This rating appears fair, as there were indeed some positive contributions (see 4.3.8) – although the project design, reporting framework and M&E system did very little to promote a more systematic and strategic approach towards gender empowerment and the empowerment of women by this project. The UNDP systems and oversight failed to adequately address these shortcomings. The main results areas where the project contributed to gender equality were first: Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance: as women have been recognized as important stakeholders in the communities around the PAs, as users of natural resources and farming practices and included in the PACs on an equal footing to the men in their villages; and secondly (although this was essentially a passive process and not necessarily empowering), targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women: where examples of positive outcomes benefitting women include increased environmental awareness amongst women; introduction of salinity-tolerant rice through women farmers at Jokadu; distribution of 1,000 fuel efficient cookstoves reducing fuelwood demands; community woodlots for

fuelwood supply; training of women beekeepers; and access to certain borehole water supplies for community and farming uses.

Cross-cutting Issues (1): How did the project contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation?

269. While the Project Document listed one low-rated risk as: ‘the diverse impacts of climate change on natural and productive ecosystems and species-level biodiversity may undermine the project objectives’, and its mitigation involved integrating climate change in the planning and execution of project activities, this was not explicit in the project strategy. No national level climate vulnerability assessment was conducted and important questions remain regarding national-scale impacts and adaptation measures. The PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (2018) includes a section on climate change resilience and adaptation assessment, which lists a number of initiatives taken by DPWM to address this subject, including planting mangroves (as conducted at JNP and BBWR), restoring degraded farm fields and encouraging climate-smart agriculture (as supported under the SLM demonstrations), and the Bio-Climate Education Center at Kiang West. The management plans for the three reserves include actions that can be considered climate adaptive (eg planting 200 ha mangroves at JNP), but they all lack articulated strategy on climate resilience that will respond to specific identified climate-related impacts (eg saline intrusion, more intense drought periods, less predictable rains). Overall, despite the lack of a clear strategy to address climate change, the project has contributed towards the climate resilience of the PAs and surrounding communities through measures such as the planting of mangroves and other tree seedlings, awareness raising, climate-smart agriculture practices, solar-powered borehole water supply for SLM demonstration plots and PA headquarters areas, community woodlots for fuelwood supply, salinity-tolerant rice varieties at JNP, and income generating activities such as bee-keeping. The project has also assisted community engagement in fire management – a major threat to the PAs that is likely to intensify with climate warming and drought occurrence. However, it needs to be stated that while these project contributions are very relevant to UNDP “core” activities, the linkages between environment/biodiversity and governance remain weak, and arguably these community approaches will not be successful until there is a more joined-up approach between focal areas among donors.

Cross-cutting Issues (2): How did the project contribute to capacity development?

270. This project included a variety of capacity development aims, relating to improving the management effectiveness of protected areas, governance of natural resources management and sustainable land management. The results can be summarized as follows: **Output 2.1** aimed to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities for PA governance at central, community and PA levels; this included training courses on PA co-management for PA staff; 26 community representatives; and 29 staff of NGO / CBOs. However, DPWM central staff lacked in-depth training and there is a lack of institutionalized professional development. METT scores indicate that there was little advance in management capacity of the three PAs beyond improvements in park infrastructure, co-management arrangements and engagement of communities. There remains a need for further investment in all three PAs, especially to ensure that facilities are maintained, and vehicles for park staff. Some additional PA staff were engaged (eg for JNP) but the technical capacity of park staff remains low.

271. **Output 3.1** aimed to mainstream biodiversity, NRM and SLM into the NEMA project – this was cancelled quite early in the project. National mainstreaming efforts through the TAG and ANRWG made little headway. **Output 3.2** aimed to build the capacity of local communities for NRM and SLM activities; this included training of 20 people in bee-keeping skills, training of opinion leaders, a capacity building workshop for 33 VDC members towards better co-management of the PAs, an SLM identification and planning workshop in Kerewan, and training for the 15 farmers receiving the SLM packages⁶⁷. The reporting on other NRM and SLM training activities is likely incomplete. Overall, the SLM engagement was hugely delayed only really getting underway in 2019-20. It is clear that much more could have been achieved if work had started earlier, been more efficiently coordinated and included stronger measures to secure post-project sustainability. **Output 3.3** aimed to build capacity for environmental monitoring - this was cancelled, as it was far too ambitious for the project resources available and existing staff capacity within DPWM. It would not have been sustainable. **Output 4.1** aimed to enshrine community-based SLM and NRM through agreements with DPWM, supported by an awareness-raising campaign. The Heads of Agreement were not pursued, as in DPWM's view, their system of consulting with and engaging communities in PA governance as part of PA establishment could be seamlessly continued through the same structures, known as Protected Area Committees. However, the awareness raising was conducted as planned and apparently was quite successful based on reports (no indicators were applied on awareness levels). The project held three opinion leaders meetings with Alkalos (traditional chiefs), politicians and Governors. The project also established two working groups one for PAs and the other for SLM. Through these mechanisms the awareness and understanding of local communities in PA co-management, SLM and NRM has been enhanced. The PACs for each of the three PAs have been established, engaging representatives from all the adjacent communities including equal proportions of women and men, and have received some basic training for co-management.

Cross-cutting Issues (3): How did the project contribute to the poverty-environment nexus?

272. With very high dependency on land and natural resources for livelihoods, increasing population size, droughts and poor agricultural practices threaten both livelihoods and the environment in the Gambia, which remains an LDC where poverty is a major challenge. The project's focus on elevating SLM and co-management of natural resources for communities near PAs sought to address poverty-related threats such as fuel-wood collection. While there was no stated aim to focus on the most vulnerable members of the communities during SLM interventions, the project did provide benefits to a substantial number of people. Examples include: the 1,000 fuel-efficient stoves distributed to households will have benefited over 8,000 people; supply of salinity-tolerant rice varieties contributed towards food security at the household level – potentially several thousand people; reportedly about 5,000 people

⁶⁷ Comment from ITA: An important point – there was very little understanding of SLM approaches nationally. On the surface there seemed to be a lot going on but in reality these amounted to a few basic initiatives (organic pest control (basic), composting (basic), vegetable gardening, bee keeping)... but there was no great innovation. Many sites that were visited to find out what was available were not working due to donor insistence on "community" projects rather than individual farmer assistance, interventions were extremely expensive (as was the PAN package). The idea behind the PAN approach was not to focus on specific technologies or approaches but to try to establish an innovative culture based on a broad understanding of principles – water, soil, ecology, etc...so that extension officers and farmers could have the basic provision of water and fencing and then experiment. However, events causing delays and the SLM capacity of the PMU mitigated against this. Arguably, it would be better to start with less academically qualified younger technical experts more open to understanding the principles than more academically experienced experts unable to move quickly from an agri-business, high input mind set.

benefited from the woodlots programme; support for bee-keeping resulted in the establishment of Nyofelleh Beekeepers Association. There was no monitoring of socio-economic status or incomes among the targeted communities, therefore no quantitative data are available on changes in these conditions. However, it is likely (again, not monitored) that the project's promotion of SLM and co-management of natural resources for communities near PAs reduced threats such as cutting of trees for fuelwood and timber, and provided more secure income and food security through climate-resilient farming practices. While integration with the NEMA project did not happen, collaboration continued with NEMA and other organizations conducting SLM and community development around the PAs, and there is potential for such collaborative work to continue in future if facilitated effectively by DPWM. Conversely, lack of coordination with related initiatives allowed some damaging interventions (eg failed fish ponds) to go ahead that impacted the local environmental condition.

5.2 Conclusions

273. **Project Design:** The original PAN project concept was planned for a GEF Full-Sized Project of over USD 4 million, but due to delays in completion and submission of the PIF, only USD 1.3 million were finally available in the STAR fund for Gambia and the PIF was submitted as a Medium-Sized Project. During the belated project inception review in September 2016, significant deficiencies in the project design presented in the Project Document were identified: the intervention strategy was overly ambitious for the GEF resources available, the national capacity of DPWM to co-finance the project coordinator and operate the PMU was grossly over-estimated, the results framework was overly complicated and incomplete, and the correspondence between the project strategy narrative and results framework was incomplete. The likely causes of this are first that the Project Document failed to redress the resourcing imbalance in the original project design; and secondly the remote preparation of the Project Document during the PPG due to the West African Ebola crisis failed to reflect the actual project context within the country.
274. **Project start-up** was also flawed, with delays in the receipt of Delegation of Authority (DOA) affecting the Inception Workshop (on 14th July 2015) and recruitment of key project personnel. Consequently, the Inception Workshop in 2015 did not review the Project Document in detail and it was signed on Jul 27, 2015, unfortunately without the DOA, which contributed to delaying project implementation on the ground. The hiring of project staff took a long time, and the project struggled to put in place the full PMU, only appointing an International Technical Advisor in September 2016 and a Financial Administrator in March 2017, with a Project Coordinator seconded by the Government at an inadequate rate of remuneration, impacting PMU performance. The resignation of the Financial Administrator in October 2017 and long delay in securing a replacement also impacted the project's delivery. While there were obviously real constraints in play (including political instability around national elections in December 2016), this chaotic start-up period was a set-back for the project.
275. **Implementation** picked up in 2017 and progress was made mainly on the first Component in 2017-18, but subject to major periodic delays associated with approval of workplans, budgets and payment authorizations. In August 2019, a proposal was submitted

for a 12 month extension of the 48 month project from its original closing date of 31 July 2019 through to 31 July 2020. The project extension reflected a clear desire to build on the limited progress achieved in order to achieve the intended project outcomes with the limited resources remaining. This resulted in sharper focus and accelerated progress on the SLM / community livelihoods in Component 2 of the project in particular.

