

Closure Stage Quality Assurance Report

Overall Project Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

Project Number : 00059713

Project Title : MENARID:Institutional Strengthening and Coherence for Integrated Natural Resources Management

Project Date : 28-Sep-2010

Strategic

Quality Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**

1. Did the project pro-actively take advantage of new opportunities and adapt its theory of change to respond to changes in the development context, including changing national priorities? (select the option from 1-3 which best reflects this project)

- 3: The project team regularly completed and documented a comprehensive horizon scanning exercise to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context that required adjustments in the theory of change. There is clear evidence that the project board considered the scanning and its implications, and documented changes to the project's RRF, partnerships, etc. made in response, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project team has undertaken some horizon scanning over the life of the project to identify new opportunities and changes in the development context. The project board discussed the scanning and its implications for the project, as reflected in the board minutes. There is some evidence that the project took action as a result, but changes may not have been fully integrated in the project's theory of change, RRF, partnerships, etc. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project team may have considered new opportunities and changes in the development context since implementation began, but this has not been discussed in the project board. There is limited to no evidence that the project team has considered changes to the project as a result. This option should also be selected if no horizon scanning took place during project implementation.

Evidence

During the reporting period the project has explored new opportunities through horizon scanning. These were used during the implementation period of the year while also presented to the final project board meeting as possible opportunities for the subject project's scale up.

2. Was the project aligned with the thematic focus of the Strategic Plan? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. It addressed at least one of the proposed new and emerging [areas](#) and implementation was consistent with the issues-based analysis incorporated into the project. The project's RRF included all the relevant SP output indicators. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan. The project's RRF included at least one SP output indicator, if relevant. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: While the project may have responded to one of the three areas of development [work](#) as specified in the Strategic Plan, it was based on a sectoral approach without addressing the complexity of the development issue. None of the relevant SP indicators were included in the project's RRF. This option is also selected if the project did not respond to any of the three SP areas of development work.

Evidence

The project responded to the land degradation and integrated natural resources management in the sustainable development working area.

3. Evidence generated through the project was explicitly used to confirm or adjust the programme/CPD's theory of change during implementation.

- Yes
- No

Evidence

As MENARID project was one of the long standing successful projects delivering several results and lessons learned, the project contributed to the CPD's framework and the theory of change with reflecting the importance of participatory and bottom up approaches in the implementation of integrated natural resources management as well as land degradation prevention and control.

Relevant

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

4. Were the project's targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, to ensure the project remained relevant for them? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Systematic and structured feedback was collected regularly from a representative sample of beneficiaries, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized, as part of the project's monitoring system. Representatives from the targeted group were active members of the project's governance mechanism (i.e., project board or equivalent) and there is credible evidence that their feedback informed decision making. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Targeted groups were engaged in implementation and monitoring, with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized. Beneficiary feedback, which may be anecdotal, was collected regularly to ensure the project addressed local priorities. This information was used to inform project decision making. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: Some beneficiary feedback may have been collected, but this information did not inform project decision making. This option should also be selected if no beneficiary feedback was collected.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

During the reporting period the project's targeted groups have been engaged in implementation and monitoring. Although the excluded and marginalized groups were not targeted directly in the project document but the project activities also covered this group of beneficiaries. In fact, One of the key characteristics of the MENARID project is that it was "people-centered" and public participation has been applied in feasibility studies, priority settings, decision making processes, implementation of projects and monitoring the results, which reduces the costs of the projects, increases the quality of the work and promotes sustainability. This was discussed and acknowledged in last project board meeting of the subject project while also reflected in the project's Terminal Evaluation.

5. Did the project generate knowledge, particularly lessons learned (i.e., what has worked and what has not) – and has this knowledge informed management decisions and changes/course corrections to ensure the continued relevance of the project towards its stated objectives, the quality of its outputs and the management of risk? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

3: *Knowledge and lessons learned (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, analysis and monitoring were regularly discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that the project's theory of change was adjusted, as needed, and changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)*

2: Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)

1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

Evidence

During the last year of the project's implementation there has been several publications on the project achievements and lessons learned as well as the project's focused areas such as alternative livelihood. Lessons learned was also reflected in the subject project's final review report.

