
Terminal Evaluation Inception Report

UNDP-GEF Project: Improving sustainability of the PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs

GEF Project ID: 4584

UNDP Project ID: 4855

Country: Kazakhstan
Region: Europe and Central Asia
Focal Areas (GEF-5): Biodiversity
Land Degradation
GEF Agency: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Executing Agency: Committee for Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Agriculture

Date	Version	
23 April 2018	01	First draft

Opening Page

PROJECT DETAILS:

Project Name:	Improving sustainability of the PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs	
Project ID:	GEF Project ID: 4584	UNDP PIMS ID: 4855
Country:	Kazakhstan	
Region:	Europe and Central Asia	
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	
Funding Source:	GEF Trust Fund	
Strategic Programs:	GEF-5 Biodiversity Strategy, Objective 1: Improve Sustainability of Protected Area Systems GEF-5 Land Degradation Strategy, Objective 3: Integrated Landscapes: Reduce Pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in wider landscape	
GEF Agency:	United Nations Development Programme	
Implementation Modality:	National Implementation Modality (NIM)	
Executing Agency:	Committee for Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Agriculture	
Responsible Partners:	N/A	

FINANCIALS:

Project Preparation Grant:	USD 120,500
GEF Project Grant:	USD 4,364,000
Cofinancing Total:	USD 19,179,293
GEF Agency Fees:	USD 436,400
Total Cost:	USD 26,663,793

PROJECT TIMELINE:

Received by GEF:	05 August 2011
Preparation Grant Approved:	27 October 2011
Concept Approved:	01 November 2011
Project Approved for Implementation:	08 July 2013
State Date:	3 September 2013
Project Closed (planned):	31 August 2018

TERMINAL EVALUATION DETAILS:

TE Timeframe:	April-June 2018
TE Team:	James Lenoci, International Consultant / Team Leader (to be determined), National Consultant
Reporting Language:	English

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

The project objective is to enhance the sustainability of protected areas in globally important desert and semi-desert ecosystems by expanding their geographic coverage, promoting a landscape approach and supporting biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs, focusing on regions of Ile Balkhash, Ustyurt and Aral-Syrdarya desert and semi-desert ecosystems. The long-term solution to addressing the threat of loss of desert and semi-desert ecosystems takes a more strategic landscape-based approach to protected area expansion and management of the least-represented desert and semi-desert ecosystems in Ile Balkhash and Southern Kazakh desert areas. The solution relies on three key elements. The first element relates to expansion of the PA estate to include desert ecosystems, accompanied with management plans for the PAs, financing, and permanent and fully staffed management units. Secondly, the solution depends on a high degree of integration of these protected areas with buffer zones, wildlife corridors and other areas of the broader productive landscape. Finally, the solution depends on engagement of local communities in activities that bring income on the one hand and ensure a biodiversity dividend on the other, as well as their participation in PA management.

1.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the terminal evaluation (TE) are to assess the achievement of project results, to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming. The purposes of evaluations of UNDP supported, GEF financed projects also include the following:

- ✓ 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 contribute to the overall assessment of results in achieving GEF strategic objectives aimed at global environmental benefit; and
- ✓ 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).

Thematic Learning Review of UNDP-GEF Ecosystems and Biodiversity Team's Portfolio of PA Projects:

The TE is also part of a thematic learning review of the UNDP-GEF Ecosystems and Biodiversity team's portfolio of projects on protected areas. UNDP's work in Ecosystems and Biodiversity (EBD) has as an overall strategic objective to maintain and enhance the goods and services provided by biodiversity and ecosystems to secure livelihoods, food, water and health, enhance resilience, conserve threatened species and their habitats, and increase carbon storage and sequestration. The aim of the thematic learning review is to advance understanding of solutions that have worked or not worked within the UNDP-GEF EBD protected areas portfolio of projects to improve the design and implementation of ongoing and/or future projects. Apart from the objectives of the TE outlined above, the evaluation will also address the following questions in support of the thematic learning review.

High-level technical questions:

1. What are the **key characteristics, collective outcomes and innovation highlights** of the protected area project **portfolio**?

2. At **project-level**, which protected area strengthening **approaches/practices have worked well** (and under what conditions), what **challenges** have been encountered and how have/can they be resolved?
3. How does the protected area work supported by UNDP **deliver on the sustainable development goals (SDGs)**, and how can this delivery be **enhanced** in future?

High-level operational/strategic questions:

4. What **practical recommendations for strengthening protected area project design** can be made, with particular attention paid to **effective ways of integrating protected area work into multifocal programming approaches**?
5. How best can UNDP's **information management systems and project evaluation processes be enhanced**, so that they contribute maximally to enhanced data availability, improved knowledge management, and reflexive learning?
6. What recommendations can be made for **embedding protected-area related work in the EBD team's future strategic priorities**, in line with the new UNDP Strategic Plan, and evolving GEF programming directions?

1.3 Risks and Assumptions

The TE will be carried out over the period of April-June 2018; including preparatory activities, field mission, desk review, and completion of the TE report.

The following risks and assumptions are highlighted for the evaluation:

Stakeholder feedback: As time is of the essence, there is a risk that there will be insufficient time to obtain feedback from the key stakeholders. Efforts will be made to interview most of the stakeholders in person during the evaluation mission. As necessary, additional interviews will be arranged via Skype or telephone, for those stakeholders who are unavailable during the mission or do not reside in the region. The TE team assumes that the information obtained over the course of the evaluation time-period will be representative.

Field visits: As time is limited for the evaluation, the TE team might not be able to visit each of the project-supported field activities. The TE team assumes that the sites visited during the evaluation mission are representative of the work completed.

