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LDCF/SCCF ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT 2016

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The fourth LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report (AER), prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF, presents an assessment of five completed LDCF projects for which the terminal evaluations (TEs) were submitted in calendar year 2016. No SCCF projects are part of this AER. These five LDCF projects account for \$17.03 million in funding and \$30.38 million in actual co-financing. The AER looks at performance, innovation, gender considerations and presents a synthesis of lessons learned from the 2016 cohort of completed LDCF/SCCF projects.
2. The four national projects focused on climate risks and resilience and all address primary priority areas as outlined in their respective NAPA country reports. The Benin project concentrated on the agricultural sector, more specifically on resilient agricultural practice. The Maldives project purpose was the integration of climate change risk into resilient island planning, with a focus on capacity development, policy support and climate risk reduction measures. The Lao PDR project focused on minimizing food insecurity from climate change and farmers' vulnerability to extreme flooding and drought events, through an applied ecosystem approach. The project in Samoa concentrated on the integration of climate change risks and resilience into forestry management. The fifth completed LDCF project, the global National Adaptation Plan (NAP) project, focused on assisting Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with country-driven processes to advance their NAPs.
3. Four of the five completed projects had a satisfactory outcome rating, while one project's outcome rating was moderately unsatisfactory. Projects rated satisfactory shared the following commonalities: project objectives were relevant to UNFCCC guidance and decisions, projects effectively achieved the majority of set objectives, and – in the case of the national projects – projects' outcome areas addressed primary priority areas as listed or outlined in the countries' NAPA reports. Differentiators between projects with a satisfactory rating and the one project rated moderately unsatisfactory link to the effectiveness and the efficiency in reaching anticipated results.
4. In terms of sustainability, three of the five completed projects received ratings in the likely range. Terminal evaluations of these three projects indicated that additional financial support and government commitment following project end will be vital to continue the momentum of the projects. Reasons for one project's sustainability being rated moderately unlikely were linked to financial, sociopolitical, institutional and governance, and environmental risks as hindrance to project sustainability. One project did not receive an overall sustainability rating.
5. All projects received 'M&E design at entry' ratings in the satisfactory range. All projects provided an M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. This included a baseline, indicators, set targets and an M&E budget. All five projects were equally rated in the satisfactory range for the 'M&E plan implementation' element; M&E systems were in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the projects.

6. The results on outcome ratings for completed LDCF projects are similar to the LDCF ratings in the AER 2015. This year's analysis of completed projects shows better performance in the M&E categories compared to last year's cohort of LDCF projects. Given the small number of completed projects to date, a comparison of one year to the next is not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the two funds.

7. The focus of the gender assessment was on three gender considerations: (a) gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data, (b) explicit gender considerations in the description of the project activities, and (c) the existence of an overarching women inclusion, empowerment and/or gender mainstreaming strategy or approach. The four national projects part of the 2016 cohort all mention women as stakeholders or beneficiaries, and the global NAP project mentions the need for gender sensitive approaches. But only the Benin and Samoa projects included women as decision-makers in some of their activities, and none of the projects had a gender mainstreaming strategy or approach. A new gender rating, piloted in the 2016 Program Evaluation of the LDCF, has been applied and is further explained in annex C. When applied to the 2016 cohort of completed projects as quality-at-entry assessment four projects were rated gender aware and one project was rated gender blind. Used to rate upon project completion, two project were rated gender aware, one project was rated gender sensitive, and two were rated gender blind. None of the projects part of the 2016 cohort of projects were rated gender mainstreamed.

8. An identification of innovative approaches and synthesis of lessons learned is further discussed in the report. Most of the lessons learned do not relate to earlier identified innovations. They relate to standard good practice elements in the following project-related fundamentals; (a) communications and stakeholder involvement, (b) project management, (c) content-technical learnings, and (d) monitoring and evaluation. These groupings are used in the report to further discuss individual lessons learned topics. One of the lessons learned from the global NAP project is that sensitization, trainings and receiving particular technical, institutional and knowledge inputs will not automatically translate into capacity; one of the project's broad assumptions. It would be useful for future projects to deconstruct that assumption and examine the variables along that chain that can be improved for long-term sustainable capacity-building. The same project also showed that a project can be effectively managed in a joint collaboration between two different organizational entities. Conditions, which made this possible, included: (i) shared office sites, (ii) clear delineation of work and agreement on joint work plan; (iii) historical experience; and (iv) separate budgets to be managed according to individual UN processes.

BACKGROUND

1. The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2016 - prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF - presents an assessment of project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation, and a review of innovative approaches used in completed projects. For this assessment, five projects were considered for which terminal evaluations (TEs) were submitted by GEF Agencies to the IEO in calendar year 2016. All five projects were LDCF projects. Gender considerations and a synthesis of lessons learned from the 2016 cohort of completed projects is also part of this year's AER.

ASSESSMENT OF TERMINAL EVALUATIONS

2. This is the fourth year that completed LDCF/SCCF projects are reported on in the IEO Terminal Evaluation dataset, used for the Annual Performance Reports (APRs) to the GEF Council and the LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Reports (AERs) to the LDCF/SCCF Council. In the 2016 cohort of TEs there are five completed projects that received funding from the LDCF. These projects account for \$17.03 million in LDCF funding and \$31.48 million in co-funding. Geographically, two national projects are from the African region, two national projects are from the Asia and Pacific region, and one project is global. All four national projects are full-size projects; the global project is a mid-size project. There are no completed SCCF project in the AER 2016 cohort.

3. Reporting on project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation, and innovative approaches are based on an analysis of the ratings and information provided in TEs that have been first reviewed by the IEO and/or the evaluation offices of GEF Agencies. See annex A for details on the Terminal Evaluation Report review guidelines.

Outcomes and Sustainability

4. Table 1 provides summary information and ratings for the AER 2016 cohort of the five completed LDCF projects. Given the small number of completed projects to date, these projects are not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the LDCF.

5. The four national projects focused on climate risks and resilience. The Benin project (GEF ID 3704) concentrated on the agricultural sector, more specifically on introducing resilient agricultural practices. The Maldives project's (GEF ID 3847) purpose was the integration of climate change risk into resilient island planning, with a focus on capacity development, policy support and climate risk reduction measures. The Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) focused on minimizing food insecurity from climate change and farmers' vulnerability to extreme flooding and drought events, through an applied ecosystem approach. The project in Samoa (GEF ID 4216) concentrated on the integration of climate change risks and resilience into forestry management. The fifth completed LDCF project, the global National Adaptation Plan (NAP) project (GEF ID 5320), aimed to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with country-driven processes to advance their NAPs.

Table 1: Outcome, Sustainability and M&E ratings of completed LDCF projects part of the AER 2016 cohort

Table 1. Outcome, Sustainability and M&E ratings of completed LDCF projects part of the AER 2016 cohort

GEF ID	Fund	Agency	Project Title	Country	LDCF Grant (M\$) ¹	Outcome rating ²	Sustainability rating ³	M&E design at entry rating ²	M&E plan implementation rating ²
3704	LDCF	UNDP	Integrated Adaptation Programme to Combat the Effects of Climate Change on Agricultural Production and Food Security	Benin	3.41	S	ML	MS	S
3847	LDCF	UNDP	Integrating Climate Change Risks into Resilient Island Planning	Maldives	4.49	MU	MU	MS	MS
4034	LDCF	UNDP	Improving the Resilience of the Agriculture Sector in Lao PDR to Climate Change Impacts	Lao PDR	4.45	S	ML	MS	MS
4216	LDCF	UNDP	Integration of Climate Change Risk and Resilience into Forestry Management (ICCRIFS)	Samoa	2.40	S	ML	S	S
5320	LDCF	UNEP / UNDP	Assisting Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with country-driven processes to advance National Adaptation Plans (NAPS)	Global	2.00	S	NR	S	S

¹ Amount excludes PPG grant and agency fees.

² GEF/EF Agency six-point rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

³ GEF/GEF Agency four-point scale: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), and Unlikely (U). Alternatively, the rating might be Not Rated (NR).

6. Four of the five completed projects had a satisfactory outcome rating, while one project's outcome rating was moderately unsatisfactory. Projects rated satisfactory shared the following commonalities: project objectives were relevant to UNFCCC guidance and decisions, projects effectively achieved the majority of set objectives, and – in the case of the national projects – projects' outcome areas addressed primary priority areas as listed or outlined in the countries' NAPA reports.⁴ Differentiators between projects with a satisfactory rating and the one project rated moderately unsatisfactory link to the effectiveness and the efficiency in reaching anticipated results. The Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) was ineffective in reaching planned results, with three of the project's four outcomes were rated moderately to highly unsatisfactory, and due to numerous delays and poor project planning the project also received a moderately unsatisfactory rating on efficiency.

7. In terms of sustainability, three of the five completed projects received ratings in the likely range. The national projects in Benin, Lao PDR and Samoa (GEF IDs 3704, 4034 and 4216) were rated moderately likely to be sustainable. Terminal evaluations of all three projects indicated that additional financial support and government commitment following project end will be vital to continue the momentum of the projects. The Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) was rated moderately unlikely, given there are remaining financial, sociopolitical, institutional and governance, and environmental risks as hindrance to project sustainability. UNEP and UNDP did not provide an overall sustainability rating for the global NAP project (GEF ID 5320), but three of the four sustainability factors – financial sustainability, socio-political sustainability, and institutional framework and governance – were given a moderately likely rating.

8. The results on outcome ratings for completed LDCF projects are similar to the LDCF ratings in the AER 2015;⁵ the outcome rating for four projects was satisfactory, and one project was rated moderately unsatisfactory. Looking at the 2016 LDCF cohort's sustainability ratings, three projects were rated in the likely range, while two projects were rated moderately unlikely on sustainability. Given the small number of completed projects to date, a comparison of one year to the next is not representative of the full range of objectives and approaches of the two funds.

9. For the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016, the evaluation team assessed the alignment of NAPA implementation projects with their NAPA country priorities.⁶ The four national projects that are part of the AER 2016 cohort all received an alignment rating of very high, which means that the implementation projects' outcome areas all address primary priority areas that are listed or outlined in their respective NAPA country reports. Primary priority areas addressed are agriculture, climate information systems, disaster risk management, coastal zone management, natural resource management and fragile ecosystems, infrastructural development, human

⁴ Based on data from the Program Evaluation of the LDCF. IEO, [Program Evaluation of the LDCF](#), September 2016. [Program Evaluation of the LDCF, Report to Council](#), May 2016. Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.20/ME/02.

⁵ IEO, [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2015](#), May 2016. Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.20/ME/01.

⁶ For details on the procedure for the NAPA implementation projects alignment rating, please see annex B.

health, climate education. The priority area for the global NAP project (GEF ID 5320) is the NAP process.

Quality of Project Monitoring and Evaluation

10. The quality of monitoring and evaluation in LDCF/SCCF projects is reviewed by rating the M&E design and planning at project start, as well as the implementation of the M&E plan. The latter also looks at adjustments made to the logical results framework during the project's life cycle, and follow-up and management response to mid-term review (MTR) recommendations. The scoring of both M&E elements is done by means of a six-point rating scale, ranging from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

11. All five projects received 'M&E design at entry' ratings in the satisfactory range. All projects provided an M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. This included a baseline, indicators, set targets and an M&E budget. However, there was room for improvement with respect to the indicators developed. Indicators for the Benin project (GEF ID 3704) were only set at objective and outcome levels; project outputs and output-level indicators were not defined. Also the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) could have improved on indicators at entry; some of the impact indicators were formulated as output indicators. The TE noted that some of the targets set were too ambitious.