276. **M&E** was weak throughout implementation, with critical risks not well monitored or even recorded in the PIR. Implementation including M&E was affected by chronic capacity challenges and weak ownership of the project on the side of the main IP and weak leadership at the level of the Department⁶⁸, while UNDP Results Based Management standards were inconsistently applied during implementation. The progress reports and PIRs do not report on process indicators relating to gender and social inclusion and give very little impression of attention to monitoring and assessment of the perspectives of women and men involved and affected by the project, or of relevant groups' (including women, indigenous peoples, children, elderly, disabled, and poor) involvement with the project and the impact on them. The project lacked staff capacity for this purpose (no M&E or gender specialist). None of the Impact or IRRF indicators are gender-disaggregated. There is also no evidence of inclusive, innovative or participatory monitoring systems in use. Design weaknesses in the RF persisted throughout the project, hampering effecting M&E and the assessment of final results in this TE.
277. **Risk Management:** The project document listed six risks and noted that further consideration of risks would be carried out during the project inception phase - this did not happen until September 2016, when the major risk represented by the chronic underfunding of DPWM and its lack of financial capacity to support the PMU staffing and operations was identified. Overall, there is limited evidence that the Risk Log was actively used as a tool to inform and track risk management effectively by the UNDP CO, with the PIRs providing a limited assessment of project risk management during implementation, lacking consistent identification and tracking of critical risks. In 2020, one new strategic critical risk was described relating to the COVID19 pandemic, which was also reported as an SESP risk. This was handled quite effectively by the project, with no major adverse issues arising, aside from constraints on some field activities, and a delay in starting the terminal evaluation and the need to conduct it largely remotely. **Environmental and social risks:** as identified through the UNDP SESP were rated "low" and are not mentioned in any monitoring reports or the Atlas risk register. An independent review by an international safeguards expert indicated some gaps in the identification of risks and the rating of their significance, and recommended that the SESP risk rating should be raised to Moderate, but this was only released in March 2020, too late to include during implementation.
278. **Financing and Co-financing:** the project experienced significant financial budgeting, disbursement and management challenges during the implementation period, that reflected both on the capacity of the DPWM to manage the project and on the UNDP CO to conduct effective oversight and keep financial management on track. These included: delays in financial approvals impacted rate of implementation progress; delay in implementation of annual audits; key Audit findings - the first audit report identified 8 high, 1 medium and 1 low

⁶⁸ Comment from ITA: ...the department does not have a strong culture of reporting. This is a serious capacity deficit especially as it runs so many small projects. There is no standard reporting and therefore no M&E or accountability.

risk; while the report for 2019 identified 6 medium and 1 low risk. These issues were eventually resolved; at project completion, the RTA noted in PIR 2020 that financial management has presented some challenges in this project, including some budget deviations that must be resolved as the project proceeds to closure. The disbursement of the GEF budget in the UNDP Combined Delivery Reports (CDR) across the full extended project period (excluding this terminal evaluation) is shown in **Table 4**. The variance from the original project budget is relatively large (i.e. greater than 10%) for all Activities except for 1.5 (PMU), a concern that was reflected in the audit report findings. Delays in implementation, reflected by low annual rates of disbursement were reported in the PIRs (see **Table 5 and Figure 4**) and noted in the audit reports. Delivery of cofinancing against the amounts committed at CEO Endorsement are given in **Tables 6 and 7**. According to the figures provided by UNDP CO, the amount provided by different sources varied from that committed at CEO Endorsement, but overall the total of cofinancing realized exceeded the committed amount by 9.55% (USD 5,138,843 against USD 4,690,909 at project approval). In particular, UNDP's cash contribution of USD 30,000 per year was critical for the functionality of the PMU, as was support from DPWM.

279. **Results / Impacts:** The project achieved significant results despite the many challenges it faced during implementation. The table of project achievements against results framework indicator targets in **Annex 14** and the conclusions in section **4.3.1** on progress towards objectives describe progress against planned targets (although many targets were not defined at all, or were vague and difficult to measure). Therefore the results are summarized in **Table 10**. This reveals that both Objective-level impact indicators were achieved; one out of five IRRF sub-indicators (treated at Objective-level) was fully achieved, three partially achieved and one cancelled; the single impact indicator for Outcome 1 was achieved; indicators for Outcome 2 were mixed, with one achieved, one partially achieved and one cancelled; Outcome 3 results were also mixed with two achieved, two partially achieved and one not achieved; and for Outcome 4 one indicator was achieved and one partially achieved. Thus overall, eight indicators (44.4%) were considered fully achieved, seven (38.9%) partially achieved, one not achieved (5.6%) and two cancelled (11.1%). Thus overall, 83.3% of indicators showed full or partial progress towards the planned targets. Five of the seven Outputs were partially achieved and two were cancelled.
280. First and foremost, the extensions of the three targeted PAs resulted in an increase in the PA estate of 24,013.41 ha (against a targeted area of 15,000 ha), taking the total from 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha. This increases the PA system's area of coverage of the Gambia's territorial area to 7.4%. While final legal gazettelement of JNP is still pending due to COVID19 delays, the extensions to BBWR and KWNP have been completed.
281. Secondly, the number of people in target area who feel that they have a significant role in managing natural resources was targeted to have increased by 50% over baseline (which was not determined, but considered minimal). In reality, 61 villages have been directly implicated in the management of the target areas, through the PACs. This represents nearly all the adjacent villages and is therefore over 90%.
282. Thirdly, the total number of people benefitting from strengthened livelihoods related to solutions for management of natural resources appears to be significant, although the exact

figures are not verifiable. This includes several thousand people, the majority of which are female farmers who benefited from sustainable rice production; about 5,000 people expected to benefit from the woodlots programme; over 1,000 energy saving stoves distributed to households to reduce the use of fuel wood benefited over 10,000 people; 20 farmers have been trained in bee-keeping and secondary processing of by-products; 15 villages hosted demonstration SLM plots led by individual farmers and 61 villages in total have been involved in the co-management of the three PAs through the PACs, with equal representation of men and women. Seedlings/saplings of multiple use species were successfully established near target communities, including 9,000 in Jokadu, where a 20-bed nursery produced seedlings that were distributed to communities for planting; an additional 90,000 *Gmelina* stumps, and 2,500 *Acacia* seedlings purchased were planted in July 2019 mainly in the 2 woodlots established but also some were given to the communities. A total of 20 communities benefited, making 5,075 seedlings per community.

283. The three PAs together with the extensions have had their boundaries properly surveyed and demarcated and formally declared based on the provisions of the Wildlife Act 2003. KWNP and BBWR are already gazetted PAs and covered by the Wildlife Act 2020. So there is no requirement to apply for gazettelement of the extension areas of these two PAs according to the PMU. Both the Biodiversity and Wildlife Act revision in 2020 and the application for the gazettelement of JNP (including the extension area) have been submitted to the National Assembly for approval. The approval process of these documents has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Permanent and clear demarcation of borders was ensured through clearing of KWNP extension borders in 2018 and 2019 and 300 pillars erected in JNP and BBWR extension.
284. An effective management presence was established in JNP, reflected by the increase in METT score from a nominal baseline up to 51 by project close. METT score changes for BBWR and KWNP failed to reflect improved management effectiveness status, despite obvious advances in terms of PA extension, co-management engagement with surrounding communities, improved facilities, and management plan development. Inconsistent assessment may explain this to some extent.
285. **Environmental stress reduction:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, it is likely that the engagement of surrounding communities in the co-management of the three PAs, the associated awareness raising, and support provided for sustainable livelihoods and SLM coupled with marking of PA boundaries on the ground and increased management effectiveness of PA staff will have resulted in shifts in attitudes of local residents towards greater appreciation of the purpose of the PAs, resulting in reduced illegal activities and threats such as fires.
286. **Environmental status change:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the addition of over 24,000 ha of lands under PA co-management will help to secure the habitats and wildlife present in these areas. Without such protection, it is quite likely that land conversion will occur, resulting in losses of mangrove, dryland forest, wetland and grassland habitats and their associated species. The project also planted significant amounts of mangrove propagules in some of the degraded wetlands.

287. **Changes in policy/legal/regulatory frameworks:** The project achieved positive results in this area, including: revision of the PoWPA Action Plan 2015-2025 (Rev. 2018), revision of the Biodiversity and Wildlife Law 2003 (in 2020), establishment of JNP and extension of BBWR and KWNP, development of management plans for all three sites (BBWR in draft still), also some improvements in infrastructure and management effectiveness of the three PAs – especially Jokadu NP. This included the establishment of PA Committees for the three PAs involving 61 surrounding communities as a basis for co-management. These measures have a high degree of permanence once established, although the PACs will require constant communication and nurturing to remain functional and engaged.