Language: Project documentation is in English and Kazakh (and Russian) language. Interviews will also be held in English, with independent interpretation support. The TE team assumes that independent interpretation support will be provided for the TE team during the TE mission. For documentation available only in Kazakh (and Russian) language, the national consultant will be tasked with reviewing and summarizing the relevant content.

2 Methodology

2.1 Guidelines

The overall approach and methodology of the evaluation follows the guidelines outlined in the following guidance documents:

- ✓ Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation for Full-sized Projects, Approved by the GEF IEO Director on 11th of April 2017
- ✓ UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects, 2012, UNDP

2.2 Scope of Evaluation

The terminal evaluation will be an evidence-based assessment and will rely on feedback from persons who have been involved in the design, implementation, and supervision of the project, and review of available documents and findings made during field visits.

The evaluation will include the following activities:

- ✓ An evaluation mission is planned from 13-27 May 2018. The TE team will interview key project stakeholders, including the project manager, representatives from participating government agencies and ministries, consultants, and local beneficiaries. The mission itinerary will be included in **Annex 1** after finalized with the project team.
- ✓ A desk review will be made of available reports and other documents, as listed in **Annex 2**. This list will be amended as more information is obtained, and the final list of information reviewed will be included in the final TE report.
- ✓ As a data collection and analysis guidance tool, the evaluation matrix included as **Annex 3** was prepared. Evidence gathered during the evaluation will be cross-checked between as many sources as practicable, to validate the findings.
- ✓ The project results framework will be used as an evaluation tool, in assessing attainment of the project objective and outcomes against indicators (see **Annex 4**).
- ✓ The TE team will also review the available information regarding cofinancing realized throughout the duration of the project and what activities were completed with the cofinancing support (**Annex 5**).
- ✓ Financial delivery will be assessed by comparing the actual expenditures incurred for each outcome and project management, for each year of implementation compared to the annual work plans.

2.3 Evaluation Rating Criteria

The findings of the evaluation will be compared against the targets set forth in the project results framework and analyzed considering local circumstances. The effectiveness and efficiency of project outcomes will be rated according to the 6-point GEF scale, ranging from Highly Satisfactory (no shortcomings) to Highly Unsatisfactory (severe shortcomings). Monitoring & evaluation and execution of the implementing and executing agencies will also be rated according to this scale. Relevance is evaluated to be either relevant or not relevant.

Sustainability will be rated according to a 4-point scale, ranging from Likely (negligible risks to the likelihood of continued benefits after the project ends) to Unlikely (severe risks that project outcomes will not be sustained). Impact will be rated according to a 3-point scale, including significant, minimal, and negligible. The rating scales are outlined below.

Rating scales		
<p>Ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&E, IA & EA Execution:</p> <p>Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency</p> <p>Satisfactory (S): There were only minor shortcomings</p> <p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were moderate shortcomings</p> <p>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings</p> <p>Unsatisfactory (U): There were major shortcomings in the achievement of project objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency</p> <p>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings</p>	<p>Sustainability Ratings:</p> <p>Likely (L) Negligible risks to sustainability</p> <p>Moderately Likely (ML): Moderate risks to sustainability</p> <p>Moderately Unlikely (MU): Significant risks to sustainability</p> <p>Unlikely (U): Severe risks to sustainability</p>	<p>Relevance Ratings:</p> <p>Relevant (R)</p> <p>Not relevant (NR)</p> <p>Impact Ratings:</p> <p>Significant (S)</p> <p>Minimal (M)</p> <p>Negligible (N)</p>
<p>Additional ratings where relevant:</p> <p>Not Applicable (N/A)</p> <p>Unable to Assess (U/A)</p>		
<p>Source: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects, 2012, UNDP</p>		

2.4 TE Reporting

The report will start out with a description of the project, indicating the duration, main stakeholders, and the immediate and development objectives.

The assessment of **project design** will focus on an evaluation of how the coherence and practicability of the project’s objectives and components, and whether project outcomes were designed according to SMART criteria (Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound).

Project formulation also covers how capacities of executing agencies were assessed when designing the project, if partnership arrangements were identified and negotiated prior to project approval, and an assessment of how assumptions and risks were considered.

In GEF terms, **project results** include direct project outputs, short- to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impacts, including global environmental benefits, replication efforts, and local effects. The focus of the evaluation will be at the outcome level, as most UNDP supported GEF financed projects are expected to achieve anticipated outcomes by project closing and recognizing that global environmental benefit impacts are difficult to discern and measuring outputs is insufficient to capture project effectiveness.

Project outcomes are evaluated and rated according to relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

Relevance: The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time. Also, the extent to which the project is in line with GEF Operational Programs or the strategic priorities under which the project was funded will be evaluated.

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; also called cost effectiveness or efficacy.

In addition to assessing outcomes, the report will include an evaluation of country ownership, mainstreaming, **sustainability** (which is also rated), catalytic role, mainstreaming, and impact.

In terms of **progress towards impact**, the TE team will assess whether the project has demonstrated: (a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, (b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or (c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.

An **assessment of monitoring and evaluation systems** will include a review of the appropriateness of the M&E plan, as well as a review of how the plan was implemented, e.g., compliance with progress and financial reporting requirements, how were adaptive measures taken in line with M&E findings, and management response to the recommendations from the mid-term review.

Assessment of implementation and execution first looks at how the logical results framework was used as an M&E tool during project implementation. The quality of execution by both the implementing agency and the executing agency will also be evaluated and rated in the project implementation section of the report. This evaluation considers whether there was sufficient focus on results, looks at the level of support provided, quality of risk management, and the candor and realism represented in the annual reports.

Other assessments will include the need for follow-up, materialization of cofinancing, environmental and social safeguards, gender concerns, and the effectiveness of partnerships and the degree of involvement of stakeholders.

Finally, the evaluation presents **recommendations** for reinforcing and following up on initial project benefits. The report concludes with a discussion of **lessons learned** and **good practices** which should be considered for other GEF and UNDP interventions.

An outline of the evaluation report is compiled in **Annex 6**.

2.5 Ethics

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluators, and the evaluators have signed the Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement form (see **Annex 7**). The evaluators ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of individuals who will be interviewed and surveyed. In respect to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, results will be presented in a manner that clearly respects stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

The evaluation will be completed in line with relevant UNDP and GEF policies and procedures, and according to the guidelines outlined in the Terms of Reference (**Annex 8**).

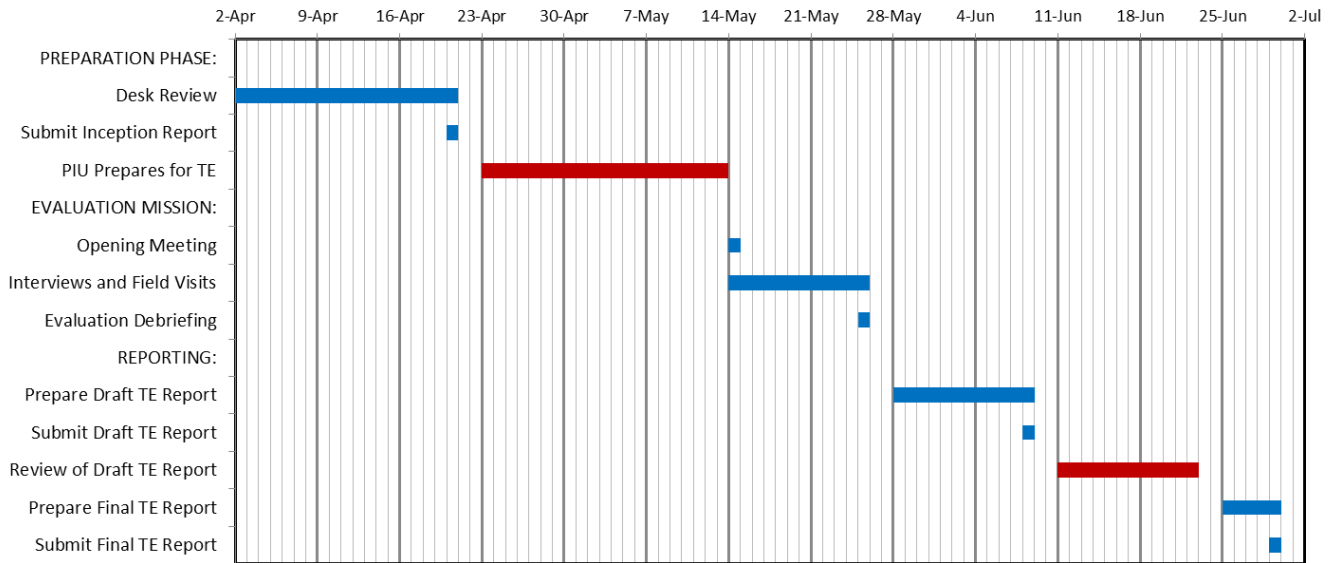
3 Comments/Questions following Preliminary Desk Review

The TE consultant has reviewed available information and has been in communication with the project manager. Please make the following preparations prior to the start of the TE mission.

1. Please provide the contact details for the national consultant recruited for the TE team;
2. Please provide a suggested TE mission itinerary. The TE consultant will review the suggestions and the team could then finalize the itinerary and fix interview and field visit arrangements. The finalized itinerary will be integrated into this inception report as **Annex 1**.
3. Apart from the governmental stakeholders, the TE team would like to interview representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) who have been involved in the project, as well as a sampling of local households within the target areas.
4. Please fill in the “end of project status” information into the version of the project results framework copied in **Annex 4** to the inception report (a separate Word file will be provided). The TE consultant has a copy of the project implementation review (PIR) report for 2017; please provide updated information regarding end of project status.
5. Please provide information regarding cofinancing realized into the spreadsheet copied in **Annex 5** to the inception report (a separate Excel file will be provided). Please also indicate any cofinancing contributions that was mobilized from other sources during project implementation; feel free to add additional rows as needed.
6. The project team has provided the TE consultant with some documentation. Please provide the following additional documentation:
 - a. Approved tracking tools: terminal versions.
 - b. CEO Endorsement Request (approved version).
 - c. Annual work plan for 2018.
 - d. Project board minutes for any meetings convened after 03.07.2017.
 - e. Combined delivery report for the period of 01 Jan through 30 Apr 2018.
 - f. Financial audit reports.
 - g. Project asset register.
 - h. Records of protected expansions, e.g., government gazette records, approved expansion plans, etc.
 - i. Monitoring reports associated with the species targets included in the project results framework.
 - j. Supporting documentation regarding progress with respect to territorial development plans employing landscape management approaches.
 - k. Records of ecosystem restoration activities.
 - l. Supporting documentation regarding progress with respect to quality and quantity of vegetation cover in the 3 target rural districts.
 - m. Monitoring records of changes with respect to household income of families participating in the measures on pasture management.
 - n. Supporting documentation demonstrating farmer associations are using experiences achieved by the project.
 - o. Enforcement records associated with reductions in poaching and illegal logging at target PA's.
 - p. Supporting documentation associated with the functioning of stakeholder engagement mechanisms.
 - q. Progress with respect to the pilot PES schemes mentioned in the 2017 PIR.
 - r. Supporting documentation associated with the land users who have benefitted through the Eco-dam biodiversity microcredit line.
 - s. Maps (jpg files, or similar) of the target PA's and sites.

