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Evaluation of Community-Based Approaches at the GEF

An Evaluation Report by the GEF IEO

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Volume 2: Case Studies

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Section 1. Country Case Study Methodology

Intro and Purpose

The case studies for the evaluation of Community Based Approaches (CBA) at the GEF play an important role as the main mechanism for systematically gathering country and community-level feedback on the merits, impacts, challenges, and lessons for GEF projects that use CBA. The case studies will focus on the latter portion of the evaluation objective (in italics): assessing the extent to which community-based approaches are prevalent in the GEF projects and programs, *their characteristics, the extent to which these approaches influence the effectiveness and sustainability of GEF interventions, and to provide lessons on their use*.

The case studies will take an in-depth look at the extent to which the characteristics of GEF CBA projects align with best practice, and any linkages with CBA design elements to project effectiveness and sustainability. Best practice elements linked to project performance were identified through a literature review conducted for the evaluation. They include: devolution of decision-making and financial and technical resources to communities; ensuring accountability of implementers to users; the importance of taking a long-term approach to ensure results can be maintained by the community over time; recognition of human rights, gender and equality; building on local priorities and capacities integrating CBA with other governance structures; identifying and using traditional knowledge; ensuring social aspects are included in monitoring and evaluation; and ensuring that projects build social capital.[1]

Analysis of sustainability in GEF CBA projects in these case studies will build off previous IEO work identifying factors that influence sustainability after projects have closed. The 2017 Annual Performance Report (APR) identified key factors contributing to higher outcome ratings and broader adoption at post-completion which included stakeholder buy-in, political support, availability of financial support for follow up, and sustained efforts on the part of the national executing agency. Case studies will assess the extent to which these factors (and others) played a role in outcomes and sustainability. Projects that have been closed for three years or longer will be reviewed using the Post Completion Verification Instrument, which looks beyond project completion to comprehend whether and how longer-term project outcomes are being reached and sustained over time, as well as the extent to which GEF-supported interventions have led to broader adoption – or even transformational change – across markets and systems.

The purpose of this note is to provide an overview of the country case study methodology. It is meant to serve as guidance to country case study teams and ensure that a consistent approach is applied across the different country case studies, which will be carried out by different individuals.

Evaluation Questions

The country case study will add to the evidence based collected by the evaluation to address the following evaluation questions from the approach paper and evaluation matrix[2]:

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries?

KQ 4: How have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? How does this affect sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

Case study approach and methodology

Five case study countries were selected using the following criteria: prevalence of CBA portfolio; a mix of project ratings (outcome and sustainability) – positive, negative and neutral; focal area diversity, diverse agency representation, and regional coverage (Africa, Asia, and Latin America). The case study selection process is outlined in a separate note that will be posted to the evaluation webpage. Annex 2 shows the projects in the case study countries.

Two-week missions are anticipated to each case study location, with the majority of the time spent in the field visiting project sites and gathering feedback from resource users, especially local communities. Though extensive feedback cannot be collected from every community at each project site due to resource constraints, the evaluators will be attentive to scoping whether there are one or two project sites in each country that would provide an opportunity for additional in-depth data collection to be carried out on a community wide basis to answer questions on inclusion, motivation for participating, and perceived benefits of the intervention from a wider group of stakeholders than those present during the site visit. This scoping would include determining whether communities are geographically concentrated, presenting an opportunity for phone or household surveys, and whether there are any issues that would merit additional data collection.

Several data gathering activities will be carried out as part of the case study work. It is anticipated that the mission preparation will start at least 4-6 weeks prior to travel and will involve background reading, remote interviews, and planning, followed by about two weeks in country. The work program for each case study will include the following: 1) **Document review** - country strategy documents and project documents; the GEF IEO CPE for the country (if available) and the GEF country page for the case study country; 2) I**nterviews** with key informants (government officials, GEF operational and political focal points, country Agency staff, project staff); 3) **GIS analysis** (where possible) – remote sensing to validate and/or better understand environmental changes and inform selection of site visits; 4) **Site visits** to a subset of project sites; and 5) **Community level data gathering** through interviews, focus group discussions and/or community surveys. Activities 1 and 2 will take place prior to the mission, and to the extent possible, so will activity 3.

Document and portfolio review

The project document review will be undertaken in preparation for the country case study and will include, at minimum, the following documents: government strategy documents relating to climate and environment, review of the broad GEF portfolio in the country; and project documents (design document, implementation reports, mid-term review, and any evaluations). As these documents are reviewed a list of key stakeholders related to the projects will be compiled. Any geolocation information will be noted for potential GIS analysis or site visit selection. Furthermore, the portfolio of ongoing and completed projects will be scanned by an evaluation analyst to identify any additional projects that use CBA approaches that didn't meet the initial inclusion criteria used to determine inclusion in the country case study CBA portfolio (explicit reference to CBA approaches in project title, objectives, of components).

Key informant interviews

Given the relatively short amount of time spent in-country, ideally some of the key informant interviews will be carried out remotely, prior to travel, via videoconference. On the heels of the COVID pandemic, remote meetings and videoconferencing are more common and accepted, the evaluation will take advantage of this culture shift. Any follow-up can be done in person once in-country, as well as interviews with those that could not be reached via videoconference. Conducting as many of the interviews as possible remotely makes it possible to spend more time at the project sites, gathering feedback from natural resource users and communities. Furthermore, conducting key informant interviews ex-ante allows for more feedback from knowledgeable stakeholders to be factored in to selected field visit sites. At minimum, each country case study will include interviews with 10 key informants. Stakeholders from the government, civil society, GEF agencies, and project staff will be interviewed. Interview templates are included at the end of this note. The option of holding a civil society roundtable, which would include inviting representatives of civil society for a group discussion, will be explored.

GIS Analysis

Where feasible, and if location information is present in project documents or can be provided by project staff, the case studies will include some GIS analysis of environmental change, and the sustainability of any changes, in project areas. The GIS data would be case specific and depend on the Global Environmental Benefits targeted by the projects, but some example datasets include the Global Land Cover Change dataset (2000 – 2020), and the Forest Carbon Fluxes dataset (2000 – 2020). Data on observed change at the project site level can also help drive site selection, validate outcomes reported in the terminal evaluation, and help prepare for community interviews. If adequate data is available, GIS analysis will be done for a subset of complete projects prior to travel. However, if it is not available the evaluation team can collect this data while in the field, using their smartphones to collect GPS tracking data which would allow for post mission GIS analysis.

Site visits

Visits to project sites will be selected independently by IEO staff or consultants, based on initial feedback from interviews, a review of project documents, and any GIS analysis. The site visits will be carried out to validate any reported environmental or social outcomes, to better understand context of the project

and the CBA approach and to gather feedback from communities and scope whether additional community data gathering through mobile or community surveys that would continue after the initial site visit will be possible. The site visits will be carried out for all closed projects (at least one site per project) and for projects under implementation if possible, with a preference for projects that have been under implementation for at least two years. The site visit for closed projects with validated terminal evaluations provides an opportunity to conduct data gathering to complete the post-completion verification instrument.

Community data gathering

It will be critical to gather as much data from community members as possible during the limited time spent at project sites. The approach used will be fit for purpose, but at minimum the evaluation team will aim for is 2-3 semi-structured interviews per project site, followed by two focus group discussions (one with women and one with men). This will require pre-arrangement with village leaders and should reflect an understanding of the different user groups and the context of the project. Before data collection begins, an ethics statement will be shared with community stakeholders. This statement will inform them of the purpose of the evaluation, that their participation is voluntary and has no effect on future programming if any, explain the role of IEO and convey that their responses will not be attributed to them.

Case study protocol

The first step is a review of background documents (country strategy, portfolio, project documents, case study methodology note, case study selection note, and interview protocol). Then, the GEF IEO will draft an introductory email to the in-country project managers, the OFP, and other relevant stakeholders as identified with the help of GEF IEO. The evaluator, with the help of a local consultant, will make arrangements for initial interviews and draft a mission agenda with a timetable, list of persons to be met, and list of project sites will be drafted in agreement with the OFP. The agenda should be prepared and shared with national partners at least a month prior to the mission. Prior to meetings with national and local stakeholders (as relevant) the evaluator will share a two-page note explaining the evaluation and the approach. The sequence of activities should be as follows: i) background research and preliminary analysis (including GIS analysis if possible); ii) outreach to country stakeholders to introduce case study and select and confirm a date for the mission; iii) conduct as many interviews as possible over video, while drafting mission agenda (to be circulated with country stakeholders prior to mission); iv) mission travel – to include inception meeting with OFP, follow up interviews in capitol, site visits, and debrief with OFP; v) any follow up data collection in communities (if possible); vi) report writing.

Site selection

Project sites will be selected by IEO with the help from OFPs and project staff based on the following criteria: 1) Intervention typology (type and depth of CBA used in project design; 2) accessibility/seasonality and availability of stakeholders for interviews (including COVID-19 safety protocols); 3) ability to conduct GIS analysis prior to the mission (whether location data is available in project documents or from project staff); 4) balance of sites that are near major cities with those that are in more remote areas. Visits to sites from closed projects with validated terminal evaluations will be prioritized, with secondary priority given to site visits for ongoing projects in later stages of

implementation. At least one site from each closed project will be attempted. The site sampling approach will be documented in the case study writeup.

Each country case study will produce the following outputs:

- Case study writeup (see template at the back of this note)
- Post completion verification instrument (for closed projects that have been completed for at least three years)
- List of persons interviewed
- Interview notes (with video recordings of interviews if done via videoconferencing)
- Videos and pictures of site visits with date, time and latitude/longitude coordinates

The country case studies will be carried out by the TTL and an international consultant with the support of local consultants.

Schedule

July – August 2022 (and beyond, as needed): Preparation **–** hiring, onboarding, preliminary contact with OFPs, Agencies and projects staff, GIS Analysis, drafting of stakeholder lists and agendas, preliminary interviews. The order of the case studies is still under consideration and will depend on consultant availability, weather and holiday considerations and feedback from the OFPs.

September – January 2023: Data collection, follow-up surveys, report drafting

Key Informant Interview Guidelines

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries? (Government officials, OFP, Agency staff, project staff)

Indicators:

- Presence of language supporting community-based approaches in country strategy or priorities
- Perceptions of the importance of community based (vs. other) approaches in environment interventions, articulation of the value-add of the approach, rationale for use.
- Evidence/examples of community-based approaches from GEF projects being scaled up, mainstreamed or replicated using criteria from previous IEO evaluation on scaling up.

Example questions (Government officials, OFP, Agency staff):

- To what extent are community-based approaches relevant for environmental strategy in this country?
- Do you have any examples from policy and practice of where the approaches are reflected in any government strategy, vision, policy, etc or prioritized for funding? *For example forest policy decentralization reforms, transferring ownership and management responsibilities for natural resources to user organizations*

- How does the CBA approach integrate into other sectors in and outside natural resources management? Is there any evidence of strong links and complementarity with those aspects considered in the CBA under GEF?
- What is your opinion on the value add of projects that use a community-based approach in their design and implementation?
- How would you compare projects that use CBA to projects that don't use community-based approaches? What are the strengths/weaknesses?
- Are you aware of any GEF projects that use community-based approaches [list CBA projects identified] being scaled up, mainstreamed, or replicated beyond the GEF pilot?

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

Indicators:

- Perceptions on whether project design elements of CBA are linked to environmental or social outcomes
- Feedback on value add of the community-based approach including how the approaches are received, and community perceptions on their level of engagement.

Example questions (Government officials, project staff, communities):

- How have [the projects] led to improved environmental outcomes? To what extent can these environmental outcomes be linked to the project design?
- How have [the projects] led to improved social or economic outcomes for women and men in the communities? To what extent can these social or economic outcomes be linked to the project design? Note to interviewer: If needed, you can prompt with the following examples of socio-economic outcomes – livelihood improvement, poverty reduction, empowerment, wellbeing, governance, fragility.
- What have been the benefits and challenges of CBA in [the projects]? Who has been most benefited or burdened?
- How are CBA approaches received by local government and by communities? Why?
- What are the (a) implementer's and (b) community's motivations for participating in CBA projects?
- How well do the GEF CBA projects take gender into consideration? Is this different for non -CBA projects?

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

Indicators:

- Description/evidence of context and enabling factors influencing performance
- Stakeholder perceptions on factors influencing performance for environmental interventions using community-based approaches

Questions to ask (Government officials, project staff, community members):

- What are CBA factors that influence performance or usefulness of [the projects]?
- What are the external factors (policies, institutions, cultural norms) that facilitate or hinder the implementation and/or effectiveness of CBA in achieving results for [the projects]?
- Were there any existing community structures for the management of natural resources in place prior to the project? If so how well did the project align/complement? Is there adequate consideration of what already existed and demonstrated some level of success?
- How have CBA approaches fit with communities' local culture and capacity?

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

Indicators:

- Feedback on factors influencing sustainability from IEO evaluations, focusing on subset of projects using community-based approaches.
- Perceptions on the likelihood of sustainability of community-based approaches (in comparison to other approaches).
- Information on anticipated sustaining of environmental benefits, identification of project design as a factor in likelihood of sustained benefits (for example: community buy-in/participation; community involvement in design, monitoring, upkeep, community roles in financing, etc).
- Achieved environmental and socio economic benefits sustained at least three years after project completion

Questions to ask (Government officials, project staff, community members):

- What is your perception on the (observed or likely) sustainability of GEF projects that use CBA?
- Are CBA approaches more likely, less likely or similar likelihood of sustainability relative to projects that don't use CBA?
- Under what circumstances are CBA projects most likely to have sustainable results?
- (If applicable) What are the elements of CBA design that you associate with sustainability? (for example: decentralized decision making; community involvement in design, monitoring, upkeep, community roles in financing, etc).
- To what extent are owners of the project equipped to manage the activities, assets or results of the project after its completion? [probe for livelihoods, natural resource governance, decision making, financial planning, social or cultural equity, or other]?
- If CBA approaches entail transferring management authority from governments to communities, was the transfer ensured by the relevant government entity to last beyond the duration of the project?
- What aspects of government contributions are necessary conditions for successful CBA?

- Are there any other factors that would make GEF projects that use CBA more sustainable?

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

Indicators:

- Perceptions on stakeholder incentives related to immediate socioeconomic needs vs. long term environmental outcomes.

Questions to ask (government staff, project staff, communities)

- What are the stakeholder incentives related to immediate socioeconomic needs vs. long term environmental outcomes?
- Have you seen any examples from CBA projects where there was a good balance between immediate socioeconomic needs and long-term environmental outcomes?
- Can you think of examples in which CBA hindered environmental objectives?

Annex 1. Country Case Study Report Outline (Max 20 pages + annexes)

The case study report should take into consideration that it is not an evaluation of the projects, but rather a data gathering exercise for a larger evaluation. Therefore, the following report outline should be used, providing data on the key evaluation questions.

I. Background and Context
   - Brief description of overall evaluation (use language from the approach paper)
   - CBA in the country (including the portfolio of projects with data on status, agency, start and end dates, financing amounts, GEF phases, ratings). Highlight the GEF projects selected for site visits
   - Alignment with national priorities, laws, strategies, policies
   - Other relevant information (strength of civil society, strength of CBA approach in country, etc)

II. Evaluation methods and approach
   - Site selection criteria
   - Description of data collection methods

III. Findings:
   - KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries? (Government officials, OFP, Agency staff, project staff)
   - KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?
   - KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

- KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?
- KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect the sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

IV. Analysis and Main findings Conclusions. Discuss trends, anything that stands out after interviews and site visits. Do not make recommendations.

V. Annexes: Persons consulted, image files

Section 2. Cameroon Case Study

Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF: Cameroon Country Case Study

Prepared by: Leonard Usongo, Independent Consultant

May 2023

Photo credit: Leonard Usongo

Background

Cameroon, a Congo Basin country, is home to over 7850 plant species belonging to 1800 genera in 220 families; making it one of the most diverse countries in Africa in terms of plant biodiversity (Onana, 2011). Of these, 815 species are endangered (Onana and Cheek, 2011). The Cameroon landscape has different vegetation types, including high rainfall Biafran forest, lowland moist Congolese forest, montane and semi-deciduous forest ecosystems.

According to a 2018 ranking published by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Cameroon's fauna and flora biodiversity ranks 21st globally and 4th in Africa. However, this rich environmental potential "is undergoing serious damage from natural or man-made causes such as climate change, drought, floods, desertification, deforestation, multifaceted pollution, coastal and river erosion with many consequences for the well-being of people and the country's economy".

To address this, the government of Cameroon through the 1994 forestry and wildlife laws, introduced the concept of community forest. This was to empower indigenous and local communities derive direct and indirect benefits from forest resources through sustainable forest management. Despite this legal recognition, the appropriation of the concept by the communities remains difficult.

Laws, policies, strategies that support community-based approaches in Cameroon

The selected projects for this case study are all aligned with Cameroon's national priorities, strategies and policies on biodiversity conservation, participatory natural resource management and sustainable development. Cameroon is signatory to United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This Convention provides a global framework for concerted actions on biodiversity with the objective of ensuring the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the equitable sharing of its benefits.

In order to meet its obligations within CBD framework, Cameroon in 1999 developed its first National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) that was officially validated in 2000. The second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was developed in 2012 and was implemented until 2020. The NBSAP 2012 document is still being used pending the writing of document for document for the next implementation phase.

The NBSAP 2 document presents Cameroon's 2020's biodiversity mission which can be summarized as follows: 'To take all necessary measures to reduce the rate of biodiversity

loss at the national level and to ensure the long term sustainability of key ecosystems, in order to ensure that, by 2020, biodiversity and other ecosystem services continue to contribute to the creation of wealth including through mainstreaming, capacity building and financing of biodiversity-related activities through strong partnership, participation of indigenous and local communities and a focus on gender issues, as a safeguard for future generations'.

Target 16 relates to CBA, by 2020, benefit sharing from payments for the sustainable use of biodiversity, genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge contribute to increased incomes for local communities.

The GEF funded projects also aligned with other national strategy documents such as the national REDD+ strategy, Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (GESP), national development strategy with 2030 development vision (NDS30) and other sectoral documents for the forestry and wildlife sectors. These strategic documents in one way or the other address CBA at least in their conception.

The legal basis for environmental protection in Cameroon is the 1996 framework law on environmental management and regulatory instruments in key production sectors including the 1994 Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries Laws. Other important legal instruments include the 2003 Biotechnology Law, 1998 Water Law, 2001 Mining Code and 2011 Framework Law. The 1994 Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries laws went further to recognize and incorporate the concept of community forestry in chapter 2, article 34 and section 2 of the document. In Article 3 of the implementing decree, a community forest is defined as a forest in the non-permanent forest domain, which is the subject of a management agreement between a village community and the forest administration. The management of this forest is the responsibility of the beneficiary village community, with the support or technical assistance of the forest administration. This law recognizes the importance of communities in the management and conservation of biodiversity.

Institutionally, the ministry of environment, nature protection and sustainable development (MINEPDED) is the national focal institution for biodiversity conservation. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) is in charge of protected areas and wildlife management. The national network of protected areas consists of national parks, wildlife reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and zoos. In order to address the needs of indigenous and local communities living next to protected areas, MINFOF created community hunting zones and community forests. There are also other sectoral ministries responsible for implementation of the National Program for Conservation and Management of Biodiversity in Cameroon (PCGBC).

Other community management mechanisms include sacred forests and community land management codes.

The projects that were subject of this study are listed in Table below. Within this framework, seven projects were evaluated on CBA, three of which were visited in order to verify project results and impacts, and consult with beneficiary local communities and other field stakeholders on their views on the projects. Projects visited were those already completed at least 3-5 years from the date of current evaluation exercise, allowing for an assessment of the sustainability of project outcomes are project close. Below projects were selected for site visits:

- ◊ A Bottom Up Approach to ABS: Community Level Capacity Development for Successful Engagement in ABS Value Chains in Cameroon (*Echinops giganteus*) (GEF ID 5796)
- ◊ CBSP Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Ngoyla Mintom Forest (GEF ID 4084)
- ◊ CBSP Sustainable Community Based Management and Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Cameroon (GEF ID 3821)

The evaluated projects in Cameroon had community components featured community-based approaches in their implementation.

Portfolio of projects using a community-based approach

To identify projects that were likely to include a community-based approach for the broader evaluation, purposive sampling was used to identify projects from the GEF portfolio in the biodiversity, land degradation, climate change adaptation focal areas and related multi-focal area projects. Projects that were explicit in their use of a community-based approach in their title, objectives, or activities were selected. Based on this sampling a portfolio was identified for Cameroon and included seven projects, four ongoing and three completed (Table 1). Components and activities that demonstrate a community-based approach are described in Table 2.

Table1: GEF project portfolio evaluated in Cameroon

GEF ID	Agency	Focal Area	Status	GEF Phase	Project Title
10287	WWF-US	Multi Focal Area	Ongoing	GEF – 7	Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin
9604	UNEP	Multi Focal Area	Ongoing	GEF – 6	Removing Barriers to Biodiversity Conservation, Land Restoration and Sustainable Forest Management through Community-based Landscape Management – COBALAM

5796	UNDP	Biodiversity	Completed	GEF – 5	A Bottom-Up Approach to ABS: Community Level Capacity Development for Successful Engagement in ABS Value Chains in Cameroon (Echinops giganteus)
5210	UNEP	Biodiversity	Ongoing	GEF – 5	Sustainable Farming and Critical Habitat Conservation to Achieve Biodiversity Mainstreaming and Protected Areas Management Effectiveness in Western Cameroon SUFACHAC
4739	UNEP	Biodiversity	Ongoing	GEF – 5	Participative Integrated Ecosystem Services Management Plans for Bakassi Post Conflict Ecosystems (PINESMAP-BPCE)
4084	World Bank	Biodiversity	Completed	GEF – 4	CBSP Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Ngoyla Mintom Forest
3821	FAO	Biodiversity	Completed	GEF – 4	CBSP Sustainable Community Based Management and Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Cameroon

Table 2. Project objectives, detail on community-based approaches in selected projects

GEF ID	Objective	Components using community- based approaches	Community based approaches described in project documents
10287	The project's objective is to strengthen the integrated management of Cameroon's globally important forest landscapes in the Congo Basin to secure its biological integrity and increase economic and livelihood opportunities for forest dependent people.	Component 3: Advancing sustainable forest management (SFM) through non-timber forest product (NTFP) and hardwood value chains Component 4: Increasing benefit generation from biodiversity through sustainable tourism development	At the start of the ProDoc stage of project development, objectives and a methodology for stakeholder engagement were elaborated7 based on several main steps or components: (i) a kick-off workshop to launch the ProDoc development process; (ii) national and local (or site level) stakeholder consultations; and (iii) a validation workshop/process.
9604	Improved biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods in three landscapes in the Western High-lands (WHC) and South Region of Cameroon, through participatory com-	Component 2: Capacity and incentives development to support HCVF/KBA management and SLM and SFM deployment	During the PPG, indigenous peoples and local communities represented by the village Chiefs have been consulted and involved in all project validation activities. These community representatives will continue to be engaged through face-to-

	munity-based land-scape management in the WHC and the development of enterprises based on responsible resource use.		face community meetings, individual interviews, and workshops. Representative will be also included in the Project Steering Committee and the Project thematic Technical Working Groups.
5796	Selected indigenous and local communities in Cameroon participate successfully in ABS-compliant value chains based on genetic resources (GRs) and/or associated traditional knowledge (aTK).	Component 1. Strengthened community capacity on ABS and successful engagement in target value chains in Cameroon (Echinops giganteus) Component 2. Incorporation of ABS-compliant value chains and dissemination of lessons learned in national legistlation and regulatory frameworks in Cameroon	The project's approach is a bottom-up approach to ABS by involving people in project design and capacity building at the community level for successful engagement in ABS value chains in Cameroon.
5210	To promote biodiversity conservation and mainstreaming in production landscape at Bakossi Banyang Mbo area of Cameroon through sustainable farming practices that improved community livelihood options and commercial opportunities.	Component 2. Sustainable Farming practices and promotion of communities' livelihood and biodiversity conservation through IESMP	This project has adopted a methodology based on conservation awareness and education, and the involvement and support of local stakeholders. The activities were previously validated by the communities. But the project design did not follow the participatory approach
4739	Reduce pressure on natural resources from competing land use in wider landscape	Outcome 3.1: Enhanced cross-sector enabling environment for integrated landscape management	This project has adopted a methodology based on conservation awareness and education, and the involvement and support of local stakeholders. The activities were previously validated by the communities. But the project design did not follow the participatory approach.
4084	The PDO is to improve the conservation and management of the Core Area and improve access to income-generating activities for local communities in the project area.	Component 2 – Design and Implement a Livelihood Support Mechanism (LSM)	This project was based on a review of existing methodologies for similar successful mechanisms, and in close consultation with local stakeholders. Operational procedures will be adopted through a validation workshop with local community representatives as a project activity before the LSM becomes operational.

3821	To ensure long term sustainable livelihoods of local communities living in and around mangrove areas	Outcome 2: Mainstreaming of mangrove management in local development	This project has informed and invited people to a project design meeting. It then informed and supported stakeholder dialogue so that key public and private actors understood what was required for (and committed resources to) sustainable mangrove management and local socio-economic development.

Evaluation methods and approach

Site selection criteria

The project sites were selected by the IEO in close collaboration with the consultant. The following criteria were used: i) intervention typology (type and depth of CBA used in the project design ii) accessibility/seasonality and availability of stakeholders for interviews (including COVID-19 security protocols) iii) balance between sites that are close to major cities and those in more remote areas. Site visits to completed projects with validated final evaluations were prioritized for site visits. Thus the three sites visited (Ngoyla, Mouanko and Mbouda (for the Lebialem communities) were visited. The selected sites are shown in Figure below. The field work was undertaken in November 2023.

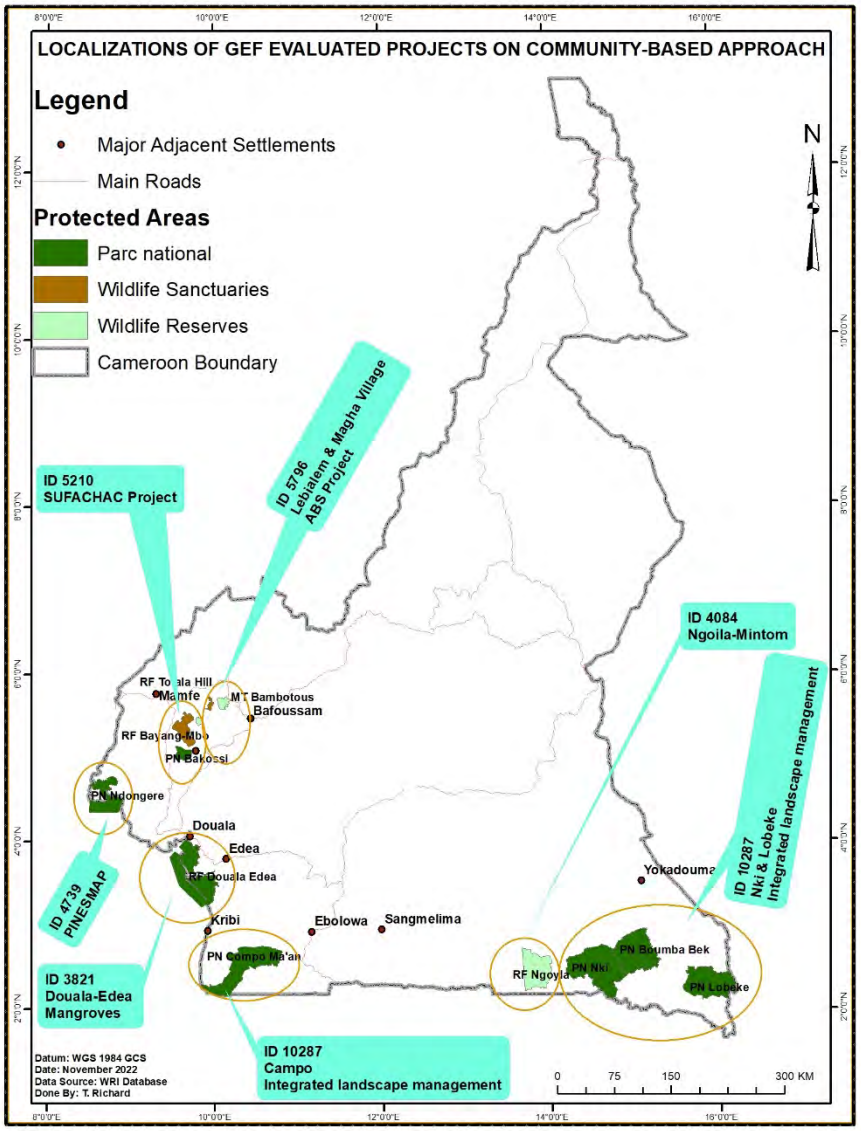

Figure 1: Location of project sites visited by IEO mission

Data collection methods

Document review

The review of project documents was done from the preparatory to the analytic phases of the evaluation. The documents reviewed comprised strategic documents such as government climate and environment strategy, NDS30, REDD+ national strategy, NBSAP, the national GEF portfolio, various project documents made available to the consultant

(concept paper, implementation reports, mid-term review and any evaluations). During review process of the documents, a list of key project stakeholders was compiled and shared with the Evaluation Office.

Key Informant Interviews

The interviews were conducted with various stakeholders at national and field levels. The stakeholders were divided into 3 categories, namely: government (MINFOF and MINEPDED in particular), implementing agencies (UNDP, World Bank, Rainforest Alliance, WWF, FAO, etc.), and implementing partners (CWCS, EruDef, etc.). The survey forms proposed by the Evaluation Office for stakeholders' consultations were reviewed and adjusted to suit the local context. Interviews were conducted in a transparent and participatory manner. In total, 10 government officials were interviewed, four representatives of GEF implementing agencies, two consortium partners from national NGOs and 67 members of beneficiary villages and community-based organizations.

Site visits and community data collection

Priority was given to site visits to closed projects with validated final evaluations, with secondary priority given to site visits to ongoing projects with at least two years of activity.

A combination of methods was used in the field data collection. The following methods were used: i) Plenary group meetings - These meetings were held at each project site visited, bringing together all stakeholders potentially involved in project implementation. Depending on size of the group, focus group discussion meetings were organized in two or three groups per site. One group of women, one group of men and sometimes mixed groups made of women and men. The meetings' objectives were: a) to inform and sensitize stakeholders on the purpose of the evaluation case study b) assessment of their perceptions of the project and their contributions in terms of lessons learnt, benefits and other related information. The agenda and organizational arrangements (including protocol aspects) were designed to optimize time allotted for stakeholders' consultations. Depending on the number of participants, proposed meeting venues were discussed with field project staff.

In total, eleven stakeholders' consultative meetings were held during field site visits divided as follows: two meetings respectively in Mouanko (ID 3821) and Mbouda (ID 4084) and seven in Ngoyla (ID 5796).

Limitations

The IEO mission was limited in the number of sites it could visit due to time constraints, many potential sites, and the dispersion of project sites across the country. Consequently, the case studies do not systematically conduct in-depth analysis to draw causal relationships between all project activities and outcomes, but rather they collect

qualitative data (supplemented by quantitative data where available) to gather stakeholder feedback, understand the reasons for success or failure of CBA, and look at sustainability post completion. The site visits focused primarily on CBA components or activities. IEO relied upon project self-evaluation or independent evaluation reports, complemented by primary data collected by the field team to carry out analysis.

Findings:

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries?

Overall, all projects in the case study portfolio aligned with Cameroon's main sectoral guidelines and policies, and contribute to Cameroon's national priorities in environment, land use planning, forest management, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. However, after an analysis of the legal framework and review of project documents, it is noted that there are gaps in support for the framework that can be attributed to inadequate technical capacity and knowledge, and understaffing of relevant sectorial ministries to enforce existing frameworks.

The consultations with national stakeholders (government officials, OFP, implementing agencies) and project staff at field level, demonstrated the relevance of CBA in the context of Cameroon. Despite shortcomings of existing legal framework, there were positive results from some of the field projects (ID 9604 and 5796) to promote participatory natural resource management with active engagement of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

Cameroon has set out its development vision and goal of becoming an emerging economy by 2035. This vision shapes national development initiatives and strategies in industrialization, development of the private sector, resource allocation, sub-regional, regional and international integration, partnership and development assistance. The vision also lays the foundation for other key policies, including the second phase of the ESMP for 2020-2027, the Cameroon Economic Growth Acceleration Plan and the national strategy for development of the rural sector (SDRS). These strategies promote integration of the environmental dimension into the various policies and strategies and aim to ensure sustainable management of natural resources including environmental benefits.

In developing GEF projects, the implementing agencies ensure that the projects are aligned with the country's priorities. The main focus is on biodiversity conservation. The project "A Bottom-up approach to ABS: Community level capacity development for successful engagement in ABS value chains in Cameroon (*Echinops giganteus)*" GEF ID: 5387 was in line with NBSAP2 vision. The vision states that by 2035, a sustainable relationship with biodiversity is established for its use and benefits in order to meet the development needs and welfare of local communities, and ecological integrity is preserved through sectoral and decentralized interventions with participation of all

stakeholders including local communities. The ABS project contributed in the development of a national framework on benefit sharing and supported the development of a legal framework for APA.

Some of the projects contributed to the achievement of national priorities through various training programs on a wide range of topics. Others contributed to national development objectives by financing of income generating activities such as SUFACHAC and PINESMAP. The conservation and sustainable use of Ngoyla-Mintom projects contribute to biodiversity conservation particularly in the Cameroon segment of transboundary landscape involving protected areas in Gabon (Minkebe) and Congo (Odzala). The Sustainable Community Based Management and Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems in Cameroon (ID 3821) promoted the creation of community forests within the Atlantic coastal mangrove ecosystems (GCP/CMR/030/GFF project).

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

After a both a review of project documents, followed by site visits to a sample of project sites, the IEO mission had difficulties obtaining concrete evidence of results on the ground. This is primarily due to absence of baseline data upon which concrete monitoring indicators should have been formulated.

However, the different stakeholders, governmental institutions, NGOs and IPLCs interviewed by the mission provided some feedback on changes in the ecological dynamics and wellbeing of the communities associated with GEF financed projects that used CBA. The results of environmental and socio economic components of the three completed projects which were visited by evaluation mission are presented in below.

Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Nogyla Mintom Forest (ID 4084*)*

Environmental outcomes: Environmental outcomes could not be measured in a robust manner due to the absence of baseline data to determine environmental indicators to. Monitoring indicators for agro-sylvo-pastoral activities such as reduction in hunting and improvement forest vegetation dynamics were not included in the project results framework.

The terminal evaluated reported that that agroforestry activities were developed, while fish, farming and livestock activities were not quite successful. Therefore, the TE found no significant impact in reducing hunting activities by IPLCs. On vegetation impacts, it was difficult to assess the economic gains and contributions to biodiversity conservation.

Social outcomes: Implementation of micro-projects in the agro-pastoral sector should in principle reduce pressure on the forest and therefore contribute to carbon stocks. However, following field visits to the project areas, beneficiary populations from common

initiative groups (CIGs) in BAPLET Etekessang and Alliance Albis of Bissobilam indicated that the project did not significantly contribute to improving livelihood of local communities and biodiversity conservation of the forest landscape. This observation should be viewed with caution due to unavailability of project database and baseline information.

Most community members interviewed were unable to provide concrete feedback on project benefits to the communities. However, from a social context, the project contributed to organizational structuring of local actors through the creation of common initiative groups and cooperatives. These groups still formally exist, however they are no longer active.

Sustainable community management and conservation of mangrove ecosystems in Cameroon " GEF Code: 3821

Environmental outcomes

A community-based approach was incorporated in the sustainable management of mangrove resources component of the project. The project supported creation of community forest, the Manoka Community Forest covering 2,700 ha and development of simple management plan for the community forest. The project developed a guide for management of community mangrove forests. This document has been published and is a good knowledge product produced by the project for use by other conservation projects. The project funded various training programs covering wide range of disciplines involving beneficiary communities and other important local stakeholders.

The community forests established with technical and financial assistance from the project have tangible environmental impacts by contributing to the increased land area owned by IPLCs and carbon sequestration. However, following their creation, management of community forest is described by stakeholders as costly. Communities report challenges managing these forests and indicate they need assistance with these costs. Results from field visit confirm established community forests are not fully operational due to inadequate finances, and technical and management problems. This represents an immediate challenge for community forestry in the project area. The weak institutional environment is another factor facing community forestry in the region. Interviews with project team confirmed these identified shortcomings in community forestry. The existence of specific frameworks for protection and management of mangrove forest ecosystems developed by the project demonstrates the government's recognition of the importance and vulnerability of mangrove ecosystems. The framework was developed on a consensual basis following consultations of the different stakeholders. A major activity of the project was production of management tools to promote an integrated and knowledge-based approach for management of mangroves ecosystems. The project contributed to:

- development of a national strategy for sustainable management of mangroves and other coastal ecosystems
- a master plan for research on mangroves and other coastal ecosystems, and a specific information center on mangroves. The center provides information and data on mangroves and coastal ecosystems to policy makers, private operators and other stakeholders operating in mangrove areas
- establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms to enhance inter-sectoral dialogue to coordinate field interventions within mangroves and coastal ecosystems

However, despite the useful tools developed by the project, application of CBA in project implementation strategy has not been adequately reinforced and supported, based on field observations and consultations of beneficiary communities. The training of community members and other stakeholders on the approach was limited, and the follow up and monitoring by the project team was also limited. The project contributed to gazettement of Douala-Edéa national park and the classification of Rio Ntem estuary as Ramsar site. It also contributed to the creation of communal forests in Bamousso and Ekondo-Titi. The gazettement process was participatory with involvement of local communities in delimitation of future boundaries of the protected area and surrounding multiple use zones that included community farmlands etc.

Gazettement of Douala-Edea national park and designation of RAMSAR site are direct project also contribute to biodiversity conservation of fragile and highly threatened mangroves ecosystems.

Social outcomes

According to the project team, the project's approach to improving social or economic outcomes of women and men included building their capacities in managing mangrove resources for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods. The establishment of communal forest is an important socio-economic outcome since revenues generated from its exploitation directly benefit the local communities and economy. Community forestry enables communities to dispose of and use the resources of their territory in a sustainable way. The project financed various income generating activities to reduce dependence by local communities of mangroves and wildlife. The socio-economic outcomes are linked to project’s development objectives to ensure long-term sustainability of livelihoods of local communities living in mangrove areas.

CBA is perceived by local institutions and communities as a tool to increase participation of all stakeholders, especially rural communities in natural resource management processes and sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems in particular.

A "learning by doing" training on sustainable fishing techniques, sustainable timber harvesting and mangrove restoration was carried out by the project with participation of over 100 community members. Over 2,5 hectares of degraded mangrove areas were restored with participation of the local communities. Training modules were developed by the project in business plan development. The communities of Lobe-Mbeka, Eboundja, Mouanko and Canto Bakoko participated in the training which brought together 74 local resource persons including 49 women. The project team indicated CBA was considered during the design of the project to enable execution of activities such as gazettement process and establishment of community and council forests which required participation of local communities. Other important factors taken into consideration during project development were the non-existence of legal and policy framework to support management of critical ecosystems such as mangrove ecosystems, current unsustainable practices of mangroves exploitation, the weak integration of local communities in local development planning framework and inability to mainstream community-based approaches for sustainable use and management of mangrove forests and coastal ecosystems.

A Bottom-up approach to ABS: Community level capacity development for successful engagement in ABS value chains in Cameroon (Echinops giganteus) (GEF ID: 5796)

Environmental outcomes

The ABS project was designed with a bottom-up approach as presented in the project title. During consultation with GEF implementing agency UNDP and other project stakeholders notably CBOs, traditional rulers, cooperatives and local associations, stakeholders indicated that the success of the project was in part due to the wide range of stakeholders the project mobilized. The project was implemented in Lebialem Division and Magha-Bamumbu (Wabane sub division) and Lewoh (Alou sub division). Since 2016, the project area is going through socio political crisis with minority Anglophone communities demanding more autonomy from the central administration. The crisis led to displacement of some activities such as capacity-building workshops out of the project area. In fact, the socio-political context has significantly hampered implementation of field activities.

Notwithstanding, of all the 7 projects evaluated, this project had the most demonstrable results associated with the CBA approach in Cameroon. A significant achievement of this project was its contribution in the elaboration of law N° 2021/014 of 09 July 2021 governing access to genetic resources, their derivatives, associated traditional knowledge and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use.

This law aims among other things the following:

- ◊ support valorization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in order to encourage their conservation and sustainable use

- ◊ regulating access to genetic resources, their derivatives and/or associated traditional knowledge
- ◊ ensure involvement of IPLs in sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources or associated traditional knowledge
- ◊ contribute to improving the living conditions of local communities
- ◊ improve the contribution of biodiversity to development and human well-being

Considering the above, the ABS project contributed to laying a good foundation for sustainability and institutionalization of benefit sharing and conservation of genetic resources. Local participation and ownership of project activities was established through local cooperatives for marketing of *Echinops*. The project lacked adequate funding and a project exits strategy which impacted sustainability in terms of local ownership and institutionalization of results and lessons learnt.

Social outcomes

The IEO mission held meetings with ABS project stakeholders and in particular His Royal Highness and Senator Lekunze in his dual capacity as a Senior Chief from the project area and senator. He is also the chairman of the local development committee made up of several villages in the project area and main source for production of *Echinops giganteus* and *Mondia whitei*.

HRH Lekunze and other community leaders highlighted project benefits to the communities, setbacks and lessons learnt. Below is a resume of main points from the consultation meetings:

<u>Positive aspects for the local communities</u>

i. The project generated revenues from sales of the species thereby contributed to improving household economies and wellbeing of the communities. A kilogram of *Echinops* was sold at 2700 FCFA local farmers. The money was redistributed in different percentages to the local cooperative, local development council and local producers. The local development council invested money received from sales of *Echinops* in social projects such as road construction, health centers, etc. Although no statistics were presented, the respondents indicated revenues generated from Echinops contributed to construction and equipment of a health center in Magha village
ii. By redistributing revenues generated to various local beneficiaries, the project contributed to establishment of a local benefit sharing mechanism

iii. Although the project did not develop value-chain for the species,[1] project activities contributed to local team building, social cohesion and community participation in development projects. Community member during interviews indicated all social strata (youths, men, women, etc.) participated in project activities
iv. The setting up a local cooperative to coordinate sales of the species is proof of local ownership and active engagement in *Echinops* value chain
v. Two nurses were trained by the local development councils with funds received from *Echinops* sales. The ABS project provided some medical equipment to the local health center
vi. The community leadership encouraged organizational development, cooperation and responsibility in managing the income generated by the project

Despite above positive outcomes of the project, certain constraints were enumerated which were later confirmed during site visit.

i. There were challenges associated with a difficult enabling institutional environment mainly due to a lack of a shared vision on project implementation and deliverables between the local administration represented by the municipal council and the village development committee responsible for execution of community projects funded through revenues generated from *Echinops*.[2] The differences between both structures could have been avoided in the design of project's governance structure. Secondly, the respondents talked about interference of the municipal council which wanted to manage project revenues from *Echnops* trade
ii. *Echinops* species cannot be domesticated following several field attempts by local farmers. The species grows better in the wild. Further research is needed to determine whether the species can be cultivated by local farmers

Additional feedback from communities and project stakeholders:

i. There was a request to increase and replicate the lessons learned and best practices of the ABS project in the form of community participation and local benefit sharing mechanism in future interventions

[1] This was reportedly due to the short time horizon of the project (as perceived by community members). Groups were formed and supported, but there was insufficient time for them to test the tools they developed.

[2] The conflict between the municipal council and village development committee triggered tensions and mistrust between two important local governing structures responsible for economic and social development of their community. The social implication of such conflicts is demotivation of the people to support development projects.

ii. Stakeholders noted Insufficient capacity building of cooperative staff, local farmers and other local stakeholders in areas such as agroforestry techniques, harvesting and processing techniques, and management of local community enterprises which constrained the potential benefits of the project

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

The combination of document analysis and interviews with IPLCs and other stakeholders made it possible to identify critical factors which determine and influence CBA integration and application in GEF funded projects in Cameroon. Results of this analysis clearly demonstrate **that projects based on local initiatives, implementation approaches, strategies involving IPLCs and other local stakeholders are quite successful.** Likewise**, consideration of capacity building activities, establishment of multi stakeholders' consultative platforms and other co-management management instruments, programmatic synergies between GEF funded projects and other projects, baseline reference data are equally important for success of 'CBA modelled' projects**. In this regard, programmatic synergies were created with other development partners such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), National Participatory Development Program (PNDP), USA based Rainforest Trust and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) to support various initiatives with similar conservation and sustainable development objectives.

Analysis of the data and interviews with local communities and organizations at the local level highlighted the factors that influence added value(s) of community-based approaches to CBA project implementation.

It was found **that local actors do not always identify with the design of projects**. More often than not, the IPLCs were invited to workshops to present the project design and objectives to them than ensuring better understanding of CBA concept and participation in project implementation. Such situations do not allow IPLCs to be more engaged and take ownership of the projects. This is the case with the GEF ID 4084 project. For ID 5796, local interviewees indicated that decisions notably on strategic decisions on project orientations with management implications on the ground were taken at the national level without consultation of local project stakeholders. As part of lessons learnt, the local stakeholders proposed for future projects, strategic decision making should involve grass root consultations in order to build local legitimacy and ownership in the context of CBA.

The strategy of involving local stakeholders is also a major issue in successful implementation of CBA projects. Factors that influenced relatively good performance of ABS project (ID 5796) was involvement of local leaders in project implementation. **The engagement of local leaders and resource persons accelerated achievement of project results.**

In the framework of certain projects, the involvement of local authorities is more encouraged and this seems to catalyse implementation of field activities. These observations were made during stakeholders' consultations of ID 5210 and 4739 projects. However, in the case of ID 3821, according to FAO GEF implementing agency for this project, the involvement of technical departments of MINEPDED and MINFOF through letters of agreement facilitated implementation of field activities and participation of local stakeholders.

Within the framework of project 3821, the participation of civil society, including three national NGOs, namely Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS), Cameroon Ecology (CamEco) and the Organization for Environment and Development (OPED), in project implementation accounted to some extent to success in the implementation of project activities. **These organizations have good understanding of the local context and were instrumental in facilitating participation of local communities**.

The **lack of staff with capacity to guide and facilitate community-based approaches was identified as a major challenge** faced by GEF ID 4084 where the CBA approach was seen as inadequately implemented due to the lack of proper staffing and experience.

However, it was noted that **projects that build on successful local initiatives or activities were more successful**. In this respect, a good example is ID 5796 project and to some extent GEF ID 4084. In fact, the project activities that brought results were those that relied on agroforestry, a practice that was already underway in the Ngoyla area (ID 4084). For ID 5796, the project relied on the exploitation of the genetic resource (*Echinops giganteus*) which was already being practised by the local communities.

The implementation approach is also a key factor to guarantee success of CBA in projects. **Following the principles of the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) requirements is a good entry point to involve this important stakeholder group who were a gateway to project implementation** in Cameroon. This is because FPIC mandates consultation of the IPs who are key local actors and other vulnerable groups. In the case of project 4084, the activities did not follow the IPLC principles despite the fact that this project was dealing with IPLCs. The approaches were not culturally appropriate at the beginning with lessons learnt at each project phase for improvements.

The project stakeholders felt that due to the time required to ensure sustainability of project actions, monitor project impacts using theory of change, the **current project timelines were too short to see results.**

Capacity building is a critical factor in the implementation of CBA projects. For ID 5796 project, the lack of capacity building of local resource persons in various aspects of domains such as value chain, design, implementation and management of community projects, etc., was a major constraint. Most expertise for research and certain activities were sourced externally with little effort to train and empower local resource persons. Local

respondents said, insufficient capacity building and participation of community-based organizations (CBOs) in project implementation hindered timely execution of field activities. The same observations apply to ID 4084 project. Insufficient capacity in livestock and fish farming techniques by beneficiary IPLCs contributed to limited impacts of livelihood activities on the ground.

The benefits of project implementation are not always tangible and visible on the ground. In the case of ID 5796 project, communities noted the absence of concrete material benefits from the project. From inception, the local communities indicated that there was an agreement by project management to handover at the end of the project certain equipment such as motorcycles and wheelbarrows to the local cooperative. For some reasons the equipment was not handed to the communities. The communities were discontented by project's decision not handing over the equipment. It is difficult to predict long term implications of such decisions on future projects in the area.

Multi stakeholders' collaboration and programmatic synergies catalyse project implementation and economy scale. In the case of ID 3821 project, through collaboration with regional Central African Forests Ministers' Commission (COMIFAC) shared lessons learnt and capitalized its experience in sustainable management of mangroves with "sister" project in the Republic of Congo (GCP/PRC/007/GFF, concomitantly funded and implemented by GEF. The project developed programmatic synergies with technical partners such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the UNDP, USA based the Rainforest Trust foundation, and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) contributed to project results and sharing of common vision on sustainable mangroves management. The project team indicated that, various partnerships and programmatic synergies led to revitalization of two existing multi-stakeholders'/inter sectoral consultative platforms on mangrove management in Rio del Rey and Rio Ntem zones of Cameroon's estuary. The multi stakeholders' platforms contribute to information exchange and collaboration to promote protection and sustainable management of mangroves and coastal ecosystems.

The CBA through the different platforms has facilitated mechanism of for information and knowledge sharing among the different stakeholders, local administration, NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) involved in sustainable mangrove management. The platforms have enabled members of each stakeholder group to be more involved in sustainable management of mangroves and management of conflicts related to natural resource use.

The participation of minority groups is also an important factor in achieving project objectives using CBA. These actors are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. Involvement of women, youth and local people in project implementation is also important.

The sustainability of the project in terms of local ownership and institutionalisation of project results and lessons learned are better guaranteed when there is adequate funding and better worked out exit strategy. This is the case with ID 5796 project whereby due to insufficient funding there was inadequate appropriation of project results. From consultation of the different stakeholders, general speaking, implemented projects require more funding and time generate transformative impacts both on the environment and social aspects including perceptions and support from local communities.

ID 5796 project due to limited funding, could not carry out research on *Echinops* domestication, value chain and other studies to ensure economic spin-offs from exploitation and marketing of the species.

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

A project is considered sustainable when the continued use of its results can be ensured after the completion of the project. Therefore, in the context of the evaluation of GEF projects, the sustainability of the approach is defined as the extent to which the results of the application of the approach are assured after the completion of the project implementation.

To this end, the various projects implemented benefit from a monitoring and evaluation component that ensures the capitalization of lessons learned. However, some projects such as ABS supported community level capacity development with active engagement of local communities in *Echinops giganteus* value chains. The ABS project contributed to the development of a regulatory framework and structuring of communities. But beyond that, this project has made it possible to set quotas for the distribution of revenues from the exploitation of genetic resources, even though it was limited to the training and implementation of tools.

The Sustainable Community Management project (ID 3821) contributed to empowering local communities of Manoka through community forestry despite identified management challenges of community forests. The project has developed various management tools to promote community forestry and best management practices. However, the site visits highlight the need to accompany communities a few years after the adoption of the tools for better appropriation and greater sustainability.

The Conservation and Sustainable Use project in Ngoyla Mintom (ID 4084) provided small grants to communities for agro-pastoral activities. The Common Initiative Groups (CIGs) that benefited from the micro-grants for the most part stopped their activities once the project ended. The micro-grants offered concrete financial assistance to CIGs and boosted cocoa production and banana plantations of the communities. By contrast, interviewees

said the results were not the same for livestock and fish farming projects. One of the lessons learnt from small grants scheme is necessity for training of IPLCs and beneficiary CIGs in various domains, fish farming, agriculture, livestock management etc. It was observed that micro projects were relatively sustainable in areas where beneficiary groups were well trained. However, during site visits, most of the micro projects were found to have little transformational impacts on livelihoods for the communities.

Replication of best practices and successful models are important elements of sustainability. In the context of GEF projects, the replication approach refers to lessons and experiences from the project being used to design and implement other projects. Replication can be of two types: replication itself which is application of lessons and experiences from a project to other locations within the project area. Scaling up refers to the application of lessons and experiences on a larger scale in the same region but with increased financial inputs from other sources. As part of the ABS project, a document on lessons learned and good practices was developed. However, this document is not widely disseminated to the general public.

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect the sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Ngoyla Mintom Forest. GEF ID 4084

For the GEF ID 4084 project, the Livelihood Support Mechanism (LSM) has been implemented to support the livelihoods of IPLCs. The activities of this component aim to improve the livelihoods of these stakeholders. The activities included agroforestry, fisheries and livestock production. In principle, livestock and fish farming are meant to produce animal protein to make up for the protein produced by livestock alone. However, if the activities are unsuccessful, the communities turn back to the pre-project activities, such as hunting and bush meat trade.

In relation to cocoa-based agroforestry activities, the community initiative groups funded had an impact on production and improved sources of income. However, this activity ultimately competes with biodiversity protection in case of inadequate land use planning.

As a result, tensions between natural resource managers (MINFOF) and local communities remained perceptible. The compromise to reverse current trends within forest dependent communities, is to initiate income-generating activities adapted to local context with long term assistance.

Sustainable community management and conservation of mangrove ecosystems in Cameroon (GEF ID 3821)

The exploitation of mangroves is a major source of income to local communities. It is therefore important for the project to develop tools promoting sustainable management. The tools developed by the project team include management frameworks, protected areas management and forest landscape restoration. In the context of this project, CBA supported stakeholders' consultations leading to creation of Manoka community forest and gazettement of Douala-Edéa National Park. However, these activities conflict with the exploitation of mangrove resources notably wood harvesting as fuelwood and artisanal fishing. The CBA approach made it possible for the project to integrate local communities living in mangrove areas in local development planning to avoid conflicts in resource use. The lack of alternatives to economic development opportunities other than fishing, fish smoking and exploitation of mangrove resources were major barriers in project implementation.

According to the implementing agency, CBA is a good approach but must be supported by sustainable financing mechanism(s) without which environmental objectives will be hindered by locally driven economic and community livelihood activities.

A Bottom-up approach to ABS: Community level capacity development for successful engagement in ABS value chains in Cameroon (Echinops giganteus and Mondia whitei) GEF ID: 5387

The exploitation of *Echinops* and subsequent revenues generated from trade in the species contributed to reducing potential conflicts between communities and forest administration. The local communities unsuccessfully experimented with domestication of the species. The project activities in the initial phase were limited to awareness raising phase, capacity building, mobilizing local beneficiary communities and support to the elaboration and adoption of the law on genetic resources. There are opportunities to further invest in value chain of the species. This will provide more tangible results and lessons learnt on conservation and development values of such a project.

Crosscutting: Gender and Inclusion

An analysis of the constraints related to achievement of project results showed that IPLCs were not generally involved in project design (GEF ID 4804). Project stakeholders indicated this led to a lack of activities adapted to their context and insufficient funding to support co-management initiatives. Interviews with local NGOs indicated limited funding to community actions. IPLCs interviewed in for this project indicated they saw a drop in hunting returns and therefore exerted greater hunting efforts over the years for bush meat. Furthermore, IPLCS indicated that the short lifespan of the project did not allow for sufficient time for them to become familiar with the project's vision, strategy and implementation activities.

In terms of gender, the findings are mixed. In GEF ID 3821 women were involved at all levels of the project although to varying degrees. At the community level, specific activities targeted women and youths as the main beneficiaries especially income generating activities. Results from field analysis showed that women are active in fish smoking and trade. They are also involved in mangrove exploitation as fuelwood for domestic use and fish smoking. The latter are well structured and dynamic. This explains why the project invested in training women in mangrove exploitation techniques, improve smoking techniques and awareness raising against illegal and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. In GEF ID 5796 gender was well taken into account during the design phase of the project, but during implementation, attention to gender was impacted by the security situation in the area. This explains the reported poor results of gender mainstreaming in project during implementation. The project did support women's associations within value chain of *Echinops giganteus* and *Mondia whitei*. Women are represented in the local cooperative responsible for marketing of the species.

Main Findings

Most of the projects evaluated seek to reconcile conservation and sustainable development. This demonstrates government's political engagement to ensure biodiversity conservation through protected areas and other initiatives contribute to livelihood of surrounding local communities.

From a review of documents of various projects, the **absence of baseline reference data is a problem for end-of-project assessment**. None of the projects evaluated carried out baseline studies to monitor long-term socio-economic (education, income, livelihoods, etc.) and environmental (size and condition of the impacted areas).

The CBA approach is highly relevant for environment projects in Cameroon, aligning with national priorities with a focus on biodiversity conservation, in addition to national strategic programs such as the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper (2035), national REDD+ strategy etc**.** Alignment with legislative and regulatory frameworks was seen a critical factor for success of the approach. Challenges for implementing the approach at the national level are associated with capacity and resources.

The GEF projects examined integrated CBA to varying degrees in project design and implementation. While many of the projects adopted participatory approaches in design and implementation, some weaknesses in the approach were identified including insufficient consultation and coordination with local communities (especially IPLCs) and the perceptions that decision making was occurring at a central, rather than local level.

CBA contributed to the achievement of environmental objectives of the projects. Robust data on broader environmental impacts associated with the approach is limited, but there are reports from some communities about positive environmental outcomes associated with the approach. Some other examples of successful environmental

activities implemented by the projects using CBA include capacity building of local communities, creation of community forests, and co-management of protected areas. Beyond direct environmental benefits, there were successes in contributions to national policy formulation.

Project impacts are limited once the projects phase out. The sustainability of CBA was related to the following factors: development of exit strategies which emphasize building an enabling institutional environment (this includes training of local management institutions to support collaborative management); include staff expertise; in-depth, inclusive multi stakeholders' consultations; ex-ante analysis of socio-cultural dynamics; and building on previous experience/existing community institutions.

Evidence on socioeconomic co-benefits associated with CBA projects was limited, but there is potential to improve wellbeing. Field visits revealed that community forestry and community wildlife management do have potentials to generate incomes for local economies for jobs creation, welfare and empowerment of the communities in terms of access rights and management of natural resources but evidence was anecdotal.

Project timelines were seen as an impediment to achievement of results. Capacity building, awareness raising, and support for institutional development takes time, sometimes more time than what is allocated for project implementation. Stakeholders felt that results from CBA projects require longer time horizons.

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Annex 1: Persons consulted

Name		Organization
Mme ZABOYA Adele	Government official	MINEPDED
ARRAH Emanuel (provenance buéa)	Government official	MINEPDED
JOUOGUEP Valerys	Government official	MINEPDED
MBAGNA NDANGA Marie Paule	Government official	MINEPDED
Dr Amadou WASSOUNI	Government official	MINEPDED
Mr ARMAND ASSENGZE	Forest and Environment Sector	FAO
Dr Gordon Ajonina		CWCS
Mr GUENDOH Sanga		MINEPDED
Dr Michael Njume Ebong		CHEDE
Dr DINGOM Aurélie Taylor		MINEPDED
Dr ZEH-NLO MARTIN		PNUD
Mr ADAMA Saidou		MINEPDED
Dr NZOOH Zacharie Ndogmo		WWF
Mr ETOGA Jean Marie)		WWF

ALBERT Atangana Francis		World Bank
Mr WAOUO Jacques		MINEPDED
MALA Armand William		Rainforest Alliance
Julie (responsable suivi évaluation et apprentissage)		Rainforest Alliance

Location : ETEKESSANG (NGOYLA) 11/23/2022
Name of participant
AGUELE Jodelette
MONI Pierrette
MUNE Eugenie
ADA Lydie
MBENG Rose
BIDJAMA Rosalie
YAINA Brigitte
KIWIA Laurentine
AKOURIA Princia
ATSUM Emilienne

LEBENG Eugene
ZAMESSIE Marie
Location: MABAM (NGOYLA) 11/22/2022
Name of participant
Jeanne AMPIELA NDIOH
(Délégué GIC)
EKOTTO NGON Flore
MPONO Gilles
DOBELA Fabrice
MEMGBWA Samson
SALO Roger
AMPE Elyse
EKADIO Pauline
AMANDA Henriette
AYAH Jacqueline
AYAH Nadège
MOUGNAGO Jean

MOKOLO(NGOYA) 11/22/2022
Name of participant
SM. BAMETOL Alphonse
SM. NKOLA Rodrigue
TAMODJEM Hyacenthe
Location: NGOYLA 11/22/2022
Name of participant
ISMAILA Souaibou
AKOULA Leance
AHMADOU Laminou
AHMADOU Djindo
IYAWA Kouleya
SADJE Ousman
ABDEL Eugenie
Location:MABAM (NGOYLA) 11/22/2022
Name of participant
DOBELA Fabrice

MPONO Gilles
MEMBWA Samson
SALO Roger
MOUGNAGO Jean
NGAN Pierre
EKADIO Pauline
AMANDA Henriette
AYAH Jacqueline
AYAH Nadège
Location : ZOULABOT I (NGOYLA) 11/23/2022
Name of participant
SM. METOULL Hervé (Chef du village)
DOUDOUMO Jean-Paul (Délégué du GIC
NKOLMBA Annie (ménagère)
APAH Romaine (Membre)
AMELE Antionette (Membre)
Location : ZOULABOT I (NGOYLA) 11/23/2022

Name of participant
BABOT Pascal Blaise
TENGUE Fred William
ETSIELE BABOT Lolita
MEDJO Louis
MBEH Armand
Denise MBOTEGUE
Paulette ANDJOH
Carine ADJAZE
Carole MELENGUE
KAMZOH Brice
Location: MOUANKO (Lobethal) 11/10/2022
Name of participant
DIKWEDI KALKE Steh
ALI Clinton Jokor
EKOLLE Jacques
LAISIN Bruno

IGRI Jean
FOKAN
NGALLE Herve
NDOUMBE Alexandre
MINDJONGUE Blaise
KWEDI KWIN Daniel
ESSOME ESSOME Pierre
NDELLE Lizette
MZOYEM Joyceline
YCNISE Emelt
KWEDI Penda
Location: MOUANKO 11/11/2022
Name of participant
MOUSSONGO Jacqueline
ANGA Agnes
MOUDOUTHE Hedire
MISSONBA Dora

NGOUE Erna
MOUDEMA Annette
MBOUMDATH Helene
ENGUEDJE Alvine
BONDINGUA Petroline
NDELLE Lizette
EBEGNE Augustine
Location: Mbouda 11/15 and 11/16
Name of participant
TANDUWN Landnus
FOLLAH Andrees
EKENG Mariana
EKENG Angeline
MOTANJONG Denis Atoh

Annex 2: Images

Type	Degress	DMS
Latitude	2,59686	2°35'48" N
Longitude	14,02734	14°1'38"...

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Latitude	2,68835	2°41'18" N
Longitude	14,00456	14°0'16"...

Type	Degress	DMS
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Longitude	14,00456	14°0'16"...

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Type	Degress	DMS
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GPS Map Camera
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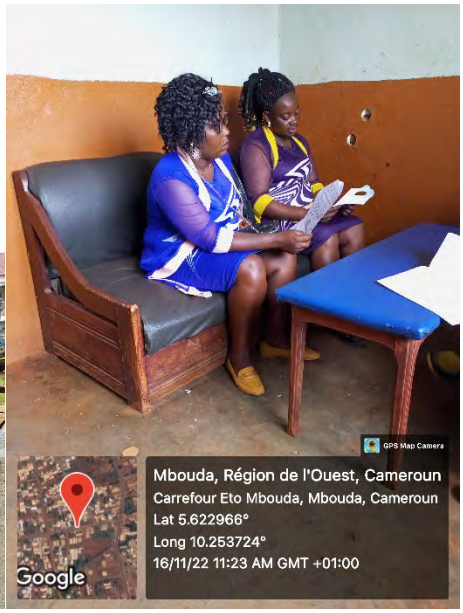
Google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Long 10.253724°
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Section 3. Indonesia Case Study

Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF: Indonesia Country Case Study

Prepared by: Kate Steingraber, GEF IEO; Rodd Myers, Dala Institute; and Mariana Silvana Moy, Independent Consultant

April 2023

Community-rehabilitated forest outside of protected area in Cihajawar, supported by GEF ID: 3279. Photo credit: Kate Steingraber

Background

Indonesia is a mega biodiverse country rich in natural resources, which are often the source of conflicting land claims by communities, the state, and private enterprises. Community-based approaches to environmental conservation and restoration are often seen as a way to (a) mitigate some of these conflicts (b) produce meaningful socio-economic results for community members and (c) improve both the immediate and long-term environmental results of projects. While a popular contemporary approach to environmental projects in Indonesia, the extent to which projects are community based varies considerably, with few effective laws in place to ensure the benefit-sharing, procedural participation, and recognition, of local communities and especially Indigenous people.

Laws, policies, strategies that support community-based approaches in Indonesia

Statutory mechanisms

Indonesia's regulatory environment is complex and overlapping. There are several regulations that relate to community-based approaches in the context of GEF programming, however, they tend to be context specific and often do not relate to the ways that people may participate, but rather in how they can benefit. For example, the inti-plasma oil palm scheme dictates that local communities must maintain 20% of oil palm plantation areas. In practice, communities often have little control over the costs of inputs and sales, nor over the ways in which plantations are managed (Myers et al. 2015). Efforts to legislate the ways in which benefits from carbon sales are shared have also been challenged by bureaucracy (Setyowati 2021; Dyarto and Setyawan 2021).

One example of a community-based approach in Indonesia is the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) program, which aims to involve local communities in the management and conservation of forests. Under this program, communities are granted legal rights to manage and use forest resources, and they are given support and training to develop sustainable forest management practices (Table 1).

Table 1. Arrangements for HKm, HD and HTR social forestry schemes

	Community forests **Hutan Kemasyarakatan (HKm)**	**Village Forests** **Hutan Desa (HD)**	**People's Planted Forests** Hutan Tanaman Rakyat **(HTR)**	**Partnership Forest** Kemitraan Kehutanan	**Customary Forest** Hutan Adat (HA)

Scope	Group or cooperative use rights over: - Timber from planted trees only, in Production Forest - Non-timber forest products. - Environmental services.	Village management rights over: - Timber from both natural and planted forest, in Production Forest areas. - Non-timber forest products. - Environmental services.	Individual or cooperative use rights in Production Forest, under three different models: - Independent, established at own initiative and cost. - Partnership or joint venture with plantation company. - Led by a company under an outgrower scheme.	Group of farmers or community members, not government employees.	Claimants must meets specific conditions and prove that the territory claimed is one customarily used by ancestors.
Conditionality	Use subject to separate business license. Not alienable, cannot be collateralised.	Use subject to separate business license.	Use rights granted at outset. Not alienable, only planted trees can use be used for collateral.	Community claimants must have used the land for at least the last five years.	Ownership rights for customary communities
Duration	35 years	35 years	60 years	10 years	permanent
Laws (see below)	1, 3, 4	1,2, 4	1,4,5	1,4,7	1,4,6

These statutory schemes are governed by the following laws:

1. Peraturan Menteri Limgkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Nomor 83 Tahun 2016 tentang Perhutanan Sosial on social forestry
2. Peraturan Kementerian Kehutanan Nomor 89 tahun 2014 tentang Hutan Desa on village forests
3. Peraturan Menteri Kehutanan Nomor 88 tahun 2014 tentang Hutan Kemasyarakatan on community forests
4. Peraturan Direktur Jenderal Perhutanan Sosial dan Kemitraan Lingkungan KLHK Nomor 13 tahun 2016 tentang Pedoman Verifikasi Permohonan Izin Usaha Pemanfaatan Hasil Hutan on benefit-sharing from forest products
5. Kayu pada Hutan Tanaman Rakyat (IUPHHK-HTR) on people's planted forests

6. Putusan Mahkamah Konstitusi Nomor 35 tahun 2012 tentang pengelolaan hutan adat yang dikembalikan kepada masyarakat hutan adat dan hutan adat bukan merupakan hutan negara, melainkan tanah adat yang harus dilestarikan on customary forests.
7. Peraturan Menteri Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Nomor 39 tahun 2017 tentang Perhutanan Sosial di Wilayah Kerja Perum Perhutani.

Over the last decade there has been increasing attention paid to customary forests, which have been sanctioned by statutory law. Law 5 of 1960 (i.e., the BAL) recognizes adat (customary or custom) law as coexisting with national law; however, few regulations have been introduced that relate directly to adat

(Wright 2011). We note Ministry of Agriculture rule Permen Agraria 5/1999 as an exception

in which customary land rights are recognised in non-forestland. Article 5 of the BAL reads

as follows:

> The Agrarian law applies to the land, water and air space is customary law, to the extent that it is not contrary to national interest and the State, which is based on national unity, Indonesian socialism and the regulations contained in this Law and other regulations, and to any elements that rely on religious principles.

Forestry Law 41/1999 effectively negated customary land tenure security for those with customary claims over forests by regulating that all forestland not owned under private land rights be directly controlled by the State. Within this, only claimants meeting the following criteria would be considered as having customary forests: (1) the society is organized as a distinguishable community; (2) there are existing structures and institutional arrangements; (3) there are clear territories and boundaries based on customary law; (4) customary law and customary judiciaries still exist; (5) societies still gather forest products to fulfil their daily needs; and (6) the claim has the support of the district government. These principles have been in place for 15 years, and yet Constitutional Court challenges were required to lead to hutan adat being realized in the country.

The government often cited the BAL as a constraint to issuing hutan adat, in which it is stated that the allocation of land should not contradict national interests (Contreras- Hermosilla and Fay 2005). Before the Constitutional Court decisions, Moeliono (2002) and Moniaga (1993; 2007) already questioned in what ways the role of national law and practices would erode adat traditions and serve to integrate local communities politically, economically, and socially into the nation-state.

Aside from forest management, there are few laws that compel implementers to engage the community beyond cursory consultation (Hasyim et al. 2021; Myers et al. 2016). Instead, Indonesia has opted for the strong representation of the village government, which has substantial control over interventions withing the borders of the village, and has access to the annual village funds, which are issues directly for the development of each village by the national government (Arifin et al. 2020).

In addition to these programs, there are also a range of community-based initiatives that focus on sustainable agriculture, marine conservation, and renewable energy. These initiatives involve local

communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of environmental projects, and they aim to build the capacity of communities to manage their natural resources in a sustainable way.

Another example of community-based approach in Indonesia is the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs). MPAs are areas of the ocean that are set aside for the conservation of marine resources, and they can be established and managed by local communities. A number of community-based MPAs have been established, often with the support of NGOs and other organizations. These MPAs are managed by local communities, who work together to monitor and enforce fishing regulations, control pollution, and educate others about the importance of conservation.

Similarly, the establishment of community fisheries is prevalent in Indonesia. Community fisheries are areas of the ocean that are set aside for the exclusive use of local communities, who are responsible for managing and protecting the resources within those areas. By establishing community fisheries, local communities are able to regulate fishing practices, reduce overfishing, and promote sustainable fishing practices. In addition, these fisheries can provide economic benefits to local communities, as they can be a source of food and income .

Customary mechanisms

Customary governance systems that support community-based approaches are under the broad umbrella of “adat” (custom), and specifically, “hukum adat” (customary law). Custom and customary law are impossible to understand for the entire country as they are as diverse as the cultures that have built and maintained them. They are also dynamic and changing over time (Davidson and Henley 2007). While there are many examples of how custom ensures the participation of some members of society, it can be equally as exclusive along age, marital status, lineage, caste, and gender (Elmhirst et al. 2017). Adat has a significant impact on community-based- approaches as it often governs who can, and cannot, participate and benefit from community activities, and it is especially relevant for the allocation of land, which is often governed more by adat than statutory certification in Indonesia (Lund 2021).

The political context in Indonesia

During the early post-independence period in the 1950s and 1960s, the government of Indonesia was heavily involved in the management and exploitation of natural resources. This period was characterized by a strong state-led development strategy, which included nationalization of foreign-owned companies and the establishment of state-owned enterprises.

In the 1970s and 1980s, however, there was a shift towards decentralization and deregulation of the natural resource sector. This was driven in part by the economic crisis and the need to attract foreign investment. The government began to privatize state-owned enterprises and opened up the natural resource sector to foreign investment.

In the 1990s, Indonesia experienced a period of democratization and decentralization. The government began to devolve more power to regional and local governments, which were given greater autonomy in

managing natural resources. However, this period was also marked by corruption and weak governance, which led to environmental degradation and conflicts over resource access.

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on natural resource governance in Indonesia. The government has introduced a range of reforms aimed at improving the management and regulation of the natural resource sector. These include efforts to combat corruption, strengthen environmental regulation, and increase transparency and public participation in decision-making.

Despite these reforms, however, challenges remain in managing Indonesia's natural resources. These include issues such as conflicting land claims, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, and the continued influence of powerful vested interests in the sector. The political context will continue to shape the governance of natural resources in Indonesia, and the success of reform efforts will depend on the ability of policymakers to navigate these complex dynamics.

Portfolio of projects using a community-based approach

To identify projects that were likely to include a community-based approach for the broader evaluation, purposive sampling was used to identify projects from the GEF portfolio in the biodiversity, land degradation, climate change adaptation focal areas and related multi-focal area projects. Projects that were explicit in their use of a community-based approach in their title, objectives, or activities were selected. Based on this sampling a portfolio was identified for Indonesia and included seven projects, four ongoing and three completed (Table 2). Components and activities that used a community based approached within the projects visited by the field mission were identified in Table 3.

Table 2. GEF projects identified as using CBA approach in Indonesia

GEF ID	Project Title	GEF Phase	GEF Agency	Financing	Project Status
10757	Maintaining and Enhancing Water Yield through Land and Forest Rehabilitation (MEWLAFOR)	GEF – 7	UNIDO	1,775,313	Ongoing
10731	Strengthened Systems for Community-based Conservation of Forests and Peatland Landscapes in Indonesia (CoPLI)	GEF – 7	IFAD	5,329,452	Ongoing

10236	Catalyzing Optimum Management of Nature Heritage for Sustainability of Ecosystem, Resources and Viability of Endangered Wildlife Species (CONSERVE)	GEF – 7	UNDP	6,272,018	Ongoing
9600	Strengthening of Social Forestry (SSF) in Indonesia	GEF - 6	World Bank	14,317,909	Ongoing
4340	Strategic Planning and Action to Strengthen Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Nusa Tenggara Timor Province (SPARC)	GEF - 5	UNDP	4,933,943	Completed Rating (outcome): Satisfactory
3443	Strengthening Community Based Forest and Watershed Management (SCBFWM)	GEF - 4	UNDP	6,900,000	Completed Rating (outcome): Moderately Satisfactory
3279	Citarum Watershed Management and Biodiversity Conservation Project (CWMBCP)	GEF - 4	ADB	3,614,678	Completed Rating (outcome): Successful

Table 3. Project objectives, data on CBA in projects visited for fieldwork

GEF ID	Objective	Components using community-based approaches	Community based approaches described in project documents
4340	To enable the NTT province to strengthen climate resilience of its rural communities to improve livelihood, food, and water security	Community-based pilots intended to diversity and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable rural communities. Planning and policy with local government and rural communities integrating climate resilience actions in their development policies, plans, and programs.	**Grants were given to community groups** for livelihoods, food and water security through community-based management. They were expected to diversifying sources of income to be less sensitive to climate change. Water resources infrastructure and management improvements undertaken to take climate change into account. Villages were supported to **integrate adaptation measure into their community vision maps** and create

			community-based climate risk information system.
3279	Improved integrated water resources management in the Citarum river basin	Component 1. Biodiversity inventory, habitat mapping and GIS Component 2. Land restoration rehabilitation pilot Component 4. Biodiversity conservation mainstreaming on the production landscape	Biodiversity management action plans developed through **participatory process**, and communities involved in ongoing monitoring of biodiversity. Conservation village models were developed with communities that border conservation areas. **Communities were given grants** to allocate towards livelihoods activities, decided in a participatory manner amongst their group members.
9600	The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to improve access to forest land use rights and strengthen community management in selected priority areas allocated for social forestry	Component 2 – Strengthening community management within social forestry	Project activities include **participatory forest management, community forest management and mapping.** Existing community groups are supported by the project, new community groups are form and provided capacity building. **Grants will be directly awarded to community groups** The appropriate implementation of the management plans will be overseen and ensured through a supervision mechanism that is designed to ensure that activities are in **line with the management plan and that feedback is provided to the beneficiaries**

			There is a **project level grievance redress mechanism** established within the implementing arrangements of the project.

Evaluation methods and approach

Data collection methods

As a first step, project documents were reviewed to gather a list of key stakeholders to interview, learn more about project context, design, and achievements, and help decide selection of field visits. Key informant interviews were carried out before the mission (remotely), and during the mission with more than 177 stakeholders in Indonesia (national government officials, agency staff, national level implementing agency staff, civil society, indigenous peoples advocacy group; regional government; academia, consortiums involved with project management, local government, regional NGO staff, and community members) (see Annex 1). With local communities the evaluation carried out focus group discussions and made efforts to include the voices of vulnerable groups and women.

IEO collected feedback about the factors or challenges that influence the usefulness, value-add, and ultimately performance of projects that use a community-based approach. Some of the factors for success and challenges relate to good project management (such as good working relationships, land tenure issues, remoteness of project sites and lack of infrastructure, issues related to migration, etc) and are not presented, instead the focus is on feedback specific to GEF projects that use a community-based approach.

Site selection criteria

Of the seven projects identified as part of the Indonesia portfolio covered by this case study, three were selected for field visits. Two closed projects were prioritized, and then within the resource and logistical constraints of the mission (project sites are dispersed throughout the country) one ongoing project was selected.

The country case study was undertaken in two phases. The first in December 2022 by Rodd Myers and Mariana Silvana Moy, and the second in January 2023 by Kate Steingraber and Mariana Silvana Moy. Interviews in Jakarta were carried out during the January mission. The evaluation mission met with stakeholders from the following project sites:

GEF ID and project name	**Sites visited**

4340: Strategic Planning and Action to Strengthen Climate Resilience of Rural Communities in Nusa Tenggara Timor Province (SPARC) (closed)	1. Manggarai District (Bappeda Office, Project Staff, Local NGO, Community members and Head of Village at Gapong Village and Liang Bua Village) 2. East Manggarai District (Bappeda Office, Community members of Bea Muring Parish and Head of Deno Village)
9600: Strengthening of Social Forestry (SSF) in Indonesia (ongoing)	1. Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara Province (KPH Maria Donggomasa Office, Community members of KTH Dana Kala and Head of Ntori Village, and Community members of KTH Oi Rida and Head of Maria Utara Village) 2. Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara Province (KPH Toffo Pajo Soromandi, Community members of KTH Ncai Ama Nofi and Head of Karamabura Village, and Community members of KTH Sonco Ama Sunu) 3. Denpasar: Balai Besar PKPSL Jawa Bali Nusa Tenggara 4. Jakarta: PSKL-Ministry of Environment and Forestry, PMO, and World Bank
3279: Citarum Watershed Management and Biodiversity Conservation Project (CWMBCP) (closed)	1. Bandung District, West Java Province (BBKSDA West Java Office, Community Members of MDK Sugih Mukti and Head of Sugih Mukti Village, Sindang Pakuon Village for PES Scheme, Saguling Waduk/Dam) 2. Purwakarta District, West Java Province (Community members of MDK Cihanjawar)

Limitations

The IEO mission was limited in the number of sites it could visit due to time constraints, many potential sites, and the dispersion of project sites across the country. Consequently, the case studies do not systematically conduct in-depth analysis to draw causal relationships between all project activities and outcomes, but rather they collect qualitative data (supplemented by quantitative data where available) to gather stakeholder feedback, understand the reasons for success or failure of CBA, and look at sustainability post completion. The site visits focused primarily on CBA components or activities. IEO relied upon project self-evaluation or independent evaluation reports, complemented by primary data collected by the field team to carry out analysis. Data availability limited the extent to which sustainability could be assessed. For example, in Citarum, the IEO team was unable to obtain the GIS coordinates for neither the restored conservation areas, nor the rehabilitated border areas and was therefore unable to validate the claims of improved environmental status by project teams and community with data. The inability to share basic coordinate data with the evaluation team calls into question the sustainability of the GIS database system, as well as continued capacity to use this data in the management of protected areas and to track environmental status change over time.

Findings:

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries?

All stakeholders interviewed at the national, regional and local levels felt the CBA approach used in GEF-projects was relevant for the context in Indonesia. Government respondents pointed to the increasing prominence community-based approaches within government strategy. According to respondents, the approach of working directly with villages is embedded within national and sub-national approaches to environmental management and development that focus on decentralizing decision making to the village level. GEF grants were used to further programming that was already in place and to advance the government's agenda. The additionality of the GEF in this context was seen by national government officials as providing concrete/tangible results from working directly with communities, and in allowing for experimentation of new modalities of working with communities. For example, a consortium of sector experts was enabled by the GEF grant as part of the Citarum project.

Community-based approaches are well-suited for implementation in local contexts. In the context of climate change adaptation, the CBA approach allowed for tailored responsiveness to multi-dimensional risks as demonstrated in the SPARC project. Respondents indicated that they valued CBA because it allowed for better integration of local knowledge than in top-down approaches.

CBA is seen as especially relevant in and near forests. Community members themselves generally found the approach relevant because they wanted to be involved in the decision-making processes on land that they use. In the example of the Social Forestry project, forest-use rights were afforded to communities to undertake agroforestry, providing livelihood opportunities while protecting the environment. In the case of Citarum, the project was seen as meeting the needs of the communities, albeit at a small scale. A representative from an Indigenous peoples' advocacy group felt that the approach is relevant, but that in practice, inclusion of Indigenous people in mixed communities is challenging. They stressed that IPLCs should be involved in the design phases of the projects.

The CBA project management structure was also viewed as relevant. Project boards involve a range of stakeholders related to the project, in addition to the technical team (including province level representatives), there is a separate PMU from the government In SPARC, the project management structure was less clear to community members who only understood the project as a collaboration between the civil society implementer and the local government but didn't have a sense that there was oversight by communities members at the project level.

Though the approach was deemed relevant, what CBA means in the context of projects was not always explicit in project documents, relying on assumed meanings. In the CWMBCP project the TE pointed out some definitional issues and inconsistencies around the term community-based forest and watershed management for example. The TE notes that frequent reference is made to the community-based model, but the model isn't well defined. Two possible interpretations are offered, one is that it relates to the process of strengthening local community-based organizations (CBOs) for more meaningful participation in natural resource management or another is that it relates to the development of sub-watershed management plans with participation of local communities. The TE concludes that a clear definition of the model would enhance the likelihood of replication (TE, 48). In the SPARC project, the community-based nature was more explicit and was primarily concerned with decision-making around project implementation but stopped short of devolved financial management.

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

Environmental outcomes:

The link between community-based approaches and environmental outcomes is not explicit in the project design, lofgrames and reports. The terminal evaluation from GEF ID 3443 – SFM Strengthening Community Based Forest and Watershed Management describes measurement issues that hinder reporting on environmental and social outcomes. They are summarized here, with a focus on those most relevant for CBA. The TE notes that

> 'the objective level indicator does not reflect the incremental added value of the GEF funding. For example, in the wording of the indicator there is no indication that the support is through community-based management, and it is unclear which watershed functions and ecosystem services are targeted' (TE, 11).

The TE also notes that one of the aims under Output 1 was to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs), in order to better support forest and watershed management but states that this is not sufficiently reflected in the output level performance indicators. Though there were some shortcomings in terms of indicators, there also were some indicators that stand out in terms of monitoring progress of CBA projects, and inclusion. Key Indicator No. 6 was "The amount of funding provided to support community-based management of natural resources in the 6 provinces in which the demonstration sites are located." The TE reported USD 5,214,300 achieved against this indicator, though it remains unclear what the target was. The project also measured inclusion through Key Indicator No. 4, "Proportion of (a) women and (b) the landless involved in community groups across the 6 demonstration sites."

Similarly, the terminal evaluation for GEF ID 3279 – Citarum Watershed Management and Biodiversity Conservation Project does not have any data on environmental status change.[1] While environmental outputs are reported on in the TE, the link between those results and CBA is not immediately clear, and it remains an open question whether or not results such as the development of eight biodiversity management action plans in a participatory process, the installation of GIS systems, and biodiversity surveys related to, required, or were affected by CBA.

Projects affected mindsets and behaviors that benefited protected areas. Prior to the project, communities in Citarum reported taking resources from the conservation areas – wood for cooking for example. Communities reported a decrease in 'illegal' logging which they attributed partially to increased awareness of community members about the regulations supporting protected areas, increased community patrols, and empowerment of the communities as entities responsible for monitoring the areas. In Cihanjawar village, community members felt that an environmental status change of increased tree cover had led to improved water (both quality and quantity), and better conditions for their rice paddies. Communities received more than 100 palm sugar trees which were used to restore the area bordering the conservation area. Men harvest the palm sugar, which is then processed and sold by women, this is further discussed in the gender and inclusion section below.

Similarly, in the Social Forestry project, the IEO field mission visited four communities in Bima and Dompu and heard community perspectives on how they are seeing both environmental and socioeconomic benefits during early implementation of project activities (Image 1). The environmental benefits include the ability to prevent illegal logging, and also a shift away from illegal logging by the community members themselves. The communities report a shift in mindset, better understanding of the importance of conservation, and new awareness about the boundaries of the protected areas. They also report conducting patrolling activities. The expected socioeconomic benefits will be measured in terms of improvements in household income by planned independent surveys, according to the project managers. Examples of livelihoods support include processing and marketing coffee and oil from a local fruit in Maria Utara (Image 2).

Image 1. Agroforestry scheme in Dompu started with support from the Social Forestry Project. Photo credit: Kate Steingraber

Image 2. Communities harvest fruit and nuts and process into oils sold locally and regionally with support from the Social Forestry project. Photo Credit: Kate Steingraber

Community members often implemented data collection activities related to environmental benefits, but were not aware of how to use the data. In the Citarum project, biodiversity tracking tools were used in the eight conservation areas tracking changes from 2013 – 2016 and show mixed results, with high variance along the quantitative indicators collected as part of the Biodiversity Tracking Tool indicating both negative and positive changes in the species monitored. Trail cameras were used as part of the project (Images 3 and 4), local forestry officials received training in how to use them and so did community members, but IEO could not find evidence that they were currently in use. Similarly, rainfall measurement devices were installed in Manggarai as part of SPARC. During the project implementation, farmers diligently recorded the data, but were not clear on how to use it to influence their practices. Further, at the time of the evaluation, none of the instruments described in this section were active in the field.

Image 3. Leopard captured at camera trap in Gunung Papandayan Nature Reserve, West Java. Photo credit: Forestry Regional Office of West Java

Image 4. Leopard's footprint in Cikeupeh Wildlife Reserve, West Java. Photo credit: Forestry Regional Office of West Java

The Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes have seen mixed results. The PES scheme piloted in the Citarum project was not successful. As reported in the TE, and verified in interviews, the PES pilots were not viable during the project implementation period. This was attributed by stakeholders to inadequate local regulations that would allow for the necessary management arrangements between upstream communities and downstream water users. IEO heard from community members that efforts to continue working on a PES scheme that will provide payments to upstream users in exchange for efforts to curb erosion and improve water for downstream users are still in process. This was triangulated among members of the consortium set up to support project implementation, and local government officials. In contrast, an example of a successful PES scheme is found in GEF ID 3443 that linked a hydropower company to communities who received compensation for planting and improving sediments. These activities reportedly yielded measurable reductions in sediments at project close.

Communities reported participating in a community and conservation area mapping exercise for the first time as part of the projects. This was helpful for environmental conservation because the communities reported that they had better understanding of official boundaries and felt empowered to patrol against illegal logging. For example, in Sugih Mukti, villagers described learning the boundaries of the 9,600 ha conservation area and removing 16 illegal agriculture plots from the conservation area. In this village the livelihood activity supported by the project also addresses an environmental challenge: the villagers selected a waste management facility that they operate for profit. They collect waste throughout the village for a fee, and then sort through the refuse, reselling or recycling what they are able to. Stakeholders in the Social Forestry Project also reported participating in a participatory mapping exercise for the first time (Image 5).

Image 5. Group members in Dompu discuss the land showed in GIS maps provided by the project team. The communities participated in the mapping exercise and saw the land from this perspective (showing ground cover and boundaries) for the first time. The maps were a valuable tool to facilitate discussions for the evaluation mission. For example, it was possible to see which sites had the least amount of forest cover and understand decision making around removing trees to plant corn prior to the project and plans to re-incorporate trees while practicing agro-forestry as part of the Social Forestry project. Photo credit: Kate Steingraber

The environmental outcomes for SPARC were limited. As a climate change adaptation project, SPARC was proposed on the premise that changes in local climates necessitated behavioral shifts among rural communities in terms of food production, water use, and livelihood activities. It was therefore related to climate change adaptation at local levels rather than mitigating against climate and environmental changes. While there were multi-stakeholder groups established at the district levels, they tended to focus on the primary concerns of the project, having to do with agriculture and livelihoods, true to the project design (see SPARC final report). The project did not have any environmental objectives or targets that were measurable.

Socioeconomic outcomes:

Surveys undertaken by GEF ID 3443 – SFM Strengthening Community Based Forest and Watershed Management found that average monthly household incomes increased in project areas from income generated from community-managed areas. Household incomes were independently surveyed by external consultants, as part of a participatory project impact assessment. Referenced to control households, the targeted households had increased monthly income in all six demonstration areas, ranging from 40% more in the DAS Palu to 146% more in Sub-DAS Tulis. Adjusting for inflation, these income levels exceed the target of IDR 635,470 (TE). The findings on household income increases are caveated based upon findings during the TE fieldwork, and raise questions on the likelihood of sustainability.

In the Citatrum project, the TE makes no substantial reference to any data on outcomes related to livelihoods or other socioeconomic co-benefits, but communities attribute livelihoods benefits to the project. Data collected during interviews with community members revealed that the livelihood support activities were highly valued by community members. The MDK conservation community group in Sugih Mukti village was formed under the project and during early implementation group members learned about the idea to create a waste management facility to generate income. They attribute their current and past economic benefits to the project, they earn money from separating out plastic and collecting trash from neighborhoods, as well as through creating compost. The group leader estimated that up to 70 people have graduated out of the group and moved on to higher paying jobs after getting starting with income improvements from the waste management facility. The expansion of the waste management facility after project close is further discussed in the sustainability section below. The other village visited by the project in Cihanjawar also benefitted from livelihoods support. In addition to income generated from harvesting sugar palm, villagers benefitted from support to handicraft production and provision of livestock to groups and individuals. The handicraft machine was provided to a group of individuals who learned from the leader how to make tables, handicraft, knives, etc. One group member estimates that he makes 1 to 2 billion IDR annually from selling the handicraft.

The legacy of CBA in the SPARC project is in bottom-up approach in which local communities had considerable autonomy to set their own priorities in terms of livelihoods activities. Across all three sampled villages, respondents praised SPARC for its community-based approach and enabling the community members to decide their own livelihood activities. Unanimously across the sampled villages, respondents felt that they were in control of what the activities were and what inputs were needed. They noted in several instances that the quantity of inputs were limited by SPARC, but understood that the project had resource limitations and were comfortable with their ability to direct those expenditures within those limitations.

Similarly, although still under implementation, the Strengthening of Social Forestry in Indonesia project is praised by respondents as being flexible and adaptable to interests of communities. The project especially interesting given the relatively large size of the GEF grant – USD 14,317,909 at approval (a full size project at the GEF is a grant of more than USD 2 mil – the average size GEF grant for GEF-7 was USD 6,948,141 (inclusive of agency fee). The money is being used to support the government's social forestry program, which allows participating community groups to choose between five different types of management schemes for land that is in some cases being illegally farmed. The project is unique in that it aims to provide a full spectrum of support, from formal legal permission to use (and protect) the land for up to 35 years under the condition that the land be used for agroforestry. The project provides support for capacity building, group formation, and planning for grants that groups will receive after their formal permission is cleared through the necessary approving authorities. Groups select which economic activities or livelihoods support they want. National project staff report that community groups have proposed rights to 200,000 hectares of forest so far. The project design is appreciated by the ministry because it allows for flexibility. This project also is positioned to support Indigenous claims over forest land through the pursuit of customary forest designation. To date, there have been no customary forestry schemes, however the project team stressed their intention to ensure inclusion of Adat (customary group) communities (see table 1). The project team reported challenges with changing the mindset of communities away from cultivating corn, trying to shift focus to fruit trees, honey and livestock. They also report some challenges developing value chains, mostly in terms of finding private sector partners, especially in more remote areas.

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

Project time horizons can be difficult to navigate, timelines impede likelihood of seeing outcomes at project close. Project stakeholders (GEF Agencies, Implementing Agencies, and community facilitators) noted that the amount of time required to work directly with communities in a bottom-up approach is higher relative to top-down approaches. This is especially true for projects that take a sequenced approach, that first on building capacity (for decision making, environmental issues, administrative issues, financial management, etc), before working on financing the activities chosen by the communities. All of these activities can be difficult to fit into project time spans, especially in SPARC in which implementation in some villages was limited to 1.5 years.

The approach is 'easier' to implement when there are established and well-functioning groups in place and projects can build upon the existing social infrastructure. Project teams can reestablish or strengthen existing groups and use that as a starting point for project activities. Through the CBA approach, the projects tailor interventions based on the social/existing condition, focusing on building capacity to sustain project interventions, augmenting existing management capacity etc. The project team for the ongoing Social Forestry project indicated they have had the most success with building capacity of groups that already existed. IEO validated this through meeting with both new and existing groups, and witnessed the differences between the two in terms of capacity, social cohesion and governance. In contrast, all of the groups in SPARC were established for the express purpose of receiving funds and none had institutional training that would enable them to function institutionally. At the time of the evaluation, all of the groups were functionally inactive although maintained registry with the department of agriculture.

Lack of policy coherence[2] at the national level is a challenge in Indonesia. In recent years, agriculture policies that support and promote the cultivation of corn were put into place, but this happened at the expense of forest areas. Project teams then had the difficulty of trying to nudge community members away from growing corn, into using agroforestry. Projects that require working across different agencies are more complex, but inter-agency cooperation and coordination is seen as key. When the projects are centrally managed, upstream and downstream coordination influences success as does alignment with national programs.

Livelihoods activities in CBA projects were more successful when paired with linkages to markets. The closed projects included training and capacity-building on issues related to agricultural and non-timber forest product production, but generally failed to systematically make adequate linkages with markets. In all of the SPARC villages, community respondents suggested that they were not provided with any market-related training or capacity-building, and that they lacked the ability to translate improved production to higher incomes in a significant and sustainable way. One SPARC community member expressed that "we have lots of tomatoes, but we can't even eat them all and have nowhere to sell them." Similar sentiments were expressed by other community members who waited for buyers to come to the farm gate and expressed lack of knowledge over whether or not prices offered were fair. This, according to respondents, curtailed the value-addition potential that the project might have otherwise had. We also note that project proponents relate this limitation to the short implementation period. However, there were some examples of linkages with markets in other projects. In the ongoing SSF project, for example, successful examples of livelihoods activities were found, with higher profits reported by communities that are able to conduct marketing and sales activities to reach consumers

beyond their local communities. In the Citarum project, some of the small business created through project activities are ongoing (trash collection/recycling, handicrafts, sugar palm). There were some linkages to regional markets in the handicraft business, but the trash collection and sugar palm markets were mostly within the villages.

Involvement of local governments is key to success of CBA projects. Local, regional, and national stakeholders stressed the importance of involving local governments in project design and implementation. This includes governments at the village, district and provincial levels. According to agency staff, if these actors are involved and supportive, projects can move forward more easily. This was confirmed by IEO through interviews with village leaders during field visits. These leaders confirmed the importance of their involvement, both to ensure that interventions were targeting the right locations and addressing the pressing needs of communities, and also to ensure coordination with any other donor funded activities. Consequently, changes in leadership can present a challenge if turnover is difficult to manage.

Community facilitation is important for success of CBA projects. Facilitators should be well-trained, and should be a daily presence in the communities where they work, providing ongoing and as needed support (SSF and Citarum examples). Similarly, community respondents in SPARC emphasized that the visits from implementers was key to advancing their processes, and that although appreciated, they would like to have had more interaction.

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

Because there was limited data collected on environmental outcomes, it is difficult to trace sustainability of the project outcomes from an environmental perspective.

Project stakeholders from both villages that IEO visited from the Citarum project confirmed that both the forest rehabilitation zones in community managed buffer zones, and the conservation areas themselves had achieved and sustained improved environmental status as a result of project activities. The community members reported continuing their patrol efforts. IEO was unable to validate the continued use of the GIS tracking system provided through project activities. It was reported that the more than half of the camera traps provided by the project are still in use by the regional government, but IEO was unable to validate.

Sustainability of socioeconomic outcomes is mixed. The communities in Cihanjawar and Sugih Mukti villages both report that their group is still active, and that most of the livelihoods activities are ongoing. In Sugih Mukti the waste management facility that was started with GEF seed money was scaled up by a private sector entity (PT BIODIV Energi) who supported the group as part of their corporate social responsibility efforts, and then further support was provided by the national government. The group leader provides training on how to manage finances, and group members report that these activities continue to date. The group currently collects 15 tons of trash monthly from the area and group members plan to make handicrafts from the usable refuse. In Cihanjawar, community members reported earning an estimated IDR 4,500,000 from producing palm sugar, an activity that is still ongoing. The group using the handicraft machine is also still benefitting from the investment.

The terminal evaluation of GEF ID 3443 observed that likelihood of sustainability for the community-based organizations supported under the project was largely dependent upon the internal capacity of

the CBO to secure funding, the cohesiveness of the CBO and the location of the CBOs. Without the support of the facilitators, it seemed there was a general drop in activity.

In SPARC districts, adaptation is now a crosscutting initiative that officials credit to the project. In many ways, the enthusiasm for SPARC remains in communities. However, the multi-stakeholder fora have dissipated or been absorbed into other processes (also related to COVID, which made convening and travelling challenging). The farmer groups in all the villages sampled for SPARC were inactive, but the learnings from SPARC remain and respondents report using them on their individual farms. Benefits from livestock-based projects dissipated quickly, with almost all respondents reporting that they had sold off their livestock or they had died. In Gapong Village, respondents stated that the livestock had been sold to pay for immediate educational needs of children and not replenished. They noted that when expensive events arise, like tuition, a funeral, or a wedding ,there is considerable pressure to sell the animals. In all of the villages sampled, there were indications of elite capture in which one member, often the group leader, continued to conduct the activities such as raising goats, making manure, producing seeds and so on while the other group members had reverted to pre-project activities.

Image 6. Cattle Cage Funded by SPARC Project in Bea Muring Area. Photo credit: Mariana Silvana Moy

Image 7. Fertilizer House Funded by SPARC Project in Bea Muring Area. Photo credit: Mariana Silvana Moy

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect the sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

In Bima and Dompu the example of the tradeoffs and tension between environmental objectives and economic needs is very apparent.

Project staff for the ongoing Social Forestry project are candid about the challenges they face in changing the mindset of communities. The private sector presence creates a market and an incentive to grow corn. Community facilitators are working on promoting the agroforestry approach, especially to communities that are illegally using land to grow corn. One of the appeals to these communities is that they get formal permission to use the land, and no longer have to worry about getting reported or caught by authorities. With formal land tenure comes access to agricultural extension services, and the project teams are promoting the project using an anti-poverty message. By switching to agroforestry, which allows communities to sell fruit from trees, community members will be able to use any improvements in income to improve wellbeing (send children to school, etc). Project teams felt like this approach had been successful in convincing communities to join the project.

Crosscutting: Gender and Inclusion

The Citarum project targeted two specific groups to receive support through CBOs, and women's participation represented 21% of the total. The project also targeted landless farmers, but saw lower levels of inclusion of this group, at 8.4% of the total.

In the villages visited by the evaluation, IEO did not observe that women played a leadership or decision-making role in the community groups. Women were beneficiaries of the livelihoods activities, though they had different activities and different roles than men. For example, in Cihanjawar, the men harvest the palm sugar, and the women process it (Images 8 and 9) . From this, one woman reported receiving IDR 150,000 per day to help support her family's needs. In Sugih Mukti village, the women reported joining the group that runs the waste management activities because they were jobless and needed income. The men went out into the community and collect the waste, making up to IDR 100,000 a day, while the women made IDR 30,000 for sorting the refuse. Women interviewed by IEO were glad they joined the group, but indicated that women's participation needs to be encouraged, convincing women that there is an economic benefit is key.

Image 8. Sugar palm in Cihanjawar, provided by GEF ID 3443. Photo: Kate Steingraber

Image 9. Women processing sugar palm to sell locally in Cihanjawar. Photo: Kate Steingraber

In SPARC, women's groups were developed in all of the villages sampled and there were indications that women had autonomy to determine the activities of the group. The TE suggests that there were a low ratio of women extension workers and states that:

> women are insufficiently catered by extension services for various reasons: the agriculture agency mostly employs male extension workers (in Manggarai 20% are female and in Sabu Raijua and East Sumba this is only 5%); gender training has not been provided to extension workers; extension approaches and tools have not incorporated gender specific needs and approaches. This is problematic since women in NTT play a key-role in managing important assets such as small livestock like pigs, chicken and seed, and play a key-role in crop production, harvesting and processing.

It further noted that about 1/3 of the project participants were women across SPARC, and that there was little leadership training or support for women despite UNDP's emphasis on gender equality.

Respondents suggested that **CBA needs to engage women from the start and separately from men**, given the patriarchal structures in many communities. Overall, the involvement of women was often in womens' groups. In SPARC, women and men were provided the same opportunities to participate in terms of the availability of project resources, but there was little explicit evidence to suggest that the project activities accommodated for the extra domestic burdens that women experience. While group meeting times were designed to accommodate women's schedules, they also did not make explicit attempts to even out other activities so that women could participate as fully as men. In SSF, the

experience was mixed. Some respondents reported that men were the main family member involved in the project while women generally stayed at home, but there were also examples of groups where the main force driving economic production of seed oil (including processing, marketing, and distributing) were carried out by women.

According to the SSF project: **The project will focus on mitigating potential elite capture, which could occur in the context of management of common pool resources such as community forest.** The project does not involve benefit sharing in the sense of collective "profits" to be managed or distributed to a collective on a landscape scale. However, access to participate is a guiding tenant, and guidance and training are to be provided to ensure access to marginal groups to avoid elite capture. The distribution of income within the participating groups (community enterprise groups and/or farmer groups) will be addressed through the groups' governance arrangements. Group structure, regulation, and dynamics form part of the training and development provided to these groups of community members as part of the FMU facilitators' role, to be supported under this SSF project. (PAD, 24)

Analysis ands

It was difficult to link GEF projects using community-based approaches to broader impact, but there is evidence of achieved environmental and socioeconomic outcomes. In the case of the Citarum project, many of the project level outcomes were achieved, but it was difficult to measure broader environmental status change, or sustainability because of the lack of data. Interviews during field visits indicate that environmental conservation activities are ongoing, and some of the livelihoods activities continue, with some strong examples of success. The SPARC project exhibited limited sustainability of the livelihoods activities. The SCBFWM project showed some achievement of both environmental and socio-economic outcomes at project close.

Working with existing groups: Existing groups can be 'faster' and easier' to set up, and working with them is certainly a logical starting point and a tenet of CBA (to start with pre-existing institutions), however, the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion within the groups is often unclear (though some projects include explicit efforts to avoid elite capture), and in most cases, the groups were formed as a requirement to access funds. In most villages included in this evaluation, the groups were only animated in order to obtain funding, and often lack the institutional governance capacity and momentum to be self-sustaining, innovating groups working toward common objectives.

GEF projects using community-based approaches varied in their level of comprehensiveness of the approach. Whilst SPARC devolved decision-making to community members, it failed to sufficiently root into the community such that communities had the capacity to continue the activities. Communities were involved in thematic decisions but were not involved in procurement or access to markets, which limited sustainability. Similarly, the Citarum project involved capacity building around environmental and livelihoods issues, and devolved decision making to groups, supported by grants issued directly, however there was limited involved in project management (with the exception of forest monitoring).

There were both great appreciation for the projects, and limited sustainability of results. Most respondents reflected favorably on the sampled projects and had anecdotal examples of impact while admitting that the impact felt in the project were not lasting, especially in the case of SPARC. This was less true in the case of the Citarum project. The limited sustainability of results is related to the lack of

institution-building with most projects working with community groups but largely depending on the government to continue support services for the communities, which failed to materialize.

Time horizons: Limited implementation periods limited the sustainability of the projects, and the ability to help community groups to mature into self-actualized collectives.

Gender and Inclusion: While some projects made specific efforts to include women in project activities, the extent which structural issues that may prevent full participation and benefit-sharing of women is less certain. Although there are indications of newer projects that include space for addressing explicit IP issues such as customary forests, there are not any clear and specific objective or strategy to including Indigenous People and institutions in the sampled projects.

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Annex 1: Persons consulted

Firstname	Lastname	Gender	Role	Organization	Location
Irawan	Asaad	M	Head of Office	Forestry Regional Office of West Java (BBKSDA Jawa Barat), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Bandung, West Java
Bisro	Sya'bani	M	Chief of Management Unit	Forestry Regional Office of West Java (BBKSDA Jawa Barat), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Bandung, West Java
Eri	Mildranaya	M	Environment Controller	Forestry Regional Office of West Java (BBKSDA Jawa Barat), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Bandung, West Java
Dwi Hendra	Kristianto	M	Staff	Forestry Regional Office of West Java (BBKSDA Jawa Barat), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Bandung, West Java
Riswan	Buhori	M	Head of Village	Sugih Mukti VIllage	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Ujang	Sukmana	M	Head of Community Group	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java

Ace	Hermawan	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Chriesdian	Casanova	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Elah	Nurhayati	F	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Yayah	Dariah	F	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Tati	Rohayati	F	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Dewi	K	F	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Dede	Irawan	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Suherlan		M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Sugih Mukti	Sugih Mukti Village, Pasir Jambu Sub District, Bandung District, West Java
Eri	Nurhayat	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java

Dede	Rukman	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Syarip	Hidayat	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Abdul	Kohar	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Uli		M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Aman		M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Wawan		M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Budi	Mawarli	M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Nana		M	Community Member	Conservation Model Village - MDK Cihanjawar	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Iis	Rohati	F	Village Facilitator	Program CWMBC	Cihanjawar Village, Bojong Sub District, Purwakarta District, West Java
Vidya	S. N	F	Staff BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta

Sylvana	Ratina	F	Fungsional (Former Head of BBKSDA West Java)	Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Febriany	Ishandar	F	Staff BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Rasyidah		F	Staff BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Rudiono		M	Staff BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Rangga	Agung	M	Staff BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Dewi	Sulastriningsih	F	Head of ABKT and Coridor Division, BPPE	Directorate of Essential Ecosystem Management Development (BPPE), Directorate General of Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Dirjen KSDAE), MoEF	Jakarta
Syafda	Roswandi	M	Director of Preparation of	Directorate of Preparation of Social Forestry Area (PKPS), Directorate General of Social	Jakarta

			Social Forestry Area (Dir. PKPS)	Forestry and Environmental Partnership (Dirjen PSKL), MoEF	
Tubagus Ajie	Rahmansyah	M	Chief of Preparation of Community Forestry (HKm) and HTR (Kasubdit Penyiapan HKm dan HTR)	Directorate of Preparation of Social Forestry Area (PKPS), Directorate General of Social Forestry and Environmental Partnership (Dirjen PSKL), MoEF	Jakarta
Erna	Rosdiana	F	National Advisory	PMO SSF Program , MoEF	Jakarta
Dede	Rohadi	M	Program Leader	PMO SSF Program , MoEF	Jakarta
Mamat	Rahmat	M	Staff	PMO SSF Program , MoEF	Jakarta
Laksmi	Dhewanthi	F	Director General of Climate Change Control - OFP GEF	Directorate General of Climate Change Control, MoEF	Jakarta
Sri Tantri	Arundhati	F	Director of Climate Change Adaptation	Directorate of Climate Change Adaptation, Directorate General of Climate Change Control, MoEF	Jakarta
Iwan	Gunawan	M	WB Team for SSF Project	World Bank Indonesia	Jakarta
Tini	Gumartini	F	WB Team for SSF Project	World Bank Indonesia	jakarta
Christian Budi	Usfinit	M	Manager Program SPARC	UNDP Indonesia	Jakarta
Agus	Rusly	M	Secretary General of DG of Climate Change Control	Directorate General of Climate Change Control, MoEF	Jakarta

Helena	Lawira	F	Project Officer - Citarum WMBC Program	ADB Indonesia	Jakarta
Soeparno	Wirodidjojo	M	Project Leader-Citarum WMBC Program	Consortium PT. Inacon Luhur Pertiwi	Jakarta
Pudjo	Hutomo	M	Institutional/Policy Specialist Component 3	Consortium PT. Inacon Luhur Pertiwi	Jakarta
Dwi	Kristianto	M	Comdev Specialist-Component 4	Consortium PT. Inacon Luhur Pertiwi	Jakarta
Didit	Susiyanto	M	Comdev Asisstant-Componen 4	Consortium PT. Inacon Luhur Pertiwi	Jakarta
Agus	Sriyanto	M	Leader Component 1 - Biodiversity	Consortium PT. Inacon Luhur Pertiwi	Jakarta
Apolinaris Samsudin	Geru	M	Implementing Partner-Program SPARC - Head of Climatology Station Lasiana BMKG - East Nusa Tenggara	Head of Climatology Station Banten, BMKG	Banten
Silvester Ariatno	Djehaut	M	Head of Local NGO - Implementing Partner Program SPARC in Manggarai - East Nusa Tenggara	NGO Tunas Jaya Foundation	East Nusa Tenggara
Ojom	Sumantri	M	Head of Balai PSKL Jawa Bali Nusa Tenggara - Implementing Partner for SSF Program	Center of Social Forestry and Environment Partnership (PSKL) Jawa Bali Nusa Tenggara	Denpasar

Monika Kristiani	Ndoen	F	Project Manager	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN) Indonesia / The Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago	Jakarta
Yuliati	Basri	F	Chief of Forest Use Planning and Community Development (Kasie P2PM)	Forest Management Unit (BKPH) Maria Donggo Masa	Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Tamrin		M	Bima District Facilitator	SSF Program	Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Mei Liana	Sulistia	F	Assistant Wawo Sub District, Bima District	SSF Program	Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Algi	Syarif	M	Head of Ntori Village	Ntori Village	Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
A	Rafik	M	Head of Maria Utara Village	Maria Utara Village	Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Arahman		M	Head of Community Group	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Siti	Aisah	F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Makrifah		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Hamilah		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara

Abakar		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Damrin		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Muhammad	Natsir	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Fitri		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Abdurarahman		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Ismail	Gau	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Anuriah		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Naima		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
A	Rafik	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Oi Rida	Maria Utara Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Anwar		M	Head of Community Group	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara

Fitiriani		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Rosina		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Ratnah		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Hurman		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Abdul	Karim	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Bunyamin		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Jufri		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Nurrahma		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Hamidah		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Dana Kala	Ntori Village, Wawo Sub District, Bima District, West Nusa Tenggara
Faruk		M	Head of BKPH Toffo Pajo Soromandi	Forest Management Unit (BKPH) Toffo Pajo Soromandi	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Iksan		M	Staff of Social Forestry Unit	Forest Management Unit (BKPH) Toffo Pajo Soromandi	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara

Bangkit	Maulana	M	Staff of BKPH Toffo Pajo Soromandi	Forest Management Unit (BKPH) Toffo Pajo Soromandi	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Siti	Salmah	F	Dompu District Facilitator	SSF Program	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Aswan		M	Head of Kramabura Village	Kramabura Village	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Israr	Ardiansyah	M	Head of Community Group	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Ahmad	Haddu	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Kusmiati		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Chintami	At	F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Fitri		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Rahmawati		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Irawati		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Fariani		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara

Sinta	Mutiara	F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Arena		F	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Nurwalida		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Jaimuddin		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Ncai Ama Nofi	Kramabura Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Kuras	Abubakar	M	Head of Nowa Village	Nowa Village	Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Muhamad	Saleh	M	Head of Community Group	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Ahmad		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Bambang		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Nederwandi		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Sahrul		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Anwar		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara

Muhamad	Sidik	M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Ismail		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Mursalim		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Jainudin		M	Community Member	Forest Farmer Group - KTH Sonco Ama Sunu	Nowa Village, Dompu District, West Nusa Tenggara
Hila	Jonta	M	Head of Office	Bappeda Manggarai District	Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
A	Alexus	M	Head of Economy Development Division	Bappeda Manggarai District	Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Robert		M	Former Point Person of SPARC Program	BKSDN, Manggarai District	Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Kiki	Artina	F	Staff	Bappeda Manggarai District	Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Bonevantura Dedi Hendrian	Dugis	M	Staff	Bappeda Manggarai District	Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Adrianus	Jelami	M	Head of Gapong Village	Gapong Village	Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Aleks	Lapak	M	Head of Kemas Proklim	Gapong Village	Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara

Yustina	Diu	F	Head of Community Group	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Melania	Mel	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Herlinda	Dewi	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Fenisia	Kurniati	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Maria	Ince	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Merensiana	Tati	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Modesta	Empal	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Regina	Nusum	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Seravina	Dadi	F	Community Member	Woman Farmer Group - KWT Baeng Koe	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Katarina	Imul	F	Head of Community Group	Cotton Mattras Group - Woman Group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara

Anastasia	Bisiun	F	Community Member	Cotton Mattras Group - Woman Group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Beata	Niwung	F	Community Member	Cotton Mattras Group - Woman Group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Kristina	Ju	F	Community Member	Cotton Mattras Group - Woman Group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Osilia	Linda	F	Community Member	Cotton Mattras Group - Woman Group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Emanuel Kristianus	Harum	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Flodosius Asmin	Ate	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Silfinus	Jehatu	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Susana	Lulus	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Wilhemus	Pantur	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Yohanes	Deman	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara

Yuliana	Lisa	F	Community Member	Water group and livestock group	Gapong Village, Cibal Sub District, Manggarai District, East Nusa Tenggara
Marselinus	Hasan	M	Catholic Priest - Inisiator-Facilitator Bea Muring/SPARC Project	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	East Manggarai District
Matias	Mingga	M	Secretary	Bappeda East Manggarai District	East Manggarai District
Ferdinandus	Mbembok	M	Head of Economy Development Division	Bappeda East Manggarai District	East Manggarai District
Katarina	Setia	F	Staff for Program Planning, Data and Evaluation	Bappeda East Manggarai District	East Manggarai District
Silvester Nobi	Robin	M	Head of Deno Village	Deno Village	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Paulus	Sadan	M	Head of Kemas Proklim	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Ambrosius	Roni	M	Community Member	Organic Fertilizer Developer - Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Edeltrudis	Tanggo	F	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Kristiani	Mira	F	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Kristoforus	D	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District

Noberia	Marini	F	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Albertus	Abu	M	Parish Priest	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Ronaldus	Wantas	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Thomas Aquinas	Mbiru	M	Community Member	Coffee Production Division - Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Daniel	Sudirman	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Videlis	Vigis	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Yohana Cecilia	Daputri	F	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Yustina	Mita	F	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Stefanus	Randut	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Konstantinus	Mansur	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Aloisius	Duas	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Rofinus	Haman	M	Community Member	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District
Petromualdus Charly	Krowa	M	Priest	Bea Muring Catholic Parish Community	Poco Ranaka Sub District, East Manggarai District

Aleks	Sal	M	Head of Kemas Proklim	Liang Bua Village	Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Aleksius	Parus	M	Community Member	Paddy Field and water group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Yeremias	Taleng	M	Community Member	Paddy Field and water group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Yohanes	Nabit	M	Community Member	Paddy Field and water group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Yovita	Lilut	F	Community Member	Paddy Field and water group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Elisabeth	Mamus	F	Head of Community Group	Livestock - Pig Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Lusia	Goarni	F	Head of Community Group	Livestock - Goat Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Bibiana	Bis	F	Community Member	Livestock - Goat Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Yovita	Jenaut	F	Community Member	Livestock - Goat Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Sisilia	Ima	F	Community Member	Horticulture Woman Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Venansia	Saiman	F	Community Member	Horticulture Woman Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District

Yuliana	Umut	F	Community Member	Horticulture Woman Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Merlin	Paus	F	Community Member	Horticulture Woman Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Erna	Rut	F	Community Member	Horticulture Woman Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Gerda	Geong	F	Community Member	Livestock - Pig Group	Liang Bua Village, Rahong Utara Sub District, Manggarai District
Rosarius	Naingalis	M	District Facilitator	SPARC Manggarai District	Labuan Bajo

Section 4. Madagascar Case Study

Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF: Madagascar Country Case Study

Prepared by: Kate Steingraber, Evaluation Officer, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

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Mangrove restoration area in Ambavarano village supported by GEF project ID 3687

Photo Credit: Ariel Elyah

Background

In Madagascar, home to an unparalleled biodiversity in the African region, it is now recognized that community action plays an important role in ensuring effective stewardship and management of natural resources. In the 1990s there was a narrower focus on conservation without much consideration for

how to manage the people living around protected areas, user rights were not protected or acknowledged. Since the 1990s, driven by a shift in government strategy and reinforced by various projects, support to grassroots communities has continued to grow and become more formalized. This has seen projects move from a more 'top down' approach to one that is more 'bottom up' and reflects the role of communities as important stakeholders. From local social conventions, better known as 'Dina', to management transfers, the forms of community involvement in environment interventions have become more diverse over time.

This case study analysis situates the community-based approaches promoted by the GEF in their implementation context in Madagascar. The case study was carried out for the Evaluation of Community Based Approaches[1] at the GEF by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office.

Laws, policies, strategies that support community-based approaches in Madagascar

Formal mechanisms

Community-based interventions in Madagascar are governed by a number of formal regulations at the national level, including:

1. Law No. 96 025 on the Local Management of Renewable Natural Resources, commonly known as the "GELOSE Law" (September 30, 1996): This law defines the regulatory framework for the transfer of natural resource management to the grassroots communities or COBAs (communautés de base). Among other things, it provides for a management contract binding the community, the State or its local representation, the Commune, and the designated manager of the protected area. The GELOSE law is one of the legal bases for the explicit recognition of the role of COBAs in conservation.

2. Decree No. 98 610 (August 13, 1998) on Relative Land Tenure Security: defines the procedures for recognizing and delimiting the land occupied by the local community that benefits from the management of renewable natural resources. Note: In the legal context of Madagascar, a decree (issued by the executive branch) is easier to repeal than a law (issued by the legislative branch).

3. Decree No. 2000 027 on COBAs: in line with the GELOSE law, this decree specifies the structure and operating procedures of the grassroots communities that may be entrusted with the management of renewable natural resources.

4. The protected areas code (COAP) came into law in 2001. It set out the principles for the existence of the network, notably the need to represent Madagascar's diverse ecosystems through a mosaic of territories in order to represent and conserve the national natural heritage. Madagascar National Parks was mandated to manage the national network comprising parks and reserves in IUCN categories I, II and IV, but was also called upon to encourage and support the creation and consolidation of privately owned and managed reserves known as voluntary protected areas. A new COAP was established in 2015

The "Dina[2]"

The Dina is a kind of collective agreement that straddles the line between the formal and the informal. Its scope is generally limited to a well-defined territory. The existence of the Dina predates the existence of the regulatory texts governing COBAs. In addition, some Dina - outside the environmental context - provide for the death penalty for violations of established community codes. This is the case, for example, of the *Dina Menavozo* (red throat), which was intended to combat theft and organized crime in certain regions of south-eastern Madagascar.

Because of their potentially violent nature, Dina are not universally accepted in official legislation, though it is legally recognized as a form of bylaw under the national Dina Law of 2001. Nevertheless, as local collective agreements, they are present in the customs and traditions of communities and therefore critically important for projects that employ a community-based approach. Dina related to community based natural resource management should normally be submitted and approved by the court to ensure alignment with legislation.

The COBAs themselves are accustomed to calling the internal regulations governing their members, *Dina.* Penalties, often financial - called *"vonodina"* - are applied in case of infringement of the community rules. Illegal logging by COBA members, for example, is subject to *vonodina*. Repeated violations of the terms of the Dina can lead to the exclusion of the offending member.

The political context in Madagascar

Starting in 2009, Madagascar experienced a decade of political turmoil. In March 2009, after a Coup d'Etat[3], the President elected in 2002 was forced to resign and flee the country. This was followed by a transition period of nearly five years, marked in particular by tense relations between the Malagasy state, then led by Andry Rajoelina, and donors. It is in this politically challenging context that the design and implementation of GEF-5 projects took place.

Portfolio of projects using a community-based approach

To identify projects that were likely to include a community-based approach for the broader evaluation, a keyword search was conducted on data from the GEF Portal on project title, objectives and

components. Based on this keyword search a portfolio was identified for Madagascar and included eight projects, six ongoing and two completed (Table 1). Four ongoing projects were not analyzed for this case study: Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas and Improved Livelihoods to Combat Wildlife Trafficking in Madagascar (GEF ID 10233); Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in the Northwestern Landscape (Boeny region) (GEF ID 9606); Participatory Sustainable Land Management in the Grassland Plateaus of Western Madagascar (GEF ID 5354); Conservation of Key Threatened Endemic and Economically Valuable Species in Madagascar (GEF ID 5352). Field visit site selection prioritized closed projects, ongoing projects were selected to maximize the short time allocated to conduct fieldwork.

Table 1. GEF projects selected for site visits

GEF ID	Project Title	GEF Phase	GEF Agency	Financing	Project Status
3773	Support to the Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity (through Additional Financing to the Third Environment Support Program Project (EP3)	GEF - 4	World Bank	10000000	Completed Rating (outcome): Moderately Unsatisfactory
3687	Madagascar's Network of Managed Resource Protected Areas	GEF - 4	UNDP	5999611	Completed Rating (outcome): Satisfactory
5486	A Landscape Approach to Conserving and Managing Threatened Biodiversity in Madagascar with a Focus on the Atsimo-Andrefana Spiny and Dry Forest Landscape	GEF - 5	UNDP	5329452	Ongoing
10696	Inclusive conservation of sea turtles and seagrass habitats in the north and north-west of Madagascar	GEF - 7	UNEP	3370320	Ongoing

Table 2. Project objectives, data on community-based approaches used in projects

GEF ID	Objective	Components using community-based approaches	Community based approaches described in project documents

3687	Expand the PA system of Madagascar by developing a sub-network of managed resource protected areas in represented ecological landscapes, comanaged by local government and communities and integrated into regional development frameworks.	Component 2 - Institutional capacity & decentralized PA governance framework for MRPAs. Component 3 - Public-private partnerships & financial sustainability.	This project included **some devolved decision making and accountability**, **legitimacy in the eyes of users** through creation of participative boundaries, zoning and land use, and recognition of community land tenure ; and a **strategy for sustainability of results** – the project was designed in a way to be appreciated and appropriated by local communities and authorities by improving livelihoods based on revenues linked to sustainable resource use from the new protected areas, and also to safeguard interests of all stakeholders with respect to activities and benefits emanating from the site.
3773	The global objective of the project is to contribute to the preservation of the quality of regional and global commons through improved natural resources management and biodiversity protection in critical ecological regions, defined as national PA and their corresponding buffer zones and corridors. (GEF Objective)	Component B: Local community support and development: (approx. 90,000 households and over 1,000 grassroots community organizations) - including monitoring of safeguards implemented under EP3, implementation of compensation for communities surrounding two new forest corridors, mitigation of remaining conflicts around established PAs, and support to community-based organizations to increase involvement in PAs management notably through the community-based forestry management contracts.	Weak **devolved decision making**, project fell short of providing this power to local stakeholders whose livelihoods were affected by the creation of PAs. Note: The community-based approach used by the project mostly supported one time safeguards payments to offset the inability of communities to use forest resources for livelihoods.
5486	To protect biodiversity within the Atsimo Andrefana Landscape from current and emerging threats, and to use it sustainably, by developing a collaborative governance framework for sectoral mainstreaming and devolved natural resource management.	Component 2: Community-based conservation and sustainable use operationalized Outcome associated: Landscape level planning and economic analysis support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into management of the Atsimo Andrefana Landscape, covering three districts and totaling ~2.4 million hectares	This project included **limited devolved decision making and accountability,** communities were consulted in design; **partial incorporation of local institutions and customs;** and **moderate consideration of sustainability of results** through the landscape governance approach and expected benefits through livelihoods activities.

10906	Adopt integrated approaches for inclusive conservation of sea turtles and seagrasses and the sustainable management of their habitats in North-West Madagascar	Outcome 2: Improved management of marine turtle and seagrass habitats in the project sites Outcome 3. Local communities and private sector adopt sustainable livelihood and business practices that address sea turtle and seagrass conservation	**Devolved decision making** through the involvement of community members in the selection of income generating activities to pilot (combined with analysis of what is suitable); **accountability of implementation to users** – the project will set up and manage a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) as recommended that would address project affected persons; **incorporation of local institutions and customs** – the project will ensure that the agreements with Community Associations do not violate traditional natural resources right system of the local people in favor of the Associations and compliance with Dina; **sustainability of results** – plans exist for financial and institutional sustainability, as well as environmental sustainability.

Evaluation methods and approach

Data collection methods

As a first step, project documents were reviewed to gather a list of key stakeholders to interview, learn more about project context, design, and achievements, and help decide selection of field visits. Key informant interviews were carried out before the mission (remotely), and during the mission with more than 50 stakeholders in Antananarivo (national government officials, agency staff, national level implementing agency staff, civil society, other stakeholders with knowledge of the environment sector in Madagascar) and in the regions (regional government, regional NGO staff, academia, local government, and community members) (see Annex A for list of persons consulted). With local communities the evaluation carried out focus group discussions and made efforts to include the voices of vulnerable groups and women.

Site selection criteria

Of the eight projects identified as part of the Madagascar portfolio covered by this case study, four were selected for field visits. Closed projects were prioritized, and then within the resource and logistical constraints of the mission (most of the project sites are remote[4] and dispersed throughout the country)

two ongoing project sites were selected. Some of the sites were so remote that villagers traveled up to two days to a central location to be able to participate in interviews.

The evaluation mission took place from November 3 – 18, 2022 and was led by Kate Steingraber, GEF Evaluation Officer, GEF IEO with support from Ariel Elyah, Independent Consultant. The evaluation mission met with stakeholders from the following project sites, numbers from the table reflect the numbers on the map of site visit locations.

GEF ID and project name	Sites visited/met with representatives from communities
1. 3687: Madagascar's Network of Managed Resource Protected Areas (closed)	1. Andranotsimaty (Loky Manambato PA) 2. Ambavarano (Loky Manambato PA)
2. 10696: Inclusive conservation of sea turtles and seagrass habitats in the north and north-west of Madagascar (ongoing)	3. Community members from four communities in the Diana region (around the Nosy Hara PA), namely Lalandaka, Antsako, Ankingameloka and Ambaro in the district of Antsiranana II.
3. 3773: Support to the Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity (through Additional Financing to the Third Environment Support Program Project (EP3) (closed)	4. Beba Manamboay (near Zombitse Vohibasia PA) 5. Andasy (near Zombitse Vohibasia PA) 6. Andranomaitso (near Zombitse Vohibasia PA)
4. 5486: A Landscape Approach to Conserving and Managing Threatened Biodiversity in Madagascar with a Focus on the Atsimo-Andrefana Spiny and Dry Forest Landscape (ongoing)	7. Ankilimalinika (Ranobe PK32 PA) 8. Maromiandra (Ranobe PK32 PA) 9. Andabotoka (Ranobe PK32 PA) 10. Mamery (Ranobe PK32 PA)

Map of sites visited by IEO mission

Limitations

The IEO mission was limited in the number of sites it could visit due to time constraints, many potential sites, and a decision to focus on remote sites due to stakeholder feedback received during initial consultations. Consequently, the case studies do not systematically conduct in-depth analysis to draw causal relationships between all project activities and outcomes, but rather they collect qualitative data

(supplemented by quantitative data where available) to gather stakeholder feedback, understand the reasons for success or failure of CBA, and look at sustainability post completion. The site visits focused primarily on CBA components or activities. IEO relied upon project self-evaluation or independent evaluation reports, complemented by primary data collected by the field team to carry out analysis. The geospatial analysis was conducted with the best data available in the closest proximity to the starting and ending points of the project, and the time period after completion, but these are not precisely aligned with actual start and ending dates of the project.

Findings:

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries?

All groups of stakeholders consulted (central and local government, implementing agency staff, GEF agency staff, NGOs, academia and community members) agreed that community-based approaches are highly relevant in the context of management of protected areas and the buffer zones surrounding them in Madagascar. There are two main dynamics that were mentioned as factors that emphasize communities in PA management. The first is a lack of resources to manage the large land area encompassed by protected areas. Communities are seen as a valuable resource to support forest patrol and ecological monitoring activities. The second dynamic is the role that human actions play in deforestation. Communities in and around the PAs rely on natural resources for livelihoods and subsistence including but not limited to clearing land (slash and burn) for agricultural practices or grazing zebu (cattle); charcoal production; mining (legal and illegal); timber extraction; illegal poaching, etc.

Stakeholders interviewed identified the mechanisms through which they see CBA projects (including those financed by the GEF) addressing environmental challenges, these included: socialization and/or education about the need for and value of protecting the environment; creating a sense of ownership for the protected areas; developing capacity of local communities to manage resources; capacity building and provision of assets that promote sustainable livelihoods. Creating a sense of ownership was idenfitied by stakeholders as important to increase the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes. A few other viewpoints were shared on the relevance and value-add of the community-based approach in Madagascar:

- Multiple stakeholders reflected the view that the previously employed 'top-down' approach hadn't been successful or wasn't relevant given the context which necessitates taking community needs into consideration when designing a project.
- The relevance of the approach was linked to equity issues by some stakeholders who see efforts to leverage community-based approaches to make everyone less poor, versus making some individuals better off from project activities.
- Cost management was seen a value-add of the community-based approach, with CBA it's possible to federate may stakeholders which makes the limited project funds go farther

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

The data on broader environmental impacts (environmental status change) associated with completed GEF-financed activities using community-based approaches is limited, this is reflected in project documents and confirmed with key stakeholders. However, there is data on environmental outputs and outcomes associated with the projects (expanded coverage of protected areas, number of hectares under improved management, etc). Data on socioeconomic outcomes is limited. Broadly speaking, both government and NGO stakeholders reported that while there is an historical lack of robust monitoring and evaluation of environmental and socio-economic outcomes at the project level, there has been a shift towards collecting community level data both on ecological trends and human wellbeing associated with recently designed projects. Although they were unaware of any examples where project level ecological reporting was consolidated or reported up, there is an incentive for communities to continue the ecological monitoring started by the GEF projects because it's usually a prerequisite for financing from future projects led by NGOs.

Some stakeholders attributed any perceived lack of broader impact of CBA projects to project design choices and targeting, indicating that because of the big surface area targeted and insufficient budget, the projects have focused on breadth (wide coverage) over depth (more resources provided to each community/household). In general, stakeholders thought community co-management works well for both environmental and social outcomes, pointing to more success along both dimensions in communities with access to nearby economic activities (for example, communities located next to a national park benefit from revenue streams associated with tourism, men serve as tour guides and women make handicrafts or food items to sell).

Here data on project environmental and socio-economic outcomes is presented for the two closed projects visited by the evaluation mission. Information is sourced from project documents, supplemented by interview findings.

1. GEF ID 3773: Support to the Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity (through Additional Financing to the Third Environment Support Program Project (EP3)

Environmental Outcomes: The IEG performance evaluation report (PPAR) conducted an ex-post evaluation of this project, finding the following:

- The project increased the coverage and helped expand the number of Protected Areas in Madagascar, directly supporting the management of 33 Protected Areas covering 2.7 million hectares of land and supporting the expansion of 860,000 hectares of land under PAs (through newly established or expanded protected areas). However, management was found to be unsustainable due to lack of institutional capacity and insufficient financial resources (PPAR, 11).
- The EP3 project contributed to natural resources protection in a fragile setting (during the political instability described above), ensuring that donors, environmental NGOs, and other stakeholders would collaborate under a single framework (PPAR, 11).
- In spite of the expansion of PAs, GIS analysis conducted by IEG found that the increased placement of forest habitat under PAs in the EP3 did not result in the envisioned reduction of deforestation rates (PPAR, 13).[5]

Field visits confirmed what was stated in the PPAR. Stakeholders at the implementation level reported that the environmental benefits were heterogenous, differing between each PA (as reflected in the Geospatial analysis conducted by IEG). They also said that the pressures on the PAs were difficult to overcome, especially those relating to migration. However, one aspect of the project was seen as successful and sustained - field visits and interviews with community stakeholders and NGO staff confirmed that capacity building and community forest patrols were effective, helpful to the regional government, and that community forest patrols were still ongoing, in some instances on a voluntary basis. In two of three of the villages visited, other organizations (such as Madagascar National Parks) had taken over funding of forest patrol activities, where community members could earn a modest sum of money either to conduct the forest patrols on their own, or to serve as guides for Madagascar National Park staff to conduct the forest patrols. The incentive to continue the forest monitoring activities is linked to the expectation that doing so would make the community more attractive or eligible for additional project activities, however community members stated that they also saw the intrinsic value in the activity.

Socioeconomic outcomes: Local communities surrounding PAs did not see agricultural incomes improve or livelihoods restored as a result of project support (PPAR, 16). Failure to address agricultural productivity around the PAs was identified as one explanatory factor for the continued deforestation occurring in PAs supported by the project. The community development activities funded by the project reached less than half of the intended beneficiaries, most of whom expressed dissatisfaction with compensation activities through project surveys. The PPAR analyzes secondary data on the incomes of households located in project villages supported by safeguard activities (meant to offset loss of income from inability to use the newly formed PA) and villages without support and found no significant difference between the two groups of households (PPAR, x).

Feedback from project stakeholders in the field complements what was reported in PPAR. Project benefits were not felt widely across communities, which may be attributed at least in part to the amount of resources allocated per village. This was validated in both villages visited by IEO, where the community members reported that very few people benefitted from the project's activities to support livelihoods – in one village 11 people in a village of 400 received seeds for cash crops and although agricultural implements were meant to be shared between community members the resources provided were considered insufficient. In a second community visited by IEO with a population of 4,000 people, 20 households received cassava seeds and agricultural implements.

2. GEF ID 3687: Madagascar's Network of Managed Resource Protected Areas

Environmental outcomes: The MRPA project supported creation of five protected area sites, encompassing 1,464,972 HA, and it also set up baseline inventories for the five sites, management support, and community ecological monitoring systems. According to the Terminal Evaluation (TE), a total of 90 patrol missions were conducted over the course of the project, and analysis showed that this is associated with a drop in the number of breaches of the protected area from 2014 to 2015. The project developed the institutional capacity of village organizations to monitor land use. At project close there were 80 village organizations supported, with management contracts signed, however the capacity to enforce management actions associated with the contracts was considered variable in the TE.

From IEO field visits to the Daraina commune, community members estimated that around 70% of community members are sensitized to protect the environment, while around 30% continue to practice slash and burn. The women's association in Ambavarano village, benefiting from the MRPA project, reported an example of environmental conditions improving through a women led mangrove reforestation subproject. The mangrove is reportedly a good habitat for crabs. The crabs are harvested for self-consumption and for sale to collectors during the rainy season. Fishing is one of the most important livelihood activities in this area, so the mangrove restoration activity directly supports this important source of income. IEO validated the communities' reports of improved environmental status for the mangrove forests through GIS analysis, and found that the area supported by the project, bordering the Ambavarano village, did in fact see an increase in mangrove coverage. These GIS findings are presented in the sustainability section below.

Socio-economic outcomes: The terminal evaluation reports ongoing support to income-generating activities including market gardening crops, small animal farming, winnowing, ecotourism, fish farming and beekeeping.

During field visits, community members reported that the project had a good balance between social and community development outcomes, creating and supporting vanilla, cashew and octopus value chains, and ecotourism. The success of the livelihoods activities is linked to involvement of Sahanala[6] social enterprise, which links local producers to certification process and value chains that allow for their goods to be sold domestically and internationally. Formerly supported by the MRPA-GEF project, the association of local fishermen in Ambavarano became a robust federation in 2018. Since then, this community-based structure collaborates with Fanamby and Sahanala for comanaging the fishery resources around. The collection center for fishery products contributes to socioeconomic development of the villagers, while supporting their environmental tasks. The center establishes environmental specifications and standards for collected fishery products. Any fishermen wanting to deal with the center must follow these rules. This collection center is comanaged by Sahanala (private sector), Fanamby (NGO), and the Ambavarano community itself. The crops produced by communities that were supported by Sahanala include vanilla, cashew nuts, patchouli and spices. Other economic activities created by the project include Camp Amoureux in Menabe Antimena and Camp Tattersalli in Loky Manambato (Camp Tattersalli was currently in disrepair during the time of the mission due to the lack of revenue from reduced tourism during COVID, but plans are underway to repair the camp). There are also agreements in place with a local hotel in Nosy Ankao which purchases fish and vegetables (photo 1) from producers under an arrangement supported by the project. Consequently, the fisher groups interviewed report a change in mentality and mindset as they view the natural resources as an asset that must be protected for future generations.

Photo 1. The MRPA-GEF project supported the implementation of community-led farming, this family chose to farm vegetables. Until now, some farmers continue to their plots, the produce from this plot is sold to a private sector partner (Miavana Time and Tide).

3. GEF ID 5486: A Landscape Approach to Conserving and Managing Threatened Biodiversity in Madagascar with a Focus on the Atsimo-Andrefana Spiny and Dry Forest Landscape

This project is ongoing, but project activities are ending in late 2022/early 2023, preliminary results related to the project include the forest patrols and ecological monitoring as well as activities to sensitize people to the need for forest preservation and protecting water resources. The project team plans a socio-economic survey for the terminal evaluation, but project documents do not mention baseline data collection for comparison of before/after project activities.

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

IEO collected feedback about the factors or challenges that influence the usefulness, value-add, and ultimately performance of projects that use a community-based approach. Some of the factors for success and challenges relate to good project management (such as consistency of project teams, good working relationships, land tenure issues, remoteness of project sites and lack of infrastructure, issues related to migration, pressures on land use related to draught etc.) and are not presented, instead the focus here is on factors specific to GEF projects that use a community-based approach.

CBA projects that provided support to regional governments were appreciated. GEF funding was provided not only for project implementation (through an NGO) but also to support the work of regional government officials. The direct support for regional authorities reduced cost of interventions for national authorities, and improved the attitude of the regional government toward the project as they felt ownership and increased trust, a sentiment that was also perceived by some project stakeholders (GEF ID 3773 and 3687) as a factor that contributed to improved performance.

In-depth, ex-ante analysis to inform design is necessary for interventions that reflect local context. Some stakeholders identified an element that was lacking in some of the CBA projects in Madagascar - in-depth contextual analysis of each community (or at minimum of the issues at regional level) including analysis of community needs, explore relevant governance structures, assess access to value chains, and understand specific drivers of environmental degradation. Some tangible examples of how this could impact project performance includes allowing projects to tailor activities (such as financial procedures) to align with seasonal nature of agricultural activities, to ensure that any livelihood activities are linked to markets. Consultations that are inclusive, locally led, and include extensive fieldwork were described as the best approach. For example, the EP3 project (GEF ID 3773) was seen as having an insufficient analysis which contributed to ill-selected livelihoods as part of one-time safeguards payments for some communities that were not appropriate for the context, nor linked to markets which lead to a lack of sustainability.

Continuous tailored community sensitization and capacity building is important. An example of where this was a limiting factor comes from GEF ID 5486 – stakeholders reported that some project activities did not align with community capacity and resources, and that planning activities were seen by regional government stakeholders as too high level and theoretical for communities. For example, the species monitoring, and biodiversity observation activities required access to computers, which wasn't always possible given the context in remote communities.

Strong and continuous communication with communities was seen as a factor for success. Project stakeholders highlighted good communication campaigns associated with GEF ID 3687 which explain the rules of interventions, roles for community members, expected benefits, and education about the natural resources that need to be protected and why. An example of why this is especially important is seen in frustrations expressed by community member associated with GEF ID 5486 who cited the lack of communication about promised project activities. In this instance, community members felt that they were promised project activities that they hadn't yet received as the project was coming to an end, however it is important to note that women and vulnerable groups did receive project support, it was the remainder of the community that felt that they didn't receive the promised activities. When project activities are promised and not delivered it creates frustration, negative feelings toward the project and

its implementers, and (worse case) retaliation in the form of forest fires.[7] Communities also report becoming disenchanted with government and project staff changes, and with long inception periods and drawn-out times between when project is introduced and activities hit the ground, these challenges can reportedly be at least partially mitigated by communication.

Participation of NGOs with strong local knowledge and ongoing commitment to communities is tied to performance and sustainability. Stakeholders linked the level of involvement of NGOs as an important factor not only for performance, but also sustainability. A factor credited with the continuation of forest patrol efforts in communities where other activities financed by projects had stopped was the continual involvement of key partners (Madagascar National Parks was highlighted), and the amount of time and effort they had put in with communities during the early phases of the project to explain the importance of supporting efforts to reduce environmental degradation in protected areas. In contrast, the lack of long-term NGO engagement associated with the GEF ID 3773 project in the Toliara region was considered a hindering factor, as once the NGOs are seen as gone from the area there are reports that the activities they promoted (avoidance of slash and burn agriculture, promotion of forest monitoring, etc.) decline or erode.

Reasonable expectations in terms of objectives and project timelines are important. Stakeholders indicated that it's important that targets reflect reality on the ground (which may differ between regions or communities) and that longer time horizons may be necessary to create the capacity to work together with communities. This was also seen as a challenge, with projects that last three to five years, the time period is insufficient to demonstrate sustainable outcomes for the environment and for communities.

Level of stakeholder involvement during design is important. Implementing NGOs, who are often very knowledgeable about local context and conditions in project areas, reported that they were not offered a chance to provide feedback on project design – projects were presented in a 'take it or leave it' approach. More inclusive consultations procedures would be beneficial, involving stakeholders at different levels, from community representatives to regional and central governments and the private sector.

A 'patchwork approach', where project activities supported some, but not all, communities around a PA limited impact. The field team learned that many donor supported projects (not just the GEF) use what is described as a patchwork approach, where a project would support some (but not all) communities near a protected area. The other communities may or may not be participating in other projects funded by other donors. This approach makes it difficult to see consolidated environmental and social impacts associated with GEF projects that use a community-based approach. This relates to sustainability as well, because different donors have their own priorities and ways of working with communities, in the example of the MRPA project, stakeholders reported that the projects that came after the GEF do not have such strong links to the community level.

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

Stakeholders at all levels expressed a recognition of the importance of maintaining the integrity of the protected area and a commitment to supporting outcomes achieved by projects, though they faced many challenges in the form of pressures related to migration, mining, forest fires and lack of livelihood

support (in addition to other socioeconomic challenges such as health, water and sanitation, and education). Key informants described the following elements as important for sustainability:

- The importance of considering continuity of project activities when designing the project. Projects should be explicit about how sustainability (especially financial and institutional sustainability) will be ensured.
- Sustainability depends on continued financing of implementing NGOs and communities, continuation of any partnerships established (for example with the private sector).
- There can be ownership and sustainability within one commune or an area that has community-based protection, but there may be other issues in a nearby commune with different level of support or different management system which impacts overall sustainability of the protected areas of interest. This is linked to the use of a patchwork approach in working in and around protected areas as described in the previous section.
- Sustainability of livelihoods activities was seen as unlikely for the EP3 project (GEF ID 3773) given the lack of prior analysis (ie improper seeds for the climate, insufficient agricultural implements) and lack of connection to markets/value chains.

In general, the stakeholders interviewed expressed the perception that activities that seem to have been sustained past project close are those considered 'soft' such as training, capacity building, education campaigns, while activities that were considered 'hard' or more tangible (infrastructure, assets for income generating activities etc.) tended to be less likely to be sustained. This was reflected in observations from field visits where agricultural inputs/activities were not yielding benefits (or yielded limited benefits to a few individuals) versus the community education campaigns or capacitation for forest patrol which seem to be leading to some behavior change through influencing mindsets around the need to care for protected areas.

The main aspect of the EP3 project (GEF ID 3773) that continued was the existence of the CLPs (Local Park Committee) and the continued activities of forest patrols. The forest patrol activities are seen as very effective and helpful for the regional government and communities gave examples of when they had caught poaches or other people behaving improperly in protected areas and brought them to local authorities for prosecution[8]. One example of a highly functional CLP is in Andasy village, where the CLP is still active and functional and has expanded from an original five members to nine. There is also a CLP support committee with 11 members, four of whom are women (photo 2).

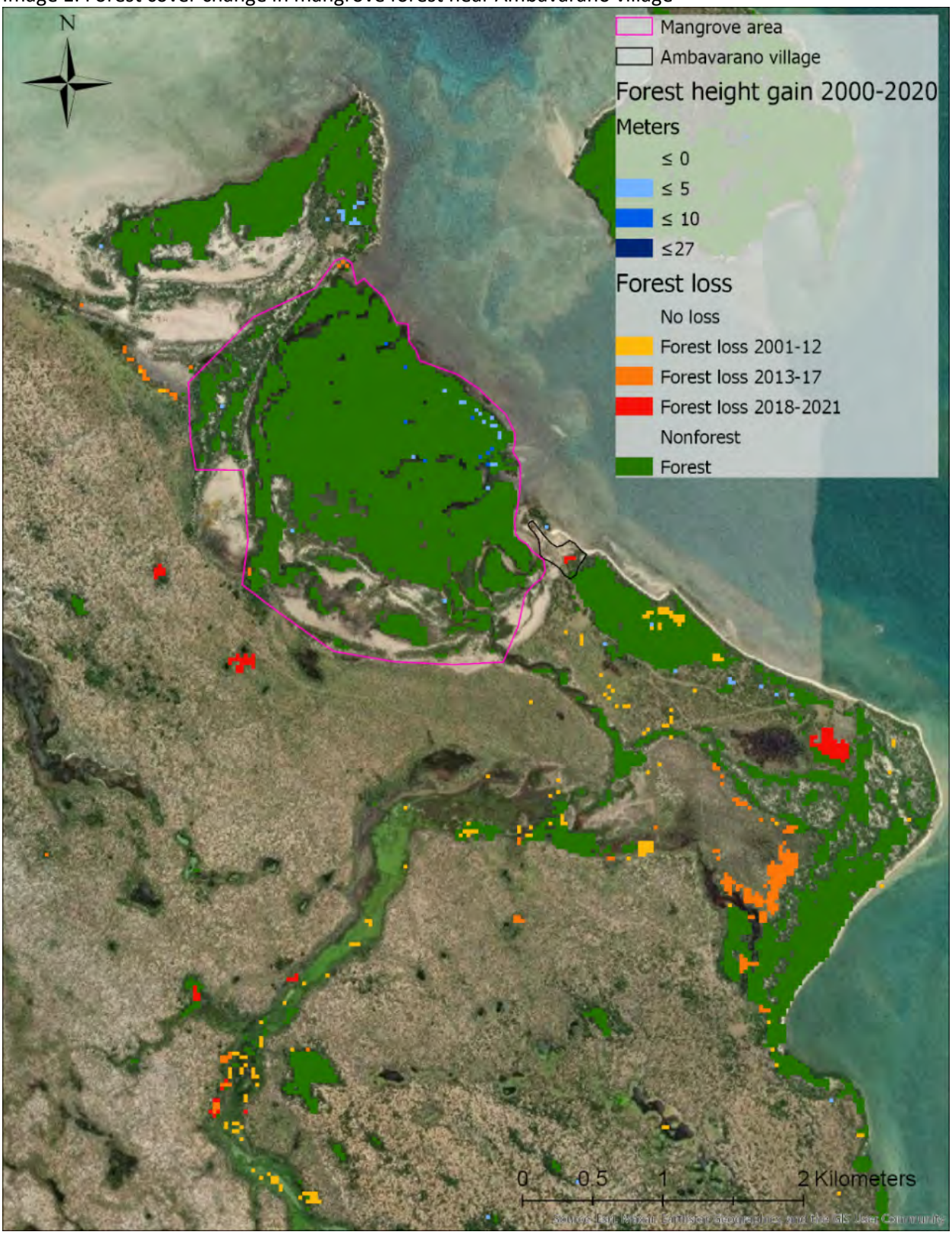
Photo 2. Andasy Village CLP Committee and newly formed CLP Support Committee, which added women in supporting roles

Forest patrols also continue in the Loky Manambato area, associated with GEF ID 3687. Additionally, Conservation efforts in Loky Manambato are working well, with communities reporting relatively few forest fires and little illegal logging.

A GIS analysis of the MRPA (GEF ID 3687) project activities encouraging protection of a mangrove forest near Ambavarano village supports the assertions by the community that the project contributed to positive environmental status change. As a starting point, IEO analyzed forest loss and gain data between 2000 and 2021 (Hansen et al, 2013 and Potapov et al. 2022) in the project area, shown in Image 1. As Image 2 shows, during the time periods preceding the project, during the project, and after the project, the areas to the southeast and due south from the village experience forest loss, while in the mangrove forest, the forest cover increased. Given the long-time span, and lack of geographical

precision in the forest cover data (datasets are global and may lack precision at the local level), further analysis was undertaken using high resolution images available in Google Earth.

Image 1. Forest cover change in mangrove forest near Ambavarano village



Note: The area encircled in pink is the mangrove areas that the communities describe supporting through the project. The village of Ambavarano is located southwest of the mangrove forest.

Image 2. Google Earth high resolution image of mangrove forest

Image 2a. May 2012 (prior to project start)	Image 2b. August 2015 (midway through project implementation)[9]	Image 2c. May 2022 (five years after project close)
		

Images 5a-c further validate the environmental change in mangrove reported by the women supporting the forest. Image 5a is from before the project began implementation, image 5b is from during implementation, and image 5c, showing noticeable mangrove regrowth, is from five years after the project closed. This shows, at least on a small scale, the environmental status change associated with project activities, and sustainability after project close.

In addition, the livelihoods activities supported by the project in collaboration with Fanamby/Sahanala NGO (as described in the previous section, Sahanala works to connect local producers to national and international markets) continue as of November 2022, the ability of communities to access domestic and international markets has contributed dramatically to sustainability of the livelihoods activities. From interviews, IEO learned that not all project areas exhibited this level of success for the livelihoods component of this project. IEO notes that Sahanala has a distinct advantage in this area where vanilla production and international trade have been established for some time.

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect the sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

The narrative of protected area management in Madagascar is underpinned by the tension between short term economic needs and long-term environmental needs. Examples of where projects have addressed the different needs are found in the projects examined for the case study, most notably:

GEF ID 3687: This project was designed in a way to address the short-term socio-economic needs through efforts to improve livelihoods. The livelihoods activities were linked to domestic and international market through partnership with a local organization. The rationale for the livelihood activities was linked to sustainable resource use of resources from the protected areas, this was accompanied by intentional efforts to safeguard the interests of stakeholders that benefited from and contributed to managing the protected areas. As people have more secure alternative sources of income, they feel less dependent on natural resources to survive and this can reduce pressure on natural resources.

GEF ID 5486: This project also provided some support for livelihoods through provision of seeds, implements, and other livelihood support. The project conducted socialization and education of community on their role in protected area management. Communities were sometimes paid, but sometime worked on a voluntary basis, to conduct forest patrols, report livelihoods activities and conducted socialization and education of communities on the role they were being asked to play in protected area management.

When asked how to address this tension stakeholders had the following feedback:

- It is important to have investment for communication and education on the tradeoffs related to the environment and social dimensions, this is reflected in the design of GEF ID 10696 and project team's efforts to educate communities to manage their coastal resources and protect the species that live there while also providing information about the short term economic benefits that would be received through project activities. It is also important to be explicit about the tradeoffs in the design of the project.
- The context and analysis of projects must acknowledge poverty/dependance on natural resources and on valuing local knowledge, to address the tradeoffs it's important to understand the individual context at the selected project site, and recognize that GEF interventions should not only focus on environment, but must also consider livelihoods and holistic thinking about the broader needs of communities (schools, roads, health).

Crosscutting: Gender and Inclusion

Stakeholders reported some challenges moving forward on gender, but there was widespread agreement on the importance of continued efforts to intentionally integrate women into project activities. Some regions were described as more difficult for encouraging female participation in project activities, for example, in the southwest part of the country women are traditionally less involved in decision making and there are social norms prevent women from participating. Some success has been found in social marketing campaigns to enhance participation, but it remains a challenge.

GEF projects (GEF IDs 3687 and 5486 stand out in this respect) conducted tailored livelihoods activities, and noted the importance of having complementarity in support between male and female community members (ie if the man works as a tour guide, the women can make and sell handicrafts). Stakeholders felt it was important to reinforce the role of women in management of local community activities,

through giving women leadership roles or encouraging their participation in management committees, or potentially through savings and lending groups. GEF ID 5486 targeted women and vulnerable people to receive project assets before other community members, they were given support in the form of needles and supplies for handicrafts in addition to materials for cultivating peanuts, however stakeholders reported that they attempted to grow the crop but felt that the climate of their area was insufficient to support a good peanut yield. GEF ID 3687 put women in charge of growing and restoring mangrove forests, as reported above, in Ambavarano village, the practice continues to date. Women in this project were also trained on vegetable growing and leadership management. The women's association is reported to be still active in Ambavarano.

There were some challenges with inclusion during project design at multiple levels. In general, members of the regional government staff felt there was a lack of representation of local governments in decision making processes. They noted the need before final validation of project concept to do more consultation with regional stakeholders to ensure that project design reflects field reality. In addition, some stakeholders reported that the EP3 project gave resources and power to those that were able to express their needs amongst the community, only the loudest. This is linked to education and capacity levels, but it's an example of how in some communities there are high-capacity stakeholders who can potentially coopt the benefits of the project.

Although it is early in implementation of GEF ID 10696, NGO staff did not feel they were directly consulted for their feedback on project design, but rather the project was presented to them. Community members associated with this new project suggested that only targeting individuals in that are members of associations can lead to feelings of exclusion among other community members. One solution offered by community members to these feelings of exclusion was to provide general infrastructure that is more likely to benefit the whole community.

Analysis and Main Findings

Communities play a critical role in protected area management in Madagascar. Stakeholders agreed that communities that live around protected areas not only contribute to environmental degradation but also have a critical role to play, along with other actors, in the management of protected areas.

There is limited evidence linking GEF CBA projects with broader environmental impacts and social outcomes in Madagascar. There is a lack of robust data collection on either type (environmental or socioeconomic co-benefits) of outcome, or broader impacts, at the project level (though newly approved projects have made some notable improvements in measurement including baseline data collection to show improvement, for example on livelihoods); one reason given as contributing to limited impact is the patchwork approach employed around PAs in Madagascar with not all communities around a targeted PA receiving the same level or amount of support.

CBA projects in practice were not as inclusive or participatory as they were described in project documents. The reality on the ground as perceived by communities and local stakeholders generally reflects less robust engagement than what is described in project documents, with some exceptions. Challenges remain in including women in projects and in integrating women into decision-making roles. The social aspects, including gender, of CBA projects are complex and require organizations with adequate capacity to support these projects.

Sustainability of livelihoods activities is mixed, and more likely to continue where robust links to markets were created or supported by projects. Training and capacity building related to livelihoods was valued, but the productive assets were either not maintained or not sufficient to cover more than a few people in each community, diluting any impact on socioeconomic status. Appropriately tailored activities, linkages to markets, and ongoing support from organizations with technical expertise in livelihoods made success more likely.

Sustainability of forest patrol activities is strong and likely to continue, and was linked to behavior change supported through training and capacity building. Protected areas staff reported a continued lack in resources for forest monitoring, communities can help fill that gap. Directing payments to community members for carrying out or supporting forest patrols continues and provides a consistent source of income to participating community members. There are some examples of communities carrying out forest patrols on a voluntary basis, demonstrating their support to conservation efforts linked to the projects.

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Annex A: Persons consulted

Firstname	Lastname	Gender	Role	Organization	Location
Patrick	Rafidimanantsoa	M	Head of Conservation interim	Blue Ventures - Madagascar	Antananarivo
Lalao	Aigrette	F	National Technical Advisor for Mangroves	Blue Ventures - Madagascar	Antananarivo
Gandy Arnaud	Manoelison	M	Senior Programme Officer	C3 Diego	Diego/Antsiranana
Aubergie Maelas	Zafitiana	F	Programme Officer	C3 Diego	Diego/Antsiranana
Longin	Mahatoro	M	Mayor of Ankilimalinika & Chairman of FIMIAKADI Association	Commune of Ankilimalinika	Commune of Ankilimalinika
Jaomise	Andriariziky	M	Mayor	Commune of Daraina	Commune of Daraina
Tsilegna	Pascal	M	Secretary-General of Maromiandra Commune Vice-president of FIMIAKADI Association	Commune of Maromiandra	Commune of Maromiandra
Yacinthe	Razafimandimby	M	Regional Marine Coordinator / CI / PFGAP	Conservation International (CI)	Diego/Antsiranana
Nicolas	Salo	M	Park Director, Loky Manambato	Fanamby	Vohemar, commune of Daraina
Mack Brice	Sianghouissa	M	Coastal & Marine Conservation Manager, Loky Manambato	Fanamby	Vohemar, commune of Daraina

Richelin	Jaomary	M	Terrestrial Conservation Manager, Loky Manambato	Fanamby	Vohemar, commune of Daraina
Gislain	Benoro	M	Field agent, Loky Manambato	Fanamby	Vohemar, commune of Daraina
Hortensia Bezara	Hosnah	F	Landscape Manager / Fanamby / PFGAP	Fanamby	Diego/Antsiranana
Serge	Rajaobelina	M	Founder & Chairman of Sahanala, Founder of Fanamby	Fanamby / Sahanala	Antananarivo
Serge	Ratsirahonana	M	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager	FAPBM	Antananarivo
Hajarivo	Andrianandrasana	M	General Resources Officer	FAPBM	Antananarivo
Hanta	Rabefarihy	F	Ex-MRPA National Coordinator	GEF-UNDP-MRPA (2013 to 2017)	Antananarivo
Tertius Rodriguez	Belalahy	M	Manager of Terrestrial Protected Areas	Madagasikara Voakajy	Diego/Antsiranana
William Peterson	Andrianantenaina	M	Regional Director of Environment & Sustainable Development Interm	MEDD, Government / Atsimo Andrefana Region	Toliara
Claude	Christian	M	Regional Director of Environment & Sustainable Development (DREDD Diana)	MEDD, Government / DIANA Region	Diego/Antsiranana
Cyriaque	Rafanomezantsoa	M	Deputy chief of local forestry unit (adjoint chef cantonnement)	MEDD, Government / District of Sakaraha	District of Sakaraha

Bakoly Françoise	Rakotoarimanana	F	Chief of local forestry unit (chef cantonnement)	MEDD, Government / District of Toliara II	District of Toliara II
Paul Ali Mamichar	Nadiariniaina	M	Local forestry yardmaster (chef de triage forestier)	MEDD, Government / District of Vohemar	District of Vohemar
Rinah	Razafindrabe	M	Director General of Environmental Governance	MEDD, Government / National	Antananarivo
Christine Edmée	Ralalaharisoa	F	Ex-GEF Operational Focal Point, Technical Support Manager	MEDD, Government / National	Antananarivo
Hery Andriamirado	Rakotondravony	M	Current GEF Operational Focal Point	MEDD, Government / National	Antananarivo
Rivosoa	Rabenandrianina	M	Director General of Sustainable Development	MEDD, Government / National	Antananarivo
Hafany	Tombondray	M	Vice president of Association Tsimoka / MBG / PFGAP	Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG)	Diego/Antsiranana
Hervé	Solo	M	Operations officer	MNP Diego	Diego/Antsiranana
Onja	Ramamonjy-Ratrimo	F	Comanagement & Development Officer	MNP National Office	Antananarivo
Juliette	Raharivololona	F	Park Director, Zombitse Vohibasia	MNP Sakaraha	District of Sakaraha
Anselme Marcel	Atalahy	M	Operations officer	MNP Sakaraha	District of Sakaraha
Manantsoa	Andriatahina	M	Environment Programme Officer, Environmental Focal Point for GEF projects in Madagascar	UNDP Madagascar	Antananarivo

Lanto	Andriamampianina	M	Terrestrial Conservation Manager	WCS National Office - Madagascar	Antananarivo
Ravaka Natacha	Ranaivoson	F	Marine Conservation Manager	WCS National Office - Madagascar	Antananarivo
Erik	Reed	M	Natural Resources Management Specialist	World Bank - Madagascar office	Antananarivo
Fenohery	Rakotondrasoa	M	Conservation Manager	WWF national office	Antananarivo
Valencia	Ranarivelo	F	Senior Advisor	WWF national office	Antananarivo
Fanja	Razafindramasy	F	Database manager	WWF national office	Antananarivo
Pascal	Tsilengna	M	Community Member	Ranobe Park PA	Iftaty
Voabelo	Tsianegnena	M	Community Member	Ranobe Park PA	Iftaty
Bernard	Mbehely	M	Community Member	Ranobe Park PA	Iftaty
Radotoarimanana	Bakoly Francoise	F	Chef Cantonnment	Ranobe Park PA	Iftaty
Raharimanana	Tsimiova	M	Community Member	Ranobe Park PA	Ifaty
Eloi	Joseph	M	Community Member	Nosy Hara PA	Ifaty
Marohay	Norbert	M	Community Member	Nosy Hara PA	Ifaty
Marisoa	Alda	M	Community Member	Nosy Hara PA	Ifaty
Ali	Julien	M	Community Member	Nosy Hara PA	Ifaty
Jacynthe	Razafindandy	F	Manager of Protected Areas	Conservation International	Diego

Rivosoa	Rabenandrianina	F	Gender Director of Sustainable Development	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Antananarivo
Vanona	Mboty	F	Chairwoman	Mti local women's association in Vaillage Ambavarano (Fokontany Ansampilay)	Ambavarano
Edmond	Jaotina	M	Chairman	Local Association of fisherman	Ambavarano

Section 5. Peru Case Study

Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF: Peru Country Case Study

Prepared by: Gabriela López Sotomayor, Independent Consultant

April 2023

Photo Description Jequetepeque River Basin, site of GEF ID 4773

Photo credit: Flickr

Background

Peru has a complex geography where 33 million Peruvians coexist within an enormous diversity of landscapes, species, and cultures, which define it as a mega-diverse country. Among other megadiverse countries, Peru is home to 70% of the planet's biodiversity. This biodiversity has an equally cultural heritage. According to the National Policy for the mainstreaming of the intercultural approach (2017), cultural diversity is an intrinsic value of Peruvian society and a resource for development. Peru is one of the countries with the greatest cultural diversity in the world, which is closely related to the extraordinary geographic, biological, and climate diversity existing in its territory.

This cultural richness is found in the diversity of peoples, cultures and expressions found throughout its regions. Peru has 47 indigenous languages spoken by nearly 4.5 million Peruvian men and women. There are 54 distinct groups of indigenous peoples located in the Andes mountains and in the Amazon basin, officially recognized in the Database of Indigenous Peoples of the Ministry of Culture, together with an additional portion of its population concentrated in the coast, from the Tumbes region to the Tacna region. Furthermore, there are more than 200 cultural expressions and practices of various peoples officially recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Nation. Today, the positive recognition of cultural diversity contributes to the need for the government to demonstrate the fundamental role that the right to cultural identity plays in the full exercise of citizen rights under equal conditions, as well as in the reduction of inequality, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the promotion of development that supports cultural identity and social inclusion.

Therefore, in recent years, the State has sought to act with cultural relevance and contribute to the elimination of discrimination, respect for cultural differences, social inclusion, and national integration. However, the political instability of the last few years and especially that which has existed since December 2022, exposes an uncertain political course.

At the level of the Ministry of the Environment-MINAM, restructuring and guidelines that support social inclusion have been developed. In 2013, the National Service of Natural Protected Areas by the State - SERNANP, restructured its Functional Operational Units-UOF, of the Management Directorate of Natural

Protected Areas-ANP, incorporating for the first time a UOF for participatory management in ANP. This was followed by development of management guidelines in 2015, that were updated in 2018. These guidelines make the following premise explicit: it is not possible to achieve a good state of conservation of biological diversity, if people do not get involved and obtain benefits from said conservation. As expressed in the guidelines, the ANP states its willingness to create institutional plans and improve the relationship with communities to work in a participatory and cooperative manner.

Similarly, in 2015 the Directorate of Biological Diversity of MINAM, begun the formulation of the Guide for the Elaboration of Participatory Management Plans in Ramsar Sites, through a pilot with communities in the Ramsar Lucre Huarcapay[1] site. Later, the said guide was approved in 2018 through Ministerial Resolution (RM 186-2018-MINAM) to strengthen participatory social administration in local management, facilitating the incorporation of cultural and socioeconomic values in the management tool and in its implementation. As of early 2023, there are three Ramsar sites that have already developed their participatory management plan.

During this same period, the process of incorporating gender developed as a transversal approach in the elaboration of the Nationally Determined Contributions-NDC of Peru, by the key actors of five prioritized public sectors: Ministry of the Environment- MINAM, Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations-MIMP, Ministry of Culture- MINCU, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation-MINAGRI, and Ministry of Energy and Mines-MINEM. Between 2014 and 2019, the incorporation of a gender approach in the preparation of the NDC was fostered by the increased sensitivity to this issue in both national and international contexts. Although a commitment and political will to incorporate a gender approach in the elaboration of the NDC is evident so far, the mainstreaming process has only advanced in initial stages: commitments have been established, definitions have been created. Specific delineation of appropriate methodologies and tools will be carried out during the later stages at the regional and local levels.

Even with these advances, the number of socio-environmental conflicts in the country is increasing every month, with 221 social conflicts registered in December 2021,[2] of which 140 (63.3%) are related to socio-environmental issues, according to the report of the nation’s Ombudsman's Office (Defensoría del Pueblo).

Taking into account the Peruvian sociocultural, environmental and institutional context, examining community based approaches (CBA) is highly relevant, since it is necessary to strengthen intercultural dialogues, build collective proposals and also because there is currently an opening of the State that previously did not exist and needs to be consolidated and strengthened for better performance in the implementation of inclusive strategies in the territories.

Laws, policies, and strategies that support community-based approaches in Peru

Currently in Peru, the CBA is highly relevant. In recent years the importance of including participatory approaches has been made explicit in national guidelines, and such strategies have been recognized in the role of the State. For many decades, this type of approaches has been promoted mainly by civil society. Formally, the community-based approach is being supported by various national and sectoral policies, laws and strategies:

- ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Peru has approved and ratified this Convention since 1993, which has two basic postulates: the right of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own cultures, ways of life and institutions, and their right to participate effectively in decisions that affect them. It guarantees the right of indigenous and tribal peoples to determine their own priorities with regard to the development process, insofar as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to control, to the extent possible, their own economic, social and cultural development.
- State policies[3] within the framework of the National Agreement:
    - Policy 33: State policy on water resources. Approved on August 14, 2012. speaks to establishing water governance systems that allow the informed, effective and articulated participation of the actors involved in water resources.
    - Policy 34: Territorial Planning and Management. Approved on September 24, 2013. Promotes a strategic, integrated, effective and efficient process of territorial planning and management that ensures human development throughout the national territory, in an atmosphere of peace, which allows the convergence of interests, identities and cultures of the populations. It indicates that the State will regulate and promote a planned process of multiscale, intersectoral, intergovernmental, participatory territorial planning, as a tool for integrated land management.
    - Policy 35: Information society and knowledge society. Adopted on August 16, 2017. This policy expresses the commitment to promote an the sharing of information for a knowledge society oriented to integral and sustainable human development, based on the full exercise of people's freedoms and rights, and capable of identifying, producing, transforming, using and disseminating information in all human dimensions including the environmental dimension.

- Law N° 29785-2011, Law on the Right to Prior Consultation of Indigenous or Native Peoples, recognized in ILO Convention 169. This act regulates the right to consultation and prior, free and informed consent of indigenous peoples, whenever legislative and administrative measures affecting their collective rights are envisaged. The purpose of the consultation is to reach an agreement or consent between the State and indigenous or

native peoples regarding the legislative or administrative measure that directly affects them, through an intercultural dialogue that guarantees their inclusion in the State's decision-making processes and the adoption of measures respectful of their collective rights.

- Law Nº 29792- 2011 of the Creation, Organization and Functions of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, which was created to articulate the policy of development and social inclusion in the country. Its main objectives are to design, conduct, execute and articulate this set of policies and strategies aimed at promoting social inclusion.

- Presidential Resolution N° 50-2013-SERNANP, which restructures the Functional Operational Units of the Directorate of Management of Natural Protected Areas of the National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State–SERNANP. This restructuring incorporates the functional Operational Unit of Participatory Management in the ANP.

- Supreme Decree N° 011-2015-MINAM, which approves the National Climate Change Strategy, and contains provisions to "Consider the gender and intercultural approach in relation to climate risk management, in national and development plans".

- Presidential Resolution N° 222-2018-SERNANP, which approves the Participatory Management Guidelines in the National System of Natural Areas Protected by the State.

- Ministerial Resolution N° 186-2018-MINAM, which approves the Guide for the Development of Management Plans for Ramsar Sites, which contemplates a specifically participatory approach.

Portfolio of projects using a community-based approach

To identify projects that were likely to include a community-based approach for the broader evaluation, purposive sampling was used to identify projects from the GEF portfolio in the biodiversity, land degradation, climate change adaptation focal areas and related multi-focal area projects. Projects that were explicit in their use of a community-based approach in their title, objectives, or activities were selected. Based on this purposive sampling, a portfolio was identified for Peru and included four projects, two closed and two ongoing (Table 1). Table 2 includes information on the objectives, components using a community-based approach and the approaches described in project documents.

Table 1. GEF projects identified as using CBA approach in Peru

GEF ID	Agency	Focal Area	Status	GEF Phase	Project Title
10541	FAO, IUCN	Multi Focal Area	Ongoing	GEF – 7	Sustainable management and restoration of the Dry Forest of the Northern Coast of Peru
4773	IFAD	Biodiversity	Ongoing	GEF – 5	Conservation and Sustainable Use of High-Andean Ecosystems through Compensation of Environmental Services for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion (MERESE)
3933	IFAD	Biodiversity	Completed	GEF – 4	SFM Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Forests of the Northern Highlands of Peru (Inkañaris)
3276	UNDP	Land Degradation	Completed	GEF – 4	Promoting Sustainable Land Management in Las Bambas (MST)

Table 2: Project objectives, data on community-based approaches used in projects

GEF ID	Objective	Components using community-based approaches	Community based approaches described in project documents
10541	To restore and sustainably manage the dry forests of the Northern Coast of Peru, facilitating the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services, increasing the resilience of communities and their livelihoods, and supporting the achievement of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) target.	Component 1. Promoting governance with multi-sectoral, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach for the sustainable development of dry forests in Peru. Component 3. Sustainable production practices for the conservation of the natural heritage of dry forests in the Peruvian Northern Coast.	The project will strengthen an enabling environment for adequate participatory and inclusive management of dry forests in the North Coast of Peru. The project will seek participatory management of protected areas. The project works on strengthening information systems for decision-making on land use.

			The project contains a complaints and grievance mechanism and will report on consultation, participation, and engagement process report. Communities as in the stakeholder engagement report are information recipients (not involving in planning and revision).
4773	To protect and sustainably use the High-Andean ecosystems that provide environmental services, especially biodiversity and water, by transferring economic resources from downstream beneficiaries to upstream rural communities of the intervention watersheds.	**Component 1**: Conservation and Sustainable Management of High Andes Ecosystems. **Component 2:** Improvement of the Institutional Framework for Environmental Services in Peru through implementation of PES/CES schemes.	**There project has devolved decision-making and accountability, and incorporation of local institutions and customs.** The stakeholders in the watersheds have an active role in implementation. At least 30% of community groups are led by youth and women. A focus on promoting the participation of women and youth was also incorporated.
3933	To ensure the sustainable and participatory management of protected areas and communal forested lands in the Northern highlands of Peru while addressing existing barriers and threats.	1) Support to the regional system of protected areas in Lambayeque and Cajamarca 2) Promotion of forest management in buffer zones of the protected areas considered in the project	Devolved decision making and accountability Incorporation of local institutions and customs.

3276	Private sector, Government, NGOs and local communities interact constructively in support of SLM, taking advantage of corporate responsibility programmes of the mining sector	Strengthening capacities of institutions and community representatives in Las Bambas to plan, propose and evaluate initiatives in support of SLM Strengthening capacities of farmers in Las Bambas to apply SLM	Incorporation of local institutions and customs Identifiable actions in implementation for the integration, improvement, strengthening, or recognition of local institutions, rules and rights but no authority to make decisions. Legitimacy in the eyes of users Sustainability of results Participatory planning, community management plans for grasslands and pasturelands (for elaboration of ecological economic zonification)

Evaluation methods and approach

Data collection methods

Initially, the documents of the four projects selected for the case study in Peru were reviewed. This review allowed to for identification of key institutions and actors to be included in the interviews. The original intention was to carry out field visits, but given the context of political crisis in the country this option was suspended then canceled.

18 virtual and telephone interviews were conducted involving 26 representatives of public institutions at the national and local level (MINAM, SERNANP), project implementing institutions (PROFONANPE, UNDP, IFAD-MINAM), members of local communities and associations (Laquipampa, Udima, Tumbaden), members of regional platforms (Good Governance Platform MERESE Jequetepeque), a representative of a Municipal Water and Sewerage Company (EMAPA Cañete), representatives of civil society (CooperAcción), and a representative from a national level indigenous women's organization (ONAMIAP).

The virtual interviews were conducted between January 5 and February 23, 2023. (See full list in Annex 1).

Limitations

In general, the case study was not designed to conduct in-depth analysis to draw relationships between project activities and all outcomes. The IEO team was unable to conduct site visits due to political unrest in Peru. Remote interviews were carried out, and the analysis relied on evaluation reports supplemented by interviews.

Findings

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries? (Government officials, OFP, Agency staff, project staff)

Relevance

There was broad agreement across stakeholder groups that applying this type of approach is highly relevant. Officials at the national level recognize that there is a message from the latest ministerial efforts of MINAM to focus on the benefits generated by interventions for the population. They highlight the country's effort to incorporate the participation and rights of indigenous peoples through, for example, the Law on Prior Consultation[4] or the rules of citizen participation. However, members of civil society indicate that, although these norms have been approved, the role of the State is still weak because it is not clear on to promote and apply them in practice, mentioning as evidence the lack and limitation of spaces for dialogue in areas with extractive activities, showing a habit of limited consultation.

In addition, all the actors interviewed agree that any intervention must consider the active involvement of the population in decision-making on the sustainable use of natural resources and organizational development, aspects specifically addressed by the CBA. They mention that it is necessary to show the importance of the process of involvement of the populations which would require systematic application to demonstrate the value add and collect lessons learned.

The approach is very suitable for territories where a large proportion of the population belongs to a peasant community. The approach starts from working with collectives, beyond people addressing collective rights encourages thinking about development together. This was seen as a highly relevant process to promote change in management of territory and natural resources.

There was also agreement that a people-centered approach must start from improving the living conditions of communities, addressing basic aspects such as malnutrition and health, promoting sustainable livelihoods, all of which facilitate a more fruitful dialogue.

SERNANP considers that it is the only public office with an environmental role that now conducts a specific approach in favor of the people. It has changed its view towards the population as no longer a subject of benefit but as partners of conservation, building a horizontal relationship. This approach to community development with a view to self-management has no national funding and according to the interviewees the cooperating institutions still consider it risky to deliver resources directly to the communities, although it is a way of organizational strengthening that could be accompanied by the various institutions that intervene in the territory.

SERNANP officials recognize the influence that civil society organizations and cooperating institutions have had for an evolution towards understanding the importance of the participatory approach:

> *10 years ago, I would not understand. Now, I know that the work is with the communities. Before, when I was head of an ANP I did not understand it, I did not know that the needs of the communities must be met. Without realizing it we were doing it. Few organizations understand the needs of the communities and co-decide together, that is what I feel we have been trying to develop, talking as equals. A leader told me to go from protest to proposal and from proposal to action. Any project that addresses conservation and environmental issues should use these approaches. If they do not join the communities, it is not possible, they are demanding it. I think they are at a turning point. They have been marginalized, they have not had a good experience, they have not been given a piece of the development pie. Many transparent and corruption-free community and indigenous organizations will succeed, better than we do.*

Although the interviewed representatives of the institutions agree that the approach is relevant, they consider that it is key to contribute to empowerment, leadership and citizen participation in spaces such as communal assemblies, being necessary that institutions and projects consider that communities and their leaders already have to assume another role, of co-management and co-direction of the interventions that are made in the territories they occupy and use.

Advantages

According to the people interviewed, community-based approaches favor the practice of citizenship. Human well-being has to do with closing gaps in health, education, and having healthy ecosystems. Another perceived benefit is that working with people generates interest in creating successful

interventions, which can contribute to sustainability. Project participants value their own contributions and take care of what they have built. They shift from seeing themselves as beneficiaries, there is local ownership and further local initiatives can spring from the initial investment.

Implementers interviewed agree that the CBA has no disadvantages, but that is challenging to apply in the context of human and environmental systems. The approach generates results to which not all actors are accustomed to, such as promoting the practice of citizenship, and the ability to dialogue, which is not well received by all groups involved.

Local actors report that applying this approach has allowed (for example, in the town of Udima) a change in attitude. Previously, there were detractors of conservation, but after verifying the project benefits for themselves, community members became involved as communal volunteer park rangers under the format of a vigilance committee. According to the local interviewees, there are no disadvantages in the use of the approach, instead they consider it necessary whenever there are populations linked to the territory. Specifically for the context of peasant communities, they see it as the only functional approach, because it creates space for collective work.

Representatives of indigenous organizations and civil society agree with these perceptions, emphasizing that it is necessary for projects to apply these approaches because it is critical to listen to communities about how they are interested in developing the projects, how women want to participate, and understand their own internal local dynamics as well as their previous knowledge before embarking on a process of joint design. Then, projects will be truly adapted to their reality, designed with greater knowledge of the context and their ways of life, without jeopardizing their territorial autonomy. They consider that projects with a CBA focus bring dynamism and learning to communities, improvement in lifestyles, and greater exchange of information.

The design:

The CBA approaches in project documents examined for the case study were not elaborated in detail. The project objectives focused on conservation aspects and referred to the populations as key actors, understanding the CBA as a transversal approach. However, the implementers admit that, in the design, the approach only mentioned the direct participation of the community, but this participation was not explicitly delineated.

Implementers from GEF ID 3276 report the importance of maintaining a common discourse when applying an approach, which is not always achieved when multiple institutions with different agendas are involved. For this reason, with the intention of ensuring quality application of the methodology, they decided not

to outsource implementation to a local NGO, as was initially proposed. They considered it less risky and linked to a greater likelihood of following up on the participatory approach.

The implementing entity of GEF ID 4773 and 3993 mentioned that it was not involved in the design of the project and that community-based approaches were not included at first added at a later point in time. Stakeholders point out that it is necessary to improve the design of projects by having greater knowledge of the local reality and the involvement of local actors, otherwise tensions are generated later when trying to adapt strategies and actions according to the local context which are not in alignment with the project documents. In some cases, there is a lack of flexibility of involved stakeholders which generates distance from local actors when they see that the approaches have not been designed with sufficient knowledge of their local reality. In this regard, it is reported:

> *In the design, knowledge of the current reality is fundamental. Additionally, it is necessary to contemplate a period of generating basic improvements in living conditions in the communities where the project is to be implemented. It is not possible to arrive with a discourse of sustainable development where the State is not present and there are no basic services such as drinking water, health, education, with high levels of malnutrition. It is necessary first to attend to these aspects, the ecosystem is their home, and recognize the citizenship of the community members. Faced with this request to fund basic needs donors are reluctant to fund these activities in a project targeted toward conservation or climate change and there are examples where projects are not funded. In addition, many times those involved in project design conduct these activities while working in distant locations without being in contact with the local reality or knowing it.*

> *On some occasions, projects are designed with two or three implementing institutions which have different guidelines and work approaches, which would should lead to an alignment of approaches. However, this doesn't always happen because the project executor is required to do everything quickly.*

They also mention that in GEF projects the implementation is done at least two years after having made the design, and in that time many things change, the baseline is not always updated, nor the new conditions are analyzed. Applying to restructure a project takes time, the new conditions can be from a change in community management to the event of an oil spill, all of which requires flexibility to adjust the proposals.

The application of the approach and how it is defined

In the context of Andean and Amazonian communities, CBA is an important approach but it's equally important to clarify how it is defined. Interviewees mention that the ecosystem-based approach-EBA was promoted before, then the CBA, now there is the nature-based solutions-SBN while they anticipate future changes in approaches emphasized by donors, they consider that the most crucial thing is that the people are in the center, the peasant communities are governed by assemblies and communal norms not recognized by law but approved by communal assembly.

Interviewees report that organizations and institutions come with multiple agendas that change in focus over time, their efforts to strengthen capacities focus on the following: vindication of rights, market inclusion, productivity, a greater focus on natural resources and climate change, but without neglecting the importance of development. They point out that ecological systems are open systems, and no one has bothered to generate a skeleton. CBA can help to encompass it, but for that it will have to be discussed and aligned with other approaches, for example, the very fashionable SBN (nature-based solutions).

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

The information presented here is based on three of the four projects. The Sustainable Management and Restoration of the Dry Forest of the Northern Coast of Peru Project (GEF ID 10541) is in early stages of implementation, activities in the field have yet to begin therefore the case study is unable to report on outcomes.

Socio-economic outcomes:

Conservation and Sustainable Use of High-Andean Ecosystems through Compensation of Environmental Services for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion - MERESE (GEF ID 4773)

According to implementers, there were governance benefits associated with the project. It promoted the development of spaces for inter-institutional and intersectoral dialogue, specifically linked to investment in natural infrastructure, as well as Water Governance Policies-DPGA. The project has also facilitated the generation of strategic alliances, for example in the Jequetepeque basin, where a platform of 32 members from three regions of the country was formed. This platform was implemented as a technical group within the Water Resources Council5 of the Jequetepeque–Zaña basin, with the intention of supporting that conservation and monitoring actions.

In the MERESE project, community groups with legal status that develop productive activities that depend on or use wetlands, native forests, or grasslands, located in the basins, were invited to present subprojects for the conservation and sustainable use of high-Andean ecosystems of the Jequetepeque and Cañete River basins. The delivery of public resources[6] to the communities has been innovative, through this infusion of resources given directly to communities they have strengthened their internal governance and financial management capacity.

The project provided capacity building and technical knowledge. From the perspective of the representative of the association of producers of the Jequetepeque basin, the project added to what they had already been doing with the management of the irrigation canal, the value-add of the project was providing technical knowledge. Previously they had formed an association and sought institutional support to preserve the area and improve the availability of water, due to the fact that the hamlet of Alto Peru, in the district of Tumbadén (San Pablo, Cajamarca) houses 284 lagoons. It is an aquifer cushion of considerable importance that contributes to the Gallito Ciego dam. The project helped to promote activities that they had already started: improvement of farms, pastures, small-scale livestock. However, it's important to note that communities expressed their discomfort at not having been involved in the MERESE agreements or participating in the platform, they perceived that remoteness of their community does not allow them to receive the same opportunities as others that are less remote.

> In the Cañete basin, the MERESE project contributed to the reclaiming of a sense of community organization – these groups carried out work tasks and made collective agreements, for example declaring certain areas off limits or managing temporary closure of pastures. They also recognized two forests (Forest of Lloque and Forest of Love) as permanent conservation forests. These forests are located in the peasant community of Vilca and house ancient woodlands.

Project stakeholders agree that the project provided better interaction between contributing communities and recipients, especially in the Cañete basin. Water was an issue that was important to local stakeholders, it allows them to conduct their livelihood activities. The communities put into practice capacities for the management of financial resources for the conservation and sustainable use subprojects that were financed through competitions. Progress has been made towards a common understanding on the issue of caring for water sources from the different actors.

There is no quantitative information to support the claim that the project contributed to better living conditions, but according to local perceptions there is better pasture for livestock and greater agricultural production (milk and guinea pig rearing), in some cases the new income is reportedly used for feeding families and school education. The experiences in both areas have encouraged some nearby communities and hamlets to organize and implement similar actions with the support of, for example, the Rural Agrarian-Agro Rural Productive Development Program. The implementers of the project report that improvements were achieved, but there was no income baseline to conduct a robust comparison.

SFM Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Forests of the Northern Highlands of Peru (GEF ID 3993)

The project facilitated the first formation of formalized producer associations. This was the first local experience of having an official organization, at project close there was insufficient facilitation and support to strengthen the newly formed organization.

The impact of the livelihoods activities on revenues could not be determined quantitatively as there was no baseline or tracking system to provide such information.

The success of the livelihoods activities was mixed. Some of the livelihoods activities were successful (beekeeping, coffee, tare). It is reported that some individuals continue to carry out these project-supported livelihoods activities on their own some persons continue with the activities individually and with greater awareness to conduct them in an environmentally friendly manner. However, local actors in Udima report that some productive activities did not work because local production conditions and their previous knowledge were not considered. Therefore, they believe that there was inadequate professional guidance, that previous knowledge and skills were not considered, and that availability of local materials was not taken into consideration.

Local authorities were reportedly supportive of the approach but reportedly lacked the background with communities that would facilitate local acceptance and trust. In several cases[7] there are documented complaints and a history of not respecting legal process. In addition, local authorities were reported to not have adequate capacities to develop collaborative relationships with the population. This aspect required the project to create processes to avoid conflicts and to repeat the approach and awareness process with each change of local authority. In localities like Udima they report that local authorities never have a presence in the area, and they perceive them as distant in every way.

The project improved governance in that it facilitated a horizontal and positive relationship between the state (SERNANP) and the population in the Udima area, a relationship that was distant due to the normative role it plays in the context of the Reserva de Vida Silvestre de Udima-RVSU (Udima Wildlife Reserve). The project improved the population's confidence in the institutions. In this sense, SERNANP is now integrated into the dynamics of associations and hamlets.

Promoting Sustainable Land Management in Las Bambas (GEF ID 3726)

In the MST Las Bambas project, conversations were held with the communities, agreements and actions were defined, people were selected with themselves in a communal assembly to train with inclusive criteria. The trained people then fulfilled the role of promoters in issues of community organization, improvement of productive systems, and strengthening of capacities on resources. Three programs were created for everyone: youth, women, adults, male managers and non-managers. There were two promotions of 100 people, picking up the farmer-to-farmer training approach applied since the 1980s in southern regions of the country.

The project focused on the development of "thinking" (education, skills, forms of relationships between the main actors, and research) rather than on the physical transformation of the environment, betting on the development of competencies on agroecology and agrobiodiversity, and on institutional improvements.

The main activities included land management, water management, agrobiodiversity management, and mechanisms to generate effective collaboration between the private sector, government and local communities. The project focused on three main objectives, of which two were related to capacity development (at the level of institutions and one at the level of families) and a third aimed at the generation of a model of interaction between the private sectors, government and local communities in a context of mining activity.

Though there was no formal monitoring or indicators to link this project to improving income and food security, there is some data on socio-economic co-benefits to communities. Implementers report that the communities managed to increase their agricultural yield per plot between 200 to 250% with good agroecological practices. Community members sold their surplus in the market and had more income at the family level. At the communal level, the communities marketed certified organic crops to the mining company, forming a communal collection company.

The project was widely accepted locally, according to interviewees and background documents. The communities advocated for an appreciated the skills development activities, indicating that it helped them addressed the problems that afflict them that they had previously identified[8].

The project used an appropriate cultural approach, given the context of working with indigenous communities. Priority was given to hiring local Quechua-speaking inhabitants of Cusco and Apurimac to carry out extension as Yachachiqs, who are leaders selected by their communities and recognized for their

knowledge. They received training and capacity building and then supported local families to adopt of various practices. Other projects[9] have capitalized on the Yachachiq approach to strengthen other community groups in the Apurimac region.

Environmental outcomes:

Conservation and Sustainable Use of High-Andean Ecosystems through Compensation of Environmental Services for Rural Poverty Alleviation and Social Inclusion - MERESE (GEF ID 4773)

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According to the latest implementation report (June 2021), a total of 37 conservation and recovery subprojects were implemented (9,026.15 ha for direct financing and 5,045.25 ha for voluntary commitments) and 6 Territorial Management Plans-PGT (3 per basin) were completed to support the development of complementary activities for conservation actions, mainly irrigation systems.

The interviewees corroborate that the project focused on carrying out studies and strengthening capacities to achieve these conservation and recovery actions in around 14 thousand hectares, most of them in the Cañete basin. From the contribution of the project, a hydrological monitoring system has been installed in the Cañete basin (Laraos), and it is constituted as a pilot site at the ANP level to include this information in environmental monitoring. SERNANP is continuing support.

SFM Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Forests of the Northern Highlands of Peru (GEF ID 3993)

According to the Terminal Evaluation, vegetation cover within and outside conservation modalities was maintained in 2016, with an average reduction of 0.84 total hectares of both Wildlife Reserve (Reserva de Vida Silvestre). The local actors interviewed confirm that prior to the project they used areas of the reserve for agricultural activities, but now they value more the forest and the presence of birds. They mention that before, there was more deforestation and cattle were grazing without limit. The project has contributed to behavior change toward conservation efforts and they have agreements with SERNANP to graze only in a Special Use Zone and with a rotation system. In addition, capacities of local communities and members of the management committee of the Laquiampa and Udima Wildlife Reserves were strengthened.

Promoting Sustainable Land Management in Las Bambas (GEF ID 3726)

The project contributed to the strengthening of agroecological capacities and agrobiodiversity, but there is not enough quantitative evidence on areas with sustainable land management and agrobiodiversity. In terms of water management, 3 different basins are reported covering 3,923 km^2 with better management.

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

Accessibility of project sites:

In the MERESE project, the same approach has been applied in two basins, however the local involvement between the two areas has been very different. In the Jequetepeque basin, the formation of institutional platforms has been facilitated among multiple regions in the north of the country (Lambayeque, La Libertad, Cajamarca) to implement conservation and monitoring actions in the management of water resources with agreements with local communities to conserve water sources.

However, representatives of local actors in this area report that they are not properly linked or involved in the design and decisions on these reward mechanisms. They consider that they are in a strategic place in the headwaters of the basin, but they have only participated in meetings and that because they live in a remote area that requires 6 to 8 hours of travel by land there is insufficient involvement of communities in decision making processes and platforms, they do not know the function of the platforms or who makes them up. They expressed a desire to see cooperatives and local associations included in the platforms. Remoteness is also a challenge for local governments, missions to visit remote project sites can last up to a month in duration.

Aspects of the MST project were sustained past project close, the improved capacity for agroecological and agrobiodiversity was perceived as intact. The basins with improved water management are still intact.

Capacity of partners to work with communities:

Strong capacity in partner organizations (implementing agencies, governments, and private sector) to work with communities to reinforce territorial management capacities is critical.

For example, in the MERESE project, providing companies (EP)[10] are involved at the project level. However, at the national level there is a lack of capacity of providing companies to reconcile agreements, this is at least partially attributed to limited experience. The representative of an EP mentions that in the EP there should be specialized staff and support to work with communities on environmental management, however sometimes this is lacking and can limit project effectiveness.

In contrast, in the Cañete basin the facilitating role of institutions such as SERNANP played an important role in supporting capacity building through participatory action plans developed with communities. This co-management approach is highly relevant as it seeks to find consensus, and address specific problems faced by communities, but it can require skill support and facilitation.

Implementers of the MST project stated that there is local buy-in for the CBA approach, however they face resource constraints when working with native or peasant communities. There is a shared vision of capacity building but this falls on the local governments, the issue how regional governments receive support from the central governments to work directly with communities has not been resolved.

Previous experience with similar projects

A history of previous interventions, particularly in very remote areas, is a factor that accelerates project results especially in terms of organizational strengthening. For example, in the Inkañaris project, project achievements in Udima were not consolidated and now the organization is very weak, unlike in Laquipampa where there are strong reults, attributed to groups' experience with previous projects that continue their involvement to date, involving more producers.

In the MERESE project, the presence of pre-existing associative structures (communities or associations) added value to project implementation. For example, there is a greater involvement and functioning of local institutions in the Cañete basin compared with the Jequetepeque basin.

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

From the SFM Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Forests of the Northern Highlands of Peru project (GEF ID 3993) there was limited sustainability after project close. According to the interviewees, very few Business Plans-PDN survived over time. The plans were developed, but there was no support for production and marketing, so very limited progress has been made. One example from local producers relates to tare - with the income from the cultivation of 1.5 hectares of tare, the Association of Ecological Producers for the Conservation of the Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge-APROECO, generated an economic

fund that is used basically to cover costs of legal procedures such as the annual obtaining of certificates of validity of power of attorney of the association, a procedure that annually costs 400 soles.

In Laquipampa, of the five associations that were formed, only one is still in operation and is quite successful. Their plot serves as a demonstration plot, it is visited by community members from other villages. After the project closed, the association won funding for two additional projects from the National Program for Innovation in Fisheries and Aquaculture-PNIPA. They harvest tilapia which allows them to consume one part and sell the rest to local restaurants and other community members.

In the MST project there were some aspects of sustainability present. The plans that were developed as part of the project were updated, and are considered important starting points for local development planning. The efforts to build local capacity and reinforce local leadership continue to show results - one local technician later became provincial major, other stakeholders that received support through the project work for a local civil society institution. The increase in the production of native products made it possible to reinforce the local and regional identity as a sustainable produce. Working with recovered potato varieties, some producer associations were able to access state subsidies and projects (For example Procompite).

Other projects have capitalized on the Yachachiq approach promoted as part of the MST project to strengthen other community groups in the Apurimac region. Ayninakuy Project, led by the International Finance Corporation (IFC, in partnership with the Government of Canada)

The following factors were found to influence sustainability of GEF CBA projects in Peru:

Capacity building and leadership strengthening

All the interviewed actors agree on participation in decision-making, leadership and strengthening of community capacity as pillars of sustainability. They suggest that the strengthening of local leaders should always be present in the formulation of projects. For implementers of the MST project, an indication of likelihood of long term impact of the project is the commitment towards strengthening of local institutions, in addition to strengthening agroecology and agrobiodiversity. They highlight that a local member of the project later became provincial mayor, which contributed to the sustainability of the project approach in addition to demonstrating the project's contribution to local leadership.

They also consider that local empowerment contributed to sustainability at the organizational level which is evidenced by the involvement of men and women in subsequent projects in the area as promoters.[11]

Some of these individual also participate on municipal governments and as recognized producers of organic crops.

Local government commitment

Implementers unanimously identified a challenge to sustainability related to the commitment of local governments. Sustainability can be negatively impacted by political instability, the volatility of technical teams, and corruption, another challenge is lack of resources within local government budgets. Therefore, the sustainability of projects anchored in local governments was described as potentially weak, but in contrast, projects anchored in local communities can be an alternative. This belief was echoed by officials at the local level who stressed the importance of local spaces, they can continue to function even when the national or regional governments are not working well. Local buy-in is critical. Even if national commitment isn't present, activities can still advance at the local level with the support of the local population base.

None of the 3 projects evaluated shows evidence of consistent progress in the commitment of local governments, but they do show commitment of the communities, especially in the MST and in the Cañete basin of the MERESE project.

Local government involvement in territorial management

Local SERNANP actors and implementers agree that conscious involvement of local governments in the sustainable management of ecosystems is a key factor for sustainability. They indicate that local governments are mostly involved with economic issues and logistical aspects without being aware of the implications associated with this this type of territorial management and participatory project approaches, which makes it difficult to integrate these concepts in local policies. They mention that the communities involved in these projects are generally more aware of these issues than local authorities.

None of the 3 projects evaluated shows evidence of consistent progress on this issue.

Strength of local institutions

Local institutions are also recognized by the various actors as a key player for sustainability. Projects that focus on family groups over community organizations, NGOs, or associations weakens communal institutions. Most stakeholders agreed that government agencies are not adequately prepared to support these approaches or an intercultural approach.

Institutions such as SERNANP with a presence in the national territory are working towards developing a bridge between the State and local populations linked to protected areas. Implementers of the MERESE project identify that in the Cañete basin there is more probability of sustainability due to the presence of the RPNYC, but in the Jequetepeque basin they see sustainability as uncertain.

Quality facilitation

A factor that influences the performance and adoption of projects with a CBA approach, according to the implementers, is the facilitation capacity of project professionals, beyond their technical capabilities. It is challenging to work with populations, to develop confidence gradually with listening skills, and furthermore, many people are not willing to move to remote areas that require intense physical effort to move around communities.

Stakeholders gave examples of unprepared project personnel who represent the State and even write in official minutes using incorrect language, thus generating distrust and rejection by the communities. The lack of capacity for quality facilitation undermines local involvement, and consequently the sustainability of interventions.

Continued engagement and monitoring

The various actors interviewed agree that it is important to have mechanisms for external accompaniment and monitoring of the communities when local capacities have not yet been consolidated. It was also agreed that with time, communities themselves can gradually develop such mechanisms. However, none of the 3 projects evaluated has developed these mechanisms for sustainability through continued support and monitoring.

Some implementers emphasize the need to be able to monitor qualitative aspects such as empowerment, well-being of women and men in the communities, as they are key aspects for sustainability and are generally not monitored or evaluated.

Articulation of actors for territorial governance

Implementers and local actors point out the need for and importance of working in a clear and articulated manner for the sustainability of interventions, both at the level of local authorities and at the point of local actors linked to a territorial space such as watersheds. Although the MERESE mechanisms have a law, a regulation and there are also ordinances that recognize the formation of good governance platforms in the basins, there are still reports by stakeholders of insufficient capacity to govern the

mechanism created by the projects that manages the upper and lower part of the basin, calling into question likelihood of sustainability.

The platforms have been created so that the communities as contributors have active participation and manage the resources jointly with the provider companies, but as mentioned by actors involved in the MERESE project, the communities or actors of the upper basin and lower basin are distanced not only geographically but also culturally and socially. The implication is that there is no single member or actor that has the necessary skills and capabilities to promote collective and intercultural spaces for dialogue and joint planning. The EPE are not yet ready to assume this role. The three projects showed efforts to articulate actors at the local level.

Intercultural approach

Representatives of civil society and indigenous organizations emphasize the importance of undertaking projects with an intercultural lens, this is fully compatible with community-based approaches. They mention that the sustainability of interventions requires respecting the diversity of development schemes, beyond proposing unitary public policies. They add that in planning policies it is necessary to reflect a definition of territory recognizes cultural dimensions the development views of the inhabitants of the territories.

They point out that projects that address the management of natural resources are always linked to the issue of territorial planning, which does not yet have a national law. The MINAM is the governing body of the environmental OT under a process that is considered top-down. The interviewees report that it is necessary to approach the OT in an inverse, bottom-up way, and with an intercultural approach, which would allow sustainable involvement in the local management of the territory.

SERNANP local representatives emphasize that incorporating technical, biophysical and sociocultural aspects is key to make making consensual decisions with the community. This starts with articulating the different actors, dialogues including knowledge sharing.

The MST project and the MERESE in the Cañete basin are the ones with the greatest evidence in incorporating an intercultural approach.

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas?

Faced with this question, the various actors interviewed expressed several thoughts. They agree that it is essential that the populations involved see positive changes in the short term to generate buy-in for the projects. While there may be differences in context between communities, it is necessary to consider the need to improve basic living conditions (food, health, housing) as a starting point for interventions.

Local actors and representatives of indigenous organizations stressed that before starting a project, the needs of the populations must be gathered in situ, in order to have a deep understanding local context and prioritize the inhabitants' topics of interest to define the type of intervention to be carried out. This is critical to build each project for local reality and to ensure that projects align with existing local processes instead of expecting the population to adapt to the project.

Addressing basic living conditions was seen as an action that would motivate communities to promote sustainable management processes in the territory. Public officials at the national level support this idea, confirming that an environmental project is paired with improvement in basic services (availability and quality of water, education, health), they foresee greater impact. Interventions that jointly address socioeconomic and environmental issues are considered a good option for the context where there are communities face poverty and harsh living conditions.

Another aspect to consider when designing projects to deal with these tradeoffs, is the importance of understanding the social and productive dynamics within the community in order to understand the right incentives for the local population. Project implementers indicated that the project can provide facilitation, and analysis of the territory and that the community can then decide what to do. For example, the project can present the following type of analysis: if you communities desire improved condition of grasslands, it becomes necessary to close some areas for recovery or to have rotation systems. This option can be presented then a joint analysis can explore possible implications and consequences of the different options, with the ultimate decision left to communities (with the assistance, analysis, and facilitation provided by projects).

Representatives of civil society point out specific tensions associated with the presence of extractive industries. Communities worry both about water sources and natural resources, but they also want to access the economic benefits generated by extractive activities. For example, when communities perceive water sources are at risk, conflicts are generated because private companies receive the permits from the state, but from the perspective of communities the state does not provide key basic services at the community level. In this situation, the role of projects is key. The MST project is an example, it provided information to communities, for example, on ecosystems, for decision-making, and to strengthen capacities for dialogue.

Other relevant experience in Peru

There are other examples of projects that have reached or are achieving a balance between immediate socio-economic needs and long-term environmental outcomes that were mentioned:

- EbA Montaña-IKI Project[12] in Cañete watershed, implemented with the RPNYC between 2012 and 2015, which reported the following achievements: improvement in the availability of water, places where springs that had already disappeared reemerged, the increased production of milk of their cattle, the management of fences for the shearing of vicuñas, initially handling 110 hectares and, after 3 years, 245.
- Project Building Resilience in the Wetlands of the Datem del Marañón Province[13] implemented by PROFONANPE between 2017 and 2023. It consists of developing a mixed strategy to improve the quality of life of the indigenous population of the province of Datem and the conservation of a natural area with unique characteristics. So far, biobusinesses have been generated that are proving successful.[14]

Crosscutting: Gender and Inclusion

Gender

None of the three projects analyzed included a specific strategy for gender or a budget allocated to support advancing of gender related issues. However, all three projects did make efforts to include the presence of women in activities. Some examples are provided below:

GEF ID 3726:, The project, consistent with its inclusive and participatory approach, was able to influence the strengthening of women's and youth organizations by providing support them at the district and regional levels.

GEF ID 3993: The terminal evaluation reflected the lack of gender approach, indicating that although the design of the project considers the involvement of women, it does not allocate a budget or propose the elaboration of a gender strategy as a starting point for the implementation of such involvement. The project has not mainstreamed the gender approach in its management instruments, nor in the tools it has made available to families. However, the project has been concerned during its first stage (2012-2013) with the involvement of women in participatory rural diagnostics and their validation. In the last stage of the project, the Business plans) of Udima registered a significant presence of women.

The information reported in the TE was supported in interviews, where it was mentioned that formal efforts to engage women were not reflected in a plan. The formation of women's associations was encouraged, but the organizational aspect remained weak. The women tried to continue business activities own their own, but they canceled their efforts it during the pandemic period.

GEF ID 4773: The project did not have a gender action plan (PIR, 2021), nor a gender strategy. However, actions were incorporated that facilitated inclusion of women and young people in the communal groups. They benefited by the subprojects, both as members of the boards of directors (77.1% have a woman and 37.1% have a young person); or as leaders of groups (11.4% led by a woman and 5.7% by a young person). MERESE project implementers pointed out that integrating a gender approach requires addressing structural aspects to ensure that participation is effective. The gender approach was not a part of the design of the project, only an indeterminate percentage of participation was requested, and participation was understood merely as the presence of women in events or activities.

Inclusion

According to a representative of an indigenous organization, it is necessary for local governments to educate themselves on indigenous peoples and their ways of life in order to develop more empathy for them, and to consider exclusive policies for indigenous peoples, establishing specific management or sub-managements contributing to indigenous state institutions to register the people's demands.

This aspect is still quite challenging on several levels. At the design phase, it is considered by the implementers and local actors that gaps remain in adequate participation of actors familiar with the context and local reality. This lack of adequate knowledge resulted in some project sites facing the inability to find relevant key stakeholders, especially remote areas (ie the Jequetepeque Basin in MERESE project). There have also been difficulties identifying sustainable productive options due to the ignorance of local reality that could be addressed with timely consultation and prior dialogue with the inhabitants (Laquipampa and Udima in Inkañaris Project).

Conclusions

The CBA approach is declaratively supported, but it is not yet operative. Currently, there is a legal and regulatory framework that supports the implementation of CBA. The State expresses an intention to focus on the benefits for the population generated by interventions. Achievements of CBA projects have been more effective in some cases than in others, this can be attributed in part to circumstantial characteristics of the people in charge. There is no evidence of an institutional effort to ensure implementation of CBA with the methodological care required.

There is an incomplete implementation of the approach. There is evidence of a demand for the State and project implementing institutions to define mechanisms that put community based approaches into practice (ie projects that considering specific contexts, improving local people's inclusion in the design of projects, strengthening the capacities of the human teams involved in the implementation). In short, there is a demand for consistent application of the approach, from the conception of the project to efforts to maintain sustainability, but efforts so far in the GEF portfolio have fallen short.

Importance of soft capacity building. There is evidence that in a context of constant socio-environmental conflicts such as what is found in Peru, it is necessary to develop capacities for intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, the development of local leadership is identified as a key element for sustainability, alongside the need for implementors to provide quality facilitation.

The CBA approach has no disadvantages. It is recognized that the CBA approach is the more appropriate in any territory linked to any population.

The sustainability of socio-economic and environmental results is more likely with continued engagement and support. Two projects showed differing results in terms of sustainability. The sustainability of MERESE project activities was heterogenous across different project sites, results were continued in the Cañete basin where there was a history of similar interventions and where communities received continued support. The Inkañaris project lacked continuation of support for communities where the MST project strengthened its results due to its work in leadership and supporting local institutions.

There is no evidence of robustness of monitoring and information systems. The monitoring systems implemented by the three projects to determine the progress of socioeconomic and environmental indicators are limited or absent.

Communities as a fundamental local actor in ecosystem management. Communities play a key role in land management that is generally more committed and involved than that of local or regional authorities. However, communities are not usually direct recipients of financial resources.

The application of the CBA approach is limited when it lacks the consideration of gender and inclusion. It is evident that the application of the CBA approach requires consolidating conceptual and operational capacities to apply cross-cutting approaches such as gender and interculturality. Gender approaches were not seen applied in an intentional, methodological manner across the GEF projects in Peru. The MST project provided a good example of factoring in indigenous peoples, however this was an outlier among the projects reviewed.

The context of poverty cannot be overlooked. Environmental interventions that take place in a context of poverty are more likely to receive community buy-in and support (and be sustained) when they are paired with interventions to provide improvements in basic services.

Acronyms

ANP	Protected Natural Area
CBA	Community based approach
EBA	Ecosystem Based Approach
GEF	Global Environment Facility
CNDHH	Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Coordinator of Human Rights)
EMAPA Cañete	Empresa Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado Cañete Sociedad Anónima (Municipal Company of Potable Water and Sewage of Cañete)
GCF	Green Climate Fund
MERESE	Mechanisms of Rewards for Ecosystem Services (MRSE)
MINAM	Ministry of the Environment
MST	Sustainable Land Management
ONAMIAP	Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú (National Organization of Andean and Amazon Indigenous Women)
PROFONANPE	Fondo Nacional para Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado (National Fund for State Protected Natural Areas)
SBN	Nature-based Solutions
SERNANP	Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado (National Service of State Protected Natural Areas)

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Annex 1 Persons consulted

#	Type of Institution	Stakeholder	Contact person	Project	Date of interview
1	National level- Ministry	MINAM- Dirección General de Ordenamiento Territorial y de la Gestión Integrada de los Recursos Naturales- DGOTGIRN	Doris Guardia Yupanqui- Director	GEF 10541- Bosque seco	January 5th
2	National level- Ministry	MINAM-Dirección General de Economía y Financiamiento Ambiental - DGEFA	Susana Saldaña Especialista en Financiamiento para la Infraestructura Natural Emiko Miyashiro. Especialista en Economía Ambiental	GEF 3933- - Inkañaris	Fevruary 23rd, 12 pm
3	National level- Ministry	MINAM-Dirección General de Economía y Financiamiento Ambiental - DGEFA	Elena Castro Simauchi Coordinadora de Promoción de la Gestión Integrada de Recursos Naturales Luis Ledesma- Director Economia ambiental	GEF 4773- MERESE	January 26th
4	National level- Ministry	MINAM- Dirección General de Cambio Climático y Desertificación DGCCD	Jorge Miguel Leal Pinedo Especialista en Desertificación y Sequía	GEF 3276- Las Bambas	February 1st 10 am
5	National level- Private environmental fund in Peru	PROFONANPE-	Claudia Godfrey- ex Directora técnica, Omar Corilloclla, Director monitoreo y evaluación, Odile sanchez , Area My E Juana Kuramoto, Jefa de investigacion	GEF 3933- Inkañaris GEF 4773- MERESE	February 3rd 10 am

			Sr. Luis Castro , Inkañaris project manager at that period.		
6	National level- Service of protected areas	SERNANP- Directorate of Management of Natural Protected Areas	Marco Arenas - Responsible for the Functional Operational Unit of Participatory Management of the Natural Protected Areas	GEF 3933- Inkañaris GEF 4773- MERESE	January 23 trd, 4pm
7	Project level	FIDA	Jerónimo Chiarella - Project manager	GEF 4773- MERESE	January 27th, 3 pm
8	Project level	UNDP	Francisco Medina -project manager		February 2, 2.30 pm
9	Local level- Service of protected areas	SERNANP- Head of local protected area	SERNANP in Chiclayo- Head of area RVSBN Udima Joel Rolando Córdova Maquera,	GEF 3933- Inkañaris	January 25th, 5.30 pm
10	Local level- Service of protected areas	SERNANP- Head of local protected area	Abdias Villoslada Taipe. Head of RPNYC- 064-243888 , 968218462 Elmer Segura -Especialista, turismo y social, Hulfer Lázaro– Especilsita en RRNN, encargado en monitoreo biofísico.	GEF 4773- MERESE	January 30th 4pm
11	Local level	Comité de gestión RVS Laquipampa	Melina Durand	GEF 3933- Inkañaris	February 1 st, 5 pm
12	Local level	Comité de gestión RVSBN Udima	Armandina Quiroz Rodas- Miembro asociación de mujeres Monte Chico	GEF 3933- Inkañaris	February 7th 6.30 pm

13	Local level	Asociación productores ecológicos para la conservacion del Refugio de vida silvestre Laquipampa	Presidente de la Asociación: Napoleón Durand-	GEF 3933-Inkañaris	February 3rd, 8 am
14	Local level	EMAPA Cañete	Contacto: Emilio Hito – Gerente General de EMAPA Cañete Correo electrónico:	GEF 4773-MERESE	February 1st 11 am
15	Local level	Plataforma de Buena Gobernanza MERESE Jequetepeque	Helder Aguirre – Coordinador de la Plataforma de Buena Gobernanza MERESE Jequetepeque. Ex coordinador de cuenca de Jequetepeque del Proyecto MERESE-FIDA.	GEF 4773-MERESE	January 27 th 2 pm
16	Local level	Asociación de Productores Agropecuarios ABC-Tumbaden, Cajamarca	Luis López – presidente de la Asociación	GEF 4773-MERESE	February 2 nd, 1 pm
17	National indigenous level	Organización Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas Andinas y Amazónicas del Perú (ONAMIAP)	Ketty Marcelo López Presidenta Jr. Santa Rosa 327, Lima, Perú.	Generral perspective	January 27th, 9 am
18	Civil society	CooperAcción	Henry Vásquez	Generral perspective	February 17th , 9 am

Section 6. Timor-Leste Case Study

Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF: Timor-Leste Country Case Study

Prepared by: Octavio Araujo, Independent Consultant

March 2023

Reforestation site in Aituto (Ainaro, Timor-Leste) supported by GEF project ID 5056

Photo Credit: Octávio de Araújo

Timor-Leste Country Case Study

Background

During an extended period of weak central governance, foreign development agencies and international NGOs broadly favoring a community-based approach (CBA) played a dominant role in Timor-Leste reconstruction (World Bank 2013). It is expected that the CBA builds community-level social capital, increases the demand for good governance, empowers communities, and enhances poverty targeting, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness, development's inclusiveness, and poverty reduction efforts (Hernandez 2020). Based on the promising results of bottom-up approach, the Government of Timor-Leste (GoTL) decided to integrate CBA in national and rural infrastructure development projects through the *Programa Nasional Dezenvolvimentu Suku* (PNDS) aiming at increasing development in rural areas through intensive participation of local communities in every aspect of basic infrastructure development projects.

Application of CBAs in Timor-Leste has permeated non-infrastructure development projects such as community-based natural resource management (CBNMR) in marine protected areas (MPAs)[3], forest protected areas (JICA Timor-Leste 2016), community resilience building (UNDP Timor-Leste 2016), and disaster risk management (IOM International 2017). Not only does multi-level engagement[4] and coordination help communities achieve expected results effectively and efficiently, but it also allows them to establish social networks, exchange knowledge, and build capacity. This eventually helps sustain rural development efforts initiated by the projects in the long run.

This case study analysis situates the community-based approaches promoted by the GEF in their implementation context in Timor-Leste.

State administration, legal framework, policies, and strategies that support community-based approaches in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste State Administration System

Administratively, Timor-Leste is split into 14 municipalities: Lautem, Baucau, Viqueque, Manatuto, Dili, Aileu, Manufahi, Liquiça, Ermera, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Covalima, Oecussi,

[3] In 2013, the USAID Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) worked hand in hand with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) through its National Directorate for Fisheries and Aquaculture to develop and capture a model of practice for the Management of Coastal and Marine Resources in Timor-Leste.

[4] Multi-level in this context means that GoTL and GEF had first engagement at the global level to bring the fund to Timor-Leste, followed by Agencies and corresponding line ministries' (Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Secretariat of State for the Environment, and Ministry of State Administration) engagement, and eventually PMU and Suco Leaders/Constituents

and Atauro. The municipalities are further sub-divided into administrative posts, then sucos ("villages") and then aldeias (hamlets). Sucos are considered as the smallest political units in Timor.

Chief of sucos, a non-politically appointed position, play an important role in mobilizing local communities to implement projects of collective interest, preserving peace and social stability, mediating disputes and conflicts, and contributing indelibly to improving living conditions of the population and Socioeconomic progress. They preside over the suco councils, composed of youth and women, Chief of Aldeias and *lian nain* (elder/traditional authority).

Legal Frameworks for Decentralization and Rural Development in Timor-Leste

The following legal frameworks are strongly relevant to decentralization efforts in Timor-Leste:

- Timor-Leste National Constitution defines local government as "corporate bodies endowed with representative organs, with the objective of organizing the participation by citizens in solving the problems of their own community and promoting local development without prejudice to the participation by the State".
- Decree-Law No. 5/2004 on community authorities (composed of suco chiefs, chief villages, and the members of suco councils).
- Decree-Law No. 4/2012 on the Integrated District[5] Development Plan (PDID) which is the main mechanism for devolving budgetary power to local governments.
- Decree-Law No. 8/2013 establishes the statute of *Programa Nacional de Desenvolvimento* dos *Sucos* (PNDS) or the National Suco Development Programme.
- Decree Law No. 4/2014, which establishes the organic statute of administrative pre-decentralization structures.
- Decree Law No. 23/2021 which establishes the organization, composition, and powers of the bodies of local power, as well as the legal framework for the administrative decentralization of the State.

Community-Driven Development (CDD) in PNDS

The implementation modality for PNDS in Timor-Leste centers in the Community-Driven-Development's (CDD) principles (DFAT Timor-Leste 2013). This approach gives communities control over decision making and management and use of development funds, with the long-term aim of reducing poverty. From 2013 to 2022, the program provided Timor-Leste's 442 suco (villages) with an annual grant of $50,000 - $75,000 to fund small-scale infrastructure projects identified, planned, constructed, managed, and maintained by local communities.

[5] In the past, the term "district" was used to refer to "municipality" administration unit.

The prevalence of CDD in Timor-Leste since the introduction of PNDS has facilitated the permeation of CBAs in non-infrastructure development projects that are in favor of bottom-approach approach. CBA has been introduced as part of co-management effort in community-based natural resource management (CBNMR) in marine protected areas (MPAs), forest protected areas, community resilience building, and disaster risk management in many parts of the country.

The Political Context in Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste maintained a national unity and stability after its 2006 political crisis. The country has successfully organized peaceful and transparent parliamentary and presidential elections since the end of UN mission in 2012. However, the political contestation in Timor-Leste continues to divert the attention toward the most pressing economic development issues. Since the restoration of independence in 2002, the petroleum sector remains the dominant sector in Timor-Leste's economy and for state revenue (Neves 2022). There is widespread recognition and awareness that the country needs to urgently diversify its economy.

The GoTL has explicitly expressed their concern on environmental issues and the threat of climate change. They have formulated specific national policies[6] and regulatory framework related to fisheries management, biodiversity conservation, and climate change adaptation. *Nevertheless, they have not fully mainstreamed environmental concerns into concrete actions such as endorsing an increase of the portion of the annual General State Budget (GSB) to relevant line ministries and strengthening institutional capacity of relevant ministries to improve service delivery. This creates dependency on bilateral and multilateral agencies to fund the operational activities of relevant line ministries (i.e., Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Secretary of State for the Environment, and Ministry of State Administration)*.

Portfolio of projects using a community-based approach

To identify projects that were likely to include a community-based approach for the broader evaluation, a keyword search was conducted on data from the GEF Portal on project title, objectives, and components. Based on this keyword search a portfolio was identified for Timor-Leste and included four projects, two ongoing[7] and two completed (see **Table 1**).

Table 2: GEF projects selected for site visits

[6] National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Nationally Determined Contributions, and Climate Change Policy

[7] The IEO mission found that as of the start of the mission implementation activities for Project #10713 had still not started and it was decided to exclude this project from field visits.

GEF ID	Project Title	GEF Phase	GEF Agency	Financing	Project Status
4696	Strengthening the resilience of small scare rural infrastructure (SSRI) project and local government system to climate variability	GEF-5	UNDP	4,900,000.00	Completed
5056	Strengthening community resilience to climate-induced disasters in the Dili to Ainaro road development corridor (DARDC)	GEF-5	UNDP	5,250,000.00	Completed
9434	Securing the long-term conservation of Timor-Leste's biodiversity and ecosystem service through the establishment of a functioning national protected area system and the improvement of natural resource management in priority catchment corridors (TLSNAP)	GEF-6	Conservation International	3,340,367.00	Ongoing
10713	Adapting to climate change and enabling sustainable land management through productive rural communities in Timor-Leste	GEF-7	United Nations Environment Programme	9,845,662.00	Concept approved

Table 3: Project objectives, data on community-based approaches used in projects

GEF ID	Objective	Components using community- based approaches	Community based approaches described in project documents
4696	Critical small scale rural infrastructure is climate resilient designed and implemented through participatory approaches and strengthened local governance systems, reflecting the needs of communities vulnerable to increasing climate risks.	Outcome 2: Local Administrations integrate climate risks into participatory planning, budgeting and standards of small-scale rural infrastructure development. Outcome 3: Small scale rural infrastructure made resilient against climate change induced risks (droughts, floods, erosion and landslides)	The project used **extensive community input to identify the relevant risks and to set priorities** for action on climate resilience. This approach enhanced the level of national and local ownership of project activities. It also established/strengthened **community maintenance group for water supply project**. In addition, the project provided input to the PDID planning manual to include aspects of climate risks to infrastructure, including Annex 12 on maintenance and operation which emphasizes Community Management Action Plan (CMAP) as part of the community roles in basic maintenance by beneficiaries group. Additionally, it provided **small grants to community-based NGO project to conduct activities** such as tara-bandu, check dam construction, terracing, tree and grass planting

		in at least the 3 Districts of Liquiça, Ermera and Baucau (Physical Investment Component)	along the roads, rural infrastructure, water protection, school campaign, radio, and workshop.
5056	Critical economic infrastructure for sustained human development protected from climate induced natural hazards (flooding, landslides, wind damage) through better policies, strengthened local DRM institutions and investments in risk reduction measures within the Dili to Ainaro development corridor	Outcome 3: Community driven investments implemented to reduce climate change and disaster induced losses to critical infrastructure assets and the wider economy	To make the outcomes and interventions sustainable, the project **formed community groups, trained them in DRM, farming techniques, controlling erosion and utilizing weather information.** The project also supported **establishment of women's group in each suco/aldeia with DRM fund** with the **aim to involve them in identifying activities, developing and implementing community action plan.** The action plan is community driven and gender-focused developed through CVCA process focusing measures to reduce the climate induced disaster risks and vulnerabilities of the target communities. Lastly, **communities were also involved in participatory community vulnerability assessments**.
9434	Securing the long-term conservation of Timor-Leste's biodiversity and ecosystem services through the establishment of a functioning National Protected Area System and the improvement of natural resource management in priority catchment corridors	Outcome 2.2: Capacity of communities to manage their natural resources substantially increased Outcome 3.1: Sustainable forest management in priority catchment corridors substantially improved Outcome 3.2: Priority degraded areas rehabilitated and/or reforested	The project **Involved youth** in training program for environmental management, **built the capacity of community level conservation groups** through training, exchange visits, and learning-by doing field activities, integrated community-based sustainable forest management into suco NRM plans and initiated the implementation of NRM plans. The project also worked closely with government and communities **to develop, validate, and approve priority forest rehabilitation and reforestation plan, established/strengthened nursery center, and trained communities on vegetation techniques**.

Evaluation methods and approach

Data collection methods

The IEO mission in Timor-Leste started with a review of project documents and legal framework and policy documents on decentralization and CBNRM. This initial step led to the identification of a group of key stakeholders for interviews and focus groups discussions (FGDs) in Dili and target municipalities. Overall, 12 key stakeholders (national government officials, national level implementing agency staff, civil society organizations, and partners, MAF representatives in municipalities, local leaders, and community members) were interviewed in Dili and municipalities where the project sites are located. Moreover, around 36 participants (27 males, 9 females) took part in three FGDs held in Barifaca (Lautem), Horai-Quic (Ainaro), and Fahilebo (Liquiça).

To capture the gender information, the mission ensured that women group members in project sites are encouraged to participate in the FGDs and that their stories/experience are captured.

Site selection criteria

Overall, the three projects selected for IEO mission were/are being implemented in eight municipalities in Timor-Leste. The total number of project sites where physical infrastructures and other activities took place is 52[8] (See **Annex B**); However, since both #4696 and #5056 have interventions in two similar sites (sucos) in Ermera municipality, the number is reduced to 50 sucos.

Due to the large number of project sites dispersed in various location in the country, the site selection for field mission took two factors into consideration:

- Not all activities in these sites are linked to community-based approach[9]
- The IEO mission had resource constraints in term of time and logistics (many sites are located in remote areas where travelling in rainy seasons is not advisable)

After consultations with key stakeholders and the IEO TTL, the field mission was planned to seven sites (sucos) across five municipalities. Since closed projects were more prioritized than the ongoing ones, 5 sites (Talimoro, Uailili, Horai-quic, Aituto, and Manutasi) belong to project #4696 and #5056 and 2 sites (Fahilebo and Baricafa) to project #9434. It is important to note that activities in one site (suco) are also dispersed in various sub-locations. Hence, having small number of sites for field mission has the advantage of allowing for more visits to the fields and various locations where those activities took

[8] The number is based on the Suco administrative level

[9] Some project activities focus more on capacity building for national government and are implemented either by NGOs or private companies.

place. No interviews or site visits were conducted for #10713 as the project has not implemented any relevant activities at this stage.

The country case study was undertaken by Joaquim Freitas and Octavio Araujo, both independent consultants based in Timor-Leste. Interviews in Dili were carried out during December 2022 and January 2023. The evaluation fieldwork took place during **6-days** over a period of three weeks between **20 December 2022** and **10 January 2023** in the following 8 sites across 6 municipalities:

Table 4: 8 sites selected for IEO field mission in Timor-Leste

Project #	Location		Field mission activity
	Municipality	**Suco/Sites**	
4696	Ermera	Talimoro	• Interview with local leader and focal point • Visit to water source and collection points
	Baucau	Uailili	• Interview with NGO, local leader, and focal points • Visit to NGO nursery center • Visit to water source
5056	Aileu	Lausi	• Interview with MAF representative in Aileu municipality • Visit to plantation site in aldeia Manumerlolo • Visit to MAF Forestry nursery in aldeia Riafusu
	Ainaro	Horai-quic	• FGD with local leader and community members • Visit to nursery center Kartolu • Visit to agroforestry site Kartolu • Visit to reforestation site in Lauheli
		Aitutu	• Visit to reforestation site
		Manutasi	• Interview with MAF forestry representative • Visit to nursery centre and reforestation site
9434	Liquiça	Fahilebo	• FGD with local leader and community members • Visit to water and soil conservation site • Visit to community group livestock site • Visit to reforestation site
	Lautem	Baricafa	• FGD with local leader and community members • Visit to two nursery centres • Visit to one water conservation site • Visit to one plantation site

Limitations

In general, the field mission was not designed to conduct in-depth analysis to draw relationships between project activities and all outcomes. Lacking some crucial data, the IEO mission was limited from performing analysis of socio-economic outcomes from the three projects. Moreover, time and resource constraints did not allow the IEO mission to visit most sites where many other small-scale infrastructure construction and rehabilitation took place.

Findings:

KQ 1: How relevant have GEF projects that use community-based development approaches been to the national priorities of GEF recipient countries? (Government officials, OFP, Agency staff, project staff)

Interviews and FGD with all groups of stakeholders confirm that there is a strong consensus on the high relevance of CBAs to the national priorities of Timor-Leste based on the following reasons. Firstly, since 2012 Timor-Leste has been rolling out its decentralization programme, PNDS, which aims to increase development in rural areas through intensive participation of local communities in every aspect of basic infrastructure development projects. However, during its early implementation phase where only limited budget was available, PNDS was not able to respond to the heterogenous needs of Timor-Leste's 442 sucos and their aldeias. This limitation opened the window of opportunity for GEF projects' intervention. Since the CBA approach adopted by GEF projects resembles PNDS's CDD approach, the GEF projects served as a platform to introduce CBA modality, implement the much-needed infrastructure or natural resource management projects in remote parts of Timor-Leste – which otherwise remain neglected by the central government – and upgrade PNDS materials (manuals and guidelines). In fact, project #4695 – which followed guidelines of PDIM and PNDS manual on the procedure of CBA such as community engagement, needs identification, decision making, and obtaining approval from suco and municipality level – also led to the improvement of GoTL's planning manual for PDIM (*Planeamento de Desenvolvimento Integrado Municípal* or Integrated Municipality Development Plan). The manual now has some content on climate risks to infrastructure, including Annex 12 on maintenance and operation.

Secondly, CBA promotes local ownership of project outputs (i.e., clean water facility, forest plantation, nursery centers, water/soil conservation sites, etc.) through its voluntary contribution modality. This is an appropriate solution to reduce the high cost for materials- and labor-intensive projects provided that PNDS's annual grant allocation for each suco is relatively low (only between USD 50,000 – USD 75,000) to fund every aspect of infrastructure project in sucos and isolated *aldeias* with heterogenous needs. Moreover, the highly centralized and bureaucratic decision making, coupled with underfunded programmes in

line ministries[10] tend to slow down rural development in many vulnerable parts of Timor. Hence, community's collective voluntary contribution in term of time and physical labor comes in handy. For project #5056 in Talimoro (Ermera) and Uailili (Baucau) and project #9434 in Baricafa (Lautem) and Fahilebo (Liquiça), communities volunteered their time and labor for construction works, preparation of seedlings at nursery centers, and tree planting activities. Some even went as far as licensing (informally) the use of property (traverse land) for water pipes transmission or community water collection points (taps) when needed.

Thirdly, apart from working directly with communities, the GEF projects partnered up with line ministries to support existing programmes which also use CBAs. This is a quite common for project #5056 which established an LOA with Ministry of State Administration (MSA) to transfer the budget portion (USD 400,000) of the LDCF grant to MSA for the Top-Up Grant mechanism. The pilot mechanism was used to integrate DRM/DRR and climate change adaptation into the annual municipal planning and budgeting system in the four municipalities targeted by the project. Activities include the prioritization and approval of community priority projects, the procurement process following the PDID procedures to contract the local communities, and oversight and supervision of the implementation of these projects. Project #5056 also established another LOA with MAF, with a total grant of USD 391,000, to support the implementation of climate resilience measures focusing on agroforestry, reforestation, and watershed management activities to reduce the impact of climate change induced disasters related to floods, landslides, and droughts. Activities include the establishment of tree nurseries, agroforestry, plantations and reforestation, terracing, building of check dams and dewponds as well as construction of organic composts. Overall, the LOAs enabled the underfunded line ministries to carry out programme in target municipalities while at the same time strengthened their project management skills.

KQ 4: Have community-based approaches influenced and contributed to better environmental and socio-economic outcomes?

Desk review, interviews and FG discussions revealed different accounts on influence and contributions of GEF financed projects using CBA approaches on environmental and socio-economic outcomes.

Environmental Outcomes

The three GEF projects implemented the following activities that have led to achievement of various environmental output and outcomes:

[10] In 2022 GSB, only 1.2% was allocated to Ministry of Agriculture and Fishery and 0.14% to Secretary of State for the Environment.

- For project #5056, TE reports claim that around 220,000 seedballs were prepared and disseminated for reforestation plantations to rehabilitate larger vulnerable slopes previously damaged by slash and burn agriculture, erosion, and other forms of ecosystem degradation. The project also supported the plantation of bamboo in slope areas to prevent disasters and provide alternative source of income to the local communities. In Aileu municipality, the IEO field mission confirmed that the total number of seedlings distributed by MAF[11] to community to be planted in private properties for the three-year period is 180,000.[12]

[11] The IEO mission faced time and capacity constraints to identify whether the DARDC project's target reforestation coverage of 50,000 hectares for the Dili-Ainaro (outside of the WB road project RoW) was reached and if ongoing maintenance continues. The field visits in conducted in Ainaro (Horaiquic, Aitutu, and Manutasi) and Aileu (Lausi) covers approximately four hectares (0.008% of the target coverage area). Only Lausi and Aitutu show significant progress in terms of tree growth and density.

[12] There is no clear outline of the target coverage for reforestation of degraded land in the project document (for out 3.2.)

- For project #4696, TE reports on planting of trees and vegetation along the road (as part of soil bioengineering) and along irrigation canal/water source areas (as part of soil and water conservation) in various locations which showcase the main difference between the conventional and climate-resilience infrastructures in the country. The total area coverage towards the end of the project is reported to be more than 0.8 Ha project for the former and more than 0.3 Ha for the latter. During the field visit in Baucau (Uailil) and Ermera (Talimoro), it was observed that water source in both locations remain protected from erosion and pollution thanks to the project intervention.

Photo 1:Forest plantation in 5 sites showing sign of growth due to suitable tree species for the local climate and proper protection fencing system. The site in Manutasi shows a clear sign of failre due to removal of fences

- For project #9434, it is reported in the MTR that the project has reached 44.8% of its target area (500 ha) for reforestation of degraded land.

Field visits to six plantation sites during the mission observed that in sites where community members planted suitable tree species, applied proper planting technique and built proper

protection system (fences) and where MAF Forestry staff regularly rehabilitated the fences and monitored the sites[13], there is a general tendency to achieve better results than the ones only managed by community. For project #5056 in Lausi (Aileu), Horai-quic Kartolu (Ainaro), Hoarai-quic Lauheli (Ainaro) and Aitutu (Ainaro), the IEO mission observed signs of good growth and high survival rates. Most of the trees have shown signs of growth, reaching an average height of 5-6 meters and radius of 30 cm. This is also the case for two plantation sites for project #9434 in Baricafa (Lautem) and Fahilebo (Liquiça).

Photo 2: A water pond located in water conservation site of TLSNAP project established by the community with the support from a local NGO in Fahilebo

Soil/water conservation has been an additional component for project #9434. During field visit to one site in Fahilebo (Liquiça), stakeholders claimed that since community-based water and soil conservation activity was implemented in early 2022, there have signs of higher ground water level than in the past. This was confirmed by measurement data collected by the project partner from August 2021 to September 2022.[14]

[13] As mentioned above, DARDC project established a LOA with MAF Forestry Directorate

[14] It needs to be considered that other natural phenomenon such high frequency of rainy season in the region in the past three years due to La Niña can also contribute to high level of groundwater.

It is important to highlight some noticeable failures in project sites. The TE for #4696 already reports that some roadside planting was not successful due to lack of water, animal grazing, and unsuitability of some of the tree species. Additionally, it also reports on the lack of application of proper techniques in areas that require terracing, rainwater trenches and larger up-slope catchment area treatments to reduce runoff. Field visit to one site in Manutasi (Ainaro) for project #5056 also reveals an unsuccessful result of community-based reforestation effort due to land dispute issue between neighboring communities The land dispute was attributed to shallow consultations with communities, an example of where CBA wasn't applied in a robust manner. A key respondent claimed during the mission that the other community's members removed the fence system which protected the four Ha plantation area a few years ago. The open grassland site is completely abandoned and only used for livestock grazing. Additionally, during an interview for the same project in Aileu, a respondent mentioned about low survival rate of seedlings due to late distribution for planting and the unsuitability in applying Fukuoka seedballs in steep slope sites. IEO was unable to visit plantation sites belonging to private community owners, and therefore could not validate their existence or sustainability.

Socio-Economic Outcomes

Both desk reviews and interviews with PMUs confirm that GEF projects are aware of the linkage between environmental issues and livelihoods of communities in target areas. The projects provided training and alternative source of livelihoods for better farming practices, sustainable fisheries, agroforestry and other income generating activities, which provided the dual benefits of improving household economy and also supporting environmental protection and disaster management.

Most groups of stakeholders consulted acknowledged the contribution of the GEF CBA projects to some socio-economic outcomes to an extent. It is observed that project #4696 and #5056 generated more immediate socio-economic outcomes than project #9434. The reasoning behind that is that construction of small-scale basic infrastructure such as irrigation schemes, water distribution facilities and collection points (taps), and road rehabilitation responds immediately to communities' basic needs. TE of project #5056 mentioned that irrigation canal development supports agricultural activities and improve local economy and enhance their resilience and adaptive capacity. Communities in Uailaili (Baucau) and Talimoro (Ermera) shared that prior to project intervention, they had to spend extra time to fetch water from distance locations for households use and irrigation of horticulture. Thanks to the project, they can now reduce time and efforts allocated to water collection. One stakeholder in Uailili (Baucau) added that access to water has enabled community to perform water-intensive activities such as horticulture and house renovation.

Respondents in Talimoro (Ermera) from project #4696 and in Fahilebo (Liquiça) from project #9434 elaborated that access to water for community in the upstream areas has enabled them to practice horticulture and sell the products to the local market. Respondents in

Fahilebo (Liquica) claimed to have earned between USD 120-300 per year due to increased frequency of annual harvest[15] as a direct result of water availability. Another key respondent claimed that tree planting activities in Osuala (Baucau) supported by project #4696 have contributed to the reduction of the level of damage on public road during rainy season. This, in turn, allows farmers to have the access to the road all year round to reach their markets without any intermittence during rainy season.

One exceptional success story in agroforestry intervention in Horai-quic (Ainaro) accounts for the long-term result of project #5056 on livelihood. During the site visit to a small coffee plantation, one community member explained that when he received seedlings of casuarina tree (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) from the project a few years back, he planted them in his property as part of the effort to reduce soil erosion and at the same time prepare the condition for coffee plantation. Three years ago, he then planted coffee seedlings (not from the project) on the same site under the shade of casuarina trees. The coffee shrubs have matured and started to produce berries in 2022. It is expected that the first harvest is to take place during the second quarter of 2023. The CBA design used by the project made a difference in the sense that approach differed from conventional top-down approaches that focus on construction of structures, Instead, the CBA used by the project centered

[15] One harvest can generate a profit between USD 40-100/household.

Photo 3: First coffee cherries from a small plantation in Horai-Quic, Ainaro under the shade of casuarina trees

community members and involved them in hard- and soft-engineering (reforestation and sometimes agroforestry). Community members are willing to use their land for those activities. Their participation is voluntary but there is expectation that they will reap the environmental and socio-economic benefits of the reforestation and agroforestry in the future.

Overall, the IEO mission in Timor-Leste has not been able to establish a causal relationship between all GEF projects and economic outcomes for households in target communities due to several reasons. Firstly, there are limited baseline/midline/endline data to help establish a benchmark for identifying any changes in household income level after project intervention. Secondly, the practice of bookkeeping does not permeate daily routine of households operating in small-scale business in Timor-Leste. Any figures provided are based on personal recollection over an unclear timeline rather than being drawn from a logbook. Lastly, it takes at least eight to ten years for projects that introduce agroforestry (except for coffee and other fruits trees) and animal husbandry to claim that individual households can now generate stable income from project activities. During the field mission, it was identified that most of the plantations are less than five years old and the trees have not reached maturity level. A key respondent from project #9434 acknowledged that the project has not obtained any tangible socio-economic results at this early stage from its intervention however they expect to be able to earn future profit.

It is important to acknowledge the role of CBA as an effective mechanism to involve community members in reforestation/afforestation activities and take ownership of the outputs. Despite some failures to achieve end of project outcomes and sustain the results, CBA has generated significant impacts judging from the level of awareness and participation of community members in project activities. This is underscored by their significant contributions to prepare and planted hundreds of thousands of seedlings in both public and private property, to build basic geoengineering structure to conserve water and soil, to license the traverse of water pipes through their property, to be part of the facility management groups, and to participate in animal-husbandry.

KQ 5: What factors have influenced the usefulness and value-added of community-based approaches to the performance of projects using them?

Based on interviews with key stakeholders and observation of FG discussion activities in target sucos, the following factors are considered:

- **Proper engagement with local actors helps secure mutual respect and trust-based relationship**
  Establishing mutual respect and trust-based relationships is of utmost importance for interventions at the community level. For GEF projects, this has been achieved through showing respect to existing socio-cultural structures and traditions, positioning communities as partners and active agents of change, and fostering inclusion and transparency in decision-making and financial procedures. As a result, implementation of project activities became more effective and efficient as there are/were tremendous supports from leaders and community members alike (chief of suco, suco council, and community members, including women representatives).
  Interviews and FGDs reveal that all local stakeholders (PMU, Suco leaders, and NGO) play their role in socializing project objectives with their communities and in mobilizing resources to facilitate effective project implementation. As community leaders, chiefs of Suco often made appeal to their constituents for cooperation and maximum participation in project activities. This resulted in successful mobilization of community members to join groups (i.e. nursery group, livestock group, facility management group, etc.) and volunteer. Some national stakeholders praised GEF projects for the success in promoting voluntarism and cultivating a strong sense of ownership. Both voluntarism and local ownership are crucial elements for cost-effectiveness during project implementation and sustainability of outputs and outcomes post-project completion. The Terminal Evaluation from project #5056 outlines that the national government is planning to replicate some of these elements for future project in other parts of the country.

- **The empowerment of local authorities and leaders is necessary for a successful project implementation**

It is evident that chiefs of Sucos play an important role in local governance. Their consent for project intervention remains crucial. During consultations in Uailili (Baucau), Baricafa (Lautem), Horai-Quic (Ainaro), Talimoro (Ermera) and Fahilebo (Liquiça), the chief of Sucos and Aldeias expressed genuine appreciation for GEF projects' intervention in their administrative territory. They also shared that PMU properly consulted with them from the onset during the phase of project design, implementation, and evaluation. In term of capacity building, they were involved in knowledge exchange and awareness raising activities on climate change, natural resource management, and early warning system and equipped with proper skills to enhance their participation in the project implementation. Both the TE and field mission for project #4696 in Ualili highlight the provision of short-term training for construction, monitoring, inspection, and verification to the 30 target sucos by PMU staff. The support has made it possible for them to develop climate-resilient proposals submitted for government funding.

Stakeholders in Uailili (Baucau) pointed out that GEF ID #4696 has contributed to strengthening their unity and environmental awareness in the community. They have always been aware of the linkage between the forest ecosystem and the excess availability of underwater reserve in their area. Having community-based water source protection as an important element of the project encouraged them to take more seriously their custodianship role of the natural resource. Tapping on this unity and awareness, they came together to express a strong opposition to a road upgrade project that poses negative environmental impact (i.e., clearing of small patches of old trees which provide ecosystem services to the area) to their village. Fortunately, after a series of negotiations with relevant national stakeholders and project developers, they managed to successfully strike a fair negotiation which led to alteration of the construction plan. The project developer has agreed to proceed with an alternative road which is located far from Uailili forest patches.

Stakeholders in Uailili (Baucau) also expressed the same strong opposition to national government's plan to transfer all community water supply services to the national public water utility (Bee Timor-Leste E.P.). The main reason being that national authority will reallocate water resources into many other users in areas outside of Uailili[16] (Baucau) which consequently threatens water resources carrying capacity. Additionally, it is predicted that the monthly water user fee charged by the national authority[17] will be significantly higher than that the current monthly fee enforced by the facility management group ($ 3.00 for distribution to household tanks and S 0.50 distribution at public water collection points).

[16] The current clean water distribution system established by DARDC project in suco Uailili (Baucau municipality) distributes water to a total of 272 households in aldeia Uamalu Boe and Uaubalu which are located 3 km aways from the water source.
[17] In Dili municipality, the rate for every thousand litter is $0.20/day for domestic consumers.

Photo 4: The main water source in Uailili (Baucau) which provides clean water supply to households in Uailili (Baucau)

- **The strengthening of social capital of the target community enables communities to maximize their participation in project activities**
  Communities' social capital can be strengthened through their engagement with both internal (local authorities, local leaders, community members, and women and youth group) and external actors (national government representatives, development agencies, and technical experts) in rural development projects. This is evident in the three GEF projects which have strong local presence in the community during the project period through activities such as site visits with national governments, training, and workshops, and FGDs. Both the TE and IEO mission document how the engagement of community with actors representing government agencies (Forestry Department from Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Secretariat of State for the Environment, Ministry of Public Works, and Ministry of Social and Solidarity), public institute (Bamboo Institute), CSO (Timor Verde and Permatil), and technical consultancy/private companies facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills which in turn elevate their capacity and eventually maximize collaboration in project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Both TEs and the IEO mission also confirm that all three GEF projects closely engaged with both communities and relevant government agencies to help strengthen local and national government coordination mechanism in natural resource management and rural-infrastructure development. This contributes to effectiveness and sustainability of project outputs.

The presence of the three projects in many villages and rural areas has transformed the sites into platforms where diverse actors/stakeholders interact to negotiate their interests and, most importantly, work as partners. Not only do multi-level engagement and coordination help them achieve expected results but it also allows them to build on existing efforts, establish social networks, exchange knowledge, and build capacity. [18]For example, participants from FGD in Horaik-Quic (Ainaro) pointed out that project #5056 builds on effort to construct a climate-resilient national level road between Dili and Ainaro which was implemented by World Bank's Road Climate Resilience Project (RCRP) a few year earlier.[19] During the FGD in Horai-Quic (Ainaro), some stakeholders reported that the have also engaged with other NGOs (both local and international such as Raibia, Red Cross Timor-Leste and Mercy Corps) to support agroforestry and disaster risk management in their area after the conclusion of project #5056. In addition, during the field visit to water source and clean water distribution system in Talimoro (Ermera), a key respondent elaborated that project #4696 intervened in some Sucos that are also beneficiaries of ILO's Road for Development (R4D) project.[20]

- **Project monitoring and evaluation activities encourage collective learning**
  There is a general tendency to overlook at M&E merely as a process where evaluators (consultants) capture information from various stakeholders (national government, PMU, local leaders, community members, and beneficiaries). This perspective neglects the fact by engaging subjects in the process, participatory M&E encourages more learning and critical thinking from both data collectors/analysts and their key interviewees/FGD participants. Although it is not commonly acknowledged, the chief of sucos and group members frequently consulted by M&E officer/evaluator play important roles in the evaluation of project approach and mechanism in their community. A lot of their observations and critics helped the projects capture success stories, challenges and lesson-learned elaborated in the reports (fields, quarterly reports, annual, MTEs and TEs). This enabled the PMU to track the projects' progress towards their goals.

  During the IEO mission in all target sites, it was observed that community members were keen to come together for sharing of and discussion on their reflection and perceptions on the three projects once again. Judging from the breadth and depth of their reflection, it is safe to say that they are used to such exercise. The frequency of such M&E activities held during the project lifetime allows them to continuously develop critical thinking skills which is necessary to assess project approaches and mechanisms, capture lesson

[18] UNDP provided technical training on plumbing system to community groups involved in the construction of water supply infrastructure system.
[19] The RCRP project was initiated in 2011 to provide the GoTL financial and technical support for the construction of a climate-resilient national level road between Dili and Ainaro to improve connectivity and reduce the vulnerability of the road to climate-induced disasters.
[20] Access to the community settlements and basic infrastructures are now more convenient than in past thanks to the construction of the rural road by the R4D project.

learned, and improve the design of future projects. This skill is highly relevant for all active agents of change, including local leaders and community members.

KQ 6: To what extent are the results of GEF projects that use community-based approaches sustainable?

Based on data from interviews, FGDs and on-site observations during the IEO mission, sustainability of the three GEF projects varies from project to project and from site to site. The sustainability analysis is heavily centered on the output of the two completed projects, #4696 and #5056, but only limited to agroforestry and clean water supply system activities.

The IEO field mission confirmed a few points raised in the TE regarding the lack of commitment of relevant institutions to continue the operations of project outputs. This is the case of #4696 in Uailili (Baucau) where there is no clarity on the status of the fee collection system from water users (households). Based on the original agreement between suco and its constituents, the mandatory fee is to be collected on monthly basis for future maintenance and repair purposes of the clean water supply system. Although one key respondent claimed that the collection system was still working, there is no further elaboration on the amount collected to date. Two other respondents confirmed that the user fee collection system had not been working properly due to lack of compliance. In general, there seems to be no concern on the unclear status of management fees as long as the facility remains operational, and no major upgrade is required. The concern will only arise if and when any damages occur. A site visit to Talimoro (Ermera) for the same project reveals that while the main water source and distribution tank are well protected, there are signs of disruption at some collection points (taps) due to lack of proper maintenance.[21]

[21] Key respondents did not elaborate on the status of water collection system.

In the case of project #5056, three out of four community nursery centers established by the project through an LOA with MAF Forestry Directorate in both Ainaro and Aileu are completely abandoned. The lack of funds from the General State Budget (GSB) makes it more reasonable for MAF to operate one rather than four nursery centers. However, it is important to note that having a smaller number of nursery centers means a lower production level of seedlings in project sites which directly affects future reforestation efforts in the country. In addition, community members are less inclined to invest their time in agroforestry once provision of financial incentives ceases.[22] They instead choose to maximize farming activities which are seen to generate more promising results in the short-run in comparison to agroforestry. As a result, the sustainability of those outputs (i.e., nurseries centers and agroforestry plantations) which remain operational to date is highly dependent on supports from MAF Forestry Directorate and international development agencies.

Photo 5: The main water distribution/storage system in Uailili (left) and Talimoro (right) are well-protected. Both systems remain operational to date.

[22] The LOA with MAF funded by DARDC project provide an incentive of $ 0.50/seedling. Payment is processed only if seedlings survival rate after planting is high (60 and above).

Photo 6: The only MAF-managed nursery centers that are still operating in Manutasi (lef) and Aileu (right)

Photo 7: One water collection point that has stopped working (left) and another one that is fully operating near the water source (right) in Talimoro (Ermera)

In term of the status of reforested area supported by project #5056, site visits to Horai-quic (Ainaro), Hoarai-quic Lauheli (Ainaro), Aitutu (Ainaro), and Lausi (Aileu) confirmed that seedlings have grown into young trees of 5 to 6 meters with various density thanks to forestry department's proper monitoring and protection system (fences). The one in Lausi seems to be doing better than the rest mainly due to its remoteness and isolation (fences and steep cliffs keep it safe from livestock encroachment). Experience from the failed plantation site in Manutasi (Ainaro) shows land dispute and lack of protection system (fences) threaten the sustainability of reforestation efforts. As less and less community members volunteer their time to replace the death seedings and repair damage fences, the sustainability of many reforestation sites becomes questionable in the future.

Analysis of interview and observation data collected from project #9434 indicates an increased level of awareness about the importance of reforestation and water/soil conservation which is essential for sustainability of project outputs (nursery centers, plantation sites, water/soil conservation site, and animal husbandry). Some members even claimed that their environmental awareness already existed before project intervention took

place and was further enhanced by the project.[23] Nevertheless, the lack of indicators of existing financial mechanism to date to support project activities beyond the project lifetime might affect the likelihood of sustainability. This is based on the observation that activities such as reforestation and animal husbandry have not yet generated income for the groups at this stage. Community feedback in Baricafa (Lautem) reveals that some community members are less inclined to commit to reforestation/agroforestry due to the long-term investment required and the challenging resource allocation between those activities and their usual labor-intensive farming.

The above-mentioned examples lead to a conclusion that the CBA design alone cannot guarantee the sustainability of project outputs and outcomes in rural setting where support from central government is limited and opportunities to diversify sources of livelihood are scarce. Additionally, the short duration of engagement (five years or less) with no follow-up does not provide enough time for community to develop a strong sense of ownership.

KQ 7: To what extent are there tradeoffs or tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs of people living in project areas? Does this affect the sustainability of interventions using community-based approaches?

High rates of population growth and the high dependence on agriculture have speed up the conversion forested land to agricultural use in Timor-Leste (World Bank 2009). The degradation of land and other natural resource for economic gain continues to create human-environment tension in the country. The IEO mission observed the following tensions between environmental objectives and economic needs:

- Communities are aware of the importance of reforestation and nature conservation in protecting ecosystem services (i.e., provision of foods, conserving soil/water, reducing the risk of climate hazards, etc.). However, they are always conflicted about how to maintain a balance between environmental protection and their sustaining their livelihood. The failure of central government to bring prosperity to rural areas as well as weak project interventions in alternative sources of livelihood leaves them with no option but to turn to nature and exploit its resources (such as timber, firewood[24], and wildlife) as their main source of livelihood. They continue to cut down trees for firewood, let livestock graze freely in forest plantations, and practice slash and burn farming. This leads to major environmental degradation around the country. Applying CBA in isolation from other crucial livelihood

[23] The community, Baricafa (Lautem), is known to have strong affiliation with natural and their cultural elements as seen in the rest of Lautem municipality. This behavior contributes to the promotion of pro-nature conservation.

[24] According to Government's statistic, n*ine in every ten households* use firewood as their main cooking fuel.

interventions in specific and national rural development plans in general does not completely address environmental problems in the long-run.

- The underlying insecurity and instability associated with unresolved land tenure issues in Timor-Leste pose negative effect on the GEF project outcomes in some sites. It is reported that land conflict between neighboring communities, as seen in #5056 site in Manutasi (Ainaro) stems from both unclear land tenure and conflicted interest on land use. One side has agreed to reforest the area while the other resisted the idea because they would lose grazing site for the livestock. Additionally, in all three sites, livestock encroachment on forest and/or agroforestry plantations continue to threaten the survival of seedlings. Although free-fazing livestock is common and its negative environmental impact is evident, there seems to be no integration of sustainable livestock management across all three GEF-project to minimize its negative impacts on projects' outputs.

- Financial resource constraints imply that the cost of community-based activities for the PMUs needs to be reduced to the lowest level possible. Voluntarism is seen as a solution to this situation. However, experience has shown that volunteers are not willing to continue their voluntary activities over a long period as they face the reality of having to attend family needs as reported in project documents and highlighted during IEO mission. It is even worse when there are more free riders who barely contribute their time for the common good. This is also the dilemma for small-scale farmers who must voluntarily opt between unsustainable farming practice which generate incomes in the short-run and sustainable agroforestry activities which requires many years to be profitable.

The above-mentioned tensions tend to exert a negative impact on the sustainability of CBAs. Unless they are properly addressed through integrated manners (i.e., linking reforestation with sustainable livestock management, introducing horticulture-based agroforestry, improving market access of local products), the lifetime of project outputs beyond project completion period will remain questionable.

Crosscutting: Gender and Inclusion

There are clear indications that all three projects uphold the GEF belief on the contribution of systematic inclusion of gender aspects in the projects towards positive synergies between improved environmental impact and greater gender equality. This is based the fact that women are involved in almost every aspect of project implementation, including capacity building and M&E.

The following observations are highlighted from project documents and further confirmed through the IEO field mission:

- While leadership positions in the selected sites for field mission are pre-dominantly held by men,[25] there are certain positions and opportunities reserved for women such as women-only group in each suco responsible for identification of activities, development and implementation of community action plan for Disaster Risk Management (supported by project #5056), membership in horticulture and nursery center group (quota for women varies from location to location), training opportunity on water conservation and agroforestry [26] (supported by project #9434), opportunities for horticulture activities, inclusion in community meeting for socialization or collective evaluation (M&E),[27] and opportunity to take over food and catering services for any project activity if needed (this applied to all projects). The quotas are seen as a necessary means to facilitate more inclusion and ensure that women are equally benefited from project activities as men are.

- The MTR for project #9434 highlights the high level of women's participation in various project activities (16% more beyond project's 30% target). It further reports that women's participation in community conservation groups in Irabere catchment area (33%) is lower than that in Comoro's (58%). This was further confirmed through an observation of the lower number of female participants in Baricafa (representing Irabere catchment) in comparison to the ones in Fahilebo (Comoro) during the IEO field mission. It can be argued that the difference in socio-cultural structure and dynamic between the two areas might be the contributing factor.

[25] The five chief of sucos with whom the IEO mission consulted are also male.

[26] 20 out of 40 participants are female.

[27] Female participants are always outnumbered the male one. This could be the result of traditional family arrangement where women are expected to stay at home and take care of the children.

- Based on the traditional gender role in many Timor-Leste households, especially in rural areas, women and girls are usually the ones responsible for gathering water for their families. Thanks to the intervention from project #4696 in Baucau, Ermera, and

Photo 8: Female participants of FGD in Fahilebo (Liquiça) during IEO mission. Some of them had to bring their children to the meeting, a clear indication of how they juggle between traditional household role and active agent of change in rural development.

Liquiça and project #5056 in Aileu

- and Ainaro, many communities now have access to clean water supply. This has helped reduce drudgery of women and girls who otherwise must travel long distance to fetch water.

- Although the concept of inclusion has been expanded widely beyond the scope of traditional concept of male and female, both TE and field mission confirms the lack of specific accounts on participation of other categories of marginalized groups (i.e., people with disability, women-headed households, and LGBTQ+) in project sites. The IEO mission sees the importance of mainstreaming gender equality ingrained in GoTL's policy – which embraces the inclusion of different group of marginalized communities – into GEF-funded projects to generate more disaggregated data which in turn help the formulation of future policy on gender and inclusion in CBAs.

Analysis and Main findings Conclusions.

CBA approaches applied in GEF projects allows active participation of Suco leaders and community members in project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The highly participatory element in almost all project sites is crucial as it facilitates effective project implementation and foster local ownership of project outputs. Additionally, it helps address any conflict during project implementation.[28] Provision of capacity building opportunities and other participatory activities (i.e., technical training, site visit, M&E, etc.) to Suco leaders and community members enables new knowledge and skills acquisition which in turn enables them to maximize their contribution to the project in specific and community-based rural development in general.

CBA is perceived by all relevant stakeholders as an effective approach to achieve expected results and contribute to sustainability of project outcomes. This is a strong consensus among all stakeholders because CBA allows local leaders and communities to coordinate among themselves and learn to identify problems, design plans, implement activities and monitor progress. At the end of the process, it is expected that they acquire new knowledge and skills, establish a strong sense of ownership of the project results. Communities perceived that CBA approaches were likely to be sustained, though the evidence from ex-post field visits on sustainability is mixed.

Community members are more likely to devote their time and energy to activities that generate promising results in the short-run rather than in investment that will only generate results in the long-run. Voluntarism is more common for establishment of water supply system or road construction in the village than for nursery establishment and tree planting. The main difference between the two types of activities is that for water supply and road construction it takes weeks or months to complete and generate significant changes (i.e., reliable access to clean water in the village, less risks to travel during rainy season) while nursery establishment and tree planting requires many years to produce meaningful results (i.e., high market value, strong root system to protect water source and soil, more carbon storage etc.). Most communities prefer to resume their individual livelihood activities as soon as project activities conclude as opposed committing to voluntary activities indefinitely.

Activities at almost all community-based nursery centers are difficult to sustain in the absence of funds from external actors. It is evident that the operation of activities in community-based nursery established during the project implementation period currently depend on project funds from external actors. Once project concludes, community members are less inclined to coordinate existing groups and volunteer their time to run the

[28] There is no other conflict reported in the project documents and identified during IEO mission except for the particular case in Manutasi (Ainaro) that involves land dispute.

centers. This is further exacerbated by the lack of clear exit plans in the project designs to secure the sustainability of outputs.

More time and continuous effort will be required to generate environmental and socio-economic outcomes from activities of GEF CBA projects. Low survival rates of planted seedlings due to weather conditions, suitability of plant species in selected sites, and livestock encroachment in the early stage of planting means that the actual coverage of reforested land is lower than that of end-of-project targets. This means that the actual environmental targets, such as area of forest coverage and level of vulnerability of the small-scale infrastructures to climate-induced disasters, will be much lower than expected if there is no effort to replenish the dead trees and repair damaged fences. Additionally, any surviving plants still require more years to reach maturity and provide ecosystem services (food, water source protection, soil conservation, timber, etc.) to the target communities.

Similarly, generating significant socio-economic impact requires more time and consistent work from all actors. Some projects have not obtained any tangible results at this early stage after completion; however, community members anticipate making a future profit.

There is limited evidence linking GEF CBA projects with socio-economic outcomes of beneficiaries in project sites in Timor-Leste. There is neither baseline/midline/endline data to establish a benchmark for measuring changes in income level after project intervention nor regular monitoring activities to report on any changes. The lack of this crucial M&E during project interventions period makes it extremely difficult to evaluate socio-economic outcomes many years later after project closure. While there some anecdotes of economic benefits, it is difficult to validate and quantify.

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Annex A: Persons consulted

First name	Last name	Gender	Role	Organization	Location
João Carlos	Soares	M	Director General	Secretariat of State for the Environment	Dili
Augusto	Pinto	M	Director National of Climate Change	Secretariat of State for the Environment	Dili
Faustino	da Silva	M	Director National of Biodiversity	Secretariat of State for the Environment	Dili
Bernadete	Fonseca	F	Former SSRI Project Coordinator	UNDP Timor-Leste	Dili
Fernando	Araujo	M	Chief of Department of Watershed Management	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate General of Forestry, Coffee, and Industrial Plants	Dili
Adelino	Rosario	M	Technical Staff on Reforestation	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate General of Forestry, Coffee, and Industrial Plants	Dili
Manuel	Mendes	M	Country Director	Conservation International	Dili
Eugenio	Lemos	M	Director	Permatil	Dili
Elisa	dos Santos	F	Director	Timor Verde	Baucau
Hernanio	Ribeiro	M	Chief of Suco	Ministry of State Administration/Suco Uailili	Baucau

Cesario	Ximenes	M	Chief of Aldeia	Aldeia Uamalu Boe, Suco Uailili	Baucau
Marcos	Mauleki	M	Chief of Aldeia	Aldeia Uatubalu, Suco Uailili	Baucau
Lourenço	Hornay	M	Acting Chief of Suco Baricafa	Ministry of State Administration/Suco Council of Baricafa	Lautem
Cristovão	Preto	M	Focal Point for Soil Conservation	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Armando	Pinto	M	Chief of group from aldeia Usufasu	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Juvinal	Sarmento Pereira	M	Vice Chief of group from aldeia Usufasu	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Juanita	Lemos	F	Group members in aldeia	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Adão	Hornay	M	Group members in aldeia Usufasu	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Armando	Baptista	M	Chief of group from aldeia Sarelani	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Julio	Pires	M	Vice Chief of group from aldeia Sarelani	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Olderico	Baptista	M	Group members in aldeia Sarelani	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem
Silverio	Baptista	M	Group members in aldeia Sarelani	Community member of Suco Baricafa	Lautem

Aleixo	Tilman	M	Chief of Suco	Ministry of State Administration/Suco Council in Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Marcelino	Pires	M	Administrative Staff	Suco Council in Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Antonio	Cardoso	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Claudio	Mendonça	M	Chief of Aldeia Lauhelo	Suco Council in Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Manuel	Marques	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Angelina	da Costa	F	Group member	Community member of Suco Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Natalia	Marques	F	Group member	Community member of Suco Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Abril	Marques	M	Youth Representative from aldeia Kartolu	Suco Council in Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Carlos	Mendonça	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Horai-Quic	Ainaro
Adão	Barros	M	Coordinator of Forest Guard	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate General of Forestry, Coffee, and Industrial Plants	Ainaro
Armando	Mendonça	M	Coordinator of Forest Guard	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Directorate General of Forestry, Coffee, and Industrial Plants	Ainaro

Luis	dos Santos	M	Chief of Suco	Ministry of State Administration/Suco Council in Talimoro	Ermera
Alberto	Soares	M	Chief of Aldeia Abat Laran	Suco Council in Talimoro	Ermera
Marcelino	da Cruz	M	Chief of Suco	Ministry of State Administration/ Suco Council in Fahilebo	Liquiça
Agustino	da Cruz	M	Chief of Aldeia Tuhilo Kraik	Suco Council in Fahilebo	Liquiça
Carlos	da Silva	M	Chief of Aldeia Tuhilo Leten	Suco Council in Fahilebo	Liquiça
Carlos	Sávio	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Patrocinio	Gusmão	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Abelino	Xavier	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Abril	Alves	M	Group member	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Mariazinha	do Rosario	F	Group member in Tuhilo Leten	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Agilda	Cabral	F	Group member in Tuhilo Kraik	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça
Mario	Sávio	M	Group member in Tuhilo Leten	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça

Santina	Ximenes	F	Youth representative from Tuhilo Leten	Suco Council in Fahilebo	Liquiça
Norteia	Ribeiro	F	Administrative Staff	Suco Council in Fahilebo	Liquiça
Leopoldo	de Araujo	M	Group member in Tuhilo Leten	Community member of Suco Fahilebo	Liquiça

Annex B: List of project sites for #4696, #5056 and #9434

Project #	Locations		Activity
	Municipality	**Suco**	
4696	Ermera (8 Sucos)	Lauala, Poetete, Hatolia, Talimoro, Leirema, Lemeia Kraik	Water supply system installation
		Manusae	Road construction
		Leguimea	Bridges rehabilitation project
	Liquiça (7 Sucos)	Maumeta	Rehabilitation of three water wells
		Dato, Metagou, Maubaralisa	Rehabilitation of road
		Motaulun	Water system
		Lisadilla	New river protection (gabion), river embankment construction
		Luculai	Soil bio-engineering
	Baucau (7 Suco)	Buruma	Road rehabilitation with bio-engineering 8
		Lacoliu	Construction of new irrigation scheme
		Uailili	Water source protection, water supply system, irrigation system
		Wailia, Ossoala	Rehabilitation of water supply system /protection of water source
		Gariuai	Water supply installation project

5056	Ermera (2 Sucos)	Talimoro	Construction of retain wall and reforestation
		Poetete	Water rehabilitation
	Aileu (8 Sucos)	Madabeno	Check dams, water harvesting, compost, nursery, agroforestry, terracing and Reforestation
		Talitu	Check dams, water harvesting, compost, nursery, agroforestry, terracing and Reforestation
		Lahae	Check dams, water harvesting, compost, nursery, agroforestry, terracing and Reforestation
		Madabeno	Water source rehabilitation, Nursery site
		Malere	Water source rehabilitation
		Aisirimou	Check dams, water harvesting, compost, nursery, agroforestry, terracing and Reforestation
		Liurai	Check dams
		Cotolau	Check dams, compost, water harvesting, Water roof harvesting, water infiltration and reforestation
	Ainaro (8 Sucos)	Hilokomau	Water rehabilitation
		Horai-Quic	Check dams, nursery, reforestation, agroforestry
		Aitutu	Check dams, dew ponds, reforestation and terracing

		Manutasi	Reforestation, nursery
		Mulo	Check dams, dewponds, and compost
		Nunumogue	Check dams and compost
		Bulico	Water rehabilitation
		Casa	Nursery, Reforestation and terracing
	Same (1 Suco)	Holarua	Water rehabilitation
9434	Dili/Liquiça (4 Sucos)	Lihu, Fahilebo, Leorema, Ulmera	Nursery center, animal husbandry, water and soil conservation
	Lautem (6 Sucos)	Bahatata, Baricafa, Uacala, Lari Sula, Cainliu	Nursery center, reforestation, demarcation for protected area, development of business plan
	Viqueque (1 Suco)	Irabin de Cima	Nursery center, animal husbandry, water and soil conservation

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Independent Evaluation Office, Global Environment Facility
1818 H Street, NW • Washington, DC 20433, USA
www.gefieo.org

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