288. **Changes in socio-economic status:** There were no data available to support this analysis. Qualitatively, the 61 communities around the three PAs total an estimated 70,000 people, of which the project benefited a portion through a variety of livelihood-related interventions, as has been described above.

289. The main **barriers and risks** that may prevent further progress towards long-term impact concern the low financial sustainability and the lack of capacity in DPWM to support the national PA system and management of the three targeted PAs (see 4.3.6) and to maintain support to the surrounding communities for co-management of these areas and continued reduction of external threats. In addition, COVID19 has potential to have major negative impacts for the sustainability of the project outcomes, through: reduction in annual budget allocations to DWNP as a result of shifts in government priorities; reduction in tourist visitation to protected areas in Gambia (affecting revenue generation); and local impacts on communities.

5.3 Recommendations

290. Relatively few recommendations are made, because the project has already been completed owing to COVID19 related delays affecting the terminal evaluation. Therefore, the recommendations mainly concern follow-up actions that may assist in bolstering the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

Rec #	TE Recommendation	Entity Responsible	Time frame
A	Category 1: Completing critical outstanding deliverables		
A.1	The legal designation of Jokadu NP remains pending due to COVID19-related delays in official approval of the submitted documents. DWNP should follow up on this to ensure that it takes place without delay.	DPWM, GEF OFP	By 31 December 2020
A.2	The management plan for Bao Bolong WR was a key project deliverable that was not fully completed (the draft did not include the extension area). This should be completed as soon as possible to enable effective management of the whole PA.	DPWM	By 31 March 2021
B	Category 2: Resolving outstanding audit queries and safeguard issues		
B.1	According to PIR 2020, there remain some budget deviations that must be resolved as the project proceeds to closure – these include some PMC discrepancies, misallocation of DPCs under activity budget lines, DPCs being slightly exceeded and the addition of new budget lines not provided for in the Prodoc, and for which no justification has been given, in excess of 5% of the total grant. It is recommended that the	UNDP and DPWM	By 31 December 2020

	UNDP Regional PA works closely with the UNDP CO, IP and project team to resolve these deviations.		
B.2	As indicated in PIR 2020, an independent review report released in March 2020 indicated some gaps in the identification and rating of safeguards risks, and recommended that the SESP risk rating should be raised to Moderate. It was too late to take up the recommendations during implementation, but some should be included in the project's closure report, to assist the IP with ongoing monitoring and management of any safeguard-related risks to sustainability.	UNDP	By 31 December 2020
C	Category 3: Facilitating outcome sustainability		
C.1	Facilitate ongoing liaison with and support for PACs and communities adjacent to PAs to maintain harmonious engagement in co-management, and control over external threats to biodiversity	DPWM	Immediate and ongoing
C.2	Facilitate ongoing collaboration with agricultural, rural development and environmental initiatives around the targeted PAs in order to sustain and replicate livelihood benefits (eg SLM farmer field packages, community woodlots, bee-keeping, saline tolerant rice varieties and fuel-efficient cookstoves) to surrounding communities and reduce pressure on natural resources (eg through the IFAD ROOTS project)	DPWM, GEF OFP	Immediate and ongoing
C.3	Facilitate alignment of UNDP-led projects with the outcomes of this project to support the continued flow of socio-economic and environmental benefits (eg Rapid Response Facility, Small Grants Programme, climate change resilience and governance/democracy projects that empower citizens to take control of their environment, BIOFIN, etc.)	UNDP CO, GEF OFP	Immediate and ongoing
D	Category 4: Follow up strategy		
D.1	A systemic improvement approach is needed to break the lack of progress achieved from project to project in the Gambia. This should be a programmatic approach that aims to build systemic capacity for biodiversity conservation and PA management so that it can become self-sustaining (perhaps through a regional programme). Such systemic capacity development should take account of the IUCN Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners ⁶⁹ (which is being applied in China through the GEF C-PAR Programme)	UNDP, GEF OFP	2021-22

5.4 Lessons Learned

Improving project design

- This project (in common with other projects) had biodiversity mainstreaming goals without providing the dedicated support needed to achieve it. Mainstreaming takes significant effort, and is only likely to be effective if specific mechanisms are created or used to institutionalize inter-sectoral collaboration in the government system. Therefore, mainstreaming projects need to include a dedicated staff role to take this forward.
- Quality assurance of PIFs and Project Documents should ensure that the baseline capacity, scope, outcomes and indicator targets are consistent with the GEF budget available in order to ensure that the intended project impact is feasible. This was a major issue with the current project that should have been addressed at PIF and/or PPG stage.

Strengthening implementation

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https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/global_register_of_competences_for_pa_practitioners_e_version_0.pdf

- Invest more in the Inception Phase of projects to provide effective re-assessment of design, avoid mismatches, and provide support for project start-up, including planning, hiring staff team, procurement, etc. The weak start-up of the current project set the tone for problematic implementation, which could have been avoided through an effective inception phase.
- Invest in the training of IP/PMU staff on UNDP standards for risk management, social and environmental safeguards and gender mainstreaming during the project inception period, and ensure adequate GEF budget provision in the ProDoc. This should be included in the standard guidance for UNDP project documents. Lack of capacity was a serious problem for these aspects of project management for the current project.
- Remove bureaucratic obstacles such as multiple signatures and different levels of reviews (eg for staff TORs) – where feasible and in line with UNDP oversight procedures - to facilitate project start-up and smooth implementation. These obstacles contributed towards major delays in the implementation of the current project, while noting that the IP's inability to conform to UNDP administrative requirements was a related issue.
- Make more effective use of PIRs for adaptive management by proactively and systematically following up on recommendations (currently the emphasis is more for compliance monitoring). This was a consistent weakness throughout the current project, further hampered by ineffective PEB functioning.
- Review existing UNDP regulations to make allowance for addressing the disparity between government salaries and GEF Project PMU staffing requirements to facilitate smooth implementation and ensure fair and adequate remuneration for the professional services provided. This is a generic issue for GEF projects, that could be resolved through a more flexible approach on the part of UNDP and GEF (eg through appropriate allowances).

Strengthening M&E and reporting

- Revise UNDP Quarterly and Annual Report templates to include gender mainstreaming and social and environmental safeguards reporting in support of the PIRs and more consistent application of UNDP standards.
- Ensure more rigorous UNDP oversight of M&E design, reporting and remediation, and adherence to UNDP/GEF standards (eg SMART indicators, clear baselines and targets). These were major weaknesses in the current project, that hindered both effective project management and evaluation.

Replication of good practices

- The SLM farmer field packages, community woodlots, bee-keeping, saline tolerant rice varieties and fuel-efficient cookstoves were all locally-effective interventions supported by the project – but to a limited extent constrained by the small GEF budget. These interventions have potential to achieve much greater impact around the three PAs if they can be replicated or upscaled to surrounding communities and reduce pressure on natural resources, and accordingly it has been recommended that DPWM and UNDP facilitate this through engagement with other initiatives such as the IFAD ROOTS project, and the UNDP Rapid Response Facility. These approaches could also be applied to similar settings around PAs in the Gambia, or with some adaptation, to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, cost efficiencies should be built in from the design phase of other projects regarding means of achieving small scale - high impact rural development support.
- While the TE was unable to gather substantial information on details, the community radio station broadcasts and engagement of local leaders in awareness raising events appear to have been successful approaches that could lend themselves to similar settings around PAs in the Gambia, or with some adaptation, to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- The project design strategy in focusing on a cluster of three PAs in close proximity to each other had a strong rational basis that was likely to result in more sustainable outcomes for biodiversity conservation. The project's aim to connect JNP and BBWR along the north bank provided impetus for riparian habitat conservation, as did the proposed extension to KWNP on the south bank. Collectively, the PA cluster has potential to secure significant representative habitats and biodiversity of the upper tidal reaches of the Gambia River and its riparian corridor, and to counter threats related to edge effects and habitat fragmentation that would undoubtedly impact biodiversity if left unchecked. This cluster approach to PA network development has strong advantages in that it creates more momentum for conservation in one locality and is likely to achieve greater impact and sustainability than dispersed sites.
- The focus on a cluster of PAs also provided the potential for added value through a networked approach to management and shared learning among the three PAs and their associated stakeholders – although this was not emphasized in the design, and only partly realized during implementation. This idea of local PA networks, or cluster-level PA management is transferable between regions and countries and has advantages including more cost-effective use human and financial resources and knowledge exchange.

6 Annexes

Annex 1: TE ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

See separate file

Annex 2: TE Mission itinerary, including summary of field visits

FIELD TRIP

Itinerary

26 September 2020:

AM: Greater Banjul to Kiang West NP

PM: Kiang West NP to Baobolong WR

PM: Baobolong WR

Night Stop: Jokadu NP

27 September 2020:

AM: Jokadu NP

PM: Return to Greater Banjul

Summary

Kiang West National Park

On the 26th of September, the TE team drove from the Greater Banjul Area (GBA) to Kiang West National Park (KWNP) in the Lower River Region (LRR) and met with the SLM Farmer Demonstrators and the park management authorities. Upon arrival at the KWNP Headquarters in Dumbuto, the team was met by the Manager of Kiang West National Park, Mr. Lamin Manneh, who introduced them to the five project SLM Farmer Demonstrators. They held a meeting with the five SLM Farmer Demonstrators. This was followed by a discussion with the Park Manager, Mr. Manneh. The team then inspected the borehole and the renovated buildings at the park headquarters and drove to Baobolong Wetland Reserve.