12. All five projects were equally rated in the satisfactory range for the 'M&E plan implementation' element; M&E systems were in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the projects.

13. The Benin project (GEF ID 3704) improved its rating from moderately satisfactory at entry to satisfactory for M&E plan implementation. Recommendations coming out of the M&E process - as part of the mid-term review (MTR) - were relevant and adopted by the project management unit, in order to improve the project and make better strategic decisions regarding its management. The TE presents the picture of a project in which M&E activities were regularly and carefully conducted, and frequently used as part of the decision-making process. In terms of adaptive management, the Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) did not utilize feedback from M&E reports. The quarterly reports noted issues such as lack of government capacity for procurement that was hindering progress, but no action was taken to address the problem (TE, 28; MTR, 36-37). The TE of the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) noted that the M&E process has been a little slow at times, and required permanent re-enforcement to get the information from project sites (PIR 2015, 43). More time should have been allocated for assessing, documenting and adjusting tools developed based on findings (TE, 45).

14. The Samoa project and the global NAP project (GEF IDs 4216 and 5320) were rated satisfactory in both M&E categories. The TE of the Samoa project noted that project indicators were SMART, and that baselines became more defined and improve the M&E system significantly after the project updated the Samoa Forest Resource Information System (SamFRIS) with forestry tailored climate information. The M&E plan includes all relevant M&E activities, including an inception workshop and report, annual project reports and project

implementation reviews (PIRs) and an external MTR and TE and a dedicated budget for M&E. The MTR was carried out as planned and some of the recommendations were implemented.

15. This year's analysis of completed projects shows better performance in the M&E categories compared to last year's cohort of LDCF projects, as part of the AER 2015.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

16. As stated in the AER 2014, there is no overarching description or definition of what is to be regarded as 'innovation' or 'innovative'.⁷ One common denominator in LDCF/SCCF projects is that projects and approaches are regarded as innovative if they are deliberately applied to tackle an issue, and these approaches (i) have not been used before in the project area, and/or (ii) have not been used before to tackle this specific issue. Other elements that make an approach innovative is that the approach needs to be (iii) widely replicable, which is linked to being locally appropriate from a technological, environmental as well as a socio-economic point of view, and this should be possible (iv) at low economic cost, which links innovation to financial sustainability.

17. All five LDCF completed projects of the AER 2016 cohort were reviewed for innovative approaches. The resilient island planning project in Malawi (GEF ID 3847) was the only project for which no innovations or good practices were identified. The TE rates the project's knowledge management and learning component as highly unsatisfactory. All other projects have clear innovative elements, which are further discussed below.

18. The Benin project (GEF ID 3704) introduced a sustainable pisciculture method with floating fish farming cages to counter the traditional 'acadja'⁸ method, which is prohibited in Lake Ahémé. The project also developed nurseries and introduced short-cycle seeds of sorghum and corn, a type of seed not yet applied in the project area. The demonstration villages also developed their own climate change adaptation plans, integrated into the rural land plans. The TE noted that incremental change innovations that linked to existing practices, like the introduction of short-cycle seeds, proved to be the most beneficial.

19. The introduction of high yielding rice varieties and mechanized sowing techniques as part of the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) can be seen as an innovation. The TE notes however that there is a risk to biodiversity if traditional rice varieties will be abandoned, and high yields can only be sustained if the farmer adopts a rotational cropping practice. Another innovation would be the introduction of a new participatory land use planning tool to develop climate risk responsive land zoning plans in targeted villages, though the potential for replication and

⁷ IEO, [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2014](#), May 2015. Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.18/ME/02.

⁸ An 'acadja' or brush park is a simple fish culture technique used in West African lagoons that can be classified as enclosure culture. An area of a shallow (1 to 1.5m) lagoon with little tidal fluctuation is delineated by driving large, sturdy sticks into the substrate, and can be over a hectare in size. Bundles and piles of branches are placed inside at about 1 bundle /m². The acadja serves as a shelter from various predators but is most important as an abundant source of food. Welcomme, R L, [An evaluation of the acadja method of fishing as practised in the coastal lagoons of Dahomey \(West Africa\)](#), January 1972, Journal of Fish Biology, 4(1), 39-55.

scaling up to the district level is being questions in the TE. The TE further talks about new adaptive practices for agro-ecosystem and landscape management being introduced, but it is not possible to assess whether these are innovations because these are not specifically mentioned.

20. The Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) pushed for and achieved legislations, policies and plans that changed the environment in which forestry management was practiced in Samoa. There is now a National Policy on sustainable Forest Management (NPSFM), a new National Forestry Sector Plan with climate change risk integrated into it, and the Forest Fire Prevention Strategy (FFPS). This legislation environment safeguards forest conservation in the future and provides a framework to prevent any activities that may put forest or natural resources conservation at risk. Two important technical tools adapted were the Climate Early Warning System (CLEWS) and the Participatory Three Dimensional (P3D) model. CLEWS was adapted for forestry management use, and P3D modeling helped communities visualize their village and the surrounding area's topography and vegetation, enhancing their participation in community based management plans.

21. The global NAP project (GEF ID 5320) was innovative in its engagement with a broad constituency. In terms of managing the partnerships beyond the immediate global support program (GSP) board members, the GSP showed some innovation in mobilizing resources and assistance from a broad network of multilateral and bilateral partners. Partners were identified during the NAP-related events at and around UNFCCC meetings, as well as through an assessment of key partners at country level, when individual support was provided. The project also launched a massive online open course (MOOC) on adaptation, reaching a worldwide audience of more than 8000 people and receiving more than 20,000 forum posts.

22. The low number of projects analyzed makes the identification of innovation trends and generalization of such trends difficult. Innovations often cannot be detached from the more 'conventional' project elements, and solutions introduced combine a suite of innovative and conventional approaches. Combined with innovation being context-dependent – what is seen as innovative in one project country could be regarded as conventional in another project country – it is not possible to come to an overarching conclusion, or a consistent understanding, of the effectiveness of innovative approaches.

GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

23. The focus for the gender assessment was on three gender considerations; (i) gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data, (ii) explicit gender considerations in the description of the project activities, and (iii) the existence of an overarching women inclusion, empowerment and/or gender mainstreaming strategy or approach. A new gender rating,⁹ piloted in the Program Evaluation of the LDCF 2016,¹⁰ has also been applied.

⁹ For details on the new gender rating, please see annex C.

¹⁰ IEO, [Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund](#), September 2016.

24. The four national projects part of the 2016 cohort all mention women as stakeholders or beneficiaries, and the global NAP project mentions the need for gender sensitive approaches. But only the Benin and Samoa projects (GEF IDs 3704 and 4216) included women as decision-makers in some of their activities, and none of the projects had a gender mainstreaming strategy or approach.

Gender Disaggregation of Indicator Data

25. The TE of the Benin project (GEF ID 3704) provides extensive overviews of gender disaggregated results by village and by activity. On the other hand, documents reviewed of the Maldives project, Lao PDR project and the global NAP project (GEF IDs 3847, 4034 and 5320 respectively) provide no evidence of gender disaggregation of output and outcome indicator data. The TE of the Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) states that the project provided “training for women in adaptive processes and training for increasing awareness as to the impact of climate change and means to build resilience,” but does not mention the number of female beneficiaries or otherwise female stakeholders in the project.

Explicit Gender Considerations in Project Activities

26. A review of project documents and requests for CEO endorsement/approval shows that none of the five projects provide explicit gender considerations as part of the description of their project activities. The project document of the Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) states, for example, that the project will “support the empowerment of women and youth and capacity development for informed decision-making,” (p.22) but does not mention how, and the project’s request for CEO endorsement is gender blind. The request for CEO endorsement of the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) states that “gender considerations will be given particular attention in the assessment and consolidation of vulnerability data,” (p.10) but it is unclear whether and how that would then inform project activities.

Existence of a Gender Mainstreaming Strategy or Approach

27. None of the documents reviewed of the five completed projects part of the 2016 cohort provided evidence that a gender mainstreaming strategy, plan or approach had been developed. The project document of the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) mentions that a gender mainstreaming program will be developed, including two gender audits during the implementation period, plus gender check-lists for all technical activities undertaken on the ground. While it remains unclear whether a gender mainstreaming strategy or approach was developed, data from the yearly PIRs points towards attention to gender and commitment to the topic by project staff. It is possible that more gender relevant analysis and strategizing took place than is being reported in the project documentation available to the evaluation team.

Gender Rating

30. The gender rating – further detailed in annex C – was applied to all five project as part of a quality-at-entry analysis during the Program Evaluation of the LDCF 2016.¹¹ The evaluation team re-evaluated the rating now that the projects have been completed, to assess whether projects improved their quality-at-entry gender rating. At entry, four projects were rated gender aware and one project was rated gender blind. Upon completion, two project were rated gender aware, one project was rated gender sensitive, and two were rated gender blind. None of the projects were rated gender mainstreamed.

GEF ID	Project	Gender rating	
		Quality-at-entry	Upon completion
3704	Benin project	Gender aware	Gender aware
3847	Maldives project	Gender blind	Gender blind
4034	Lao PDR project	Gender aware	Gender aware
4216	Samoa project	Gender aware	Gender sensitive
5320	Global NAP project	Gender aware	Gender blind

28. The Benin project’s (GEF ID 3704) self-assessment in the PIR 2015 stated that “overall the project has achieved very impressive results, especially on gender and income generating activities.” (p.49) The TE noted that the project had taken gender into account in all its activities, but on average women’s participation in the project was only 15 percent. While the project provided no gender disaggregated indicators or targets at entry, this was adjusted during implementation and gender disaggregated participation data was collected for all of the project’s activities. The Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) equally collected gender disaggregated participation data for its trainings and demonstration projects, with one training specifically focusing on gender and climate change impacts. The Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) also addressed gender by providing training for women in adaptive processes and training for increasing awareness as to the impact of climate change and means to build resilience. Women also became committee members at the community and the district levels.

29. While the global NAP project (GEF ID 5320) was rated gender aware at entry, it was rated gender blind upon completion. The TE states that “the program design did not include a clear gender analysis, and there was no evidence of any gender-disaggregated targets, indicators or gender equity goals.” (p. 9) As a result, there “was also no documented evidence that gender was accounted for in participation of trainings and capacity building activities.” (p.10) No further gender results were reported.

¹¹ Ibid.

30. None of the completed projects part of the 2016 cohort were rated as gender mainstreamed. All completed projects reviewed were designed before the 2011 GEF policy on gender mainstreaming¹² and the 2014 gender equality action plan (GEAP)¹³ were Council approved and came into effect. Also, individual GEF Agencies often apply their internal gender policies, strategies and action plans, but do not report on these efforts because this type of reporting was not a requirement in the past.