6. Were the project's special measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and produce the intended effect? If not, were evidence-based adjustments and changes made? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

3: *The project team systematically gathered data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)*

2: The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments made, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)

1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence that adjustments and/or changes were made, as appropriate. This option should also be selected if the project had no special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women relevant to project results and activities.

Evidence

The project provided opportunity to bring women's voice in policy formulation and programme development. Women were also supported through forming groups to take leadership and also provided economic development opportunities through micro-enterprise generation and alternative livelihood initiatives as well as PES schemes. This was confirmed in the project's Terminal Evaluation report and also acknowledged in the last project board meeting.

7. Was the project sufficiently at scale, or is there potential to scale up in the future, to meaningfully contribute to development change? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: There is credible evidence that the project reached a sufficient number of beneficiaries (either directly through significant coverage of target groups, or indirectly, through policy change) to meaningfully contribute to development change.
- 2: *While the project was not considered at scale, there are explicit plans in place to scale up the initiative in the future (e.g. by extending its coverage in a second phase or using project results to advocate for policy change).*
- 1: The project was not at scale, and there are no plans currently to scale up the initiative in the future.

Evidence

While the project was initiated in four pilots during the last couple of the implementation period it was further upscale into new sites. In the meanwhile in the last project board meeting it was agreed that the MENARID project needs to continue because of the potential up scaling demand received from more than 19 provinces. it was decided that FRWO will form a Working Group with key agencies to assess the possibility of continuing the MENARID project. This Working Group will assess the possibility of starting a new phase of MENARID project and will report to the Steering Committee Members at national and provincial levels. For the evidence you may refer to the last board meeting minutes already uploaded under earlier questions.

Social & Environmental Standards

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

8. Did the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human rights-based approach? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: There is credible evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights, on the basis of applying a human rights based approach. Any potential adverse impacts on enjoyment of human rights were actively identified, managed and mitigated through the project's management of risks. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *There is some evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. Potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were identified and adequately mitigated through the project's management of risks. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There is no evidence that the project aimed to further the realization of human rights. There is limited to no evidence that potential adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights were managed.

Evidence

The project is not directly targeting human rights however it promotes it through implementation of the project activities. No adverse impacts on the enjoyment of human rights have been identified.

9. Were social and environmental impacts and risks (including those related to human rights, gender and environment) successfully managed and monitored in accordance with the project document and relevant action plans? (for projects that have no social and environmental risks the answer is "Yes")

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No social and environmental impacts and risks identified during the reporting year.

10. Were any unanticipated social and environmental issues or grievances that arose during implementation assessed and adequately managed, with relevant management plans updated? (for projects that did not experience unanticipated social and environmental risks or grievances the answer is “Yes”)

- Yes
- No

Evidence

No unanticipated social and environmental issues or grievances identified during the implementation period.

Management & Monitoring

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

11. Was the project's M&E Plan adequately implemented? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was reported regularly using highly credible data sources and collected according to the frequency stated in the project's M&E plan, including sex disaggregated data as relevant. Evaluations, if conducted, fully met decentralized evaluation standards, including gender UNEG standards, and management responses were fully implemented. Lessons learned, including during evaluations, were used to take corrective actions when necessary. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF was collected on a regular basis, although there may have been some slippage in following the frequency stated in the project's M&E plan and data sources were not always reliable. Any evaluations conducted meet most decentralized evaluation standards; management responses were fully implemented to the extent possible. Lessons learned have been captured but not used to take collective actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: Progress data either was not collected against the indicators in the project's RRF, or limited data was collected but not regularly; evaluations did not meet decentralized evaluation standards; and/or lessons learned were rarely captured and used.

Evidence

The project has M&E Plan, and most baselines and targets were populated in the system. Progress data against indicators in the project's RRF is collected on a regular basis, although there may be some slippage in following the frequency stated in the Plan. Based on the results of TE the design of M&E was up to standard with a fully itemised and cost plan included in the Project Document covering all the various M&E steps including the allocation of responsibilities. The project's M&E implementation was also evaluated as satisfactory, based on TE, in case of internal monitoring and monitoring of progress and impact. Strong progress monitoring contributed adaptive management with impact on decisions making.