Baobolong Wetland Reserve

From Kiang West National Park, the team drove to Baobolong Wetland Reserve (BWR) in the North Bank Region (NBR). Upon arrival at BWR Headquarters in No Kunda, the team was met by the Reserve Manager, Mr. Lamin Njie who introduced them to the project beneficiaries. The team held meetings with representatives of the SLM Farmer Demonstrators, Cook Stoves participants, the Protected Area Committee (PAC) and Village Woodlots, supported by the project. This was followed by a meeting with

the Reserve Manager, Mr. Lamin Njie. The team then inspected the reserve headquarters building supported by the project. Finally, the team visited the No Kunda Village Woodlot supported by the project, where thousands of seedlings, mainly *Gmelina arborea* have been planted. The team, then drove to Jokadu National Park (JNP) also in the NBR.

Jokadu National Park.

Upon arrival at the JNP Headquarters in Kuntaya, the team was met by one of the Park Rangers. On the 27th of September, the team met the Park Manager, Mr. Pateh Ceesay, who introduced them to the project beneficiaries. The team held meetings with representatives of SLM Farmer Demonstrators, the Manager of JNP, Mr. Pateh Ceesay, Beekeeping participants, salt-tolerant rice growers and representatives of the Protected Area Committee. This was followed by a meeting between the National Consultant and the PAN National Project Manager. The team then inspected the borehole and the park headquarters buildings supported by the project before returning to the Greater Banjul Area.

The list of participants at each site is given in **Annex 3**. Questionnaires were completed for each group discussion and a field trip report compiled for internal use by the evaluation team.

Annex 3: List of persons interviewed

Stakeholder category and name	Project position and institutional affiliation	Method of consultation	Date	Contact (Email or phone number)
1. Regional level consultations				
Dr. Mandy Cadman	UNDP Regional Technical Advisor	Zoom interview	23/10/2020	Mandy.cadman@undp.org
Francis Hurst	International Technical Advisor	Zoom interview	26/10/2020	francishurst@sapo.pt
2. National level consultations				
UNDP Country Office				
Dr. Almamy Camara	Project Focal Point, UNDP Country Office	Questionnaire	7 th /09/2020	almamy.camara@undp.org
Dr. Almamy Camara, Ms. Fatoumatta Sanyang, Mr. Abass Kinteh, Mr. Bernard Mendy	UNDP Country Office Energy & Environment Unit staff involved in project implementation	Zoom interview	28/10/2020	almamy.camara@undp.org
Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources				
Mr. Alagie Manjang	Representative, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources	Questionnaire	7 th /09/2020	alagie33@hotmail.com
Department of Parks and Wildlife Management				
Mr. Momodou Lamin Kassama	Director, Department of Parks and Wildlife Management	Telephone and Interview	8 th /09/2020	mlkassama2@gmail.com
Project Management Unit				
Mr. Kawsu Jammeh	Project Manager, Gambia Protected Areas Network and	Telephone and interview;	8 th /09/2020	Jammeh.kawsu@gmail.com

	Community Livelihood	Zoom interview	27/10/2020	
Mr. Bernard Mendy	Finance Officer, Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood	Interview	8 th /09/2020	bernard.mendy@undp.org
Mr. Abdoulie Sawo	Project Assistant, Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood	Interview	8 th /09/2020	abdoulies@gmail.com
National NGOs				
Mr. Lamin Jobarteh	Executive Director of a National NGO, West African Bird Study Association	Telephone and questionnaire	8 th /09/2020	kunowabsa@yahoo.com
Ms Sainabou Jallow	Member of a National NGO, Sahel Wetlands Concern	Questionnaire	9 th /09/2020	zainjallow@gmail.com
GEF Operational Focal Point				
Mr. Dodou Trawally	GEF OFP, National Environment Agency	Questionnaire	9 th /09/2020	dtrawally@gmail.com
National Consultants				
Mr. Sarjo B. Sarr	Surveys and GIS Consultant	Telephone and questionnaire	9 th /09/2020	sarjobsarr@gmail.com
Mr. Sam Ali Ascroft	Financial Analysis Consultant, Task Crown	Telephone and questionnaire	9 th /09/2020	samaliashcroft@yahoo.co.uk
Mr. Bala Musa Kijera	Negotiation of rights and responsibilities consultant	Questionnaire	12/09/2020	bmkijera@hotmail.com
PSC members				

Mr. Momodou Lamin Njai	PSC Member, Department of Forestry	Telephone and questionnaire	10/09/2020	njaimomodou@yahoo.com
Mr. Njagga Khan	PSC Member, Governor's Office North Bank Region	Questionnaire	10/09/2020	njaggak@yahoo.co.uk
Provincial and Local Governments				
Mr. Ebrima K. S. Dmpha	Former Governor, North Bank Region	Telephone and questionnaire	28/09/2020	ebrimakdampha@gmail.com
3. Field trip to project sites				
a. Kiang West National Park				
SLM Farmer Demonstrators				
Mr. Alagie Sanyang	Farmer, Batellling village	Interview	26/09/2020	7064391
Mr. Lamin F. Bajo	Farmer, Bajana village	Interview	26/09/2020	9923699
Mr. Abdoulie K. Njie	Farmer, Kuli Kunda village	Interview	26/09/2020	2806833
Mr. Almamo Samateh	Farmer, Jali village	Interview	26/09/2020	2729516
Mr. Ousman M. Colley	Farmer, Dumbuto	Interview	26/09/2020	6394507
Protected Area Committee				
Mr. Yaya Sanyang	Chairperson PAC, Dumbuto village	Telephone	26/09/2020	6581358
Park Administration				
Mr. Lamin Manneh	Manager, Kiang West National Park, Dumbuto headquarters	Interview	26/09/2020	
b. Baobolong Wetland Reserve				
SLM Farmer Demonstrators				
Mr. Sulayman Dampha	Farmer, No Kunda village	Interview	26/09/2020	5174752/7178031

Mrs. Oumie Marong	Cook Stoves participant, No Kunda village	Interview	26/09/2020	6170107
Mr. Alieu Saho	PAC member, No Kunda village	Interview	26/09/2020	5182811
Mr. Dembo Jammeh	No Kunda Village Woodlot participant, No Kunda village	Interview	26/09/2020	6198745
Reserve Administration				
Mr. Lamin Njie	Manager, Baobolong Wetland Reserve, No Kunda Headquarters	Interview	26/09/2020	7249995
c. Jokadu National Park				
SLM Farmer Demonstrators				
Mr. Buba Jammeh	Farmer, Tambana village	Interview	27/09/2020	3659439
Mr. Nfamara Touray	Farmer, Darsilammeh	Interview	27/09/2020	6674595/9254428
Mr. Lamin Manjang	Farmer, Niofelleh	Interview	27/09/2020	2227400
Mr. Lamin Kanteh	Farmer, Bakang village	Interview	27/09/2020	9326483/7714419
Beekeeping				
Mr. Sanna Fatajo	Beekeeper, Niofelleh	Interview	27/09/2020	3288433
Salt-tolerant rice varieties				
Mrs. Mama Jammeh	Rice grower, Bakang village	Interview	27/09/2020	7630415
Protected Area Committee				
Mr. Besenty Mendy	PAC member, Kassewa village	Interview	27/09/2020	9377756/7071789
Park Administration				

Mr. Pateh Ceesay	Manager, Jokadu National Park, Kuntaya HQ	Interview	27/09/2020	2477998
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Annex 4: List of documents reviewed