SYNTHESIS OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM COMPLETED PROJECTS

31. The synthesis of lessons learned has been drawn from the specific TE report sections on lessons learned, as well as other sections of the TEs that held valuable lessons.

32. Most of the lessons learned do not relate to earlier identified innovations. They relate to standard good practice elements in project management, communication and stakeholder involvement, and M&E and knowledge management. The lessons learned groupings in order of occurrence (from most to least occurring) are; (a) communications and stakeholder involvement, (b) project management, (c) content-technical, and (d) monitoring and evaluation. These groupings are used below to further discuss individual lessons learned topics.

Communications and Stakeholder Involvement

Buy-in and Project Ownership

33. Valuable lessons can be learned from the Benin project (GEF ID 3704) on project ownership. The project was very well received at the village level in most demonstration locations. It created a dynamic engagement, combining the introduction of new piscicultural and agricultural methods with the development of climate change adaptation plans, integrated into the rural land plans. The TE recommends to scale out the approach to the national level. The Benin project did not create sufficient buy-in in one village, mainly due to the community in that village having a vision of gratuity, expecting the project staff to do everything for them. In future projects the level of active engagement by the community could be used as one of the selection criteria to select demonstration villages.

34. The TE of the Lao PDR project (GEF ID 4034) notes that project results need to be integrated into current or future Government of Laos activities to increase ownership and potentially sustainability.

Engaging Stakeholders and Strategic Partnerships

35. The Benin project's TE (GEF ID 3704) recommends that partnerships with research organizations and other technical partners are to be strengthened in future projects. There is

¹² GEF, [Policy on Gender Mainstreaming](#), May 2012. Policy Document GEF/SD/PL/02.

¹³ GEF, [Gender Equality Action Plan \(GEAP\)](#), October 2014. Council Document GEF/C.47/09/Rev.01.

also explicit mention of connecting with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and developing a GCF concept note for a country-wide next phase of the project.

Communicating Project Results to Raise Awareness and Knowledge

36. The Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) managed to prepare valuable documents that could be used as a knowledge base in future projects such as the survey of soft adaptation measures guidelines for climate risk resilient coastal protection. The Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) equally produced a large number of technical reports and training and awareness raising materials. These materials are available for use by future projects and other initiatives.

37. One of the lessons learned from the global NAP project (GEF ID 5320) is that sensitization and trainings will not automatically translate into capacity. One of the project's broad assumptions was that receiving particular technical, institutional and knowledge inputs will translate into capacity. It would be useful for future projects to deconstruct that assumption and examine the variables along that chain that can be improved for long-term sustainable capacity-building. Stakeholders in the project also stressed how informative and appreciated the South-South interactions and case studies were in order to improve national planning; countries seek opportunities to learn from one another's experiences and appreciate venues for South-South learning.

Project Design and Management

Staffing and Project Timeframes

38. The TE of the Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) noted that project management could be improved by having "full-time permanent staff that will be relatively secure from impacts of political changes" (p. 49) who also possess needed technical and communication skills. The Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) equally had a lesson learned on staffing; high turnover of project team members contributed to project delays.

39. The Samoa project's (GEF ID 4216) TE also asserts that achieving environmental legislations, policies and plans takes longer than the implementation of activities executed by the project team. One of the lessons learned is that this timing difference needs to be taken into account.

40. The Lao PDR's project (GEF ID 4034) timeframe of four years is seen by the evaluators of the TE as too short to develop long term objectives and implement all activities. "First steps in awareness raising, education and testing have been taken, but to create sustainability and lasting impacts, longer duration projects are required" (p. 11).

Project co-management

41. The UNDP-UNEP global NAP project (GEF ID 5320), showed that a project can be effectively managed in a joint collaboration between two different organizational entities. UNDP and UNEP effectively managed this project and brought their value added to the

initiative, while being able to leverage targeted support from external partners. Conditions, which made this possible, included: (i) shared office sites, (ii) clear delineation of work and agreement on joint work plan; (iii) historical experience; (iv) separate budgets to be managed according to individual UN processes. The TE of the project also noted that increased stakeholder consultation at project design stage and during implementation could have strengthened understanding of expected results and terminology used, and improve project results.

Content-Technical: Climate Change Adaptation

Cross-cutting Approach to Climate Change Adaptation

42. One of the recommendations from the Benin project (GEF ID 3704) is to go beyond the currently narrow adaptation focus and, in a next program cycle, explore a cross-cutting approach to connect the themes of water, rural renewable electrification and adaptation to climate change for health.

Demonstration Activities

43. The TE of the Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) noted that the demonstration projects are “good initiatives that can attract attention of local stakeholders because they represent something tangible and show direct impact of the project” (p.47), but “what should be improved is the financial planning and technical design of these interventions, as well as involvement of local stakeholders in decision-making” (p.12). Agro-forestry plots, developed by the Samoa project (GEF ID 4216), have also been very successful. They provided benefits to the farmers while contributed to the rehabilitation of affected forest areas. The farmers value these plots and are determined to keep them. This model can be easily replicated as the technical and social information are all made available by the project.

44. The introduction of floating fish farming cages in the Benin project (GEF ID 3704) did not take into account the violent winds that at times hit the lake in some of the demonstration sites. Not to delay the project and frustrate the population four floating cages were installed against the advice of the Directorate of Fisheries, together with four fish pens. While the fish pens were resistant to wind and swell, the floating cages were washed away. The project design should have taken into account these meteorological circumstances and when new information became available, the project should have taken an adaptive management approach, inform beneficiaries timely and switch to more appropriate – and perhaps less innovative – methods that would have aligned better with the local circumstances.

Climate Data Collection, Training and Research

45. The Samoa project (GEF ID 4216) successfully updated the Samoa Forest Resource Information System (SamFRIS) with forestry tailored climate information. Another important technical tool was CLEWS (Climate Early Warning System) tailored to forestry. These two technical tools are seen as a big contribution to forestry management in Samoa. The project

also introduced the use of the Participatory Three Dimensional (P3D) model, used in community-based management plans with active participation of farmers and villagers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

46. The Maldives project (GEF ID 3847) faced extensive delays. Better monitoring would have given notice of possible risks maturing, and the project could have utilized adaptive management mechanism to mitigate any damage.

47. One of the challenges of the global NAP project (GEF ID 5320), which was dealing with a process, was to monitor whether policy change occurs at the end. The project required indicators to document how trainings and capacity building would be converted into concrete policy shifts and changes that result from the project. A final lesson learned from the global NAP project is that the input-output project model used may not adequately measure the impact and capture the scope of this type of support programming, meant to be part of an ongoing process.

MANAGEMENT ACTION RECORD

48. The GEF Management Action Record (MAR)¹⁴ tracks the level of adoption by the GEF Secretariat and/or the GEF Agencies (together here referred to as GEF Management) of GEF Council and LDCF/SCCF Council decisions that have been made on the basis of GEF IEO recommendations. The MAR serves two purposes: “(i) to provide Council with a record of its decision on the follow-up of evaluation reports, the proposed management actions, and the actual status of these actions; and (ii) to increase the accountability of GEF Management regarding Council decisions on monitoring and evaluation issues.”¹⁵

49. The MAR for the LDCF/SCCF tracks the LDCF/SCCF Council’s June 2016 decisions on recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the LDCF.¹⁶ In the MAR the IEO completes the columns pertaining to recommendations, management response, and Council decisions. Management is invited to provide a self-rating of the level of adoption of Council decisions on recommendations and to add comments as necessary. After management's self-rating, the Office verifies actual adoption and provides its own ratings and comments. The rating categories for the progress of adoption of Council decisions were agreed upon through a consultative process of the IEO, the GEF Secretariat, and GEF Agencies. Categories are as follows:

(a) **High:** Fully adopted and fully incorporated into policy, strategy or operations.

¹⁴ IEO, [Management Action Record](#), May 2017.

¹⁵ GEF, [Procedures and Format of the GEF Management Action Record](#), November 2005. Council Document GEF/ME/C.27/3.

¹⁶ IEO, [Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund \(LDCF\)](#), June 2016. Council Document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.20/ME/02

- (b) **Substantial:** Decision largely adopted but not fully incorporated into policy, strategy or operations as yet.
- (c) **Medium:** Adopted in some operational and policy work, but not to a significant degree in key areas.
- (d) **Negligible:** No evidence or plan for adoption, or plan and actions for adoption are in a very preliminary stage.
- (e) **Not rated or possible to verify yet:** ratings or verification will have to wait until more data is available or proposals have been further developed.
- (f) **N/A:** Not-applicable.

50. The LDCF/SCCF Council decision stated that “the LDCF/SCCF Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.20/ME/02, Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund,¹⁷ and GEF/LDCF.SCCF/20/ME/03, Management Response to the Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund,¹⁸ took note of the conclusions of the evaluation and endorsed the recommendations taking into account the Management Response.”¹⁹ The evaluation’s recommendations are as follows:

- **Recommendation 1:** The GEF Secretariat should explore and develop mechanisms that ensure the predictable, adequate and sustainable financing of the Fund.
- **Recommendation 2:** The GEF Secretariat should make efforts to improve consistency regarding their understanding and application of the GEF gender mainstreaming policy and the Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) to the LDCF.
- **Recommendation 3:** The GEF Secretariat should ensure that the data in the Project Management Information System is up to date and accurate.

51. Efforts were made by the GEF Secretariat to report on available resources and the pipeline under the LDCF are welcome. The IEO encourages the Secretariat to develop a more systematic mechanism to promote the predictable, adequate and sustainable financing of the LDCF. Recommendation 1 has been rated medium.

52. It is also encouraging that projects that have been technically cleared in the past year are expected to carry out a gender gap analysis during project preparation prior to CEO endorsement/approval. The Secretariat should monitor compliance with this and the quality of the gender gap analysis. The issuance of further guidance on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy would be helpful. Recommendation 2 has been rated medium.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ GEF, [Management Response to the Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund](#), June 2016. Council Document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.20/ME/03.

¹⁹ GEF, [Joint Summary of the Chairs LDCF/SCCF 20](#), June 2016, 2.

53. While work is progressing on the upgrade of the GEF project management information system it has not resulted in a clear picture of progress towards improving the quality of information. Recommendation 3 has been rated negligible.

ANNEX A: TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT REVIEW GUIDELINES

The assessments in the terminal evaluation reviews is based largely on the information presented in the terminal evaluation report. If insufficient information is presented in a terminal evaluation report to assess a specific issue such as, for example, quality of the project's monitoring and evaluation system or a specific aspect of sustainability, then the preparer of the terminal evaluation reviews briefly indicates so in that section and elaborate more if appropriate in the section of the review that addresses quality of report. If the review's preparer possesses other first-hand information such as, for example, from a field visit to the project, and this information is relevant to the terminal evaluation reviews, then it should be included in the reviews only under the heading "Additional independent information available to the reviewer." The preparer of the terminal evaluation review has taken into account all the independent relevant information when verifying ratings.

A.1 Criteria for Outcome Ratings

Based on the information provided in the terminal evaluation report, the terminal evaluation review makes an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved²⁰, relevance of the project results, and the project's cost-effectiveness. The ratings on the outcomes of the project is based on performance on the following criteria:²¹

- a) **Relevance.** Were project outcomes consistent with the focal area/operational program strategies and country priorities? Explain.
- b) **Effectiveness.** Are project outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (that is, the original or modified project objectives)?
- c) **Efficiency.** Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project's cost/time versus outcomes equation compare to that of similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative, or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?

