



**Mid-term Review of the UNDP-GEF Project:
Strengthening Sustainability of
Protected Area Management in Myanmar**
February – June 2018

FINAL REPORT



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWP	Annual Workplan
BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance Initiative
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resources Management
CBO	Community-based Organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CF	Community Forestry
CFDTC	Central Forestry Development Training Centre
CIRC	Community Information Resource Centre
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DG	Director General
EAO	Ethnic Armed Organizations
ECD	Environmental Conservation Department
EMF	Environmental Management Fund
ESS	Environmental & Social Screening
FD	Forest Department
FFI	Fauna Flora International
FSP	Full-sized project
GAD	General Administration Department
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GRSP	Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project
HI-LIFE	Landscape Initiative for the Far Eastern Himalaya
HK	Hkakaborazi
HP	Hponkanrazi
HRTC	Htamanthi Research and Training Centre
HT	Htamanthi
HV	Hukaung Valley
ICCA	Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KfW	German Development Bank
KIO	Kachin Independence Organization
MBCF	Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund
MCRB	Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFS	Myanmar Forest School
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MOECAF	Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry
MONREC	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

MTR	Midterm Review
NLUP	National Land Use Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NP	National Park
NPD	National Project Director
NPM	National Project Manager
NWCD	Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division, FD
OFP	Operational Focal Point
PA	Protected Area
PAMCC	Protected Area Management Coordination Committee
PB	Project Board
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PLUP	Participatory Land Use Plan
PMC	Project Management Committee
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSD	Planning and Statistics Division, FD
QR	Quarterly Report
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RF	Results Framework
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant & Timebound
TAGPA	Technical Advisory Group on Protected Areas
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRDD	Training and Research Development Division, FD
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
UoFES	University of Forestry & Environmental Science, Yezin
VCP	Village Consultation Process
VUZP	Village Use Zoning Process
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WH	World Heritage
WS	Wildlife Sanctuary
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Key Project Information

- Table 1 below provides basic information about the project, including project identification numbers, key partners, milestones and sources of financing.

Table 1 Summary of key project information

Project Title:	Strengthening Sustainability of Protected Area Management in Myanmar		
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #):	5162	PIF Approval Date:	12.04.2013
GEF Project ID (PMIS #):	5159	CEO Endorsement Date:	10.09.2014
ATLAS Business Unit Award #:	MMR10	Project Document Signature Date (date project began):	23.06.2015
Project ID:	00083188 00091797		
Country:	Myanmar	Date project manager hired:	23.06.2015
Region:	Asia and the Pacific	Inception Workshop date:	27.10.2015
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Mid-Term Review Completion:	July 2018
GEF Focal Area Strategic Objectives:	BD-1	Planned Project Closing:	22.06.2020
Trust Fund [indicate GEF TF, LDCF, SCCF, NPIF]:	GEF TF	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	
GEF Agency:	UNDP		
Lead Government Coordinating Agency:	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC), formerly Ministry of Environmental Conservation & Forestry (MOECAF)		
Executing Partners:	Wildlife Conservation Society & Forest Department (MONREC)		
Project Financing	At CEO endorsement (US\$)	At Midterm Review (US\$)	
[1] GEF financing:	6,027,397	6,027,397	
[2] UNDP contribution:	12,000,000	6,188,515	
Government: MONREC / NWCD	4,646,300	6,249,527	
[4] Other partners: WCS	1,250,000	1,843,636	
[5] Total co-financing [2+3+4]:	17,896,300	8,032,151	
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS [1+5]:	23,923,697	14,059,548	

1.2 Brief Project Description

2. This full-sized project under the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area aims to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use Myanmar's globally significant biodiversity by strengthening the sustainability of the national Protected Area (PA) system. The project was funded under GEF-5 and is particularly significant for Myanmar as it is the country's first GEF biodiversity project. It is also the first major project that aims to bring about systemic transformation of the national PA system through an integrated set of strategies targeting different aspects of PA system policy, planning, management and financing at national, subnational and local levels.
3. The project's overall objective is to:

“Strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing”.

4. The project specifically addresses the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area Objective 1 to “Improve sustainability of PA systems” and is designed to contribute to two Focal Area outcomes: 1.1 “Improved management effectiveness of existing and new PAs” and 1.2 “Increased revenue for PA systems to meet total expenditures required for management”.
5. The project has been designed to remove the main barriers to an effective and sustainable national PA system and to lead to the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: *Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management*

Outcome 2: *Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones*

6. Outcome 1 focuses on institutional capacity development and strengthening national policy and financial frameworks for PAs, while Outcome 2 is designed to pilot strategies for reducing threats and increasing PA management effectiveness at four demonstration sites in Kachin State and Sagaing Region in northern Myanmar, which were identified on the basis of their global biodiversity significance. These are Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and Hkakaborazi National Park.

1.3 Project Progress Summary

7. The overall project strategy is in line with national policy and remains highly relevant to biodiversity conservation in Myanmar. The project thus has strong national ownership. Progress to date has been mixed, however, due to long delays at the outset in the run up and aftermath of Myanmar's 2015 landmark national elections, as well as other factors outside the project's control, such as the worsening of the conflict

between ethnic armed forces and government in Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. The latter has severely impacted project activities at this demonstration site. Project activities have ground to a halt in Hkakaborazi National Park after local protests in September 2017 against the Southern Extension PA, which has been proposed as part of the World Heritage nomination for Hkakaborazi. Meanwhile, activities at Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary could only begin in December 2017 as there were no PA staff in place until then.

8. Apart from these delays, which have particularly impacted activities under Outcome 2, there are also weaknesses and inconsistencies in the original project design as articulated in the Project Document and the Results Framework (Results Framework) which have not been updated or revised since the project was approved. In particular, several project indicators, baselines and targets are problematic making it difficult to measure certain aspects of project progress at both outcome and objective levels. Additionally, the original scope of the project was extremely ambitious and the significance of some barriers and risks to the project objective may have been underestimated, notably socio-economic and political risks relating to long-standing conflicts over land and natural resources, particularly those involving ethnic minorities.
9. Despite the many delays and challenges faced, the project had made good progress in important areas under both outcomes by February 2018, in effectively less than two years of implementation. Thus, progress towards Outcomes 1 and 2 has been rated as Moderately Satisfactory. Significant achievements under Outcome 1 include: a new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs, which is currently under approval and which includes provisions that address some of the key policy areas targeted by the project; improvements in institutional capacity at national and subnational levels as reflected in the Capacity Development Scorecard; progress in developing and institutionalizing new PA management-related training courses, including a certificate course that will be open to women for the first time in Myanmar and that will also enable successful participants to enter a promotion track; a 25% increase in real terms in the national budget for PAs since 2013-14 and preliminary work on a potential independent Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund (MBCF). Another significant achievement is the establishment of the PA Management Coordination Committees (PAMCCs) at state/regional, district and township levels, which provide a mechanism for strengthening multisector dialogue and cooperation. However, there is no community representation as yet in the PAMCCs.
10. Additionally, Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores have improved in all project PA sites by between 7-17% except Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary where they declined by 4%. However, the scale of project impacts under Outcome 2 is still relatively small. There has been most progress in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, where the project has made greatest investment to date, particularly to develop capacity for patrolling, enforcement and biological monitoring as well as to test new models for community participation in PAs. The latter includes: working with local

communities to establish Community Forestry areas in the de facto buffer zone around the sanctuary: a vibrant Community Guardians scheme that trains and employs young local people to participate in wildlife monitoring and other PA management-related activities; and a Community Guards scheme that trains local people to work alongside Forest Department guards in PA management activities, particularly SMART¹ patrolling, providing much needed additional capacity to the PA staff. Also noteworthy is the establishment of the Htamanthi Research and Training Centre. It proved more difficult to assess progress in terms of threat reduction and impact on habitats and target wildlife species due to problems with the indicators and data limitations.

11. Progress towards the overall project objective has also been rated as Moderately Satisfactory due to the slow rate of PA network expansion in terms of both total area and ecological representation (Indicator 1) and because forest cover change in the project demonstration sites could not be satisfactorily assessed because of uncertainties over the reliability of the methodology and data (Indicator 2). Only one PA has been established since the start of the project resulting in a negligible increase in geographic coverage of the PA system and no increase in coverage of priority ecoregions. Several more PAs are under establishment, but given the lengthy nature of the process, which includes documenting and settling customary claims to land and natural resources, it is doubtful whether the project can meet its planned target of increasing PA coverage from 5.6% of total land area to 10% by the end of the project. Greatest progress has been in the area of increasing the financial sustainability of the PA system, which is reflected in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard, increased national government funding for PAs and new options for long-term financing that are being explored by the government. However, a system-wide PA financing strategy is still to be developed and it is doubtful whether this can be piloted effectively before the end of the project as envisaged in the project strategy.
12. MONREC, WCS and UNDP are all extremely committed to the project and there is good cooperation between all parties. Project management arrangements are broadly in line with the Project Document (Part III). WCS has put in place a highly motivated and dedicated project team and there is also strong engagement at national and subnational levels by the Forest Department (FD) and its Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD). Project compliance with UNDP, MONREC and GEF rules and procedures, including financial management and procurement requirements is generally good. While there was major underspend of the planned budget until recently due to the long delays at the start, expenditure has accelerated in the last year and 43% of the total project budget had been spent by December 2017. The single largest source of expenditure in both 2016 and 2017 was on SMART patrolling and biological surveys and was vastly more than the investment in piloting community engagement models. Additionally, both the FD and WCS have raised significant

¹ Patrolling based on the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool. See: <http://smartconservationtools.org/smart-partnership/>

additional parallel and grant co-financing, respectively, since the project was approved.

13. To date the Project Board (PB), whose formation was also quite delayed, has only met twice. The Technical Advisory Group on PAs (TAGPA) established under the project has met only once and is unlikely to fulfil its role as planned in the Project Document. The project would benefit from greater technical support from UNDP and more regular oversight and strategic guidance from the Project Board. A greater focus by all partners on higher-level results and impacts is also needed together with a more comprehensive approach to risk monitoring, management and mitigation.
14. There is also good engagement with a wide range of stakeholders at national and subnational levels, including strong cooperation with the FD. Engagement with other government stakeholders is growing as a result of the PAMCCs, and is greater at township level due to the proximity of project staff and local government. Engagement with local communities has been strongest in Htamanthi where the project has made greatest relative investment to date with a number of positive results for 'park-people' relations.
15. The main risks to the sustainability of project outcomes are financial, socio-economic and policy and governance-related. Sustainable sources of finance to continue and scale up successful project interventions in PAs are unlikely to be in place by the end of the project. Without additional financing and capacity, it will be difficult to address the range of threats faced by most PAs in Myanmar. Ownership over the project is also still primarily by the FD and in the case of Htamanthi also by some local communities. The most serious immediate risk to project results are the widespread conflicts over the governance of land and other natural resources and a lack of clarity on how to address customary claims to these. In the longer term, climate change is likely to become a growing threat to project outcomes.

1.4 MTR Ratings and Achievement Summary Table

16. A summary of MTR achievements and overall ratings is provided in Table 2. The rating scale used follows UNDP-GEF guidelines and is explained in Annex 3.

Table 2 Summary of MTR ratings and achievements

Measure	MTR Rating MS: Moderately Satisfactory ML: Moderately Likely	Achievement Description
Project strategy	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The overall project strategy is in line with national policy and remains highly relevant to terrestrial biodiversity conservation in Myanmar. The project thus has strong national ownership. □ Progress to date has been mixed, however, due to long delays at the outset and other factors outside the project's control, in particular conflicts between ethnic armed forces, local communities, other political or business interest groups and government. The latter has affected project progress at demonstration sites (Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary and Hkakaborazi National Park) as well as more broadly in terms of expanding the PA system. □ Progress on certain aspects of the project is difficult to measure due to limitations in the original project design as stated in the Project Document and the Results Framework, including weaknesses and inconsistencies in some of the project indicators, baselines and targets. □ There are some promising results nonetheless at both national and subnational levels after a relatively short period of full implementation (approx. 20 months at the start of the MTR). □ Given changes in the national context and delays outside the project's control, it is unlikely that the project will be able to deliver on all its originally planned targets. However, the original project scope was very wide-ranging with numerous ambitious end-of-project targets.
Progress towards results	Objective: MS <i>Strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Altogether 23 new PAs have been proposed since the project start, of which 14 are in the process of land settlement and one, Inkhinebum National Park (30,052 ha) has been gazetted leading to a small increase in the geographic coverage and ecological representativeness of the terrestrial PA system. □ Thus, the planned PA system expansion target of 10% of total land area is unlikely to be met by 2020. A

Measure	MTR Rating MS: Moderately Satisfactory ML: Moderately Likely	Achievement Description
	<p><i>areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing</i></p>	<p>reduced target of 8% in line with national NBSAP targets for 2020 may also be difficult to meet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The impact of project interventions on habitat conditions (based on forest cover change) in the four demonstration sites could not be assessed due to limitations in the baselines and methods chosen to measure this indicator. □ Of the four project sites, the most promising results to date appear to be in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary where there has also been greatest and most systematic project engagement with PA managers and other local government partners and communities. Although impact on habitat could not be objectively verified, preliminary data on indicator species such as hoolock gibbon and wild cats also suggests that PA management at this site is proving effective. □ Overall financial sustainability of the PA system has improved (as measured through the Financial Sustainability Scorecard) and will likely continue to improve as a result of greater government investment and new financing mechanisms. <p>Objective likely to be partly achieved.</p>
	<p>Outcome 1: MS</p> <p><i>Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs Law is under approval with provisions to: allow PAs to access new forms of non-government funding; enable local communities to use PA buffer zones and participate in PA management; and enable the establishment of local community PAs. How these provisions are implemented will depend on the rules and regulations that are eventually approved. The options for establishing, managing and using PA buffer zones are also still to be clarified. □ There is steady progress on institutional capacity development of the FD at national, subnational and local levels as indicated by rising scores in the Capacity Development Scorecard. □ Multisector PA Management Coordination Committees (PAMCCs) have been formed at regional/state, district and township levels in Sagaing and Kachin and are meeting regularly providing an opportunity to raise awareness about project activities, results and concerns with other government departments at subnational level, notably the General Administration Department and seek support to overcome any problems. There is

Measure	MTR Rating MS: Moderately Satisfactory ML: Moderately Likely	Achievement Description
		<p>no community representation on PAMCCs to date. Post-project sustainability is unclear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ There is steady progress on institutionalization of training courses that target PA managers at different levels from Forests Guards to senior managers. New courses and curricula being developed in partnership with national training institutions, notably the University of Forestry and Environmental Sciences, the Myanmar Forest School (MFS) and the Central Forestry Development Training Centre. □ A new independent Basic Wildlife/Biodiversity Conservation and PA management certificate course for forest guards and foresters under development by NWCD together with the project, FFI and WWF. Unlike the existing certificate course offered by MFS, this course will also be open to women, and enable all participants to enter the government promotion track. □ There has been >25% increase in government budgetary allocation to PAs over the 2013-14 baseline in real terms. Although the end of project target is a 100% increase, the MTR considers this to be overambitious given widespread budgetary constraints across sectors. <p>Outcome 1 likely to be partly achieved</p>
	<p>Outcome 2: MS</p> <p><i>Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores have improved in 3 out of 4 demonstration sites covering 866,700 ha. There has been a slight reduction in the METT score of Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary from 52% to 48% impacting the project's overall contribution to meeting GEF targets as Hukaung covers 1,737,300 ha. □ It is difficult to measure threat reduction in project sites using SMART patrolling data and existing Results Framework indicators. However, anecdotal evidence of threat reduction in Htamanthi is supported by the incidence of target indicator species, although data points are limited as yet given the short implementation period. □ Encounter rates for most indicator species/groups of species appear to be stable or higher than the baseline for all project sites except for Hukaung Valley, where surveys have not been possible. However, this needs further confirmation as the quality of SMART patrolling data is variable.

Measure	MTR Rating MS: Moderately Satisfactory ML: Moderately Likely	Achievement Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ There is good use of participatory community engagement tools and promising community participation models have been developed, such as the Community Guards and Community Guardians programmes piloted at project sites as well as a Community Forestry programme in Htamanthi. Community engagement has been greatest in Htamanthi to date and needs to be greatly scaled up in Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi. Ecotourism development is being explored in Hkakaborazi and Hponkanrazi. □ Project progress in Hkakaborazi has been greatly delayed since the September 2017 local protests against the proposed Southern Extension PA and World Heritage nomination which have led to the suspension of project activities in Hkakaborazi, including biological surveys and joint patrolling with the Forest Department. <p>Outcome 2 likely to be partly achieved</p>
Project implementation & Adaptive Management	MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Project implementation has accelerated overall since May 2016 except in Hukaung and more recently Hkakaborazi. □ There is generally good compliance with MONREC, UNDP and GEF rules and procedures, including meeting financial management and procurement requirements. □ There is timely financial and technical reporting but limited critical analysis of the project strategy or adaptive management beyond responding to major threats and risks □ Monitoring and technical reporting needs greater focus on higher-level results and impacts rather than completion of activities. □ More systematic risk monitoring and management are needed □ There is good stakeholder engagement nationally and sub-nationally but the gender dimension of implementation strategies, monitoring and reporting needs to be strengthened. □ Significant additional co-financing has been raised and contributed by MONREC (NWCD) and WCS including grant and in-kind financing. □ There is good coordination and cooperation between the three project partners – Project Team/WCS, UNDP

Measure	MTR Rating MS: Moderately Satisfactory ML: Moderately Likely	Achievement Description
		and MONREC/FD but certain aspects of project governance and high-level oversight need strengthening.
Sustainability	ML	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="667 472 1380 678">□ The legal framework for PAs including their long-term sustainability will be greatly strengthened once the new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs law is approved. However, much still depends on the rules and regulations that are eventually approved to guide the implementation of the new law. <li data-bbox="667 696 1380 797">□ Institutional capacity development is likely to continue post-project given the institutionalization of new training courses for PA management staff. <li data-bbox="667 815 1380 1059">□ Preliminary work started on developing an independent Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund but PAs will continue to depend on national government funding and donor funding for the foreseeable future and most PAs will likely continue to face funding shortages in the foreseeable future. Increasing community support for PAs is thus especially important. <li data-bbox="667 1077 1380 1352">□ Most critical risks were accurately identified at the project design stage but some risks have increased in severity since then, particularly socio-economic risks. The sustainability of project results and achievement of the project objective will depend on accurate identification of critical risks and putting in place adequate measures to manage and mitigate these risks. <li data-bbox="667 1370 1380 1471">□ Environmental risks to the project, other than climate change risks, are largely unknown (e.g. the threat posed by pollution or Invasive Alien Species).

1.5 Summary of Conclusions

17. The project strategy is still highly relevant and well-aligned with national policy, which supports the establishment of an ecologically representative, viable network of well-managed PAs for conserving nationally and globally significant biodiversity and critical ecosystem services. The project thus has strong country ownership. However, at present the project is only partly on track to achieve its planned results and significantly shift the baseline situation of PA system establishment and management in Myanmar. Implementation experience to date has shown that the project strategy needs to be further adapted to give greater attention to the socio-economic dimensions of PA

planning, governance and management if the objective of expanding the PA system's geographic and ecological coverage is to be met.

18. Additionally, the project currently has 11 planned outputs under its two outcomes, each of which involves numerous activities at national and subnational levels, including significant interventions at demonstration sites in remote areas. Given the changes in the implementation context, the unanticipated delays and challenges, and a remaining implementation timeframe of 2-3 years, the project risks spreading itself too thin and not delivering sufficient impact at scale unless its scope is reduced by prioritizing the interventions and investments that are most likely to deliver significant and sustainable impacts by the end of the project. The project Results Framework also needs to be comprehensively reviewed and updated to ensure that indicators, baselines and targets are sufficiently 'SMART' and can capture project progress in a meaningful and objective manner.
19. Despite delays and implementation challenges, the project has made significant progress in several areas, notably on institutional capacity development and strengthening the legal and financial sustainability framework for the PA system. A number of promising community participation models are also underway in demonstration PAs along with interventions to strengthen their management effectiveness. While the scale of progress under Outcome 2 is still limited, preliminary results from Htamanthi provide an indication of the kinds of impacts that are possible with sustained engagement on different fronts in a relatively short period. It is critical that this engagement now takes place in Hponkanrazi and that the current impasse in Hkakaborazi is urgently resolved so that implementation can begin again. **Indeed, the situation in Hkakaborazi may also be an opportunity for the project to further test and develop multistakeholder engagement tools and processes and also develop the capacity of PA planners and managers to use these to rebuild trust and re-engage local communities and other stakeholders.** The project is already generating lessons and good practice from its site-based work that can provide invaluable guidance to strengthening community engagement in biodiversity conservation and PAs. This is an area where there is also good potential synergy with UNDP Myanmar's new Country Programme and where UNDP's co-financing could be used strategically to enhance the delivery of both CP and project objectives, for example through the Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project (GRSP).
20. Project management is generally good in that project planning and technical and financial monitoring and reporting is timely and follow due process. More systematic risk monitoring and management is needed, however. Project implementation would also benefit from further developing the capacity of senior project staff for monitoring and reporting on higher-level results and impacts against Results Framework indicators rather than at the activity level, for more critical analysis of monitoring results, and for harmonizing and integrating reporting and risk monitoring across different reporting formats. There is also need for better understanding of how to

integrate gender considerations into project activities, M&E and reporting. Stakeholder engagement is generally good, but needs to be further strengthened where there is conflict with local communities and/or other stakeholders, including stakeholders from other influential government departments and sectors. Communication strategies are also likely to be more effective if these are tailored to the interests and priorities of different audiences, for example, explaining the relevance of the project in terms that are more likely to resonate with stakeholders who may be more concerned with economic development and addressing security concerns than conservation.

21. The sustainability of project outcomes will continue to depend on external funding in the short-term as sustainable financing mechanisms are unlikely to be in place by the end of the project and core government funding will largely go towards meeting salaries and basic operational costs. It will also depend on the extent to which socio-economic considerations are integrated into PA planning and management. Sustainability is also likely to be enhanced by extending the project implementation period by up to a year to make up for the delays outside the project's control and to allow the project to generate additional results. This will also allow the project to implement any course corrections and other changes arising from this MTR more effectively. A project exit strategy with options for sustaining and building on successful project outcomes needs to be developed by the project partners well before the end of the project.

1.6 Summary of Recommendations

22. Based on the MTR findings, ten high-level inter-related recommendations are presented in this report – one on the overall project strategy/design, three on Outcome 1, two on Outcome 2, three on project management and implementation, and a final one on the sustainability of project results. These are summarized in Table and further detailed in Chapter 5.

Table 3 Summary of MTR Recommendations and key actions¹

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
A	Project Strategy	
R1 (A1)	<p>Undertake a comprehensive, participatory and strategic review of the project design and Results Framework in order to adapt the project to changes in the implementation context. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reducing the overall scope of work ▪ prioritizing interventions that are likely to have greatest sustainable impact by the end of the project; ▪ ensuring that project progress and impacts can be measured systematically; ▪ updating project risks and assumptions; and ▪ systematically recording all major changes to the original project design described in the Project Document. <p>▪ <i>Drop planned work on national land use planning and coastal governance.</i> ▪ <i>Update existing Environmental and Social Screening of risks and risk mitigation and management strategies.</i> ▪ <i>Formally exclude Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary from further monitoring against Results Framework indicators and targets with approval from the Project Board.</i> ▪ <i>Consider undertaking a socio-economic mapping of terrestrial ecosystems for PA system planning;</i> ▪ <i>Request a one-year no-cost extension from the GEF.</i></p> <p><i>See Section 4.1.2 and Annex 7 for more details and specific recommendations on RF objectives, outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines & targets.</i></p>	<p>Project Team WCS UNDP FD / NWCD</p>
B	Outcome 1	
R2 (B1)	<p>Prioritize policy-related interventions that are critical to both the scale up and sustainability of project impacts, and achievable within the available project timeframe, capacity and other resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Provide inputs to development of rules & regulations for the new law on Biodiversity & Conservation of PAs.</i> ▪ <i>Develop best practice guidelines and SOPs/Departmental instructions on a) PA buffer zone management and use b) Land Settlement for establishing PAs c) processes for establishing Community Forests including stakeholder engagement d) establishing community PAs under the new law on Biodiversity & Conservation of PAs</i> 	<p>Project Team FD / NWCD</p>
R3 (B2)	<p>Consolidate and streamline institutional capacity development activities and assess their relative impact and cost-effectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Finalize and approve draft capacity development strategy and roadmap.</i> ▪ <i>Assess cost-effectiveness of different types of capacity development activities under Output 1.3</i> ▪ <i>Obtain feedback from the key institutions involved in providing new training courses developed by the project</i> ▪ Ensure 	<p>Project Team UNDP FD/NWCD</p>

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
	<i>complementarity between the proposed Myanmar Wildlife College and the new training courses developed by the project that will be delivered through existing institutions</i>	
R4 (B3)	R4: Prioritize work on strengthening the financial sustainability of the PA system (Outcome 1) and of the demonstration PAs (Outcome 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare draft sustainable financing strategy for PA system (Output 1.4) integrated with the wider national environmental financing strategy to be developed under GRSP ▪ Integrate business plans for demonstration PAs into system-wide PA financing strategy ▪ Complete a comprehensive scoping report for the Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund ▪ Explore options for financing promising community engagement models through microfinance and other options with support from UNDP and PAMCCs. 	Project Team FD
C	Outcome 2	
R5 (C1)	Strengthen the sustainability of key project strategies to improve management effectiveness of demonstration PAs (Hkakaborazi, Hponkanrazi and Htamanthi) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase investment in community participation models (Output 2.3) ▪ Implement strategies to resume project work and PA management in Hkakaborazi ▪ Complete business plans for Hkakaborazi, Hponkanrazi and Htamanthi linked to PA system financing strategy ▪ Strengthen the quality of SMART patrolling data for both management and project monitoring purposes 	Project Team WCS FD UNDP Project Board
R6 (C2)	R5: Strengthen and expand community engagement on PA management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update and refine original Community Participation Strategy and make more relevant to each demonstration site ▪ Identify mechanisms for including effective community representation and participation in the PAMCCs, especially at township level ▪ Further develop Community Guards and Guardians schemes for Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi ▪ Develop a plan for further Community Forestry (CF) establishment and sustainability of CFs in Htamanthi ▪ Strengthen integration of gender considerations into community participation models ▪ Explore practical ways to monitor impacts of community participation models on PA management effectiveness 	Project Team FD UNDP
D	Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	
R7 (D1)	Strengthen project ownership across key stakeholder groups at different levels, particularly at subnational level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update original project Stakeholder Involvement Plan ▪ Develop a simple project Communication Strategy with appropriate messaging for different key stakeholder groups to communicate the relevance of PAs and conservation to wider development objectives ▪ Use PAMCC meetings strategically to communicate relevance of PAs and the project's work to 	Project Team FD/NWCD WCS UNDP

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
	<p>government stakeholders outside the Forest Department ■ Further enhance engagement of Community Guardians and Guards by obtaining their feedback and by increasing their understanding of the significance and applications of the data they collect ■ Leverage UNDP Area Offices in Myitkyina and Mandalay to strengthen synergies with UNDP programmes and the project and to facilitate and strengthen wider subnational government engagement and support for the project</p>	
R8 (D2)	<p>Clarify and strengthen project governance and implementation arrangements, including the ability of the Project Board to provide adequate strategic and technical oversight to the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure PB meets at least twice a year and more often if needed ■ Ensure project planning, monitoring and reporting focuses on delivery of higher-level results and sustainable impacts ■ Clarify role and functions of Project Management Committee including relationship to the PB ■ Clarify and document how the role and functions of the Technical and Advisory Group on PAs as intended in the Project Document are to be met ■ Ensure continuity in project oversight by UNDP and that the UNDP focal point has the necessary technical and management capacity for effective oversight ■ Formally approve and record all key strategic and adaptive management decisions regarding the project at PB meetings 	WCS FD UNDP Project Board
R9 (D3)	<p>Strengthen project management and staff capacities, particularly with respect to gender mainstreaming, M&E, technical reporting and communication to different stakeholder groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase staff capacity for monitoring, critical analysis and reporting on higher-level results and impacts ■ Provide more training to senior project staff on the different UNDP and GEF reporting requirements, formats and processes ■ Strengthen staff capacity to integrate gender considerations into project implementation and monitoring ■ Develop and implement a simple project M&E strategy based on the Results Framework ■ Harmonize monitoring and reporting across different tools and processes ■ Clarify roles and TORs of NPM and CTA in the project going forward 	WCS UNDP Project Board
E	Sustainability	
R10 (E1)	<p>Strengthen replication and scale-up of project results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Document the socio-economic and political barriers to PA system expansion and potential strategies to overcome these, as well any new approaches and opportunities for PA establishment and management ■ Identify mechanisms to integrate socio-economic considerations alongside ecological criteria into PA systems planning, management and further expansion ■ Identify options for continuing and scaling up key 	Project Team WCS FD UNDP Project Board

Rec #	Recommendation	Entity Responsible
	<i>project results at project demonstration sites and replicating successful strategies in other PAs. ■</i>	

Notes: See Recommendations Table in Chapter 5 for further details of the key actions shown in italics above.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the MTR

23. MTRs are a mandatory requirement for all GEF-financed full-sized projects (FSP). They are primarily a monitoring tool to identify challenges to project progress towards planned higher-level results, as detailed in the Project Document, and to outline corrective actions to ensure that a project is on track to achieve maximum and sustainable results by its completion (Annex 1). MTRs are thus forward looking and solutions oriented (Table 4). A thorough MTR can also lay the foundation for a strong Terminal Evaluation.

Table 4 Key features of Midterm Reviews of UNDP-GEF projects

Characteristics of MTRs of UNDP-GEF Projects	
Mandatory for:	Full-sized projects
Focus:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of progress towards results • Monitoring of implementation and adaptive management to improve outcomes • Early identification of risks to sustainability • Emphasis on supportive recommendations
Timeframe:	The MTR report must be submitted with the 3rd PIR
Values & Emphasis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent, i.e. MTR consultants must be non-UNDP and non-GEF personnel, and must not have had any part in the project design or implementation, including the writing of the Project Document. • Emphasis on a participatory and collaborative approach • Opens opportunities for discussion and change in project, as needed
Ratings provided for the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress Towards Results (by Outcomes) • Project Implementation & Adaptive Management • Sustainability
Budget:	Typically, US\$ 30,000-40,000 for Full-sized projects depending on project size and scope and usually budgeted in the project document.
Management response required by UNDP?	Yes

24. While the mid-point of a 5-year project would normally be around 30 months after the start of implementation, the MTR for this project was brought forward by a few months on the recommendation of the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor (RTA) in the 2017 PIR due to shared concerns about slow progress among the three project partners – MONREC’s Forest Department (FD), UNDP and WCS. All three project partners view the MTR process as a key first step to clarify and identify the key areas to address, including recommendations for strengthening existing management arrangements.
25. Organizing this MTR proved challenging, however, partly due to the difficulties of finding qualified international and national consultants who were both available and physically able to undertake considerable internal travel, including long treks, to visit field sites in remote parts of the country with security concerns, notably in northern Kachin State. Plans to hold the MTR in October-November 2017 fell through when the lead consultant withdrew days before the MTR was due to begin.
26. The MTR finally began in late January 2018 with the recruitment of a new lead international consultant. A national consultant was identified a month later, who was only able to provide limited translation support for the first half of the MTR field mission. By the time the MTR field mission began in February 2018, the project had effectively been under implementation for only 20 months given the long delays after signing of the project document. The field mission lasted from 19th February to 17th March. Information gathering, data verification and interviews continued remotely beyond this period.

2.2 Scope and Methodology

27. An MTR inception report was prepared in line with MTR TORs outlining the proposed MTR methodology. The planned scope of work for the MTR follows UNDP-GEF’s 2014 “Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects” and the TORs given in Annex 1. These require an assessment of four major aspects of the project, namely:

Project Strategy

- Is it proving effective in reaching the desired higher-level results?
- If not, what changes are needed to get the project back on track?

Progress towards Results

- As measured against project document & workplans, especially the results framework, indicators and targets, GEF Tracking Tool

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

- Identify challenges & propose additional measures to strengthen

implementation & adaptive management

- Areas to assess include: management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communication

Sustainability

- Assess key financial, socio-economic, institutional framework & governance and environmental risks to sustainability

28. Additional topics and questions are included under each of these four broad areas (see Annex 1, Section D) and in Chapter 3 and Annex 3 of the UNDP-GEF guidance for MTRs.^{2 3}
29. Information for the MTR was collected using a combination of secondary sources and direct consultations with stakeholders and key informants. The general approach and methodology for the MTR were guided by the UNDP-GEF guidance for MTRs and the key areas of particular concern identified through the initial review of documents including the Project Strategy and Results Framework, PIRs, Project Board Minutes and preliminary discussions with UNDP Myanmar and the National Project Manager. The MTR sought to be as participatory and collaborative as possible and consulted with a wide range of stakeholders, in particular the Project Team, key government counterparts in MONREC such as the Forest Department (FD), in particular NWCD, and the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD), as well as UNDP, particularly the UNDP Myanmar Country Office (CO) and the UNDP-GEF RTA based in the UNDP regional centre in Bangkok. It also met with government stakeholders at subnational levels and local communities and government stakeholders at the demonstration sites.
30. The main methods of data collection used during the MTR are listed below with additional details provided in annexes.

Document Review

31. The list of documents reviewed is given in Annex 6.

Stakeholder consultations

32. Key stakeholders to interview during the MTR were identified based on one or more of the following criteria:
 - Project partner with direct role in project implementation and/or management oversight (i.e. WCS, UNDP, MONREC) at national and subnational levels
 - National GEF focal point
 - Senior government decision-makers in Sagaing Region and Kachin State including Chairs and/or Secretaries of the PA Management Coordination Committees (PAMCC) established under the project

² http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf

³ UNDP-GEF 2014 "Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects". Pp 14 & 29

- Project beneficiaries
 - Local communities living in and around project demonstration sites who might be impacted by project activities
 - Representatives of other organizations working on similar or related issues in Myanmar, particularly those working to strengthen the protected areas system, land and natural resource use conflicts involving ethnic minorities and sustainable financing for conservation
33. A list of stakeholders consulted during the MTR through in-person interviews, group discussions and conference calls is given in Annex 5.

[Key discussion topics and questions](#)

34. Priority topics to cover during the MTR were identified through the initial document review and discussions with UNDP and the NPM. These revealed several important areas for more detailed consideration during the in-country mission. A review of the project Results Framework also raised important questions about the usefulness and reliability of several indicators, baselines and targets as well as questions about the likelihood of achieving some of the stated targets within the life of a five-year project, particularly given reported progress to date.
35. Initial discussions of some of these issues with the National Project Manager confirmed that a key priority for the MTR would be a re-examination of the project Results framework - and thereby the project strategy - as without clarity on indicators, baselines and end-of-project targets, it would be impossible to assess progress towards results. This was planned as a participatory exercise with the Project Team. Therefore, the Progress Towards Results table (Annex 8) was used together with the questions in the Evaluative Matrix from the MTR TORs (Annex 1) as the starting point and key tool for information gathering, particularly from the Project Team. Using the Progress Towards Results Table also allows for more objective evidence-based information gathering as this relies on existing indicators and targets in the project RF developed at the time of project preparation. Questions for interviews were thus formulated around these (Annex 3).

[Site visits](#)

36. Brief visits were made to Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary and Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary during the field mission to consult local stakeholders and see some of the project activities and results first hand. The MTR in-country mission schedule is given in Annex 4.

[Analysis of findings and MTR ratings](#)

37. At the time the MTR began its field mission in February 2018, the project had effectively been under full implementation a little over 20 months, rather than the 30 months that would normally be the mid-point of a 5-year project. This has been factored into the outcomes analysis and the allocation of MTR progress ratings as well as the final MTR recommendations. A presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations was made to NWCD, ECD, UNDP and the WCS Project Team in Nay Pyi Taw on 14th March.

2.3 Limitations of the MTR and MTR Data

38. The MTR faced a number of constraints as described below. These have limited some aspects of the scope of the MTR, including information gathering and data quality.

Project Complexity & Logistical Challenges

39. The project is exceptionally complex. A vast number of project activities are being implemented at national, regional/state and local levels. While it has only two planned outcomes, it has a total of 10 planned outputs, some with 'sub-outputs' as well as numerous indicators and targets captured in the project RF. Numerous other activities and outputs are included in the project document. Furthermore, it has four demonstration sites located in remote areas that are also partly restricted because of security concerns. Even with the just over two-month timeframe allowed for the MTR (45 days), it is clearly impossible to cover all aspects of the project to the same level of detail, especially given the amount of travel that must be undertaken in-country to visit selected demonstration sites and to meet with government officials and other stakeholders.
40. It was also difficult to meet with all government stakeholders as this would have required multiple trips to Nay Pyi Taw from Yangon or a longer trip to Nay Pyi Taw which was not possible in the time available for the field mission. Thus, it was not possible to meet with the Directors of TRDD and PSD or with project stakeholders at Central Forestry Development Training Centre (CFDTC), Myanmar Forest School (MFS) or University of Forestry and Environmental Science (UoFES)⁴ to obtain their views on the new training programmes being developed through the project which will be delivered through these institutions under Output 1.3. Instead, the MTR had to rely heavily on the Project Team for information on this aspect of the project.

Capacity Limitations, translation challenges and lack of independence during interviews

41. Ideally, an MTR team for an FSP should consist of at least two independent consultants, a team leader with international experience of similar projects, preferably also with experience of GEF-financed projects, and a team specialist, generally a national consultant, with relevant technical expertise and a thorough understanding of the national context. However, UNDP struggled to find a national consultant with the required experience as well as the physical ability to undertake the field visits, which will involve some trekking and camping in hilly terrain under cold and potentially wet weather conditions during the inception phase of the MTR. This meant not only reduced capacity for pre-in-country mission preparation, but also the inability to cross-check proposed methodology and approach with a second technical expert with a better understanding of the national and local socio-political context.

⁴ Formerly Yezin University of Forestry at the time of project preparation.

42. A national consultant was eventually identified, who started on the day the international consultant's in-country mission began. The consultant provided some facilitation and translation support during meetings and interviews in the first half the mission. However, the consultant was not a professional interpreter, and when responses did not relate to question it was unclear whether this was because the respondent had not understood the question or whether the question had been asked incorrectly. A second translator was hired for the second half of the mission, one who could also trek, but again the person was not a professional interpreter and he struggled to translate some of the more technical questions and concepts into layman's terms in the local language.
43. The translation challenges meant that interviews with stakeholders often also included either members of the project team and/or UNDP who also helped with translation. Most interviews were effectively group consultations which would have been impossible to have without either the project team or UNDP present. Additionally, in the villages, only WCS project staff were in position to translate local languages and were also more able to deal with technical concepts and language. While this could have influenced responses in some cases, the MTR is reasonably confident that the translations at least were more accurate. As respondents also said some negative things in the presence of WCS and UNDP, it would appear that where those present had no authority over the respondents, then responses were fairly candid. However, the interviews with Community Guards and Community Guardians where not ideal as both WCS and the Park Warden were present. Additional key informant interviews were held with selected Community Guardians with one person from UNDP present who was not connected directly to the project.
44. Finally, for a one-person team to analyse the MTR findings and draft the MTR report for such a complex project has been less than ideal and a major undertaking. It has also required many more back and forths with the Project Team to fill critical gaps and verify information.

[Loss of Institutional Memory in UNDP](#)

45. There have been many changes in the focal point for this project within UNDP Myanmar since the project started. This occurred most recently as part of a major restructuring exercise by UNDP Myanmar along with the development of its new Country Programme for 2018-2022. These changes have led to loss of continuity in project oversight as well as limited detailed knowledge of the project by its recent focal points, including where to locate some of the relevant information. The focal point for the project who handled the recruitment of the lead consultant, left a few days after the consultant was contracted. The Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for UNDP CO's Governance for Resilience & Sustainability Project was assigned to be the focal point for project for the duration of the MTR along with the Quality Assurance and Reporting Analyst. Fortunately, the CTA had undertaken a monitoring mission to some of the project sites in December 2017 and so had some firsthand knowledge of the project.

Time constraints

46. The UNDP-GEF guidance on MTRs recommends a 'fairly long lead time' (p.2) just to complete the consultant hiring process and recommends that ideally the MTR team should be contracted four to 12 weeks before the planned MTR. The lead time between contracting the lead consultant and the start of the in-country mission was just 4 weeks and although within the range of UNDP-GEF's guidance, it was less than ideal. A longer lead time would have been preferable given the absence of a national consultant on the MTR team, and the additional time needed to gather and analyse background information, as well as the amount of time that had to be invested in planning and preparing for the in-country mission given the unusually complicated logistics involved.
47. As can be seen from the mission itinerary, a significant proportion of time went in travel with little time in between interviews and trips to reflect or write up notes. This was a major challenge throughout the mission.

Language Barriers

48. Many of the reports on project activities provided by the Project Team were not accessible to the lead consultant as these had been produced for government counterparts and were in the Myanmar language. While it is beyond the scope of the MTR to review all available documentation in detail, this meant that it was not possible to independently assess the relative importance or quality of a number of the documents that were made available. It was also not possible to begin preparing interview questions in the Myanmar language before the in-country mission.

Selection of interviewees

49. Selection of interviewees and areas to visit within demonstration sites was partly determined by the logistics of obtaining travel permissions, flight bookings and meeting confirmations with officials in different state and district headquarters, including Nay Pi Taw, Monywa, Khamti, Mitkyina and Putao as well as the total time available for the in-country mission (c. 20 days – ie 50% of time available for the MTR). Additionally, in order to allow sufficient time to consult key stakeholders in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw before and after the field visits and continue information gathering, the original 2-week itinerary envisaged to visit the demonstration sites and meet government officials at regional and district levels had to be shortened to 10 days. This limited the number of stakeholder consultations that were possible at the demonstration sites. Furthermore, interviews were partly guided by who was available and accessible.

2.4 Structure of the MTR Report

50. The MTR report is divided into five chapters and several annexes in line with the report structure outlined in the MTR TORs and UNDP-GEF guidance. An executive summary of the main features, findings, conclusions and main recommendations of the report is given in Chapter 1, followed by a brief description of the purpose, scope

and methodology of the MTR in Chapter 2. The project context and design are reviewed briefly in Chapter 3, along with an account of project demonstration sites, key stakeholders and implementation arrangements.

51. The bulk of the report focuses on the MTR findings, which are presented in Chapter 4, which are the basis for the recommendations presented briefly in Chapter and detailed further in Chapter 5. Additional background information and supporting materials including the tracking tools are provided in the Annexes. Both WCS and UNDP have provided considerable feedback in an iterative manner during the course of report preparation.

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

3.1 Development Context

52. Myanmar is the largest country in mainland South-East Asia, with significant forest, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. Because of its very wide variation in latitude, altitude and climate, and location at the convergence of four major floristic regions, Myanmar supports very high diversity of habitats and plant and animal species, including many endemics and globally threatened species. The country includes all or part of fourteen WWF Global Ecoregions and species new to science are still being discovered.
53. Being rich in teak, minerals, oil and gas, Myanmar was one of the more prosperous countries in the region in the early 20th Century. However, decades of state socialism and international sanctions reduced the country to an economically depressed and politically isolated state. Political and economic reforms in recent years have led to closer ties with its regional neighbours and developed nations and accelerating economic investment by these countries, leading to widespread exploitation of natural resources and conversion and degradation of natural habitats. For example, although Myanmar has the largest proportion of land area under forest in Southeast Asia, it also has of the highest rates of forest loss in the world after Brazil and Indonesia.⁵
54. In development terms, Myanmar is now categorized as a lower middle-income Least Developed Country (LDC) and ranks 145 out of 187 countries in the Human Development Index.⁶ The rapid recent shift from a largely closed economy to an open market economy has led to growing inequality with high concentrations of poverty in rural areas and accelerated development in urban centres, although urban poverty is also rising. There are also regional disparities, with border areas having higher poverty and reduced access to infrastructure and services, linked to the long-standing conflict

⁵ E.g. See Bhagwat et al. 2017. *Losing a Jewel – Rapid declines in Myanmar's intact forests 2002-2014*. <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0176364&type=printable>

⁶ UNDP. Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone. New York, 2017

and the remoteness of some these areas. Women lag behind men in labour force participation and financial inclusion. Myanmar is also very vulnerable to natural disasters.⁷

55. Specific direct threats to Myanmar's biodiversity and protected areas (PA) system include the degradation and loss of forest ecosystems due to commercial logging for timber, agricultural expansion, conversion of forest to rubber and oil palm plantations and shifting cultivation. Wildlife hunting both for international trade and local consumption is highly organized and widespread, especially due to Myanmar's long, permeable border with China. Myanmar is among the South-east Asian countries that act as major sources of wildlife in trade, the trade involving a wide variety of native species, which, in many cases, are declining as a result of unsustainable, and often illegal, harvest. Rivers and wetlands are also threatened by alien species invasion, pollution from mining activities, river flow modification, and overexploitation of fisheries. Underlying drivers of biodiversity loss include poverty, lack of grassroots support for conservation, conflict between government and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs), a weak regulatory environment, including the lack of comprehensive land use policies and lack of technical, financial and human resource capacity at all levels of government. For example, a significant number of permanent and temporary staff positions are not filled across all government departments due to on-going budgetary constraints.
56. Not surprisingly, Myanmar's PA system has been under-resourced for many decades. Most PAs are not managed effectively. Very few have management plans or sufficient staff and budget. Further, the PA system is also biogeographically incomplete. However, Myanmar is committed to expanding and strengthening its national PA system and there is a high degree of country ownership over this through the Forest Department, particularly through its Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division which is responsible for PA system planning and management. At the time of project development, the national PA system covered less than 6% of Myanmar's land area, considerably less than Aichi Target of 17% of total land area set under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Given the country context, national policy targets for PA expansion are more realistic - 8% by 2020 and 10% by 2030.
57. While investment in conservation by both government and donors has increased since the country began its democratic transition in 2015, finance and capacity for conservation remain limited given many other demands on scarce government resources and capacity. Meanwhile economic development continues at a fast pace, often without adequate environmental planning and safeguards. There is also an on-going peace process with EAOs that began with the signing of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) between government and some of the EAOs in October 2015. Building peace and achieving stability across the country will take time, however, and

⁷ UNDP, Stephan Schmitt-Degenhardt. *A Regional Perspective on Poverty in Myanmar*. August 2013.

there continues to be periodic fighting between government and EAOs in certain parts of the country, notably in Kachin State. Travel to such areas, particularly by foreigners, is often restricted due to the security risks.

58. The effective management of the country's natural resources is recognized as being essential for sustainable growth and as well as for peace and nation building efforts. Improving environmental governance will require a range of regulatory, financial and other measures, including mainstreaming environmental considerations into sector development planning and greater resourcing and capacities for environmental management. The project is contributing to these broad objectives as well as to more specific national policy goals and commitments under international conventions and agreements, as detailed in the Project Document (Paras 189-202). The project contributes directly to the PA-related objectives of Myanmar's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP, 2012) and of the Forestry Masterplan (2001-2030). It is also contributing to the CBD's Aichi targets and to the implementation of its Programme of Work on PAs (PoWPA). Additionally, the project is supporting Myanmar's implementation of the National Tiger Recovery Programme under the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, particularly through its work in Htamanthi and Hukaung Valley. The project will also contribute indirectly to many other policy objectives.
59. There is also strong alignment with United Nations and UNDP's programmatic objectives. Thus the project will contribute to Primary Outcome 1 of the UNDP Strategic Environment and Sustainable Development Plan: "Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded". The project is most closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 "Life on Land", but will also contribute more indirectly to Goals 6 "Clean water and sanitation", Goal 10 "Reduced inequalities", Goal 12 "Responsible production and consumption" and Goal 13 "Climate action".
60. At the national level, the project was designed to contribute to the earlier UNDP Myanmar Country Programme (CP 2013-17) Outcome: "Reduced vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, improved environmental and natural resource management, and promotion of energy conservation through access to affordable and renewable energy, particularly in off-grid local communities" and the related CP Output "Enhanced institutional and communities' capacity for environmental conservation and use of natural resources".
61. Under UNDP's new CP for the period 2018-22, which is more closely integrated with delivering national priorities and goals, the project will contribute to:

Output 2.2 Solutions developed at the national and sub-national levels for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services as a platform for inclusive economic development.

62. It will also contribute to the overall United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcome:

By 2022, Myanmar becomes more resilient to climate and disaster risk with efficient environmental governance and sustainable use of natural resources.

63. The project has many potential synergies with UNDP's new Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project (GRSP), which begins implementation in 2018.

3.2 Threats and Barriers targeted by the Project

64. The project seeks to address the numerous threats to Myanmar's globally significant biodiversity by strengthening the management effectiveness and sustainability of the national PA system and expanding its biogeographic coverage and total area. The project has identified two major barriers to this objective.

Barrier 1: Weak systemic and institutional capacity to plan and manage the expanded national PA system.

65. The Project Document identifies the following specific gaps and weaknesses under Barrier 1:

- Lack of integration of the PAs into national and state/region planning
- Weak institutional capacity and financing for PA management
- Inadequate staff capacity and career development prospects within the PA system
- Insufficient systemic, institutional and financial capacity for an expanded PA system

Barrier 2: Insufficient management capacity and motivation at the PA level to manage local threats and achieve conservation outcomes.

66. The Project Document identifies the following gaps and weaknesses under Barrier 2:

- Weak and ad-hoc management at PA site level that is heavily dependent on external support
- No management plans and limited or no field staff for most PAs
- Low capacity for conservation planning and PA management generally including law enforcement and biological monitoring

- PA management is not a preferred job for most people as conditions of work are difficult, there is little budget or opportunity for income generation and little recognition
- Lack of good 'park-people relations and thus limited voluntary compliance with PA regulations
- Weak integration of PAs and conservation considerations in local development and land use planning leading to illegal use of the PA
- Insufficient models of effective community participation in PA and buffer zone management

3.3 Project Strategy

67. The long-term vision of the project is for Myanmar to have a robust, representative and effectively managed terrestrial protected area system, which is also integrated into broader landscape-level land use planning. Due to the level of threat to biodiversity across the country, the project seeks to address PA management effectiveness at both the site and system levels and with a range of complementary measures aimed at overcoming the barriers identified during project design (Section 3.2).
68. The project's long-term development goal is to contribute to the conservation and sustainable development of globally significant biodiversity in Myanmar. Its immediate objective is to strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing. Based on the barriers analysis undertaken at the time of project preparation (Section 3.2), the project interventions have been organized into two components.
69. Component 1 was designed to address the barrier of weak systemic and institutional capacity to plan and manage the expanded national PA system through a range of inputs aiming to strengthen the national and regional policy and planning frameworks in relation to PAs, build central capacity for PA system management, expand the PA system coverage to 10% of the national land area, develop a systematic approach for sustainable financing of the expanded PA system, and integrate PA values into regional and local development for sub national government units associated with the demonstration PAs.
70. Component 2 seeks to address the barrier of insufficient management capacity and motivation at the PA level to manage local threats and achieve conservation outcomes, focusing on strengthening management effectiveness, financial sustainability, community engagement, monitoring and planning to address external threats at the four selected demonstration PAs.

71. These two components have been designed to generate a number of outputs (see Table 5) and lead to the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management

Outcome 2: Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones

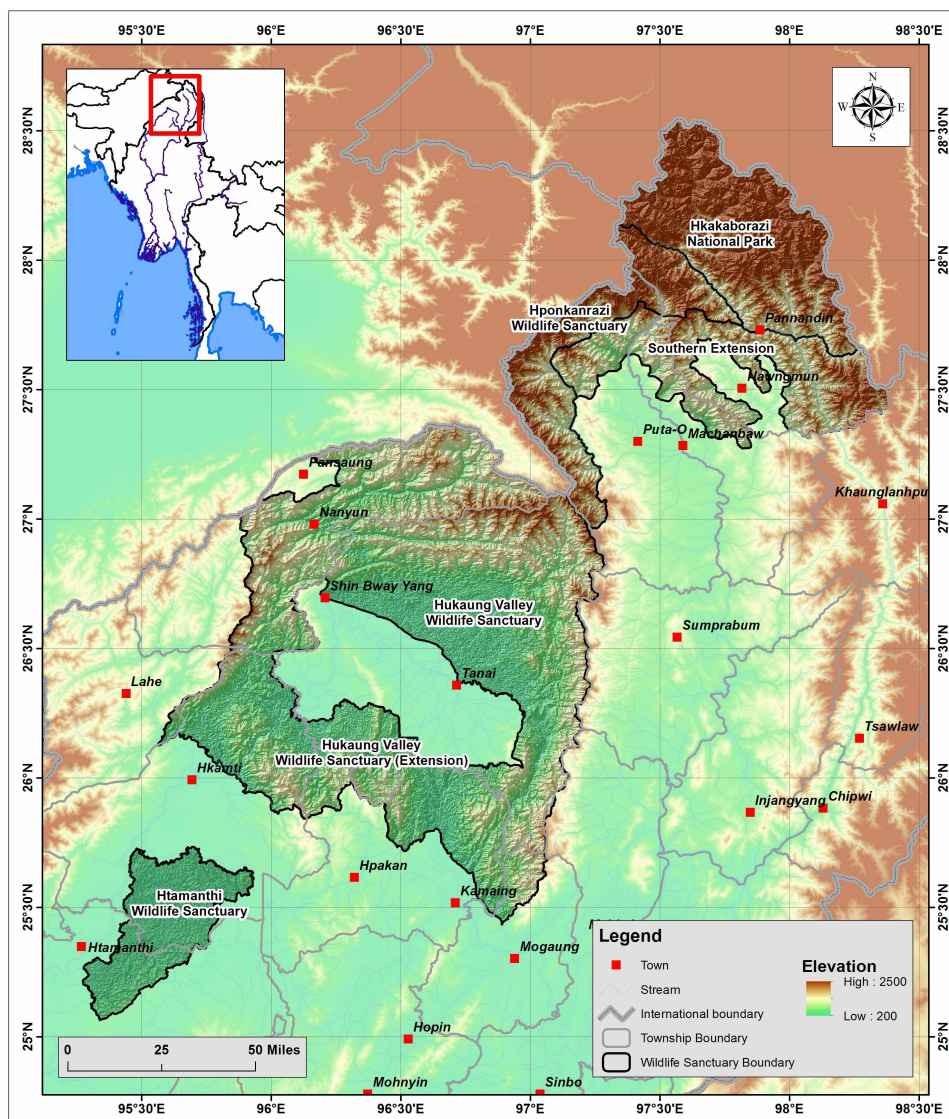
Table 5 Project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs

Project Objective: <i>Strengthen the terrestrial system of national protected areas for biodiversity conservation through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring, enforcement and financing</i>	
Outcome 1: Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management	Outcome 2: Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones
<u>Output 1.1:</u> Strengthened national policies relating to PA management and biodiversity conservation	<u>Output 2.1:</u> Strengthening management through business plans for the four demonstration PAs
<u>Output 1.2:</u> Capacity of the Forest Department strengthened for effective management of the PA system	<u>Output 2.2:</u> Demonstration PA site operations strengthened to address existing threats to biodiversity
<u>Output 1.3:</u> Training Programmes targeting PA managers institutionalised within the Forest Department	<u>Output 2.3:</u> Pilot systems developed and implemented for community participation at the four demonstration PAs
<u>Output 1.4:</u> A system-wide strategy for sustainable financing of the PA network is developed and piloted for the expanded PA system	<u>Output 2.4:</u> Analysis of drivers and planning for forestry and wildlife law enforcement in Kachin State
<u>Output 1.5:</u> Sub-national government units associated with the four demonstration PAs incorporate PA values into regional and local development	<u>Output 2.5:</u> Increased capacity for monitoring, assessing and reporting the impacts of improved PA management on ecosystems, key species, threats and local livelihoods
<u>Output 1.6:</u> National PA system expanded based on gap analysis for terrestrial ecosystems and PA network review	

3.4 Project Demonstration Sites

72. Four project demonstration sites in Kachin State and Sagaing Region (Figure 1) were also included in the original project design based on their high global biodiversity significance:
- Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (1,737,300 ha), Kachin
 - Hkakaborazi National Park (381,200 ha), Kachin
 - Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary (270, 400h ha), Kachin and Sagaing
 - Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary (215,100), Sagaing
73. Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the largest terrestrial PAs in Southeast Asia and WCS has a long history of engagement here together with the FD. Hkakaborazi National Park contains high mountain ranges including Southeast Asia's highest peak as well as some of the catchment area for the Ayerwaddy River. Hponkanrazi WS is and apart from its biodiversity also has panoramic views of the high mountain ranges of Hkakaborazi. Both these PAs are thought to have potential for domestic and ultimately international tourism, particularly Hponkanrazi which is more accessible than Hkakaborazi. Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary contains some of the watershed forests of the Chindwin river is one of three sites in Myanmar with tigers. It also has elephants. While Hukaung Valley WS is also one of the sites with tigers and one was spotted as recently as December 2017, the status and long-term viability of the population is unclear given the intense fighting taking place in the PA.
74. All the PAs have a number of villages with varied ethnic composition around their boundaries in the so-called 'buffer zone' engaging in a range of economic activities as. The latter however generally contains land under different authorities and is not under the control of PA staff.

Figure 1 Location of project demonstration sites in Sagaing Region and Kachin State



Source: WCS Myanmar Programme

3.5 Project Implementation and Management Arrangements

75. **MONREC** is the lead government coordinating agency for the project, while UNDP is the GEF Implementing Agency and WCS is the project Implementing Partner. All government ministries are located in Nay Pyi Taw, while WCS and UNDP have offices in both Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.
76. **WCS** is contractually responsible for the day-to-day implementation and the delivery of results, including the management of project technical, financial and human resources as detailed in the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed with UNDP

at the start of the project in 2015 (also see Project Document Paras 216 & 217). MONREC has appointed the Director of the Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD) of its Forest Department (FD) as the National Project Director (NPD). In consultation with the FD, WCS has selected the Deputy Director of its Myanmar Programme to be the national Project Manager (PM) and also appointed a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA).

77. At the site level, the project has individual Coordinators for the Kachin and Sagaing Landscapes to oversee project activities in their respective landscapes, as well as individual site coordinators and other field staff and interns who are periodically supported by smaller teams of visiting project staff and consultants for specific areas of work such as community engagement and biological surveys. Field offices are located in the same township as the Forest Department i.e. in Htamanthi township (covering Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary), Putao (covering Hponkanrazi WS & Hkakaborazi National Park) and Tanai township (covering Hukaung Valley WS). Except in the case of Htamanthi, the local Park Warden's offices are also located in the same townships. The PM and the CTA together are responsible for the overall management of the project, including the mobilization of all project inputs, supervision of project staff, consultants and sub-contractors. The PM reports regularly to both the NPD and to the UNDP CO as well as to the Project Board.
78. **UNDP** as the GEF Implementing Agency holds overall accountability and responsibility for the delivery of results to the GEF. Project assurance is provided through its Country Office (CO) in Myanmar. This includes 1) providing financial and audit services to the project including budget release and budget revision, 2) overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets, 3) ensuring that all activities including procurement and financial services are carried out in strict compliance with UNDP/GEF procedures, 4) procuring project vehicles as per request from WCS/MONREC, 5) ensuring that the reporting to GEF is undertaken in line with the GEF requirements and procedures, 6) ensuring the achievement of project objectives and timeliness in implementation 7) facilitating project learning, exchange and outreach within the GEF family, 8) contract into the project mid-term and final evaluations and 9) triggering additional reviews and/or evaluations as necessary and in consultation with the project counterparts.
79. **The Project Board (PB)**, (also known as the Project Steering Committee), is the project's overarching decision-making body. It is co-chaired by the Director-General (DG) Forests and the UNDP Myanmar Country Director and convened jointly by the two institutions. Its membership includes national and subnational members from the FD: the NWCD Director/NPD; the Directors of the Planning and Statistics Division (PSD) and Training and Research Development Division (TRDD); and the Directors of Forests of Kachin State and Sagaing Region. Other members of the PB are: the DG of Environment and Conservation Department of MONREC, who is also the GEF OFF, the Director of WCS, the PM, the CTA and the project focal person from UNDP. Others

may be invited to join PB meetings as needed. The PB is meant to meet according to necessity but no less than twice a year to review progress, provide strategic guidance and oversight and ensure that the project is on track to delivery its planned outcomes. Its functions as stated in the Project Document (Part III/Para 221) also include:

- approving annual project work plans and budgets presented by the PM;
- ensuring coordination with various government agencies and their participation in project activities;
- ensuring that the UNDP Environmental and Social Screening Procedure safeguards are applied to project implementation;
- approving any major changes in project plans or programmes;
- overseeing reporting in line with GEF requirements;
- ensuring commitment of human resources to support project implementation;
- arbitrating any issues within the project;
- negotiating solutions between the project and any parties beyond the scope of the project;
- assuring coordination between various donor funded and government funded projects and programmes; and
- overall project evaluation.

3.6 Implementation Timeline and Milestones

80. The project was approved by the GEF in September 2014 but officially began on 23rd June 2015 once the Project Document had been signed by UNDP, the Government of Myanmar and WCS. A project inception workshop was held in October 2015. However, project implementation became greatly delayed in the run up and aftermath of Myanmar's landmark democratic elections of November 2015. Implementation began to accelerate from May 2016 onwards, nearly 10 months after the project started, once the new government was formed and the reorganization of ministries completed. A Project Board was finally constituted in October 2016 and met for the first time in November 2016 and again in September 2017.
81. The project is scheduled to be completed within 60 months from its start in June 2020. The Project Document does not provide an implementation plan with milestones. Thus, the main project milestones are the mid-term review (MTR), originally planned for December 2018 and the terminal evaluation, which is currently scheduled for December 2019.

3.7 List of Key Partners and Stakeholders involved in project implementation

Government

- Ministry of Natural Resources & Environmental Conservation (MONREC), formerly Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry (MOECAF) including in particular the Forest Department, the Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) and the Planning and Statistics Department (PSD) as well as the following divisions of the Forest Department:
 - Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division (NWCD)
 - Training and Research Development Division (TRDD)
 - Planning and Statistics Division (PSD)
 - CTFDC
- Myanmar Forest School, under the Forest Department
- University of Forestry, Yezin, under the Forest Department
- Senior MONREC representatives at the state/regional level in Myitkyina and Monywa
- General Administration Department (GAD) and Forest Department (FD) officials at the district levels in Khamti and Putao
- FD officials at the township levels in Khamti, Htamanthi and Putao and at site-level in the PAs (i.e. NWCD field staff)
- General Administration Department (GAD)

Multilateral organizations

- UNDP

NGOs

- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- WWF Myanmar
- Fauna Flora International

CBOs

- The Literature and Cultural Societies of the ethnic minorities, branches of which are found in the project demonstration sites, notable the Shan and Rawang societies

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Project Strategy

82. The main findings regarding the project strategy are summarized below and detailed further in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. Overall, the project strategy is well-aligned to national policy objectives on PAs and biodiversity conservation and clearly builds on

WCS's considerable in-country experience as well as on global best practice on PA systems planning establishment and management. However, an overarching finding - and one that is not uncommon to GEF projects - is that the project scope is extremely ambitious given the baseline, project duration, capacity and resources. Although the project has only two planned outcomes, these together have 11 outputs that involve numerous significant activities at national and subnational levels, including a suite of interventions at four demonstration sites in remote, northern Myanmar (Chapter 3). Almost every output under Component 1 is a major undertaking, requiring sustained investment of time and resources to deliver effectively. Meanwhile, Component 2 focuses on strengthening PA management effectiveness at four sites in two logistically challenging landscapes in different administrative areas: Kachin State and Sagaing Region.

83. Apart from the logistical difficulties of managing diverse project activities at state/regional, district, township and site levels, both areas also have a history of conflict between government and ethnic armed forces, particularly Kachin. However, the MTR recognizes that this GEF-5 PA project is in many ways a product of a different time, having been designed in the years leading up to Myanmar's landmark national elections of November 2015 - a period marked by tremendous hope and optimism about the future and the likely pace of change as the country accelerated its journey towards democracy and economic liberalization. Navigating these transitions has not been easy or smooth for the new government as it continues to grapple with a fragile peace process as well as capacity and resource constraints. Thus, while the planned project scope may well have appeared reasonable and realistic at the time of project preparation, implementation experience to date has underscored the many difficulties of overcoming the deeply entrenched, multifaceted barriers to the project's objective, especially within a timeframe of five years.
84. A second major finding is that many of the indicators, targets and baselines in the project Results Framework (RF) are problematic, making it difficult to objectively assess progress towards some of the project's planned results. The project RF needs to be systematically reviewed and updated as a matter of priority and proposed changes presented to the Project Board for approval. This is particularly critical as the RF has never been updated since the project was approved. As a result of the problems with the RF, a significant proportion of the MTR field mission was spent in discussion with the Project Team to better understand planned project results and agree how best to measure progress to date. Some indicators were revised during the course of the MTR, where baselines were available, in order to enable an assessment of progress to date.
85. Another important related finding is that there is a lack of alignment and/or consistency between the project's original risk assessment and proposed management and mitigation strategies in the Project Document and risk monitoring and reporting

through different processes such as the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) to the GEF, the UNDP Quarterly Reports (QRs) and the UNDP Atlas Risk Log.

86. These findings and other issues are discussed further in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

4.1.1 Project Design

87. Other than being overambitious in its scope, the overall project design remains highly relevant and clearly addresses national priorities as set out in the NBSAP, the Forestry Sector Master Plan and other major policies and plans (see Project Document/Paras 189-198). The project is also aligned with the new Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan that is being developed by the Ministry of Planning and Finance, specifically with Pillar 3 “People and the Planet” and Goal 5 “Natural resources and the environment for prosperity”. The project design builds on international best practice for developing and strengthening national PA systems as well as on other relevant experiences and lessons, particularly WCS’s extensive and long-term experience of working closely with the FD to advance biodiversity conservation objectives in Myanmar.
88. The MTR found strong country ownership of the project by the FD generally, and NWCD in particular, including active engagement by the NWCD Director in his role as NPD, and the GEF OFP as a member of the Project Board (also see Project Document/Paras 199-202). The MTR was unable to assess broader ownership of the project by government at the national level, but there is certainly growing awareness and appreciation about the project at the subnational levels, particularly at the township and district levels, i.e. the government administrations that are in closest proximity to the sites. Country ownership is discussed further in later sections, while project scope is considered together with the Results Framework in Section 4.1.2. The rest of this section focuses on MTR findings on other specific aspects of project design that will need to be addressed or strengthened.

Decision-making processes during project design

89. The MTR is expected to review whether the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders were taken into account during project design processes, i.e. those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process.
90. The Project Document indicates that there were extensive stakeholder consultations during the project preparation at national, subnational and local levels. NGOs and representatives of local villages were involved in the stakeholder consultation meetings held locally for each proposed demonstration site. Although there are clearly limitations to one-day workshops involving many stakeholder groups, a range of perspectives was obtained (Project Document/Annex 7), which has informed project design. However, the UNDP Environment and Social Screening (ESS) report notes that there

were challenges in engaging women and other key stakeholder groups during project design (Project Document/Annex 11). It is unclear to what extent the project consulted with indigenous people's groups or other stakeholders working on land-related issues at the national or subnational level during project preparation. However, WCS is well acquainted with these issues having participated in the national land use policy development process which was led and facilitated by the Land Core Group. Land use issues in existing PAs and the difficulties of recognizing the customary land tenure of ethnic people in the current legal framework and potential solutions to this were among the issues discussed.

Gender

91. The MTR was unable to undertake a systematic or detailed analysis of the gender aspects of project design and implementation due to capacity constraints on the MTR team (see Section 2.3). There is a great deal of general awareness of the importance of gender as reflected in project reports and discussions with the project team. However, there has been little detailed or critical analysis of the gender implications and impacts of project design and implementation. The Results Framework does not include any gender-disaggregated indicators and therefore there is no reporting against gender in the annual PIRs. Quarterly reports to UNDP include gender-disaggregated data such as the numbers of men and women undergoing different types of training or attending meetings and workshops. But there is no analysis of any differences in the impacts of these trainings on men and women, including any differences in relative costs and benefits. It was apparent from reviewing key project documents⁸ and from discussions with the project team that this is an area that would benefit from being strengthened and that UNDP, as a project partner and co-financier, is ideally placed to provide that support, given their expertise and experience on gender issues in Myanmar as well as more generally.

Significant changes in national and subnational contexts

92. The major political changes in the national context have already been highlighted (Section 4.1) and are touched on further in Section 4.2.1. Other significant developments that impinge directly on project implementation are described below.
93. **Hukaung Valley WS:** There has been a steady worsening of the long-running conflict in Hukaung between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and the national Myanmar army since the start of the project. Fighting has escalated sharply in 2018. This has severely impacted the project's ability to implement activities in a PA where WCS has been working with the FD since 2004. Indeed, Hukaung was considered to be the 'most advanced model of PA management in the country' at the time of project design (Project Document, p.25/ Table 2). Only very limited camera trapping and patrolling has been possible since the project began. Also it has been decided that the proposed analysis of drivers

⁸ These include the Project Document, the PIRs, the UNDP Quarterly Reports and the 2017 report of a study of community engagement on wildlife conservation through a gender lens in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary. See: Aye Lei Tun (2017).

and planning for forestry and wildlife law enforcement in Kachin State (Output 2.4) is not feasible at present given the extent of ethnic armed conflict in Kachin generally. Nonetheless, many of the lessons from Hukaung are being used to design and implement interventions in the other project sites and can still inform models and approaches developed through the project. An interesting feature is the transfer of knowledge and capacity developed in Hukaung to other project sites, for example, the training of Community Guardians in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary by WCS field staff who were originally trained and acquired experience in Hukaung Valley.

94. **Hkakaborazi NP:** The project's interventions in Hkakaborazi have included providing support to the FD since 2015 for the preparation of a World Heritage site nomination to UNESCO. Discussions with UNESCO led to a proposal for establishing a new PA south of the existing park in order to better meet the UNESCO's Outstanding Value criterion and increase the chances of Hkakaborazi becoming a World Heritage site. In September 2017, however, there were large-scale protests by local communities, particularly from the Rawang ethnic community, against the proposed Southern Extension PA to Hkakaborazi National Park, the UNESCO World Heritage (WH) nomination, the FD and also WCS, who are also associated with the establishment Hkakaborazi National Park in 1996. As a result of these protests as well as formal written complaints, including one which had over 10,000 signatures, all project and FD activities in Hkakaborazi have been suspended since September 2017. The reasons for these protests and their implications are discussed in more detail in Section 4.2.
95. **Calls for new approaches to PAs in Thanintharyi Region:** Meanwhile, there have been calls for alternative approaches to PA establishment and management in Thanintharyi in south Myanmar under the umbrella of the Conservation Alliance of Thanintharyi (CAT), a coalition of Karen community organizations.⁹ Specifically, CAT calls for approaches that respect the rights of indigenous people and conflict-affected populations; supports the institutions and practices of indigenous peoples to protect their forests; and safeguards the fragile emergent peace process between the Karen National Union (KNU) and the national government.
96. While this project is not working in Thanintharyi, these developments have implications for project strategy and design, not least because a key objective-level target is to increase overall PA coverage and representativeness, the latter partly by expanding the PA network in the Tenasserim-south Thailand semi-evergreen rain forest which falls within the Thanintharyi region.
97. In light of the developments in Hukaung, Hkakaborazi and Thanintharyi, it is important for the project to use this opportunity to re-assess certain aspects of its overall strategy and planned interventions at both site and policy levels and to update its risk management and mitigation strategies accordingly (see Section 4.4). The new law on Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs, which is currently awaiting final approval by

⁹ http://www.theborderconsortium.org/media/97682/CAT_Our-Forest_Our-Life_Feb2018_eng.pdf

government, offers opportunities for different approaches to PA governance and management, including a new category of community PAs. How this is operationalized, however, will depend on the rules and regulations that are approved once the act is passed (see Section 4.2).

Problem Analysis, Barriers to the Objective and Underlying Assumptions

98. The original problem analysis correctly identified poverty and conflict, the lack of comprehensive land use policies and planning and the lack of grassroots support for conservation, particularly by people living around PAs, as being among the key root causes of the major threats to Myanmar's biodiversity and PA system. However, it did not analyse or explicitly acknowledge the links between these factors, such as the complex relationship between land tenure, armed conflict and internal displacement, and the implications of these for PA establishment and effective management. Indeed, the reasons given for the lack of grassroots support for conservation, and the strategies proposed to overcome this, are rather simplistic and general. Thus the reasons given are: "low awareness of conservation objectives, lack of mechanisms for local communities to benefit from PAs, and lack of opportunities for grassroots participation in conservation activities"; and the strategies identified to address these problems are: "general awareness raising, improved community outreach and more participatory approaches towards conservation that accommodate local needs."
99. The analysis of key barriers to achieving the project objective (Project Document, Section I/Part I) is also quite brief, especially with respect to Barrier 2. Barrier 1 focuses on the lack of systemic, institutional and individual capacity for PA systems and site planning and management, while Barrier 2 pinpoints lack of capacity and motivation at the site level for effective PA management (Section 3.2). There is no reference to the political, economic and social dimensions of either barrier although these could have been integrated into the existing barriers.
100. Socio-economic factors are mentioned under Barrier 2, but without reference to the history of PA establishment and management in Myanmar or of environmental governance generally. Cause and effect are not clearly articulated. For example, it is known that earlier land settlement processes associated with establishing PAs often failed to document and respect customary rights over land and natural resources, creating long-standing resentments among local populations towards the FD and PAs. Although these factors have profound implications for the long-term sustainability of both individual PAs and the system as a whole, they have not been explicitly factored into project design, but rather identified as risks and assumptions (e.g. see Results Framework, Project Document/ Paras 169-171 and the Social & Environment Screening in Annex 11). As a result, interventions that explicitly target socio-economic (and related political) barriers and threats are included in an ad hoc manner in the project design, without sufficient critical analysis of root causes and impacts or identification of effective strategies to address these. For example, there is reference to the urgent need for developing successful models for community participation in

the management of PAs and their buffer zones under Barrier 2, although the reason given for this is “the large number of PA neighbouring populations and the intensity of their activities” rather than also highlighting the importance of clarifying customary rights and uses and addressing the legitimate development needs of local populations in a transparent, equitable and sustainable manner.

101. The stated assumptions underlying the project strategy are broadly valid, although different assumptions are provided in the narrative of the Project Document and the Results Framework (Box 1), which need to be rationalized. Additionally, the causal links stated in assumptions 2 and 3 are debatable, i.e. whether increased awareness and capacity alone lead to behaviour change in favour of biodiversity conservation and similarly whether greater knowledge and information necessarily lead to prioritization of effective PA management.

Box 1 Key Project Assumptions

1. Baseline conditions in the selected demonstration protected areas can be extrapolated with high confidence level to other protected areas in Myanmar and lessons learnt can be successfully disseminated.
2. Increased awareness and capacity will lead to a change in behaviour with respect to the integration of biodiversity conservation concerns into land use policies and practices, especially within and adjacent to protected areas.
3. Sustainable financing and effective protected area management will gradually become a national priority for Myanmar as knowledge and information is made available.

Source: Project Document, Para 169

4. The Myanmar Government continues to be committed to the extension and improved management of the PA system in the face of other demands for land and resources.
5. Subnational government agencies are committed to the extension and improved management of the PA system in the face of other demands for land and resources.

102. The MTR notes that the original problem analysis in the Project Document (Section I/ Paras 29-59) predates the use of a Theory of Change (ToC) approach to problem analysis in GEF project development by UNDP. The ToC method maps causal links between project activities to project goals by working backwards from the objective level to identify all the necessary pre-conditions that must be met, and the relationships between these, in order to fulfil each major milestone along the way to the final goal. This approach is thought to provide a better and more comprehensive understanding of how individual activities relate to one another and to the achieving the final objective

(and ultimate development goal), i.e. to bringing about the desired changes, and thus enable better project planning and management. A ToC analysis may be beneficial to project planning and implementation going forward and could be integrated into the process of reviewing and revising the Results Framework.

Identification of risks and appropriate mitigation and management measures

103. Project risks are identified consistently in the Project Document narrative and Results Framework (Table 6) unlike assumptions, although these do not capture some of the important risks identified through UNDP’s Environment and Social Screening (ESS) undertaken during project preparation or the proposed mitigation and management measures (Project Document/Annex 11). The latter in particular have been somewhat overlooked in project monitoring, including in UNDP’s risk monitoring processes. In order to ensure that these are not forgotten as the project goes forward, they are reproduced in full in Table 7. In general, project risks and proposed mitigation and management measures need to be updated to reflect their current situation, documented in a coherent manner, and monitored more systematically. It would also be advisable to update the screening process using UNDP’s current Social and Environment Screening Procedure (SESP), which is more comprehensive and better integrated with UNDP’s risk monitoring systems (also see Sections 4.3,5 and 4.4).

Table 6 Risks and risk mitigation measures identified at the design stage

Risks	Mitigation Measures
1. Exploitation fuelled by the existence of significant trade in wildlife and forest products to China may decimate ecosystems and wildlife populations	1. Given the relatively significant level of this risk, one of the pillars of the Project design is to increase the MOECAP’s capacity for law enforcement in Myanmar, to fully implement relevant PA and biodiversity laws. It will also strengthen the country capacity for effective participation in regional and global networks to protect wildlife at its source (e.g. CITES-MIKE, ASEAN-WEN).
2. Political tension between ethnic minority groups and the central government may limit ability to implement project activities effectively.	2. The project will develop relationships with local ethnic leaders to increase awareness, build trust and encourage participation in project activities to ensure that tension is limited. The project is designed so that project outputs and outcomes can be achieved even if the security situation in the Hukaung area seriously deteriorated, by including three relatively secure PAs - Hkakaborazi NP, Hponkanrazi WS, Htamanthi WS. In case of the security issue, the project could also support alternative PAs within the upper tiger conservation landscape such as Natmataung NP and Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range.
3. Relevant Government agencies may be reluctant to promote conservation-oriented land-use for a fear of losing other development revenues from overwhelmingly large business and investment interests by offshore companies	3. Working closely with the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Finance, the project aims to influence the national development and fiscal development planning process, through mainstreaming biodiversity and PA system objectives. Participatory land use planning at state, region and local levels through this project will serve as a platform to develop development plans that integrate conservation priorities. It will also be critical to capture the potential of ecosystem markets in support of the PA system management.

4. Climate change may undermine the conservation objectives of the project	4. The project will work to address the anticipated negative impacts of climate change by increasing resilience through improving PA management and landscape linkages and the expansion and rationalisation of the PA system. Through this, the project will contribute to the maintenance of ecosystem resilience under differing climate change conditions, so as to secure a continued sustainable flow of ecosystem services.

Table 7 Issues raised in the project Environmental and Social Screening and proposed mitigation measures

Question	Answer	Proposed mitigation measures
<p>Social Equity and Equality</p> <p>4.1 Would the proposed project have environmental and social impacts that could affect indigenous people or other vulnerable groups?</p>	<p>Possibly</p> <p>The project will support staff assignment and conservation activities in Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and strengthening of the three PAs – Hkakaborazi National Park, Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary and Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary. Hponkanrazi WS has had no active management program since its creation, the private sector have been active in the area and made some informal agreements with local communities to acquire land for tourism infrastructure development. These land transactions are illegal and are creating confusion with local communities about their rights and the role of the wildlife sanctuary. Strict enforcement of the laws will result in tension with communities and private owners and the Forest Department. Illegal mining and logging activities in Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary could also become major issues for the project and there is the potential for conflict with the parties involved.</p>	<p>The project’s Stakeholder Involvement Plan describes the principles and approach to be followed in working especially with local communities at the demonstration sites. This is elaborated in the community participation strategy in Annex 10, with proactive consideration of the involvement of women in project activities. Community participation will inherently take an inclusive approach towards the involvement of ethnic minorities, as these constitute a large proportion of the populations in and around the demonstration PAs (see the PA site profiles in Annex 6). Specific measures will be employed in the community participation activities, including at least 30% of community facilitators will be women, and at least 50% of CBO members, and development of activities will include contact with women’s groups. Dedicated national consultant inputs have been included to integrate and monitor gender and ethnic minority interests into project implementation.</p>
<p>4.5 Have there been challenges in engaging women and other certain key groups of stakeholders in the project design process?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>As women are economically responsible for their households and heavily engaged in day to day livelihood activities, they have had limited opportunity to engage in the project designing process. For example, participation of women in the stakeholder workshops for the four demonstration PAs during project preparation was very limited.</p>	<p>With respect to the specific issues mentioned above for Hponkanrazi and Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuaries the project will take the following approach. At Hponkanrazi WS, the project will clarify the roles and responsibilities of communities, private sector and the Forest Department and work towards clear policies for private sector investment in protected areas. These existing examples will be used to inform the creation of the policy. At</p>

Question	Answer	Proposed mitigation measures
	However, the project's community participation strategy (see Annex 10) provides clear guidance and targets for the involvement of women in project activities at the demonstration sites.	Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, implementing law enforcement activities in areas that have limited understanding of the law will take time and care. The project may limit the natural resource utilization and access to some critical conservation hotspots, resulting in conservation gains through improved protection, but these limits will be done with the constant participation of local communities and conflicts will be limited to the extent possible."
Socio-Economics 8.1 Is the proposed project likely to have impacts that could affect women's and men's ability to use, develop and protect natural resources and other natural capital assets? For example, activities that could lead to natural resources degradation or depletion in communities who depend on these resources for their development, livelihoods, and well-being?	Possibly/Yes As mentioned above, the project's intervention at the four demonstration PAs aims to strengthen conservation management, which will clarify PA boundaries, increase protection levels and improve enforcement of illegal activities. These measures have potential to constrain the activities of communities and other stakeholders in and around the PAs.	While PA management by nature may restrict access to the natural resources within PA boundaries (for protection purposes), the project aims to introduce a participatory approach to PA management that will involve awareness raising, environmental education, involvement in management activities, stakeholder representation in site committees, and support for sustainable livelihood activities. Overall, the project aims to engender support for PA management from local communities and other stakeholders (eg private sector), for which an inclusive and mutually beneficial approach is needed. In the case of serious encroachment and illegal activities, it may be difficult to avoid conflict, but the goal will be fair and equitable settlements of such disputes. The project's capacity building programme will seek to strengthen the ability of national, subregional and local PA staff to respond effectively to such situations, minimizing conflict and seeking mutually acceptable solutions.
8.2 Is the proposed project likely to significantly affect land tenure arrangements and/or traditional cultural ownership patterns?	Possibly/ Yes Development of National Land Use Policy is an on-going process. As there has been weak coordination between land use related ministries (Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, Ministry of Home Affairs and MOECAF), land registration, tenure and certification are still problematic. Land tenure system in protected areas still needs to be revised and updated. The project might have some impacts on the traditional land tenure system.	In the case of serious encroachment and illegal activities, it may be difficult to avoid conflict, but the goal will be fair and equitable settlements of such disputes. The project's capacity building programme will seek to strengthen the ability of national, subregional and local PA staff to respond effectively to such situations, minimizing conflict and seeking mutually acceptable solutions.
8.3 Is the proposed project likely to negatively affect the income levels or employment opportunities of vulnerable groups?	No	<i>Question 8.3 and its answer have been included as in the view of the MTR, the correct answer is 'Yes/Possibly', given the answers to 8.1 and 8.2.</i>
Biodiversity and Conservation <i>No issues flagged in the screening</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Although no issues were raised the following is included under this heading in the section on next steps. It is included here as it is relevant to the issues raised above under Socio-</i>

Question	Answer	Proposed mitigation measures
		<p><i>economics and Social Equity and Equality.</i></p> <p>The project will have an overwhelmingly positive effect on the conservation and rehabilitation of natural habitats, including sustainable community-based forest management pilot activities in the buffer zones of the demonstration PAs. Overall, the project will promote a participatory approach to PA management, particularly with regard to sustainable resource use by local communities. The effects of these activities will be carefully monitored through the project's M&E system (including habitat extent, status of key species, status of threats, as well as socio-economic indicators related to local communities), and the lessons learned evaluated and shared</p>

Notes: Extracts are quoted verbatim. Text in italics is by the author. Annexes refer to annexes in the Project Document.

104. It is clear with the benefit of hindsight, that the project may have been over-optimistic about the probability and likely impact of identified political risks, given the situation in Hukaung Valley and the more recent developments in Hkakaborazi and Thanintharyi. It is also clear, that the mitigation strategies proposed at the time of project preparation are unrealistic for Hukaung and have not so far been implemented in Hkakaborazi (or the other sites). Shifting to alternative demonstration sites at this stage would also be impractical.
105. Other identified risks and mitigation measures as well as risk monitoring and management generally are discussed further in Sections 4.3.5 and 4.4.

4.1.2 Results Framework

106. Weaknesses in the Results Framework (Annex 7) became apparent while reviewing the annual Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) during the MTR inception period. In particular, many of the indicators, baselines and end of project targets were not sufficiently 'SMART', i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound, thereby making it difficult to measure progress towards results in an objective and repeatable manner (Table 8 and Table 9).
107. Some indicators were essentially composites of several 'sub-indicators' (e.g. Table 9, Indicator 1.1 a-e), adding to the complexity of assessing progress against the overall indicator. Furthermore, baselines were missing or had not been updated for several indicators (e.g. Table 8, Indicator 2).

108. In some instances, the choice of indicator did not always seem the most suitable for capturing project progress and impacts (e.g. Table 9, Indicator 2.1); in others the wording of the indicator and target was identical (e.g. Table 6, Indicators 1.4 and 2.5).
109. Additionally, although mid-term targets were not mandatory for the project and were therefore not set, these would have been helpful for a project of this size and complexity. Developing such targets could also have contributed to course corrections earlier on.

Table 8 Objective Indicators, Baselines & End of Project Targets

Objective Indicators			Baseline	End of Project Target
1. Increased coverage of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic PA network managed by the Forest Department to 10% (6,765,530 ha) of the country's land-area from the current 5.6% (3,788,697 ha) with increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions and essential corridors (see inset table)			5.6% coverage (3,788,697 ha) of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. See inset table for baseline representation of ecoregions.	10% coverage (6,765,530 ha) of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, with increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions (see rows marked in yellow in inset table)
Ecoregion	Current % Protected	Target % Protected		
Chin Hills-Arakan Yoma montane forest	3.60%	3.60%		
Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadow	96.46%	96.46%		
Irrawaddy dry Forest	0.45%	3.0%		
Irrawaddy fresh water swamp forest	0.04%	Potential to increase limited		
Irrawaddy moist deciduous forest	1.82%	3.0%		
Kayah-Karen montane rain forest	0.60%	1.5%		
Mizoram-Manipur- Kachin Rain forest	7.26%	7.26%		
Myanmar Coast mangrove	0.92%	3.0%		
Myanmar coastal rain forest	0.69%	Potential to increase limited		
Northern Indochina subtropical forest	0.90%	Potential to increase limited		
Northern Triangle subtropical forest	35.56%	35.56%		
Nujiang Langcang Gorge alpine conifer and mixed forest	0.00%	3.0%		
Tenasserim-south Thailand semi-evergreen rain forest	5.16%	25.00%		
Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests	6.04%	6.04%		

Objective Indicators			Baseline	End of Project Target															
<p>2. Improved habitat conditions at local level indicated by percentage change in forest cover caused by encroachment in Core Areas of PAs measured through remote sensing three times during the project</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Protected Area</th> <th>Baseline forest cover¹⁰ (% change / year)</th> <th>Target forest cover (% change / year)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>0.95%</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hkakaborazi National Park</td> <td>0.95%</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>0.95%</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>0.95%</td> <td>0.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Protected Area	Baseline forest cover ¹⁰ (% change / year)	Target forest cover (% change / year)	Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%	Hkakaborazi National Park	0.95%	0.5%	Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%	Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%	See inset table for baseline annual rate of change in forest cover and encroachment by PA	See inset table for baseline annual rate of change in forest cover and encroachment by PA
Protected Area	Baseline forest cover ¹⁰ (% change / year)	Target forest cover (% change / year)																	
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Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%																	
3. Financial Sustainability of PA System			Baseline Financial Sustainability Scorecard score (October 2013) 15%	Target Financial Sustainability Scorecard score 25%															

¹⁰ The Project Document explains that baseline rates of change in forest cover were not available for the four protected areas. Therefore a national average rate of 0.95% was used as a proxy with the intention of revisiting these figures during the project inception phase.

Table 9 Outcome Indicators, Baselines and End of Project Targets

Outcome & Outputs / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target
<p>Outcome 1: Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management</p> <p>Output 1.1: Strengthened national policies relating to PA management and biodiversity conservation</p> <p>Output 1.2: Capacity of the Forest Department strengthened for effective management of the PA system</p> <p>Output 1.3: Training Programmes targeting PA managers institutionalised within the Forest Department</p> <p>Output 1.4: A system-wide strategy for sustainable financing of the PA network is developed and piloted for the expanded PA system</p> <p>Output 1.5: Sub-national government units associated with the four demonstration PAs incorporate PA values into regional and local development</p> <p>Output 1.6: National PA system expanded based on gap analysis for terrestrial ecosystems and PA network review</p>		
<p>1.1. Strengthened national policies and legislation address the following key issues for the PA system:</p> <p>a) enabling PAs to have access to funds raised through sustainable financing;</p> <p>b) integrating valuation of ecosystem services (ES) into national land use planning;</p> <p>c) clarifying the legal status of PA buffer zones and rationalization of approaches toward them;</p> <p>d) clarifying the governance arrangements for coastal PAs; and</p> <p>e) enabling local people to use and benefit from sites within Protected Areas.</p>	<p>a) PAs currently only access government funding;</p> <p>b) values of ES not considered in national land use planning;</p> <p>c) PA buffer zones vary in location and legal status;</p> <p>d) governance responsibilities for coastal PAs are complex and unclear;</p> <p>e) local people have no legal use rights within PAs.</p>	<p>a) PAs can access diverse sources of funding for management;</p> <p>b) national land use planning policy incorporates valuation of ES;</p> <p>c) PA buffer zones are given specific and consistent legal recognition;</p> <p>d) governance of coastal PAs is clarified in national policy and law;</p> <p>e) legislation passed to enable local use of land within PAs with appropriate safeguards.</p>
<p>1.2. Improved institutional capacity of the Forest Department for the PA system planning and management as indicated by the Capacity Development Scorecard*</p> <p>*Combined average for NWCD, Sagaing region, Kachin state, the Training and Research Development Division and the Planning and Statistics Division</p>	<p>Capacity Development Scorecard revised baseline¹¹</p> <p>56%</p>	<p>Capacity Development Scorecard target:</p> <p>67%</p>
<p>1.3. Certificate-level PA management modules are established for the use of the Forest Department and incorporated into their regular curricula at Yezin University of Forestry and Central Forestry Development Training Centers as appropriate</p>	<p>No formal training courses on PA management are</p>	<p>Certificate-level PA management modules are incorporated into regular curricula</p>

¹¹ The original baseline figure of 45% given in the Project Document annexes involved subjective adjustments to the average score by the project designers. As it was unclear how this was done and therefore how the mid-term score should be adjusted, it was agreed during the MTR that the original baseline would be revised to the unadjusted score calculated at the time of project approval.

Outcome & Outputs / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target																																								
	available in Myanmar	at Yezin UoF and CFDTCS. At least 150 FD field staff trained and certified in Conservation Management and Community Outreach for PAs.																																								
1.4.100% increase in total budget allocated to the protected areas in real terms compared to the baseline as indicated by the financial sustainability scorecard	US\$ 750,000 ¹² per year as indicated by the financial sustainability scorecard.	100% increase in budget allocated to the protected areas in real terms compared to baseline as indicated by the financial sustainability scorecard.																																								
<p>Outcome 2: Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones</p> <p>Output 2.1: Strengthening management through business plans for the four demonstration PAs</p> <p>Output 2.2: Demonstration PA site operations strengthened to address existing threats to biodiversity</p> <p>Output 2.3: Pilot systems developed and implemented for community participation at the four demonstration PAs</p> <p>Output 2.4: Analysis of drivers and planning for forestry and wildlife law enforcement in Kachin State</p> <p>Output 2.5: Increased capacity for monitoring, assessing and reporting the impacts of improved PA management on ecosystems, key species, threats and local livelihoods</p>																																										
<p>2.1. Reduction of threats at the local level indicated by an eventual reduction in the number of individuals stopped inside the PA for illegal activities as shown in SMART monthly patrolling reports. See Annex 9 for baseline.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="213 1249 912 1787"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Protected Area</th> <th rowspan="2">SMART Baseline *</th> <th colspan="5">SMART Target*</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Y1</th> <th>Y2</th> <th>Y3</th> <th>Y4</th> <th>Y5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>20</td> <td>30</td> <td>40</td> <td>30</td> <td>15</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hkakaborazi National Park</td> <td>20</td> <td>30</td> <td>40</td> <td>30</td> <td>15</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>0</td> <td>10</td> <td>20</td> <td>15</td> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary</td> <td>20</td> <td>30</td> <td>40</td> <td>30</td> <td>15</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Catch effort /100km patrol distance</p>	Protected Area	SMART Baseline *	SMART Target*					Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary	20	30	40	30	15	10	Hkakaborazi National Park	20	30	40	30	15	10	Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary	0	10	20	15	8	5	Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary	20	30	40	30	15	10	See inset table for baseline rate of individuals stopped per year for illegal activities for every 100km patrolled in each PA	See inset table for predicted annual target rates of individuals stopped per year for illegal activities for every 100km patrolled in each PA
Protected Area			SMART Baseline *	SMART Target*																																						
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Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary	20	30	40	30	15	10																																				
2.2. Stable or increased encounter rates for key indicator species in each demonstration PA based on annual summaries of SMART patrolling data and focused auditory surveys for gibbons.	Encounter rate of 2 Hoolock Gibbon groups/	Encounter rate of 2 Hoolock Gibbon groups/ km and																																								

¹²Based on the exchange rate of 800 kyat = 1 US\$.

Outcome & Outputs / Outcome Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target															
	km for Hukaung valley WS, Hponkanrazi WS and Htamanthi WS. 2.5 ungulate sign observations/ 100 km patrolled for Htamanthi WS. Baselines for other sites to be completed during Year 1.	2.5 ungulate sign observations/ 100 km patrolled for all four demonstration sites															
2.3.Improved management effectiveness of individual PAs covering 2,604,000 ha, indicated by the % increase in the METT assessment (see Annex 3): <table border="1" data-bbox="213 797 708 1236"> <thead> <tr> <th>Protected Area</th> <th>METT Baseline Score</th> <th>METT Target Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (1,737,300 ha)</td> <td>52%</td> <td>82%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hkakaborazi National Park (381,200 ha)</td> <td>51%</td> <td>83%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary (270,400 ha)</td> <td>12%</td> <td>69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary (215,100)</td> <td>49%</td> <td>82%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Protected Area	METT Baseline Score	METT Target Score	Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary (1,737,300 ha)	52%	82%	Hkakaborazi National Park (381,200 ha)	51%	83%	Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary (270,400 ha)	12%	69%	Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary (215,100)	49%	82%	See inset table for METT Baseline scores	See inset table for METT Target scores
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2.4.Community participation systems piloted at demonstration PAs and incorporated into management plans	No existing systematic measures for community participation at demonstration PAs	Community participation systems piloted at demonstration PAs and incorporated into management plans															

110. Most of the outcome indicators are linked to specific outputs other than Outputs 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1 and 2.4, (highlighted in blue in Table 9) which have no directly related indicator at the outcome-level, perhaps because it is assumed these are covered by Objective-level Indicators 1 and 3 and Outcome Indicator 1.1. The absence of specific indicators related to these outputs makes it more difficult to track their progress during the annual PIR process, which only reports against indicators, and also the MTR. There is also a lack of alignment with reporting through the UNDP Quarterly Progress Reports, which track progress against Outputs rather than indicators but not to the same level of detail as the PIR. This issue is discussed further under Section 4.3.6.

111. The absence of an indicator for Output 1.6 is perhaps not so significant, as Objective Indicator 1 specifies area and ecoregion baselines and targets. However, separate indicators would have been useful for the outputs relating to PA financing, which are particularly critical to overall project success and sustainability, i.e. developing and testing a financial strategy for the expanded national PA system (Output 1.4) and strengthening PA management in the four demonstration PAs through business plans (Output 2.1). An indicator for Output 2.4 on analysing the drivers of threats to forests and wildlife in Kachin State and developing a plan for law enforcement would also have been advisable to track progress at the subnational level in this area.
112. Significant time was spent with the Project Manager and other senior project team members during the MTR mission to clarify indicators, targets and baselines in order to assess project progress to date and to discuss possible amendments and revisions – a discussion that has continued alongside the drafting of the report. The more detailed recommendations on the Results Framework arising from these discussions are summarized in Annex 7.
113. A key MTR finding is that project indicators, baselines and targets need to be revisited, clarified and simplified as a matter of priority. Ideally, these should also be translated into the Myanmar language, in order for the RF to be properly ‘owned’ by the Project Team and to serve as a useful guide to project implementation and monitoring. Although this process should ideally have occurred during the inception phase, the MTR assumes the project team and project partners were too preoccupied with getting the project off the ground during that initial period and that this was subsequently overlooked as implementation got underway and other challenges arose. If time and resources permit, a Theory of Change could also be developed and applied retroactively. Additionally, although all the risks and assumptions identified in the Results Framework remain relevant, developments since the project was approved need to be reflected in an updated Results Framework and included in the project’s risk mitigation and management strategies. This should be undertaken as part of a wider exercise to revise and update the project’s original social and environmental screening by completing UNDP’s current SESP and updating the UNDP Atlas Risk Log accordingly.
114. Another major finding of the MTR is that the original scope of the project is overambitious given the available capacity and resources, the complex political, socio-economic and geographic context of implementation. This can be done by further prioritizing planned outputs and activities based on the feasibility of planned results and the likelihood of generating maximum sustainable impacts by the end of the project. A preliminary prioritization was made during the MTR together with the Project Team after establishing progress towards planned results. The results of this initial prioritization are presented in Section 4.2.

4.2 Progress Towards Results

4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

115. The 'Progress Towards Results Matrix'¹³ was used to assess progress towards planned project outcomes, using the indicators and targets in the Results Framework, where possible. The assessment is based on reporting on the indicators and outputs in the PIRs and UNDP Quarterly Reports (QRs), respectively, which was supplemented with information collected through interviews and additional reports and documents obtained during the MTR. Some outcome indicators and baselines had to be revised in order to assess progress in a meaningful manner. As noted earlier, some important outputs do not have corresponding indicators; progress against these outputs are thus only reported in the QRs and in a qualitative manner. Apart from limitations in the quality of indicators, baselines and targets, assessment of progress was also sometimes hampered by shortcomings in project M&E and reporting (see Sections 4.3.5 & 4.3.6). Although a large number of project reports and documents are available, there has been relatively little critical analysis as yet of project strategies and results and thus limited adaptive management of the project. This, however, is not uncommon to large, complex projects such as this one.
116. Additionally, as noted earlier, the project experienced severe delays in its first year of implementation in the run up and aftermath of Myanmar's historic elections in November 2015, which has affected overall project progress. The impact of the elections on project implementation is documented in detail in the project's first PIR in 2016 and reiterated in the 2017 PIR. It was also confirmed by project partners in MTR interviews. Delays were unavoidable in the months leading up to and after the elections, given a general state of flux and the intense preparations required for Myanmar's first fully democratic elections in 30 years. It was understandably difficult for government counterparts to actively engage with the project during this period or to take major decisions. It took several more months after the elections to fully form the new government and reconstitute its departments, many of which were also re-organized. This affected the formation of the Project Board and other project coordination and advisory bodies as well as the approval of many project activities (see Section 4.3.1). It was particularly difficult to take forward some of the policy and capacity-related activities planned under Outcome 1. Project implementation began to accelerate in May 2016 after the formation of the new government in March, although the first Project Board meeting only took place in November 2016.
117. Thus, although the project officially began with the signing of the project document on 23rd June 2015, by the time the MTR began in February, it had effectively been under full implementation for only some 20 months, rather than the 30 months that would normally be the mid-point of a 5-year project. This has been factored into the

¹³ See Chapter 3 & Annex 3 UNDP-GEF 2014 "Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects" pp 15-17

outcomes analysis and the allocation of MTR progress ratings as well as the final MTR recommendations. Progress towards the objective and each project outcome was rated using the following 6-point scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), or Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), which are explained further in Box 2. The detailed analysis of progress towards planned outcomes, including progress ratings at mid-term and the basis for the ratings is included in the evaluative matrix in Annex 8 and summarized below. It is recommended that Section 4.2 be read together with this matrix.

Box 2 Progress towards results rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The project is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project objective/outcome targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
Satisfactory (S)	The project is expected to achieve most of its objective/outcome end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The project is expected to achieve most of its objective/outcome end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	The project is expected to achieve its objective/outcome end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
Unsatisfactory (U)	The project is expected not to achieve most of its objective/outcome end-of-project targets.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The project has failed to achieve its objective/outcome midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Source: From UNDP-GEF 2014 "Guidance for conducting midterm reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects" p.17

Progress towards the Project Objective

118. Progress towards the project objective of strengthening the national terrestrial PA system through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring and enforcement and financing is rated as Moderately Satisfactory (MS). This is mainly due to (a) the slow rate of PA network expansion in terms of both area and ecological representation (Indicator 1); and (b) the ambiguities involved in determining change in forest cover in the project demonstration sites (Indicator 2). Ecoregions with end of project targets for increased coverage are shown in yellow in Table 10. The progress at mid-term is shown in Table 11. Revised baselines and targets for Indicator 2 on forest cover change are presented in (Table 12).
119. These two aspects of project progress are discussed further below. Although the third Objective Indicator on financial sustainability has been rated as Satisfactory (S), this

indicator has clearly been set too low, given that the end-of-project target score of 25% has nearly been reached at mid-term (24%) after 20 months' implementation. Furthermore, 25% self-reported end score based on the Financial Sustainability Scorecard would not indicate significant strengthening of PA system financing (Annex 9). This score would need to be supplemented with details of new financing sources and mechanisms.

Table 10 Progress towards objective level end of project targets

Objective Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target / Mid-term Level																																													
<p>1. Increased coverage of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic PA network managed by the Forest Department to 10% (6,765,530 ha) of the country's land-area from the current 5.6% (3,788,697 ha) with increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions and essential corridors (see inset table)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="253 842 895 1951"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="256 846 603 936">Ecoregion</th> <th data-bbox="603 846 746 936">Current % Protected</th> <th data-bbox="746 846 890 936">Target % Protected</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 936 603 992">Chin Hills-Arakan Yoma montane forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 936 746 992">3.60%</td> <td data-bbox="746 936 890 992">3.60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 992 603 1048">Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadow</td> <td data-bbox="603 992 746 1048">96.46%</td> <td data-bbox="746 992 890 1048">96.46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1048 603 1093">Irrawaddy dry Forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1048 746 1093">0.45%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1048 890 1093">3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1093 603 1205">Irrawaddy fresh water swamp forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1093 746 1205">0.04%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1093 890 1205">Potential to increase limited</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1205 603 1261">Irrawaddy moist deciduous forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1205 746 1261">1.82%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1205 890 1261">3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1261 603 1317">Kayah-Karen montane rain forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1261 746 1317">0.60%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1261 890 1317">1.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1317 603 1373">Mizoram-Manipur- Kachin Rain forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1317 746 1373">7.26%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1317 890 1373">7.26%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1373 603 1417">Myanmar Coast mangrove</td> <td data-bbox="603 1373 746 1417">0.92%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1373 890 1417">3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1417 603 1529">Myanmar coastal rain forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1417 746 1529">0.69%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1417 890 1529">Potential to increase limited</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1529 603 1641">Northern Indochina subtropical forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1529 746 1641">0.90%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1529 890 1641">Potential to increase limited</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1641 603 1697">Northern Triangle subtropical forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1641 746 1697">35.56%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1641 890 1697">35.56%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1697 603 1798">Nuijiang Langcang Gorge alpine conifer and mixed forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1697 746 1798">0.00%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1697 890 1798">3.0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1798 603 1854">Tenasserim-south Thailand semi-evergreen rain forest</td> <td data-bbox="603 1798 746 1854">5.16%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1798 890 1854">25.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="256 1854 603 1910">Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests</td> <td data-bbox="603 1854 746 1910">6.04%</td> <td data-bbox="746 1854 890 1910">6.04%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ecoregion	Current % Protected	Target % Protected	Chin Hills-Arakan Yoma montane forest	3.60%	3.60%	Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadow	96.46%	96.46%	Irrawaddy dry Forest	0.45%	3.0%	Irrawaddy fresh water swamp forest	0.04%	Potential to increase limited	Irrawaddy moist deciduous forest	1.82%	3.0%	Kayah-Karen montane rain forest	0.60%	1.5%	Mizoram-Manipur- Kachin Rain forest	7.26%	7.26%	Myanmar Coast mangrove	0.92%	3.0%	Myanmar coastal rain forest	0.69%	Potential to increase limited	Northern Indochina subtropical forest	0.90%	Potential to increase limited	Northern Triangle subtropical forest	35.56%	35.56%	Nuijiang Langcang Gorge alpine conifer and mixed forest	0.00%	3.0%	Tenasserim-south Thailand semi-evergreen rain forest	5.16%	25.00%	Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests	6.04%	6.04%	<p>5.6% coverage (3,788,697 ha) of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. See inset table for baseline representation of ecoregions.</p>	<p>10% coverage (6,765,530 ha) of Myanmar's terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, with increased coverage of under-represented ecoregions (see rows marked in yellow in the inset table)</p> <p>Midterm PA Coverage:</p> <p>5.6% (3,818,749 ha) through the addition of Inkhinebum National Park (30,052 ha) in 2017</p>
Ecoregion	Current % Protected	Target % Protected																																													
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<p>2. Improved habitat conditions at local level indicated by percentage change in forest cover caused by encroachment</p>	<p>See inset table for baseline annual rate of change in</p>	<p>See inset table for baseline annual rate of change in</p>																																													

in Core Areas of PAs measured through remote sensing three times during the project			forest cover and encroachment by PA	forest cover and encroachment by PA
Protected Area	Baseline forest cover ¹⁴ (% change / year)	Target forest cover (% change / year)		
Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%		
Hkakaborazi National Park	0.95%	0.5%		
Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%		
Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary	0.95%	0.5%		
3. Financial Sustainability of PA System			Baseline Financial Sustainability Scorecard score (October 2013) 15%	Target Financial Sustainability Scorecard score 25%

120. Altogether 23 PAs have been proposed since the start of the project and 14 are in the process of land settlement, a key step in the gazettelement process. The project can meet one of its key Objective-level targets if these 14 PAs are gazetted in the next 2-3 years. However, at the time of the MTR, only one new PA - Inkhinebum National Park (30,052 ha) - had been fully gazetted since the start of the project,¹⁵ resulting in minimal increase in the total land area within the terrestrial PA system and no increase under-represented target ecoregions (Table 11).
121. Additionally, the MTR found that the project’s target PA coverage of 10% of total land area is not fully aligned with national policy targets which under the NBSAP 2015-2020 aims for 8% coverage by 2020. The national target for 10% coverage is included in the National Forestry Sector Master Plan (2001-02 to 2030-31) and is for 2030. However, even the NBSAP target of 8% may prove difficult to meet, unless the rate of PA establishment accelerates greatly in next 2-3 years.
122. Assessing progress against Objective Indicator 2, which seeks to measure changes in forest cover as a proxy for changes in local habitat conditions, was more problematic (Table 12).
123. Indicator 2 was presumably intended as a measure of the impact of the ‘enhanced management effectiveness, monitoring and enforcement’ of the national PA system brought about through the project’s interventions at the four demonstration sites.

¹⁴ The Project Document notes that “Baseline rates of change in forest cover are not available for the four protected areas. The national average rate of 0.95% has therefore been used as a proxy, although local rates will vary. The baseline rates for the demonstration PAs will be updated based on the official 2013 forest cover map due for publication by 2015.”

¹⁵ Nature and Wildlife Conservation Division 2018. *Biodiversity Conservation in Myanmar: an overview*. Forest Department, MONREC.

Table 11 Progress in increased ecological representation within the national PA network

Ecoregion	% Protected			Change over Baseline
	Baseline (2014)	End of Project Target	MTR 2018	
Chin Hills-Arakan Yoma montane forest	3.60%	3.60%	-	-
Eastern Himalayan alpine shrub and meadow	96.46%	96.46%	-	-
Irrawaddy dry Forest	0.45%	3.0%	0.45%	0
Irrawaddy fresh water swamp forest (Potential to increase limited)	0.04%	N/A	-	-
Irrawaddy moist deciduous forest	1.82%	3.0%	1.82%	0
Kayah-Karen montane rain forest	0.60%	1.5%	0.60%	0
Mizoram-Manipur- Kachin Rain forest	7.26%	7.26%	-	-
Myanmar Coast mangrove	0.92%	3.0%	0.92%	0
Myanmar coastal rain forest (Potential to increase limited)	0.69%	N/A	-	-
Northern Indochina subtropical forest (Potential to increase limited)	0.90%	N/A	-	-
Northern Triangle subtropical forest	35.56%	35.56%	36.01%	+0.46%
Nujiang Langcang Gorge alpine conifer and mixed forest	0.00%	3.0%	0.00%	0
Tenasserim-south Thailand semi-evergreen rain forest	5.16%	25.0%	5.16%	0
Tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests	6.04%	6.04%	-	-

Source: NWCD data analysed by Project Team

Notes: Project targets set for 6 ecoregions highlighted in yellow. Slight increase in area of one ecoregion (highlighted in orange) as a result of establishing Inkhinebum National Park. This was not part of original project ecoregion targets. Status of other ecoregions was not assessed during the MTR. N/A = ecoregions with limited potential for further inclusion in the PA network.

124. Leaving aside the choice of a project-level indicator that is better suited to detecting trends over larger areas and longer timeframes, a more immediate problem lies in the wording of the indicator. This specifies that the indicator will measure ‘percentage change in forest cover caused by encroachment in Core Areas of PAs’. Yet, as detailed in the threats section of the Project Document, ‘encroachment’ is just one of many potential causes of forest loss and degradation in Myanmar. In the context of PAs, forest loss is generally the result of illegal clear-felling for timber or forest clearing for customary shifting cultivation. Additionally, while forest cover loss can generally be captured through remote sensing, gradual forest degradation, such as the impacts of harvesting of wild plants, and many other aspects of ‘local habitat conditions’ are less likely to be detected.

Table 12 Forest cover loss: original indicator baselines, targets and progress reported in the 2016 & 2017 PIRs

Demonstration PA	Baseline (% change/yr) ¹	End of Project Target (% change/yr)	2016 PIR – Method 1 (% change/yr)	2017 PIR – Method 2 (% change/yr)
Hukaung Valley WS	0.95	0.5	3.11	0.69
Hkakaborazi NP	0.95	0.5	6.47	0.02
Hponkanrazi WS	0.95	0.5	1.45	0.15
Htamanthi WS	0.95	0.5	0.49	0.05

Source: Project Document, PIRs, Project Team

Notes:

- 1) National average given in Project Document. Original source or period covered unclear.
- 2) Method 1: Maximum likelihood method using cloud-free satellite images from Landsat7 and conventional Remote Sensing analysis and conducted by WCS Myanmar regional GIS team. Time period of measurement was dependent on cloud free image availability. According to the project team, this method was very time consuming and deforestation rate analysis of each PA took from four weeks to six weeks. It also overestimated deforestation, as it could not represent the whole year but only selected months which were cloud free.
- 3) Method 2: Forest cover change was calculated by using google earth engine, which the MTR was informed provides a very good representation of deforestation. However, as the analysis is based on programming and script writing, it demands a lot of technical expertise and time and as a result is also highly sensitive to user errors.

125. A further problem is that more accurate baseline deforestation rates for each project demonstration site had not been not been established during the inception phase as originally planned in the Project Document. Instead, the national average deforestation rate of 0.95% included at the design stage was still being used as the baseline for all four pilot sites.
126. The changes in forest cover reported for each site in the 2016 and 2017 PIRs were calculated using different methods in each year. These differ greatly from the national average baseline as well as between years but are difficult to interpret without an accurate baseline. It is also unclear how much of the variation between 2016 and 2017 may be due to differences in methodology (see Table 9 notes). More importantly, it is unclear which method yields the most accurate and reliable data or how this information is subsequently used to strengthen PA management.
127. Baselines and rates of forest cover loss were recalculated by the Project Team during the MTR using a third method (Method 3, Table 13). However, some questions remain about the accuracy and interpretation of the data as discussed further under progress towards Outcome 2 below. While the Project Team is inclined to favour Method 3 for reasons of cost and efficiency, it is important to assess the relative accuracy and reliability of the different methods uses so far. Additionally, where figures suggest a

change, it would add value to complement remote sensing findings with some ground-truthing using SMART patrolling data.

Table 13 Re-calculated baseline and annual rates of forest cover loss and revised end-of-project (EoP) targets

Protected Areas	Baseline	2016	2017	EoP Target
Hkakaborazi NP	0.021	0.024	0.012	0.010
Hponkanrazi WS	0.019	0.010	0.015	0.010
Hukaung Valley WS	0.108	0.106	0.137	0.100
Htamanthi WS	0.018	0.003	0.011	0.010

Source: Project Team

Notes: Baseline deforestation rates and rates for 2016 and 2017 were recalculated using Google earth engine and the University Maryland Dataset on deforestation. Baseline deforestation rate was generated by averaging the deforestation rates from 2001 to 2014. The same method will be used to calculate deforestation rates for the 2018 PIR. This third Method used by the project using web-based google earth engine and the University Maryland Dataset for deforestation was developed as the improved method to correct deforestation rate baseline, analysis of PIR 2016 and 2017 and to use in the rest of project period. WCS regional GIS/RS technicians provided technical supports to develop this method. This method uses annual composites. As annual composites combine multiple dates into a single annual product, the deforestation rate results are more accurate and consistent. In addition, this method is more sustainable as it can be applied by Forest Department after GEF5 project period.

Progress towards Project Outcomes

128. Overall progress towards both Outcomes 1 and 2 is rated as Moderately Satisfactory due to the slow rates of progress of several outputs under each component, as well as weaknesses relating to some of the specific interventions undertaken to date. The MTR reviewed numerous project reports and spent considerable time in discussion with the National Project Manager as well as the Landscape Coordinators, Site Coordinators and Community Engagement Team. Interviews were also held with a wide range of other stakeholders at national, subnational and site levels (Annex 5). The MTR's overriding impression from this extensive information gathering exercise is that the project is undertaking a vast number and range of activities with insufficient systematic monitoring and critical analysis. The links between implementation activities and strategies and the achievement of planned results, especially higher-level impacts, is often unclear. Without better monitoring and critical review, the project risks spreading itself too thin by undertaking too many disparate activities, that while beneficial locally and in the short-term, may not be contributing to wider sustainable impacts. Collectively, such activities may also consume considerable resources and time. Thus, a key overall finding is that in order to maximize the likelihood of achieving planned outcomes by the end of the project, the project scope and intervention

strategies need to be reconsidered and project activities (and associated budgetary allocations) urgently prioritized.

129. Specific MTR findings in relation to project progress towards outcomes are discussed further below.

Outcome 1: Enhanced systemic, institutional and financial frameworks for PA expansion and management

130. Progress towards achieving Outcome 1 has been rated as Moderately Satisfactory although three out of the four Outcome 1 Indicators have been rated as Satisfactory in the Progress to Results Matrix (Annex 8). This is because there are several areas that need attention in order to ensure that the project stays on track to deliver its end-of-project targets, including accelerating the rate of progress.

Progress on systemic and financial frameworks

131. The new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs Law, once approved and adopted, will be a major step towards strengthening the policy framework for the national PA system. Its impact, however, will depend greatly on the rules and regulations that are currently under development by the FD and how these are applied in practice. There are promising indications that some of the key elements targeted by the Project under Outcome 1 will be addressed under the new rules and regulations, namely:

- enabling PAs to have access to funds raised through sustainable financing;
- clarifying the legal status of PA buffer zones and rationalization of approaches toward them; and
- enabling local people to use and benefit from sites within Protected Areas (as well as participate in their management).

132. The new law, rules and regulations are unlikely to clarify governance arrangements for coastal PAs (RF: Indicator 1.1d), however, as this would require multi-stakeholder agreement. The project has also had little traction on integrating valuation of ecosystem services into national land use planning through the new Land Use Policy (RF: Indicator 1.1b). The MTR appreciates the rationale for including these indicators in the original project design but considers the scope of work required to achieve these to be too large given the many other major results the project is expected to deliver. For example, these targets represent just two of five 'sub-indicators' under Indicator 1.1 which is linked to Output 1.1 (Table 9). Clarifying governance of coastal PAs is a notoriously difficult task the world over, while changing national land use policy is especially challenging given the complexities of land tenure and land use in Myanmar. Delivering these results would require the project to work closely with additional sets of stakeholders at the national level over an extended period, for which the Project Team does not have sufficient capacity or resources. As the project is already contributing to other significant policy outcomes, the project should consider dropping these two areas of activity under Indicator 1.1 (with the approval of the Project Board)

during the process of prioritizing interventions for the remainder of the project. This will enable the project to focus more strategically on three critical elements for the long-term sustainability of Myanmar's PA network – PA financing, buffer zones and benefits to local communities.

133. Other promising achievements under Outcome 1 include the establishment of multisector PA Management Coordination Committees (PAMCCs) at regional/state, district and township levels. These PAMCCs meet regularly providing an opportunity for PA staff to raise issues affecting their PA with other key departments, notably the General Administration Department (GAD).¹⁶ The PAMCC's meet every 6 months at state and regional level and every quarter at district and township level, where PAMCC's are generally held back to back with the corresponding monthly GAD meeting. Additionally, in 2018, the project has been requested to support the development of the Kachin State Environmental Action Plan. These interventions contribute to the achievement of Output 1.5, which aims to ensure that relevant subnational government administrations incorporate PA values into regional and local development. However, progress against this Output is not systematically monitored as it has no direct indicator in the Results Framework (Section 4.1.2). The PAMCCs are an especially interesting mechanism for promoting more effective multisector coordination at subnational levels and should continue to be strengthened through the project, especially as the FD is proposing to replicate this mechanism across Myanmar and has already done so in Rakhine State.
134. The MTR met with the Chair and Secretary of the Sagaing Region and Kachin State PAMCCs. These interviews revealed that as the mechanism is relatively new, there is still work to be done in terms of improving communication and cooperation between different departments and the FD, although a perennial problem is the high turnover of government staff and loss of institutional memory. Nevertheless, there is need to better communicate the relevance of the project to non-FD government stakeholders in Sagaing and Kachin, particularly by demonstrating how effectively managed PAs are relevant to their economic development priorities, i.e. by making the business case for PAs. Strengthening communication, including how to profile the project, is discussed further in Section 4.3.7. A significant limitation of PAMCCs at present is that there is no community participation in this mechanism. Options for involving communities in the PAMCCs at least at township and potentially district level should be explored as a priority, particularly given the changes that are being proposed under the new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs law.
135. With regard to sustainable financing, greater emphasis is needed on the development of a sustainable financing strategy for the PA system (Output 1.3). This is another output without a direct indicator and that is therefore not tracked in the PIRs, but rather through the UNDP QRs. Nor is it clearly tracked through the Financial Sustainability

¹⁶ These have sometimes been referred to as the PA Management Support Unit (PAMSU) due to differences in translation.

Scorecard (Annex 9). Given the significance of this output to achieving Outcome 1, this is somewhat surprising and the Project Team may wish to consider adding an indicator on this during the review of the Results Framework. Nevertheless, considerable preliminary work towards the development of a strategy has been undertaken by the project (and others), including a study of sustainable financing options for PAs¹⁷, a more recent comprehensive assessment by WWF and WCS of environmental financing status and trends¹⁸ and exploratory work on the potential for establishing an independent Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund¹⁹ and for ecotourism development²⁰.

136. What is needed now is to synthesize all the relevant work done to date into a draft PA system financing strategy. This should be undertaken in coordination with work being undertaken by MONREC under UNDP's Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project (GRSP) to develop a broader environmental financing strategy for Myanmar. This strategy would then inform the further development of the MBCF. Additionally, the end of project target for central government financing of PAs currently aims for a 100% increase over the baseline. Although this has increased by 25% since the project began, the MTR's assessment is that doubling the central government budget by the end of the project is probably overambitious and a 50% increase over baseline is probably more feasible given the many competing demands on limited government resources overall.
137. Finally Output 1.6, which aims to expand the national PA system based on a more up to date gap analysis of terrestrial ecosystems, also has no indicator associated with it, but is moving ahead. The MTR discussed the possibility of including a simple socio-economic analysis to overlay on ecological gap analysis as a means to start planning for PAs in a more holistic manner from the outset, i.e. by taking into account the likely customary claims and uses in different geographic areas and ecosystems at the planning stage. The feasibility of doing within the available project timeframe and budget will need to be assessed by the project partners. However, this could be a valuable contribution to advancing the implementation of the new law on Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs.

Progress on institutional frameworks and capacity

138. There has been considerable action and investment by the project in relation to enhancing the institutional framework for PA expansion and management through capacity development of the FD, particularly of NWCD staff, (Output 1.2) and the development and institutionalization of training programmes for PA managers within the FD. This is partly reflected by the increase in scores in the Capacity Development

¹⁷ L. Emerton, A. Kyin, R. Tizard. 2015. Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas in Myanmar – Assessment and Recommendations. Yangon, WCS, p. 95.

¹⁸ L. Emerton & A. Kyin. 2017. Myanmar Environmental Financing and Trends.

¹⁹ WCS 2015. Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Investment Vision

²⁰ Hkakaborazi and Putao Ecotourism Draft Plan. March 2018. Consultancy report to MONREC & WCS.

Scorecard (Annex 10) from a revised baseline average of 56% (range: 48% to 65%) and a mid-term average score of 63% (range 50-71%).²¹

139. It should be noted that the original baseline score given in the RF of 45% is reported as an 'adjusted average score'. However, this score appears to have been derived in a subjective manner as no explanation is given as to how it was calculated. Given that 2018 scores could therefore not be adjusted in the same way, it was agreed with the NPM to use unadjusted average scores for the mid-term assessment and to revise the 2014 baseline to the unadjusted score. As the unadjusted scores are generally higher, the project may wish to consider revising the end of project target upwards from 67% to a slightly higher score, such as 75%.
140. Strengthening the capacity of PA staff is an area in which WCS and the Project Team have a long history in Myanmar and thus considerable experience. However, the impacts and sustainability of the project's approach are not always clear from the available monitoring reports and other documentation and it was beyond the scope of the MTR to assess these directly given logistical, time and human resource constraints (Section 2.1). It was not possible, for example, to meet with the Directors of TRDD and PSD or with project stakeholders at Central Forestry Development Training Centre (CFDTC), Myanmar Forest School (MFS) or University of Forestry and Environmental Science (UoFES)²² (see Section 2.3). Instead, the MTR had to rely heavily on the Project Team for clarifications and additional information on this aspect of Outcome 1.
141. A capacity assessment of NWCD was undertaken early on and a draft strategy and road map for further capacity development proposed. As reported in the 2017 PIR, the project was then requested to expand this assessment and develop a strategy to cover the whole FD. It has since been decided that this would be impractical, given that this would mean expanding the assessment from 600-odd NWCD staff to some 8,000 FD staff across Myanmar. The project is now focusing on those parts of the roadmap that will have greatest impact by the end of the project. A draft Action Plan has been recently completed (after the MTR mission) and has not been reviewed as it is in the Myanmar language. However, the existing draft capacity development roadmap and strategy need to be finalized and formally approved by the Project Board (PB). These may also require further elaboration as the original version reviewed by the MTR is quite brief and general.
142. In the meantime, over 300 FD staff have undergone short training courses at national and subnational levels on different aspects of PA management and planning, biodiversity monitoring, SMART patrolling, law enforcement, wildlife management, community engagement and participatory community forestry. Training has been

²¹ The scores reflect the average of combined scores of three central FD divisions – NWCD, the Training and Research Development Division (TRDD), and the Planning and Statistics Division (PSD) – and the Kachin and Sagaing Forest Departments. Also see Sections 4.3.5 & 4.3.6 for a discussion on strengthening the use of the Capacity Development Scorecard.

²² Formerly Yezin University of Forestry at the time of project preparation.

provided either directly by the Project Team or in cooperation with MFS and UoFES. Project reporting on training is largely limited to the numbers and types of attendees and details of the training provided and does not provide information on the impacts of training. There is also confusion in reporting against Indicators and 1.2 and 1.3 with trainings reported against 1.3 rather than progress in institutionalization of training, although as discussed later, this may be partly due to language-related comprehension barriers (Section 4.3.6). Additionally, the PIRs and QRs are not consistent in the numbers and details of trainees reported, something that is again discussed later in the sections on project monitoring and reporting (Sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.6). More importantly, there is little information on the quality of training or its effectiveness, including any gender-disaggregated information beyond the total numbers of men and women trained, which is also only given in the reports to UNDP.

143. Another important strategy to strengthen FD capacity is the project's Community Guards and Community Guardians programmes, which are among the community participation models that the project is testing under Output 2.4 and therefore discussed under Outcome 2 below.
144. Institutionalization of training programmes for PA managers is a key planned result under Outcome 1 (Output 1.3) as no formal training courses on PA planning and management were available in Myanmar at the time of project design. The project appears to be making steady progress on planned activities as outlined in the Project Document. This includes collaborating with NWCD, FFI and WWF to develop a 6-week certificate course in Wildlife Conservation and PA Management targeted at different levels of PA field staff from Forest Guards and Foresters to Park Wardens, for which the FD has also allocated budget, equipment and materials. Training materials have been developed for the basic course and training of trainers is planned for May. Trainings are to be conducted annually and the first basic training course is to be held in July 2018 targeting forest guards and foresters. Certificates will be issued by the DG of the FD and will be taken into account in promotion processes. Previously, only the certificate course at MFS was taken into account for promotions. A significant positive feature of this new certificate course is that unlike the existing certificate course offered by MFS, women can also take part in the training and obtain certificates, thereby enabling them to enter the promotion track.
145. Another notable project achievement is the agreement reached with the UoFES in February 2018 to develop a curriculum for its new Department of Biodiversity and Wildlife Conservation and to update and strengthen the wildlife conservation syllabus for its 4th year students for which consultants have been hired.
146. Additionally, a six-module/six-week training curriculum on Biodiversity Conservation and PA management is under development for inclusion in MFS's new two-year diploma course, which has replaced the earlier nine-month certificate course for foresters to qualify for promotion to the ranger level. These modules are also being

adapted for use by CFDTTC for short (one-week) in-service training and refresher courses for all levels of PA staff in the field, from guards to park wardens. Course content is being developed by the project's landscape and site coordinators in the Myanmar language. The first course is scheduled for 2019 and training, which will include training of lecturers, will initially be undertaken by the project. It is intended that MFS will continue to teach the course themselves in subsequent years. The project will institute quality control measures in the first year of training by MFS to assess whether MFS staff require further capacity development for teaching the course.

147. It was beyond the scope of the MTR to assess the training programmes that are being developed by the project in terms of their technical content and quality, the process of development and institutionalization, or their likely effectiveness and long-term sustainability. As noted above, it was also not possible to meet with the key project counterparts for Outputs 1.2 and 1.3 in PSD, TRDD, MFS or CFDTTC during the MTR mission to obtain their views on the project's interventions to institutionalize training for PA management staff. This is something that needs further review and guidance by UNDP and the Project Board. For example, the project M&E system should include methods to monitor and assess the quality, impacts and sustainability of training delivered through the project and of the courses and curricula that are being developed. In particular, there is need to assess the effectiveness of the many different one-off short-term training courses and to critically review the allocation of effort and resources between Outputs 1.2 and 1.3.

148. Finally, since 2017 there have been discussions on the possibility of establishing an independent Myanmar Wildlife College modelled on the Southern African Wildlife College. This would aim to create a dedicated cadre of wildlife professionals through vocational training, and unlike MFS, would not be limited to just FD staff. Initial scoping work on this was undertaken for MONREC in November 2017 by the Southern African Wildlife College with support from WWF Myanmar. There has also been discussion on joint curriculum development between WWF, WCS, the Smithsonian Institute and FFI. The MTR discussed the proposal briefly with both WWF and WCS, but had no opportunity to discuss it with other key stakeholders in the FD, including NWCD and TRDD. After reviewing the draft MTR report, NWCD has clarified that the training that is being developed through this project will continue to be institutionalized within the FD. The development of the Wildlife College and its relationship to the work being undertaken by the project under Outcome 1 should continue to be periodically monitored by the PB by engaging with all relevant stakeholders from the FD as well as WWF Myanmar, UoFES and others to maximize synergies and complementarities.

Outcome 2: Strengthened management and threat reduction in the target PAs and buffer zones

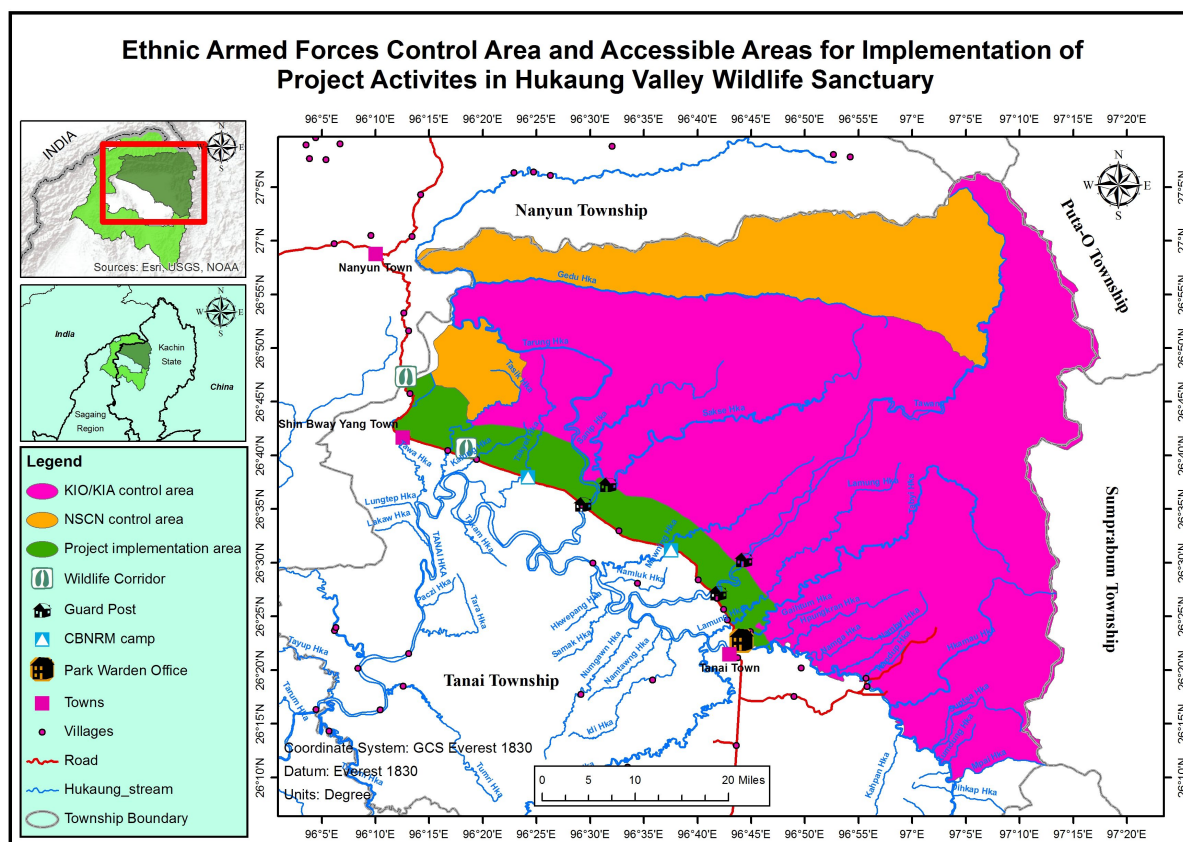
149. The MTR's overall assessment is that the project has made good progress towards several of the planned results under Outcome 2 in a relatively short period of time,

particularly in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, where the community participation models that are being piloted (Indicator 2.4/ Output 2.3) show great promise. Additionally, overall METT scores (Indicator 2.3/ Outputs 2.2 & 2.5) have improved from between 7-17% in all sites except Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary where they declined by 4% (Annex 11). As noted earlier in Section 4.1.1, the scope of project activities has been greatly reduced due to the security situation in Hukaung and more recently in Hkakaborazi National Park as a result of protests against the proposed Southern Extension PA and the World Heritage nomination. Additionally, assessing progress objectively against some of the indicators for Outcome 2 proved challenging (and time consuming), because of limitations in indicator and target definitions and reported data. This issue has already been touched upon earlier (Section 4.1.2) and is detailed further in Annex 7. In particular, there is insufficient time series SMART data to be able to assign a meaningful progress rating to the two main impact indicators for Outcome 2, namely threat reduction (Indicator 2.1) and encounter rates for key indicator species/taxonomic groups (Indicator 2.2). Progress towards Outcome 2 has thus been rated as Moderately Satisfactory. Notable findings related to strengthened management and threat reduction in the target project sites are discussed further below after a brief overview of the situations in Hukaung and Hkakaborazi at the time of the MTR.

Armed conflict in Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary

150. There has been a severe deterioration in the security situation in Hukaung Valley in 2017-18 and it seems unlikely that the project will be able to implement most of its planned activities here any time soon. At the start of the project, Hukaung Valley WS had the largest budget of the four demonstration sites. This has since been revised downwards and Hukaung Valley now has the smallest budget of the four sites. The likelihood of this happening was considered to be moderate at the time of project preparation and the overall risk identified as low. It is however notoriously difficult to accurately assess political risks. Most of the original area of Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary is under the control of the Kachin Independence Organization and their armed wing the KIA, while some is under the control of the Naga Armed Forces (NSCN) (Figure 2). Nevertheless, the project continues to maintain a presence in the area and some limited activities, including SMART patrolling (by vehicle) and wildlife monitoring together with the FD along the main Ledo Road, a small strip, c. 40 miles long and 5 miles wide, along the north-west boundary of the original sanctuary (Figure 2). This included camera trap surveys and bird surveys in 2017 and wildlife signs surveys and gibbon line transects in 2016.

Figure 2 Areas controlled by Ethnic Armed Organizations in Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary



Source: WCS Myanmar Programme

151. The MTR was initially doubtful about the value of any further investment of GEF resources in this area given the security situation. However, discussions with the Hukaung Site Coordinator, Stakeholder Engagement Officer and the NPM persuaded the MTR that there may be some strategic value in continuing a low level of engagement in Hukaung provided that this uses minimal project resources. This is partly due to the great ecological significance of this area, at least until recently, which led to the establishment of one of South-East Asia's largest terrestrial PAs. It is still possible that the area could be restored in the longer-term once a cease-fire is in place if the habitat is not lost completely – for example, a tiger was recorded in the camera trap surveys as recently as December 2017. The KIA are also reported to have rules against hunting the following five species: tiger, elephant, gaur, sambar and gibbon. Given this and the enormous historical investment in the area by the FD and NWCD, it may be beneficial in the long run to continue with some limited activities and maintain relationships in the area. WCS has already started negotiating with the KIA to undertake wildlife surveys in the core when it becomes safer to do so.

152. The justification for focusing on the Ledo Road area is that this narrow strip marks the boundary to the original Wildlife Sanctuary area, which forms the core of the PA. Despite the recent heavy fighting in this area between the KIA and the Myanmar armed forces, it remains in some ways more secure than the extension, which is separated from the core along much of its boundary by the Tanai township development. That latter has a permanent population of over 60,000, and a very large but fluctuating population of migrants who come to work in the local amber and gold mines (Figure 2). The extension is thus particularly vulnerable to a range of anthropogenic pressures including hunting, the impacts of mining as well as timber logging to meet demand from as far away as Myitkyina.
153. In addition to patrolling and wildlife surveys along Ledo Road, the project is also supporting the FD through 9 Community Guards as well as undertaking some limited CBNRM in Takhet and Sheinlongar Villages to reduce their dependency on the Sanctuary through agroforestry and better management of village forests in the Buffer Zone. Again, the benefits of these interventions should be clearly documented, particularly lessons learned that have application elsewhere.
154. The MTR would also advise against starting activities at a different site at this stage in implementation, although this was a proposed potential mitigation measure originally (Project Document/Table 5). However, going forward, the cost-effectiveness of project activities in Hukaung should be periodically reviewed by UNDP and the Project Board. Additionally, in line with adaptive management principles, the three project partners should consider excluding Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary from future assessments of progress towards project outcomes including the terminal evaluation. This should be formally decided through the Project Board and reported in the next PIR.

Protests against the World Heritage Nomination in Hkakaborazi

155. The MTR spoke separately to several different stakeholders about the recent protests against the government's proposed World Heritage nomination of Hkakaborazi and the related proposal for a new PA to the south of Hkakaborazi, the Southern Extension PA (Section 4.1.1). Apart from the three project partners, the MTR also interviewed local people from Nam Ru, Nam Ru Htu and Saw La Di, three villages near Warsandam village on the edge of Hponkanrazi and the proposed Southern Extension PA; the Chairman of the Putao Township Rawang Culture and Literature Committee, who is also the Treasurer of the national committee; and UNESCO which has an office in Yangon. Responses from different stakeholders were largely consistent. These indicated that some of the reasons for the opposition to the proposed Southern Extension PA, which contains seven villages, and the World Heritage nomination are concerns about the implications for people living in this area. There is particular concern among the Rawang, who fear the creation of the PA would further curtail their customary practices, such as shifting cultivation, and other uses of the area's natural resources. Other stakeholders feared it would lead to restrictions on hunting. Although the government has said this would not be the case, there is deep distrust of

government locally based on people's experience of the establishment of Hkakaborazi National Park.

156. These negative perceptions also extend to WCS who were involved with the establishment of Hkakaborazi and are generally associated with the FD and therefore not viewed as being neutral. The local communities' understanding of WCS's role has arguably been further complicated by the latter's involvement in the government's Land Settlement process²³ for the proposed new PA. Several stakeholders mentioned that some of the opposition may in reality be from vested business interests who may be concerned that the establishment of the Southern Extension PA would affect further infrastructure and other development (such as gold mining) in this area as well as the illegal logging that is currently taking place. Some stakeholders mentioned that the World Heritage nomination is perceived as an initiative of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the ruling political party, and that there may therefore be a political dimension to the conflict.
157. There are clearly multiple complex factors involved in the local opposition to the Hkakaborazi Southern Extension PA and World Heritage nomination. At present, there is an impasse. Although the government had originally hoped to submit its dossier for the World Heritage nomination in February 2018, this process, including the Land Settlement that was started last year, has now been suspended as the government has stated it will not proceed without the consent of local communities. The Rawang leaders meanwhile are waiting for the new wildlife law and associated the rules and regulations to be finalized and approved to better understand their options under the new law, including the potential for a community conservation area rather than a traditional PA. In the interim, all FD and project activities in Hkakaborazi have been stopped, including patrolling and wildlife surveys. This is a major concern as this may well impact the achievement of some of the end of project targets under Outcome 2.

Progress on Threat Reduction

158. Several problems were encountered in trying to assess progress on threat reduction using Indicator 2.1 (Table 9). Indicator 2.1 ostensibly seeks to measure threat reduction by measuring the numbers of people stopped inside a PA for illegal activities using SMART patrolling data. In practice, what has been reported is 'catch-effort', or the total number of 'actions' per 100 km patrolled, which is a slightly different thing. The MTR had detailed discussions with the Project Team to better understand what Indicator 2.1 was actually measuring as this is not clearly explained in the PIRs or QRs, and also to see if better ways could be identified to measure and monitor threat reduction in each PA.
159. The MTR learned that four actions are possible when SMART patrols encounter people engaged in illegal activities: verbal warnings, written warnings (a contract which

²³ The government's official process for clarifying and recording customary claims and practices.

commits the offender(s) to not undertake illegal activities again), destruction of camps and confiscation of hunting weapons, and arrests by NWCD staff. However, the number of actions does not reflect the total number of people involved in an illegal activity. For example, a SMART patrol may encounter a number of people engaged in illegal gold mining, but a warning would only be given to the 'owner(s)' of the mine, while the labourers involved who may number up to 50 people, would be included in the 'observed only' category. Thus, catch-effort does not in itself provide a direct measure of the numbers of people stopped for illegal activities. Additionally, SMART patrols may encounter people who run away or camps where people are not present. Data are further skewed by variation in how patrol teams treat customary subsistence uses by local communities and whether these are considered legal (and 'observed only') or treated as illegal and an action recorded.

160. Another problem with this indicator (i.e. 'catch effort') is that patrolling in Htamanthi is done on both foot and by motorboat, while in Hukaung it is mainly done by motorcycle and car, while in Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi it is always on foot. Catch effort per 100 km patrol distance tends to be higher in PAs where patrolling is mainly on foot and lower when vehicles are used (Table 14). However, the implications of using different methods has not been taken into consideration in data analysis and reporting in the PIRs. As catch-effort also does not distinguish between different types of threats, there is no way to determine whether the more serious threats are increasing or decreasing by looking at the data reported in the PIRs.
161. Given these problems with SMART data collection and analysis, it was very difficult to interpret the figures reported in the PIRs or to compare figures against the baseline or between different years, especially for Htamanthi and Hukaung. Different options to retrofit this indicator were discussed with the project team as numerous variables are monitored through SMART patrolling and recorded in a database that includes historical data collected by WCS. One option might be to monitor and report on 3 or 4 variables that capture the level of threat better by calculating the catch effort for illegal camps²⁴ and hunting weapons recorded during patrols as shown in Table 14. However, baselines for these variables are only available from 2016 for all sites except Htamanthi. It would also be important to calculate catch-effort by different patrolling methods as patrolling distance varies enormously between sites depending on whether boats and vehicles are also used as shown in Table 14. Additionally, a minimum figure for the total number of people encountered can be generated by totalling the number of actions recorded, the number of people in the 'observed only' and the number of people who were unsuccessfully pursued. While this would underestimate the total number of people encountered in the PA and would also not accurately measure the numbers engaged in illegal activities, it does provide some

²⁴ Temporary camps established to undertake hunting and/or illegal harvesting of timber or plants and other prohibited activities.

indication of the level of disturbance to a PA by people passing through for different purposes.

Table 14 Potential revised indicator 2.1 to measure threat reduction in project PAs

PA	Indicators	Baseline 2015	Baseline / PIR 2016	PIR 2017	EoP Target
Hk NP	Patrol Distance (km)	N/A	1,506	2,412	3,000
	Total People encountered	N/A	29	63	30
	Total Camps encountered	N/A	19	21	10
	Total Hunting weapons encountered	N/A	184	310	100
Hp WS	Patrol Distance (km)	N/A	402	N/A	2,000
	Total People encountered	N/A	35	N/A	30
	Total Camps encountered	N/A	33	N/A	10
	Total Hunting weapons encountered	N/A	157	N/A	100
HV WS	Patrol Distance (km)	N/A	201	4,776	6,000
	Total People encountered	N/A	0	48	30
	Total Camps encountered	N/A	0	12	10
	Total Hunting weapons encountered	N/A	26	31	20
Ht WS	Patrol Distance (km)	4,196	6,133	116,193	130,000
	Total People encountered	3,274	1,806	948	500
	Total Camps encountered	33	29	31	20
	Total Hunting weapons encountered	993	152	38	20

162. According to both the Project Team and the Park Warden, there has been a real reduction in threats in Htamanthi due to greater patrolling and enforcement as reflected in the lower number of people and hunting weapons encountered here (Table 14). However, patrol distance has increased exponentially in Htamanthi in 2016-17 as a result of using motor boats. Without analysis of data disaggregated by patrol method, it is difficult to be sure whether the lower numbers are due to greater patrolling by boat and hence lower encounter rates. Additionally, although Hponkanrazi has a baseline for 2015-16 thanks to patrolling having been undertaken that year by Hkakaborazi PA staff, there are no data for 2016-17 as Hponkanrazi did not get permanent staff till December 2017 and Hkakaborazi staff could not repeat the exercise last year. Finally, the quality and usefulness of recorded data ultimately depends on the capacity and rigour of the patrol teams, which is not systematically monitored. This particular aspect is discussed further as part of the general MTR findings on project M&E and reporting (Sections 4.3.5 & 4.3.6).

163. Given the difficulties of using Indicator 2.1 to measure threat reduction, the MTR was unable to assign a meaningful progress rating for threat reduction in Hkakaborazi, Hponkanrazi and Htamanthi. The project team needs to give further thought to how SMART patrolling data can be used more effectively for project monitoring and PA management, perhaps by including additional quantitative and/or contextual information on the different types of actions recorded to better reflect the nature and severity of the threat for which an action was recorded as well as the numbers of people involved. As a first step, data collected through different types of patrolling (i.e. on foot, by boat or by motorbike or car) should be disaggregated. It may also be more efficient and effective to monitor fewer variables but to monitor these better, prioritizing those that are important for PA managers as well as effective measures of threat reduction in each site. Additionally, it may be useful to record data in a way that allows analysis of the total number of people encountered during patrolling engaging in a) illegal activities b) customary uses and c) passing through.

Progress on strengthening management of project PAs and buffer zones

164. Three indicators are included in the Results Framework to measure progress towards strengthened management of project sites. One is the METT score (Indicator 2.3), which as noted above has improved for all sites except Hukaung (Table 15). Based on the current trajectory, it is very likely that end of project targets for the METT score will be reached in Htamanthi, as well as in Hponkanrazi, provided the project scales up its activities in the latter now that park staff are in place. End of project targets may also be reached in Hkakaborazi, if the project and PA managers are able to resume planned activities on the ground soon (Section 4.1.1).

Table 15 METT Scores at mid-term for project demonstration sites

Protected Area	METT Scores		
	Baseline	Mid-term (2018)	End of Project Target
Hukaung Valley WS (1,737,300 ha)	52%	48%	82%
Hkakaborazi NP (381,200 ha)	51%	58%	83%
Hponkanrazi WS (270,400 ha)	12%	39%	69%
Htamanthi WS (215,100 ha)	49%	61%	82%

165. A second indicator seeks to assess the actual impact of improved PA management by measuring change in the encounter rates of ungulates in each project PA and as well as in hoolock gibbon group density where the species is present (Table 16). Based on

MTR discussions, the project is also considering including the relative abundance of medium cats as an indicator in Htamanthi which has been included in Table 16.

166. The MTR reviewed the data presented in the first two years' PIRs as 2018 data were not yet available. Ungulate encounter rates, which are based on SMART patrolling data, suffer from the same problems as the threat reduction indicator discussed above and are thus not as reliable for Htamanthi because of the large amount of patrolling conducted by boat and thus lower likelihood of detecting ungulates. For example, significantly higher ungulate encounter rates have been recorded in both Hkakaborazi and Hponkanrazi, where patrolling is on foot. Given the presence of numerous medium to large cats in Htamanthi, including a healthy tiger population, one would expect the ungulate encounter rate in Htamanthi to be the same or higher than Hkakaborazi and Hponkanrazi. Such anomalies in the data are not discussed in the PIRs, however. There is clearly need for far greater critical analysis and reflection on the data collected through the project and its application.

Table 16 Change in encounter rates for key indicator species in project PAs

PA	Indicator	Baseline	PIR 2016	PIR 2017	EoP Target
HV WS	Ungulate encounter rate per 100 km patrol distance (SMART data)	0.3	0.1	0.2	1.0
Hk NP	Ungulate encounter rate per 100 km patrol distance (SMART data)	5.0	5.9	5.1	6.0
Hp WS	Ungulate encounter rate per 100 km patrol distance (SMART data)	5.0	5.2	No data	6.0
	Hoolock Gibbon group density per Km ² (Auditory survey)	2	N/A	N/A	2
Ht WS	Ungulate encounter rate per 100 km patrol distance (SMART data)	0.3	0.5	0.2	1.0
	Hoolock Gibbon group density per Km ² (Auditory survey)	2	2.32	2.13	2
	Medium cats relative abundance per 100 trap nights (Camera trap survey)	0.17	0.77	0.94	1.5

167. A third measure of strengthened PA management included in the Results Framework is the community participation systems that are piloted at project sites and integrated into PA management plans (Indicator 2.4). Although both the indicator and the end of project targets are identically worded (see Section 4.1.2) - and rather vague - this is an area where the project is undertaking some interesting work with good potential for replication and scale up. This is therefore discussed in some detail below. But first it should be noted that neither the METT nor the PIRs capture progress on Output 2.1, which aims to strengthen management through developing business plans for each project PA, but for which there is no indicator in the Results Framework. There is also little relevant progress reported against this output in the UNDP Quarterly Reports. Yet

this is potentially a very important tool for strengthening PA planning, management and sustainability and a planned result. It may therefore be advisable to include an indicator for Output 2.1 during the Results Framework revision exercise in order to ensure that progress on this output is tracked more systematically.

168. Also noteworthy is the development of the Htamanthi Research and Training Centre (HRTC) covering some 50 acres at Swet Khaung Ngaw Village. This has been mainly funded with co-financing from other projects such as the IUCN/KfW tiger funds. The Centre will host a variety of training courses targeting different stakeholders, including NWCD staff, local communities, conservation interns and school children. It will also serve as a base for researchers and help promote collaborations with universities, botanic gardens and other research institutions. Separate dormitories are being constructed for men and women to facilitate participation in the training courses. GEF project resources have financed the construction of two quarters for housing trainers. Additionally, the FD has applied for internal funds to build staff quarters nearby in order to gradually shift the PA headquarters from its current location west of the Chindwin river to the east side. This will facilitate PA management by being closer to the Sanctuary and to the majority (20/25) of local villages as well as by having road access.

Community participation models

1. Community Guards and Community Guardians

169. The development of Community Guards is an approach that WCS first started using to complement and strengthen PA staff capacity in 2014 under a different project. The Community Guardians programme, however, was developed through this project, i.e. from 2015 onwards. Both Guards and Guardians are recruited from the local community and trained to undertake SMART patrolling. Guards are assigned to the Park Warden and primarily assist PA staff with threat monitoring and law enforcement. Guardians also support park staff, but are trained to undertake biological monitoring, such as camera trap surveys, auditory gibbon surveys and ungulate surveys. Guardians are also trained in community engagement and often act as community mobilizers. Both programmes seek to give local communities a greater stake in PA management and thereby promote a greater sense of local ownership of the PA. Additionally, the Community Guards programme is particularly invaluable to the FD as it provides vital additional capacity on the ground (see Section 4.2.2). The programme also aims to develop the capacity of Community Guards to enable them to apply to become permanent government PA staff.
170. The MTR interviewed both Guards and Guardians in Hponkanrazi and Htamanthi and was generally impressed by the impacts and potential of these programmes. However, these very important positive features of the project are not well reflected in project monitoring and reporting or effectively communicated to relevant audiences.

171. Both programs are currently most active in Htamanthi, where the FD is supported by some 27 Community Guards and 25 Community Guardians. In Hkakaborazi there are 25 PA staff and 14 Community Guards and in Hponkanrazi there are 9 staff and 5 Community Guards. There are very few Community Guardians in other project sites so far although a number of people have undergone the training for this. This may be partly due to a historically better relationship between Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary and local communities as the latter have continued to have access to forest resources in the buffer zone following the establishment of the PA unlike in Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi where the establishment of the PAs impacted customary rights more negatively. It may also be partly due to the greater level of community engagement the project has had with Htamanthi to date relative to the other sites.
172. The Htamanthi Park Warden expressed considerable appreciation for the added capacity provided to PA staff by both the Guards and Guardian, including the calibre and commitment of the Guards and Guardians. So much so, that NWCD has already taken on some 10 Community Guards and Guardians as government PA staff, i.e. as Forest Guards. Other positive features identified by the Park Warden include improved relations between the local community and PA staff generally as a result of greater interaction and communication as well as because of FD support for Community Forestry initiatives (see later).
173. MTR interactions with the Community Guardians team at Htamanthi included interviews as well as accompanying the team to monitor and set camera traps near Nampagun Guard Station. In depth interviews with two of longest serving Guardians (i.e. since 2015 or 2016) suggest that many are motivated by a genuine interest in wildlife and forests. Additionally, the opportunity to potentially become government staff is a tremendous incentive for young people in an area with very limited employment opportunities. Other more intangible benefits of the Guards and Guardians programmes include giving young people greater confidence as they develop new skills, feel valued and take pride in their work. These benefits were evident to the MTR team during the Htamanthi field visit. Even those who may not be recruited as government staff are developing transferable skills that will stand them in good stead for the future. The importance of these impacts in relatively poor, underdeveloped, remote areas should not be underestimated. Lack of employment, particularly for young men, is a source of many social problems across the world. Having productive work, a sense of purpose and being part of a close-knit community are undoubtedly contributing to the wellbeing of the young people who have become Community Guardians.
174. There are however relatively few female Community Guardians (and no Guards). The MTR met two women Guardians, one in Htamanthi and one in Hponkanrazi. The interview with the female Guardian in Htamanthi and discussions the project team confirmed that here are many social barriers to women being allowed to undertake this kind of work as it involves trekking and camping in the forest and being with men.

Women may also lack confidence to take up this kind of work. Indeed, the female Guardian in Hponkanrazi was too shy to even respond to interview questions put to her by the translator. According to the female Guardian from Htamanthi, there is interest among young girls to become Guardians, but many simply do not have the time as they have too many other responsibilities at home and on their farms. It is important for the project to remain gender aware and to continue to identify strategies to increase the engagement of women in the project, although it will be difficult to have a major impact in this area in the short implementation time that remains.

175. As Hponkanrazi has only had permanent PA staff, including the Park Warden, since December 2017, it was too early to be able to assess the new Warden's perceptions of these two programmes, which are also not as well developed here as in Htamanthi. Although the MTR met with several Forest Guards and Community Guards stationed at Warsandam Guard Post, interview conditions were less than ideal as both the Park Warden and project staff were present during the interviews.
176. Nevertheless, based on the experience in Htamanthi and the general feedback from the FD, the MTR considers the Community Guards and Guardians programmes to be among the project's most valuable interventions, which however, need to be further developed in Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi and strengthened in all sites to make SMART patrolling and biological monitoring more effective generally. This in turn requires better monitoring and assessment of project activities by the project team and should include documentation of processes and lessons in order to support further replication and scale up. MTR interviews with the Guardians indicated that there are challenges to filling out SMART patrol data forms (e.g. having to know many species by their scientific names). This in turn may affect data quality. Interviews also reflected limited understanding of how SMART data are ultimately used. Ideally, the project should have systems in place to obtain feedback from Guards and Guardians on the constraints they face while undertaking SMART patrolling and biological monitoring, their capacity needs and any other feedback in order to reflect their experiences in the project's adaptive management of these activities. The long-term sustainability of both programmes also needs careful consideration as Guards and Guardians are currently being paid by the project, although the latter are only employed on a seasonal basis (from October to May) and all are employed annually. The project has already begun to think this through and needs to complete this as part of preparing a comprehensive exit strategy.

Community Forestry in Htamanthi

177. The project is working closely with the FD and villages around Htamanthi to develop Community Forestry (CF) areas in the buffer zone, which lies outside the PA and is currently classed as 'Vacant and Fallow Land'. Although local people have been using this land for generations, they have no security of tenure. Legally, the land belongs to the Union Government and can be given away at any time for development. The project

has been working with the 25 villages around Htamanthi since 2014, first under an earlier project, and now the GEF project, to develop detailed Participatory Land Use Plans (PLUPs) that map traditional boundaries and uses, with the aim of obtaining 30-year community forestry leases to strengthen local tenure over the land. Leases are renewable for a further 30 years.

178. At the time of the MTR, 21 PLUPs had been completed and 3 applications for CF leases had been submitted, with another two planned for submission before the rains. The CF User Groups (CFUGs) are also developing their own management plans for the proposed CFs which include agreements on sustainable use, conservation, benefit-sharing and management by the community, including how this will be financed and penalties for violations. Interestingly, although the government normally allows 5 acres per household for such leases, applications made so far cover areas that are an order of magnitude larger than what this informal 'rule of thumb' suggests has been the norm to date. For example, instead of 180 acres, villages with only some 30 households have requested over 1,800 acres as a test case. The rationale for this being that unless larger areas are requested, the wider buffer zone is still at risk of being degraded or converted to other uses
179. The MTR met with the members of two CF User Groups and other villagers from Nam Sabi and Swe Khaung Ngaw and also spent considerable time in discussion with the project's mobile Community Engagement Team at different sites. There was tremendous enthusiasm among participants at the village meeting for the work being undertaken by the project here. The Park Warden also spontaneously informed the MTR that that the project's support for CF applications had strengthened relations between PA staff and local communities, with improved communication generally and greater support for law enforcement activities including reporting of illegal activities to PA staff. Additionally, villagers now know how to file complaints about illegal activities in the buffer zone by outsiders.
180. While still at the relatively early stages, the MTR was extremely impressed by the project's Community Engagement Team and the work that has been undertaken so far at Htamanthi, including the participatory processes that are being used and the level of stakeholder engagement. Draft guidelines targeted at community mobilizers such as the Community Guardians, are being developed on the participatory land use mapping and planning processes. These include the Village Consultation Process (VCP) and Village Use Zoning Process (VUZP) and the development of the PLUP. A video documentary is also being made.
181. Depending on the outcome of the first round of CF applications, it is also critical for the project to determine how many more CF applications can realistically be submitted during the remainder of the project (given the lengthy processes involved), and how CF implementation will be monitored and support to the CFUGs sustained after the end of the project. It is essential that the community engagement process and

impacts, including lessons are properly analysed, documented and disseminated. Although CFs are not viable in Hkakaborazi and Hponkanrazi (as communities there want full ownership over their customary land and resources), the potential for replicating the general approach to understanding customary claims and uses in the other sites should also be assessed.

Ecotourism Development in the Hkakaborazi Landscape

182. The so-called Hkakaborazi Landscape in Putao District includes Hkakaborazi National Park, Hponkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary and the contentious proposed Southern Extension PA. Ecotourism development is the main community participation system that the project has been pursuing here. Tourism development is high on the national and state government's agendas and indeed the World Heritage nomination was likely in part motivated by the desire to increase the profile of this outstanding landscape. A feasibility study and ecotourism development plan were commissioned by the project on behalf of MONREC and a draft ecotourism plan produced in March 2018. The study has been completed and a draft plan produced. The project is also collaborating with ICIMOD, which is also promoting tourism development, as an alternative livelihood option for local people in the Hkakaborazi Landscape under its Landscape Initiative for the Far Eastern Himalaya (HI-LIFE). A Community Information Resource Centre (CIRC) has been established by ICIMOD at Warsandam, which will be owned and managed by the community with technical and financial support from ICIMOD, WCS, and the FD.
183. While it may be possible to develop some small scale community-based tourism operations in Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi within the life of the project, there are several barriers to developing international and domestic tourism at scale. These include travel restrictions on international visitors across much of Kachin outside a few towns due to the security situation as well as the relative inaccessibility of the region by road. Domestic flights are limited and expensive and likely to be significant limitation on domestic tourism which tends to be of a shorter duration as well. Accommodation too is limited of variable quality.
184. There is also insufficient clarity about how community-based ecotourism development would constitute a 'model' or 'system' for community participation in PA management in Hkakaborazi or Hponkanrazi. Furthermore, at the time of the MTR, no strategy had yet been developed for overcoming the recent problems with local communities although alternative or additional activities would appear to be critical given recent problems. What form these could take is something the project needs to urgently identify with guidance and support from the Project Board. Given the interest among the Rawang leadership in the Community Conservation Areas that may be possible

under the new law, this could be an area for project intervention that is also well aligned with the existing project strategy. Lessons from the community engagement approaches piloted in Htamanthi could also be used to facilitate dialogue and begin rebuilding trust. For example, WCS's Village Consultation Process could potentially be used to also develop PLUPs for villages in and around Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi.

4.2.2 Barriers that remain to achieve the project objective

185. The project is on track to significantly shift the baseline situation of PA system establishment and management in Myanmar by a) developing greater systemic and institutional capacity to plan and manage and expanded national PA system (Barrier 1) and b) by strengthening management capacity and motivation at individual PA level to manage local threats and achieve conservation outcomes (Barrier 2). However, some socio-economic and political barriers still remain to achieving the project's objective of expanding the PA network and increasing its ecological representativeness. As noted earlier, there are some socio-economic and political barriers to the expansion of PAs managed by the government, which may not have been as evident at the time of project development and also considered to be outside the scope of the project. These were therefore identified as potential risks rather than as a barrier that could also be addressed through the project, although the experience of the last few years suggests otherwise and this should now be reconsidered as discussed already (Sections 4.1.1 and 3.2).
186. The challenges in Hukaung Valley and more recently in Hkakaborazi are a reflection of the dynamic political context in which the project is being implemented and an illustration of the complexities and risks of conservation in the real world. The political conflict in Hukaung, although not unique, has become exceptionally severe and it may be difficult for the project to advance its work there in the foreseeable future. But the recent local opposition to the proposed Southern Extension PA linked to Hkakaborazi and the response by government could even be viewed as positive developments – a reflection of a new Myanmar that allows greater space for civil society expression. The project partners fully recognize that these changes are part of the process of democratization of the country and that PA planning and management strategies must also adapt to the changing political landscape of the country. The new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs Law is a step in that direction, although much will depend on the rules and regulations that are eventually approved.
187. There are also barriers to implementing sustainable financing mechanisms for PAs that were not identified during the project design stage. The first is that there are no legal and administrative provisions in place for PAs to retain any income they generate to reinvest in PA management. While under the new Biodiversity & Conservation of PAs

law, it may be possible to start generating income through charging user fees, it is not clear whether and how these can be retained and re-invested by PA managers. A second barrier is that due to budgetary constraints, only around a third of permanent government staff positions and around two-thirds of temporary staff positions have been filled across all sectors including the FD. This suggests that increasing PA financing alone will not necessarily lead more effective PA management unless mechanisms are also put in place to allow PA managers to be able to absorb and use additional funding effectively.

4.3 Project implementation and adaptive management

188. Overall project implementation and adaptive management is rated as Moderately Satisfactory²⁵ based on an assessment of the following seven key components of effective implementation and management. Although implementation has faced numerous delays due to reasons outside the project's control, there has been good cooperation between all the partners to overcome these difficulties and implementation has accelerated since 2017. There is generally good compliance with UNDP, MONREC and GEF rules and procedures including financial management and procurement requirements. However, there are weaknesses associated with some aspects of project management arrangements, M&E systems, reporting and adaptive management processes as detailed further below.

4.3.1 Management arrangements

189. Separate interviews with the partners and other MTR observations indicated a high level of commitment to the project by the FD, WCS and UNDP as well as close cooperation between all parties. Indeed, the MTR was brought forward because of partner concerns about delays in project implementation and progress to date and the desire to adapt and strengthen management as needed. Project management arrangements are broadly in line with the Project Document (Part III), although there have been some important changes and gaps which are discussed further below. Overall, the MTR confirmed that there is need for more systematic and regular project oversight and guidance by the Project Board and UNDP. A greater focus by all partners on higher-level results and impacts is also needed together with a more comprehensive approach to risk monitoring management and mitigation.

Functioning of the Project Board and other Project Bodies

190. The formation of the Project Board (PB) was greatly delayed by the many disruptions to the functioning of government in the run up and aftermath of the November 2015 national elections (Section 4.1.1 & 4.2.1). By the time of the project's first PIR, and one

²⁵ Implementation of some of the seven components (Sections 4.3.1 – 4.3.7) - management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, stakeholder engagement, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and communications - is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.

year into implementation, the PB had yet to be formed. The Board was finally constituted in October 2016 and held its first meeting in November 2016. Although the PB is meant to meet at least twice a year, it has thus far only met twice, with the most recent meeting in September 2017.

191. It was originally intended that the PB should include representatives from Ministries of National Planning & Economic Development and of Finance, but it is generally difficult to obtain their participation given many more pressing demands on their time. The PB was also meant to include members from the Kachin State and Sagaing Region General Administration Department (GAD). However, it has proved more practical to include GAD officials in the state and regional PAMCCs. A Project Management Committee (PMC) was created at the first PB meeting and its membership and TORs (Box 3), were formally constituted by MONREC in April 2017 (Notification No. 64/2017). The committee comprises a subset of PB members including UNDP and is chaired by the NPD. Based on the TORs, it appears that the PB decided delegate some of its functions (Section 3.4) to the PMC. To date, the PMC has met once in connection with preparing for the first PB meeting.
192. PB meeting minutes indicate that there has been little opportunity for the PB to focus on more strategic issues given that only two meetings have been held to date. These have focused instead on pressing operational matters such as solving implementation problems, approving workplans and other project management-related structures and processes. For example, the focus of the first meeting was on sharing implementation progress in 2015-16 and establishing various project bodies - the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), the Technical Advisory Group on Protected Areas (TAGPA), the subnational PA Management Coordination Committees and the Project Management Committee (PMC) – as well as strengthening stakeholder engagement and coordination between the three project partners (FD, UNDP and WCS) and approving the project workplan and budget for 2017.
193. Going forward, it is essential that the PB meets more regularly in order to oversee and steer the project more effectively, adhering to the planned minimum schedule of twice a year, with additional meetings as needed. It is also important that these meetings are used to evaluate progress towards higher-level results and determine further actions to achieve maximum sustainable impact by the end of the project. The role of the PMC should also be clarified, including whether this structure is actually needed, and if so how it can better support the project and the PB.

Box 3 ToRs for the Project Management Committee

- To review and oversee annual work plan and budget prepared by Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor before submitting to the Project Board for the approval
- To provide technical and administrative guidance for planning and implementing of project activities
- To ensure all planned activities are technically sound and in line with the project objectives, outcomes and time-frame
- To ensure that the project activities are carried out in accordance with the desired standards and requirements
- To strengthen inter-institutional coordination between relevant governmental departments, organizations and institutions to contribute to project goals
- To submit recommendations for the project to Project Board

194. There have also been changes to the operation of the Technical Advisory Group on PAs (TAGPA), which in the short-term was intended to provide technical advice and inputs to support project implementation through thematic sub-working groups. TAGPA has met only once formally in May 2017. Given that existing in-country technical capacity is already over-stretched, it was decided then not to form sub-working groups but to collaborate instead on the following eight priority thematic areas as and when required and organized by the project and the FD: 1) Capacity Development; 2) Policy improvement; 3) PA sustainable financing mechanism; 4) Buffer zone management; 5) Education and awareness raising; 6) Co-management; 7) Research and monitoring; and 8) Wetland conservation. Given this arrangement, it seems unlikely that the project will create a sustainable mechanism through TAGPA for on-going technical support on PAs to NWCD as originally envisaged in the Project Document. This need not be a problem as there may be other more suitable mechanisms for this. However, project partners should explicitly decide and record what role, if any, TAGPA is to play in future. Furthermore, it is clear that certain aspects of the project could have been greatly strengthened by additional external technical support, notably the project Results Framework and the M&E system. As it seems this is not something TAGPA can provide, it is important that other ways are found to strengthen support to the project for the remaining implementation period and fulfil some of the important functions originally intended for TAGPA, such as updating national stakeholders about project progress and sharing lessons. This is again something to be clarified and documented in a PB meeting.

Project Oversight by UNDP

195. While there has been strong administrative and financial oversight of the project by UNDP, all partners informed the MTR that the provision of technical support has been less consistent, partly due to insufficient technical capacity within UNDP Myanmar and partly because of frequent changes in the project focal point in the Country Office. In the two and half years up to December 2017, there have been five or six different officers overseeing the project in UNDP Myanmar. As a result, meetings between UNDP and the project were irregular and there has been only one monitoring visit to project sites by UNDP, which took place in November-December 2017. There has also been turnover of UNDP Myanmar senior management and a major restructuring of the Country Office to align with the new country programme. During MTR interviews, government stakeholders in particular stressed the need for more systematic project monitoring and technical support by UNDP, including joint monitoring field missions with government, as well as better communication about project progress and plans. M&E and communication are discussed further in Sections 4.3.5-4.3.7).
196. UNDP Myanmar staff, including senior management, were very candid to the MTR about earlier weaknesses in project support and oversight and are committed to addressing these gaps for the remainder of the project. There are some obvious areas where UNDP has a comparative advantage over WCS and can provide greater support. These include:
- facilitating engagement and coordination with government stakeholders at subnational levels;
 - strengthening the gender-related aspects of the project through developing the capacity of the project team and integrating these in more meaningful ways in project M&E and reporting systems;
 - strengthening synergies with other UNDP projects and programmes, particularly in Kachin and Sagaing;
 - making better use of UNDP area offices in Myitkina and Mandalay to identify synergies with other on-going work and for liaison with local government officials; and
 - ensuring valuable processes and lessons are documented and disseminated more effectively to a range of audiences through UNDP's national and global communication platforms.
197. An immediate step for UNDP is to support the Project Team to revise and update both the Results Framework and the risk assessment (SESP) and to develop a practical and robust project level M&E system for the remainder of the project. This would include ensuring that all project monitoring and reporting tools and mechanisms are properly integrated into a coherent and comprehensive M&E system and that the focus of monitoring is as much on achieving higher-level results as on ensuring implementation of activities and financial delivery at the output level. Project-level M&E and reporting

are discussed further in Sections 4.3.5 and 4.3.6, respectively. Risk assessment, management and mitigation are discussed separately in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.4.

198. It is also essential that UNDP ensures that there is continuity in project oversight and management by the Country Office for the remainder of the project and that the UNDP focal point has the necessary technical understanding and management skills to both effectively support the project and coordinate with government and other important stakeholders.

Hiring of National Project Manager

199. Two notable changes were made to management arrangements during the first year of implementation. The first was the appointment of the Deputy Director of WCS Myanmar as the Project Manager (PM) at the start of the project rather than a 'newly-hired international expert in PA management' as stated in the Project Document (Para 235). This change was not formally approved by a Project Board (PB) as there was no PB at the time but was clearly discussed and agreed by UNDP, MONREC (then MOECA) and WCS as this change is reflected in the minutes of the Project Inception Workshop which lists the members of the newly formed Project Coordination Unit²⁶ (see Annex 1 of the Inception Workshop Report).
200. According to WCS, there were several reasons for making this change. First, it was felt to be better to have a national rather than international officer in this role given language barriers and restrictions on in-country travel for foreigners. However, it was difficult to find a suitable independent hire given national capacity constraints. Second, assigning WCS's Deputy Director to this role ensured continuity, given his role in developing the project and a long history of working with WCS and the Forest Department, including in-depth knowledge and experience of the project demonstration sites, having been WCS's Northern Forests Complex Coordinator prior to becoming Deputy Director. These factors were considered especially critical since this is Myanmar's first GEF Biodiversity Project and also NWCD and WCS Myanmar's first experience of implementing a GEF project.
201. The MTR agrees that it is preferable to have a national PM if the skills and experience required by the role can be sourced nationally, in order to strengthen national ownership. There is no doubt that the Deputy Director of WCS is extremely well-qualified for the position in terms of technical and management skills, knowledge and experience. Furthermore, having started his career with the Forest Department and subsequently worked for WCS for 12 years, he has good working relationships with both government and civil society actors in the wildlife and environment sector.

202. The MTR is, however, slightly concerned that a small but unknown proportion of the NPM's time is allocated to non-project-related WCS work. The MTR was also

²⁶ Also referred to as the Project Management Committee or Project Management Unit.

concerned to learn that the current Director of the WCS Myanmar Programme is due to retire soon and will be replaced by the Deputy Director/NPM as this has more serious implications for the project. Maintaining continuity of leadership and management is essential at this juncture as the project seeks to address the findings of the MTR and implement important course corrections. Furthermore, the international CTA who has been leading the work related to Outcome 1 took leave from first week of February to last week of March due to health reasons. UNDP and WCS should identify ways to address any potential technical gaps created by the CTA's absence. It is important that all project partners consider the implications of these developments to ensure that any disruptions to project implementation and continued progress are minimized. Major decisions taken on key project management roles such as the NPM and CTA should also be clearly recorded and approved by the PB.

Location of PCU

203. The second change from the management arrangements outlined in the Project Document was to locate the PCU within the WCS Myanmar office in Yangon, rather than in MONREC in Nay Pyi Taw as originally envisaged in the Project Document (Para 215). Although the intention was clearly to provide space for PCU members in the NWCD Director's office (e.g. see Annex 1 of the Inception Workshop Report), sufficient space could not be made available in the end. While it is normally preferable to have a PCU based within the lead government agency, in this instance there are benefits to having the PCU and the NPM in Yangon. These include greater connectivity and ease of access to the four demonstration sites (which require flying to regional airports). It also facilitates visits by the NPM and other PCU staff to the field and periodic team meetings of key field and PCU staff while keeping costs down. Furthermore, at present most other non-government project partners and stakeholders are currently Yangon-based, including UNDP Myanmar. Both UNDP and WCS have offices in Nay Pyi Taw headed by a senior staff member, who coordinates with government partners as needed, including on behalf of the project. UNDP will be expanding its office in Nay Pyi Taw but will continue to maintain a presence in Yangon. Additionally, both the NPM and the current UNDP focal point for the project also travel to Nay Pyi Taw frequently for work, allowing them to meet regularly with government counterparts and other stakeholders. A second building is currently being constructed by the Forest Department in Nay Pyi Taw to address space constraints, but it would likely be disruptive to shift the PCU at this late stage.

4.3.2 Work planning

204. As noted in the discussion on progress towards outcomes (Section 4.2), work-planning and quarterly reporting follow UNDP formats and processes, which are output and activity-based, while reporting to the GEF through the annual PIRs focuses on indicators and end-of-project targets in the project Results Framework. Budgeting is also based on the workplans. Although, the workplans include a summary of project

indicators, baselines and targets, planning is very much focused on immediate activities rather than the delivering higher-level results, a problem that is compounded by having 11 outputs. Work planning processes can be greatly strengthened once the existing Results Framework has been reviewed and updated and starts being used more systematically as a tool for project planning, monitoring and adaptive management (Section 4.1.2). Ideally, work planning should include separate mini strategies and plans for each demonstration site as well as for the delivery of each outcome.

205. Delays in project start up and implementation and the causes for these have already been discussed extensively (Section 4.2). Although project implementation has accelerated greatly since mid-2016, and even though the number of demonstration sites has effectively been reduced from four to three, the project still risks spreading itself too thin by undertaking too many disparate activities at different sites and levels. Given the challenging context of implementation, project scope needs to be further reduced through a prioritization exercise (Section 4.1).

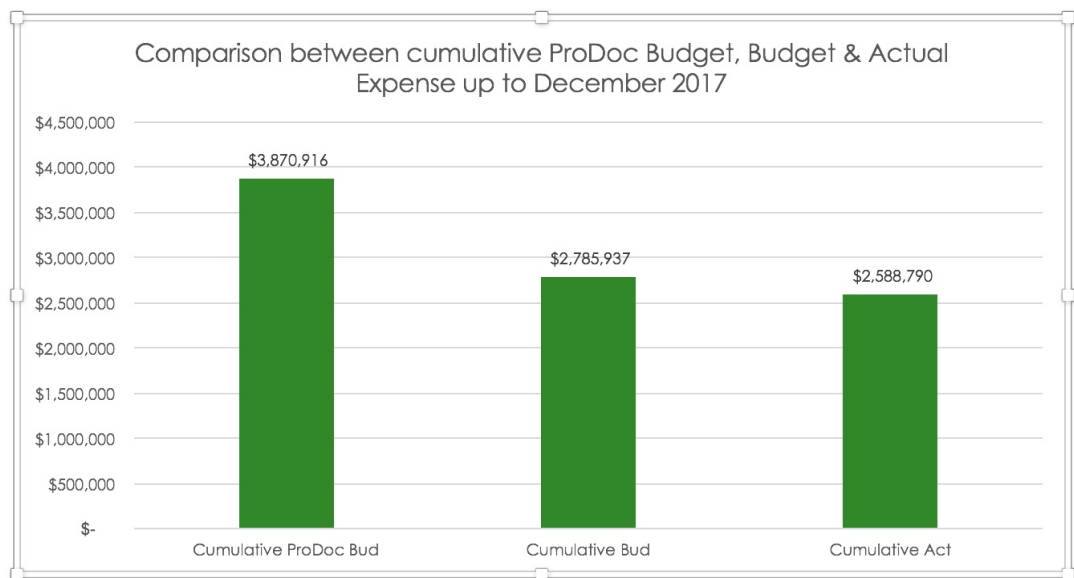
4.3.3 Financial management and co-finance

206. No concerns were raised by any stakeholders regarding the financial management of the project. Both UNDP and WCS have strong financial controls in place and exercise due diligence in the management of funds and all procurement-related matters in line with government, GEF and UNDP requirements. Financial and procurement obligations are detailed in the Project Cooperation Agreement and in Paras 216-217 of the Project Document. Budgeting is based on an Annual Workplan (AWP) which is linked to the project Results Framework and is the basis for requesting quarterly cash advances from UNDP together with the previous quarter's report. WCS Myanmar Programme has an internal system of preparing monthly expense reports that are reviewed by their Grant and Monitoring Manager, who checks for underspend and overspend against planned budget and clarifies discrepancies before these are consolidated and submitted to UNDP for further review on a quarterly basis.
207. The project is also subject to independent audits. These review expenditure, fixed assets and where relevant unspent project cash and bank balances. Two audits have been completed to date, the first covering the period from 1st July 2015 to 31st December 2016 and second, the 2017 full calendar year. Neither audit found any significant problems, although the second audit, which is much more detailed, has identified some minor problems classed as low risk and made recommendations to rectify these. One observation relates to the charging of some of the WCS Yangon office rental and electricity bills to the project without clear written rules on allocation of such costs between different projects as the office is not exclusively a project office. The second refers to the pre-payment of field project office rental costs, thus payments have been made in 2017 to cover 2018 rent. Both UNDP and WCS have already

provided a management response and will be acting on the audit recommendations to address the two concerns that have been flagged.

208. Timely flow of funds has not been a problem up to now. Instead, the project has struggled to spend its planned budget given the many delays in the first year and the inability to implement many project activities in Hukaung Valley and more recently Hkakaborazi. Thus, up to December 2017, i.e. after 30 months of implementation, there was a cumulative underspend of more than USD 1 million from the original Project Document budget. Expenditure was also less than the revised budget. There was underspend against both project components, particularly Component 2. Since 2017, the project has greatly accelerated implementation, particularly under Component 2, and by December 2017, some 43% of the total project budget had been utilized.

Figure 3 Planned and actual cumulative project budget and expenditure up to December 2017



Source: WCS

Figure 4 Planned and actual cumulative project budget and expenditure by outcome up to December 2017



Source: WCS

Notes: Components 1 & 2 = Outcomes 1 & 2, respectively, while Component 3=project management costs

Table 17 Actual project expenditure by year and component relative to planned budget

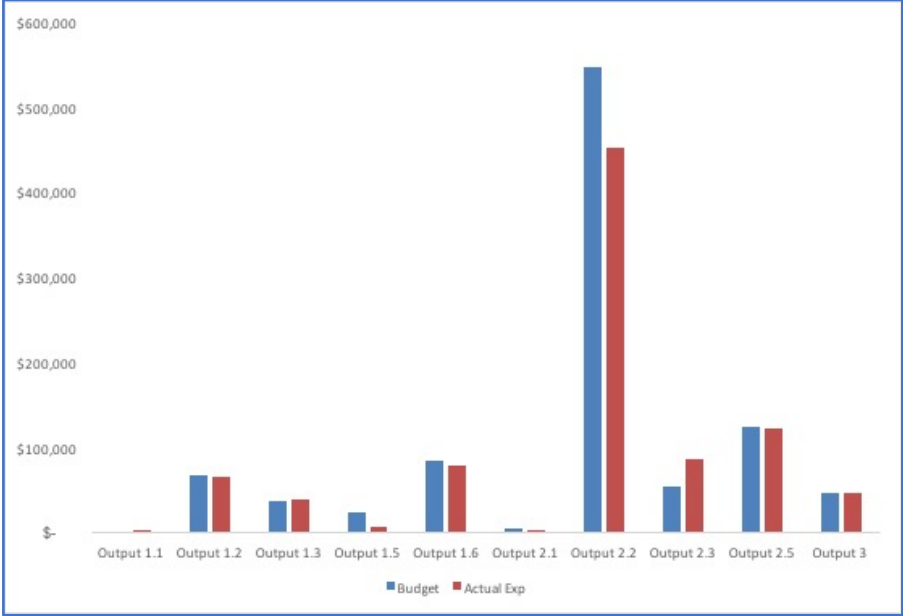
Source: WCS

	2015	2016	2017	Total 3 years Actual	Total 5 years Budget	%
Comp 1	\$ 60,628	\$ 186,654	\$ 484,138	\$ 731,421	\$ 1,870,547	39%
Comp 2	\$ 178,451	\$ 662,485	\$ 917,253	\$ 1,758,190	\$ 3,873,273	45%
Comp 3	\$ 23,069	\$ 45,754	\$ 29,875	\$ 98,698	\$ 283,577	35%
	\$ 262,149	\$ 894,893	1,431,266	2,588,309	\$ 6,027,397	43%

209. Budget revisions were not examined in detail but the largest ones have been in relation to the reduction in activities in Hukaung and Hkakaborazi, which has been unavoidable. However, the MTR notes that the single largest area of expenditure (c. USD 983,000 in 2016 & 2017) is under Output 2.2 (“Demonstration PA site operations strengthened to address threats to biodiversity”), which includes SMART patrolling and biological surveys, so far primarily in Htamanthi. The MTR has identified a number of problems with SMART data collection, analysis and use as discussed in Section 4.2.1/Outcome 2. Given the investment in this area by the project, it critically important

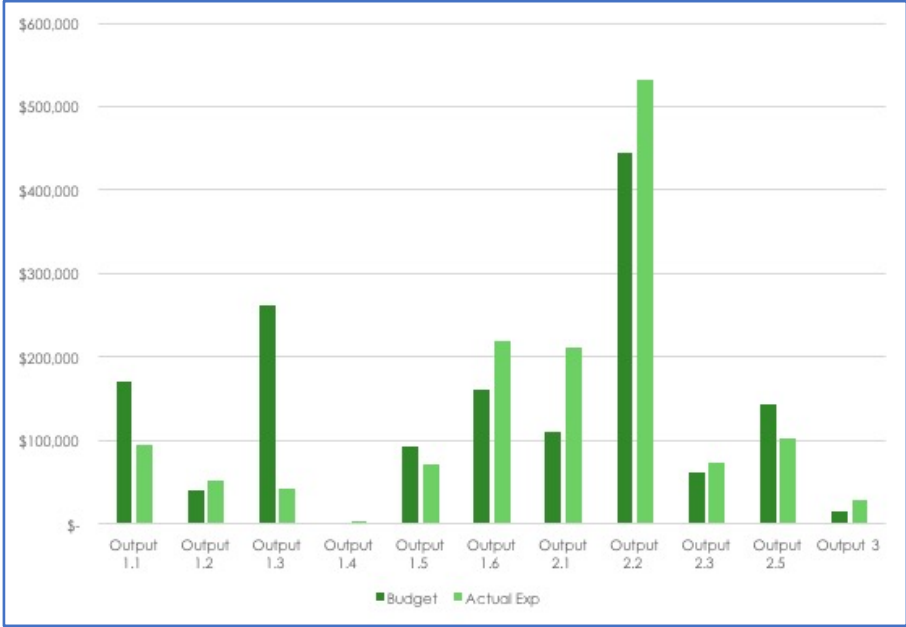
to review the implementation of Output 2.2 and associated activities in order to ensure that this will lead to real impact and replicable results.

Figure 5 Expenditure by output in 2016



Source: WCS

Figure 6 Expenditure by output in 2017



Source: WCS

210. The MTR also notes that despite its significance to the long-term sustainability of the project strategy, there has been relatively little investment (c. USD 159,000), thus far

under Output 2.3 “Pilot systems developed and implemented for community participation at the four demonstration PAs”.²⁷

211. Total committed co-financing at project signing was over USD 17 million, of which USD 12 million was committed by UNDP, although USD 5.65 million of this amount had yet to be mobilized; the balance USD 6.35 million was parallel funding from TRAC resources. Co-financing does not appear to be tracked through the PIRs or the QRs. Data provided by the three project partners summarized in Table 18 indicates that all partners have contributed significant co-financing to the project. Both MONREC and WCS have leveraged additional resources, thereby significantly increasing their co-financing contribution since the CEO endorsement stage. This is an impressive achievement by these project partners. This includes expenditure of over USD 2 million under bilateral grants to NWCD from the Norwegian Environment Agency. These grants have contributed to other aspects of PA system planning and management. Meanwhile, WCS has raised an additional USD 2.15 million in grant co-financing since the time of CEO endorsement all of which has been contributing directly to the delivery of project outcomes. Thus, the co-financing raised by MONREC and WCS and utilized by the time of the MTR is between 35–47% higher than the total amount identified by these partners at the time of CEO endorsement for the entire project period.

Table 18 Details of project co-financing at CEO endorsement at the start of the MTR

Sources of co-financing	Name of co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount confirmed at CEO endorsement (US\$)	Actual amount contributed by stage of MTR (US\$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
1. National Government	MONREC (NWCD)	a) In-kind	4,646,300	3,693,751	80%
		b) Grant	N/A	2,555,776	100%
		Total In-kind & Grant (a+b)	4,646,300	6,249,527	135%
2. GEF Agency	UNDP	Parallel	12,000,000	6,188,515	51%
3. NGO	WCS	Grant	1,250,000	1,843,636	147%
TOTAL			13,250,000	8,032,151	72%

212. UNDP co-financing has been mainly in the form of parallel funding to other projects that contribute to the project’s wider objectives, with significant funding going towards strengthening institutional capacity for sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation by MONREC, as well as to developing new sustainable financing mechanisms such as through UN-REDD. UNDP anticipates leveraging an additional USD 2.4 million between 2018-2020 primarily from relevant work under the

²⁷ Based on budget data and analyses provided by WCS Myanmar Programme.

new Governance for Resilience and Sustainability Project (GRSP) which is currently under development and slated to begin in June 2018.

4.3.4 Stakeholder engagement

213. WCS has a long history of working with the FD at national and subnational levels as well as with engaging with other government stakeholders and local communities in different sites. In Hukaung, they have also built relations with the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in the past. A concerted effort has been made in this project to engage key stakeholders at different levels, including women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. It is difficult, however, to develop and maintain equally strong engagement with all stakeholder groups in all sites and at all levels as this requires sustained investment of time, effort and resources. This was evident from the MTR visits to Htamanthi and Hponkanrazi. The MTR observed greater awareness and support for project activities in the former than in the latter, where activities have only started recently and have further been overshadowed by the concerns over the World Heritage nomination process. It should, however, be possible to overcome current obstacles through more systematic engagement and investment of resources in Hponkanrazi as is happening in Htamanthi.
214. The MTR found good support for the project and its objectives at the national and subnational levels, particularly within the FD, including considerable appreciation for WCS, as the implementing partner. Strengthening communication within MONREC i.e. beyond the FD remains important, particularly with ECD, which is headed by the GEF OFF. Although ECD is a member of the Project Board, annual or even twice-yearly meetings are rarely sufficient for effective communication and engagement. Nor is it generally enough to circulate documentation including technical reports in the run up to meetings as most PB members are likely to be too overstretched to be able to read or retain these in any detail. As discussed further in Section 4.3.7, it is essential that the project identifies the key messages and information it should be communicating to different stakeholders along with strategies for more effective communication. The Project Team and UNDP should together identify the best approach to preparing and conducting PB meetings to ensure that the PB and its meetings are able to also provide high-level strategic oversight and guidance to the project.
215. Understanding of the project and its relevance was more variable at the state/regional and district government levels than at the township level, where there is greater proximity and interaction with the project. The formation of the PAMCCs at each level of government administration is a good mechanism for increasing understanding and participation in the project by different government sectors including the key decision-makers at subnational levels. The project makes presentations at PAMCC meetings about its activities and issues that need to be addressed with the support of government. A key weakness of PAMCC meetings, however, is the lack of community representation. This is something that needs to be addressed urgently as the reporting

in the PIRs suggests that PAMCCs are a mechanism for strengthening community participation in PA management.

216. Existing mechanisms for engaging local communities vary from site to site and depend largely on the nature of the project's site-based interventions. The Community Guardians and Community Guards are approaches that are being rolled out at three of the project sites. In Htamanthi, the CF work is the entry point for engaging local communities. As discussed earlier, these community participation approaches appear to be contributing to greater support for the project and to the conservation objectives in Htamanthi. The same level of engagement is yet to be developed at Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi. The project may also need to be more proactive and strategic in how non-FD government stakeholders are engaged, for example by identifying those aspects of the project that are likely to be of most interest to them and communicating these in language that is more likely to resonate with them, e.g. by shifting the focus from wildlife protection to the relevance of the project to local development, sustainability and resilience. To these ends, it may be useful to review and update the original Stakeholder Involvement Plan (Project Document/Part IV) and the Community Participation Strategy. The latter could include specific strategies tailored to each project demonstration site that also take into account local ethnic minorities and other marginalized or disadvantaged groups as well as gender-related factors (see below and Project Document/Annex 10).
217. Finally, the WCS Myanmar Programme collaborates with a wide range of national and international NGOs, research and training institutions and others working on a range of issues relating to conservation, sustainable land use and environmental management in Myanmar. There is thus frequent formal and informal exchange of information and knowledge. The project also works closely with different partners in some specific areas, such as on ecotourism development in Hkakaborazi with ICIMOD, the development and provision of training courses with the Smithsonian Institute, WWF Myanmar and FFI and wild cat camera trap surveys with WildCRU.

4.3.5 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

218. Project-level M&E has revolved around reporting against Annual Work Plans (AWPs) in the Quarterly Reports (QRs) to UNDP and against the Results Framework indicators in the annual PIRs. The former involves reporting against outputs, while the latter focuses on progress towards outcomes measured through the Results Framework indicators. Both are completed internally by the Project Team before sharing with UNDP for review and further comment. Neither the project nor WCS Myanmar Programme has a dedicated M&E officer. Nor is there a separate system of reporting to WCS. Periodic reviews of project activities and results are undertaken by the NPM together with the CTA and the Landscape Coordinators. Although these were originally intended to take place on a quarterly basis, meetings have become more opportunistic as the

Landscape Coordinators are based in the field. There is more frequent interaction between the NPM and the CTA as both are based in Yangon.

219. Effective project M&E has been limited the lack of sufficiently SMART indicators and unclear or missing baselines in the project Results Framework (discussed in detail in Section 4.1 and Annex 7). Additionally, although output level indicators are not mandatory, their absence has meant that progress on important outputs - or lack thereof - is not being tracked regularly and appropriate management action taken when needed. In general, there has been greater emphasis, including investment of resources on monitoring of demonstration PA sites through SMART patrolling and biological surveys rather than monitoring of project results. However, there are also weaknesses with using these monitoring data to measure project progress and impacts as already discussed (Section 4.2.1 & 4.3.3).
220. Additional monitoring tools include the METT, Capacity Development Scorecard and Financial Sustainability Scorecard, all of which measure progress at the project start, mid-term and end. The METT is completed by the respective site-based project staff together with the local Park Warden and other PA staff. The Capacity Development Scorecard is completed by three central FD Divisions and the FD in Kachin and Sagaing without any direct project input. The Financial Sustainability Scorecard has been completed by the project and is based on government data. All three have been completed as required for the MTR and are included in Annexes 9 - 11.
221. The UNDP Environmental and Social Screening undertaken at the time of project preparation (Project Document/Annex 11) is another important tool for assessing risks and risk management and mitigation strategies that are subsequently monitored through UNDP's Quality Assurance System. This is done through an online platform where Risks and Issues are logged and updated quarterly as part of the quarterly and annual reporting processes. However, as noted earlier, the existing risk assessment needs to be reviewed and updated (Section 4.1.1). This should ideally be done using UNDP's new SESP format, which is more comprehensive than the screening procedure undertaken during project development.
222. It was not possible to assess the allocation of resources to project M&E, or its cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness as this is not budgeted and tracked through UNDP's or the project's financial reporting systems other than for the resources allocated for mid-term and final evaluations and audits, which are adequate.
223. In general, the MTR found that monitoring of risks and the technical aspects of the project needs to be greatly strengthened for the remainder of the project (see Section 4.1). The Results Framework has not been used systematically or critically as a monitoring tool; had this been done, then the many problems associated with existing indicators, baselines and targets would have been detected much earlier. Although such a review would normally take place during the Inception Phase, this did not

happen, probably because the focus at that point was more on getting the project off the ground given the many delays. Once started, the emphasis naturally shifted to accelerating implementation to make up for lost time and, as often happens, internal review and reflection become secondary to the day-to-day demands and challenges of implementation. While site-level PA monitoring is used to guide some aspects of project interventions, in particular PA management actions, it has not generally been used to guide adaptive management of the project in a proactive manner. Rather, adaptive management has occurred largely in response to major events outside the project's control, such as the security situation in the Hukaung and the protests in Hkakaborazi.

224. It should be noted, however, that this is WCS Myanmar Programme's first experience of implementing a GEF project and also the FD's first GEF full-size Biodiversity project. The project is also the largest one to be implemented by WCS and NWCD in Myanmar to date. There has thus been much to learn for WCS and the Project Team, who the MTR found to be exceptionally dedicated and hardworking. A key challenge is language as it is not easy for most of the Project Team and many government counterparts, particularly at subnational levels, to understand and 'own' a long and complicated Project Document, Results Framework and monitoring tools that are in English and full of GEF and development-sector-specific terms and concepts.
225. The Project Team – and thus the project - would benefit greatly from targeted capacity development to improve their understanding of the RF and the various project Tracking Tools to ensure that these serve as effective inputs to the formulation of the AWP as well as being properly reflected in reporting in the QRs and PIRs (see below). In particular, the team needs to be encouraged to think more critically about what it is they are measuring and why. This process has already started as part of the MTR and can be further developed through the RF revision exercise recommended by the MTR, which should also include a re-assessment of risks and risk management and mitigation measures using the updated UNDP SESP (Section 4.1.1). The process should be continued by the Project Team and should be completed together with UNDP before being presented at the next PB meeting.
226. Developing a Theory of Change, if time and resources permit, could be an additional way of strengthening capacity for greater strategic analysis of the project design and results. A more systematic approach to internal review of progress against the revised RF and AWP is also needed, together with integration of relevant results generated by the different monitoring tools (the METT, the Capacity Development Scorecard and the Financial Sustainability Scorecard), and periodic reflection on the implications of these for further project implementation and adaptive management. Additionally, as noted earlier and specifically requested by government (Para 195), UNDP and the FD should undertake joint monitoring field missions at least once a year.

4.3.6 Reporting

227. Project reporting currently emphasizes the delivery of activities and is not always linked clearly to either outputs in the UNDP QRs or indicators in the UNDP-GEF annual PIRs, although this may be at least partly due to language and comprehension-related factors (see above). The project also submits monthly progress reports to NWCD in the government reporting template in the Myanmar language. These focus on activities and constraints, i.e. what has been achieved, explanations for any delays in planned activities, and the plan for the next month. These also serve as inputs to the UNDP QRs. There is no formal reporting at the subnational level. The project also produces a large number of technical reports, which are shared with all stakeholders, including with the Chairs and Secretaries of the PAMCCs at subnational level. There is no separate reporting to WCS.
228. To date, there has been little critical analysis of project progress or reporting on higher level results in the QRs and PIRs (or the technical reports reviewed by the MTR). Risk reporting, particularly in the PIRs, has also been minimal. Had there been greater critical review by all partners during the reporting process, problems with project indicators and other substantive issues could have been identified earlier. By not addressing these earlier, it has been more difficult to assess project progress towards results and thereby evaluate the relative strategic value and cost-effectiveness of different project interventions and therefore to manage the project adaptively. There has also been little formal reporting of changes to project strategy, adaptive management measures implemented or lessons learned. However, a number of changes have been made, with the approval of UNDP and/or the Project Board depending on their relative significance. While some are recorded in the PB minutes, there is need for more systematic documentation of changes to the project including the basis for such changes and the implications for planned results. While ideally this should be integrated into the QR or PIR reporting processes, the formats for these reports do not lend themselves easily to such reporting. However, the project could easily develop a simple user-friendly system of tracking and recording important project-related information as part of its internal M&E and adaptive management system. Keeping track of such information will stand the project in good stead for the final evaluation.
229. Along with improving M&E systems and M&E capacity as suggested above, the project team, in particular the Landscape and Site and Assistant Site Coordinators, would also benefit from capacity development to strengthen their analytical skills and the overall quality of reporting. This would include improving understanding of the two main reporting formats in English i.e. the QRs and PIRs as well as of the different tracking tools, and identifying ways to harmonize the content reported in the QRs and PIRs. Better alignment and integration of monitoring data and other information in the Tracking Tools, QRs and PIRs would also improve overall reporting quality and coherence. There is also need to harmonize risk reporting in the QRs and the PIRs

after updating the risk assessment (Section 4.3.5). It is especially important for the Project Team to move beyond activity-level reporting and providing gender-disaggregated numbers of people trained on different topics or participating in workshops to trying to measure and report on the actual changes brought about as a result of project interventions, including any gender-differences in impacts, as well as identifying emerging lessons and best practice.

230. PIR reporting to date and follow up action has also not been well synchronized with Project Board meetings because of the delays in establishing the Project Board. Thus, the two PB meetings to date have taken place a few months after the PIR was finalized and submitted and there has been little critical discussion of the progress reported in these. It is important to better align the timing of Board meetings to major monitoring milestones such as the PIR (and the MTR) and to also ensure that preparation for Board meetings also includes a greater focus on discussion of higher level results and impacts so that the Board can fulfil its oversight and strategic guidance functions more effectively.

4.3.7 Communications and Knowledge Products

231. The development of a communication strategy is briefly indicated in the Project Document (Para 273), but has not been done so far. The project nonetheless produces a prolific number of short reports and other communication materials in both the Myanmar language and in English and disseminates these widely at national and subnational levels particularly to government partners. These reports generally focus on project activities and events. Additionally, project staff also undertake education and awareness activities at the field level in collaboration with NWCD targeted at school children and village communities. Formal reports such as PIRs are shared with NWCD and the GEF OFP.
232. Despite the frequent communication between the project and diverse stakeholders at national and subnational levels, there is much scope for strengthening the reach and effectiveness of project communication. A first step would be to review project communication methods and their impact and to then develop a simple communication strategy without investing too much time or resources in this exercise. This would include identifying the different audiences that need to be targeted for achieving the project's objectives and long-term sustainability, as well as the appropriate messaging for each audience, in particular key non-FD government actors at national and subnational levels (such as GAD) and local communities. The importance of the latter was especially apparent to the MTR in meetings with subnational government representatives from outside the forest sector whose priorities are very different and who may not always appreciate the relevance of the project to their economic development objectives and other policy priorities. The need

for this is also evident from the recent opposition to the proposed Southern Extension PA and World Heritage nomination. A project implemented by NWCD and WCS will naturally be perceived by other sectors as a wildlife conservation project with the only potential wider benefits being perceived as ecotourism development and some minor local income generation. It is critically important for the project to change these perceptions by articulating and communicating the many development benefits of its interventions and the overall project strategy. through, for example, the maintenance of critical ecosystem services and environmental risk reduction, and thereby making the business case for PAs. This is an area where UNDP has considerable experience and could help the project to develop appropriate messaging and communication materials for different audiences particularly outside the conservation sector and to reach target audiences, including by disseminating information through its different communication platforms.

233. Finally, the project has produced few knowledge products to date, although these would be a useful way of capturing and disseminating important project experiences and lessons to a wider audience. Manuals exist in Myanmar language for the Village Consultation Process (VCP) and Village Use Zoning Process (VUZP), but may need to be adapted for wider dissemination as well as be translated in English. It would also be useful to document and share the project's approach to CF planning and application process, the Community Guardians and Guards schemes and to share these along with lessons with other practitioners. It would also be valuable to work with the FD to consolidate some of these processes into departmental Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Such knowledge products are essential for the replication and scale up of project results.

4.4 Sustainability

234. The Project Document accurately captured most critical risks to the project at the time of preparation (see Section 4.1.1). However, some risks identified by the original Environment and Social Screening that were not considered critical at the time have since increased in severity (in terms of both probability and impact). These are yet to be captured effectively in UNDP's ATLAS Risk Management Module and to be monitored and reported on systematically. For example, the recent protests in Hkakaborazi are recorded as an issue rather than a risk. The MTR strongly recommends a comprehensive re-assessment of project risks using the updated UNDP SESP. Risks recorded in the RF and ATLAS should be updated accordingly along with the management and mitigation measures proposed for critical risks, which should then be regularly monitored and reported on. Additionally, while the project is making progress on developing sustainable financing mechanisms, it is very unlikely that these will be generating income by the end of the project. Thus, the overall sustainability of project outcomes is rated as Moderately Likely (ML).

235. There is, however, much that can be still be done to enhance the sustainability of project outcomes as discussed further below and in earlier sections of this chapter. Additionally, during the course of the next 12 months, it would be advisable for the project to develop an exit strategy for sustaining key project results that takes into account the various risks outlined below.

4.4.1 Financial risks

236. In the short to medium-term, the sustainability and further development of initiatives and systems developed or strengthened by the project such as SMART patrolling, the Community Guardians and Community Guards programmes and the CF programme in Htamanthi will likely depend on additional donor support. While government investment in PAs has increased, much of this investment continues to be to expand staffing and support staff salaries. PA expansion and strengthening of the management of existing PAs will also require additional external support in the foreseeable future. Some steps are being taken to develop sustainable financing mechanisms by the FD through the project such as exploring the options for establishing a Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund (MBCF). MONREC is also looking at mechanisms such as PES, while the Environmental Management Fund (EMF), which is mandated by law, is being developed through ECD with support from UNDP, WWF and other partners (Section 4.2.1/Outcome 1). However, these will take time to establish and start generating revenue, particularly PES schemes, while PA entrance fees and ecotourism are unlikely to become a significant income stream in the medium-term. Furthermore, as noted in 4.2.2, legal and administrative systems need to be in place to allow PAs to retain and reinvest revenues. Developing a financial strategy for the PA system (Project Output 1.4) is a critical first step to clarifying PA system financing needs, objectives and options. As stressed earlier, this should be completed by the project without further delay as much of information is already available.

237. The MBCF hold considerable potential for generating additional resources for biodiversity conservation and PA management, but much still remains to be clarified and agreed, including its purpose, scope, the fund design, target income, potential sources of revenue, location of the fund, likely management costs, funding modalities and potential beneficiaries. Scoping work has been initiated and must be sufficiently comprehensive scoping in order to answer these questions. Scoping should also include discussions with other pertinent stakeholders such as the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Central Bank and the Attorney General's Office. A detailed scoping exercise has already been undertaken for the EMF. Although the latter differs from the MBCF in that it will be a government fund and its establishment is mandated by law, it may also offer valuable insights for the development of the MBCF. Greater clarity is also needed on how the EMF and the MBCF will complement each other.

238. The project team and partners are fully aware of the challenges to developing long-term sustainable financing for Myanmar's PA system. WCS has a long-standing commitment to biodiversity conservation and effective PAs in Myanmar and has thus far been very successful in raising project funds from a variety of donors. The FD too has raised considerable bilateral and multilateral funding (Section 4.3.3). However, it will be necessary to also look at alternative sources of funding, including potentially from the private sector. Business plans are being developed for at least three of the project sites. These will provide further clarity on the financing needs and sources.
239. It would also be worthwhile to explore opportunities for financing community-related initiatives such as the CF programme and Community Guardians programmes through microfinance or other sector government funding schemes and budgets i.e. outside the FD. This is an area where UNDP's experience could prove very helpful and where there may be synergies with on-going work supported by UNDP or other partner UN agencies. For example, it may be useful to connect with UNCDF and PACT International and others who have undertaken microfinance initiatives in Myanmar. Options for partnering with others with experience in mobilizing resources for community development may also be useful.
240. Opportunities under REDD+ including UN REDD and the Green Climate Fund could also be explored. Myanmar has also asked UNDP for assistance to become one of the countries implementing UNDP's BIOFIN approach²⁸ to mobilizing additional resources for biodiversity conservation.

4.4.2 Socio-economic risks

241. Socio-economic risks to PA expansion are flagged in the project's Environmental and Social Screening (Project Document/Annex 11) and have been discussed at length in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.2.1. Additionally, there remain serious threats to Myanmar's biodiversity and the integrity of natural ecosystems including in its PAs due to illegal hunting, logging, mining and other forms of resource extraction. There are also risks associated with unplanned economic development, particularly the development of infrastructure in remote parts of the country. These threats can only be addressed by overcoming the underlying inter-related problems of poverty, conflict and natural resource governance.
242. At present, there is little ownership of project outcomes by local communities in most project sites and indeed, outright opposition at present by some communities in Hkakaborazi. The situation in Hukaung is beyond the scope of the project to overcome but reflects the challenges facing PA establishment and effective management in Myanmar. The project's experience at Htamanthi shows that there is good potential for developing community participation and support for conservation and PAs when there is sufficient investment, the right site-specific incentives and government

²⁸ <http://www.biodiversityfinance.net/>

support. As noted in Section 4.3.3, there has been little financial investment in community engagement to date compared to the amounts spent on SMART patrolling and biological surveys, which are far more resource intensive in terms of time, money and human resources. It is worth considering whether additional resources should be allocated towards community engagement going forward to strengthen local support for conservation although careful thought will need to be given to ensuring that investments will generate meaningful results before the project ends.

243. There is generally strong ownership over the project by MONREC at the national level and by the FD at national and subnational levels in Kachin and Sagaing, and capacity gaps are being systematically addressed through collaborative efforts between NWCD, the project, WWF and other partners. Capacity development of PA staff will likely be sustained as a result of the institutionalization of training courses and curricula in MFS and UoFES as well as the new certificate course being developed by NWCD (Section 4.2.1/Outcome 1).
244. Ownership of project outcomes by other government sectors may be increasing as a result of the PAMCC mechanism although this needs further strengthening through better messaging and the inclusion of local community representation (Section 4.3.4 and 4.3.7). While the FD also recognizes the benefits of the PAMCC, in the short-term, additional external support may still be needed for these to continue to function effectively. There is also greater government openness towards community participation in conservation, which needs to be leveraged more strategically. Recent developments in national legislation, for example, are paving the way for greater community engagement on biodiversity conservation and PA management (Section 4.2.1/Outcome 1). The MTR discussed a number of ways in which the project could pilot new strategies for operationalizing some of the community-related elements of the new policy.
245. Replicating and scaling up successful approaches will remain a challenge in the short-term, given on-going financial, human resource and capacity constraints across Myanmar. Developing greater public understanding of the many benefits of conservation as well as ownership the national PA system would also strengthen long-term sustainability. This should be included in the project communication strategy, which should also make use of the tools and different entry points available to UNDP and the FD. In general, there is need to better document good practices and lessons from the project that are relevant to managing or mitigating socio-economic risks in and around PAs (such as the VCPs, VUZPs and the PLUPs and other community mobilization strategies used by the project) and to communicate these more effectively to different audiences. Indeed, there are valuable lessons to be extracted and shared from the recent experience in Hkakaborazi as well as from Hukaung Valley.

4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks

246. One of most serious risks to PAs in Myanmar are the many conflicts over governance of land and other resources and a lack of clarity and agreement on how to deal with customary claims to land and other resources. This has serious implications for existing PAs (e.g. Hukaung) as well as for the further expansion of the PA system (Section 4.2.1/Outcome 1). Land classified as ‘Vacant, Fallow or Virgin’ (regardless of actual land use on the ground) is especially vulnerable to conversion to other uses as it can be given for commercial development by government. Buffer areas around PAs often contain such land limiting the options available for community development and engagement as there is no security of tenure over such land. A National Land Use Policy (NLUP) that sought address some of these issues was published in early 2016 after extensive and unprecedented public consultation. However, this is yet to be formally adopted by the government. This in turn has delayed development of the proposed umbrella national Land Law.
247. It is difficult to predict precisely how these risks will affect individual PAs as much depends on the site-specific circumstances. However, the project is well aware of these risks as WCS is a member of the Land Core Group²⁹, which works on land governance issues. These risks are thus generally taken into account by the project when planning local interventions. The new law on Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs, which will greatly strengthen the institutional framework for PA establishment and management, will also potentially create new opportunities for resolving land use conflicts for example through local community PAs – a new category of PAs. Much depends on the interpretation of the law through the rules and regulations that are finally approved to guide its implementation, although there is much the project can do to develop and disseminate best practice to support effective implementation of the new law (Section 4.2.1). Harmonization of land laws and administration will still be needed. New opportunities will also arise as the peace process progresses.

4.4.4 Environmental risks

248. The project is reducing environmental risks overall by seeking to maintain biodiversity, natural habitats and ecosystem services through an ecologically representative and viable PA network. There are always climate-related risks to individual PAs, but these are not likely impact the entire system. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) is another potential environment risk and one about which very little is known. The most serious known medium to long-term risk, however, is climate change, which can cause more widespread and cascading ecological impacts through disruption of hydrological cycles, rainfall patterns, temperature and other weather-related variables. A PA system that has taken potential climate change impacts into account in its design and coverage is likely to be more resilient and a valuable risk mitigation measure that will

²⁹ <http://lcmyanmar.org/en/>

benefit not just biodiversity but also continued human wellbeing and economic activities.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Project strategy and relevance

249. An ecologically representative, viable network of well-managed PAs remains the cornerstone of all national and international efforts to conserve global biodiversity and the ecosystem services that underpin life on earth. Thus, this GEF-5 PA project remains as relevant today as it was when it was first conceived, if not more so, given the on-going threats to Myanmar's biodiversity and ecosystem services and the further biodiversity losses that are likely as the country continues to develop economically. The project design is well-aligned with national policy objectives and builds on WCS's considerable national (and international) experience in strengthening biodiversity conservation and PA management and working closely with the FD. There is thus strong country ownership of the project by MONREC and close cooperation in the delivery of project results by the FD at national and subnational levels, led by NWCD.
250. The implementation experience of the last two and a half years has however shown that socio-economic barriers and risks to further PA system expansion may have been underestimated at the time of project design. Many of the delays and challenges faced by the project, particularly in relation to Outcome 2, are directly or indirectly related to on-going and new conflicts between ethnic minorities and government over land and natural resources, as in Hukaung Valley and Hkakaborazi, respectively. The slow pace of fully gazetting proposed PAs is partly due to the complex land settlement processes involved in establishing new PAs. There are also growing calls for new approaches to PAs that take into account customary claims on land and natural resources by ethnic minorities and other communities (Section 4.1.1). Given these factors, it may be challenging to meet the project's stated target of expanding the terrestrial PA system by 10% (or even the MNBSAP 2020 goal of 8%) by the end of the project.
251. MTR findings suggest that the project strategy needs to give greater attention to the socio-economic dimensions of PA planning, governance and management. It was clear from discussions and interviews with the Project Team, the FD and UNDP showed that the project partners understand the concerns of indigenous people and other local communities and recognize that these need to be taken into account more effectively in further PA planning and management. Indeed, the new Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs Law is a step in this direction: once approved, this will create new opportunities for local communities to benefit from PAs and engage in their management. Much depends on the rules and regulations that are eventually adopted

to guide the implementation of the new law. Realizing these opportunities will also take time, effort, and systematic engagement of multiple stakeholders. The PA project is already generating lessons and good practice from its site-based work that can provide invaluable guidance to strengthening community engagement in biodiversity conservation and PA management. This is an area where there is also good potential synergy with UNDP Myanmar's new Country Programme and where UNDP's co-financing could be used strategically to enhance the delivery of both CP and project objectives, notably through the GRSP.

252. Additionally, given the changes in the implementation context, the unanticipated delays and challenges, and a remaining implementation timeframe of 2-3 years, the project will have to scale back its ambition and prioritize the interventions and investments that are most likely to deliver significant and sustainable impacts by the end of the project, for example, through continued institutional capacity development, strengthened community engagement and efforts to increase the financial sustainability of the PA system.
253. Finally, the existing project Results Framework (which has not been updated since the project was approved) requires a major overhaul to ensure that indicators, baselines and targets are sufficiently 'SMART' and can capture project progress in a meaningful and objective manner. Assumptions and risks also need to be updated and comprehensively documented, particularly risks, which need to be better monitored, managed, and where possible, mitigated.

5.1.2 Progress Towards Results

254. Despite the delays and implementation challenges faced, the project had made good progress in important areas by February 2018, in effectively less than two years of implementation. Therefore, progress towards Outcomes 1 and 2 has been rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.
255. Significant achievements under **Outcome 1**, which seeks to strengthen the policy, institutional and financial frameworks for PAs, include: the new Conservation of Biodiversity and PAs law, which includes provisions that address some of the key policy areas targeted by the project; improvements in institutional capacity at national and subnational levels; progress in developing and institutionalizing new PA management-related training courses, including a certificate course that enables successful participants to enter a promotion track that will also be open to women for the first time in Myanmar; a 25% increase in real terms in the national budget for PAs since 2013-14; and preliminary work to establish an independent Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund alongside the MONREC's Environmental Management Fund. Another significant achievement is the establishment of the PAMCCs at state/regional, district and township levels, which provide a mechanism for strengthening multisector dialogue and cooperation. However, one limitation is that

there is currently no local community representation in the PAMCCs. There is also need to clarify the legal status of buffer zones and rationalize approaches towards these, as this is one of the key indicators for Output 1.1 in the Project Results Framework (Table 9). This is particularly important, since under the new law on Conservation of Biodiversity and PAs the Forest Department is considering allowing co-management and community conservation areas in PA 'buffer zones', i.e. in land neighbouring the PA but not under the control of the Forest Department. Ideally, the rules being developed under this new law would allow for the creation of buffer zones with a clear legal status and a consistent approach towards such areas across the country. However, doing so through the rules to the new Biodiversity Law may be challenging at this stage given the number of other government departments who would need to be consulted. A more practical or achievable measure in the lifetime of the project may be to develop a standardized approach to establishing and managing buffer zones on a case by case basis by developing a Forest Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or FD instruction on PA buffer zone management and use.

256. Results under **Outcome 2**, which focuses on the site-level interventions at the four project demonstration sites, have been more mixed. Assessing progress has also been complicated by weaknesses in indicators and data limitations. Nevertheless, METT scores have improved in all sites except Hukaung Valley, where these have understandably declined given the conflict situation. Progress has been greatest in Htamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary, where the project has made greatest investment to date. While still at a relatively early stage, the MTR was extremely impressed by the project's work on community engagement in Htamanthi, including the impacts and potential of the three models that are being piloted here: the Community Guards, Community Guardians and Community Forests programmes. The first two programmes provide much needed additional capacity to the FD in terms of both boots on the ground and training. All three programmes have reportedly improved relations and cooperation between the FD and local communities, which in turn is helping to control and reduce illegal activities in the Sanctuary. It proved difficult, however, to measure the actual impact of the improved cooperation and other project interventions in terms of threat reduction and habitat and wildlife status because of challenges of using and interpreting SMART patrolling data. It is also a little early to assess the project's impact on wildlife and natural habitats as some baselines have only recently been established and more time is generally needed to assess the impact of management interventions on ecological parameters. Also noteworthy is the establishment of the Htamanthi Research and Training Centre, primarily through co-financing raised by WCS and the FD. This is yet another indication of the long-term commitment of both WCS and the FD to strengthening Myanmar's PA system.
257. The scale of project impacts at the demonstration sites is still relatively small, however, as work has been suspended in Hukaung Valley and Hkakaborazi, while activities in Hponkanrazi could only begin once FD park staff were in place, which only happened

in December 2017. Nevertheless, preliminary results in Htamanthi provide an indication of the kinds of impacts that are possible with sustained engagement on different fronts. It is critical that this engagement now takes place in Hponkanrazi and that the current impasse in Hkakaborazi is urgently resolved so that implementation can be resumed albeit adapted to the changed circumstances. Indeed, the situation in Hkakaborazi presents an opportunity for the project to further test and develop effective community engagement processes for PA planners and managers by identifying and implementing appropriate strategies to rebuild trust and re-engage local communities. Community engagement processes will need to be adapted to site-specific circumstances, e.g. the Community Forestry option that is proving popular in Htamanthi is not something that appeals to communities in Hkakaborazi and Hponkanrazi who aspire to greater control over customary land and resources than is possible through the relatively short-term CF leases.

258. The new Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas law holds great potential for increasing community engagement in conservation in Myanmar in diverse ways, including through co-managed areas within PA buffer zones and the establishment of Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Territories and Areas (ICCAs). Globally, community engagement in conservation and ICCAs are recognized as making a valuable contribution to the achievement of the CBD's Aichi Target 11.³⁰ Similarly, such areas could significantly contribute to strengthening Myanmar's national PA system by not only increasing the total area of its PA estate but also strengthening connectivity between PAs and thereby increasing their overall ecological and climate resilience. Canada, for example, has committed to work with its indigenous peoples, local communities and other stakeholders to increase the area of its terrestrial and inland freshwater under protection from 10.5% to 17% by 2020.³¹

259. The recent IPCC Special Report to the UNFCCC, the so-called '1.5 degree report'³², has also made clear that sustainable management of forests and other lands is key to achieving the Paris Agreement and preventing catastrophic climate change. The next 12 years are critical to averting dangerous climate change. A recent study has also found that the lands managed by indigenous peoples and local communities can make a major contribution to our climate goals as well as to other SDGs. The work of the Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance (CLARA)³³ also puts forward suggestions specifically for the land sector to advance our climate, biodiversity and other

³⁰ "Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape." <https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/rationale/target-11/>

³¹ <http://www.conservation2020canada.ca/home/>

³² <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>

³³ <https://carillon-pineapple.squarespace.com/report>

sustainable development ambitions through a rights-based multi-stakeholder approach designed to meet multiple goals.

260. Community engagement in conservation and ICCAs come in many different forms globally reflecting the diversity and complexity of the formal and informal interactions between people and nature and the socio-political, economic, cultural and environmental contexts in which these interactions occur.³⁴ ICCAs can be part of a national PA system and/or complementary to it depending on individual country circumstances. What is clear, however, is that ICCAs must be demarcated, documented and be legally recognized in such a way that communities, including indigenous peoples, have security over tenure over land and natural resources, are able to engage in their customary practices, and have a real say in decision-making. In the project context, clarity over PA buffer zones is particularly important for successful community engagement in natural resource governance and sustainable use and to deliver the community engagement models envisaged under the project's Output 2.3. Additionally, communities and ICCAs will often continue to need external support from other stakeholders to ensure equitable and sustainable use of natural resources to complement traditional decision-making institutions and knowledge and ensure that vulnerable and marginalized groups are also included and benefited.

261. The specific modality for community engagement must thus be tailored to the local context and founded on a detailed understanding of both this context and the current and historical patterns of natural resource use and governance including any inequalities in these patterns. Ideally, such knowledge should be used to develop a theory of change towards the project's desired outcomes at the local level and the most appropriate pathway to these, given the available inputs (resources, time, partners, etc.).

262. As noted earlier (Paras 176-180), the Project Team is already using several internationally recognized good practices for community engagement in Htamanthi, to build trust and understand the local context, including community problems, development aspirations and opportunities. These include the Village Consultation Process (VCP) and the Village Use Zoning Process (VUZP) and other well-known participatory research and engagement tools such as wealth ranking, land use mapping and resource use. This has led to the identification of Community Forestry as the appropriate model to pilot in this site.

263. The Project Team has also established that Community Forestry would not be an appropriate approach in other project demonstration sites (Para 180). However, such participatory tools can still be used effectively in other sites for a multi-stakeholder situation analysis and problem diagnosis, trust building and to identify viable outcomes for each site and strategies to achieve these. Building trust will be key in areas with on-going conflict such as Hkakaborazi and the proposed Southern Extension. There

³⁴ E.g. see <http://www.iccaregistry.org/en/about/iccas>

are many experts in Myanmar who can provide guidance on effective multi-stakeholder trust-building strategies and activities given the on-going national peace process.

264. Overall the project has invested significantly fewer resources in community engagement relative to other components as highlighted earlier (Paras 208 & 209). In 2016 and 2017, expenditure on Output 2.2 (SMART patrolling) was more than six times higher than expenditure on Output 2.3 (community participation pilots): USD 983,000 vs USD 159,000. Given the many socio-economic and political risks to the sustainability of project results and to Myanmar's PA system generally, greater investment in these aspects could be beneficial. However, the project is already over half way through its implementation period, so there is need to be strategic in how this done. It would be a major achievement if the participatory processes tested by the project in Htamanthi and other sites could be further developed and institutionalized in the land settlement processes that are integral to the PA gazettement process. This would require wider uptake of these processes within government, notably by the GAD. Awareness generation through the PAMCC and training focused on developing capacity within government the socio-economic and governance dimensions of PA establishment and management, including specific tools for participatory land and resource mapping and planning, could also be some practical steps that the project could undertake in the remaining implementation period. This could also be a mechanism for gradual inclusion of local community representation in the PAMCCs.

265. The project may also benefit from consulting the work of IUCN's Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) and its Global Programme on Governance and Rights (GPGR)³⁵ as this seeks to strengthen a rights-based approach to natural resource governance, with particular attention to indigenous peoples, gender and women's empowerment and also includes support of SDG implementation. Amongst other work, CEESP has proposed a Natural Resource Governance Framework (NRGF), which aims to provide a *"robust, inclusive, and credible approach to assessing and strengthening natural resource governance, at multiple levels and in diverse contexts"*. The overarching goal of the NRGF is to: *"set standards and guidance for decision-makers at all levels to make better and more just decisions on the use of natural resources and the distribution of nature's benefits, following good governance principles, such that improved governance will enhance the contributions of ecosystems and biodiversity to equity and sustainability."*³⁶ A variety of tools and knowledge products can be found through the NRGF working group and website.

266. IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and the CBD website are also good sources of information on international good practice on community engagement, different PA models and natural resource governance more generally

³⁵ <https://www.iucn.org/theme/governance-and-rights>

³⁶ <https://www.iucn.org/commissions/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/our-work/knowledge-baskets/natural-resource-governance>

through its Best Practice Guidelines and PARKS journal as well as other resources. Although now quite old, the 2004 Best Practice Guideline on *“Indigenous and local communities and protected areas: towards equity and enhanced conservation”* still contains useful guidance on general principles and approaches to community co-managed areas as does the special 2006 PARKS issue on community conserved areas.

267. Finally, effective community engagement and the development of well-functioning co-managed conservation areas and ICCAs is a long-term process that requires the commitment and investment of time and resources by multiple stakeholders that extends well beyond the life of this project. This process is likely to be particularly complex in a country like Myanmar which is the process of multiple transitions as noted in UNDP’s Country Programme Document for 2018-2022. UNDP and the other project partners should identify ways to continue to sustain and build on promising project results and impacts beyond the life of this project as part of its exit strategy.

268. Progress towards the overall **project objective** of strengthening the national terrestrial PA system through enhanced representation, management effectiveness, monitoring and enforcement and financing has also been rated as **Moderately Satisfactory** because of the slow rate of PA network expansion in terms of both area and ecological representation (Indicator 1), and because forest cover change in the project demonstration sites could not be satisfactorily assessed due to uncertainties over the reliability of the methodology and data (Indicator 2) (Section 4.2.1). Greatest progress has been in the area of increasing the financial sustainability of the PA system (Indicator 3), as reflected in: the increase in the Financial Sustainability Scorecard score; the increase in national government funding for PAs; and the preliminary work on new options for long-term financing of biodiversity conservation and PAs. However, a system-wide PA financing strategy is still to be developed and it is doubtful whether this can be piloted effectively before the end of the project as envisaged in the project strategy.

5.1.3 Project implementation & Adaptive Management

269. Overall project implementation and adaptive management is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**. Implementation has faced numerous delays due to reasons outside the project’s control. However, there has been good cooperation between all the partners to overcome these difficulties and implementation has accelerated since 2017 as a result. WCS has put in place a highly motivated and dedicated project team and there is also strong engagement by the FD and NWCD at national and subnational levels. Compliance with UNDP, MONREC and GEF rules and procedures is generally good, including financial management and procurement requirements. Both NWCD and WCS also raised significant additional co-financing for the project since the time of CEO endorsement, including grant co-financing which is contributing directly to the delivery of project results. However, the MTR identified several areas that needed to

be improved in relation to project management arrangements, M&E systems, reporting, communication and adaptive management processes. These include strengthening certain aspects of UNDP's support to the project, as well as ensuring greater high-level oversight and strategic guidance by the Project Board.

270. Project implementation and adaptive management would be greatly strengthened overall by developing the capacity of senior project staff. Areas for capacity development include developing the ability for critical analysis and monitoring and reporting on higher-level results and impacts against Results Framework indicators rather than at the activity level, and for harmonizing and integrating reporting across different reporting formats (e.g. PIRs, QRs, tracking tools etc.). Project staff also need a better understanding of how to integrate gender considerations into project activities, M&E and reporting. The project team is committed to good stakeholder engagement, but clearly faces challenges with communities in some areas, as well as with some government stakeholders (i.e. outside the FD). It is therefore important for the project to update its original Stakeholder Involvement Plan and to develop a Communication Strategy that identifies the most effective ways of communicating with different target audiences and appropriate messaging. These are all areas in which UNDP has particular expertise and should therefore be able to support and guide the project team.

5.1.4 Sustainability

271. The project is making good progress on strengthening institutional capacity for PA planning and management as well as working towards greater multisector dialogue and cooperation at subnational levels through the PAMCC mechanism. The new law on Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs also has the potential to enhance the sustainability of project outcomes as it includes provisions for developing new sources of PA financing and additional categories of PAs such as local community PAs. However, there are still several risks to the overall sustainability of project outcomes as detailed in Section 4.4, which has therefore been rated as Moderately Likely (ML). In the short-term, additional financing will be needed to maintain, replicate and scale up successful site-based interventions such as SMART patrolling, biological surveys and the Community Guards, Community Guardians and Community Forestry programmes. As new sources of PA financing are unlikely by the end of the project, and government funding is primarily to cover salaries and basic PA operations, alternative sources of funding will be needed to sustain these programmes as well as the PAMCC meetings. SMART patrolling and biological surveys are especially resource intensive but also important given the magnitude of on-going threats to Myanmar's biodiversity and PAs, which is too great to be addressed by a single short-term project. Replication and scale up will also be a challenge without additional funding.

272. The socio-economic risks to the project's outcomes have already been highlighted, particularly with respect to achieving the project's overall objective of expanding the geographic and ecological coverage of the terrestrial PA system. There is an opportunity for the project to test strategies for overcoming these risks in the project demonstration sites for example by strengthening local ownership of project outcomes. Preliminary results from Htamanthi indicate that there is potential for developing community support for conservation and PAs when there is sufficient investment, the right site-specific incentives, and strong government support. The impacts in Htamanthi are especially noteworthy given that the project has spent six times as much on SMART patrolling and biological monitoring under Output 2.2 as on community participation models under Output 2.3. A key question for project partners to consider is whether it may be more cost-effective to allocate additional resources to community engagement although this would need to be carefully planned and monitored to ensure that meaningful results can be achieved before the project ends.
273. Given these risks to sustainability, it is essential for the project to develop an exit strategy that puts forward options for sustaining and building on successful project outcomes. Guidance from the Project Board and support from UNDP will also be critical for developing the exit strategy. Sustainability is also likely to be enhanced by extending the project implementation period by up to a year to make up for the delays outside the project's control and to allow the project to generate additional results. This will also allow the project to implement any course corrections and other changes arising from this MTR more effectively.

5.2 Recommendations

274. Ten overall recommendations supported by a set of key actions are presented below together with an indication of the partners responsible (i.e. with ultimate management responsibility) for the action, relative priority and ideal timeframe for completion. Although over 50 actions are listed below, some will be relatively easy and quick to complete, while others are more complex and will require more time and resources. Recommendations 1, 8 and 9 include a series of corrective actions to strengthen the design, monitoring, governance and adaptive management of the project. Recommendations 2 to 6 focus on actions to enhance the delivery of results under Outcomes 1 and 2, reinforce initial benefits and pre-empt and reduce potential risks. Actions listed under Recommendations 7 and 10 are designed to strengthen long-term sustainability of project results as well as further replication and scale up after the end of the project. Altogether, 27/51 actions are identified as 'High priority' because they are considered to be particularly critical to either the delivery and sustainability of project outcomes and/or effective project monitoring and management.

<p>Recommendation 1 (R1): Undertake a comprehensive, participatory and strategic review of the project design and Results Framework in order to adapt the project to changes in the implementation context, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reducing the overall scope of work ▪ prioritizing interventions that are likely to have greatest sustainable impact by the end of the project; ▪ ensuring that project progress and impacts can be measured systematically; ▪ updating project risks and assumptions; and ▪ systematically recording all major changes to the original project design in the Project Document. 			
<p>Relevant to: Project Strategy, Implementation & Adaptive Management, Outcomes 1 & 2, Sustainability</p>			
<p>Responsible entities: Project Team (PT)/WCS, UNDP, FD</p>			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
<p>R1.1: Review, clarify and/or revise objective and outcome level indicators, baselines and targets and ensure these are sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (i.e. SMART) and that baselines, risk and assumptions are accurate and up to date. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise all Objective Indicators, baselines & targets; ▪ Revise Outcome Indicators 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, and 2.4 and associated baselines & targets; and ▪ Develop a Theory of Change for the project (if time and resources permit) as a capacity development exercise for the Project Team & partners and translating the Results Framework into the Myanmar language <p>See Section 4.1.2 and Annex 7 for specific recommendations on revising RF objectives, outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines & targets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	As soon as possible
<p>R1.2: Reduce scope of Outcome 1 by formally dropping planned work on national land use planning (Indicator 1.1a) and coastal governance (Indicator 1.1d)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP ▪ FD ▪ Project Board 	Medium	As soon as possible
<p>R1.3: Add specific indicators for Output 1.4 (a PA system sustainable financing strategy) and Output 2.1 (strengthened management of demonstration PAs through business plans) to ensure progress on these are monitored systematically through the PIRs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ Project Board 	High	As soon as possible
<p>R1.4: Consider undertaking a socio-economic mapping of terrestrial ecosystems as an input to PA systems planning to integrate with the ecological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NPM ▪ NPD ▪ UNDP 	High	2018

gap analysis undertaken under Output 1.6 if time and resources permit			
R1.5: Update the Environmental and Social Screening undertaken at the time of project approval using the more recent UNDP Social and Environment Screening Procedure (SESP) and ensure that risks reporting including mitigation and management strategies, is harmonized across different processes such as the PIR, QRs and UNDP Risk and Issues Log.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT/WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	As soon as possible
R1.6 Exclude Hukaung Valley WS from further mandatory monitoring and reporting against Results Framework indicators and targets with approval from the Project Board. <i>Note: Cost-effectiveness of project activities in Hukaung Valley should continue to be monitored by WCS, UNDP and the Project Board</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCS ▪ FD ▪ UNDP ▪ Project Board 		Next PB meeting
R1.7: Given delays and other implementation challenges outside the project's control, request a one-year no-cost extension from the GEF via UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCS ▪ FD ▪ UNDP ▪ Project Board 		PIR 2018

Recommendation 2 (R2): Prioritize policy-related interventions that are critical to both scale up and sustainability of project impacts and achievable within the available project timeframe, capacity and other resources			
Relevant to: Outcome 1, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: Project Team/WCS, NWCD, FD			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R2.1: Provide inputs to the rules and regulations that will be developed by the FD to guide the implementation of the new law on Biodiversity & Conservation of PAs to ensure these address key project targets under Outcome 1 (Output 1.1a, 1.1c and 1.1e in particular).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT /WCS ▪ NPD 	High	2018
R2.2: Develop a Forest Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or instruction on PA buffer zone management and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ NWCD ▪ FD 	Medium	PIR 2019
R2.3: Use project knowledge, experience and tools such as the Village Consultation Process (VCP), the Village Use Zoning Process (VUZP) and the Participatory Land Use Plan (PLUP) to develop a Forest Department SOP and/or instruction on best practices for assessing, recording and managing customary uses and rights in relation to PAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ NWCD ▪ FD 	Medium	PIR 2019

R2.4: Building on the existing 2016 FD instruction on Community Forests, develop an SOP on effective stakeholder engagement to establish Community Forests in PA buffer zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ NWCD ▪ FD 	Medium	PIR 2019
R2.5: Consider developing an SOP or best practice guidelines for establishing and managing a community PA under the forthcoming new law on Biodiversity and Conservation of PAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ NWCD/FD 	Medium	PIR 2020

Recommendation 3 (R3): Consolidate and streamline capacity development activities and assess their relative impact and cost-effectiveness			
Relevant to: Outcome 1, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: UNDP, FD, WCS			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R3.1: Review and finalize draft capacity development strategy and roadmap for NWCD and present to Project Board for approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ NWCD / FD 	Medium	2018
R3.2: Assess the relative value and cost-effectiveness of different types of capacity development activities under Output 1.3, particularly the delivery of one-off trainings, the development of new training courses and the institutionalization of new training courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP ▪ FD 	Medium	2018
R3.3: Obtain feedback on the new certificate and non-certificate training courses and curricula developed by the project from the key government counterparts involved (CFTDC, NWCD, PA staff, MFS, UoFES,)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP ▪ PB 	Medium	2018
R3.4: Ensure complementarity between the proposed Myanmar Wildlife College and the new training courses developed by the project that will be delivered through existing institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NWCD/FD ▪ PB 	Medium	2018

Recommendation 4 (R4): Prioritize work on strengthening financial sustainability of the PA system and of the demonstration PAs			
Relevant to: Outcome 1 & 2, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: Project Team / FD			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R4.1: Prepare the draft sustainable financing strategy for the PA system, building on the considerable secondary information on PA financing needs that exists already and integrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	2018

with the development of MONREC's broader environmental financing strategy through GRSP			
R4.2: Integrate business plans for demonstration PAs into the system-wide sustainable financing strategy developed through the project (R4.1)	▪ PT / WCS	High	2018-19
R4.3: Finalize and produce a report of the comprehensive scoping undertaken for the Myanmar Biodiversity Conservation Fund, building on scoping work undertaken for the Environmental Management Fund.	▪ PT / WCS	High	2018
R4.4: With support from UNDP and potentially the PAMCCs, explore options for sustaining promising community engagement models such as CF applications in Htamanthi, Village Use Zoning and Land Use Planning, including microfinance schemes or funding available through other government departments	▪ PT ▪ UNDP ▪ FD	High	2018-19

Recommendation 5 (R5): Strengthen the sustainability of key project strategies to improve management effectiveness of demonstration PAs (Hkakaborazi, Hponkanrazi and Htamanthi)			
Relevant to: PT, FD, NWCD			
Responsible entities:			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R5.1: Increase project investment in community participation models (Output 2.3) which is currently very low relative to investment in SMART patrolling.	▪ NPM ▪ NPD ▪ UNDP ▪ PB	High	2018 onwards
R5.2 Develop and implement strategies to overcome current problems in Hkakaborazi related to the World Heritage nomination through stakeholder engagement and trust-building activities	▪ FD ▪ WCS ▪ UNDP ▪ PB	High	As soon as possible
R5.3: Complete business plans for demonstration PAs and link to system-wide PA financing strategy. <i>Note:</i> Ecotourism plan for Hkakaborazi should be integrated in the PA's business plan.	▪ PT/WCS ▪ FD	Medium	2018
R5.4: Identify and implement strategies to improve the quality, analysis and use of SMART patrolling data to monitor threat reduction and other parameters relevant to PA management effectiveness	▪ PT/WCS ▪ FD	High	2018

Recommendation 6 (R6): Strengthen and expand community engagement on PA management			
Relevant to: Outcome 2, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: Project Team, WCS, NWCD, FD, UNDP			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R6.1: Update the original Community Participation Strategy to reflect the needs of ethnic minorities and other marginalized or disadvantaged groups as well as the gender dimension, and adapt to the site-specific conditions in each project demonstration site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT/WCS ▪ UNDP 	Medium	2018
R6.2: Identify strategies to include community representatives in the PAMCCs and ensure their effective participation in PAMCC meetings at different levels starting with the township PAMCCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ UNDP ▪ FD 	High	2018
R6.3: Build on lessons from Hukaung Valley and Htamanthi to develop and initiate Community Guards and Guardians schemes for Hponkanrazi and Hkakaborazi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ FD 	High	2018
R6.4: Manage community expectations in Htamanthi by determining how many more CF applications can realistically be submitted before the project ends and how support to the CF User Groups will be sustained once the project ends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT /WCS 	Medium	2018
R6.5: Explore practical options for monitoring the impacts of community participation models piloted by the project on PA management effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS 	Medium	2018
R6.6: Strengthen integration of gender considerations into activities related to community engagement under Output 2.3 with support from UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP 	Medium	2018

Recommendation 7 (R7): Strengthen project ownership across key stakeholder groups at different levels, particularly at subnational level			
Relevant to: Outcomes 1 & 2, Implementation & Adaptive Management, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: WCS, UNDP, FD			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R7.1: Update original project Stakeholder Involvement Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT 	Medium	2018
R7.2: Develop a simple project Communication Strategy that identifies appropriate messaging for key target audiences to enhance project ownership and sustainability, including ways to effectively communicate the 'business case' for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT with guidance from UNDP 	Medium	2018

PAs and conservation i.e. the relevance of PAs and conservation to wider development objectives			
R7.3: Use PAMCC meetings and similar events to communicate project objectives and business case for conservation and PAs to non-FD government stakeholders in ways that will resonate with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT with support from UNDP 	On-going	2018 onwards
R7.4: Make the Community Guardians and Guards programmes a 'two-way' process by also sharing feedback on how the biological survey data and SMART patrolling data they collect are being used and incorporating their comments on how to make biological surveys and SMART patrolling more effective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS 	Medium	2018 onwards
R7.5: Leverage UNDP co-financing (e.g. through GRSP) and the UNDP Area Offices in Myitkyina and Mandalay to strengthen synergies between UNDP programmes and the project and to facilitate and strengthen wider subnational government engagement and support for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP 	Medium	2018 onwards

Recommendation 8 (R8): Clarify and strengthen project governance and implementation arrangements, including the ability of the Project Board to provide adequate strategic and technical oversight to the project.			
Relevant to: Project implementation & adaptive management, Sustainability			
Responsible entities:			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R8.1: Ensure the PB meets at least twice a year and more often if needed so that key project decisions are discussed and formally approved and recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NPM ▪ NPD ▪ UNDP 	High	2018 onwards
R8.2: Increase emphasis of project planning, monitoring and reporting on delivery of higher-level results and sustainable impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT/WCS, UNDP ▪ PB 	High	2018 onwards
R8.3: Clarify role and functions of the PMC including its relationship to the PB.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NPM ▪ NPD ▪ UNDP ▪ PB 	Medium	2018
R8.4: Clarify and document how TAGPA's role and functions as intended in the original project design are to be met. (These functions are to serve as a mechanism for providing technical support on PAs to the project and thereafter to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ NPD ▪ FD ▪ UNDP 	Medium	2018

NWCD and to update national stakeholders about project progress and sharing lessons.) This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewing membership of TAGPA to identify and fill any gaps in expertise relevant to PA planning, establishment and management ▪ Increasing efficiency by only involving a subset of relevant experts from TAGPA in technical consultations and events as needed on a case by case basis 			
R8.5: Ensure continuity in oversight of the project by UNDP and that the UNDP project focal point has the necessary technical and management skills to support the project effectively and to coordinate with government and other stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP ▪ PB 	High	2018 onwards
R8.6: Ensure all key strategic and adaptive management decisions regarding the project are formally approved and recorded at PB meetings (e.g the decision to scale back work at Hukaung Valley and Hkakaborazi.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCS ▪ UNDP ▪ FD ▪ PB 	High	2018 onwards

Recommendation 9 (R9): Strengthen project adaptive management and staff capacities, particularly with respect to gender mainstreaming, M&E, technical reporting and communication to different stakeholder groups			
Relevant to: Project implementation & adaptive management, Outcomes 1 & 2, Sustainability			
Responsible entities: NPM and other PT senior staff /WCS, UNDP			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R9.1: Increase staff capacity for monitoring, critical analysis and reporting on higher-level results and impacts rather than activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT/WCS, UNDP ▪ PB 	High	2018
R9.2: Provide additional training to senior project staff on the different reporting requirements, formats and processes (PIRs, QRs, tracking tools, scorecards, risk monitoring, etc.) to increase their understanding and ownership of these processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	As soon as possible
R9.3: Strengthen project staff capacity to integrate gender considerations into project activities and to monitor and report on the impacts of this going beyond numbers of men and women participants at events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UNDP 	High	2018
R9.4: Develop a simple project M&E strategy based on the Results Framework for the remainder of the project and ensure that there is periodic monitoring and reporting against this by key project team members (the Landscape and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NPM / WCS ▪ NPD ▪ UNDP 	High	2018

Site and Assistant Site Coordinators and Thematic Team Leaders)			
R9.5: Harmonize monitoring and reporting across different tools and processes including the PIRs, QRs, Risk Logs and Tracking Tools (i.e. the Capacity Development Scorecard, the Financial Sustainability Scorecard and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT ▪ UNDP 	High	2018 onwards
R9.6: Document lessons learned, best practices and develop some specific knowledge products based on project experiences in both English and Myanmar language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT/WCS ▪ UNDP 	Medium	2018 2019 2020
R9.7: Clarify roles and TORs of NPM and CTA in the project going forward, given changes in the circumstances of both (i.e. if NPM becomes WCS Myanmar Programme Director and if CTA unable to continue in his earlier role).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	As soon as possible

Recommendation 10 (R10): Strengthen replication and scale-up of project results			
Relevant to: Sustainability			
Responsible entities: PT/WCS, UNDP, FD			
Key actions	Responsible	Priority Level	Timeframe
R10.1: Identify the socio-economic and political barriers to further expansion of the terrestrial PA system as well as potential strategies to overcome these, as well as new approaches and opportunities for PA establishment and management (Section 4.1.1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ NWCD / FD ▪ UNDP 	High	2018-19
R10.2 Identify mechanisms to integrate socio-economic considerations alongside ecological criteria into PA planning, management and further expansion of the terrestrial PA system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ NWCD / FD UNDP 	High	2019
R10.3: Develop a project exit strategy that identifies options for continuing and scaling up key project results (e.g. on PA financing, SMART patrolling, Community Guards, Community Guardians, Community Forestry) at project demonstration sites and replicating successful strategies in other PAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PT / WCS ▪ UNDP 	High	2018-19
<i>Note: Recommendations 1-9 are, to varying degrees, also relevant to the sustainability of project outcomes.</i>			

6 ANNEXES

1. MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
2. MTR evaluative matrix and examples of questions used for data collection
3. Ratings Scales
4. MTR mission itinerary
5. List of persons interviewed
6. List of documents reviewed
7. Results Framework Analysis
8. Progress towards results matrix
9. Financial Capacity Scorecard
10. Capacity Development Scorecard
11. Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools
12. Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form Signed MTR final report clearance form
13. Annexed in a separate file: Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
14. Photos from the field