Title of Document	Date	Language	Source
Contacts and Project Sites			
Full list and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Board and Technical Advisory Committee members, RTA, Project Team members, other partners and stakeholders to be consulted nationally and for each site		EN	UNDP CO
List of related projects/initiatives contributing to project objectives approved/started after GEF project approval (i.e. any leveraged or “catalytic” results) – report on cofinanced activities from related SLM projects provided		EN	UNDP CO
Project Preparation			
GEF Project Identification Form (PIF)	Submitted March 6, 2014	EN	GEF Website
GEF STAP Screening Report on PIF	None on GEF Website	EN	
GEF Secretariat Review and Council comments on PIF	None on GEF Website	EN	
GEF CEO Endorsement Request	Submitted 24 March 2015	EN	GEF Website
Final UNDP-GEF Project Document with all annexes	Signed on 27 July 2015	EN	UNDP CO
UNDP Initiation Plan	6 August 2014	EN	RTA
UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure	Undated	EN	UNDP CO
Project Inception			
Project Inception Workshop Report	No Inception Workshop, but inaugural PEB meeting on 14 July 2015	EN	UNDP CO
ITA Inception Report and 3 year Workplan	ITA Mission Report dated Sept 2016	EN	
Project Evaluations			
No Mid Term Review conducted			
UNDP EBD Desktop Safeguards Review	20 Nov 2019	EN	RTA
GEF Tracking Tools (note – baselines in Prodoc)			
METT (EoP review) for Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve	WWF format; July 2019	EN	UNDP CO
METT (EoP review) for Kiang West National Park	WWF format; July 2019	EN	UNDP CO
METT (EoP review) for Jokadu National Park	WWF format; July 2019	EN	UNDP CO
GEF BD-1 Tracking Tool for all 3 PAs	GEF format (Word); 10 October July 2020	EN	UNDP CO
GEF BD-2 Biodiversity Mainstreaming Tracking Tool	GEF format (Word); 10 October 2020	EN	UNDP CO
Annual & Sub-Annual Project Plans, Reports and Budgets			
Annual Work Plans (AWP)	3 yr WP & Budget from Inception Report (2017-2019); 2018, 2020	EN	UNDP CO
Progress reports (quarterly, semi-annual or annual, with associated workplans and financial reports)	2017: Q2,3,4 2018: Q1,2 2019: Q1	EN	UNDP CO
Progress Reports Annual	2018, 2019 (incomplete)	EN	UNDP CO
Progress Summary for PEB Meetings	Summary for PEB: April 2017, Aug 2017, Jan 2018	EN	UNDP CO
UNDP Atlas Risks Log	Full project period	EN	UNDP CO
Financial data, including actual expenditures by project outcome	CDRs (2015-2020), Summary of GEF expenditure and Cofinancing inputs; cofinancing report for SLM activities	EN	UNDP CO
List of contracts and procurement items over ~US\$5,000 (i.e. organizations or companies contracted for project outputs, etc)	Summary of contracts	EN	UNDP CO
Annual Budgets	3 year budget from Inception Report	EN	UNDP CO
GEF & UNDP Financial Expenditure Reports	See CDRs	EN	UNDP CO
Co-financing data with expected and actual contributions broken	Summary table	EN	UNDP CO

Title of Document	Date	Language	Source
down by type of co-financing, source, and whether the contribution is considered as investment mobilized or recurring expenditures			
Co-financing expenditure reports	No reports from sources	EN	UNDP CO
Annual Audit Reports	2015-18, 2019	EN	UNDP CO
Project Implementation Reports (PIR)	2017, 2018, 2019, 2020	EN	UNDP CO
ITA mission Reports	Sept 2016-Dec 2019	EN	UNDP CO
Peer Reviews	None conducted	EN	
Project Completion Report	None prepared	EN	
Project Executive Committee and Advisory Committee Meeting Reports			
Project Executive Committee Meeting minutes	2015-2020, except Sept 2016	EN	UNDP CO
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting minutes	None	EN	
PAC Meeting Reports	July 2017	EN	UNDP CO
Technical WG on SLM Meetings	Mtgs 1 & 2, July 2017	EN	UNDP CO
Project Communications and Awareness Materials (electronic copies)			
Samples of printed, electronic, website materials	None provided		
Data on relevant project website activity – e.g. number of unique visitors per month, number of page views, etc. over relevant time period, if available	None provided		
Project Technical Reports (electronic copies of assessments, plans, guidelines, etc)			
Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Not prepared		
Records of Stakeholder Consultations	JNP-BBWR WG meeting 23 June 2017; PA Heads of Agreement consultations Nov 2017;	EN	UNDP CO
Ecological survey report(s) (Output 1.1)	First Survey 22 Aug 2017 See PoWPA Action Plan Annexes for final results	EN	UNDP CO
Gambia PA Programme of Work and Action Plan (Output 1.1)	PoWPA 2018		
Reports on cadastral surveys of project sites (Output 1.2)	BBWR, JNP, KWNP 12 Oct 2017		
Decrees / legal instruments for gazettelement of modifications to JNP and KWNP (Output 1.2)	Gazettelement not completed		
Capacity development, training and equipment procurement plans and reports (Output 2.1)	Various training and workshop reports		
Management plans for project sites (Output 2.1)	JNP and KWNP management plans; BBWR in draft only (not seen)	EN	UNDP CO
Regulations for co-management, protection and sustainable use for project sites (Output 2.1)	Not provided		
Mainstreaming reviews and assessments (Output 3.1)	Not conducted		
Mainstreaming guidance handbook (Output 3.1)	Not conducted		
Community-based management agreements (Output 3.2)	Report on negotiation of reciprocal rights and responsibilities. Agreements not completed	EN	UNDP CO
Technical implementation plans for CBNRM and SLM activities (Output 3.2)	SLM TWG minutes, July 2017	EN	UNDP CO
Technical reports, workshop reports on CBNRM, SLM activities (Output 3.2)	Community Nursery Report; Various	EN	UNDP CO
Plans and reports on environmental education activities (Output 3.2)	Activity initiation plan Oct 2017	EN	UNDP CO
environmental education materials (Output 3.2)	Not provided		
Implementation plan for Environmental Monitoring System for project sites (Output 3.3)	Cancelled		

Title of Document	Date	Language	Source
Technical reports for Environmental Monitoring System for project sites (Output 3.3)	Cancelled		
Handbook for ecological/biodiversity monitoring for the Gambia (Output 3.3)	Cancelled		
Heads of Agreement and plans with communities on SLM (Output 4.1)	Not completed		
Legal covenants between Village Councils and DWNP (Output 4.1)	Not completed		
Lesson learned reports	Not provided		
Other project deliverables that provide documentary evidence of achievement towards project outcomes	Not provided		
Any relevant socio-economic monitoring data, such as average incomes / employment levels of stakeholders in the target area, change in revenue related to project activities	Not provided		
Other Relevant Documents (not produced by the Project)			
Gambian National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 – 2021		EN	https://mofea.gm/downloads-file/national-development-plan
Terminal Evaluation Report of the UNDP/GEF project Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening		EN	https://www.thegef.org/project/spw-a-bd-gambia-biodiversity-management-and-institutional-strengthening-project
Publications and Scientific Papers			
None provided			
UNDP and GEF Programme Documents (for reference only)			
UNDP Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) The Gambia 2017-21		EN	https://www.gm.undp.org/content/gambia/en/home/operations/legal-framework.html
UNDP Country Programme Document 2017-21		EN	https://www.gm.undp.org/content/gambia/en/home/operations/legal-framework.html
UNDP Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP)		EN	https://www.gm.undp.org/content/gambia/en/home/operations/legal-framework.html
The Gambia Human Development Report		EN	http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/GMB.pdf
GEF 5 programming document		EN	https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF_R5_31_CRP1_4.pdf

Annex 5: Evaluation Question Matrix

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Evaluation Criteria: Relevance			
How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at local, regional and national levels?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the objectives of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages between project objective and elements of the CBD, such as key articles and programs of work (especially PoWPA) UNDP Financial and Capacity Scorecards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with UNDP and project partners Desk review CBD website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities (including alignment of relevant focal area indicators) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF V strategic priority documents for period when project was approved Current GEF strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the project support the biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives of the country? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents Approved policy and legislation related to management plans, budgets, etc. Level of financing for the PA system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PA Law PA System Plan Project documents UNDP Financial and capacity Scorecards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Interviews with UNDP and project

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p>What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design? How does the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement of local and national stakeholders in project origination and development (number of meetings held, project development processes incorporating stakeholder input, etc.) Collaboration opportunity Collaborative management approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project staff Local and national stakeholders Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Field visit interviews Desk review
<p>Is the project internally coherent in its design?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there logical linkages between expected results of the project (results framework) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)? Is the GEF budget sufficient to achieve the intended outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal logic Level of coherence between project outputs, activities and GEF budget allocations Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Key project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Key interviews
<p>How is the project relevant with respect to other donor-supported activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors? How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are not covered by other donors? Is there coordination and complementarity between donors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents from other donor supported activities Other donor representatives Project document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses Key interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analyses

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was project support provided in an efficient way? Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? Did the project results framework and work plans have any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation? How was results-based management used during project implementation? Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)? Did the leveraging of funds (cofinancing) happen as planned? Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? Was procurement carried out in a manner that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Availability and quality of financial and progress reports financial and progress reports Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures Planned vs. actual funds leveraged Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency Cost associated with delivery mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews with project staff
Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency - Was the project implemented efficiently, in line with international and national norms and standards?			

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p>How efficient were partnership arrangements for the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were partnerships / linkages between organizations encouraged and supported? Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable? What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? Which methods were successful or not and in which way? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, Examples of supported partnerships Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations Project partners and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<p>Did the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise and local capacity? Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project? Was there effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents and evaluations UNDP Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p>What lessons can be drawn regarding efficiency for other similar projects in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency? How could the project have more efficiently carried out implementation (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc...)? What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
<p>Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness:</p> <p>To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?</p>			
<p>Has the project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National policy, legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable management and financing of national PA system have been strengthened Institutional and staff capacities are in place to effectively manage and govern the national PA system Sustainable financing mechanisms and innovative collaboration approaches successfully demonstrated at PA demonstration sites lead to better conservation outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See indicators in project document results framework and logframe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project team and relevant stakeholders Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents analysis Interviews with project team Interviews with relevant stakeholders

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<p>How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed? What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient? Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis Interviews
<p>What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collected throughout evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis
Evaluation Criteria: Results/Impacts			
Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project objective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental indicators Level of progress through the project's Theory of Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability			

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of “ownership” of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of environmental risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What risks are posed by the COVID-19 pandemic that may affect the sustainability of project results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of COVID-19 related risks to project benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field visit interviews Desk review
Evaluation Criteria: Gender and women’s empowerment: How did the project contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment?			