An overall rating is provided according to the achievement and shortcomings in the three criteria ranging from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory, and unable to assess.

²⁰ *Objectives* are the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or program is expected to contribute (OECD DAC 2010).

²¹ *Outcomes* are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention; these may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD DAC 2010). For the GEF, environmental outcomes are the main focus.

The reviewer of the terminal evaluation provides a rating under each of the three criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency). Relevance of outcomes is rated on a binary scale: a 'satisfactory' or an 'unsatisfactory' rating is provided. If an 'unsatisfactory' rating has been provided on this criterion, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than 'unsatisfactory'. Effectiveness and Efficiency is rated as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** The project had no shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory.** The project had minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** The project had moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** The project had noticeable shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The project had major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** The project had severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

The calculation of the overall outcomes score of projects considers all three criteria, of which relevance criterion will be applied first - the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than 'unsatisfactory'. The second constraint that is applied is that the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the 'effectiveness' rating. The third constraint that is applied is that the overall rating may not be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Outcomes} = (b + c) \div 2$$

In case the average score is lower than the score obtained after application of the first two constraints, then the average score will become the overall score. The score is converted into an overall rating with mid values being rounded up upwards.

A.2 Impacts

Has the project achieved impacts, or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? Impacts will be understood to include positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention. They could be produced directly or indirectly and could be intended or unintended. The terminal evaluation review's preparer takes note of any mention of impacts, especially global environmental benefits, in the terminal evaluation report including the likelihood that the project outcomes will contribute to their achievement. Negative impacts mentioned in the terminal evaluation report should be noted and recorded in section 2 of the terminal evaluation reviews template in the subsection on "Issues that require follow-up." Although project impacts are to be described, they will not be rated.

A.3 Criteria for Sustainability Ratings

Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after completion of project implementation (GEF 2000). To assess sustainability, the terminal evaluation reviewer identifies and assesses key risks that could undermine continuation of benefits at the time of the evaluation. Some of these risks might include the absence of or inadequate financial resources, an enabling legal framework, commitment from key stakeholders, and enabling economy. The following four types of risk factors are assessed by the terminal evaluation reviewer to rate the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes: financial, sociopolitical, institutional frameworks and governance, and environmental.

The following questions provide guidance to assess if the factors are met:

- **Financial resources.** What is the likelihood that financial resources will be available to continue the activities that result in the continuation of benefits (income-generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project outcomes)?
- **Sociopolitical.** Are there any social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership is insufficient to allow for project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- **Institutional framework and governance.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency, and the required technical know-how, are in place.
- **Environmental.** Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits? The terminal evaluation should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, construction of dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project.

The reviewer provides a rating under each of the four criteria (financial resources, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental) as follows:

- **Likely.** There are no risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately likely.** There are moderate risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately unlikely.** There are significant risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.
- **Unlikely.** There are severe risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.
- **Unable to assess.** Unable to assess risk on this dimension.
- **Not applicable.** This dimension is not applicable to the project.

A.4 Criteria for Assessment of Quality of Project M&E Systems

GEF projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work program inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that measure results (such as environmental results) after project completion. Terminal evaluation reviews will include an assessment of the achievement and shortcomings of M&E systems.

- a) **M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. Questions to guide this assessment include: In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient (sufficient and practical indicators identified; timely baseline; targets created; effective use of data collection; analysis systems including studies and reports; practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, and when for M&E activities)?
- b) **M&E plan implementation.** The M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the project. Annual project reports were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings. The information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance. An M&E system should be in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure. Question to guide this assessment include: Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress toward project objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?
- c) **Other questions.** This includes questions on funding and whether the M&E system was a good practice.
 - Was sufficient funding provided for M&E — in the budget included in the project document?
 - Was sufficient and timely funding provided – for M&E during project implementation?
 - Can the project M&E system be considered – a good practice?

A number rating 1–6 is to be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation provides a rating under each of the three criteria (M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and M&E properly budgeted and funded) as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There was no project M&E system.

The rating for M&E during implementation will be the overall rating of the M&E system:

Rating on the Quality of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System = b

ANNEX B: NAPA IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS ALIGNMENT RATING

The LDCF was established in response to guidance received from the Seventh Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meeting in Marrakech in 2001, as one of its climate change adaptation (CCA) financing mechanisms. The LDCF is mandated by parties to the UNFCCC to, among others, provide support to the least developed countries' (LDCs) climate adaptation efforts, including the preparation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), the implementation of NAPA priority projects in LDCs, as well as support for the preparation of the NAP process in eligible developing countries.

NAPAs provide a process for LDCs to identify priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change – those for which further delay would increase vulnerability and/or costs at a later stage. The main content of NAPA Country Reports is a country-driven list of ranked priority adaptation activities and projects, designed to facilitate the development of proposals NAPA Implementation Projects.

For the LDCF Program Evaluation 2016 NAPA Country Reports as well as NAPA Implementation Projects have been reviewed and country priorities for adaptation activities have been identified for each. These priority adaptation activities fitted the following groupings:

- Agriculture (*including animal husbandry and fishery*)
- Climate information systems
- Disaster risk management
- Natural resource management & fragile ecosystems (*including mountain ecosystems, mangroves, forestry, wildlife, land degradation and management*)
- Water resource management
- Human health
- Infrastructural development
- Renewable energy / energy efficiency / energy security
- Climate education
- Tourism
- Climate smart urban areas
- Sustainable rural livelihoods (*other than agriculture and NRM*).