4 Work Plan

The work plan for the TE process is illustrated below.



The TE inception report is being submitted herein, following preliminary desk review, allowing the PMU to prepare for the TE mission scheduled for 13-27 May 2018.

A debriefing of the TE findings will be held on the last day of the mission, and the TE team will then prepare the draft report over the subsequent approximate two weeks. Upon receipt of review comments, the TE team will prepare the draft final version of the TE report. The final version will be compiled upon confirmation from the UNDP Country Office and the Regional Technical Advisor.

5 Logistics and Support

The Project Management Unit (PMU) and/or the UNDP Country office are expected to provide the following support:

- ✓ Facilitate interviews and field visits with project stakeholders.
- ✓ Arrange domestic air-travel and/or ground transport during stakeholder meetings and field visits.
- ✓ Arrange accommodation reservations.
- ✓ Provide independent interpretation for TE interviews.

There might be occasions when the TE team asks PMU staff members not to participate during certain interviews, to allow stakeholders uninhibited opportunities for providing feedback.

Annex 1: Evaluation Mission Itinerary

Date	Location	Details
Sunday, 13 May 2018	Astana	Arrival of International Consultant/Team Leader
Monday, 14 May
Tuesday, 15 May
Wednesday, 16 May
Thursday, 17 May
Friday, 18 May
Saturday, 19 May
Sunday, 20 May
Monday, 21 May
Tuesday, 22 May
Wednesday, 23 May
Thursday, 24 May
Friday, 25 May
Saturday, 26 May
Sunday, 27 May	Astana	Departure of International Consultant/Team Leader

Annex 2: List of Documents for Review

1. Project documents

- 1) GEF Project Identification Form (PIF)
- 2) Project Document and Log Frame Analysis (LFA)
- 3) CEO Endorsement Request
- 4) Project Inception report
- 5) Implementing/executing partner arrangements
- 6) List and contact details for project staff, key project stakeholders, including Project Boards, and other partners to be consulted
- 7) Monitoring reports
- 8) Midterm review (MTR) and other relevant evaluations and assessments
- 9) Management response to midterm review recommendations
- 10) Annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR), APR, QPR
- 11) Financial audit reports
- 12) Project budget, broken out by outcomes and outputs
- 13) GEF tracking tools: baseline, midterm and terminal assessments
- 14) Financial Data including Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs), broken down by component
- 15) Actual cofinancing realized by the end of the project
- 16) Project monitoring reports, e.g., regarding the community level activities
- 17) Project communications materials, i.e. press releases, brochures, documentaries, etc.
- 18) Comprehensive report of subcontracts.

2. UNDP documents

- 19) Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)
- 20) Country Program Document (CPD)
- 21) Country Program Action Plan (CPAP)

3. GEF documents

- 22) GEF focal area strategic Program Objectives

4. Other documents

- 23) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- 24) National Reports on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- 25) National Program on Combating Desertification

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: Is the project relevant with respect to the environmental and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
To what extent is the principle of the project in line with national priorities?	Level of participation of the concerned agencies in project activities. Consistency with relevant strategies and policies.	Minutes of meetings, Project progress reports, national and regional strategy and policy documents	Desk review, interviews
To what extent is the project aligned to the main objectives of the GEF focal area?	Consistency with GEF strategic objectives	GEF Strategy documents, PIRs, Tracking Tools	Desk review, interview with UNDP-GEF RTA
To what extent is the project aligned to the strategic objectives of UNDP?	Consistency with UNDP strategic objectives	UNDP Strategic Plan, Country Programme Document	Desk review, interview
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
Assessment of progress made toward achieving the indicator targets agreed upon in the logical results framework			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
What evidence is available showing sufficient funding has been secured to sustain project results?	Financial risks	Progress reports, sectoral plans, budget allocation reports, testimonial evidence	Desk review, interviews
How have individual and institutional capacities been strengthened, and are governance structures capacitated and in place to sustain project results?	Institutional and individual capacities	Progress reports, testimonial evidence, training records	Desk review, interviews
What social or political risks threaten the sustainability of project results?	Socio-economic risks	Socio-economic studies, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews
Which ongoing circumstances and/or activities pose threats to the sustainability of project results?	Risks to sustainability	Sectoral plans, progress reports, macroeconomic information	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Have delays affected project outcomes and/or sustainability, and, if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?	Impact of project delays	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward long lasting desired changes?			
What verifiable environmental improvements have been made?	Verifiable environmental improvements	Progress reports, sectoral plans, municipal development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
What verifiable reductions in stress on environmental systems have been made?	Verifiable reductions in stress on environmental systems	Progress reports, sectoral plans, municipal development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
How has the project demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements?	Progress toward impact achievements	Progress reports, sectoral plans, municipal development plans	Desk review, interviews, theory of change analysis
Efficiency: Was the Project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
How was the project efficient with respect to incremental cost criteria?	Incremental cost	National strategies and plans, progress reports	Desk review, interviews

Terminal Evaluation Inception Report, April 2018

 Improving sustainability of the PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs
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Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
To what extent were the project objective and outcomes realized according to the proposed budget and timeline?	Efficient utilization of project resources	Progress reports, financial records	Desk review, interviews
Country Ownership:			
How are project results contributing to national and subnational development plans and priorities?	Development planning	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
Which governments policies or regulatory frameworks were approved in line with the project objective?	Policy reform	Government approved plans and policies	Desk review, interviews
How have governmental and other cofinancing partners maintained their financial commitment to the project?	Committed cofinancing realized	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Stakeholder Involvement and Partnership Arrangements:			
How has the project consulted with and made use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions?	Effective stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How were partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval?	Partnership arrangements	Memorandums of understanding, agreements	Desk review, interviews
How have partnerships influenced the effectiveness and efficiency of project implementation?	Effective partnerships	Progress reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How have relevant vulnerable groups and powerful supporters and opponents of the processes been properly involved?	Inclusive stakeholder involvement	Meeting minutes, reports, interview records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How has the project sought participation from stakeholders in (1) project design, (2) implementation, and (3) monitoring & evaluation?	Stakeholder involvement	Plans, reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Catalytic Role:			
How has the project had a catalytic or replication effect in the country?	Catalytic effect	Interview records, municipal development plans	Desk review, interviews
Synergy with Other Projects/Programs			
How were synergies with other projects/programs incorporated in the design and/or implementation of the project?	Collaboration with other projects/programs	Plans, reports, meeting minutes	Desk review, interviews
Preparation and Readiness			
Were project objective and components clear, practicable, and feasible within its time frame?	Project coherence	Logical results framework	Desk review, interviews

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Evaluation Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
How were the capacities of the executing institution(s) and its counterparts properly considered when the project was designed?	Execution capacity	Progress reports, audit results	Desk review, interviews
Were counterpart resources, enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at Project entry?	Readiness	Interview records, progress reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Financial Planning			
Did the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds?	Financial control	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Has there been due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits?	Financial management	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Has promised cofinancing materialized?	Realization of cofinancing	Audit reports, project accounting records	Desk review, interviews
Supervision and Backstopping			
How have GEF agency staff members identified problems in a timely fashion and accurately estimate their seriousness?	Supervision effectiveness	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
How have GEF agency staff members provided quality support, approved modifications in time, and restructured the project when needed?	Project oversight	Progress reports	Desk review, interviews
How has the implementing agency provided the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, and frequency of field visits for the project?	Project backstopping	Progress reports, back-to-office reports, internal appraisals	Desk review, interviews, field visits
Monitoring & Evaluation			
Were intended results (outputs, outcomes) adequately defined, appropriate and stated in measurable terms, and were the results verifiable?	Monitoring and evaluation plan at entry	Project document, inception report	Desk review, interviews
How has the project monitoring & evaluation plan been implemented?	Effective monitoring and evaluation	Progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews
How has there been focus on results-based management?	Results based management	Progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews
Mainstreaming			
How were gender issues integrated in project design and implementation?	Greater consideration of gender aspects.	Project document, progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits
How were effects on local populations considered in project design and implementation?	Positive or negative effects of the project on local populations.	Project document, progress reports, monitoring reports	Desk review, interviews, field visits

Annex 4: Project Results Framework

Instructions to PMU: please fill in “end of project status” in cells highlighted in yellow.

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	End of Project Status	TE Comments	Rating
Objective: To enhance the sustainability of protected areas in globally important desert and semi-desert ecosystems by expanding their geographic coverage, promoting a landscape approach, and supporting biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs					
1. Coverage of underrepresented Southern desert in the PA System of Kazakhstan	1,591,800 ha (5.3% of ecological zone)	By 2015 coverage of Southern desert in PA system increases by 2,682,032 ha (8.9% of the ecological zone). This increase comes from the following: - Establishment of 1 new PA (Mangistau State Reserved Zone) covering 2,676,262 ha - Expansion of 1 existing PA (Barsakelmes State Nature Reserve) by 5,770 ha By 2020 ¹ coverage of Southern desert in PA system increases by approximately 970,000 ha (3.2% of the ecological zone). This increase comes from: - Expansion of 1 existing PA (Ustyurt State Nature Reserve) by approximately 220,000 ha - Establishment of a wildlife corridor between Barsakelmes and Ustyurt PAs of approximately 750,000 ha			
2. Coverage of underrepresented Mountain-valley subtype desert in the PA System of Kazakhstan	99,704 ha (3.3% of ecological zone)	By 2015 coverage of Mountain-valley subtype desert in PA system increases by 1,602,504 ha (53.4% of the ecological zone). This increase comes from the following: - Establishment of 1 new PA (Ile-Balkhash State Nature Reserve) covering 442,296 ha - Expansion of 1 existing PA (Altyn Yemel State National Nature Park) by 460,208 ha - Establishment of a wildlife corridor between Altyn Yemel and Ile-Balkhash PAs of 700,000 ha By 2020 ² coverage of Mountain-valley subtype desert in PA system increases by approximately 30,000 ha (1% of the ecological zone). This increase comes from the following: - Establishment of 1 new PA (Arganaty) covering approximately 30,000 ha			
Ile Balkhash Project Area:					

¹ Although the project is expected to end in 2018, target indicators for PAs and corridors to be established/ expanded under Zhasyl Damu 2015-2020 are set for 2020 as this is the official time frame for Zhasyl Damu. However, the project expects to achieve much of the ground work for establishment/ expansion of these PAs and corridors by 2018 through supporting the government in preparation of ENOs and TEOs for these areas along with necessary consultations. But it may not be until the end of 2020 that the government is able to formally gazette these areas. Target hectare estimates for 2020 remain estimates at this stage and will be confirmed during project implementation.

² Same as previous footnote

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Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	End of Project Status	TE Comments	Rating
3. Size of flagship species populations of desert & semi-desert ecosystems in target areas remains at the baseline level or increase	Goitered gazelle: 1,800	1800≥			
	Koulan: 1,700	1700≥			
	Argali: 205	205≥			
	Aral Syrdarya Project Area:				
	Goitered gazelle: 80	80≥			
	Koulan: 340	340≥			
	Pallas's sandgrouse: 407	407≥			
	Ustyurt Plateau:				
	Ustyurt argali: 1,020	1020≥			
	Goitered gazelle: 270	270≥			
	Houbara bustard: 60	60≥			
Outcome 1: PA system of Kazakhstan contains representative samples of desert and semi-desert ecosystems under various conservation regimes and is effective in protecting ecosystems and ecological processes					
4. Enhanced management effectiveness of existing PAs that are expanded under the project (as measured by METT)	Altyn Yemel: 50 %	75%			
	Barsakelmes: 42 %	67%			
	Ustyurt: 43 %	68%			
5. Enhanced management effectiveness of new PAs that are established under the project (as measured by METT)	Ile-Balkhash: 19%	44%			
	Mangistau: 7%	32%			
	Arganaty: 9%	34%			
Outcome 2: Landscape-level conservation planning and management are developed and implemented in target desert and semi-desert environments					
6. Territorial development plans employing landscape management approach	0 ha	9 million ha			
7. Number of hectares of restored wetlands & delta lakes	0 ha	2,202 ha			
8. Number of hectares of riparian & saksaul forests under sustainable management	0 ha	18,048 ha			
9. Quality and quantity of vegetation cover in rangelands in 3 rural districts	Hectares of land with significant signs of soil erosion caused by overgrazing in selected plots ³	Reduction of the size of the area heavily affected by soil erosion by at least 15% in the Ile Balkhash area and 20% in the Aral Syrdarya target area			

³ Baseline to be estimated at the beginning of the project once monitoring sites are identified and primary data are collected.

Terminal Evaluation Inception Report, April 2018

Improving sustainability of the PA system in desert ecosystems through promotion of biodiversity-compatible livelihoods in and around PAs

UNDP PIMS ID: 4855; GEF Project ID: 4584

Indicator	Baseline	End of Project target	End of Project Status	TE Comments	Rating
10. Presence of plant species which negatively affect the function of distant rangelands	Hectares of distant rangelands with significant signs of natural succession due to under grazing ⁴	Unwanted plant species in at least 4 rangeland monitoring plots are less than 5% surface coverage			
11. Average income of families participating in the measures on pasture management	US\$ 1,600	Increase by at least 20%			
12. Number of farmer associations that use the experiences of this project as a model	No projects which use participatory bottom-up approaches in the target areas	At least 15 farmer associations or rural consumer cooperatives in the Aral Syrdarya target area and 25 in the Ile Balkhash area use the experience of this project as a model.			
Outcome 2: Community involvement in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in and around PAs is enhanced					
13. Reduction in poaching and illegal logging at target PAs (annual) per unit of patrolling effort, compared with year of initial patrolling	Ile-Balkhash Target Area				
	Illegal logging violations: 67 Poaching violations: 436 Total violations: 503	Reduction by 40%			
	Aral-Syrdarya Target Area				
	Illegal logging violations: 241 Poaching violations: 157 Total violations: 398	Reduction by 40%			
14. Functioning stakeholder engagement mechanism for transparency in PA planning and management	No PA public committees for mobilizing stakeholders in and around PAs in the Ile-Balkhash and Aral-Syrdarya target areas	Two (2) operational PA public committees			
15. Number of PES agreements under implementation in project area	0	2 by project end			
16. Share of registered land users and low-income rural households benefiting from biodiversity microcredit line	0%	5%			

Note: the project results framework is the version updated during the inception workshop on 2 October 2014.

⁴ Same as previous footnote

Instructions to PMU: please fill in actual cofinancing information into the cells highlighted in yellow; also include cofinancing mobilized during implementation; add rows as needed.

Annex 5: Cofinancing Table

Cofinancing Source	Type	GEF Agency		Government		Non-governmental Organizations		Multilateral Agencies		Private Sector		Academic/Research Institutions		Total Cofinancing	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
GEF Agency:															
United Nations Development Programme	Grant	600,000												600,000	0
United Nations Development Programme	In-kind	100,000												100,000	
Sub-total, UNDP		700,000	0											700,000	0
Government:															
Forestry and Hunting Committee	Grant			10,000,000										10,000,000	0
Forestry and Hunting Committee	In-kind													0	0
Akimat of Aralsk Rayon of Kzylorda Oblast	Grant			1,296,827										1,296,827	
Akimat of Aralsk Rayon of Kzylorda Oblast	In-kind													0	0
Akimat of Balkhash Rayon of Almaty Oblast	Grant			1,333,127										1,333,127	0
Akimat of Balkhash Rayon of Almaty Oblast	In-kind													0	
Sub-total, Government				12,629,954	0									12,629,954	0
Non-governmental Organizations:															
International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea	Grant					185,520								185,520	0
International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea	In-kind													0	0
Flora & Fauna International	Grant					680,000								680,000	0
Flora & Fauna International	In-kind													0	0
Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK)	Grant					116,000								116,000	0
Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK)	In-kind													0	
Public association "Taldykorgan Inter-district Society of Hunters and Fishermen"	Grant					161,200								161,200	0
Public association "Taldykorgan Inter-district Society of Hunters and Fishermen"	In-kind													0	0
Sub-total, NGOs:						1,142,720	0							1,142,720	0
Multilateral Agencies:															
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)	Grant							83,000						83,000	0
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)	In-kind													0	
Sub-total, Multilateral Agencies:								83,000	0					83,000	0
Private Sector:															
KAP-AC Gas Limited Partnership	Grant									1,286,667				1,286,667	0
KAP-AC Gas Limited Partnership	In-kind													0	
Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture JSC	Grant									1,500,000				1,500,000	0
Fund for Financial Support of Agriculture JSC	In-kind													0	
Sub-total, Private Sector:										2,786,667	0			2,786,667	0
Academic/Research Institutions:															
Kazakh State University of Agriculture, Forest, Land & Water Resources Dept.	Grant											888,152		888,152	0
Kazakh State University of Agriculture, Forest, Land & Water Resources Dept.	In-kind													0	0

Cofinancing Source	Type	GEF Agency		Government		Non-governmental Organizations		Multilateral Agencies		Private Sector		Academic/Research Institutions		Total Cofinancing	
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
Kazakh State University of Agriculture, Water Resources, Land Reclamation & Irrigation Dept.	Grant											428,800		428,800	0
Kazakh State University of Agriculture, Water Resources, Land Reclamation & Irrigation Dept.	In-kind													0	0
Almaty Kazakh Research Institute of Livestock Breeding & Fodder Production	Grant											320,000		320,000	0
Almaty Kazakh Research Institute of Livestock Breeding & Fodder Production	In-kind													0	0
Shymkent Kazakh Research Institute of Livestock Breeding & Fodder Production	Grant											200,000		200,000	0
Shymkent Kazakh Research Institute of Livestock Breeding & Fodder Production	In-kind													0	0
Sub-total, Academic/Research Institutions:												1,836,952	0	1,836,952	0
Total Cofinancing for Project Implementation:		700,000	0	12,629,954	0	1,142,720	0	83,000	0	2,786,667	0	1,836,952	0	19,179,293	0

Note: cost figures in United States dollars (USD); planned figures obtained from the project document.

Annex 6: TE Report Outline

i. Opening page:

ii. Executive Summary

- Project Summary Table
- Project Description (brief)
- Evaluation Rating Table
- Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations

1. Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Scope & Methodology
- Structure of the evaluation report
- Limitations
- Rating scales

2. Project description and development context

- Project start and duration
- Problems that the project sought to address
- Immediate and development objectives of the project
- Baseline Indicators established
- Main stakeholders
- Project theory of change

3. Assessment of Project Design

- Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
- Assumptions and Risks
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project design
- Planned stakeholder participation
- Replication approach
- UNDP comparative advantage
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Management arrangements

4. Assessment of Project Results

- Outputs
- Outcomes
 - Effectiveness
 - Relevance
 - Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Progress towards impact

5. Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

- M&E design
- M&E implementation

6. Assessment of Implementation and Execution

- Quality of implementation
- Quality of execution

7. Other Assessments

- Need for follow-up
- Materialization of cofinancing
- Environmental and social safeguards
- Gender concerns
- Stakeholder engagement

8. Lessons and Recommendations

Annexes

- TE Mission Itinerary
- Evaluation Matrix
- List of Persons Interviewed
- List of Information Reviewed
- List of documents reviewed
- Matrix of Rating Achievement of Project Objective and Outcomes
- Cofinancing Table
- Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form
- Rating Scales
- Terms of Reference for Terminal Evaluation
- Signed TE Final Report Clearance Form

Annex 7: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct Agreement Form

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 limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

TE Consultant Agreement Form

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

Name of Consultants: James Lenoci

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

Signature:

Budapest, 23 April 2018



James Lenoci, International Consultant/Team Leader

Annex 8: Terms of Reference for Terminal Evaluation

TERMS OF REFERENCE

English Expert to undertake Thematic Learning Review of UNDP-GEF Ecosystems and Biodiversity Team's Portfolio of Projects on Protected Areas

Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Location:	Home based with mission travel
Category	Sustainable Development
Languages Required:	English
Starting Date	November 27, 2017
Duration of Initial Contract:	68 days through 31 July 2018
Supervisor:	Head of Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Background:

Within UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS), the Ecosystems and Biodiversity (EBD) cluster under the Global Environmental Finance unit is engaged in supporting developing countries to access finance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other sources on issues relating to biodiversity and the sustainable management of forests, crop and rangelands. The EBD cluster additionally provides support through global projects on related policy, finance and capacity development.

The EBD portfolio includes national projects in over 120 countries, with oversight and technical support provided by a Senior Technical Advisor (STA) and Regional Technical Advisors (RTAs), as well as global initiatives coordinated through the UNDP-GEF unit providing policy (BES-Net), capacity (NBSAP Forum) and finance (BIOFIN) support to countries. Teams work out of different locations and regions, requiring both staff and consultants to be flexible in order to produce results.

As an implementing agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP oversees a portfolio of projects in the Focal Areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, ozone-depleting substance phase-out, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants. These are implemented through UNDP's network of more than 130 Country Offices located in developing countries, as well as numerous UN and other agency partners.

UNDP's work in Ecosystems and Biodiversity (EBD) has as an overall strategic objective to maintain and enhance the goods and services provided by biodiversity and ecosystems in order to secure livelihoods, food, water and health, enhance resilience, conserve threatened species and their habitats, and increase carbon storage and sequestration. The value of all UNDP-managed biodiversity and ecosystems projects currently in planning or under implementation is US\$1.6 billion, with UNDP supporting 132 countries to access GEF and other vertical funds' grant finance. Through this project portfolio UNDP provides support to work in three programming areas: (i) Integrating biodiversity and ecosystem management into development planning and production sector activities; (ii) Unlocking the potential of protected areas, including indigenous and community-conserved areas to contribute towards sustainable development; and (iii) Managing and rehabilitating ecosystems for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The UNDP Global Environmental Finance (UNDP-GEF) Unit is seeking the services of two international consultants to work as part of a team that will prepare a Thematic Learning Review. This review will be based on EBD protected area projects monitoring and evaluation reports. Most of these reports have been already prepared, and nine (9) will need to be prepared by the team. One consultant will serve as the overall Team Leader, who will take overall responsibility for the finalization of the Thematic Learning Review report that will be widely disseminated to support future project/programme design and implementation by UNDP and beyond.

Scope of work:

The Thematic Learning Review, which will be coordinated by the Team Leader, will focus on a collection of approximately 120 GEF-financed protected area projects under the GEF-3, -4 and -5 funding cycles. Nine monitoring and evaluation reports will also need to be prepared by the team, following standard UNDP-GEF guidance on conducting mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations. The Thematic Learning Review report must be ready for publication in September 2018, and to be launched in November 2018 at the CBD COP 14 in Egypt.

The Thematic Learning Review will be based on a review framework developed and agreed to at the beginning of the assignment. The report will include an in-depth exploration of themes (to be identified by the team) that advance understanding of solutions that have worked or not worked within the UNDP-GEF EBD protected areas portfolio of projects, so as to improve the design and implementation of ongoing and/or future projects.

Tasks and Responsibilities:

- Prepare two (2) project evaluation reports, following UNDP-GEF guidance. These reports will be cleared by and payment approved by the relevant RTA and with input from the UNDP Country Office concerned. Additional quality assurance support will be provided by the UNDP-GEF Directorate as needed.
- Prepare input from the two project reports to the TLR in line with the TLR framework. The Team Leader will review the outputs related to the Thematic Learning Review.

Expected outputs and deliverables:

The total contract duration will be 68 days through 31 July 2018 according to the following plan:

- Contribute to development of Thematic Learning Review framework, review questions, Thematic Learning Review report structure and detailed timeline by July 2018;
- Prepare two (2) evaluation reports, following UNDP-GEF guidance, and use these reports as input to the Thematic Review in line with the TLR framework. Each report will take approximately 30 days, including mission travels, and 8 days allocated for supporting the Thematic Learning Review by July 2018 (the expected dates for the eight evaluations are shown in Table 1 and will be confirmed in consultations with the relevant CO and the project team);
- Provide feedback on draft full Thematic Learning Review report by July 2018.

Table 1 Expected Timeline for Evaluations

TLR Team Member	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18
Team Member					4393 Mongolia // TE		4855 Kazakhstan // TE	

Payment schedule:

- Contribute to development of Thematic Learning Review framework, review questions, Thematic Learning Review report structure and detailed timeline by 31 July 2018 - 10%;
- Undertake and prepare two (2) monitoring and/or evaluation reports each, following UNDP-GEF guidance, and use these reports as input to the Thematic Review:
 - Evaluation work plan and framework for the two evaluation exercises: by 31 December 2017 - 10%
 - Delivery and approval of first finalized report (4393 Mongolia): by 31 March 2018 - 40%
 - Delivery and approval of second finalized report (4855 Kazakhstan): by 31 May 2018 - 40%

Information on Working Arrangements:

- The consultant will work from home with mission travel;
- The Consultant will be given access to relevant information necessary for execution of the tasks under this assignment;
- All templates and reports will be provided by UNDP;
- The Consultant will be responsible for providing his own working station (i.e. laptop, internet, phone, scanner/printer, etc.) and must have access to a reliable internet connection;
- Consultant will be supervised by the UNDP-GEF Head of EBD team based in New York, USA;
- Given the global consultations to be undertaken during this assignment, the consultant is expected to be reasonably flexible with his/her availability for such consultations taking into consideration different time zones;
- Payments will be made upon submission of a certification of payment form, and acceptance and confirmation by the Supervisor on days worked and outputs delivered.

Travel:

- Two (2) missions will be required. The exact duration of the mission will vary for each project;
- Mission travel must be approved in advance and in writing by the UNDP-GEF Head of EBD;
- Consultant will liaise with the corresponding Country Offices to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the government, etc. Country offices will likely contract in-country national consultant(s) to support the team members while in-country;
- The [Advanced and Basic Security in the Field II courses](#) successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- Individual Consultants are responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when travelling to certain countries, as designated by the [UN Medical Director](#);
- Consultant is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under <https://dss.un.org/dssweb/>;
- Consultant is responsible for obtaining any visas and security clearances needed in connection with travel with the necessary support from UNDP;
- The consultant will be responsible for making his/her own mission travel arrangements (including travel claims) in line with [UNDP travel policies](#);
- All related travel expenses will be supported by the project travel fund and will be reimbursed as per UNDP rules and regulations upon submission of an F-10 claim form and supporting documents. Costs for airfares, terminal expenses, and living allowances should not be included in the financial proposal.

Competencies:

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism.

Technical Competencies:

- Demonstrated ability to coordinate processes to collate information and facilitate discussion and analysis of material;
- Technical competencies in undertaking complex evaluations which involve multiple countries and variety of stakeholders;
- Demonstrated strong research and analytical skills.

Communications:

- Excellent writing skills in English;
- Demonstrated knowledge of UN terms, language and style;
- Excellent communication skills and experience in conducting structured interviews with a variety of stakeholders.

Professionalism:

- Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and work under pressure;
- Demonstrated excellent organizational skills.

Required skills and experience:**Education:**

- Master's degree or higher in a discipline relevant to natural resources management, biological sciences, forestry, agriculture, agro-economics, geography, climate sciences, international development, public policy, social sciences, economics, public administration, finance or other closely related fields.

Experience:

- At least 5 years of working experience in Biodiversity and/or Marine and coastal ecosystems;
- Experience working with international institutions, civil societies and/or governmental authorities, and experience working with and in developing countries;
- At least 5 years of work experience in one or more of the following UNDP locations: Africa, Eastern Europe & CIS, Asia & Pacific, and/or global;
- At least 5 years of relevant experience in Monitoring and evaluation/ knowledge management, including at least 2 years' experience in GEF work in: Project and programme design and development, Project and programme management and implementation, and/or Monitoring and evaluation/ knowledge.

Language:

- Proficient in written and spoken English.