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of progress of gender action plan and gender indicators in results framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways did the project's gender results advance or contribute to the project's biodiversity outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of logical linkages between gender results and project outcomes and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues How did the project contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What assessments of climate change vulnerability were used to inform project plans and activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reference to published climate change vulnerability assessments in project plans and documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways were climate change adaptation integrated into project plans, activities and deliverables? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mention of climate change adaptation in project plans, reports and deliverables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways were climate change adaptation used to inform the design and implementation of SLM and NRM activities involving local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of climate-smart agriculture practices, climate-resilient development practices for local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues How did the project contribute to capacity development?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project increased the capacity for management of the national PA system? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in institutional capacity of DPWM for PA system administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project increased the capacity for management of the targeted PAs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in management effectiveness of targeted PAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project increased local capacity for community-based NRM and SLM? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of local community members provided with training in CBNRM and SLM practices Numbers/proportion of local community members continuing to practice these methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<p>Evaluation Criteria: Cross-cutting Issues</p> <p>How did the project contribute to the poverty-environment nexus?</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways and to what extent has the project contributed towards poverty reduction in the targeted areas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of direct project beneficiaries below the poverty line Tangible improvements to socio-economic status of beneficiaries (eg improved livelihoods, food security, income) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the project's strategies for CBNRM and SLM been mainstreamed, replicated or upscaled in ways that will contribute towards poverty reduction beyond immediate project beneficiaries? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project related CBNRM and SLM practices incorporated into new sector policies and plans for agriculture, rural development, environment, etc. Replication or upscaling of project related CBNRM and SLM to other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project staff Project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review, interviews, field visits

Annex 6: Questionnaires used for project stakeholders

See separate files

Annex 7: Co-financing inputs from partner institutions at project PAs

The project decided to compile a record of the activities of development-oriented institutions operating in the three protected Areas of Kiang West National Park area, Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve area and Jokadu National Park Area respectively and to regard them as co-financing. Visits were made to Projects, Departments, NGOs and CBOs to record information on their activities in different locations. The project SLM Expert compiled a summary of these activities as co-financing inputs as follows (see attached file). Note that only a portion of these costs were included as cofinancing contributions by UNDP.

See attached file

Annex 8: TE Rating scales

<i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, I&E Execution</i> 6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): moderate shortcomings 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	<i>Sustainability ratings:</i> 4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	<i>Relevance ratings</i> 2. Relevant (R) 1. Not relevant (NR) <i>Impact Ratings:</i> 3. Significant (S) 2. Minimal (M) 1. Negligible (N)
<i>Additional ratings where relevant:</i> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

Annex 9: UNEG Code of Conduct and Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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's Mid-Term Review.

Evaluation Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Evaluator: Richard Crawford Prentice

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): N/A

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

Signed at Histon, Cambridge, UK on 27 October 2020

Signature:



Annex 10: Signed TE Report Clearance form

(to be completed by CO and UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and included in the final document)

Evaluation Report Reviewed and Cleared by

UNDP Country Office

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNDP GEF RTA

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annex 11: TE Audit Trail

The following table describes how the received comments on the draft TE report have been addressed the final TE report. This audit trail is a mandatory annex of the final TE report.

Responses to Comments received on the Terminal Evaluation of Gambia Protected Areas Network and Community Livelihood Project (UNDP PIMS 5000)

The following comments were provided on the draft Terminal Evaluation report; they are referenced by author, comment number (“#” column) and location in the text. Note that the paragraph numbering and formatting has been corrected in the final report, and the references in the table refer to the finalized layout for ease of reference.

Comments were received from Dr Mandy Cadman (UNDP Regional Technical Advisor) dated 13 November 2020; Mr Francis Hurst (PAN Project International Technical Advisor) dated 14 November 2020; Dr Almamy Camara (Programme Specialist, Environment and Resilient Development, UNDP Country Office,) dated 29 November 2020; and Mr Kawsu Jammeh (PAN Project Coordinator) dated 7 December 2020.

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE response and action taken
Mandy Cadman (UNDP RTA)	1	Pg.1, Executive Summary, Project Information Table	<p>Please use the table template (Table 7) on page 34 of the Guidance document; this includes some additional data fields and has a slightly different layout.</p> <p>Please note that the required geolocation data for each project site can be obtained from the CO/project team or can be extracted from the 2020 PIR</p>	<p>The table has been updated in line with the UNDP July 2020 Guidance document.</p> <p>The geolocation data for each project site has been obtained from PIR 2020 (hyperlink inserted)</p>
Mandy Cadman (UNDP RTA)	2	Pg. 47, Table 6, Cofinance	Please use the format (or at least include all relevant data) as outlined in the Guidance document, Table 12, page 45	Table 6 has been revised according to the UNDP July 2020 Guidance, and a new Table 7 following the guidance added.

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE response and action taken
Mandy Cadman (UNDP RTA)	3	Pg.53, Para 117	MTRs are not mandatory for MSPs, BUT, considering the implementation and performance challenges and risk status of the project an MTR would have been most helpful	This comment supports the TE finding on this subject.
Mandy Cadman (UNDP RTA)	4	Throughout Report	There are a few minor editorial errors/typos in the document - noted in the attached draft in Tracked Changes	These edits have all been inserted in the final text.
Mandy Cadman (UNDP RTA)	N/A	General Comment	This report is well-structured, comprehensive, and balanced and all conclusions and findings are strongly-evidence based. It makes clear, practicable recommendations and has extracted valuable lessons learnt, presented in a way that makes them useful both at project and programmatic level. Thank you.	No response required.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	5	Page 2, 1.3: Summary of findings and evaluation lessons learned, 1.3.1: Findings, Paragraph S7	No MTE was conducted for the project. As far as I know GEF MSPs are not subjected to MTE	While there is no mandatory requirement for a MTE/MTR for GEF MSPs, in this case the TE considers that – given the challenges experienced during the initial years – an MTR would have provided the opportunity to guide project direction and strengthen project management going forward, in line with the RTA’s comments in PIR 2017: “It is also recommended that it be considered if a light mid-term review would be useful, despite this being a medium-size project, to assist in determining how to proceed. An analysis of the ambitions of the project compared to the resources available should then also be included as a priority in any such MTR”.

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE response and action taken
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	6	Page 4. S11: Efficiency	<p>Financial Administrator. The project does not have the position of Financial Administrator, but a financial Officer.</p> <p>Finance Officer and bureaucratic delays with UNDP. This needs to be qualified with---"due to the inability of the implementing partner to observe/follow UNDP rules and procedures"</p>	<p>Noted in the text. The PIRs refer to Financial Administrator, hence the use of this term in the TE report.</p> <p>Noted in the text. However, it is difficult for the TE to verify this non-compliance with UNDP rules and procedures, hence it has been referred to as 'reported inability...'</p>
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	7	1.3.2: Conclusions, S13: Project design and start up	<p>The national capacity of DPWM to co-finance the project coordinator and operate the PMU was grossly overestimated.</p> <p>It is important to note that only the project coordinator was to be funded/co-financed from government/DPWM resources as committed to by government. Note that UNDP Co-financing and GEF resources entirely operationalized the PMU.</p> <p>There was no inception workshop: Yes there was an inception workshop as per the attached IW report of 14th July 2015</p>	<p>Comment accepted. This is the first time that the TE team has seen the draft report on the Inception Workshop – it was not provided earlier. The TE is of the opinion that the Inception Workshop in 2015 did not meet the requirements for M&E purposes set out in the Project Document paragraph 248 – it</p>

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE response and action taken
				did not review the Strategic Results Framework, and there was no PMU in place at the time to follow up.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	8	Page 10: 1.3.3: Lessons learned, strengthening implementation	Remove bureaucratic obstacles such as multiple signatures and different levels of reviews (e.g for staff TORs) to facilitate project start up and implementation. As far as I know, staff TORs are not subjected to multiple signatures, however TORs must be reviewed by the IP and UNDP to ensure relevance and ownership	Noted – the relevant text has been qualified in line with this comment.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	9	Page 13: 2.3: Methodology for data collection and analysis, paragraph 9:	Note, no MTR was conducted. This project is an MSP, therefore, no MTR is required.	See response to comment 5 above.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	10	Page 14, paragraph 14, 2 nd bullet point	MECCWW. This should now read MECCNAR	Text edited.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	11	Page 17: Paragraph 23, 3.1: Project start and duration, including milestones	While a MTR was planned in the project document, this was not implemented by UNDP, and the funds were reallocated within the project. GEF MSP do not require MTE	See response to comment 5 above.
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	12	Page 43: 4.2.3: project Finance and Co-finance, paragraph 101 (a)	GEF budget in project document was inadequate to support effective project management. 1 st bullet point: GEF project budget for project management costs did not include any budget for the project manager. In my view this was not	While the intention was to have the Project Coordinator as a government co-financed position, the fact that this position was