12. Did the project's governance mechanism (i.e., the project board or equivalent) function as intended? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

The project's governance mechanism operated very well, and is a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)

The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)

The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document, and/or the project board or equivalent did not function as a decision making body for the project as intended.

Evidence

The project has had strong governance mechanism in place both at the national level (project board) as well as local project coordination committees at site and provincial (basin) levels. During the life of the project the project board met at least annually while local/provincial committees have had several meetings during the implementation period.

13. Were risks to the project adequately monitored and managed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

3: The project actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders at least annually to identify continuing and emerging risks to project implementation and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk, and some evidence that risk mitigation has benefitted performance. (all must be true to select this option)

2: The project monitored risks every quarter, as evidenced by a regularly updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures. (both must be true to select this option)

1: The risk log was not updated every quarter as required. There may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that could have affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks. The project's performance was disrupted by factors that could have been anticipated or managed.

Evidence

the project, in consultation with UNDP reviewed and assessed risks regularly and the risk log was updated in the system.

Efficient

Quality Rating: Exemplary

14. Adequate resources were mobilized to achieve intended results. If not, management decisions were taken to adjust expected results in the project's results framework.

Yes

No

Evidence

The planned resource were allocated and fully utilized for the implementation of the planned activities based on the project's annual work plan. During the reporting year the delivery rate of the project was %100.

15. Were project inputs procured and delivered on time to efficiently contribute to results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. Implementation of the plan was generally on or ahead of schedule. On a quarterly basis, the project reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)
- 1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them. This option is also selected if operational bottlenecks were not reviewed during the project in a timely manner.

Evidence

The project has had a procurement plan which was updated at least biannually. As 2017 was the last year of the project implementation both the project team and UNDP monitored the realization of the procurement plan closely to ensure that the planned budget and intended results are delivered in time to avoid any possible delay in the project implementation. Consequently, there has been some cases where adaptive management measures should have been take to ensure smooth implementation of the planed activities. The 100% delivery rate is an evidence of this.

16. Was there regular monitoring and recording of cost efficiencies, taking into account the expected quality of results? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: *There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true to select this option)*
- 2: The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project communicated with a few other projects to coordinate activities. (both must be true to select this option)
- 1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules. It is not clear that the link between cost savings and quality of results was made.

Evidence

Based on the Terminal Evaluation the project's cost effectiveness was deemed highly satisfactory. Project management costs was within the allocated budget and expected outcomes were completely achieved by the time of terminal evaluation and

this was due to regular monitoring and cost effective implementation of the project's planned activities. Similarly, activities implementation was effective and due to that all activities with some additional were accomplished without quality negotiation so efficiency was strong.

Effective

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

17. Is there evidence that project outputs contributed to the achievement of programme outcomes?

- Yes
 No

Evidence

Acknowledged in the final project board meeting and based on the TE report, MENARID Project contributed at the programme level to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcome focusing on supporting development of sustainable livelihoods improving agricultural systems for increased productivity, creating employment for vulnerable segments of the population, reducing economic and gender disparities, environmental shocks and recovery.

18. The project delivered its expected outputs.

- Yes
 No

Evidence

Based on the TE, the project has delivered intended outputs. All of the project outputs (except two which were rated satisfactory) are ranked individually as Highly Satisfactory; hence overall the achievement of outputs and activities is evaluated as Highly Satisfactory. All of the project outcomes are also achieved as per planned, hence achievement of outcomes of the project is also rated as Highly Satisfactory and overall project is also rated as Highly Satisfactory. Outputs have achieved all of their major targets, and yielded global environmental benefits, without any shortcomings. These outputs can be presented as "best practice" and is rated as Highly Satisfactory. The project has accomplished almost all activities that were required to make Land Management sustainable by providing a viable long-term security to livelihoods and local ecology from desertification; hence the outcome achievement is rated as Highly Satisfactory.

19. Were there regular reviews of the work plan to ensure that the project was on track to achieve the desired results, and to inform course corrections if needed? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Quarterly progress data informed regular reviews of the project work plan to ensure that the activities implemented were most likely to achieve the desired results. There is evidence that data and lessons learned (including from evaluations) were used to inform course corrections, as needed. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *There was at least one review of the work plan each year with a view to assessing if project activities were on track to achieving the desired development results (i.e., outputs.) There is no evidence that data or lessons learned were used to inform the review(s).*
- 1: While the project team may have reviewed the work plan at least once per year to ensure outputs were delivered on time, no link was made to the delivery of desired development results. Select this option also if no regular review of the work plan by management took place.