Most NAPA Country Reports provided a list of prioritized adaptation activities. For those that did not, sectoral prioritization was used by the reviewer to identify areas of priority adaptation activities. For those that did not prioritize activities nor provide an overview of priority sectors, the key environmental stresses and climatic vulnerabilities as identified in the NAPA Country Report were used by the reviewer to identify key areas of priority adaptation activities.

For each country, the scoring of NAPA Implementation Projects' key priority adaptation activities was compared against its NAPA Country Report scoring on the same. This comparison resulted in an alignment rating for each NAPA Implementation Project with the key priority areas as identified in the NAPA Country Report.

The reviewer rated NAPA Implementation Projects' alignment with key priority areas in the NAPA Country Reports as follows:

- **Very High:** The NAPA Implementation Project's outcome areas address primary priority areas as listed / outlined in the NAPA Country Report.
- **High:** The NAPA Implementation Project's outcome areas do not address primary priority areas as listed / outlined in the NAPA Country Report, but address other priorities that are outlined in the NAPA Country Report.
- **Low:** The NAPA Implementation Project might touch upon some priority areas (primary or other), but does not address specific priorities as outlined in the NAPA Country Report in a structural manner.
- **No Alignment:** Project does not address ANY of the priorities (primary or other) outline in the country NAPA report.
- **Unable to Assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

ANNEX C: GENDER RATING

The gender mainstreaming description as part of the GEAP glossary states that “Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities.” And “It [gender mainstreaming] is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.”²²

The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality, and the goal of projects taking into account gender is to mainstream gender according to the above description. It was decided to ‘relax’ the gender mainstreaming description a little in the gender rating and not aim for gender perspectives and gender equality being central to ‘all activities’, but to ‘most, if not all, activities’.

The Fifth Overall Performance Study’s (OPS5) “Sub-study on the GEF’s Policy on Gender Mainstreaming” ([Technical Document 16](#)) makes use of the following project rating categories for gender mainstreaming:

- *Serious Omission*: The project contained little or no reference to gender issues, but it should have included gender concerns because of the nature of the project.
- *Not Sufficient*: Gender issues were mentioned in the project documents, but no real attention was paid to these concerns in project activities.
- *Gender Mainstreamed*: Gender issues were integrated into the project.
- *Not Relevant*: Gender and social issues were not considered and were not expected to be considered in the project.

In line with the gender rationale of the UNDP Gender Marker, it was questioned whether it is appropriate to have initiatives where gender equality and/or women’s empowerment issues can be considered ‘not applicable’, or ‘not relevant’. In practice it is rare for projects to not have any gender relevance, given they then would be assumed to have no relevance to humans. The OPS5 sub-study also stated that “International gender specialists are increasingly providing evidence that the categories that do not take gender into account (such as energy technologies, street lighting and energy efficiency) are in fact gender relevant.”²³ The evaluation team of this sub-study agrees that projects that touch upon the lives of people – and GEF supported interventions do, either directly or indirectly through, for example, employment opportunities created – always have gender relevance.

²² Ibid. 13, 7.

²³ IEO, [OPS5 - TD16 - Sub-study on the GEF's Policy on Gender Mainstreaming](#), October 2013. Fifth Overall Performance Studies, Technical Document 16, 35.

The rating category 'gender blind' was added for those projects that do not demonstrate any gender awareness, but should. Gender aware and gender sensitive are chosen as categorizations, because their connotation is seen as more positive than the categories used in the earlier mentioned sub-study. The gender rating takes gender mainstreaming as the goal for projects, but has added an even higher goal of being gender transformative to identify those projects that go beyond gender mainstreaming and could be an example to others when it comes to gender.

The gender rating applied makes use of the following five scales:

Gender-blind: Project does not demonstrate awareness of the set of roles, rights, responsibilities, and power relations associated with being male or female.

Gender is not mentioned in project documents beyond an isolated mention in the context description, gender is not tracked by the tracking tools and M&E instruments, no gender analysis took place, no gender action plan or gender strategy was developed for the project.

Gender-aware: Project recognizes the economic/social/political roles, rights, entitlements, responsibilities, obligations and power relations socially assigned to men and women, but might work around existing gender differences and inequalities, or does not sufficiently show how it addresses gender differences and promotes gender equality.

Gender is mentioned in the project document, but it is unclear how gender equality is being promoted. There might be one or two gender disaggregated indicators, but it is unclear whether and how that data informs project management. Gender might be mentioned in a social assessment, but it is unclear what is done with that information. No gender action plan or gender strategy was developed for the project.

Gender-sensitive: Project adopts gender sensitive methodologies to address gender differences and promote gender equality.

A gender analysis or social analysis with gender aspects is undertaken, gender disaggregated data are collected, gender sensitive indicators are integrated in monitoring and evaluation, and the data collected informs project management. But the gender focus is only apparent in a limited number of project activities.

Gender-mainstreamed: Project ensures that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to most, if not all, activities. It assesses the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels.

Like gender-sensitive, but there are gender relevant components in most, if not all, activities.

Gender-transformative: Project goes beyond gender-mainstreaming and facilitates a 'critical examination' of gender norms, roles, and relationships; strengthens or creates systems that support gender equity; and/or questions and changes gender norms and dynamics.

Like gender-mainstreamed, but the way gender is addressed might result in behavioral changes towards gender norms and dynamics in the systems targeted by the project.

Not gender-relevant: Gender plays no role in the planned intervention. *(Note that in practice it is rare for projects to not have any gender relevance. If a project touches upon the lives of people, either directly or indirectly, it has gender relevance).*