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft TE report	TE response and action taken
			<p>necessary as the Project Coordinator/Manager was not meant to be paid under the project, but from government consolidated /recurrent budget. Therefore no budget was expected to be included for this position under the PMU. The agreement was that the PC position will be government contribution under the recurrent budget.</p> <p>The PMU was entirely financed by UNDP and GEF resources. The in-kind co-financing mentioned is under the national budget and should not be reflected under the PMU. Government was not expected to make any subventions for the PMU apart from the in-kind contribution of office space etc.</p>	<p>cofinanced at a rate that was inadequate compensation for the role involved was a serious problem for project implementation.</p> <p>This comment suggests that there was adequate funding for the PMU through the UNDP and GEF resources provided, yet PIR 2017 page 14 identifies inadequate cofinancing of the PMU as a critical risk.</p>
Almamy Camara, (UNDP Country Office)	13	Page 47, Table 6: Co-financing Table	Ministry of Agriculture (NEMA project) cash contribution of US\$2,636,364 towards component 2. As far as I know, all Co-financing for the project, except that of UNDP were in-kind, no cash contribution was received by the project from NEMA.	Tables 6 and 7 have been revised in line with the UNDP July 2020 Guidance. These show that cash cofinancing from MoA/NEMA was planned in the project document, but not realized.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	14	Page 4, S7	There was confusion as to whether the project required an MTR – there was a budget allocation but the ProDoc was ambiguous. This was flagged in a mission report.	Noted in footnote
Francis Hurst (ITA)	15	Page 5, S9	Perhaps this reflects, in part, the situation in the institution and agencies in different policy sectors into which biodiversity needed to be mainstreamed as well. This was not just a project shortcoming but a contextual issue.	Noted in footnote
Francis Hurst (ITA)	16	Page 6, S13	There was an inception workshop but it was ineffective (based upon the report) for instance it did not review the SRF, there was no PMU in place, etc...	Text edited; footnote

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Francis Hurst (ITA)	17	Page 7, S14	Also possibly worth noting that some of the indicators were beyond the capacity of the DPWM to actually collect data in both methodology and material/financial resources). It's not unusual with SRFs that the indicator and targets are dependent upon the project first building the capacity to collect and measure the data.	The point is accepted and incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	18	Page 9, S24	Added to this might be the lack of mainstreaming / integration into policy sectors and policy sector operational plans, and across project interventions. The DPWM tries to mainstream across projects but this is done on an ad hoc basis and can easily be lost during implementation.	The point is accepted and incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	19	Page 9, Section 1.3.3, Strengthening Implementation, 1st bullet	Very much so – possibly a role for the RTA to support vulnerable countries during this phase, especially with ensuring that the PMU is in place and there is sufficient technical advice	The TE team considers that such support should mainly come from the UNDP Country Office under the guidance of the RTA, and that additional support – eg from a UN Volunteer, can boost start-up
Francis Hurst (ITA)	20	Page 9, Section 1.3.3, Strengthening Implementation, 3rd bullet	Yes and no. To be fair to UNDP this was a difficult project assurance role which only really became effective midway through the project.	Accepted – edited to reflect that such measures should only be taken where feasible and in line with UNDP oversight procedures
Francis Hurst (ITA)	21	Page 9, Section 1.3.3, Strengthening Implementation, 5th bullet	This is tricky because some of these are also GoG requirements and the ways in which they can be circumvented expose a project to risks at audit.	Accepted – text has been revised to include such qualification
Francis Hurst (ITA)	22	Page 10, Section 1.3.3, Strengthening M&E and Reporting, 2 nd bullet	Starting with the project design	Accepted and included.

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Francis Hurst (ITA)	23	Page 10, Section 1.3.3, Replication of good practices, 1 st bullet	Perhaps to add – there should be ongoing work to establish a culture of value for money – ways in which cost efficiencies can be built in from the design phase and efficiencies built in to fit with project financial efficiency. Projects think (and spend) big but very often the support needs to be small scale. This needs to be “baked in” during the project design – the dissonance between small scale high impact rural support and the pressures and needed efficiencies of project budget execution. Admittedly in the PAN project the late “warming up” of the SLM component could have done much better if it had got off the ground much earlier.	Accepted, and included in abridged form
Francis Hurst (ITA)	24	Page 11, Section 1.4, C2	Continued financial analysis (adaptive management) for greater efficiencies (value for money)?	Accepted and included
Francis Hurst (ITA)	25	Page 28, Para 59	The process for approving these changes – PMU – PEB approval – RTA approval – reporting in PIR was outlined but likely reflects a weakness in the PEB meetings which was caught between being inclusive of stakeholders and the need to make executive decisions. A second tier Committee to allow greater participation was tabled early on with a slimmed down PEB (IA, EA, Focal Point, Key Partner with the PC as Secretary) but the second Committee would have been too expensive.	Comment added as a footnote. TE team concurs with the view that this failure likely reflects a weakness in the PEB meetings; but also weak follow-up by the PMU and UNDP CO.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	26	Page 30, para 64; Page 58, para 104	It might be worth mentioning this – the SLM intervention has 2 components: 1 – the introduction of “technologies” which are not well-supported in The Gambia with technical expertise – this is the understanding of soils and soil processes (not just composting, organic agriculture and bee keeping) and 2 – the project approach to delivering small-scale interventions within the construct of a project (the “packaging”) which also has to take account of the nuances of land tenure systems in sub-Saharan Africa and the effects of different property regimes on project interventions. In many ways this was a	TE concurs with this point – which has been incorporated in this paragraph.

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			fundamental weakness in the project's design. It arguably took a technology introduction approach to land use rather than a land and property tenure approach which have been at the root of most successful CBNRM approaches. Thus the project had the challenges of private-common property to overcome in its interventions without being able to do the basic ground work with communities early on.	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	27	Page 32, para 71	These PARCC analyses were very sophisticated approaches but in absence of realistic data they were misinformed. Data was provided. In some ways this throws up an issue that these tools are very useful but the basic ecology capacity is not present. For instance; amphibians – a key indicator species were represented by a handful of species out of those that could be expected to be found in The Gambia, presumably because data was lacking and these were the only species that could be reliably identified in the absence of specific technical expertise. Similarly, the forecasts for land area under protection were skewed by the inclusion of species that no longer occur in The Gambia or should only be considered in the context of the larger Sene-Gambia ecosystem.	TE concurs – some elaboration has been made on this point.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	28	Page 32, para 73	The membership [of the PEB] was expanded during the inception phase	No changes are recorded in the Inception Workshop report or first two PEB Meeting minutes, so TE is unable to verify this.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	29	Page 37, para 83, 3 rd bullet	However, this was an enormous undertaking which was not supported by a track record of monitoring. Of all the surveys carried out by the DPWM all were in the body of previous projects and externally funded and assisted and only one had ever been repeated (the Water Birds Survey). This is externally funded and the data is analysed externally. This would have assumed that the DPWM had the human resources in terms of qualified ecologists to carry out the work – training might be in survey work but a basic ecology qualification would be necessary. For	Added as a footnote, as it provides further explanation of the issue at hand.

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			instance there was an attempt by the ITA to introduce Distance Sampling as an effective methodology but there was no uptake of the opportunity.	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	30	Page 37, para 84	This also marked a significant drive by UNDP to focus on results and to adhere to the M7E process and adaptive management.	TE concurs – point incorporated.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	31	Page 40, para 93	It could be argued that, systemically, with this approach to mainstreaming, it is too early to try to develop this. There is still a very strong focus on projects by all interested parties because this where they derive institutional income/budget support. Therefore, projects and budgets are closely guarded. It would take a much bigger intervention (and at a higher level) to change this attitude at this point in time.	Comment has been added as a footnote. TE generally concurs and this need is reflected in Recommendation D1 in Section 1.4.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	32	Page 44, para 101d	However, there was a budget allocation in the ProDoc for audit and it was part of the M&E framework in the same document.	TE concurs – point incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	33	Page 50, para 114	This issue of requesting a revision to the RF was made clear on a number of occasions.	TE concurs – point incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	34	Page 50, para 114	To review the implied Theory of Change would have necessitated stepping back and taking a property/tenure based approach towards natural resource management including a collective understanding of how common and private property resources were being managed in the project area. This would have been a massive re-focusing of the project's approach which would not have been possibly under given the time and other constraints. When the SLM got started they then began to run into these issues – collectively managed woodlots, private farms, common property grazing and private property livestock, "profit maximising" and costs and benefits of collective management. The	TE notes this comment, incorporated as a footnote. The final sentence is likely the key point here – that for reasons of expediency, a re-design based on the issues mentioned here would have been too complicated and time-consuming (possibly self-defeating) to implement.

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			<p>ProDoc was essentially a blunt instrument which missed some of the key driving forces of land degradation in the area. In some ways the ProDoc spoke more to the international need to develop sophisticated protected areas monitoring systems (or their targets) and less to the inequalities and inefficiencies in land use and the agencies tasked with policy sectors.</p> <p>As such, it was a conventional biodiversity approach bolted to a conventional agricultural development approach. By 2016 the project really had to go with what it had in the ProDoc because there were insufficient resources and time to make any meaningful adjustments and increase the resource governance component of the project strategy.</p>	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	35	Page 53, para 126	The first contact that the ITA had with the RTA was through the mapping and the need to provide maps for the PIR. This would be in 2019.	Added as footnote
Francis Hurst (ITA)	36	Page 56, para 135	Important – and also that there is budget allocation available for this in the ProDoc/GEF because it is not just a critical UNDP issue it is central to the objectives of the project. Conservation cannot take place when there are such large social injustices. However, most ProDocs are written by men and only provide lip-service to these issues. But, they should be integral to the project's design, to the Theory of Change.	TE concurs – GEF budget allocation point has been added here, also to lessons learned on Strengthening Implementation.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	37	Page 56, para 138	Reflecting the larger mainstreaming challenges	TE concurs – point incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	38	Page 63, para 163	All of these METT scores should come with a sizable health warning. Probably the last scores are the most accurate	TE concurs: while comments were provided against some METT scores, the inability to conduct a full field visit assessment of each

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				project site's management status has constrained the TE's ability to verify the METT scores provided, and the final 2020 METT provided to the TE contained errors that had to be corrected.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	39	Page 66, para 176	I'm uncomfortable with this because there is an imbalance of power in this relationship and it is very difficult to hold one party accountable (whichever side) with a verbal agreement. Arguably, verbal agreements are not worth the paper they aren't written on. They are also subject to very different expectations and largely un-enforceable in a Court of Law.	Comment added as a footnote
Francis Hurst (ITA)	40	Page 71, para 195	I would argue a process driven approach addressing resource tenure and improved resource governance which engaged with local government and their delivery of services as well as related sector agencies would have been a better starting point, loosely you could term this approach as addressing tenure and pricing and the inefficiencies and inequalities in the management institutions. This could have drawn on some of the earlier local government capacity building initiatives which had been very successful in establishing VDCs etc., (albeit the selected local governments did not fall in the PAN project area but the approach was very effective in those LGs where the programme had operated). However, that would not be possible in the inception phase through adaptive management. It would have had to be built in from the very start of the design. This comment also applies to the section below.	The TE accepts that this may have been an alternative pathway at the project design stage.

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Francis Hurst (ITA)	41	Page 73, para 201	Because these things were being rolled out so late there was less focus on equitable solutions and more focus on getting something on the ground – a creeping project expedience.	TE concurs – point incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	42	Page 75, para 206	Actually when minutes were taken they reflect pretty accurately what was discussed – it was just that very few strategic and even operational decisions were made by the PEB.	Added as footnote. TE's opinion is that the minutes are difficult to apply to adaptive management because decisions are not clearly stated, which likely reflects the style of chairing of the meetings as well as their reporting.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	43	Page 76, para 208	However, the BTF lacks a meaningful Operational Manual.	Added as footnote.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	44	Page 77, Para 213	It could be argued that there is an unwillingness in UNDP (in most countries) to link biodiversity and PAs to the ongoing good governance programmes. Lessons from southern Africa demonstrate that while the benefits of more resilient and people-centred land management can be measured in the increased flow of ecosystem goods and services and in improved rural livelihoods <i>“benefit [from CBNRM] should also be understood in non-pecuniary terms, and when economic benefit is linked with authority and responsibility large increments in social capital can result”</i> .	This is a personal opinion; included as footnote for information.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	45	Page 78, para 220	Without the Operational Manual this is questionable? If there are not clear and equitable pathways to access the fund....the Operational Manual as it stands is not fit for purpose. It is not a sinking fund but should be replenished. In short it is a legitimate means to circumvent treasury rules and partially retain revenues. There are a number of dangers in this, not least that Parliament sees it as the means to finance protected areas and thus replace the annual subvention from central	This is a personal opinion; included as footnote for information.

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			chest and the costs of administering the fund are greater than the benefits flowing into it (and out of it...).	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	46	Page 81, para 232	To be fair – mid way through the project there was a push to try to get gender disaggregated data by UNDP but in many ways they were facing a considerable step-change in order to do this. Recording was pretty feeble anyway so disaggregating data by gender while requested we were lucky to get back basic data (gender should have been included in this basic data). At times it might seem as women as beneficiaries but not as active participants....	Additional information is noted - no substantive change required to paragraph.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	47	Page 97, Table 13 (Evaluation Table), Sustainability, Financial Resources	And lacks a functional Operational Manual	Text incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	48	Page 99, para 268	Essentially a passive process and not necessarily an empowering process...	Text incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	49	Page 100, para 269	These projects are very relevant to UNDP “core” activities but it seems impossible to link environment/biodiversity with governance – arguably these community approaches will not be successful until there is a joined up approach in focal areas within donors.	Text incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	50	Page 101, para 271	An important point – there was very little understanding of SLM approaches nationally. On the surface there seemed to be a lot going on but in reality these amounted to a few basic initiatives (organic pest control (basic), composting (basic), vegetable gardening, bee keeping)... but there was no great innovation. Many sites visited to find out what was available were not working due to donor insistence on “community” projects rather than individual farmer assistance,	Elaborates on paragraph - added as footnote

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			<p>interventions were extremely expensive (as was the PAN package). The idea behind the PAN approach was not to focus on specific technologies or approaches but to try to establish an innovative culture based on a broad understanding of principles – water, soil, ecology, etc...so that extension officers and farmers could have the basic provision of water and fencing and then experiment. However, events causing delays and the SLM capacity of the PMU mitigated against this.</p> <p>Arguably, it would be better to start with less academically qualified younger technical experts more open to understanding the principles than more academically experienced experts unable to move quickly from an agri-business, high input mind set.</p>	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	51	Page 101, para 272	But the project was not able to protect people from damaging interventions by other related projects such as the infamous fish ponds which pose a potential risk to livelihoods by the damage they have caused.	Comment incorporated in paragraph.
Francis Hurst (ITA)	52	Page 102, para 273	The narrative of the Project Document which describes the “theory of change” and the various interventions is rambling and provides a somewhat fanciful and ambitious list of things the project will do and achieve. BUT when it comes to the RF these are not carried over. So there are important activities in the text that don’t appear in the SF and vice versa. The DPWM was very inexperienced with log frames but it would be a challenge for anyone to match up the ProDoc narrative with the RF. In short, the ProDoc was a real “dog’s breakfast”. My suspicion is that it contained a lot of re-cycled material from a GIZ forestry project	Comment elaborates on points made in the paragraph. Added text that the correspondence between the project strategy narrative and results framework was incomplete.

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			which lent it a spurious authority and I identified several copy pastes from a Central Asian SLM UNDP GEF ProDoc.	
Francis Hurst (ITA)	53	Page 103, para 276	Perhaps this should be mentioned earlier but the department does not have a strong culture of reporting. This is a serious capacity deficit especially as it runs so many small projects. There is no standard reporting and therefore no M&E or accountability.	Added as footnote
Francis Hurst (ITA)	54	Page 107, Recommendation C.3; also Summary Recommendation C.3	I would argue that this should not just be limited to the environmental and climate portfolio but should be extended to governance / democracy and other areas as well. Empowering local people to take control of their environmental and natural resources is a core governance objective.	TE concurs - point incorporated into recommendation
Francis Hurst (ITA)	55	Page 108, Lessons Learned, Strengthening Implementation, 3 rd bullet	To be fair to UNDP some of these delays were often due to the Ministry as well	TE concurs - point incorporated
Francis Hurst (ITA)	56	Page 108, Lessons Learned, M&E and Reporting, 2 nd bullet	Yes - Arguably there is a basic misunderstanding (systemically) about these projects. They are not simple interventions they are highly complex, unpredictable socio-ecosystems with multiple drivers and a high degree of uncertainty. Village water reticulation is fairly simple and straightforward – biodiversity/SLM projects are not!!	TE concurs – GEF project complexity does indeed present challenges for implementation – however, this is not a lesson learned in itself. Perhaps the lessons are in ensuring that project design should not be unduly complex, and that the inception period should aim to build understanding of the design among stakeholders. This is quite a general point.

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Kawsu Jammeh (Project Coordinator)	57	No paragraph referred to in comment. Relevant to paras S15; 110, 112, 145, Table 10, 238.	My addition relates the data; Protected Area coverage increased from 76,064 ha to 92,549 ha. The percentage coverage of the landscape is 9.25%.	The TE has taken the figure of 64,276 ha from the project document as the baseline for the project. The PIR of August 2020 states: The extensions at the three targeted PAs result in an increase in the area of the total PA estate of 24,013.41 ha, taking the total from 64,276 ha to 88,289.41 ha. This increases the PA system's area of coverage of the Gambia's territorial area to 7.4%. The basis for the figure of 92,549 ha is not provided, therefore the TE team is unable to respond.

[Annex 12: Relevant terminal GEF Core Indicators or Tracking Tools \(separate file\)](#)

The following terminal GEF Core Indicators and Tracking Tools were made available to the TE:

- METT Assessment Report for Bao Bolong Wetland Reserve (4 July 2019)
- METT Assessment Report for Jokadu National Park (4 July 2019)
- METT Assessment Report for Kiang West National Park (4 July 2019)

[Annex 13: Project achievements against Results Framework targets \(separate file\)](#)

Table summarizing status of Results Framework indicators at project completion against targets.