Evidence

During the course of the project implementation the project team and UNDP conducted joint reviews of the annual work plans at least twice a year and required adjustments/ management measures were applied when required.

20. Were the intended targeted groups systematically identified and engaged, prioritizing the marginalized and excluded, to ensure results were achieved as expected? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Targeted groups were systematically identified using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence to confirm that targeted groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups to assess whether they benefitted as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries were members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project did not report on specific targeted groups, or there is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries have capacity needs or are populations deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected, but not regularly.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

Based on the TE the project was successful in systematically identifying and engaging target groups particularly marginalized groups. The latter group includes women and children who are most vulnerable to land degradation, reduction in food production and climate change. The project therefore made efforts to include women in all activities to enhance their knowledge and capacity, build leadership capacity, improve their economic situation, increase food production and decrease drudgery related to water and natural resource collection. The project provided practical knowledge to address land degradation and promote sustainable land management.

21. Were at least 40 per cent of the personnel hired by the project, regardless of contract type, female?

Yes

No

Evidence

Close to 70% of the project personnel were female.

Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

22. Were stakeholders and partners fully engaged in the decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the project? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Only national systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were to fully implement and monitor the project. All relevant stakeholders and partners were fully and actively engaged in the process, playing a lead role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *National systems (i.e., procurement, monitoring, evaluation, etc.) were used in combination with other support (such as country office support or project systems) to implement and monitor the project, as needed. All relevant stakeholders and partners were actively engaged in the process, playing an active role in project decision-making, implementation and monitoring. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There was relatively limited or no engagement with national stakeholders and partners in the decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring of the project.
- Not Applicable

Evidence

Based on the Terminal Evaluation report, the project has worked closely with many stakeholders throughout and the active engagement of stakeholders has been vital to fulfilling its achievements, hence stakeholder participation is evaluated as Highly Satisfactory.

23. Were there regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of institutions and systems, and were the implementation arrangements adjusted according to changes in partner capacities? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: Changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems were regularly and comprehensively assessed/monitored using clear indicators, rigorous methods of data collection and credible data sources. There is clear evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Implementation arrangements were formally reviewed and adjusted, if needed, in agreement with partners according to changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were monitored by the project using indicators and reasonably credible data sources. There is limited evidence that capacities and performance of national institutions and systems improved by the end of the project, if applicable. Some adjustment was made to implementation arrangements if needed to reflect changes in partner capacities. (all must be true to select this option)*
- 1: Some aspects of changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems may have been monitored by the project, however changes to implementation arrangements were not considered. Also select this option if changes in capacities and performance of relevant national institutions and systems were not monitored by the project.

Not Applicable

Evidence

The project implementing partner was subject to HACT micro-assessment in 2017 which was conducted and the IP was deemed as qualified.

24. Were the transition and phase-out arrangements implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made to the plan during implementation? (select the option from 1-3 that best reflects the project)

- 3: The project's governance mechanism regularly reviewed the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented as planned by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *There was a review of the project's sustainability plan, including arrangements for transition and phase-out, to ensure the project remained on track in meeting the requirements set out by the plan. The plan was implemented by the end of the project, taking into account any adjustments made during implementation. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project may have had a sustainability plan that specified arrangements for transition and phase-out, but there was no review of this strategy after it was developed. Also select this option if the project did not have a sustainability strategy.

Evidence

Transition and phase out of the project was discussed between UNDP and IP as well as key stakeholders. The project sustainability beyond the GEF life was discussed by the board members. Based on the terminal evaluation of the subject project the sustainability likelihood of the project is rated as "likely". There are several initiatives at the national level for continuation of the project and further up scaling to new pilots/provinces which are being reviewed by the IP, FRWO. The MENARID project could play a key role as a model for Rural Development and employment creation as targeted by Article 27 of the 6th National Development Plan. In fact in the 6th national development it's approved that the MENARID model is to be replicated.

25. Please upload the final lessons learned report that was produced for this project.

Summary/Final Project Board Comments: