

# Closure Stage Quality Assurance Report

**Overall Project Rating:** Needs Improvement (The lessons learned report is required for all projects. See question 25)

**Project Number :** 00078743

**Project Title :** Support to Sustainable Environmental Management and Disaster Risk Management

**Project Date :** 01-Jan-2014

## Strategic

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

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

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

#### Evidence

The Project Steering Committees have met regularly to address and discuss any changes in the development context that might have affected the project implementation. No evidence seen that theory of change and RRF have been changed as a result.

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

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

#### Evidence

No explicit mentioning of Strategic Plan in project documents, however the link to UNDP 1 2013-2018, which in turn was linked to the Strategic Plan.

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

- Yes
- No

#### Evidence

No evidence seen that project's theory of change was changed during implementation.

#### Relevant

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

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

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

#### Evidence

Final evaluations showed a lack of capacity to systematically collect sample of beneficiaries, e.g. challenges for FONERWA to regularly follow up on the projects financially benefiting from the fund. For instance, key information such as the economic benefit from each investment was not included as part of the information beneficiaries were supposed to submit (Final Evaluation Report).

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

- 3: Knowledge and lessons learned (gained, for example, from Peer Assists, After Action Reviews or Lessons Learned Workshops) backed by credible evidence from evaluation, analysis and monitoring were regularly discussed in project board meetings and reflected in the minutes. There is clear evidence that the project's theory of change was adjusted, as needed, and changes were made to the project to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *Knowledge and lessons learned backed by relatively limited evidence, drawn mainly from within the project, were considered by the project team. There is some evidence that changes were made to the project as a result to ensure its continued relevance. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: There is limited or no evidence that knowledge and lessons learned were collected by the project team. There is little or no evidence that this informed project decision making.

#### Evidence

Yes, for PEI, through conducting an internal review half way through the project, led to re-prioritizing focus on outputs that could be adequately funded (PEI Completion Report). In general, regular technical meetings and Project Steering Committee meetings served as an important forum to discuss lessons learned from previous quarter systematically. Lessons learned from Final Evaluations have indeed informed the way forward in the next phase of the projects.

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

- 3: The project team systematically gathered data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. Analysis of data and evidence were used to inform adjustments and changes, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project team had some data and evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. There is evidence that at least some adjustments made, as appropriate. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The project team had limited or no evidence on the relevance of the special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women. No evidence that adjustments and/or changes were made, as appropriate. This option should also be selected if the project had no special measures in addressing gender inequalities and empowering women relevant to project results and activities.

#### Evidence

For both projects supporting capacity building of FONERWA and Supporting Ecosystem Rehabilitation and Protection for Pro-poor Green Growth Programme in Rwanda (SERPG), evidence in the final evaluation show that considerable impact to addressing gender inequalities were made and also achieved, with FONERWA supporting a majority of projects focused on gender (75%) and green jobs created through SERPG showed a good gender balance (around 58% of male and 42% of female) (Final Evaluation Reports).

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

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

#### Evidence

Final evaluations show proof that some initiatives indeed are considered for up-scaling, such as the Green Village initiative, which was piloted through the PEI project (PEI completion report). For FONERWA, the fund continues to mobilize more resources and gaining international recognition by receiving UNFCCC's award for climate change action in 2018 as well as hosting several south-south delegation to share experience and knowledge with other interested governments in Africa.

### Social & Environmental Standards

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

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

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

#### Evidence

The projects have at large targeted groups vulnerable to impacts on climate change. Through SERPG, green jobs that have been generating income for local communities have been created and through the capacity building support to FONERWA, the fund has provided support to 104,004 people (47,842 men and 56,162 women) to cope with effects of climate change. As most of projects count households rather than individuals; various activities were carried out in order to build and empower beneficiaries in terms of climate-adaptive capacities for them to be able to cope with effects of climate change (Final Evaluation reports).

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

- Yes
- No

#### Evidence

Addressing environmental risk and coping with effects of climate change as well as creating green jobs have been the main objective with the projects.

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

- Yes
- No

#### Evidence

The green jobs created for local communities through the SERPG project, did indeed generate income for households, however because they were on average time-bound and temporary, after the project, many beneficiaries went back to mainly providing a livelihood through subsistence farming activities (Final Evaluation Report).

### Management & Monitoring

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

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

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

#### Evidence

Internal reviews during the project implementation period were conducted as well as final evaluations. However, there is no records of reporting on project indicators on a regular and consistent way, e.g. in Atlas. In the narrative progress reports provided on a quarter basis, challenges and lessons learned were included.

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

- The project's governance mechanism operated very well, and is a model for other projects. It met in the agreed frequency stated in the project document and the minutes of the meetings are all on file. There was regular (at least annual) progress reporting to the project board or equivalent on results, risks and opportunities. It is clear that the project board explicitly reviewed and used evidence, including progress data, knowledge, lessons and evaluations, as the basis for informing management decisions (e.g., change in strategy, approach, work plan.) (all must be true to select this option)*
- The project's governance mechanism met in the agreed frequency and minutes of the meeting are on file. A project progress report was submitted to the project board or equivalent at least once per year, covering results, risks and opportunities. (both must be true to select this option)
- The project's governance mechanism did not meet in the frequency stated in the project document, and/or the project board or equivalent did not function as a decision making body for the project as intended.

#### Evidence

Yes, in the PEI project, following an internal review conducted in 2015/16 as a result of major cut in funds, the decision was made to re-prioritize among the outputs and narrow the scope in implementation since the budget cuts were substantial.

In the Strengthening Institutional Capacity of the Ministry of Natural Resources in Rwanda (SICM), huge budget cuts also affected project implementation to a much larger degree than anticipated at the design on the project. An internal review of the project addressed later, in June 2016, a realistic approach towards what was possible and more likely to bring more impact with the available resources.

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

- 3: The project actively monitored risks every quarter including consulting with key stakeholders at least annually to identify continuing and emerging risks to project implementation and to assess if the main assumptions remain valid. There is clear evidence that relevant management plans and mitigating measures were fully implemented to address each key project risk, and some evidence that risk mitigation has benefitted performance. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: The project monitored risks every quarter, as evidenced by a regularly updated risk log. Some updates were made to management plans and mitigation measures. (both must be true to select this option)*
- 1: The risk log was not updated every quarter as required. There may be some evidence that the project monitored risks that could have affected the project's achievement of results, but there is no explicit evidence that management actions were taken to mitigate risks. The project's performance was disrupted by factors that could have been anticipated or managed.

#### Evidence

No evidence that risk logs were updated, however, through the Project Steering Committee mechanism as well as regular progress reports relevant risks and challenges were addressed. In the final evaluation reports, several of the projects pointed to how the risk of sufficient available funds were underestimated, which later on affected project implementation. There was a cut in core resources in 2015, which affected the projects only funded with TRAC most severely. As pointed out in question 12, management decisions to mitigate the effects were made by the Project Steering Committee for the SICM project.

Efficient

Quality Rating: Needs Improvement

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

- Yes
- No

## Evidence

As mentioned in Q.12, several of the projects faced severe cuts in funding. However, adequate management decisions were made to re-prioritise among the planned outputs to ensure some continuity and achievement of result (PEI Completion Report). For FONERWA, which also faced cuts in funds, difficult conversations took place, however no amendment of the project document. Instead, as a result of, FONERWA managed to cope with the new budget and managed to keep all original outcomes within the obvious limits imposed by fewer resources (Final Evaluation Report).

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

3: The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. Implementation of the plan was generally on or ahead of schedule. On a quarterly basis, the project reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)

2: *The project had a procurement plan and kept it updated. The project annually reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs in a timely manner and addressed them through appropriate management actions. (all must be true to select this option)*

1: The project did not have an updated procurement plan. The project team may have reviewed operational bottlenecks to procuring inputs regularly, however management actions were not taken to address them. This option is also selected if operational bottlenecks were not reviewed during the project in a timely manner.

## Evidence

The project, as part of the quart work plans, monitored the procurement and implementation, albeit no separate procurement plan. Through the Project Steering Committee mechanism as well as technical meetings with the project teams, operational and technical bottlenecks were assessed and addressed on a regular basis.

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

3: There is evidence that the project regularly reviewed costs against relevant comparators (e.g., other projects or country offices) or industry benchmarks to ensure the project maximized results delivered with given resources. The project actively coordinated with other relevant ongoing projects and initiatives (UNDP or other) to ensure complementarity and sought efficiencies wherever possible (e.g. joint activities.) (both must be true to select this option)

2: *The project monitored its own costs and gave anecdotal examples of cost efficiencies (e.g., spending less to get the same result,) but there was no systematic analysis of costs and no link to the expected quality of results delivered. The project communicated with a few other projects to coordinate activities. (both must be true to select this option)*

1: There is little or no evidence that the project monitored its own costs and considered ways to save money beyond following standard procurement rules. It is not clear that the link between cost savings and quality of results was made.

## Evidence

The project cost were monitored on a regular basis through financial reporting back to the Project Steering Committees. As a consequence of the funding cuts, costs had to be monitored more carefully with assistance from the country office. However, final evaluations of the projects all pointed to a common challenge of monitoring and collecting data as planned.

Effective

Quality Rating: Highly Satisfactory

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

Yes

No

## Evidence

For the PEI project, notable contribution to the outcome was made through supporting improved systems for sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, including strengthened capacities for poverty-environment mainstreaming and coordination and increased public expenditure on environment and climate change, from 0.4% in 2009/10 to an estimated 6% in 2015/16. Moreover, catalyzing substantial mobilization of additional donor resources for poverty-environment related activities, especially through FONERWA, GEF and GCF. In addition, piloting Green Villages which have proven successful and cost effective in addressing poverty – environment challenges at community level, and have been replicated and upscaled by other actors and donors, including by government through the IDP model villages (PEI Completion Report). For FONERWA, UNDP capacity building support led to the fund mobilizing US\$ 129 million in 2018 and in turn to support to 104,004 people (47,842 men and 56,162 women) supported to cope with effects of climate change (Final Evaluation Report).

### 18. The project delivered its expected outputs.

- Yes
- No

## Evidence

Yes, albeit to a varying degree for the different projects. For PEI project, all outputs were considered achieved the end of the projects, whereas some outputs were affected by constraints faced in adequate resources as well as capacity to implement several project at once.

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

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

## Evidence

Yes, the projects' Steering Committee met on a quarter basis to review achievements made in the past quarter as well as approve the next quarter work plan. In this way reviews of the annual work plans were made to ensure that changes made were addressed as well as delays in project implementation mitigated.

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

- 3: Targeted groups were systematically identified using credible data sources on their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There is clear evidence to confirm that targeted groups were reached as intended. The project engaged regularly with targeted groups to assess whether they benefitted as expected and adjustments were made if necessary to refine targeting. (all must be true to select this option)
- 2: *The project targeted specific groups and/or geographic areas, based on some evidence of their capacity needs, deprivation and/or exclusion from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. Some evidence is provided to confirm that project beneficiaries were members of the targeted groups. There was some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected. (all must be true to select this option)*

- 1: The project did not report on specific targeted groups, or there is no evidence to confirm that project beneficiaries have capacity needs or are populations deprived and/or excluded from development opportunities relevant to the project's area of work. There may have been some engagement with beneficiaries to assess whether they benefitted as expected, but not regularly.
- Not Applicable

### Evidence

For FONERWA, the final evaluation concluded that capacity building activities and efforts facilitated through the programme were developed in an efficient manner, making a reasonable use of the resources available, and generating an impact in targeted staff and beneficiaries in general (Final Evaluation Report). For SERPG, temporary jobs were created approximately for a period of 6 months to 2 years for beneficiaries. The extra income from project works has considerably diversified and improved the income for the local communities. However, since it was time-bound, sustaining the income-generating activities have been a challenge and most continue to rely on subsistence farming activities (Final Evaluation Report).

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

- Yes
- No

### Evidence

For the SERPG project, an overall a good gender balance was achieved in participation ratio of workers, and the beneficiaries included around 58% of male and 42% of female for the green jobs created. For FONWERA, projects under implementation with a significant focus on gender was reported to be 75% (18 out of 24) most focusing on creation of green jobs (Final Evaluation Report).

## Sustainability & National Ownership

Quality Rating: Satisfactory

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

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

### Evidence

National system were used for implementation, albeit with support from the country office upon request, e.g. for procurement since the long procurement processes in some national systems would slow down project implementation. For monitoring of the project, FONERWA faced challenges with monitoring and properly following up on the project that benefited from the fund. This was a big task in relation to the team. However, efforts were made and improvements could be seen starting in 2017. For all project, decision-making was made at the Project Steering Committee level, where quarterly meetings ensure that national stakeholders had a say in project implementation.



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

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

#### Evidence

To varying degree for the different outputs, national systems were used for project implementation. Capacity building of the Ministry of Environment (former Ministry of Natural Resources) approved to be an ambitious plan in relation to the fact that capacity building is a long-term intervention. In addition, the Ministry was implementing several projects at once, which was not considered adequately. Another aspect was that the Ministry, in 2017, was divided into three entities and the project remained with the Ministry of Environment. This change in institutional framework to some degree affected the implementation capacity.

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

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

#### Evidence

During the final year of implementation, informed by final evaluations, commitment through Management Responses were made to ensure that in the next project phase, thorough capacity assessments are to be conducted in order to identify gaps and opportunities to build on the achievements made, but also learn from the challenges faced. Given the fact that several projects faced insufficient project funds in relation to planned budgets, stronger focus should also be placed on resource mobilization together with the implementing partners.

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

### Summary/Final Project Board Comments:

