

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project “Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas” (GEF ID 4464)  
(2014-2020)**



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Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas”

The UNEP/GEF 4464 Project

(February 2023)

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## Acknowledgements

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This Terminal Evaluation was prepared for UNEP by Ram Chandra Khanal, as an independent consultant.

The evaluator would like to express his gratitude to all persons met and who contributed to this evaluation, as listed in Annex II.

The evaluation team would like to thank the project team and in particular Dr Devendra Gauchan, Ms Marieta Sakalin, Mr Sang Jin and Dr Devra Jarvis for their contribution and collaboration throughout the evaluation process. The evaluator would also like to thank Ms Shabnam Shivakoti – Joint Secretary, MoALD, Dr Bal Krishna Joshi – NARC, Dr Ram Krishna Shrestha - CCDABC, Bharat Bhandari - LIBIRD, Nirajan Pudasaini - LIBIRD and Reeta Gurung - LIBIRD.

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The evaluation consultant hopes that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will contribute to the successful finalisation of the current project, formulation of a next phase and the continuous improvement of similar projects in other countries and regions.

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## **Brief consultant biography**

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Dr Ram Chandra Khanal is an independent evaluator based in Kathmandu. He has extensive experience in the field of evaluation focusing on biodiversity conservation (both flora and fauna), ecosystems management, climate change and sustainable agriculture-related projects and programmes. He has worked in a variety of roles of designing and management of evaluation such as evaluation design in complex settings, use of participatory tools, carrying out evaluative assessment and theory-based evaluation, among others, over the last two decades.

## About the Evaluation

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**Joint Evaluation:** No

**Report Language(s):** English.

**Evaluation Type:** Terminal Evaluation

**Brief Description:** This report is a Terminal/ Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF 4464 project implemented between 2014 and 2019. The project's overall development goal was to contribute to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems throughout the world. The evaluation sought to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, and the relevant agencies of the project participating countries.

**Keywords:** Developing Countries, Nepal, Himalayas, Agrobiodiversity, Access and Benefit Sharing, Local Crops, Crop Genetic Diversity, Climate Change, Ecosystem Management<sup>1</sup>

**Primary data collection period:** September 2022 – February 2023

**Field mission dates:** 15<sup>th</sup> -21 September, Jumla district, 23 -25 September, Dolakha district and 26 – 28 September, Lamjung district

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<sup>1</sup> This data is used to aid the internet search of this report on the Evaluation Office of UNEP Website

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

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<b>ABS</b>	Access and Benefit Sharing
<b>BI</b>	Bioversity International
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity
<b>CBM</b>	Community-Based Management
<b>CCDABC</b>	Centre for Crop Development and Agrobiodiversity Conservation
<b>COVID</b>	Noble CoronaVirus
<b>CSB</b>	Community Seed Bank
<b>DADO</b>	District Agriculture Development Office
<b>DFS</b>	Diversity Field School
<b>DOA</b>	Department of Agriculture
<b>EA</b>	Executing Agency
<b>FFS</b>	Farmer Field School
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>ICIMOD</b>	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IPGRI</b>	International Plant Genetic Resources Institute
<b>IS</b>	Intermediate State
<b>ITPGRFA</b>	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>LCP</b>	Local Crop Project
<b>LIBIRD</b>	Local Initiative for Biodiversity Research and Development
<b>MEL</b>	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
<b>MIS</b>	Management Information Systems
<b>MTR</b>	Mid Term Review
<b>MTS</b>	Medium Term Strategy
<b>NAGRC</b>	National Agriculture Genetic Resources Centre
<b>NARC</b>	Nepal Agriculture Research Council
<b>NARMIN</b>	National Association of Rural Municipalities in Nepal
<b>NBSAP</b>	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental Organization
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>PC</b>	Project Coordinator
<b>PDQ</b>	Project Design Quality
<b>PGR</b>	Plant Genetic Resources
<b>PIC</b>	Prior Informed Consent
<b>PIR</b>	Project Implementation Review
<b>PMU</b>	Project Management Unit
<b>POW</b>	Programme of Work
<b>PPB</b>	Participatory Plant Breeding
<b>PPG</b>	Project Preparation Grant
<b>PSC</b>	Project Steering Committee
<b>PVS</b>	Participatory Variety Selection
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Development Cooperation
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SQCC</b>	Seed Quality Control Centre
<b>TAC</b>	Technical Advisory Committee
<b>TE</b>	Terminal Evaluation
<b>TEEB</b>	The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity
<b>TM</b>	Task Manager
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>TOR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDAF</b>	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollars

## Project Identification Table

<b>GEF Project ID:</b>	4464		
<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	UNEP	<b>Executing Agency:</b>	<b>Bioversity / co-executing agency- NARC &amp; LIBIRD</b>
<b>Relevant SDG(s):</b>	<p>Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture Targets: 2.4, 2.5, 2a</p> <p>Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss Targets: 15.6</p>		
<b>Sub-programme:</b>	MTS 2014-17 and 2018-21 and SP3: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	<b>Expected Accomplishment(s):</b>	PoW2014-2015 EA(a): Use of the ecosystem approach in countries to maintain ecosystem services and sustainable productivity of terrestrial and aquatic systems is increased indicator: (i) Increase in the number of countries integrating the ecosystem approach with traditional sector-based natural resource management
<b>UNEP approval date:</b>	15 November 2013	<b>Programme of Work Output:</b>	PoW 2014-2015 SP3 Ecosystem Management
<b>GEF approval date:</b>	8 April 2013	<b>Project type:</b>	Full-Size Project
<b>GEF Operational Programme #:</b>	GEF V	<b>Focal Area:</b>	Biodiversity
		<b>GEF Strategic Priority:</b>	BD2, BD4
<b>Expected start date:</b>	January 2013	<b>Actual start date:</b>	January 2014
<b>Planned completion date:</b>	USD 8,131,104	<b>Actual operational completion date:</b>	Sept 2020
<b>Planned project budget at approval:</b>	USD 8,131,104	<b>Actual total expenditures reported as of 2020 June 13:</b>	USD 8.337 M
<b>GEF grant allocation:</b>	USD 2,300,000	<b>GEF grant expenditures reported as of [June 2020]:</b>	USD 2,260,567
<b>Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:</b>	USD 100,000	<b>Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:</b>	USD 207,500
<b>Expected Full-Size Project co-financing:</b>	USD 5,831,104	<b>Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:</b>	USD 6.077 M
<b>First disbursement:</b>	18 December 2013	<b>Planned date of financial closure:</b>	Sept 2020
<b>No. of formal project revisions:</b>	2 (no cost extensions)	<b>Date of last approved project revision:</b>	Sept 2020
<b>No. of Steering Committee meetings:</b>	6	<b>Date of last Steering Committee meeting:</b>	24 February 2020
<b>Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (planned date):</b>	N/A	<b>Mid-term Review/ Evaluation (actual date):</b>	Sept-Dec 2018
<b>Terminal Evaluation (planned date):</b>	N/A	<b>Terminal Evaluation (actual date):</b>	June 2022 – Feb 2023
<b>Coverage - Country(ies):</b>	Nepal	<b>Coverage - Region(s):</b>	Asia Pacific
<b>Dates of previous project phases:</b>	N/A	<b>Status of future project phases:</b>	N/A

## Executive Summary

### Project Background:

1. The project “Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas” (the project) was financed by a grant of USD 2.3 from GEF and implemented by UNEP as an Implementing Agency. Bioversity International (international) was the international Executing Agency whereas NARC & LIBIRD (national) served as co-Executing Agencies for this project. The project commenced in January 2014. The planned completion date was 30 June 2019 but it was extended to Sept 2020 by two ‘No Cost Extensions’.
2. The project objective was to mainstream the conservation and use of agricultural biodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems. The objective was to be achieved through three components i.e., i) mainstreaming mechanisms that integrate diversity-rich solutions into breeding and technology; ii) increasing access to local agricultural biodiversity planting materials, and iii) promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing of local agricultural biodiversity planting materials.
3. The project outcomes were:
  - Outcome 1: the area devoted to sustainably-managed agrobiodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity-rich solutions;
  - Outcome 2: Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in population sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.
  - Outcome 3: Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit-sharing mechanisms that support the diversification of varieties
4. The implied Theory of Change of the project was therefore that the project objective would be achieved through intermediate effects in two areas: i) mainstreaming the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in legal frameworks and government programmes, and ii) improving ecosystems resilience, and ecosystems services and ABS capacity in the mountain ecosystems. These outcomes and intermediate effects areas would mutually be reinforcing to conserve the important crop biodiversity, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems.
5. The project was designed to achieve a broader impact through the generation of field-based knowledge related to the local crops; the application of knowledge to conserve, promote and utilize agrobiodiversity *in-situ* (strengthening of farmers' information seed systems, participatory plant breeding and funds management) for food and agriculture; enhance farmer’s indigenous knowledge and skills, rights and practices;

promote access and benefit sharing from agrobiodiversity resources, and assist the government for creating an enabling environment for the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity.

**This evaluation:**

6. In line with UNEP’s Evaluation Policy, the Terminal Evaluation (TE) was conducted with two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among implementing, executing and co-executing partners.
7. The evaluation was undertaken to assess project performance in terms of strategic relevance; quality of project design; nature of the external context; effectiveness; financial management; efficiency; monitoring and reporting; sustainability; factors affecting performance and cross-cutting issues; and key strategic questions identified by UNEP.
8. The evaluation took place between June 2022 and December 2022. Three project sites were visited. The evaluation involved several phases i.e., an initial review of project design and stakeholder analysis, development of a reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC), desk review, extensive interviewing with a wide range of project actors, project sites visit, data triangulation and analysis. The main limitation of the project was to get reliable information from stakeholders and communities as the project field implementation was completed about three years ago. The evaluator compensated for this issue by having more interviews, providing opportunities for the interviewees to recall and carrying out data triangulation from different sources.

**Key findings**

9. The project played a relevant role in promoting local crops and agrobiodiversity in Nepal through the development of high-quality evidence (data/knowledge), field demonstration of community-based management approaches on agrobiodiversity, local crop registration process and registration of high-performing local crops in the gazette of the government of Nepal. Strategic Relevance was rated highly satisfactory. Quality of Project Design, Nature of External Context, Effectiveness, Financial Management, Efficiency and Factors Affecting Performance were rated ‘Satisfactory’ whilst the project had room for improvements in Monitoring and Reporting and Sustainability.
10. The project’s relevance stands out as the project supported the Government’s policy frameworks for the conservation of agrobiodiversity and responded to the need of using the local biodiversity for food security, nutrition and climate change adaptation. The project was relevant and aligned, with UNEP’s mandate and strategic priorities, and GEF’s Strategic Priorities on Biodiversity. It was also aligned with major global priorities, such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and

Agriculture (ITPGRFA), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the 2030 Development Agenda.

11. The project design presented a comprehensive explanation of the problem to be tackled. Its major strengths rested on: having a comprehensive and coherent project document including the Result Framework, focus on context analysis carried out through thematic and institutional reviews, focus on the local needs and resources, development of research-based knowledge on local crops and creation of effective project implementation structure and governance mechanisms.
12. The weaknesses in the project design included, for example, insufficient activities related to livelihoods and the value chain of local crops, having some ambitious targets; inadequate identification of the role of partners during implementation, weak mechanisms of monitoring, and inadequate gender-related analysis and interventions.
13. There was no major political conflict during the project implementation period. But the project was slightly affected due to the Gorkha earthquake and the change of governance structure (from a unitary to a federal governance approach). These context changes slightly affected the efficiency and effectiveness aspects of the project.
14. The original ProDoc of the project did not include a Theory of Change (ToC). The evaluator, in consultation with the project partners, reconstructed the Theory of Change during the inception phase of this evaluation. According to the ToC, the project would achieve its goals via three outcomes and 11 outputs, organized around three components. No formal modifications/revisions were made to the ProDoc during project implementation.
15. The project did not provide progress against the project output indicators. The review however showed that the project has succeeded in delivering most of the physical outputs planned in the Results Framework. Out of 11 outputs, most of the outputs are achieved satisfactorily. The analysis showed that four outputs are considered highly satisfactory whereas five outputs are rated as satisfactory. Among the delivered outputs, some of the most important ones to achieve outcomes were considered to be of good quality by project partners. The delivery of most outputs was on time. In addition, the project delivered a huge pool (more than 100) of field-based knowledge in the mountain ecosystems. The knowledge products can be used by a variety of stakeholders and the project and consortium are recognized as a reference repository on local crops.
16. Outcome 1 was successfully achieved whereas outcomes 2 and 3 were partially achieved. For improving agrobiodiversity conservation and use through the increased use of diversity-rich solutions in the agriculture production systems, the project supported participatory breeding and varietal selection process, crop improvement, value addition, and institutional capacity building (outcome 1). Farmers got some monetary and non-monetary benefits from the locally adapted materials (outcome 2)

whereas some preliminary works were carried out to gain benefits from ABS (outcome 3). The assumptions for progress, from project outputs to outcomes, were partially held, and the drivers to support the transition, from outputs to outcomes, were mostly in place.

17. The project outcomes in combination positively contributed to the achievement of the two intermediate states (i.e., integration of LCP in government programmes and improving ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and capacity of ABS). The project contributed to changes that may lead to the expected impact (conservation of globally important crop biodiversity for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems), but the scale/magnitude (related to the expected extent), broadness (related to the wide scope required for change to happen) and effectiveness (related to the degree to which the project would produce the desired effect) of the change process while incentive (the direct/indirect benefits) to beneficiaries and enabling environment (policy, subsidy and regulation) were not yet sufficient to reach the desired intermediate states and impact in a reasonable timeframe. It was noticed that at the community level, the smooth continuation and scaling up are dependent on the financial sustainability of the community seed banks (CSBs).
18. The Terminal Evaluation found that the intermediate state one could be realized easily (likely) with some incremental support from the government while intermediate state two and intended impacts are moderately likely to become a reality in the present condition. For this to happen, this would require that the Government of Nepal and Development Partners dedicate additional investments with focused programme priority in wider geographic areas to increase the likelihood of reaching the envisioned change by the project.
19. Adherence to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures was noted. The finance team within the PMU was capable enough to regularly analyze, check and project the expenditure against the proposed budget and annual work plan. There was also good communication between finance and project management staff while the project was planned and reported.
20. The project adopted some efficient project modalities and cost-saving measures such as engaging an NGO (i.e., LIBIRD) as a co-executing agency which has a strong footprint in the subject matter in the project sites and the use of community-driven participatory approaches. The project received two ‘no cost extensions’. There was a slight delay in project implementation in the beginning and faced some implementation challenges such as ‘change in governance structure’ and the earthquake. This means the actions had to be slightly condensed affecting the quality and performance. To compensate for this, the project adopted adaptive management solutions while engaging local communities effectively.

21. The project document included a basic M&R framework, M&R processes were however expected to be elaborated and M&R tools to be developed during the inception phase; this was not done. Besides PIRs, no robust monitoring system was set up to facilitate the timely tracking of results, adaptive management and progress towards project objectives. Similarly, the baseline, as mentioned in the project document, was not created. To some extent, M&R was considered more as a GEF requirement than an instrument to improve project execution, and achievement of outcomes and to ensure sustainability.
22. The project is assessed as moderately likely to achieve its planned long-term impacts. The key reason for this assessment is that most CSBs (also community households), especially in the mountain regions, do not continue the project results unless farmers get additional income or livelihood support from the intervention. In addition, there is a need to scale up the activities through government programmes by considering the capacity building and development of enabling an environment focusing on ABS from agrobiodiversity resources.
23. The factors affecting project performance achieved an overall rating of satisfactory. Except for Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity, all other factors are found to be satisfactory.
24. The evaluation noted that the project has contributed a lot in raising awareness, developing knowledge, strengthening institutional capacity and supporting in developing policy guidelines for the conservation and promotion of local crops which would have not been supported by other funding streams. Although there are some minor shortfalls in delivering outputs and outcomes, the project championed this theme and created solid foundations for future work. The project was highly appreciated by the government and other stakeholders for its outcomes and proactive engagement with the stakeholders. Overall, the project was effective and delivered its outputs and outcomes and rated ‘satisfactory’.
25. Regarding the strategic questions, the Project has contributed directly to three strategic objectives (sustainable and inclusive growth; social development; and resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change) of UNDAF (2018-2022). There was no substantive effect of the COVID-19 pandemic as the project field implementation was completed in 2019.
26. Major lessons learned from this project are:
  - Learning 1: Formulation of the project along with a clear result framework by considering the local context is critical for ensuring effective project management and service delivery.
  - Learning 2: Collaboration among all the stakeholders and a participatory approach are fundamental for trust-building among the stakeholders and achieving the project objectives.
  - Learning 3: High-level political support with the provision of funded programmes is key to this kind of initiative that aims for transformational change by legalizing

access and benefit-sharing mechanisms from agrobiodiversity resources. It however needs the active engagement of several stakeholders continuously beyond the sphere of influence of EA.

- Learning 4: Support for people’s livelihoods and local crop value chain is paramount to ensure community ownership and sustainability of any community-driven biodiversity conservation initiatives.
- Learning 5: Achieving complex results – including developing an enabling environment and improving ecosystem services and resilience is not easy and requires longer-term strategic interventions by fostering collaborative work among the relevant stakeholders.
- Learning 6: Innovative community-based biodiversity management (CBM) related good practices can help to improve ownership and ensure better engagement of stakeholders for agrobiodiversity conservation and use.
- Learning 7: Project execution in a complex environment (agroecology, political and socio-economic) requires robust project management structure and mechanisms while ensuring trust and credibility among the partners.

27. Major recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Guidance for the design of future GEF projects of this nature should be improved. In addition, the progress reporting and information required for the terminal evaluation should also be harmonized during the project design.
- Recommendation 2: The government of Nepal should consider improving mechanisms and policy frameworks that support local-level initiatives to conserve and use agrobiodiversity and promote collaborative work of all tiers of governments and sectoral ministries.
- Recommendation 3: Women are considered the main custodian of agrobiodiversity in mountain agriculture so gender equity issues should get further attention by having a clear gender gap analysis and identifying gender-responsive actions.
- Recommendation 4: Support for local crops should prioritize and equally emphasize the people’s livelihood that directly strengthens the economic interest of the community in agrobiodiversity conservation. These may include mechanization to reduce drudgery, product diversification, market information and access, eco-tourism and possibly other income streams such as organic agriculture certification.
- Recommendation 5: Future projects should establish a stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning framework with a simple but complete project management information system (MIS) including placing an M&E officer for better management of MEL functions.

## 1 Introduction

28. “Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas” (the project) was financed by a grant of USD 2.3 million from GEF and USD 5.83 million<sup>2</sup> co-finance (cash and kind) from Executing and co-executing agencies. The project was implemented by UNEP as the GEF Implementing Agency (IA); Bioversity International was the international Executing Agency, and Nepal Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LIBIRD) served as the national Co-Executing Agencies (EAs). Bioversity International was responsible for the overall execution of the project and provided appropriate scientific support whereas, at the national level, NARC provided scientific and technical input for the projects whereas the LIBIRD executed project activities including participatory crop improvement works.
29. UNEP provided overall coordination support and ensured that the project was in line with the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (2014-2017 and 2018- 2021) and its Programme of Work (POW). The project was aligned with the sub-programme (SP) 3: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems. The project was financed under GEF 5 and linked to the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area. The programme also contributed to the GEF strategic programmes and objectives – mainly objectives 2 (mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors) and 4 (Build Capacity on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing).
30. The project intervention sites included four districts in the Mountain agroecological zones of Nepal (see figure 1). These project sites were selected by using criteria such as high intra and inter-specific diversity of the target crops, agroecological diversity and the importance of target crops for food security and people’s livelihoods. The main objective of the project at the time of the project design was to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems<sup>3</sup>.
31. The project got approved on 15 November 2013, started in January 2014<sup>4</sup> and was completed in Sept 2020<sup>5</sup>. At design, the project was, however, planned to be completed in June 2019. During the project implementation, two revisions (with no cost

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<sup>2</sup> The project achieved more than the planned co-financing (total amount of USD 6,077,440 - this amount does not cover UNEP committed contribution of US \$ 425,000). This increase in co-financing was also due to the two no cost extensions.

<sup>3</sup> Project Document of the project

<sup>4</sup> UNEP approval 15 November, focal area biodiversity, sub-programme - SP3: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems

<sup>5</sup> The closing workshop was organized on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020

extension) were made to allow for the completion of the remaining activities and deliverables<sup>6</sup> of the project.

32. The mid-term review (MTR) of this project was carried out in Dec 2018 which provided a status of the project and provided some recommendations for improvement.
33. This terminal evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and other executing/co-executing agencies. The Evaluation has identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. Recommendations relevant to the stakeholders are identified during the evaluation process.
34. The intended audience for the findings of TE includes (a) responsible government institutions including the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD); Department of Agriculture (DoA), NARC, Ministry of Forests and Environment, Local Governments; (b) UNEP, Bioversity, LIBIRD; (c) GEF; and (d) the wider range of stakeholders including individual farmers (men and women), local groups – such as Community Seed Banks (CSB) in agrobiodiversity management, climate change response and sustainable development in Nepal and beyond. In particular, it is intended that the evaluation findings would be valuable for stakeholders designing future interventions in local agrobiodiversity, climate change adaptation and community-based participatory development projects and programmes in Nepal and elsewhere.

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<sup>6</sup> Amendment no. 1/PCA/2013/035 / S1-32GFL-000264/P1-33GFL-000199 and amendment no 2/PCA/2013/035, SB-000687.13.01/S1-32GFL-000264/P1-33GFL-000199

## 2 Evaluation Methods

35. The evaluation followed a robust participatory inquiry approach where thematic analysis was carried out based on the agreed evaluation questions. The evaluation was conducted following UNEP’s evaluation principles and methodology as set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) which is attached (Annex V) and guidance documents and templates provided to the consultants. These required the project to be evaluated according to a structured set of nine key evaluation criteria, with sub-criteria, each criterion being rated on a six-point scale<sup>7</sup>.
36. The evaluation criteria include (1) Strategic Relevance<sup>8</sup>, (2) Quality of Project Design, (3) Nature of External Context, (4) Effectiveness (incl. availability of outputs; achievement of outcomes and the likelihood of impact), (5) Financial Management, (6) Efficiency, (7) Monitoring and Reporting, (8) Sustainability and (9) Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues.
37. In addition to the 9 evaluation criteria outlined above, the TE also answered strategic questions that were provided in the Terms of Reference.
  - a. Q1: To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF coordination and implementation process?
  - b. Q2: What evidence can the evaluation identify as the project’s contribution to Nepal Country Programme Component 2 on “Improved household food security for enhanced resilience to shocks”?
  - c. Q3: To what extent has the TEEB’s dedicated communication team supported this GEF project in areas where the two projects were complimentary?
  - d. Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might such changes have affected the project’s performance?
38. The evaluation findings related to the 5 topics of interest to the GEF have also been assessed. These topics included: i) performance against GEF’s Core Indicator Targets; ii) engagement of stakeholders; iii) gender-responsive measures and gender result areas; iv) implementation of management measures taken against the Safeguards

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<sup>7</sup> Most criteria will be rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). *Sustainability* and *Likelihood of Impact* are rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU) and *Nature of External Context* is rated from Highly Favourable (HF) to Highly Unfavourable (HU). The ratings against each criterion are ‘weighted’ to derive the Overall Project Performance Rating. The greatest weight is placed on the achievement of outcomes, followed by dimensions of sustainability. The evaluation consultant will consider all the evidence gathered during the evaluation concerning the criteria rating description matrix to generate evaluation criteria performance ratings.

<sup>8</sup> This criterion includes a sub-category on Complementarity, which closely reflects the OECD-DAC criterion of ‘Coherence’, introduced in 2019. Complementarity with other initiatives is assessed with respect to the project’s design. In addition, complementarity with other initiatives during the project’s implementation is assessed under the criterion of Efficiency.

- Plan and v) challenges and outcomes regarding the project’s completed Knowledge Management Approach.
39. Central to the evaluation was the analysis and reconstruction of the project’s Theory of Change (ToC)<sup>9</sup>. To map out the project contributions to the intended and unintended impacts, the evaluation assessed the project performance by considering ‘what happened?’ The evaluation also focused on learning from the project by considering ‘why’ something happened or not happened.
  40. Similarly, for assessing the contribution of the project interventions, the evaluation considered the prior intentionality (e. g. approved project design documentation and Results Framework) and the articulation of causality (e. g. narrative and/or illustration of the ToC). When possible, baseline data and comparison groups/village/ context was used. The assessment was based on robust evidence and a credible association of input versus results.
  41. This Terminal Evaluation (TE) is based on three main phases.
  42. **Phase 1: Inception phase:** This phase included activities carrying out a brief project analysis including (project design), stakeholder analysis, development of ToCs and finalization of evaluation questions that relate to the evaluation criteria mentioned in the ToR and the interviews within UNEP and key stakeholders (before the field mission). This phase also proposed the project sites to visit and a tentative list of stakeholders to consult during the data collection phase.
  43. An evaluation matrix was developed based on the evaluation criteria and scope presented in the ToRs, the project intervention logic (log frame) and the review of the key project documents. This matrix was structured along with the new updated UNEP evaluation criteria set out within the TORs and includes all evaluation questions that were deemed appropriate and necessary to support successful field missions. Based on the project document analysis and introductory interviews with stakeholders, an inception report was finalized.
  44. **Phase 2: Data collection:** This phase included data collection from primary and secondary sources. The evaluator visited project sites (from 15<sup>th</sup> -21 Sept, 23 -25 Sept and 26 – 28 Sept in Jumla, Dolakha and Lamjung districts respectively) and carried out field meetings with community members and stakeholders by using various participatory tools such as Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Survey (KII)<sup>10</sup>. The evaluator met lead farmers, farmers’ groups, community leaders, elected representatives of Municipalities, project staff and NARC scientists in the field whereas the project staff, government officials and private entrepreneurs in

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<sup>9</sup> Development of ToC is not a requirement while designing the project. Over time it is expected that UNEP projects would include a Theory of Change within the Project Document and the need to ‘reconstruct’ change models will reduce.

<sup>10</sup> Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, allowing space for interviewees to ask questions and communicate their priorities and views, and enabling the evaluator to follow up on unforeseen and emerging points and findings.

Kathmandu. For this evaluation, altogether 38 KIIs and 3 FDGs (22 farmers of which 60% were female members) were carried out. Out of 60 people, who were met in this evaluation, 22 (37%) were women. The evaluator also observed the project sites and took some transect walks in the villages. The evaluator interviewed a wide range of stakeholders in Kathmandu in the months of August and Sept 2022. UNEP Task Managers, representatives of the Project Management Unit (PMU) plus steering committee members, key representatives of the executing/co-executing agencies and other relevant staff were also interviewed. Information collected from the women and other excluded members of communities was given special attention considering the time, place and gender constraints<sup>11</sup>.

45. Information collected from these groups in Kathmandu was carried out through face-to-face meetings and online based on the COVID-19 situation and the availability of respondents. The field missions considered the COVID situation and other health risks and followed the do no harm principle. Relevant data/information/reports from other organizations were also reviewed. To improve the credibility of the data/information, data triangulation was also carried out.
46. The evaluator reviewed various project documents, reports and published knowledge products originating from the project (see annex III), and national policies and plans. Besides, the evaluator also reviewed other thematic documents produced by other organizations working on similar themes.
47. The main sampling approach is purposive sampling at the national level. At the project site level, the evaluator used a mixed approach. For major stakeholders and beneficiaries, purposive sampling was carried out based on their level of engagement and availability. When many respondents were available at the same time, the evaluator randomly picked the respondents to get specific information about the project interventions. The key informant groups that were interviewed were the project team (those with management responsibilities), government officials (who are directly involved in the project-related activities), and direct beneficiaries and local groups such as community seed banks.
48. Project sites were selected by the executing/co-executing organizations in consultation with government officials based on the following agreed criteria:
  - high intra and inter-specific diversity of the target crops;
  - agroecological diversity including altitude, aspect, land type, soil type, vegetation, and availability of irrigation;
  - the importance of target crops for food security and the overall livelihood strategy of the households in the community;

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<sup>11</sup> Particular attention was given to evaluate project performance against the principles of gender and human rights. Every effort was made to ensure that women in local communities are provided with the opportunity to discuss the project without the presence of other dominant groups/members of the communities.

- logistics, as high-altitude sites have operational constraints in terms of costs, access, time and facilities, thus, project sites were selected where partner institutions already have their presence in the districts;
- the number of rural institutions; and
- the level of community interest

49. For data collection, the following three project sites were visited.

District	Rural Municipality	Project sites
Jumla	Tatopani Rural Municipality	Hanku
Lamjung	Marsyangdi Rural Municipality	Ghanpokhara
Dolakha	Gaurishankar Rural Municipality	Jugu

50. Data were collected with consideration of ethics and human rights. The respondents were given the objectives of the meeting and ensured that their views/responses were anonymous. All pictures were taken, and other information was gathered after getting prior informed consent from people according to the UN Standards of Conduct. In reporting stakeholder interviews and discussions at the project sites, the views and opinions of identified individuals are only reported with the express permission of those individuals.

51. **Phase 3: Data analysis, synthesis and report preparation:** Analysis, judgement, and perception derived from the findings and interviews completed during the TE field missions. To reduce measurement, sampling and procedural bias, data/information triangulation was carried out for validation through cross-verification from more than two sources such as through key informant survey, focus group discussion, observation and review of the documents. The draft and final versions of the main evaluation report were shared with key stakeholders and the final report was prepared based on the comments received from UNEPs and the major stakeholders. Draft and final versions of the main evaluation reports were shared with key stakeholders by the evaluation manager. Based on the comments, the evaluator finalized the evaluation report.

52. The following limitations to the evaluation are noted:

- As the project completed its field operations 2.5 years ago, it was difficult to get adequate data information from the national stakeholders and beneficiaries. In many cases, they shared based on the recall basis and they were, in some cases, confused with the other ongoing activities being carried out by LIBIRD and Bioversity on the same sites.
- The project was started in 2014 and the project activities were completed in 2019 (officially completed in 2020) and most of the project staff and government officials (such as project steering committee members and government staff in the field) were already transferred from that place or got their retirement. Hence, it was difficult to find the right person to get in-depth project-related experience.

- Due to the extended monsoon in 2022, it was difficult to travel to the field sites. Air flights were cancelled in most of the mountain areas during the evaluation mission and it was not possible to fly to the *Humla* district. After the cancellation of the air flight, the evaluator used road transport and also walked (as the roads were blocked due to a landslide) to reach Jumla.
- The project has produced a large volume of reports and other printed documents. The evaluator has examined most of these reports, but it was not possible to review the whole of these documents and some of them include Good Practices for Agrobiodiversity Management and Crop Biodiversity for Mountain Food and Nutrition Security in Nepal: Tools and Research Results of the UNEP GEF Project, Nepal<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> The final report (annex 12 final report) provided 110 knowledge products originated from this project. These knowledge products are also provided at <https://himalayancrops.org/publications/#>.

## 3 The Project

### 3.1 Context

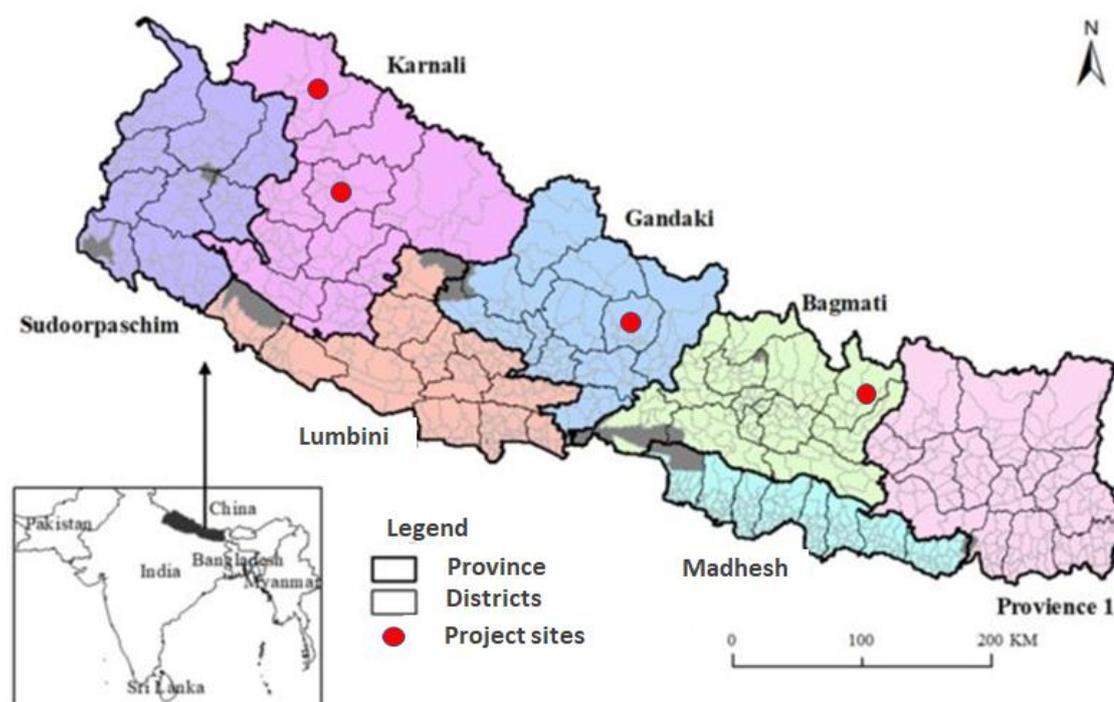
53. Warming in the Himalayan region has been much greater than the global average and the rising temperatures are leading to the rapid melting of the glaciers. Weather patterns are becoming more unpredictable and extreme with prolonged dry spells and very strong storm events.
54. Crop biodiversity continues to be lost from production systems around the world and this is especially true in mountain environments, which are considered to be one of the first areas to be severely affected by changes in climatic parameters. This will have a direct but negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of the Himalayan people, especially in agriculture practices and long-term food security.
55. Hence, there is an urgent need to link crop biodiversity with the livelihood strategies of the farmers and communities in the mountain agricultural environments of the Nepal Himalayas in the changing climate through appropriate management and use (and the benefits from this) so that the threats and challenges related to agriculture biodiversity and people’s sustainable livelihoods can be addressed.
56. In this context, the project aimed to support the government to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in mountain agriculture. The project was implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and supported various policies and international commitments that Nepal has made.
57. The selected four districts i.e., Humla, Jumla, Lamjung<sup>13</sup> and Dolakha (see project sites in Figure 1) contain a wealth of unique local crop diversity of the eight target (mandate) crops of this project. The crops included traditional high-altitude rice varieties (*Oryza sativa*), Naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare* var. *nudum*), buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* and *F. tararicum*), common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.), amaranths (*A. caudatus* and *A. leucocarpus*) and minor millets such as proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), foxtail (*Setaria italica*) and finger millet (*Eleusine coracana* L.).
58. The Nepalese government commits to mobilizing local crop biodiversity for sustainable agricultural production in fragile mountain environments. Nepal has developed an agrobiodiversity policy (2007/revised 2014) and the 15<sup>th</sup> five-year development plan of the government of Nepal has mentioned that ‘Agricultural biodiversity will be preserved, promoted, and sustainably utilized by guaranteeing

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<sup>13</sup> As per the decision of the first PSC meeting of 2014, new site Ghapokhara was added by replacing the Kaski site. Kaski site was selected in 2012 (during PPG phase) but when the project team visited in 2014 after the project implementation, they observed the site with limited presence of working population in farming with needed diversity of mandated crops. Ghanpokhara of Lamjung district came to be a suitable site for the project as it met all the criteria of the project in terms of mandate crop diversity, suitable agroecology, accessibility and community willingness to participate in the project.

programmes and budget for climate adaptation and resilient technologies to enhance farmers' capacity to cope with climate change’ as one of the strategies for agriculture.

Figure 1: Nepal map with four project sites



59. The main challenges faced by the project were the changes in governance structure moving from unitary governance to federal structure; heavy staff transfers due to the change in governance structure; the Gorkha earthquake (April 2015); and inadequate policy frameworks for developing access and benefit-sharing related works.

### 3.2 Results Framework

60. The project design adopted an agrobiodiversity conservation and livelihood enhancement approach based on extensive study and problem analysis including a prior community survey.
61. The Project **Goal** was “to contribute to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems throughout the world”. The project’s specific **objective** was “to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems”<sup>14</sup>. The project was to achieve its objective through three components, consisting of:
- Component 1: Mainstreaming diversity-rich solutions

<sup>14</sup> Project Document of the project

- Component 2: Increasing access to planting materials
- Component 3: Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing

62. The project was revised two times (budget revision only) for the project no-cost project extension purpose. With these revisions, there were however no changes in the Result Framework except some minor changes in activities during the project implementation process. The following table 1 presents the outcomes and outputs of the project with the wording used in the approved project document (ProDoc).

**Table 1: Summary of the Project Outputs and Outcomes**

Project Component	Programmed outputs	Expected outcomes
Mainstreaming mechanisms that integrate diversity-rich solutions into breeding and technology.	<p><b>Output 1.1:</b> Diverse sets of varieties developed that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages</p> <p><b>Output 1.2:</b> Technology and processing advancements adapted to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties</p> <p><b>Output 1.3:</b> Ecosystem services from agricultural biodiversity management practices valued and utilized in agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes.</p> <p><b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhanced capacity and gender equity of farmer groups, local schools and technical colleagues and other community institutions to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources</p>	<p><b>Outcome 1.</b> The area devoted to sustainably-managed agricultural biodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through the increased use of diversity-rich solutions.</p>
Increasing access to planting materials	<p><b>Output 2.1:</b> Sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials are available to smallholders to increase productive gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience</p> <p><b>Output 2.2:</b> Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders to provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials</p> <p><b>Output 2.3:</b> Smallholder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as providers of diversity and seed</p>	<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in population sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.</p>

Project Component	Programmed outputs	Expected outcomes
Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing	<p><b>Output 3.1:</b> Recommendations and actions on how local and national institutions and strategies on plant genetic resources should address the use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas for mountain agricultural environments</p> <p><b>Output 3.2:</b> Policy support for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination</p> <p><b>Output 3.3:</b> Procedures identified and used for drafting PIC, which ensure that the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources go into the sustainable management of biodiversity by local farmer communities</p> <p><b>Output 3.4:</b> Leadership and capacity built to enable a higher level of involvement in local communities in local and national decision-making forum</p>	<p><b>Outcome 3.</b> Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit-sharing mechanisms that support the diversification of varieties</p>

### 3.3 Stakeholders

63. The ProDoc included a clear stakeholder analysis, which provided a good overview of different social and local groups and institutions that would have been affected by the activities of the project and how these stakeholders participated and/or benefitted from the project. The main beneficiaries were the local communities in the mountain ecosystems of Nepal, whose livelihoods are dependent on natural resources and mountain ecosystems.
64. There were four groups of project stakeholders. Based on the stakeholder list provided in the project document, the following table 2 summarizes the key stakeholder groups and provides an analysis of the type of involvement that each stakeholder group has in the project design and implementation.

**Table 2: Types of stakeholders and their involvement**

Stakeholders	Type of Involvement
<b>Type A: High power / high interest = Key player</b>	
Decision-makers: Project Steering Committee/ Ministry	Making appropriate policy decisions and providing necessary guidance and advice to the Project and take lead in overall

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Type of Involvement</b>
of Agriculture and Livestock Development	management and execution through PSC and coordinating ministry
National Agricultural Genetic Resources Centre (NAGRC) within NARC	To provide support to the project in providing scientific and technical inputs and collaborations in the research and development of methods and approaches.
Bioversity International (BI)	Execution of the project with the provision of relevant scientific inputs and assistance with research and application of tools, methodologies and approaches.
Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LIBIRD)	Execution of project activities on the ground. Lead participatory crop improvement work. Lead public awareness and communication actions, strengthen the capacity and leadership role of local institutions in the management of community-based conservation and development interventions.
<b>Type B: High power/ low interest over the project =Meet their needs</b>	
Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE)	They generally played an important role in the policy-making process such as ABS.
<b>Type C: Low power/ high interest over the project= Show consideration</b>	
<b>Local government</b>	Involvement in the promotion and integration of local-level plans
<b>CSB/ cooperatives Farmers (male/female)</b>	Involvement in field-level activities such as participatory appraisals and community-based activities to map agrobiodiversity. Assist in the documentation of information.  Participate in participatory research, participate in the exchange of genetic materials and knowledge and improve access to diversified quality planting materials
International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)	Provide relevant scientific input and application of tools and methodologies related to agro-biodiversity conservation and use Knowledge sharing between ICIMOD and the project based on the field learning, generating awareness and scaling up of the relevant technologies and approaches
<b>Type D: Low power /low interest over the project= Least important</b>	
Department of Food Technology and Quality Control	Food quality tests from traditional crops  The regional seed testing labs for seed testing services

Stakeholders	Type of Involvement
Seed Quality Control Centre (SQCC)	

### 3.4 Project implementation structure and partners

65. As a GEF Agency, UNEP established a broad-based effective partnership of national and international organizations at the national level. UNEP provided overall project supervision and monitoring to ensure consistency with GEF and UNEP policies and procedures, and provide guidance on linkages with related UNEP and GEF-funded activities. Bioversity International was the International Executing Agency, responsible for the overall execution of the project, and provided appropriate scientific support and technical expertise as required by the National Executing Agencies and other project partners, following the objectives and key activities outlined in the Project Document. The Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP) Bangkok also provided the required support.
66. The National Executing Agencies comprised the Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) and LIBIRD. NARC through National Agricultural Genetic Resources Centre (NAGRC), also known as Gene Bank, was responsible to provide support to the project in providing scientific and technical inputs and collaborations in the research and development of methods and approaches. The Gene Bank also carried out on-site research, facilitating the national-level coordination for policy improvement and hosting of PMU<sup>15</sup>.
67. The main role of LIBIRD was to implement project activities such as participatory crop improvement work, creating public awareness and strengthening the capacity of local institutions in the project sites in partnership with local communities, stakeholders and NARC by mobilizing and coordinating local-level stakeholders.
68. The project established a Project Steering Committee (PSC<sup>16</sup>), chaired by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD). The PSC was responsible for making policy decisions about the implementation of the project (including approval of the annual programs and the budget) and met physically once

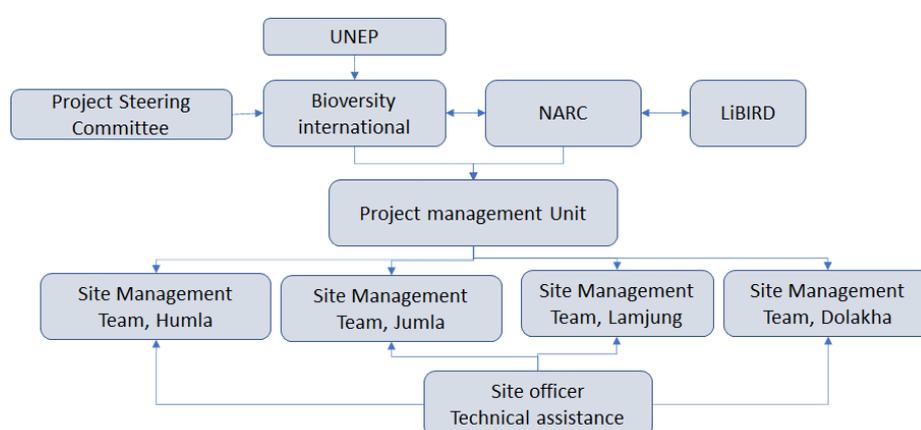
<sup>15</sup> The PMU consisted of National Project Manager with program assistance who carried out day to day project administration and coordination with the National Executing Agencies and Project staff in the project sites. PMU staff were hired and managed by the Bioversity International.

<sup>16</sup> The main role of PSC was to make appropriate policy decisions and providing necessary guidance and advice to the Project. The PSC consisting of representatives of the partner institutions (and including UNEP and Bioversity), the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the Nepal CBD focal point, the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and a female farmer representative with long-term experience<sup>39</sup> in community based in *in situ* conservation of crop genetic resources. The PSC was chaired by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agricultural Development.

a year. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC<sup>17</sup>) was also set up to share cross-site experiences and coordinate activities across sites whereas Site Management Teams (SMTs<sup>18</sup>) were established to share cross-site experiences and coordinate activities across sites.

69. Bioersivity International coordinated with the national partners and provided administrative and management leadership in the timely and effective implementation of the project activities.
70. The project has Letters of Agreement (LoAs) separately with NARC and LIBIRD. There was however no formal partnership established with the Department of Agriculture (DoA) as envisioned in the ProDoc<sup>19</sup>. The project collaborated with the Center for Crop Development and Agrobiodiversity Conservation (CCDABC) – within DoA in capacity building and local crop promotional activities.

**Figure 2: Institutional framework of the project**



71. The project developed partnerships with local farmers’ organizations/community-based organizations (CBOs) mainly cooperatives and farmers’ groups in the project sites to implement and mainstream project activities<sup>20</sup>. These farmers’ organizations

<sup>17</sup> A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was set up to share cross sites experiences and to coordinate activities across sites. The Committee developed annual work plans and budgets, prepare bi-annual progress reports and annual summary reports. In addition, the TAC coordinated activities of the different task teams at the sites and provide technical backstopping to the sites, peer review project research methods and outputs. The members of the Committee composed of Site Officers from each of the 4 project sites, technical thematic leaders, the Project Coordinator and Project manager, and Bioersivity.

<sup>18</sup> In order to share cross-site experiences and to coordinate activities across sites, a Site management team was established. The members of the team comprised of Site Officers together with Project Manager. SCC consists of a Site Officer, a site level Technical Assistant, Community Mobilizers, local thematic contact people, Municipality Representative, farmers, NGOs, and development and extension staff, Farmer Field School (FFS) representatives and with the members of the Peasant Farmer association at District level in the four site districts.

<sup>19</sup> The difficulties encountered in signing Letters of Agreement with the Department of Agriculture, due to the government budgetary system and to the complex bureaucratic procedures for the formal recognition of the project by the national authorities, have resulted in a low expenditure rate in the first three years of project implementation (source financial report - APPENDIX 1 - RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GEF ACTIVITY BASED BUDGET AND UNEP BUDGET LINE (GEF FUNDS ONLY US\$) - BUDGET REVIEW, NEPAL.

<sup>20</sup> The project developed partnership with Karnali Agriculture Cooperative in Chhipra (Kharpunath Rural Municipality), Humla; Himchuli multipurpose Agriculture Cooperative in Jungu (Gaurishankar Rural Municipality), Dolakha; Dhauligad Biodiversity Conservation Committee in Hanku (Tatopani Rural Municipality), Jumla and Seed Producer and Conservation Group in Ghana Pokhara (Marsyangdi Rural Municipality), Lamjung.

were directly involved in the day-to-day implementation of the project activities particularly in crop variety evaluation, selection, seed production, marketing, conservation in community seed banks (CSBs) and running of diversity field schools and operationalization of community seed banks and community biodiversity management (CBM) trust fund. The project's institutional Framework is depicted in figure 2.

### 3.5 Changes in design during implementation

72. During the project implementation, a few changes were made. Activity 1.3.9<sup>21</sup> *'Creating or enhancing community cooperatives for linking upstream communities for ecosystems services payment scheme'* was cancelled; a new activity entitled *'Community Biodiversity management (CBM) trust Fund mobilization for sustaining community seed bank'* was added. This change of activities was suggested through the steering committee on the grounds that the current project sites were not suited to linking upstream and downstream communities for ecosystem payment services because the upstream mountain communities are adopting *de-facto* organic production systems.
73. In addition, the project added one activity 3.1.7 *'review of seed policy, legislation and regulation affecting the promotion of target local crops and landraces'* as there were no activities related to the seed policy review. The project also extended the timeline of some activities (1.1.2.; 1.1.4; 1.3.1; 3.1.5; 3.2.1; 3.3.1) to obtain concrete results<sup>22</sup>. The main reasons are the requirement of longer-term data for result validation such as evaluation of farmers' practices to use intraspecific diversity of target crop to manage unpredictability and analyse levels of variation in traditional varieties and additional activities required (such as 3.1.7 - Review of seed policy, legislation and regulation) for achieving the component.
74. The project also changed one of the project sites. The project site i.e., Kaski proposed in the project was found to have a limited presence of a working population in farming with the needed diversity of mandate crops<sup>23</sup>. In its place, and as decided by the PSC<sup>24</sup>, another site (Ghanpokhara) in the Lamjung district was selected.

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<sup>21</sup> The fifth PSC meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2019

<sup>22</sup> Second PSC meeting note, 29 January 2016

<sup>23</sup> The crops included high altitude traditional rice varieties (*Oryza sativa*), Naked barley (*Hordeum vulgare* var. nudum), buckwheat (*Fagopyrum esculentum* and *F. tararicum*), common bean (*Phaseolus vulgaris* L.), amaranths (*A. caudatus* and *A. leucocarpus*) and minor millets such as proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), foxtail (*Setaria italica*) and finger millet (*Eleusine coracana* L).

<sup>24</sup> The 2nd PSC – Jan 29, 2016

### 3.6 Project financing

75. The GEF Trust Fund provided USD 2.3 million in grants, which was made available through UNEP. The four implementing and executing/co-executing partners (UNEP, Bioversity International, the Government of Nepal/NARC and the LIBIRD) contributed an additional USD 5.831 million in cash and in-kind co-financing. This made a total project cost of USD 8.1 million.
76. At the end of the project<sup>25</sup>, the executing and co-executing agencies contributed a total of USD 6.077 million to the project (this does not cover UNEP committed contributions of US \$ 425,000) as co-finance. Out of this, NARC contributed a total of USD 2.578 million, LIBIRD contributed USD 1.278 million and Bioversity International contributed USD 2.22 million as co-financing in cash and kind form. Bioversity International and the national partner NARC contributed additional resources (in cash and kind) of USD 385,424 and USD 362,679 respectively beyond their initial commitment during the PPG (pre-proposal grant) phase (from the final technical report 2019 to June 2020).
77. Up to June 2020, the cumulative expenditure of the GEF grant was USD 2,260,567 out of USD 2.3 M. The expenditure is 98.2% of the planned total budget. The remaining (unspent) budget of USD 39,433 was related to MTR and the terminal evaluation of the project. Hence, the total expenditure including GEF grant (USD 2.260) and executing/co-executing agencies co-finance (USD 6.077 M) was USD 8.337 M. Detail information related to cash and in-kind co-financing according to executing and co-executing agencies and expenditure according to the component was not available from the project team.

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25 Final technical report (annex 12: UNEP-GEF Project A1150-Revised

## 4 Theory of Change at Evaluation

### 4.1 Reconstructed Theory of Change at Evaluation

78. The project design was prepared between 2012 and 2013, before the “Theory of Change” (TOC) became a routine feature of project designs. Hence, the ProDoc and Results framework has been used to analyse the intervention logic and reconstruct the project’s Theory of Change (TOC). The TOC that was developed during the Mid-term Review (MTR) used the exact text in the Results Framework, without changes. The evaluator reconstructed the TOC at Evaluation based on the ProDoc Result Framework, the MTR TOC and the discussions with the project staff (figure 3).
79. The reconstructed TOC was presented in the Inception Report which was discussed and validated with the project team. Further consultations during the evaluation process confirmed that this narrative and diagram are a fair representation of the intentions of the project designers and the implementation team.
80. The Result Framework provides the project objectives, outcomes, outputs, key indicators, baseline, targets at the mid-term and end of the project, source of verification and assumptions. Table 3 below shows the outcomes and outputs as mentioned in the ProDoc and compares them with the Reconstructed TOC proposed by the evaluator. The intended developmental impact has been formulated based on the project goal in the ProDoc.
81. The project has, in general, a logical design reflected in the causality between the main objective, outcomes and outputs, as mentioned in the Results Framework. It has three components, each with its expected Outcome, and a total of 11 programmed outputs. The Result Framework provided a simple and clear design since all outcomes and outputs go towards reaching the project objective. The Results Framework used mostly SMART indicators for both outputs and outcomes with specific targets and timelines.
82. The causal pathways from project outputs to outcomes were clearly described in the ProDoc/Results Framework, but there were no clear pathways developed from outcomes to [longer-term] impacts. For example, the project objective proposed to “increase 20% globally significant target crop species of 23,000 ha by the end of the project in the Mountain agriculture ecosystems to improve ecosystems and resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity”, but there were no plausible strategies or causal pathways established to scale up the intervention and attain these targets. In addition, no intermediate states? are proposed to bridge the outcome and project impact. This issue was not reflected in the ToC analysis at the MTR. The present Reconstructed ToC includes this aspect of the TOC analysis and also includes the assumptions and drivers of the change process (see figure 3).

#### 4.1.1 The causal logic from outputs to outcomes

83. The project interventions used local crop promotion and benefit-sharing approaches at the community level as part of the overall strategy for the mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity in the national policies/strategies that contribute to building the resilience of vulnerable ecosystems and communities. The main objective of the project was ‘to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems’. There are three main project Outcomes<sup>26</sup> which are supported by various outputs<sup>27</sup>.
84. The project has 11 outputs and they contribute to one or more outcomes. The outputs related to component 1 are related to developing a set of crop varieties that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreaming into local and national extension and development packages; adapting technology and processing advancements for diverse sets of varieties; valuing and utilizing ecosystems services from agrobiodiversity management practices in agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes; and enhancing capacity and gender equity of farmers and other stakeholders to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources. In addition, outputs from other components such as availability of crop genetic diversity (in the form of seeds) and diversification of seed suppliers and an improved enabling environment to promote agrobiodiversity jointly contribute to the achievement of outcome 1 ‘the area devoted to sustainably-managed agricultural biodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity-rich solutions’.
85. In this case, the **assumptions** in the TOC include: that farmers recognize the benefits and value of traditional crops on food security, generating income and climate resilience; gender and equity policies and priorities related to natural resources management are in place; government supports adequate agriculture extension services in the mountains, increasing market demand of seeds and grains of local crops; and partners & stakeholders cooperate in the planning and implementation of activities in the project sites. In addition, the national fund flow and management mechanisms would not affect the project implementation and there would be no major disasters (such as floods, landslides or earthquakes) at the project sites. Without these conditions prevailing, it is not possible to achieve all three outcomes.

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<sup>26</sup> An outcome is the use (i.e., uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as a change in institutions or behaviors, attitudes or conditions.

<sup>27</sup> An output is the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions. For example, access by the intended user to a report; new knowledge held by a workshop participant at the end of a training event; heightened awareness of a serious risk among targeted decision-makers. (Outputs are viewed from the perspective of the intended beneficiary or user of the output rather than the provider).

86. As far as the **drivers** are concerned, factors within the control of the project that would positively influence the change process include - farmers with the knowledge to cultivate and use the local crops and the local crops are easily adapted to the local context/farming systems and help to improve farming systems resilience; and national policies<sup>28</sup>, programmes and international commitments<sup>29</sup> from the government of Nepal are supportive to with financial assistance agrobiodiversity conservation and promotion of local landraces<sup>30</sup>. These drivers contribute to achieving the expected results.
87. Under component 2, the project has three outputs. Those outputs included: increased availability of ‘sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials to smallholders to increase productivity gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience’; ‘diversified seed suppliers and other stakeholders to provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials’ and ‘smallholder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as providers of diversity and seed’. In addition, outputs from other components such as the development of appropriate technologies related to landrace management and the creation of a policy environment together with other outputs mentioned help to achieve outcome 2 ‘Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in population sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture’.
88. Regarding the assumptions, if farmers do not realize the benefits, partner organizations do not cooperate, seed suppliers or seed supply value chains are not reliable, and governments do not support them through their programmes, despite delivering outputs as mentioned above outcome three could not be achieved. For the drivers, again the usefulness of the landraces to their locations and climatic conditions and farmers’ existing knowledge are expected to strengthen the increasing farmers’ benefits from locally adapted materials.
89. Outputs related to component 3 are: preparing recommendations to address the use of crop genetic diversity; policy support to the government and stakeholders for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination; and identification and use of procedures for drafting Prior Informed Consent (PIC). In addition, outputs from other components included diversified suppliers to provide locally adapted landraces and recognition of smallholder farmers as recipients & providers of agro-diversity and seed. The accomplishment of these outputs results in

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<sup>28</sup> ‘agro-biodiversity policy - 2007’ and Nepal Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2020), Seed Act 1988 (Amend 2008), National Seed Vision 2013-25, National Seed Policy 1999, NBSAP 2014-2020, IPR Policy 2017 (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jnarc.v6i0.28111>)

<sup>29</sup> Nepal became a member of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992 and of ITPGRFA in 2009.

Nepal is also a party of Nagoya Protocol-2010 - 2014 since 2019. (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/jnarc.v6i0.28111>)

<sup>30</sup> the agrobiodiversity policy (2007, amended in 2014) has the objectives of enhancing agricultural growth and ensuring food security, protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of farming communities and developing options for a fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the access and use of agricultural genetic resources and materials (<https://moald.gov.np/publication-types/policy/>)

the achievement of outcome 3 ‘communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit-sharing mechanisms that support diversification of varieties’. Regarding the assumptions, it is essential for the achievement of the outcome that stakeholders see the longer-term value of the conservation, government policy and institutional support (such as for drafting PIC), and stakeholders cooperate based on the objectives of the national policies related to agrobiodiversity. The drivers to support the achievement of outcome 3 are related to the availability of decentralized biodiversity conservation at the local level and increased awareness among the stakeholders on the usefulness of the landraces and possible gain from agrobiodiversity through ABS.

#### 4.1.2 The causal logic from outcomes to Intermediate States (IS)

90. The pathway from the project outcome to the intended impact, in general, is not a straightforward process. The achievement of the Intermediate States (IS) - the transitional conditions between the project’s immediate outcomes and the intended impact - is a precondition for achieving the long-term impact.
91. There are policies related to agrobiodiversity (such as agrobiodiversity policy, national biodiversity strategy and action plan, national climate change policy, and environment protection act) available at the national level but these policies are broad and without a specific focus on the emerging issues being dealt with by the project. Hence, it is critical to mainstream results generated by the project within the government policy, strategy, guidelines and programmes that help conserve and promote the landraces and share the benefits to communities originating from agrobiodiversity resources. For this, it is also essential that the government acknowledges the value of agrobiodiversity and farmers as custodians of agrobiodiversity. Once there is proper integration of agrobiodiversity conservation and management with the provision of benefits-sharing mechanisms for the local level custodians, and the government also supports scaling up these initiatives in the mountain ecosystems, this would lead to improving the ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access & benefit sharing capacity. Considering these factors, the following two IS have been formulated based on the objectives of the project, as preconditions that are needed to lead to the achievement of the intended impact from the three project outcomes.
  - a. **IS 1:** Mainstreaming the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in legislative frameworks, sectoral policies/strategies, development plans and programmes in Nepal:
  - b. **IS 2:** Improved ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems are evidenced by improved livelihoods of farmers, increased farming systems resilience and capability of stakeholders to manage the agro-biodiversity resources.
92. Both Intermediate States 1 and 2 are taken from the project objective and are considered as a precondition to achieving the intended project impact. Once the 3

outcomes are achieved, there would be adequate evidence for the government to mainstream the project results and recommendations in the national policies and strategies (intermediate state 1) in a certain period.

93. Once the government integrates the project learning and results into the policies and programmes, that would help in scaling up the good results and overall diffusion of the technologies and practices such as diversity fair, diversity blocks, CSB trust fund, and local crop registration process. Once it is scaled up in the larger areas, that would help to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and benefit-sharing capacity in the mountain ecosystems (intermediate state 2).
94. To achieve these intermediate states, some critical assumptions have to be met and drivers should facilitate the process. For this level, major assumptions are: government support is assured through required legal frameworks and guidelines related to access and benefit-sharing; decision-making processes in the government are evidence-based; the governments support plans and programmes for scaling up; and sustain political will and commitment prevail to promote agrobiodiversity. If these assumptions hold, the process would lead to both IS 1 and IS 2. The key drivers expected to contribute to the realization of these intermediate states are - the existing policy frameworks help to integrate local crops to promote and increase awareness of local crops, and farmers and stakeholders get fair incentives from agrobiodiversity and increasing public awareness.

**Table 3: Justification for Reformulation of Results Statements**

Definition of results as per the Results Framework	Reconstruction of results in the ToC	Justification for the reconstruction
<b>Project goal:</b> to contribute to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems throughout the world	<b>Impact:</b> Improved conservation of globally important crop biodiversity forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in Nepal and the surrounding Himalayan region.	The impact statement has been taken from the project goal. The project goal has however mentioned keeping the scope of contribution at the global level. Due to the short period and the limited geographical scope of the project intervention, this may not be feasible.
<b>Project objective:</b> to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems.	<b>Intermediate state 1:</b> Mainstreamed the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the legislative frameworks, sectoral policies/strategies, development plans and programmes in Nepal:	This is based on the project objective mentioned in the pro doc and they are considered an important precondition to achieve a higher level of impact.
	<b>Intermediate state 2:</b> Improved ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems is	This is based on the project objective mentioned in the pro doc and they are considered an important precondition to achieve a higher level of impact.

Definition of results as per the Results Framework	Reconstruction of results in the ToC	Justification for the reconstruction
	evidenced by improved livelihoods of farmers, increased farming systems resilience and capability of stakeholders to manage the agro-biodiversity resources.	
<b>Outcome 1:</b> The area devoted to sustainably-managed agricultural biodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity-rich solutions.	No change	
<b>Output 1.1:</b> Diverse sets of varieties developed that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages.	Diverse sets of varieties (developed) <b>identified/collected and selected</b> that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages.	The project did not develop new varieties, the varieties from different sources were collected, evaluated and selected based on the needs.
<b>Output 1.2:</b> Technology and processing advancements adapted to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties	<b>Output 1.2:</b> Technology and processing advancements adapted <b>and developed</b> to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties	The project intended to develop some technologies which were also done in one case; hence 'developed' is added.
<b>Output 1.3:</b> Ecosystem services from agricultural biodiversity management practices valued and utilized in agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes.	No change	
<b>Output 1.4:</b> Enhanced capacity and gender equity of farmer groups, local schools and technical colleagues and other community institutions to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources	No change	
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.	No change	
<b>Output 2.1:</b> Sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials are available to smallholders to increase productive gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience	<b>Output 2.1:</b> Crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials is <b>increasingly</b> available to smallholders to increase productivity gains while at the same time	It was difficult to assess the level of sufficient to slightly revise by keeping 'increasingly'.
<b>Output 2.2:</b> Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders to	No change	

Definition of results as per the Results Framework	Reconstruction of results in the ToC	Justification for the reconstruction
provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials		
<b>Output 2.3:</b> Smallholder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as providers of diversity and seed	No change	
<b>Outcome 3.</b> Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit-sharing mechanisms that support diversification of varieties	No change	
<b>Output 3.1:</b> Recommendations and actions on how local and national institutions and strategies on plant genetic resources should address the use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas for mountain agricultural environments	No change	
<b>Output 3.2:</b> Policy support for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination	No change	
<b>Output 3.3:</b> Procedures identified and used for drafting PIC, which ensure that the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources go into the sustainable management of biodiversity by local farmer communities	No change	
<b>Output 3.4:</b> Leadership and capacity built to enable a higher level of involvement in local communities in local and national decision-making forum	No change	

#### 4.1.3 Causal pathways from Intermediate States to Impact

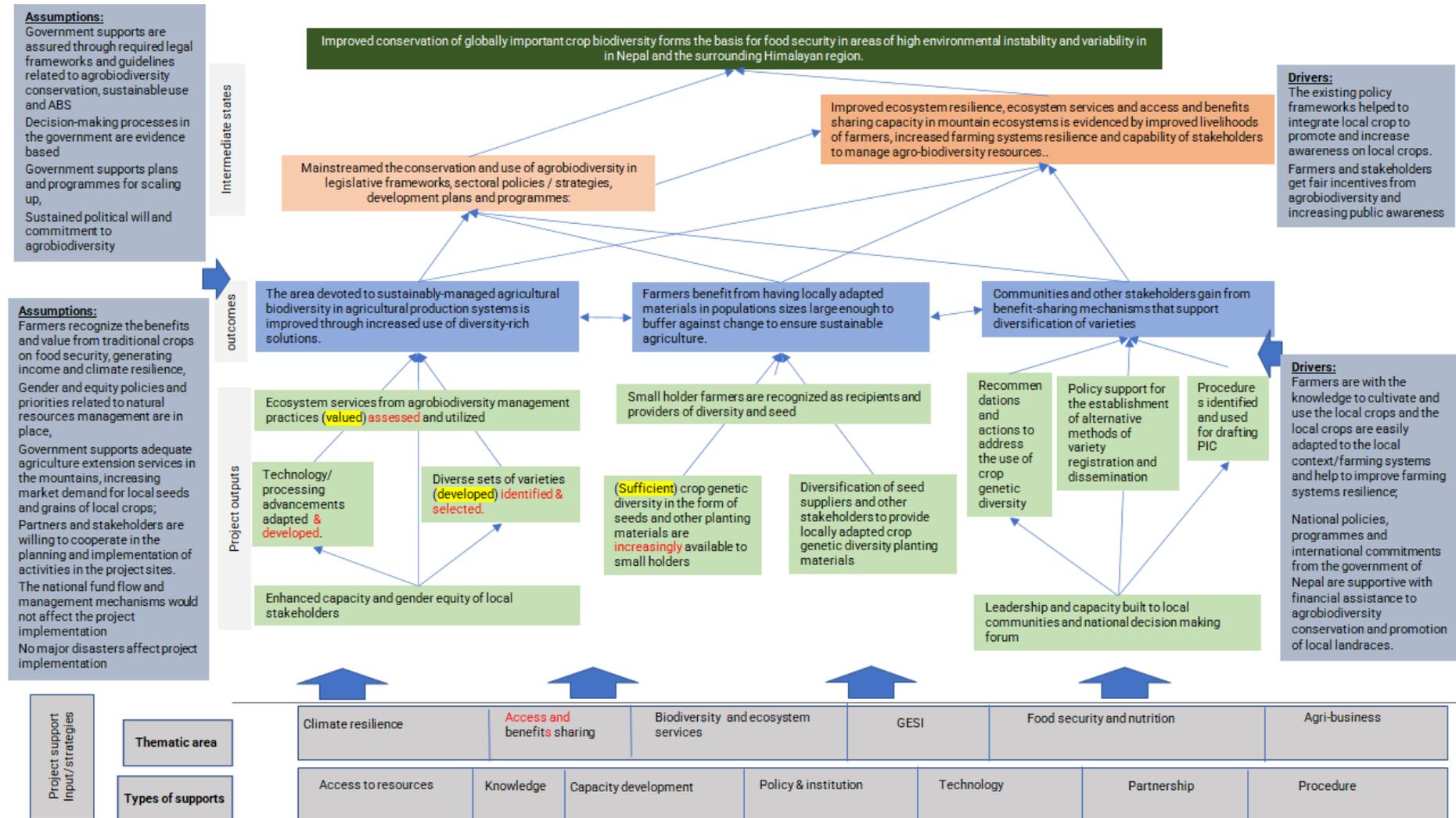
95. The ultimate goal or the intended impact<sup>31</sup>, this project's longer-term impact, of the project is (to contribute) to the ‘conservation of globally important crop biodiversity that forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems throughout the world’. The word ‘throughout the world’ appears to be ambitious in this case as the project is working in a small geographic area in Nepal.
96. It is expected that once the ‘the government mainstream conservation and use of the agrobiodiversity along with ABS mechanisms at national level (IS 1) and ‘improved ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems’ (IS 2) under the assumption that government formulate

<sup>31</sup> Impacts are long-lasting results arising, directly or indirectly from a project. Impacts are intended and positive changes and must relate to UNEP's mandate.

required policy and legal frameworks, and support programme on ABS, and there would be a sustained political will and commitments on agrobiodiversity management by creating an enabling environment; the project impact can be achieved. This would be driven by: existing policy frameworks (agrobiodiversity policy, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan); and, international commitments to conservation (CBD, and ITPGRFA) would be further strengthened.

97. The following table 3 presents lists of all outputs/outcomes as per the original project design, with new indications of whether these have been altered as part of the reconstructed ToC.

Figure 3: Reconstructed theory of change



## 5 Evaluation Findings

### 5.1 Strategic Relevance

#### 5.1.1 Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities

98. At the time of project design, the relevant UNEP strategy documents were the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-13. The project aligned with the MTS 2010-13 thematic priority on the 3<sup>rd</sup> strategic direction i.e., ecosystem management (*‘countries utilize the ecosystem approach to enhance human well-being’*). While aligning with the UNEP’s expected accomplishments, the project supported that i) to increasingly integrate an ecosystem management approach into the development and planning process; ii) develop and utilize ecosystems management tools, and iii) begin to realign their environmental programmes and financing to support local crops that helped to address the degradation of ecosystem services<sup>32</sup> on the project sites. The project also supported other two MTS priorities i. e. strategic direction first - climate change (development and promotion of climate resilient crop varieties/improving ecosystem resilience) and strategic direction fourth - environmental governance (policy support on access and benefit sharing).
99. The project also aligned with current UNEP strategic priorities. The MTS 2022-25 “For people and planet: The United Nations Environment Programme strategy for 2022–2025<sup>33</sup>” promotes ‘nature action’ by supporting the implementation of biodiversity frameworks, and mainstreaming biodiversity for sustainable development, building resilience and climate action by developing climate resilience local crops.
100. The project was relevant for the UNEP Programmes of Work (PoW<sup>34</sup>) 2011-12 in the framework of the MTS. It contributed to sub-Programme - Ecosystem Management, (a): by increasing awareness and capacity by providing new knowledge and capacity-building support to adopt and integrate into the existing farming systems and local plans; (b) help communities and government stakeholders to utilize and apply ecosystem management tools such as participatory varietal selection, biodiversity fair and diversity field school; and (c) enhanced capacity of the government stakeholders to integrate an ecosystem management approach into development and planning processes.
101. There was however no specific reporting available regarding association with the TEEB communication team, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building and the South-South Cooperation Initiative.

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<sup>32</sup> UNEP MTS 2010–2013, <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/12624/wp.03-unep-mts.pdf?sequence=1&amp%3BisAllowed=>

<sup>33</sup> <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35875/K2100501-e.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> PoW references are taken from Mid-term\_Evaluation\_of\_the\_UNEP\_Medium-term\_Strategy\_2010-2013

102. The Evaluation found that the project was coherent with UNEP’s strategic priorities including building the government’s capacity related to ecosystems management and biodiversity conservation through the development of various participatory tools and practices. The project also provided opportunities for sharing knowledge among the experts and communities through exchanges at the international level that support the North-South-South initiative.
103. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and Strategic Priorities is assessed as **‘Highly Satisfactory’**.

### **5.1.2 Alignment to GEF Strategic Priorities**

104. The project is relevant to various regional and global policies such as the GEF strategy 5<sup>35</sup>. The project directly contributed to i) objective 2 - Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use into Production Landscapes, Seascapes and Sectors and ii) objective 4 - Build Capacity on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing). In specific, the project supported<sup>36</sup> these objectives by mainstreaming the sustainable use and management of agricultural agrobiodiversity in the existing mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal (GEF strategy/outcome 2.1); provision of various measures (tools, practices, knowledge) to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity (GEF strategy/outcome 2.2) and providing policy and institutional and policy support access to genetic resources and benefit sharing (GEF strategy/outcome 4.1).
105. The project’s implementation strategies and delivered contributions (results) show - full alignment (i.e., consistency) with the GEF priorities. Hence this criterion is rated **‘Highly Satisfactory’**.

### **5.1.3 Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities**

106. The project is highly relevant considering Nepal’s environmental/agricultural challenges, especially agrobiodiversity conservation. The project is focused on mainstreaming conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity of the communities. The project was implemented under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) and supported various policies and international commitments

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<sup>35</sup> GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies, page 10-11. Available at [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF-5\\_FOCAL\\_AREA\\_STRATEGIES.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF-5_FOCAL_AREA_STRATEGIES.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> In specific the project contributed to Outcomes 2.1: Increase in sustainably managed landscapes that integrate biodiversity conservation, by mainstreaming the sustainable use and management of agricultural agrobiodiversity in the existing mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal. The project also contributed to Outcome 2.2: Measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity incorporated in policy and regulatory frameworks, by developing policy and regulatory frameworks that allow for an enabling environment for local and national agencies to move away from recommending that farmers yield to economic pressures of cultivating only one variety, towards recommending a diversification of varieties to support agricultural ecosystems with unpredictable temperature and precipitation conditions.

that Nepal has made. The ProDoc was aligned with various national policies and plans and Nepal’s international commitments such as the Three-Year Interim Development Plan (2007-2010), Agriculture Policy (2004), Agrobiodiversity Policy (2007/14) and National Climate Change Policy (2011/2019), Agriculture Development Strategy (chapter 5.3.7, output 2.7) and Food Right and Food Sovereignty Act-2018 (chapter 12), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2014, Local Governance Act, 1998), the Seed Act, 1988, Nepal Agriculture Research Council’s Strategic Vision for Agriculture Research (2011-2030).

107. The participatory community-based conservation and use of traditional crop genetic resources have contributed to meeting multiple sustainable development goals (SDGs) for the benefit of vulnerable mountain communities in the Nepal Himalayas. Many of these are linked to most of the SDGs such as ending poverty by generating income and livelihood from the use of traditional crop genetic resources (SDG1), zero hunger to ensure food security and reducing malnutrition (SDG 2 - Targets: 2.4, 2.5, 2a); good health and wellbeing (SDG 3), promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth and employment (SDG 8); responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), resilience and adaptation to changing climate (SDG13) and reduce local crop biodiversity loss and protect mountain agroecosystems (SDG15 including target 15.6)<sup>37</sup>.
108. Regarding the international and regional priorities, the project has directly supported Nepal’s contribution to the CBD’s Strategic Plan, the Aichi Targets adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties of the CBD, and the Nagoya Protocols such as the Aichi sustainable management of areas under agriculture (Target 7) and the maintenance of the diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically, as well as culturally valuable, species (Target 13). These targets helped to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss; reducing the direct pressures on biodiversity and promoting sustainable use; improving the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; enhancing the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and enhancing implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building. In addition, the project also supported the Paris Climate Agreement for fostering climate resilience (article 2) and Nepal’s commitment to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resource for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) by supporting policy frameworks related to access and benefit sharing from agrobiodiversity resources.
109. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Priorities is assessed as **‘Highly Satisfactory’**.

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<sup>37</sup> DG: UNEP GEF PIR Nepal 2019-Final (004) (page 4 and 5)

#### 5.1.4 Complementarity with Existing Interventions/ Coherence

110. The intervention design and adjustments showed complementarity/ additionality of results (but no duplication) with other ongoing interventions by UNEP or other organizations working in the project area or on the same problem/issue.
111. The project design document identified potential synergies with projects promoting biodiversity conservation such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020, the National Agrobiodiversity Policy, 2007, the climate change policy 2011 and Seed Act 2008 in Nepal.
112. At the time of project design, and up to the implementation phase, there are a considerable number of development interventions supporting the conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity, as well as relevant strategic interventions supporting people’s livelihoods, sustainable agriculture development and climate change responses. Some relevant national and international GEF (16 UNEP/UNDP GEF projects<sup>38</sup>) and non-GEF interventions (about 20 projects<sup>39</sup>) were identified at the time of design to establish a kind of synergies. Through these synergies, the project was supposed to benefit from the collaboration and bring together a wide range of different initiatives and partners around a common biodiversity agenda for mountain agricultural ecosystems.
113. The project design document aligned with UNDAF (2008 -2010) and identified other specific opportunities for partnership with ongoing interventions at the target sites. For instance, the project “Humla Development Initiative”, supported by the Development Fund of Norway, was a long-term project (2009-2024) that aimed to improve socio-economic conditions and sustainable democratic development in the remote district of Humla. The project focused to ensure synergies to capitalise on capacity-building efforts previously implemented by other projects.
114. Complementarity with Existing Interventions / Coherence is assessed as **‘Satisfactory’**.
115. To conclude, the project was highly relevant to the Government’s policies and strategies, the GEF and UNEP policy frameworks and compliance with international conventions, and the interests of local stakeholders, especially smallholders. The project was also complementary to some other agricultural and biodiversity interventions in the country, such as local crop conservation and promotion programmes by the government of Nepal.
116. Strategic relevance is rated **‘Highly Satisfactory’**.

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<sup>38</sup> See project document annex 1 page 33-36

<sup>39</sup> See project document annex 1 page 36-40

## 5.2 Quality of Project Design

117. The overall quality of the project design was assessed using the template for assessment of Project Design Quality (PDQ) provided by UNEP for Terminal Evaluations. The template provided a set of well-defined criteria for assessing and scoring various aspects of the project design, upon which a final evaluation score was given for the PDQ.

### 5.2.1 Strengths of the project design

118. The project objectives were highly relevant to the needs of the local communities and well-aligned with national policies. Some key strengths of the project were to include the conservation of traditional crop biodiversity in the mountain regions which can provide wider benefits not only to vulnerable communities and farmers to enhance their food and nutritional security but can also help genetic resource conservation for current and future use. These biodiversity resources are considered treasures of nature which needed additional attention and the project provided a timely intervention.

119. Based on project documents, the project was well formulated. In general, the project’s comprehensive and coherent Result Framework contributed to the project objectives in both content and process. The internal logic was also maintained with the good formulation of 11 outputs which contributed toward the achievement of three outcomes. The causal links of different levels of project objectives (activities to output to outcomes) were generally credible enough to generate intended results. The ProDoc showed that adequate context analysis was carried out through thematic and institutional reviews (see ProDoc Annex A to O) before the project design. Stakeholders both at the national and local levels were consulted and their views were integrated into the project document.

120. The project was also well aligned with international initiatives such as the ABS of Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nagoya protocol, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and SDGs. This would help the government to fulfil its development objective and international commitments.

121. The review also indicated that the project design had good project management and supervision mechanisms at the national level through the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC was mandated to steer and supervise the project. In addition, a technical advisory committee was also formed to provide field-level thematic input, sharing the findings and technical supervision. The project was managed by very well-known organizations in the field of agrobiodiversity and these organizations have long-standing relations and collaborative work in the field of agrobiodiversity and traditional landraces management. The project planned to follow the adaptive management approach during the project implementation.

## 5.2.2 Weakness in the project design

122. Despite these positive aspects, it is also noted that the project objectives and some of the outcome targets were over-ambitious considering the country's political economy, project duration and resources available for the interventions. For example, under outcome three, the project proposed two targets i.e., ‘at least five benefit-sharing mechanisms adopted by farmer communities and national programs’; and ‘local and national (institutions) accepted platforms for PIC operationalisation’. The evaluation showed that the project design did not carefully consider the existing local policy framework, the lengthy process required to change the policy and mechanisms, and the readiness required among the decision-makers. Developing policies and legal frameworks generally require a long process as it has to pass through various internal negotiations among the stakeholders and the adoption process within the parliament.
123. The project Result Framework showed that the proposed indicators and targets did not correspond to each other in some cases. For example, in the case of output 1.1, the proposed indicator was about the ‘number of farmers’ practices’ but the target was proposed as a percentage of varieties availability’. There are also cases of the unclear scope of the indicators such as output 1.3 where the indicator is proposed as ‘number of extension workers/development work/ researchers’ but it is not clear whether this is at the national level or project districts. The project had a large number of activities and some of them were vague and difficult to understand.
124. In addition, there were a lot of stakeholders mentioned in the ProDoc and their roles were proposed but they were not well reflected in the action plan. The risk and assumptions were identified but the project missed some other important assumptions such as the existing fund flow mechanisms & processes within the country and coordination challenges among the sectoral ministries. Besides, the review of the project document also showed that the project paid less attention to cross-learning and played a catalytic role by sharing the good result with the communities and stakeholders in similar agroecosystems for scaling up.
125. The summary scores are presented in table 4 below. Overall, the project design presented in the ProDoc is coherent (with a 4.56 score) with no major shortcomings, albeit with some gaps. It is considered ‘**Satisfactory**’ based on the scores adopted below.

**Table 4: Project design quality scores**

	SECTION	RATING (1-6)	WEIGHTING	TOTAL (Rating x Weighting/10)
A	Operating Context	5	0.4	0.2
B	Project Preparation	5	1.2	0.6
C	Strategic Relevance	6	0.8	0.48
D	Intended Results and Causality	5	1.6	0.8
E	Logical Framework and Monitoring	4	0.8	0.32
F	Governance and Supervision Arrangements	6	0.4	0.24
G	Partnerships	5	0.8	0.4
H	Learning, Communication and Outreach	5	0.4	0.2

I	Financial Planning / Budgeting	5	0.4	0.2
J	Efficiency	4	0.8	0.32
K	Risk identification and Social Safeguards	4	0.8	0.32
L	Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic Effects	4	1.2	0.48
M	Identified Project Design Weaknesses/Gaps	N/A	0.4	0
			<b>TOTAL SCORE (Sum Totals)</b>	<b>4.56 - Satisfactory</b>
1 (Highly Unsatisfactory)		< 1.83		
2 (Unsatisfactory)		>= 1.83 < 2.66		
3 (Moderately Unsatisfactory)		>=2.66 <3.5		
4 (Moderately Satisfactory)		>=3.5 <=4.33		
5 (Satisfactory)		>4.33 <= 5.16		
6 (Highly Satisfactory)		> 5.16		

### 5.3 Nature of the External Context

126. During the project implementation, there were no serious political conflicts or disturbances noted. But a couple of events occurred that affected the project implementation process. The first one was the Gorkha Earthquake (2015) which affected two projects (Lamjung and Dolakha) districts. In addition, just after the adoption of the new constitution in 2015, there was the southern border blockage. Due to this, the whole of Nepal got affected by the deficit of gasoline and other consumable goods. These events affected the normal implementation of the project activities such as transportation halts and limited travel from Kathmandu to project sites and also within the project sites.
127. There was a big shift in governance structure (moving from unitary to federal systems) in 2016/17 after the promulgation of the new constitution (2015) which affected project planning, project execution and overall management. During this period, the district-level agricultural offices were dissolved and new institutions within the Provincial and Local governments were created to work on agriculture issues. Due to this restructuring process, there was a huge transfer of staff, a delay in the posting of agricultural staff in the provincial and local Governments and inadequate clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of the government. These long and turbulent processes affected the project activities, especially in 2017 and 2018.
128. All these disasters related events were outside the control of the project team and they partially affected the project implementation process. Besides these, the project implementation contexts, in general, were favourable for the project management and implementation process. Hence, the Nature of the external context is rated **'Favourable'**.

## 5.4 Effectiveness

### 5.4.1 Availability of Outputs<sup>40</sup>

129. This evaluation is based on project progress reports, discussions with project staff, stakeholders, beneficiaries and field observations. Most of the progress related to outputs (quantities and qualities) was obtained from the project reports which were verified with the stakeholders and beneficiaries in the project sites.
130. Based on the stakeholder consultations and review of the project reports, all outputs are found to be relevant and useful for contributing to the project objectives. It was noted that the project did not provide the progress of the outputs according to the indicators and targets in the results framework. Instead, the project reported that outputs were achieved 100% (for example see PIR 2020 pages 27-29). The final technical report also mentioned that all outputs are ‘completed’ (see pages 3-4 of the final technical report – annex 12) but the evaluator’s analysis showed that all proposed indicators and targets for the outputs in the Result Framework were not achieved. The evaluator reviewed various reports and consulted the project staff, but it was difficult to assess the level of achievement of the project outputs. Based on the discussion with the stakeholders, PIR 2020 and the final project report (annex 12), the major progress made is presented below.
131. Outputs under component 1
- A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species are deployed and evaluated (cold tolerance rice 64 vars, buckwheat – 37 vars, Proso-millet – 21 vars, Foxtail millet – 27 var, finger millet 49 vars, beans – 47 vars, Naked Barely – 21 vars, Amaranth – 13 vars) (output 1.1).
  - 60 locally adapted diverse crop varieties of 8 target crops (see image 1) are identified from on-farm evaluation and their seeds are multiplied and distributed to farmers. Among them, 7 varieties of 5 crops are improved and promoted and all seven are registered (one during the project period and 6 just after the completion of the project by SQCC of the National Seed Board Government of Nepal (output 1.1).
  - Processing machines for finger millet and proso-millet are piloted and upscaled in project sites (output 1.2).
  - Diverse crop varietal mixtures and organic package field trials are evaluated for pest and disease management, soil regulation and pollination services (output 1.3).

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<sup>40</sup> Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

- Diversity field schools are operationalized in the community. Knowledge products related to crop varietal mixtures & ecosystem services developed as extension packages (output 1.4)
- Good participation of women (60%) is made in Diversity Field Schools (DFS), community seed bank (CSB) committee and training and exposure visits at the local level. (output 1.4)
- Supported 100 Farmer Field Schools (output 1.4)

**Image 1: Local crops promoted by the project**



### 132. Outputs under component 2

- Four CSBs established in four project sites produced and made available 20 mt locally adapted seeds of over 60 varieties of 8 target crops beyond project sites across different parts of Nepal (output 2.1).
- The four CSBs conserved 232 local varieties of 20 crops (output 2.1).
- The project facilitated the linkage of community seed banks of the sites with local cooperatives<sup>41</sup> farmers' groups, seed dealers (agro-vets), private seed companies, and R&D services to supply locally adapted seeds and promote diversification in seed supplies (output 2.2).
- Smallholder farmers were supported and trained in healthy seed production, supply, registration and maintenance of their local varieties. (output 2.3).

### 133. Outputs under component 3

- Carried out policy consultation meetings and training workshops have been organized and supported technically to stakeholders and decision-makers in the development and registration of farmers' varieties. Recommendation for

<sup>41</sup> Earlier work with farmers groups to make CSB but there was no provision of registration of CSBs with government authority. The project is then considered to attach with local cooperative as the cooperatives can receive grants and other support, can work on income generating activities and well recognized by the local governments.

- strengthening community Seed Bank recommendation through National Workshop in 2018 (output 3.1).
- Developed a simplified local crop registration process and get endorsed by the government (output 3.2)
  - The project made recommendations on plant genetic resources to local and national institutional use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas. Provided support to the preparation of the draft Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization Act (2018), Access and Benefit Sharing legislation (2018), and drafting Guidelines/Process for Relaxed Provision of Farmers’ variety Registration under Seed Regulation (2013) (output 3.2).
  - The project piloted a PIC form on one project site (output 3.3)
  - The capacity of farmers, government officials and private agro- entrepreneurs at the local and national levels (output 3.4).
134. More than three fourth of the beneficiaries and staff met during the evaluation mission and reported that project training (technical and writing shop) was very useful and the training resulted in a good impact at the local level to manage the project effectively and the professional staff to develop knowledge products. With this support, community members received new knowledge along with a set of good conservation practices that can be used even after the project is completed.
135. Although CSBs are required to support, especially in strengthening their institutional capacity and enhancing their market access. For instance, farmers in remote areas were found happy to revive their traditional crops, otherwise, the crops would have been lost from their areas within a certain time. Staff members and other professional experts interviewed also expressed their view that the various conservation practices and tools used by the project were useful for them. The discussions with stakeholders and the project progress reports indicated that the delivery of the project outcomes was mostly on time and there was no major delay noted by the evaluator.
136. Some significant challenges were noted during the implementation of the project. Some of them included remote project sites, the harsh climate, especially during the winter season, the limited growing season (in some cases – only one crop in a year), and the tedious weeding and harvesting process of the local crops. These contexts created the challenge to provide project-related services on time. The evaluation, in general, noted most of the outputs were delivered mostly as planned and the ‘no-cost extensions’ were for the completion of a small number of activities and final technical and financial reporting.
- 137.** The following table 5 provides a summary of the progress of the outputs delivered by this project. Due to the complexity of the assessment, three colours are used to provide the progress based on the output indicators where ‘green’, ‘yellow’ and ‘red’

indicate ‘good progress/achieved’, ‘progress/partially achieved’ and ‘no progress/not achieved’ respectively.

**Table 5: Output progress**

Project outputs	Rating	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>42</sup>
Output 1.1 Diverse sets of varieties developed that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages	Highly Satisfactory	<p>About 20% increase in the number of target mountain crop varieties with variations in functional traits are deployed and evaluated in sites. A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species are deployed and evaluated, out of which seeds of 60 varieties with functional traits are increased. Eight varieties are identified. 60 locally adapted diverse crop varieties of 8 target crops are identified from the on-farm evaluation. Breeders from NARC (from Hill Crop Research station)/LIBIRD were involved in the process.</p> <p>14 PP breeders (4 from LI-BIRD, 4 from Gene Bank, 2 from ABD, Khumal, 2 from ARS Jumla, 2 from HCRP, Kabre. The project has used the FFS /diversity schools in the communities but no record is available from DoA and NGO on the number of FFS43. The project also used DoA’s extension process. DADO used the learning before it was dismantled after the federalization started in Nepal.</p> <p>A total of 130 local farmers’ varieties of 8 mountain crops are characterised and 90 % of them are evaluated in project sites for their functional traits and data-based are made in a farmer-friendly format.</p>
Output 1.2 Technology/ processing advancements adapted to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties	Highly satisfactory	<p>The project supported the harvesting, processing and storage of the crop. The project developed a processing mill (called chino Kutak for proso-millet), a processing machine for finger millet, product diversification (such as making cakes from finger millet) and promotion of local crops through a diversity kit. The project demonstrated and there was also support from the government to use Chino Kutak in Humla and millet harvester in Lamjung and Dolakha. In addition, an entrepreneur is involved in the processing of local crop products in Humla. No other data/information is available</p> <p>109 farmers (male 79 and 30 female) were trained in food recipe preparation and the use of proso-millet and agri machinery and farm tools. Farmers get credit (mainly from informal sources, trust funds or cooperatives) but not from the banks to establish and operate a processing business. Early warning text sharing was done on the Ghanpokhara project site. The information and knowledge materials are being shared through training, workshop, visit, and biodiversity fairs</p>

<sup>42</sup> Results extracted from final report (reporting period 1 July 2019 to 30 March 2020) technical report (2019 – March 2020), updated under field missions 2022. Only output wise progress available from the technical report (2019 to March 2020). Also see the PIR 2020 where % of achievement is also provided

<sup>43</sup> The project did not have actual use of FFS by DOA where the crop genetic diversity from project sites is being used. But it is clear that DoA /AKC are using crop genetic resources of the project in their extension programs (e.g., seed distribution, block production programs etc.). For instance, the Bariyo kaguno foxtail millet variety of Ghanapokhara project site is being promoted by AKC Lamjung and also AKC and NGOs from other districts have bought seeds from the local CSB. NGO like LI-BIRD have promoted Dolakha bean varieties from Jugu Dolakha project sites to Sindhupalchowk and other districts. Ramechhap Hariyo Latte variety of Amaranth is widely promoted by some AKCs, NGOs and private seed companies like *Anamol* Seed Company of Chitwan. Dudhe chino variety of Proso-millet of Humla is being promoted by local NGO.

Project outputs	Rating	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>42</sup>
		but no early warning text messages were shared with the farmers.
<p>Output 1.3 Ecosystem services from agrobiodiversity management practices valued and utilized in agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes.</p>	Satisfactory	<p>Agriculture experts, local agriculture technicians and researchers were found to be having increased knowledge about the use of crop-genetic diversity. Diverse crop varietal mixtures field trials are evaluated for pest and disease management, soil regulation and pollination services. Diversity field schools are operationalized in the community to make them aware of their ecosystem value. Papers, flyers, posters of crop varietal mixtures &amp; ecosystem services were developed as an extension package.</p> <p>No data available no of % of researchers, scientists and extension and development workers that promote the use of crop genetic diversity. A large size of the target land area used the crops to address pest attacks thereby reducing pesticide use but no data is available on the target land area (of documentation). Although no specific studies were carried out, the discussions with beneficiaries indicated that most of the beneficiaries were aware of the value of diversity, and medicinal and food security value. No systematic data is available about the comparative crop diversity (with and without/before and after).</p> <p>A review of the proposed activities showed that there were no adequate activities implemented but provided some technical advisory support and knowledge sharing during training to support or influence soil water management projects. The project carried out the value of the use of intra-specific diversity and provided enhancing ecosystem services (such as reducing pesticides and improving pollination) but no specific data was available. In addition, activity 1.3.9 is due to the unavailability of an expert.</p> <p>The project however did not achieve all output indicators. For example, the targets related to ‘50% of researchers and extension workers with enhanced knowledge and use of agrobiodiversity and the target related to ‘40% increase in projects from the baseline figure in projects that take into account the use intra-specific diversity in their water and soil management projects”</p>
<p>Output 1.4 Enhanced capacity and gender equity of farmer groups, local schools and technical colleagues and other community institutions to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources</p>	Highly satisfactory	<p>Some orientations /sensitization events were carried out to the representatives of Educational institutions but no course was developed as such for the Educational institution.</p> <p>The project provided training and organized other knowledge-building events for local institutions and clubs.</p> <p>The capacity of the beneficiaries (55%) and stakeholders were enhanced through training, and other conservation practices such as Diversity Field Schools (DFS), community seed bank and exposure visits. But no consolidated data is available to demonstrate gender equity (as targeted).</p>

<b>Project outputs</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Progress made by March 2020<sup>42</sup></b>
Output 2.1 Sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials are available to small holders to increase productive gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience	Highly Satisfactory	Four CSBs made available 20 mt locally adapted seeds of over 60 varieties of 8 target crops beyond project sites (about 20,000 households) across different parts of Nepal in the project period to increase productivity gains and maintain ecosystem resilience. With the creation of CSBs, there was a high possibility of increasing farmers' access to crop genetic resources from the CSBs.  More than 15 genetic materials are shared from national Gene Banks to local communities/repatriation
Output 2.2 Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders to provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials	Satisfactory	Policy recommendations for the agrobiodiversity bill and seed act provided. The project has facilitated the linkage of community seed banks of the sites with seed traders, to supply locally adapted seeds and promote diversification in seed supplies. The government has also integrated the results into its programmes but there was no strong evidence available on how these policy frameworks help in the diversification of seed suppliers of planting materials and partnership of government and non-government to expand the diversification of seed suppliers.
Output 2.3 Small holder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as providers of diversity and seed.	Satisfactory	More than 5 sets of seeds are supplied by the CSBs to farmers and agro-vets/traders. Smallholder farmers are supported and trained in healthy seed production, supply, registration and maintenance of their local varieties. They are mobilized as an active member of community seed banks and providers of seeds of diverse varieties.  PIR 2017 and 2018 provided some data on seed distribution to farmers. 4 collaborations between the farmers (CSBs, cooperatives and farmer groups) and researchers reported from the project support and outside (such as Hill crop stations) involved. The project organized more than 8 diversity fairs, created 4 CSBs and more than 200 farmers participated in the cross visits and other kinds of exposures.  Despite these, there is no clear evidence available that suggests there was 'at least 4% of the total volume of transaction of seeds of partner commercial seed companies occupied by project identified varieties' (output target).
Output 3.1 Recommendations and actions on how local and national institutions and strategies on plant genetic resources should address the use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas for mountain	Satisfactory	Provided support to the preparation of the draft Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization Act (2018), Access and Benefit-sharing legislation (2018), Drafting Guidelines/Process for Relaxed Provision of Farmers' variety Registration under Seed Regulation (2013), Recommendation for strengthening community Seed Bank recommendation through National Workshop in 2018.  Some support was provided to the local institution but no 5 local and national institutions (such as DADO/AKC, local NGOs such as local CTEVT, seed company etc) have an institutional policy and mechanism in place.

Project outputs	Rating	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>42</sup>
agricultural environments		The project however there was no evidence related to a target (At least 5 local and national institutions have institutional policy and mechanisms in place to implement actions to support local crop diversity in seed supply systems) was delivered sufficiently.
Output 3.2 Policy support for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination	Satisfactory	Policy consultation meetings and training workshops were organized and supported technically by stakeholders and decision-makers in the development and registration of farmers’ varieties.  Drafting for simplified procedures for farmers' variety registration was initiated by carrying out dialogue with national seed authorities (SQCC) and sensitization to policymakers carried out to advocate for a simplified process for variety registration. The government has adopted a new simplified method for local crop registration.
Output 3.3 Procedures identified and used for drafting PIC, which ensure that the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources go into the sustainable management of biodiversity by local farmer communities	Moderately satisfactory	The project piloted a PIC form which is signed between the Jugu (Dolakha) farming community and a private Anamol seed Company for rare local common bean varieties ( <i>Khairo Ghiu</i> and <i>Panhelo Simi</i> ) to enhance benefits derived from the use of genetic resources and ensuring the benefits to Jungu communities for its sustainable management.  It is yet to formalize due to a lack of adequate policy framework and no information available related to ‘5 cases of PIC reported and recorded’ and ‘information sharing agreement’ as mentioned in the final targets.
Output 3.4 Leadership and capacity built to enable a higher level of involvement in local communities in local and national decision-making forum	Moderately Satisfactory	The capacity of 100 farmers in four project sites including two private agro-entrepreneurs in Humla are built to enable them in a higher level of involvement in local and national decision-making for agrobiodiversity management  More than targeted farmers were supported but it was not clear whether ‘6 female and 6 male farmer representatives take part in national and international decision fora’. In addition, the farmers’ association at the district level <sup>44</sup> were not in a position to use the crop biodiversity to buffer against biotic and abiotic stresses.

138. The review of the project reports and discussions with the stakeholders and beneficiaries showed that most of the outputs were delivered. There are some outputs which are not delivered partly due to the lack of enabling environment (such as the procedure identified and for draft PIC - output 3.3). There are also cases where the project has carried out activities but they are not guided by the indicators and targets and no baseline was created (for example, see output 1.3, indicator #1- 4; output 2.1, indicator # 1, 2.3 indicator # 2). Due to these reasons, there was no adequate evidence

<sup>44</sup> The project RF mentioned at least one relevant farmer association per country (should be district though) are established or strengthened.

available to confirm claims made by the project. These issues were not raised in the MTR.

139. Based on the level of achievement according to the indicators (table 5 and annex VII) and discussion with the project staff, four outputs are considered as **Highly Satisfactory** (36.4%), five outputs as **Satisfactory** (45.4%) and 2 outputs as **Moderately Satisfactory** (18.2%). These important outputs to achieve outcomes were delivered in time to allow a high level of use by users and a high proportion of outputs including to achieve outcomes were found to be of good quality and deemed to be high utility to the users in the project sites and stakeholders at the national level. In addition, the evidence shows a good level of ownership by the final users and stakeholders of the outputs. Hence, the delivery of project outputs is assessed as ‘**Satisfactory**’.

#### **5.4.2 Achievement of project outcomes**

140. The project has made important contributions to the expected outcomes. The project assessed, communicated and promoted agrobiodiversity in the agricultural policy development processes in Nepal. The project introduced Community-based Biodiversity Management (CBM) practices and tools such as CSB, Participatory Variety Selection (PVS), Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) and Diversity Field Schools (DFS) favouring access to and knowledge of better adapted genetic material with the use of local crop varieties that enhance resilience, sustainability and productivity.

#### ***Component 1. Mainstream Mechanisms that integrate diversity-rich solutions into breeding and technology***

##### ***Outcome 1: The area devoted to sustainably-managed agrobiodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity-rich solutions.***

141. For improving agrobiodiversity through the increased use of diversity-rich solutions in the agriculture production systems, the project first worked on awareness raising among the stakeholders and communities. The project provided capacity-building support through training, exposure visit, workshop and sharing knowledge products to the community members as well as various government and non-government organizations.
142. The project identified 8 local crops (see image 2) from the project sites from 300 cultivars commonly available at the local level and helped to mainstream these varieties in the local agroecosystems. The project also supported participatory varietal breeding and selection, crop improvement, supporting value addition and policy support. Some of the major achievements included the identification and promotion of disease, insect & cold tolerance, and climate resilience varieties, development & extension of cultivation practices, increase in the crop production area, support in seed production and development of knowledge products such as a field disease guide and a Farmers’ Variety Catalog. Some of the major results are briefly described below.

143. Adoption of Participatory breeding and varietal selection practices at the local level: The project employed Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB) and Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) approaches through Diversity Field Schools (DFS<sup>45</sup>) for developing and identifying genetically diverse varieties.
144. The project focused on diversity sourcing and deployment of seeds to match farmers’ needs through rapid detection, on-farm evaluation and dissemination of suitable crop genetic resources. For this, the project assisted in the germplasm collection and evaluation process for the local crops that have been used by the government and other stakeholders. These participatory varietal testing helped to characterize, evaluate and screen superior germplasms that can tolerate major disease, drought and cold including evaluation for superior agronomic traits.



**Image 2: Local crops in Jumla District, Nepal**

145. Test of crop varieties: The project also established participatory on-station and on-farm trials to identify better varieties through crop varietal mixture in beans, buckwheat, finger millet and rice to identify and select the best treatments of mixture for adaptation to changing climate, reducing disease and pest incidence, improving ecosystem services and meet food security and nutrition needs of the mountain communities in different project sites and NARC stations. This research work helped in the identification of the role of intraspecific crop diversity in managing pests and

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<sup>45</sup> Diversity Field Schools (DFS) similar to farmer field school approach was developed and piloted by the project as a farmer’s learning and action platform for sustainable management of agrobiodiversity and promoting diversity rich solutions. This was an innovative approach piloted for mobilizing local communities and supporting community seed banks and community-based conservation and development initiatives. A total of 120 DFS classes were organized. DFS approach has been found effective for participatory variety selection, grass-roots breeding, food fairs and promote farmer- to-farmer learning and sharing.

disease, promoting ecosystem services and improving food, nutrition security and the health of the farming communities.

146. Crop improvement and registration: Based on the field performance of varietal testing, the project assisted to improve locally adapted local crop varieties through a series of screening and evaluations. The project helped to register the potential varieties<sup>46</sup> based on their potential contribution to local food security and the availability of genetic variability for improvement. Once the local crop registration process was simplified, the process of registration by other organizations and farmers was continued.
147. Value addition - product processing and diversification: The project in collaboration with NARC Agri Engineering Division designed, piloted and upscaled processing machines for finger millet and proso-millet in the mountain project sites. The thresher for Proso-millet, for example, could process 30 kg in an hour with 90% efficiency (at 11-12% moisture), which is normally accomplished manually only in a full day by two women. This helped to reduce women's drudgery. Besides, the project also emphasized crop product diversification of the selected crop (for example *Chino* in Humla) for its wider acceptability by the consumers. For this, the project works with local agro-entrepreneurs to process the crop products for processing and marketing. For instance, the project provided technical and financial support to a local agro-entrepreneur in Humla (Simikot Shishir Food Industry) in processing, packaging and labelling of traditional food products and their marketing<sup>47</sup>.
148. Development of participatory CBM practices and creating an enabling environment: The project contributed to the development of CBM tools/ practices (see box 1) and shared the experience of the project in the policy-making process and practices. This helped to increase the general awareness of the government agencies and other organizations and, consequently, promote collaborative work and improve the institutional capacity of the government organisations.
149. Sharing knowledge: One of the main contributions of this project was the generation of knowledge products in different forms. The project developed about 110 knowledge products and they were widely shared and web-documented at

**Box 1: Participatory CBM practices/tools used by the project**

Participatory diversity sourcing, local crop assessment and deployment tools (Diversity Fairs, Diversity blocks, Diversity Kits);

Collective action and community empowerment (Diversity Field Schools, participatory crop breeding, community seed bank management, community biodiversity management fund).

<sup>46</sup> such as leafy amaranth variety (*Ramechhap Hariy Latte*) for vegetable purpose, two local crop varieties (*Dudhae Chino* local variety of proso millet in Humla and *Rato Kodo* local variety of finger millet in Jumla

<sup>47</sup> The project supported a local entrepreneur in Humla district to diversify food products from local crops. Mr Mukunda Rokaya reported that he has been preparing Harlicks (health and nutritional drink) from barely, biscuits from *Chino* and muffin from finger millet.

[www.himalayancrops.org](http://www.himalayancrops.org). Stakeholders at the national level mainly NARC scientists and officials at the Ministry acknowledged that all these knowledge products were found useful. Some of them were considered very important resources. For example, the project published a ‘catalogue of Traditional Mountain Crop Landraces in Nepal’ in 2019.

## **Component 2. Increasing access to local agrobiodiversity planting materials/**

### **Outcome 2: Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.**

150. To increase access and increase the farmers' benefits, the project developed mechanisms for seed collection and exchange – at the project sites (such as through a biodiversity fair) and exchange with the National Gene Bank. The project helped to establish and operationalize four Community Seed Banks (CSB) and strengthened functional links with the national Gene Bank. The project capacitated the CSBs making them functional in terms of seed conservation, multiplication, distribution, marketing and value addition of local products.
151. The CSBs were also supported for source seed production and distribution, maintaining diversity blocks, demo plot establishment and demonstration of traditional rare crop landraces targeting traditional mountain crops. These CSBs produced and made available 20 MT of locally adapted seeds to other communities<sup>48</sup>.
152. For ensuring sustainability, the project created a CBM trust fund and developed and implemented CBM fund guidelines (see box 2).
153. The project also supported linking the private sector (i.e., Anmol seeds company) with one of the CSBs (in Dolakha) to buy beans. Other than this, there was no formal engagement noted with the private sector.
154. NARC through its ‘Hill Crop Research Stations’ was involved in research of the local crops and the finding was used in its outreach programme. In addition, the project also worked with CCDABC related to the promotion of local crops and the centre also started integrating indigenous/local crops in its regular programmes in 4 districts (Lamjung, Humla, Jumla and Bajura) and three of these are the LCP project districts. In addition, the

#### **Box 2: CBM Trust fund**

CBM fund guidelines were developed which provide guidelines for implementation modality. The guidelines specified how the poorest and most vulnerable members of the communities are targeted and how conservation-related criteria (such as conservation of at least 2 landraces of traditional crops) are to be followed by the fund users. Users in the project sites also mentioned that the interest rate of the fund to be paid is less than (12-15% per annum) the market interest rate. The main emphasis of the guideline was to use this fund for quality seed production and maintenance of rare and locally adapted farmers' varieties and their value addition and marketing. Since it is a revolving fund, the principal fund remains within the community for self-financing of agrobiodiversity conservation and ecosystem services even after the project is terminated.

<sup>48</sup> Final Technical Report – Annex 12 page 4

centre also supported the promotion of local crops through 119 municipalities across the country.

155. There were increased opportunities among the local institutions i.e., CSBs, to access, multiply and sell the planting materials. These interventions provided opportunities to increase the benefits of the farmers through seed supply – both in monetary and non-monetary terms. During the evaluation time, it was however noted that the benefits were not adequate to meet the expenses of the CSBs at the local level and the benefits to farmers from the local crops were yet to be demonstrated. In addition, the scale of operation of the project was small<sup>49</sup> and there was no firm commitment noted from the public-private sector to multiply and supply the planting materials.

***Component 3. Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing of local agricultural biodiversity planting materials***

**Outcome 3: Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit-sharing mechanisms that support the diversification of varieties**

156. The project made its efforts in developing a national-level enabling environment related to access and benefit sharing from agrobiodiversity resources. The project carried out a policy review and provided technical support to the Government of Nepal in formulating and revising policy and regulatory frameworks. For example, the project supported policy dialogues and provision of technical assistance for the revision of the proposed draft Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization Bills (2016) of Nepal, Access and Benefit-sharing legislation (2018), Drafting Guidelines/Process for Relaxed Provision of Farmers’ variety Registration under Seed Regulation (2013) to MoALD. The main technical support area covered ABS, Farmers’ Rights and incentives to farmers and local communities. Special emphasis was given to recognizing and rewarding the contribution of custodian farmers in managing community seed banks (CSBs) for their collective roles in the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity at the local level. The project team also assisted the government in the drafting of regulations and directives to support the (draft) Agrobiodiversity Act to include community seed banks as the legitimate institution and platform for prior informed consent (PIC) and implementing community protocols and model agreement for creating an enabling environment for Access and Benefit Sharing. But the Bill remains in the draft stage.
157. The project also supported developing local level institutions through developing operational mechanisms of CSB at the local level as a potential local community institution for ABS mechanism and providing capacity building support to CSBs. With the experience from the project, CSB can serve as a platform for PIC by developing community protocols for ABS.

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<sup>49</sup> The outcome mentioned that ‘Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture’. According to the result framework, the project was supposed to support 8 CSBs but the project actually supported only 4.

158. The project supported the Registration process of Farmers’ Varieties for the registration of 6 local crops within the national systems (see box 3). The registration of local crops grants a formal recognition of the presence of the genetic resources and the government would be entitled to conserve and promote the crops/genes.
159. As a part of the genetic resources sharing, the project helped to develop a mechanism for linking the national Gene Bank with local communities including the mechanisms for repatriation of the gene from the Gene Bank to communities, and community seed banks, to promote access and benefit sharing (ABS) of diverse crop genetic resources in the project sites now and possibly at national level in future.
160. Special efforts were made to develop ownership of CSBs by the local Government through coordination, rapport building and supporting local communities in the project sites. For example, the local government in Jumla integrated the local crop improvement programme into their annual plans. A progress report (PIR, 2020) showed that about USD 38,000 was received from the local governments for supporting and strengthening community seed banks and promoting traditional mountain crops from 2015-2018.
161. Despite these achievements, the project was not able to put in place a nationally accepted platform for PIC<sup>50</sup>. To officialise the PIC, a legal framework of ABS at the national level is required. Government officials as well as project staff indicated that the ABS bill with a provision of having PIC was drafted by the MoALD but has yet to be submitted to the parliament. This delay impacted the ABS provisions and PIC-related interventions of this project.
162. In the following table 6, the achievement of Outcomes was assessed as defined in the reconstructed Theory of Change. The information under the ‘observation or justification for rating’ column was derived from the project reports (such as from PIRs, MTRs, and final technical report),

### Box 3: Registration of Farmers’ Varieties

The project supported improving the registration format for local variety registration by relaxing the conventional bureaucratic process. For this, an easy-to-fill format/guidelines linked with simplified provisions (*Rules 12, By Rules 2: Annex “D”*) of Nepal’s Seed Regulations (2013) has been completed and shared with Seed Quality Control Centre (SQCC) of the Government of Nepal for simplification and facilitation of registration of farmers varieties.

The project organized official visits and travelling seminars of members of the Variety Release and Registration Committee (VRRRC) to sensitize them to the need to register farmers’ varieties. Finally, 6 farmers’ varieties of 5 target crops were selected and evaluated from participatory methods in the project sites. These included amaranth variety (*Lal marshe; Acc# 3*), two endangered local Jungu Beans (*Khairo Ghiu Simi, Panhelo Thulo Simi*), one local finger millet variety (*Rato Kodo*) from Jumla, one local proso-millet variety (*Dudhe chino*), and a local *Bariyo* variety of foxtail millet from Ghanapokhara, Lamjung, for registration (PIR 2020, page 14).

<sup>50</sup> See project document (annex 1\_appendix LoE Nepal – Result Framework page 11) – outcome 2 indicator # 2 – end of the project target – ‘Local and national accepted platform for PIC operationalized’

primary data (users and stakeholder consultations) and the evaluator’s analysis (also see annex VII for detail).

163. The outcomes of the project are, in large part, achieved. Based on the level of achievement of the project outcomes, the project financing seems to be well justified. Achievement of Outcomes is rated ‘**Satisfactory**’.

**Table 6: Progress of the project at the outcome level**

Outcomes	Rating	Observations/ justification on rating
<p>Outcome 1: The area devoted to sustainably-managed agrobiodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity rich solutions.</p>	<p>Highly satisfactory</p>	<p>A dozen of target crop varieties with disease, insect and cold tolerance and climate resilience were promoted to increase the area in mountain environments. The project sites have increased by 20% the crop under foxtail millet in Lamjung and common beans and naked barley in Dolakha compared to baseline situations, no aggregate percentage however available.</p> <p>8 Farmers’ Friendly Seed Production “Flyers one each for all the eight mandate crops and one varietal mixture flyer developed with applicable farmer seed management system and made available to farmer breeders and seed suppliers.</p> <p>A Field disease guide for 8 target mountain crops and a national variety catalogue of publicly released varieties and one farmers’ variety catalogue with functional traits for mountain crops are developed, published and distributed widely as an extension package to frontline extension staff, researchers, breeders and private seed suppliers’ extension officials that use crop genetic diversity.</p> <p>A total of 300 cultivars of 8 target crops are tested on-farm, out of which 129 local farmer varieties are fully characterised and 90 % of them are evaluated in project sites for functional traits to evolve and adapt to local conditions for inclusion in extension packages. The special features and their functional traits were documented and published in the National and Farmers’ Variety Catalog.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Strategies/mechanisms developed to strengthen the multiplication and supply of important local varieties from the National Gene Bank (public) to four project site Community Seed Banks &amp; local Seed dealers &amp; Anamole seed Company (private) as well as between Gene Bank, agricultural Knowledge centre (public) and other NARC research centres (Public). CCDABC has already committed resources and developed a program to mainstream target mountain crop genetic resources in Lamjung, Humla and Bajura in mountain districts under their “Indigenous Crop Promotion Programmes”. Four community seed banks in</p>

Outcomes	Rating	Observations/ justification on rating
ensure sustainable agriculture.		four project sites and other four community-based organisations (farmers groups and cooperatives) in project sites are supplying seeds of two or more promising varieties each to local private seed dealers (Agrovets) and seed companies (i.e., <i>Anamol</i> )
Outcome 3: Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit sharing mechanisms that support diversification of varieties	Moderately satisfactory	Five benefits-sharing mechanisms (genetic resource, processing technology, community seed bank, organic farming, GI Protection, CBM fund) were assessed, developed and suggested for the farming communities and national programs. Some of these mechanisms were however at the early stage of piloting/demonstration (such as GI protection, organic farming, and processing technologies).  A community seed bank has been identified and piloted for PIC for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms (in the Dolakha site). But no further work was carried out.

### 5.4.3 Achievement of Likelihood of impact

164. The goal of the project as expressed in the ProDoc is ‘conservation of globally important crop biodiversity forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevations agricultural systems throughout the world’. The Impact statement in the reconstructed TOC (*Conservation of globally important crop biodiversity forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in Nepal and the surrounding Himalayan region*) has been formulated based on this project goal.
165. The reconstructed Theory of Change (See section 4, figure 3) identifies the following two intermediate states as necessary preconditions for the project’s outcomes to make progress towards achieving the [long-term] Impact.
- IS 1: Mainstreaming the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in legislative frameworks, sectoral policies/strategies, development plans and programmes in Nepal.
  - IS 2: Improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems is evidenced by improved livelihoods of farmers, increased farming systems resilience and capability of stakeholders to manage agro-biodiversity resources.
166. Regarding the first IS, the project contributed to achieving the project objective by mainstreaming best practices and tools for the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity. In this regard, efforts by the project have included: i) creating awareness (training, workshop, exposure visits) about the benefits of local crops among the stakeholders both at the national and local level; ii) creating CSBs in the project sites and strengthening these CSBs for the local crop conservation by adopting

- community biodiversity management (CBM) approaches; and iii) leveraging institutional mechanisms by supporting for easy local crop registration process for its formal recognition and promotion from the government side.
167. In addition, the project also: iv) engaged the local governments in promoting the local crops for integrating the local crops promotion in their annual plans and support to CSBs<sup>51</sup>; v) worked very closely with CCDABC to mainstream local crop improvement programmes (Indigenous Crop Promotion Program) in the selected districts<sup>52</sup> and Municipalities, and vi) supporting mainstreaming of agrobiodiversity conservation and ABS issues in policies and strategies, such as the development of a mechanism for linking the national Gene Bank with local communities and CSBs, and technical assistance to develop agrobiodiversity draft Bill and draft Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization Bills. All these strategies helped to integrate local crop promotion (focusing on conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing) at the local and national levels although there was room for improvement.
168. The second IS is to ‘improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems’. This result was expected to be achieved once the project interventions achieved the outcomes of the project and the project results are integrated (IS 1) into the agricultural programmes of the government and non-government organizations and they are scaled up in larger areas.
169. The project progress reports mentioned that there has been an increase in the area of local crop cultivation (about 20% of the selected crops) and the number of crop varieties in the mountain farming systems. But there was no proper assessment carried out by having a clear baseline and endline. Hence, it was difficult to generate clear evidence. The discussions with the stakeholders, the project team and the beneficiaries showed that there was an increase in the area of cultivation<sup>53</sup> while the project was implemented. Some beneficiaries mentioned that with the increased crop diversity, there was less risk of crop failure against bad weather and pest infestation. The local crops reduced the use of costly and environmentally harmful external inputs such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides. As the local crops need less intensive farming practices compared to conventional crops, some farmers mentioned that they need less water and nutrients to grow local crops. With this low-intensive and diversified farming, the agriculture systems are likely to generate additional

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<sup>51</sup> For example, the local government in Jumla integrated the local crop improvement programme into their annual plans. A progress report (PIR, 2020) showed that about USD 38,000 was received from the local governments for supporting and strengthening community seed banks and promoting traditional mountain crops from 2015-2018.

<sup>52</sup> The CCDABC of DoA, through local governments, has supported a programme to mainstream local crop improvement programme (Indigenous Crop Promotion Program) in Lamjung, Humla and Bajura in mountain districts. These supports were used to promote CSB and seed production in the project sites.

<sup>53</sup> there is no national level data available about the local crops but it is generally noted that the overall area at national level under local crop is reducing (source: Dr Ram Krishna Shrestha, Joint Secretary article ‘local crops in crisis and our food security’ (संकटमा रैथाने बाली र हाम्रो खाद्य सुरक्षा) available at <https://www.onlinekhabar.com/2022/10/1211222?fbclid=IwAR36XhPgeY7vjym2Vn4RD3v5yFRW46Q90hYfGZoLkKjURxu5y7bK0MY3y3Y>

- ecosystem services (such as increased crop pollination, and soil conservation in sloppy lands) and the farming systems become more resilient to shocks and stresses.
170. There were no specific indicators and targets developed in the result framework and assessments carried out regarding the ecosystem services and resilience during the implementation phase. Some stakeholders viewed that attaining these objectives was not possible within the project time frame. In addition, the evaluation also noted that with this small-scale intervention (in terms of geography, beneficiaries, magnitude and broadness of interventions) within the short period and limited scaling up of the project results by the government, it was hard to get these results- especially at the higher level. On the other hand, in terms of the trend of crop coverage over the years, most of the farmers and CSBs mentioned that the crop coverage was reduced after the project terminated as there was no financial and technical support available to guide the cultivation practices, crop protection<sup>54</sup> and help to access the market information.
  171. In the case of intermediate states, the project has had a good contribution to the integration of local crops in the programme (IS 1) and in improving ecosystems resilience, ecosystems services and ABS capacity in the mountain (IS 2) but the progress is slow and at a limited scale.
  172. Based on the effect of project outcomes & intermediate stages to impact as mentioned in the reconstructed ToC at Evaluation, the evaluation confirms that the project has created some good foundation which ensures a positive contribution toward the achievement of the project impact. Some of them include: increasing the local crop growing areas by 20% in the selected crops in the project sites; four community seed banks established and received support from the respective local governments; promising local crop varieties were identified (from 8 target crop species), the local crop registration process was simplified, the government also started to support the local crop programmes and increasing demand of the local crops in urban areas.
  173. The project has played a catalytic role to sensitize users, stakeholders and decision-makers at different levels and contributed to scaling up the promotion of local crops through CCDABC that would have a greater & longer impact on the environment and human well-being. The evaluation also confirms that there would be no contribution of the project to unintended negative impact as the project considered the ESS measures.
  174. Based on the impact tree analysis guidelines provided by UNEP, a brief analysis was carried out<sup>55</sup>. The analysis showed that the project outcomes that are the most

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<sup>54</sup> In Jugu, Dolakha district, the local crop (bean) was affected by diseases (possibility of plant virus which makes the leaves yellow) – this was explained by one of the beneficiary farmers during an evaluation mission.

<sup>55</sup> Drivers to support transition from Outputs to Project Outcomes are ...partially in place; b) Assumptions for the change process from Outputs to Project Outcomes ...partially hold; c) Proportion of Project Outcomes fully or partially achieved? some; d) Which Project Outcomes? (the most important to attain intermediate states / impact

important to attain intermediate states are mostly achieved. The intermediate states are partially achieved. The assumption for outputs to outcomes, outcomes to IS, and IS to impact do partially hold. Similarly, drivers to support the transition from output to the outcome, outcome to IS and IS to impact are also partially in place (see table 7 below).

175. The evaluation noted that it still requires more strategic support to demonstrate the result at the landscape level. Hence, it is moderately likely in this situation to contribute to the project goal (to contribute to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems) unless the process of integration of local crops and scale up are supported by the government.
176. The reconstructed ToC identified seven assumptions as implicit in the project logic that is relevant to the IS and impact levels. These are listed in table 7 with notes on the extent to which these assumptions proved valid.

**Table 7: Validity of assumptions**

Assumptions	Validity
<b>The outcome to IS and their impact</b>	
Government support are assured through required legal frameworks, policies and guidelines related to agrobiodiversity conservation, sustainable use and ABS	<p><u>Partially valid</u>: There were commitments through various policies and legal frameworks to conserve agrobiodiversity but without coordinated programmes among the stakeholders (within the government and outside) to ensure synergies. The CCDABC provided support through the local government but there was no proper monitoring of the activities on how these investments were used to serve the purpose of local crop conservation and use.</p> <p>Government supports are still to be guided to reduce the production and processing risks (such as mechanization through developing a weeding machine for <i>chino</i>, de-husking mill for foxtail millet (<i>kaguno</i>), proso-millet <i>chino</i> and finger millet), product diversification and market risks. Legal framework for ABS and agrobiodiversity policies are drafted but yet to be adopted.</p> <p>In addition, the federalization process also affected the implementation process as there was no clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the different tiers of the government related to agrobiodiversity conservation and ABS.</p>

or others). The most important to attain intermediate states/impact; e) Level of Project Outcome achievement? Partial; f) Drivers to support transition from Project Outcome(s) to Intermediate States are. partially in place; g) Assumptions for the change process from Project Outcomes to Intermediate States. partially hold; h) Proportion of Intermediate States achieves. Some; i) Level of Intermediate State achievement. Partial; j) Drivers to support transition from Intermediate States to Impact are... partially in place; and k) Assumptions for the change process from Intermediate States to Impact...partially hold

Assumptions	Validity
Decision-making processes in the government are evidence-based.	<u>Partially valid</u> : The policies and strategies are being developed based on the field experience but further improvements are noted.
Government supports plans and programmes for scaling up	<u>Partially valid</u> : The governments (at federal and local levels) have supported the promotion of local crops and agro-biodiversity but they are still in limited areas and efforts for larger-scale scaling up is still not adequate.
Sustained political will and commitment to agrobiodiversity	<u>Partially valid</u> : There were commitments but adequate support available to promote the local crops.
<b>Output to outcomes</b>	
Farmers realize the benefits and value of traditional crops on food security, generating income and climate resilience,	<u>Partially valid</u> : (limited): Participating farmers realize the value of the local crop (health and food security) and some of them get some additional income but it is difficult to sustain the CSBs with their current income. Some of the farmers and local stakeholders also knew the role of local crops in climate change adaptation/resilience.
Gender and equity policies and priorities related to natural resources management are in place,	<u>Partially valid</u> : The government has policies to support the gender and equity issue and they are also considered during planning and implementation. There is however inadequate analysis, identification of needs and provision of equitable support to these socially excluded members and communities.
Government supports adequate agriculture extension services in the mountains, increasing market demand for local seeds and grains of local crops;	<u>Partially valid</u> : Based on the nature of the crop, socioeconomic conditions and agroecological situations, there is a need to have targeted extension services. There are staff and programmes to support the local crops but clear extension mechanisms are yet to be promoted.
Partners and stakeholders are willing to cooperate in the planning and implementation of activities in the project sites.	<u>Partially valid</u> : There was support from local governments in some sites and CCDABC was also supported through the local governments but, other than that, no other organizations were involved in the promotion of the crops.
The national fund flow and management mechanisms will not affect the project implementation.	<u>Partially valid</u> : There was some delay in getting funds for the project from MoF at the beginning of the project. Transfer of funds from NARC headquarters to Gene Bank was often delayed mainly due to the administrative process of NARC. In other cases, there was no problem.
No major disasters affect the project work	<u>Partially valid</u> : In the early stage of the project implementation, the project was affected by the Gorkha Earthquake – especially in the Dolakha sites, otherwise there was no other major natural disaster noted during the project implementation period.

177. The reconstructed TOC identifies four key processes or “drivers of change” that are implicit in the project logic and link the project interventions in all three components to the project objective:

Drivers	Remarks
<b>Outcome to IS and Impact level</b>	
The existing policy frameworks helped to integrate local crops to promote and increase awareness of local crops.	<u>Partially in place</u> : Despite having weak investment and integration in the programme, the government has developed policies which support agrobiodiversity conservation including traditional crops, such as agrobiodiversity policy, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan); and, international commitments to conservation (CBD, and ITPGRFA).
Farmers and stakeholders get fair incentives from agrobiodiversity and increasing public awareness	<u>Partially in place</u> : Due to small-scale work and a lack of policies on ABS, there were no formal incentive mechanisms developed. There were however some local seed trading started which helped farmers to get additional income.
<b>Outputs to outcomes</b>	
Farmers are with the knowledge to cultivate and use the local crops and the local crops are easily adapted to the local context/farming systems and help to improve farming systems resilience;	<u>Partially in place</u> : There has been increased awareness and knowledge among farmers and community level both from the government, other development organizations and the projects. The local crops are well known for adaptability in the local farming systems.
National policies, programmes and international commitments from the government of Nepal are supportive with financial assistance to agrobiodiversity conservation and promotion of local landraces.	<u>Partially in place</u> : The policies are in place to support conservation and sustainable use. The government also has a specific programme through CCDABC while working with the local government in collaboration. Despite these priorities, the supports are not adequate and a wider scaling up has not been realized.

178. Table 8 also provides the level of achievement of three objective-level indicators defined in the project Result Framework (also see annex VII for detail). Based on this assessment, the likelihood of the project achieving its intended impact is assessed as **‘Moderately Likely’**.

179. The effectiveness is rated **‘Satisfactory’**.

**Table 8: Progress against the project objective/impact**

Project objective/ impact	Rating	Observations/ justification on rating
Objective <sup>56</sup> : To mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems.	Moderately likely	<p>About a 20% increase in the number of target mountain crop varieties with variations in functional traits. These crops were evaluated on sites. 4 CSBs - established conserved 232 crop varieties of 35 crop species</p> <p>A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species were evaluated, out of which seeds of 60 varieties with functional traits are increased to reach over 20,000 households</p> <p>National Variety Catalog of promoted and the Farmers’ variety Catalogue of farmers’ local varieties published and shared widely. A good practice book for mainstreaming mountain agrobiodiversity was developed.</p> <p>A public website has been developed and regularly updated with the latest project events, news blogs and publications on agrobiodiversity &amp; ecosystem services (<a href="http://www.himalayancrops.org">www.himalayancrops.org</a>)</p> <p>Crop Development and Agrobiodiversity Conservation Centre of DoA, NAGRC, NARC, Agriculture Offices of four local Governments in Project sites, one <i>Anamol</i> Private Seed Company and three local NGOs including LIBIRD are deploying crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental changes in the mountain</p>

## 5.5 Financial Management

### 5.5.1 Adherence to UNEP’s policies and procedures

180. The evaluation noted that the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP’s financial management policy established the actual spending of project funds, and compared final expenditures against the initial budget.
181. No financial management issues were noted on BI’s side that affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance. Timely submission of expenditure reports was reported.
182. The stakeholders including the NARC mentioned that the project’s finance team within the PMU was capable enough to regularly analyze, check and project the expenditure against the proposed budget and annual work plan. Financial reports were prepared and submitted on time. The PIRs also mentioned that there was a ‘low risk’ of financial management as the project maintains high transparency in the management of project funds and financial reporting systems as comprehensive and timely.
183. The steering committee approved the planned budget on time. There was timely approval and disbursement of the budget and cash advances to the partners, but some

<sup>56</sup> Add rows if your objective has more than 3 outcome indicators. Same applies for the number of outcomes.

delays were noted in the case of NARC. NARC has its own financial and administrative policies which generally took a long time (about 1-2 months) for getting approval and actual budget release from NARC headquarters to the Gene Bank account.

184. The project underwent a minor reallocation of budget. For example, the PIRs (2016, 2017 and 2018) reported that there was a ‘low risk involved’ in budget management as the project activities were implemented within the proposed budget. The reports also indicated that there was a need to minor budget reallocation (within 30% of the total budget) to make effective implementation<sup>57</sup>.
185. The reallocations were needed, for example, for updating the procurement plan (PIR 2018) and for the response to the situation created by the Gorkha Earthquake and the unofficial Indian blockade that created fuel and material scarcity in 2015 and 2016 respectively. These minor budget revisions, when necessary, were made in discussion with the project team and the partners, and approved by the steering committee. It is noted that there was no significant deviation of the expenditure against the approved budget.
186. The evaluation concludes that the financial management was handled according to proper financial management standards and practice, and adherence to UNEP’s financial management policies. There were no identified instances of deviation from UNEP’s financial policies and procedures.
187. Adherence to UNEP and FAO’s financial policies and procedures is rated **‘Highly Satisfactory’**.

### 5.5.2 Completeness of Financial Information

188. The information provided to the evaluator included the project budget, project expenditure sheet, funding sources and expenditure of the project over the years. The following financial documents were provided for review.
  - a. Co-financing report for July 2017 to June 2018
  - b. Bioversity International (IPGRI) 2016 Audited Financial Statements
  - c. Bioversity International (IPGRI) 2017 Audited Financial Statements
  - d. Bioversity International (IPGRI) 2018 Audited Financial Statements
  - e. Bioversity International (IPGRI) 2019 Audited Financial Statements
  - f. Bioversity Nepal Co-financing 2016
  - g. Nepal Final co-financing report
  - h. Nepal Final Financial report including cash advance statement
  - i. Revised budget Oct 2019 – March 2020
189. The cumulative quarterly expenditure statement (June 2020) provided detailed information according to the UNEP budget lines with the total project budget, current

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<sup>57</sup> PIR 2019 page 37

year budget, cumulative expenditures from the previous period and the expenses. It is noted that there were some savings in some budget lines but in other cases, over-expenditures were making it zero balance in total -except the MTR and terminal evaluation budget lines (see annex IV).

190. The expenditure rate of the project was found low as planned in the initial years which was mainly because DoA did not sign the project LoA. This delay in the release of project resources led to higher expenditures in 2017 as compared to the initial budget and the project had high spending rates in 2018 and 2019. Moreover, partners' capacities (NARC and LIBIRD) to implement and up-scale field activities improved after 2017.
191. There were two budget revisions. No annual audit reports of the project are available to review. The project staff mentioned that it was not a requirement to carry out project-level auditing. The overall financial statements of Bioversity International available from 2016 to 2019 also indicate the status of the project. With this limited information, it was difficult to review the financial compliance from the auditors' point of view. In this case, the discussions with the finance staff and the project manager revealed that there were no specific auditor's observations or comments for improvement related to the project expenditure. The Gene Bank also carried out a project financial audit of the budget received by NARC through 'the auditor general of the government of Nepal', it was reported that there were no financial issues raised related to the expenditure of the project.
192. It was noted that there were no requirements for the project team of providing the project expenses as per the components. So, project expenses as per the component were not available. As there was no budget left at the end of the project, it is considered that the three components had 98.2% expenditure (see Annex IV).
193. The evaluation team was provided with financial information including the project budget and subsequent amendments, expenditure reports and audit reports for periods from 2016 – 2019 but there was also some important information missing (such as project financial audit reports).
194. Co-financing analysis: The pledged counterpart co-financing at the time of approval was USD 5,831,104 or 72% of the total project budget (USD 8,131,104). According to the co-financing report (up to 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020), the project achieved more than the planned co-financing (total amount of USD 6,077,440 - this amount does not cover UNEP committed contribution of USD 425,000). Out of the total financing, NARC contributed a total of USD 2.578 million, LIBIRD contributed USD 1.278 million and Bioversity International contributed USD 2.22 million as co-financing in cash and in-kind contributions. Bioversity International and the national partner NARC contributed additional resources<sup>58</sup> (in cash and in-kind) beyond their initial commitment during

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<sup>58</sup> More co-financing was also due to the no cost extensions.

PPG (pre-proposal grant) phase<sup>59</sup>. But LIBIRD had a deficiency of USD 28,208 in their initial commitment. The co-financing (USD 48,559) from the Department of Agriculture (DoA) was not available as there was no LoA with the department.

195. The PIRs also showed a low risk of co-financing. The report mentioned ‘co-financing payments and in-kind contribution has been secured regularly’. It was however difficult for the evaluator to review and verify the real monetary value of the in-kind co-financing contributions.
196. The project did not report the co-financing as required for the TE i.e., sources of co-financing and their cash and in-kind – pledged and actual. The project team reported that it was not the requirement of reporting so the reporting was done according to the budget lines.
197. The Completeness of Financial Information is rated ‘**Satisfactory**’.

### **5.5.3 Communication between finance and project management staff**

198. Based on the discussions with the project staff including from co-executing agencies, there was good communication between the technical and finance team members. Most of the project staff mentioned that the relationship and the communication between the UNEP Fund Management Officer, the local finance officer and the Project Manager were good enough and there were no issues reported.
199. The TM was able to review the annual budget, financial plan and budget revision, and discuss with UNEP’s TM when necessary, to meet financial compliance and standards. Both the technical and finance teams were found to have adequate knowledge of the project’s financial status. Financial reporting was generally completed on time with adequate supporting documentation. Only minor financial management issues arose during the project implementation and they were dealt with through proper communication between the Task Manager, the Fund Manager and the Project Manager.
200. Communication between Finance and Project Management Staff is rated ‘**Satisfactory**’.

## **5.6 Efficiency**

201. The project efficiency is assessed primarily based on the timeliness of implementation and cost-effectiveness of the interventions.
202. Timeliness of implementation: The project underwent two formal ‘no cost extensions’ in April 2019 (Amendment no. 1/PC/2013/035) and Sept 2019 (Amendment No. 2/PCA/2013/035). In the first extension, the project was extended until 31 March 2020. The main purpose of the extension was to complete the remaining activities of

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<sup>59</sup> Annex 12 - Final Report-UNEP-GEF Project A1150-Revised (page 1).

the project which was delayed due to implementation challenges beyond the control of the Co-executing Agency. The second ‘no cost extension’ was made until Sept 2020 to complete the remaining tasks (such as financial closing and reporting) for the closure of the project. An issue that was raised during interviews was that despite the title ‘no-cost’, the extensions created an administrative burden for implementing and executing agencies. This required covering expenses related to the new period, occupying staff and consuming other resources. While this was the case, the extensions were justified to finish the project activities and serve the communities in the extended project period.

203. Cost-effectiveness of the interventions: There are no signs of duplication of efforts with other projects. The project tried to collaborate with other initiatives where possible. For example, the project has carried out a joint activity with another GEF-funded project which is being managed by IUCN (GEF Project ID 9352 –Strengthening Capacities for Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Nepal)’. The field mission however noted that additional synergies could have been further developed while working with the local municipalities and other partners.
204. The PIR 2020 and final technical reports mentioned that all project outputs were completed. As elaborated in chapter 5.4.1, the project progress reports (such as PIR and biannual reports) did not report against the output level indicators and targets. Based on the discussion with the stakeholders and the evaluator’s analysis, there was no adequate evidence available to justify that all outputs are delivered as claimed in the project reports.
205. The project however witnessed some challenges during the project implementation that affected the project efficiency to some extent. Some of them include:
  - a. It took about 4 months to get project approval from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) at the beginning of the project start. This was partly due to the staff transfer within the Ministry and partly due to getting less priority within the MoF as the project funding was comparatively small.
  - b. Due to the financial and administrative processes of NARC, Gene Bank used to get the project funds late (sometimes by 2 months) which sometimes created challenges in completing planned activities on time. It took much effort from the project to get the funds released, and that time could have been better spent carrying out the defined project tasks.
  - c. In April 2015, Nepal was devastated by a big Earthquake and some project sites (especially in the Dolakha district) were heavily affected.
  - d. With the provision of the new constitutions, Nepal shifted from unitary to federal governance systems which dissolved the district agriculture office in the project districts (which used to be a field partner). In addition, with the formation of three tiers of the government, there was a huge staff transfer. The

project ran for about six years and during that period there were also a lot of staff changes within the implementing agency, executing/co-executing agencies and the governments.

- e. During the initial period, there was hesitation from farmers due to inadequate awareness among the communities about the value of the local crops. They, instead, wanted some material and financial support to grow improved crop varieties, produce more and generate more income.
  - f. Some of the staff also indicated that the project outputs and outcome statements were so complex that it took some time for the field staff to comprehend and internalize them properly. This was partly addressed by organizing some training sessions. They also viewed that the project had too many activities that demanded heavy engagement without having much time to think about the causal linkage among activities, outputs and outcomes of the project.
  - g. It is noted that the project has four sites which were in remote areas in the Himalayan regions. Accessibility was highly limited and travelling for field implementation and monitoring was difficult. Winter in those areas is harsh and farmers and the project team have very limited time to act. Due to remoteness and harsh climate, the frequent project staff turnover was also high – especially technical staff.
206. These challenges delayed the project activity implementation to some extent – especially in the early stage of the project implementation and cost-effectiveness of implementation. The project, however, paid additional efforts by giving additional responsibilities to project staff for better coordination, developing implementation protocols and completing the task on time.
207. The project adopted some cost-saving measures with a relative degree of success. The project mainly worked with a national NGO with rich experience in the thematic area and the project sites, with the use of local staff, who have good local knowledge, skills and experiences in community mobilization and networking with grass-roots organizations.
208. The project gave a genuine attempt to increase overall efficiency in biodiversity management by adopting some innovative<sup>60</sup> and participatory agrobiodiversity management approaches. Some of them include participatory crop improvement (PPB/PVS), participatory seed exchange, biodiversity kit, biodiversity fair, Diversity field school creation CSB, the creation of a community biodiversity management (CBM) trust fund, development of mechanisms to serve CSBs as a basic unit of ABS at the local level and making the simplified systems for local crop registration. In

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<sup>60</sup> According to GEF’s definition of innovation - doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value’

addition, the project also used the climate analogue approach to identify the analogue sites (now and in future) for the expansion of the local crops. All these tasks helped to gain quick and efficient support from communities and local stakeholders.

209. The project employed adaptive management practices in natural resources management in remote mountain areas. Although the project did not deliver all planned physical outputs and outcomes are yet to be fully achieved, the relationship between implementation progress, contextual challenges and financial resources invested revealed that the project in general was implemented efficiently. Costs appear reasonable, with the project has achieved a large number of direct beneficiaries. Hence the efficiency is rated '**Satisfactory**'.

## 5.7 Monitoring and Reporting

### 5.7.1 Monitoring Design and Budgeting

210. The project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plans in the project design were consistent with the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy. The Results Framework (RF) was used as the main tool to monitor and report compliance with outputs and outcomes compared with the baselines. The project RF presented in the ProDoc includes SMART indicators for expected outcomes, along with mid-term and end-of-project targets. This was considered the main tool for assessing project implementation progress and whether project results are being achieved. The means of verification and the costs associated with the M&R activities with obtaining the information to track the indicators were also proposed in the ProDoc.
211. The preliminary oversight role of the M & E was carried out by Bioversity International (BI) whereas the PSC reviewed the major progress and provided recommendations where necessary. The project team used to share the challenges faced by the projects to UNEP, and corrective measures were explored jointly. It is noted that project oversight was ensured to meet the UNEP and GEF policies and standards.
212. The project design allocated a sum of USD 142,000 (midterm USD 25,000 and final evaluation USD 30,000 reporting USD 80,000 and audit USD 5,000 - about 6.1% of total costs) for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities. Given the scope of the project, operation in the remote areas and the complexity of measurement of some of the expected outcomes, it was not clear how these resources were to be used for setting up the evidence-based monitoring and evaluation systems that can demonstrate a clear change (by having baseline and endline).
213. There was no detailed M&E plan available with clear responsibilities for the stakeholders. In addition, the plan was silent on how to integrate the issues such as disaggregated data by relevant stakeholder groups – including gender and marginalised/disadvantaged groups.

214. It is noted that, in some cases, indicators and targets did not resemble each other. For example, in the case of output 1, the first indicator is ‘Number of farmer practices evaluated, mixtures developed, and participatory plant breeding experiments’ whereas the corresponding end of the project target is ‘20% more varieties available with variation in levels of resistance in respect to abiotic and biotic stresses are available in the farmers’ production system in all four of the project sites and beyond’.
215. In addition, on baselines, the information was either ‘non-existence’ or unclear. For instance – at baseline, ‘the concept of an amount of local functional diversity in respect to environmental stresses in the farmers’ field is negligible’ (outcome 1) with limited geographic scope, crop and type/extent of diversity.
216. Monitoring design and budgeting are assessed as **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

### 5.7.2 Monitoring of Project Implementation

217. The project organized regular review and planning meetings to review progress and plan field activities. The PSC, which sat six times during the project period, was also used to get updates on the progress made by the project and provided input for improvement. UNEP supervised BI through the review of work plans and progress reports, supervision visits and participation in the PSC. The UNEP TM also performed monitoring missions as part of annual reviews.
218. Routine project monitoring was based on field observations and reporting by a variety of staff and stakeholders including PMU staff, consultants, and the beneficiaries themselves. The field-level supervisor/officer in each project site monitored the project activities. The project carried out field-level training where processes and methods of field monitoring were also a part of it. The methodology of field assessment developed by the project to monitor the crop diversity at the farmers’ field level was found effective by the local government as well as officials at the MoALD.
219. Joint field monitoring visits were also organized with the participation of NARC, the DoA, LIBIRD and Bioversity International. For example, the project organized a field monitoring in Hunku, Jumla from 11-15 September 2018.
220. Aside from the M&E plan in the ProDoc, no updated version of the work plan was produced. The monitoring system was mainly anchored on the PIRs, which tracked results and progress towards project objectives. While the reports were prepared against the outcome indicators, the project did not report against the output indicators. The project team however mentioned that they provided the information as required in the reporting format.
221. It is noted that monitoring is geared toward collecting data for reporting purposes rather than having a robust monitoring system or tools to facilitate improvement and learning through timely tracking of results and progress towards project outcomes. To some extent, M&E was considered by project partners more as a GEF requirement than an instrument to improve project execution, and achievement of outcomes and ensure

- sustainability. In addition, there was no full-time M&E staff which could have contributed to making the strong M&R systems.
222. The PIRs reported the internal and external risks of the project. The reports mentioned the challenges faced by the project, such as the Earthquake, economic blockade, federalization, and policy impediments for ABS. But there was no clear explanation of how these challenges affected the risk profile of the project and changed the project assumptions and, in effect, how these were mitigated. These aspects were not well addressed in the project monitoring and reporting mechanisms.
  223. Despite having some quantitative indicators in the RF, there was still no adequate baseline created by the project. During the project design, there was only 50% of baseline data available (see ProDoc page 83) and there were other baselines which were planned to be collected within 18 months but this was not achieved. Besides, with the change in the federal structure (in the project case, local government boundary changes when moving from village development committee to rural municipality), the baseline created could have changed their relevancy. In absence of an adequate and reliable baseline, the project reported the progress by providing some narratives/anecdotal evidence against the indicators without specific comparable data.
  224. There was no monitoring of impact during the project implementation. The objective of the project was ‘to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscape of Nepal to improve ecosystems resilience, ecosystems services and access and benefit sharing’ but the indicators as well as reporting provided mostly output level progress (such as 20% increase in the number of target mountain crops, a total of 300 varieties of 8 targets species are deployed’). These progress reports do not communicate the level of achievement of the project objective.
  225. There was no detailed disaggregated data available related to gender and other vulnerable groups. For example, the project document has emphasized the gender equity issue (see output 1.4 and its activities such as enhancing capacity and gender equity of farmers groups...) and ensured equitable benefits from the project outputs. For this, the project proposed to promote women’s participation in technical and university training programmes and decision-making (activity 3.4), but there was no gender analysis carried out and no gender-disaggregated data available. However, the field visits and other interviews confirmed that women’s participation in the conservation and use of local crops has improved.
  226. According to the final financial report, there was no clear budget heading provided for the field implementation monitoring but they were put under different headings such as budget line # 3302 ‘site coordination meeting’, #3304 ‘technical meetings’, #3305 ‘steering committee meeting’, # 5201 ‘reports’ and # 5501 ‘midterm evaluation’. Hence,

it was difficult to assess how the financial resources were used for the specific monitoring activities.

227. The project also used the GEF tracking tools (see ProDoc Appendix 15) which were supposed to be updated in mid-term and terminal evaluation. The updated information however is not available for review.
228. The monitoring of project implementation was **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

### 5.7.3 Project reporting

229. The assessment relied on the documents provided by the project. These included PIRs, SC minutes, final technical report, ProDoc, financial reports, MTR and other technical reports. The evidence provided covered the whole project period.
230. The UNEP Task Manager (TM) with support from executing/co-executing agencies, prepared and ensured the quality of project reports including the scientific and technical outputs and publications. The project prepared various kinds of reports such as project inception reports; semi-annual progress reports; co-financing reports; and terminal reports. All these reports were prepared by the project team and presented to the PSC for review, endorsement and necessary action. The financial reports were prepared by BI and regularly submitted to UNEP.
231. There was good collaboration and communication between the executing/co-executing agencies and UNEP to produce the reports. Monitoring of the project activities and outputs from BI’s side was done through the PIRs and half-yearly progress reports. Financial reports were presented quarterly, together with requests for the advance of funds. The project has one major M&E-related report i.e., the MTR report.
232. It is noted in general that there was good consistency between the progress reports (PIRs, biannual and technical reports) and the discussions carried out with stakeholders and end users in the field. The evaluator however found that the project overstated its achievement in some cases. For example- the project reported all outputs were completed but the evaluator’s assessment showed that was not the case.
233. The RF was used as the only M&E tool, to plan and monitor project activities and expected outputs. The framework was also used as the basis for reporting to the BI Project Manager, and from him to the UNEP TM. The RF presents the indicators, mid-term and final targets of outputs, outcomes and objectives. The progress for outputs was not reported according to the indicators and targets, however.
234. The quality of the PIR reports has been generally good. A gradual improvement was noticed from the start to the end of the implementation period. Due to a lack of adequate reporting against the output, it was difficult for the evaluator to assess the

level of achievement. The project’s final financial report (until March 2020) was completed during the evaluation period.

235. In short, the project developed progress reports on time but there were also some deficiencies in the reporting systems. For example, there was weak data disaggregation by gender and/or vulnerable/marginalized groups, inadequate baseline data created that was required to assess the contribution/attribution of the changes and inadequate tracking of progress at outcome and impact levels. The project reporting is assessed as **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

## 5.8 Sustainability

236. The evaluation considered four dimensions of the sustainability of project outcomes: socio-political, financial and institutional. The project made a special effort to achieve the expected outputs & outcomes and to promote the sustainability of the project outcomes after the project ended.

### 5.8.1 Socio-political sustainability

237. The socio-political sustainability of the project depends critically upon two factors: first, the commitment of the local communities to integrate the local crop into their farming systems (social/community ownership); and second, the commitment of government authorities at the national and sub-national levels to own the project result and continue the results after the completion of the project (political will).
238. It was noted that there was a moderate dependency on ownership and local-level capacity to sustain the project results. There were different levels of ownership, interest, leadership and commitment among stakeholders to sustain project outcomes. On one hand, a high level of ownership, interest and commitment was noticed among people and institutions at the local level and the co-executing agencies and the federal agriculture ministry. On the other hand, stakeholders outside the sphere of influence of the co-executing agencies (such as major decision makers and planners in the government), who are crucial in the causal pathway of change (such as investment and scaling up), did not have adequate internalization and ownership for the future scaling up with dedicated financial resources.
239. The Government’s ownership (through NARC/Gene Bank) was strong in this project, due to the NARC’s involvement and long-standing relations with BI and LIBIRD, and the mandate of the Gene Bank to conserve agrobiodiversity. Although there was no involvement of the DoA as envisioned in the project during the project design, the project had a close collaboration with the CCDABC and Seed Quality Control Centre (SQCC) of the government of Nepal for various project-related activities. In 2021/2022, CCDABC launched an ‘indigenous (local) crop programme’ and supported two districts (i. e. Lamjung and Humla) of the project districts. Based on the discussions with the

MoALD, it was one of the priority areas of the government and it is likely to have further attention in future.

240. The existing regulatory framework is supportive of sustainable livelihoods considering the conservation of agrobiodiversity. Nepal has established broadly appropriate legislative frameworks for the protection of agrobiodiversity and the rights of indigenous minorities and local communities. Conservation of agrobiodiversity, development of climate-resilient crops and ecosystem-based adaptation are some of the priority areas of the government. However, the history of implementation of these policy agendas has been rather inconsistent. Besides, there is also a need to address some emerging issues related to agrobiodiversity conservation and use. It, therefore, needs some urgent attention to improvise the policy and legal frameworks.
241. It was noted that the project had proposed some solutions to contribute to the government’s agrobiodiversity conservation and development agenda by contributing to the policy and legal provisions such as the Agrobiodiversity Conservation Act (draft). In addition, the project started working on developing benefit-sharing mechanisms for local communities in 2019/2020. For this, the project worked with some private seed companies such as *Anamol* in Dolakha and product diversification<sup>61</sup> in Humla. The initiative was at the initial stage during the project period; hence the project was not able to assure the longer-term market for these products and establish sustainable mechanisms for income generation.
242. The socio-political sustainability is therefore rated ‘**Likely**’.

### **5.8.2 Financial Sustainability**

243. The project outcomes have a high dependency on, and sensitivity to, financial sustainability to have a larger impact. The project design also considered financial sustainability through equitable benefit sharing of the project as a key element.
244. Financial sustainability, in this case, is primarily dependent on the market - mainly the niche markets for local crop-based products. There existed a good market in the capital city Kathmandu or other urban areas for the local crop products. But the existing CSBs were not in a position to capture those markets as: a) institutional capacity (leadership, business planning and entrepreneurship skills) to connect and collect demand is still to be fully developed; b) the logistics of delivery from the remote area to the capital city is complex; c) most of them were producing seed only (without consumable goods in terms of food); and d) they were not licensed to sell the local crop seeds.
245. The government at the federal level has one local crop promotion programme with some dedicated funding and this is for the selected municipalities. Some municipalities have also supported the local crops (especially in the *Karnali* Province)

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<sup>61</sup> One of the local entrepreneurs from Humla prepared nutrient products (harlicks) from barley, biscuits from China, muffin from millet

but these initiatives cover small areas with less funding. There was no formal exit strategy available but the project has influenced the CCDABC so that they continue to support the local crops.

246. In general, CSBs were found weak for self-sustaining. This was a common challenge for the CSBs – especially in the Himalayan regions as there was less opportunity to sell local seeds alone. It was noted in a couple of CSBs that their annual income was less than what they required to run the CSBs. For example, in Jumla, the CSB paid monthly compensation to the manager and office rent of USD 38 and USD 23 per month respectively and they earned less than that. The case was more or less similar in Dolakha as well. Lamjung CBS was making some profit, however, and the main reasons for this were continued support received from the government, strong leadership, and closeness to the urban centres. The discussion with the communities showed that they needed additional financial and technical support to sustain the CSBs at the local level after the completion of the project.
247. With the support from the project, the CSBs were involved in selling seeds and other processing- and value-addition-related activities [such as product diversification in Humla, de-husking machine (*chino Kutak*) and linking with the market (such as with Anmol seed company) in Dolakha] that would help in increasing local crop products sale and improve the income of the communities. Despite some good results, there was no adequate work on linking the local crop value chain (which is outside the project scope) and creating sustainable income generation for the participating communities. There was no encouraging progress noted in the last two years in this aspect after the completion of the project.
248. The majority of the project partners interviewed raised concerns about the financial sustainability of the project. No formal exit strategy was developed to institutionalize the results derived from the project and support sustainable financing mechanisms. According to the best practices for project management, there should be a formal exit strategy, with a clear financial analysis of the need/ availability of resources. This exit strategy should have been developed at the onset of the project in close collaboration with key project partners, approved by the PSC and broadly communicated to major stakeholders.
249. Financial sustainability is assessed as ‘Moderately likely’.

### **5.8.3 Institutional sustainability**

250. There was a provision within the policy and programmes for the registration of CSBs in government institutions but it was not clear how to do this. Hence, the project helped to create a flexible process to register local crops by a group of farmers or local institutions. This was considered an important contribution from the project side.
251. Four CSBs were created and supported for their institutional building. The institutional and administrative capacity of the CSBs within the project sites however varies. It is

noted that these CSBs generated some income during the project implementation period with support from the project. The CSB was considered the main vehicle to get financial incentives or secure benefits-sharing arrangements at the local level.

252. One of the challenges was to cover the expenses of CSBs; hence the project created a CSB ‘trust fund’<sup>62</sup> which provided opportunities for CSBs to use the fund for saving and credit purposes within the CSB members. It was expected that the income generated from ‘saving and credit’ partially supports the running of the CSB. The discussion with the CSB members showed that it was difficult for them to bear the annual expenses of the CSBs from the ‘saving and credit’ income hence sustainability of the CSB by establishing the trust fund was found inadequate. This should have been reviewed during the project implementation or before the wrapping up of the project. In absence of clear exit strategies, the sustainability of the CSB trust fund was not clear.

253. During the TE mission, it was noted that these banks however faced some challenges in running their activities smoothly. Common challenges included the capacity gap of the people involved in CSBs, no business plan, inadequate demand for local crop seeds<sup>63</sup>, difficulty to get seed trading permission from the government<sup>64</sup> and weak connection with the local governments and other agricultural offices to ensure support for the CSBs (see box 4).

**Box 4: Status of CSBs in the eyes of local government representative**

One of the local government representatives mentioned that the management committee and farmers are doing their best to sustain the CSBs. They sold some seeds to the local government as well as outside of the project district. But they are now suffering from more expenses than income from their seed sell. Their operation is small, capacity is low, no business acumen - do not have idea of loss and profit, no business plan, no monitoring of activities and no financial audit. They are dependent on external support. He also said ‘they need capacity strengthening support to prepare their policies and actionable plan to get support from the local government. We could be happy to support this initiative if they demonstrate that they are capable enough to manage the CSBs and the fund they receive’.

254. The MoALD has developed pro-agrobiodiversity policies and expressed its commitment to support agrobiodiversity conservation in various international fora. MoALD and FoFE have also developed institutional frameworks such as the biodiversity division within the ministry of agriculture and forest, and CCDABC within the department of agriculture. The institutional context at the national level for promoting agrobiodiversity including local crops however remains pretty young within MoALD. There was weak cross-ministry coordination and cooperation. Given the major role of the MoFE in biodiversity management in Nepal, close collaboration between the

<sup>62</sup> Each CSBs received about 4,00,000 NRs (130 NRs = 1 USD) as a s trust fund

<sup>63</sup> In the mountain – Local crops are grown by most of the farmers in the communities and there was a culture of seed sharing among the neighbours and relatives, so the commercial demand for seed within the communities was negligible.

<sup>64</sup> Selling seeds outside the communities required the registration of the seed within the government systems and permission from formal government institutions. The crops are recently registered and there is no clarity on the current mechanisms that would provide such permission for the CSBs.

MoFE and MoALD is essential. For example, both ministries were working on draft ABS legal frameworks parallelly but without having a common understanding among themselves on various ABS issues.

255. With federalization, the roles of the different tiers of the government have been changed. For example, according to the Local Government Operation Act (2017), local governments are given a specific role of agrobiodiversity conservation in their areas. Similarly, the Seed Act (2022<sup>65</sup>) has provided some authority to the provincial and local governments but it requires a national-level clear architect to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the local government, provincial government and federal government.
256. Institutional sustainability is rated '**Moderately likely**'.
257. Overall sustainability of the good result of the project is '**Moderately Likely**'.

## 5.9 Factors Affecting Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues

### 5.9.1 Preparation and readiness

258. The inception workshop cum launching meeting was carried out on 15th and 16th May 2014. Based on the discussion with the project staff, the inception meeting shared the scope of the project and implementation strategies, and input from the participants was integrated to improve the implementation strategies.
259. The National Project Steering Committee (PSC) was formalized and the first meeting was held on 16 May 2014. The PSC was chaired by the Joint Secretary of MoALD and the Chief of National Gene Bank served as a *de-facto* secretary where the members of the committee were represented by the institutional head of partner organizations and relevant stakeholders and farmer communities. The roles and responsibilities of the PSC and stakeholders were agreed upon at the beginning of the project implementation.
260. The project was managed through PMU hosted within NARC Genebank, managed by Bioversity International and supervised by the steering committee. The project also had a technical committee to discuss the technical matters and take necessary decisions. The project document provided a comprehensive work plan with annual and component-wise breakdowns under each budget line. In general, there were some minor reallocations of the budget which were regularly approved by the PSC. There was however no procurement plan available to review.
261. The project stakeholder analysis was undertaken through extensive stakeholder consultations and analysis during the project design phase (see chapter 2.5 of the ProDoc) to ensure synergies among the partners. The field-level stakeholder

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<sup>65</sup> According to Seed Act (2022), local governments are given responsibility to create local seed management committee by creating an act whereas Provincial government authority to register the local crop at provincial level

consultations were also organized in four districts whereas institutional analysis of the various organizations (such as NARC, MoALD, LIBIRD, MoF, MoFE, DOA, SQCC, VDC, Universities, international organizations and development partners) were carried out. The analysis also involved an assessment of the scope and mission of the organizations and the potential roles of the organization in the project. There was however no capacity assessment of the organizations carried out.

262. The project was formally agreed upon with the Ministry of Finance, as the focal ministry of the government of Nepal for the GEF. The project had formal agreements with the national executing partners i.e., NARC and LIBIRD whereas the project agreement with the DoA was not materialized mainly due to small project funds and the long administrative and budget transfer processes within the Ministry. Alternatively, the CCDABC (the centre is the Government mandated agency for agro-biodiversity conservation in Nepal) was formed after the project was started and the Steering Committee would have added the CCDABC as one of the partners of this project. Likewise, after the federalization, the project could have also included selected Provincial Governments as implementing partners.
263. The discussions with the project team and stakeholders reported that there was no issue of timely staff mobilization in the project, there were however staff retention challenges, especially in the mountain regions.
264. UNEP provided reasonable responses to the questions – related to project consistency, project design, finance and monitoring - raised by the GEF secretariat during the final stage of the project approval. The project got approval from GEF on 8th April 2013 and UNEP approval on 15th Nov 2013 and the first disbursement was made on 18th December 2013<sup>66</sup>. Hence, the difference between the approval date and first disbursement date was one within UNEP and between UNEP and GEF was about eight months.
265. It was noted that project executing partners were already familiar with each other and their working modality. The executing partners were involved in the PPG stage so there was a quite strong understanding of the project concept and modality among the stakeholders.
266. The rating for the preparation and readiness is ‘**Satisfactory**’.

### 5.9.2 Quality of Project Management and Supervision

267. The PSC played both advisory and decision-making roles. The PSC met six times<sup>67</sup> during the project implementation period and its minutes were made available for review. The PSC discussed relevant issues, reaching decisions and providing guidance through concrete recommendations.

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<sup>66</sup> PIR 2018

<sup>67</sup> The sixth steering committee organized on 24 February 2020

268. The RF was used as the monitoring and effectiveness assessment tool. The project had a relatively small core PMU team within NARC and the Kathmandu-based PMU managed all project activities in four districts. The evaluation found that the majority of project staff had technical profiles aligned with the project requirements while it was also reported that some staff in the field did not have adequate experience related to local crops, mountain farming systems and agro-biodiversity as some of them were fresh graduates.
269. NARC managed the technical part along with carrying out field research through its hill research stations whereas LIBIRD managed the field activities. Both co-executing agencies provided their strong leadership in the project. No major project management issues arose during the project implementation period.
270. It is noted that there was good communication between the executing/co-executing agencies, staff involvement in the project and UNEP. To address the contextual changes, the project team also used adaptive management and addressed the field-level issues. The issues related to finance (such as budget reallocation) and activities prioritization were managed in coordination among the executing/co-executing agencies. The relationship between the PM and TM was found cooperative and mutually supportive. The project team however preferred to have more technical support and supervision from the UNEP side by bringing international perspectives and knowledge. The operational level risk assessments were carried out regularly. These assessments were reflected in the PIRs but no risk assessment of the major contextual changes such as federalization and policy framework related to ABS was carried out.
271. The project also carried out its Mid-Term Review (MTR) from September to December 2018 and the review also provided information regarding the field implementation status. Although there was limited time to integrate recommendations, as most of the project activities were due to complete in mid-2019, the project staff mentioned that they integrated the feedback to the extent possible (please also see the MTR section below for detail).
272. Staff high turnover was another challenge. The performance of implementing agencies such as Bioversity, NARC and LIBIRD is satisfactory. The steering committee also steer the project planning and management process but it was mainly reactive in nature than being proactive and taking initiatives itself. During the project lifespan (2014 to 2020), there were a lot of changes in steering committee members, project coordinators and field staff. To a large extent, handover processes were poor. The project personnel highlighted a careful consideration of these aspects in future project management.

273. The project adopted a moderate adaptive management approach<sup>68</sup>. The PSC minutes and PIRs revealed that steps were taken to respond to execution and field challenges.
274. Overall, the quality of project management and supervision from both BI and UNEP is rated **'Satisfactory'**.

### 5.9.3 Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation

275. As mentioned earlier as well, stakeholder analysis was carried out during the project design and identified the potential role of the relevant stakeholders. It is however noted that all stakeholders mentioned in the ProDoc were not involved in the later part of the project implementation. For example, the roles of Nepal-based universities<sup>69</sup> and the Peasant Farmer Association<sup>70</sup> were identified during project design as potential partners but they were not part of the project implementation.
276. The project team paid its best efforts to make aware and capacitate the stakeholders to promote their ownership of the project results. It worked closely with CCDABC and provided technical input related to local crops and the local crop registration process through capacity-building workshops/training and knowledge sharing. Technical write shops separately for NARC and LIBIRD were organized to finalize and prepare a technical paper/final report of the completed activities of the project. The project also provided technical support to the Ministry in the preparation of policy documents (such as agrobiodiversity and ABS bills) on a needed basis.
277. The level of stakeholder participation during the project implementation was encouraging. The project was implemented with good participation and cooperation of the communities, CBOs and local authorities along with national stakeholders such as CCDABC and SQCC. There was an effective collaboration with the project partners and CBOs and cooperatives in the project sites. However, inadequate collaboration in the field with other stakeholders was noted. The collaboration with the MoFEs and the National Association of Rural Municipality Nepal (NARMIN<sup>71</sup>) at the district-level promotional activities could have added value to this process.
278. There was a good level of communication found among the executing/co-executing agencies in terms of planning, monitoring and other kinds of decision making including financial support. In addition, joint learning and sharing and collaboration on events (such as biodiversity fairs, and organic fairs) were noted. There was however limited

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<sup>68</sup> The project management was mainly controlled from Kathmandu/PMU and followed the activities implementation agreed by the steering committee. Changing these agreed activities would take a longer time – getting another concurrence from the steering committee (which generally sat once in a year) and in some cases – it has to take permission from UNEP

<sup>69</sup> support the project in providing scientific and technical inputs and collaborations in research and development of methods and approaches

<sup>70</sup> support community based management of agrobiodiversity and mobilize local government resources

<sup>71</sup> The main objective of NARMIN is to advocate and lobby for a legal and policy framework towards local government, coordinate and share knowledge among RMs in improving service delivery & resource mobilization; and build stronger civil society networking for good governance & legal democracy. For detail browse at <https://www.narmin.org.np>.

participation of the private sector in the value chain development including in buying local seeds. It was noted that the role of the private sector could have been improved in the trading of genetic materials and value addition of the local crops.

279. The level of participation of the stakeholders was found **‘Satisfactory’**.

#### **5.9.4 Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity**

280. Human Rights were not considered in the project design as well as in the project implementation. No negative impacts on human rights were reported or identified during the evaluation.

281. Regarding gender mainstreaming, the ProDoc mentioned gender integration in the project planning and implementation (see output 1.4 page 53). Gender mainstreaming was proposed as an important component of this project. The project made some efforts to mainstream gender in program implementation at the local and national levels. Some of the major activities included engaging women in field-level project activities, recruiting women field technicians in project sites to mobilize women farmers in the implementation of project activities and involving women farmer representatives from a project site in the PSC. Women's participation during the training and workshop was also encouraging. Discussions with most of the staff mentioned that gender was integrated through women's participation in the project activities.

282. The evaluation noted that the design was somewhat weak in bringing up gender issues. Overall gender dimension and gender equity issues were understood with a narrow focus on women's participation in the project activities. The project did not adequately assess the gender gap and identify activities to respond to gender and equity issues. There was inadequate focus on how to increase the role of women in the decision-making process of natural resources management and empowering them. No disaggregated data, except the number of participants of women in the project-related events<sup>72</sup>, were collected and reported. Hence, the responsiveness to human rights and gender equality is rated **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

#### **5.9.5 Environmental and Social Safeguards**

283. The ES safeguards were considered in the project design. The project design had a short but sufficient safeguards analysis. Environmental sustainability was a core concern in the design of project activities.

284. The project used various measures for environmental and social safeguards (ESS). Some of the examples of ESS are the use of protection and use of agro-biodiversity, promotion of ecosystems services, climate resilience, promotion of locally adapted

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<sup>72</sup> The PIR 2020 mentioned that ‘Good participation of women (60%) is made in farmers groups of Diversity Field Schools and Community Seed Bank members. Women participation in Karnali technical schools (KTS) for agrobiodiversity courses taken by project teams is also good (40%).’

- crops, promotion of organic agriculture (less use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides) and working with the poor and women groups in the remote areas.
285. No negative environmental impact was expected from the project intervention. During the implementation, no unintended negative environmental impacts were found as a consequence of the project interventions. This is logical since the objective and activities of the project focused on enhancing positive environmental impacts through conservation and use of agrobiodiversity, and promotion of ecosystems friendly agricultural practices.
286. The project promoted nature-based farming considering mountain ecosystems without using chemicals to avoid negative environmental impacts. Local crops are already considered climate resilient crops and they are also considered future smart food (FSF<sup>73</sup>) crops, as they can be grown in less fertile and less irrigated areas, and can tolerate harsh environments and pests. In addition, the project has also considered climate-resilient agriculture practices in the climate-vulnerable mountain agroecosystems through participatory crop improvement, participatory seed exchange, and diversified-based farmers’ field schools.
287. Regarding social safeguards, the project provided support to women and marginalized communities in remote areas. These activities were included in the management plan but they are not adequately comprehensive. No proper gender analysis was carried out, and gender-responsive activities were identified. No such baseline was carried out.
288. No negative environmental or social impacts of the project were identified in the project reporting. Hence environmental and social safeguards are rated ‘**Satisfactory**’.

#### **5.9.6 Country Ownership and Driven-ness**

289. The project was aligned with and intended to implement national policies and strategies related to agriculture development and agrobiodiversity conservation. The country ownership from the Government's point of view was noted as thematically quite strong. The Department of Agriculture (mainly CCDABC) and the MoFE (through the national climate change policy, NBSAP) recognized the value of agrobiodiversity and ecosystems-based adaptation has been considered as a major strategy to address the climate change impacts.
290. The PSC took overall responsibility for making decisions and provision of supervision roles. The project’s PMU was situated within the NARC and had a strong collaboration with government agencies. The project worked very closely with the CCDABC and it has started integrating local crops into its annual programme. In addition, SQCC also

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<sup>73</sup> Li, X., & Siddique, K. H. (2020). Future Smart Food: Harnessing the potential of neglected and underutilized species for Zero Hunger. *Maternal & child nutrition*, 16, e13008. Joshi, B.K and Shrestha, R., (2018) In book: Future Smart Food: Rediscovering hidden treasures of neglected and underutilized species for Zero Hunger in Asia Chapter: 11 Publisher: FAO, Bangkok (Editors: Xuan Li and Kadambot H.M. Siddique) available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339301629\\_Nepal\\_Future\\_Smart\\_Food](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339301629_Nepal_Future_Smart_Food)

endorsed and adopted the process of local crop registration that was initiated by the project.

291. At the local level, there was also good ownership of the project’s outcomes from communities, farmers and farmers’ organizations (CBOs) and the local governments. Most of the local government also provided financial support to promote local crops and some of them also integrated the local crop/agrobiodiversity conservation and management approach in their regular plan (such as in Jumla). There were however several issues noted such as the capacity of government institutions and inadequate funds that may lead to a low level of scaling up of the project results.

292. Country ownership and driven-ness is rated **‘Satisfactory’**.

### **5.9.7 Communication and Public Awareness**

293. The project communication was effective and relatively successful when dealing with stakeholders under the sphere of influence of the executing/co-executing agencies and related to biodiversity scientific communities.

294. The project was good at publication and wide sharing of project results and good practices in different forms of knowledge products (such as books, field guides, journal papers, reports, flyers, posters, News blogs etc.) in both English and Nepali languages. These knowledge products were instrumental in creating awareness, and effective implementation of the project activities. Over 100 knowledge products (over 75 publications including project videos, national and local media news etc.) were developed and disseminated at the local and national levels as well as at the global level by developing and operationalizing its project Website ([www.himalayancrops.org](http://www.himalayancrops.org)). This was complemented by scientific publications and lesson-learned documents. The knowledge products were also shared through the executing/co-executing agencies' outreach on the international level.

295. The Project-related communication and awareness were also created through various events such as training and workshops. The project organized national and local level events and shared the project approach and findings. It is however noted that the knowledge products were either distributed through its PMU or available on the website. There was however no record available of how the knowledge products were used by the relevant stakeholders and how these reached farmers such as in similar agroecological zones of Nepal. This non-structured way of communication was probably due to a lack of communication/dissemination strategy for the project. The project would have benefited from a full-fledged communication strategy to raise awareness of the key stakeholders from the government and non-government sectors.

296. Communication and public awareness is rated **‘Satisfactory’**.

## 5.10 Follow up on the Mid-term Review (MTR)

297. The MTR was carried out in Sept - December 2018. The overall project performance rating was highly satisfactory (HS). The review mentioned that ‘the project objective and outcomes have already been achieved or are highly likely to be achieved’ and ‘the impact and benefits mainstreamed through the project are highly likely to remain after the project conclusion’. The evaluation, however, confirms that some notable challenges both in the effectiveness and sustainability of the project, as elaborated in the respective chapters of this evaluation report, remained which makes it difficult to claim that the project objectives were achieved.
298. In the MTR, the outputs were assessed based on the project reports considering the ‘percentage of completion of outputs’ without referring to the proposed indicators and targets in the log frame.
299. The MTR report was undertaken at end of the project implementation in Dec 2018 and the field activities were expected to complete in mid-2019<sup>74</sup>. The MTR recommended mainly completing the remaining task with some improvement. The MTR would have had more impact if it had proposed more strategic recommendations such as developing a sustainability plan/exit strategy to engage strategic partners both at the local and national levels for securing new investment, reporting requirements (technical and financial) and ensuring the sustainability of the project results.
300. The MTR provided six recommendations for the remaining period of the project but no management response to the evaluation was available to review. The Evaluation noted that the project implemented the recommendations from the MTR to a limited extent. For example, the project was able to address the recommendations related to making the CBM trust fund functional and linking CSB with the local crop promotional activities of the local government and CCDABC whereas the project was a little weak in addressing recommendations related to consolidating the drafted policies and practices especially related to developing access and benefit sharing mechanisms.

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<sup>74</sup> MTR report of the project - page VIII

## 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

301. The project has made a discernible contribution to the conservation and promotion of local crops through strengthening the local institutions, promotion of participatory local crop management approaches, registration of local crops in the government systems and sensitizing government agencies. These interventions influenced the government to integrate the local crops into their programmes and prepare draft policies that support the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity. Based on the assessment, the evaluation has drawn the following conclusions.

**Conclusion 1: The project was highly relevant to the government policies and priorities, the needs of the communities and international priorities. (cross-ref. # 98- 108, 319, 321)**

302. The project was aligned with the government policies and priorities such as agrobiodiversity policy (revised 2014), seed regulation (2013), National climate change policy (2011/2019), NBSAP (2014-2020), Food Right and Food Sovereignty Act (chapter 12), 15th five-year plan and others. The project was also aligned with UNEP’s MTS (2010 -13)/ UNEP PoW (2011-2012), GEF 5 priorities, SDGs (such as SDG 2 - Targets: 2.4, 2.5, 2a, SDG 3, SDG 8, SDG 13 and SDG15 including target 15.6). The project interventions were also aligned with UNDAF (2018 -2022) priorities and contributed to Country Programme Component 2 on “Improved household food security for enhanced resilience to shocks”. These alignments with the government priorities helped to increase government ownership, raise awareness among the stakeholders, increase co-funding, collaborative work at the local level and integrate into the government programme.

**Conclusion 2: The quality of the project design was good overall but some of the targets of the Result Framework were ambitious to achieve in the project time frame and long socio-political transition process. (cross-ref. # 117-125)**

303. In general, the project design was comprehensive and coherent. The causal links of different levels of project objectives (activities to output to outcomes) were credible to generate intended results. Project sites level context analysis was carried out through thematic and institutional reviews before the project design and the stakeholders both at the national and local level including local communities were consulted. The implementation strategy was also robust by involving the multi-stakeholders in the project supervision and decision process through the PSC. The project design, however, was ambitious in proposing some indicators and targets, for instance, the adoption of benefit-sharing mechanisms and the creation of an accepted PIC platform for ABS. It was not an easy target to achieve especially when the project time is short, there is weak collaborative work between the relevant ministries and the federalization process is ongoing. The government was still in the phase of clarifying

the role of the different tiers of the government and also developing a common understanding among the sectoral ministries, especially in the ABS issues.

**Conclusion 3: Considering the resources available and the changing context, the project was generally effective in delivering its outputs and outcomes. The level of focus of the project was more on ‘action/research’ to generate knowledge, whereas the efforts to link to the people’s livelihoods and market access were not adequate as demanded by the context. (cross-ref. # 140-162)**

304. The project achieved most of the proposed outputs and outcomes. It has contributed to the integration of agrobiodiversity and local crop issues in government programmes. For example, the project has made a significant contribution to creating an enabling mechanism for local crop registration and registered local crops within the government systems. The project identified and promoted local crop varieties suitable to the mountain environment. A total of 300 cultivars of 8 target crops were tested on-farm, out of which 129 local farmer varieties were fully characterized and 90 % of them were evaluated in project sites for functional traits. Knowledge products were developed and shared on seed production of these 8 crops along with a field disease guide and a national variety catalogue.
305. The project also supported harvesting and de-husking machines and local crop product diversification to reduce drudgery and increase market access. While these supports were appreciable – they were however scanty and carried out on a pilot basis in limited sites.
306. The project did not have any specific interventions on human rights but gender equity was one of the priority aspects during the project design. The project ensured women’s participation in the project activities but it just remained at participation rather than working on the equity issues related to access and benefit sharing from the agrobiodiversity resources.

**Conclusion 4: The project engaged communities and farmers' groups effectively through various community-based management (CBM) of agrobiodiversity conservation and useful tools and approaches. The continuation of these practices was however uncertain. (cross-ref. # 140, 148, 152)**

307. The main contribution of the project on CBM included (i) creating awareness and provision of knowledge to the local communities on the value of local crops food security, climate resilience, environmental friendly agricultural practices, food safety and health; (ii) development of local level institutional mechanisms (development of community seed banks, associate the CSBs with cooperatives and create trust fund), (iii) carry out action research and documentations of the local crops by developing and using participatory approaches (biodiversity fair, sharing genetic materials among the communities and repatriation <sup>75</sup> from Gene Bank to communities, PBP/PVS,

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<sup>75</sup> National Gene Bank started to collect gene across Nepal from 1986

biodiversity block, diversity field school), (iv) assessment genetic materials and identification of local crops in different agro-ecological zones of Nepal, (v) promotion of the selected varieties through multiplication, (vi) local crop product diversification to enhance market access; and (vii) mechanization to reduce the drudgery of the women farmers.

308. These processes led to an increase in the interest of communities and local government and to identify /selection of local crops based on their performance in the local agroecosystems. The experience and learning from these processes would be vital for future work. There was however no indication of how this learning would be continued in future.

**Conclusion 5: The project managed its finances well; the project delivery was efficient. The project activities implementation and output delivery were good. The project was however extended two times. In addition, the MEL systems were not strong enough to improve and learn from the project implementation. (cross-ref. # 201 – 209)**

309. The project followed the standard financial procedures and ensured the timely budget transfer and transparency of the fund. The reallocation of the budget was done jointly with the stakeholders and approved by the PSC. The project reports were provided on time and co-financing was secured. There was however no financial reporting available based on the components. The project fund flow within the NARC was sometimes delayed due to its administrative and financial processes.

310. The project managed to carry out about 95% of the total activities (91) and most of the outputs were based on the project progress reports. The project adopted some cost-saving measures and adopted participatory approaches to ensure quality participation of the communities. The project adopted multi-stakeholder-based project management with the leadership of the government and this helped with field-level coordination and engaging partners.

311. The reports were prepared on time and met the quality of reporting requirements of UNEP/GEF. The project team jointly prepared reports. The project had a monitoring and evaluation plan but they were mainly confined to the gathering of data required for the project report. The creation of a baseline (about 50%) and endline of indicators was absent including the disaggregated data related to women, and key reviews such as a change in the local context and impact monitoring were not carried out. Due to the nature of the project and inadequate baseline and endline data – it was however difficult to come up with per unit cost. In addition, in absence of baselines, it was difficult to assess the level of progress and this case was more prominent at the output level (for example see output 1.2, indicator # 4, output 1.3, indicator # 1, 2 and 3).

**Conclusion 6: The project has produced some good results such as the development of CSBs, and the local crop registration process that contributes to sustaining the initiative.**

**There are however some challenges to making the initiative sustainable.** (cross-ref. # 237 - 255)

312. The project managed to sensitise and provided capacity building support to the local communities and government agencies, created four CSBs, strengthened the capacity of CSBs, supported them in the multiplication of plant materials and their distribution and piloted PIC for ABS. With the support of the project, the registration process for the local crops was simplified and 7 local crops were registered. Farmers gained some income and contributed to food security through the promotion of local crops but, due to inadequate demand for seeds, market access, product diversification, and insufficient institutional support, there was an increased risk of not continuation of the project results as expected during the project design. The ownership of the government agencies was encouraging, took lead in supervising the project, and participated in the project-related interventions. Despite these, there has been low financial investment made for quick scaling out of the good results.

The conclusions from the Terminal Evaluation Report are summarized in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Summary and rating based on the evaluation criteria**

Criteria	Summary assessment	Rating	Ref Chapter
<b>Strategic Relevance</b>		HS	5.1
1. Alignment to UNEP MTS, POW and strategic priorities	The project is aligned with MTS 2010-13 and PoW.	HS	5.1.1
2. Alignment to UNEP/Donor Strategic priorities	Detailed alignment to GEF priorities presented in the design document and relevant GEF results framework indicators tracked in project reporting.	HS	5.1.2
3. Relevance to global, regional, sub-regional and national environmental priorities	Alignment to Nepal government policies and strategies presented in the design document.	HS	5.1.3
4. Complementarity with existing interventions / Coherence	Potential partnerships and synergies are identified in the design document.	HS	5.1.4
<b>Quality of Project Design</b>	The ProDoc developed in a participatory way, the proposed objectives are mostly coherent and consistent but some targets were ambitious.	S	5.2
<b>Nature of External Context</b>	Generally, political and economic stability but the earthquake affected the project	F	5.3

	interventions slightly in some parts of the project sites.		
<b>Effectiveness</b>		S	5.4
1. Availability of outputs	Most of the project outputs were delivered. Most important outputs are considered good quality by users/stakeholders. However, the achievement of outputs was not provided against the indicators and targets so difficult to assess fully the level of achievement.	S	5.4.1
2. Achievement of project outcomes	The project outcomes were mostly achieved. The changing logic from outputs to outcomes holds for most outputs.	S	5.4.2
3. Achievement of likelihood of impact	Some intermediate states were partially achieved. The changing logic from outcomes to impacts holds but it requires additional support from the government, communities and private sector. Drivers to support transition are partially in place.	ML	5.4.3
<b>Financial Management</b>		S	5.5
1. Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures	Adherence to UNEP's financial policies and procedures. No issues noted.	HS	5.5.1
2. Completeness of project financial information	Mostly available but some of the information was missing.	S	5.5.2
3. Communication between finance and project management staff	Good communication was noted.	S	5.5.3
<b>Efficiency</b>	The project was implemented within the planned budget with minor variations. The no-cost extensions were justified. Project activities were sequenced and managed effectively.	S	5.6
<b>Monitoring and Reporting</b>		MS	5.7
1. Monitoring design and budgeting	Broad M & E framework available but not robust. No M & E expert proposed given the complex nature of the project.	MS	5.7.1
2. Monitoring of project implementation	Regular monitoring by PMU and government officials. No systematic collection and recording of data were in place. No adequate baseline and endline data.	MS	5.7.2

3. Project reporting	Regular PIRs/half-yearly progress reports and mid-term and final technical reports were produced.	MS	5.7.3
<b>Sustainability</b>		ML	5.8
1. Socio-political sustainability	Medium dependency on socio-political factors (support from local and federal governments). Priorities of agrobiodiversity are given but no clarity on how to facilitate CSBs is not available.	L	5.8.1
2. Financial Sustainability	High dependency on financial resources (income of farmers and financial sustainability of CSBs) so far, no adequate financial viability and business plan of CSBs prepared,	ML	5.8.2
3. Institutional sustainability	Moderate dependency on institutional factors. Mechanisms are in place but need strengthening – especially the provision of securing the independent status of CSBs to get registered and get support from outside. No exit plan was prepared.	ML	5.8.3
<b>Factors Affecting Performance</b>		S	5.9
1. Preparation and readiness	Good. Quick disbursement (within 1 month from UNEP) and staff deployment. EAs are on good terms and government support was noted.	S	5.9.1
2. Quality of project management and supervision	Effective project management through PSC, PMU within NARC, experienced field implementer and staff	S	5.9.2
3. Stakeholders’ participation and cooperation	The project developed effective cooperation with MoALD and local governments, and with sectoral ministries through PSC but not for collaborative work at the field level	S	5.9.3
4. Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality	No human rights issues were identified. The gender approach is limited to the participation of women in project activities and it could have been more proactive.	MS	5.9.4
5. Environmental and social economic safeguards	The project did not develop a complete environmental and social risk analysis and risk management plan. However, risks are considered low and environmental concerns are integrated into the design.	S	5.9.5
6. Country ownership and driven-ness	Good ownership by MoALD/NARC. CCDABC and Gene Bank/NARC are taking leadership. But less involvement of other sectoral Ministries except the PSC meeting.	S	5.9.6
7. Communication and public awareness	Communications and public awareness activities are moderately effective. Huge	S	5.9.7

	knowledge products developed and shared through a project website. High-quality publications but no communication and dissemination strategy developed.		
<b>Overall Project Performance Rating</b>		<b>S</b>	

### Key Strategic Questions

#### Q1: To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF coordination and implementation process?

313. The project objectives and interventions were aligned with the strategic objectives of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF – 2018-2022) developed for Nepal. The UNDAF strategic objectives for Nepal are 1) Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth; 2) Social Development; 3) Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change; and 4) Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. The project has made a good contribution towards UNDAF strategic objectives and outcomes. They are briefly mentioned below<sup>76</sup>.

- Sustainable and inclusive growth: The project contributed to improving the livelihood of poor and marginalized communities in the mountains through the use of traditional mountain crop genetic resources.
- Social Development: The project support in the formation and mobilization of farmers and women groups, community seed banks, and cooperatives including the operationalization of Diversity based farmers field schools (DFS) in project sites have improved collective action, bargaining power and empowerment of smallholder farmers and women for better livelihoods and social development.
- Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change: The project promoted local crops which are locally adapted that helped to improve crop resilience to drought, hailstorms and cold brought by climate change and other natural disasters.

314. The project was aligned with the UNDAF (2018-2022) and it is considered the project is as relevant and supportive of the UNDAF.

#### Q2: What evidence can the evaluation identify as the project’s contribution to Nepal Country Programme Component 2 on “Improved household food security for enhanced resilience to shocks”?)

315. The UNDAF (2008 – 2010<sup>77</sup>) had 3 outcomes and the third outcome (UNDAF Outcome C) had two sub-outcomes and one of them was CP Outcome C.2: Improved household

<sup>76</sup> UNEP GEF PIR Nepal 2019-Final (004) (page 4 and 5)

<sup>77</sup> United Nations Development Assistance Framework For Nepal (2008-2010), Available at: <https://un.info.np/Net/NeoDocs/View/1285>

food security for enhanced resilience to shocks (also see ProDoc para 108). The project supported in provisioning of high-elevation locally adopted crop varieties as a part of the coping strategy against climate change helped to increase the dietary diversity of the targeted households in the intervention areas and improve the productivity of the selected local crops. It also helped conserve, multiply and register the local crops at national seed systems making the future possibility of supporting larger-scale food security in the mountains.

316. The project hence supported the country programme significantly.

**Q3: To what extent has the TEEB’s dedicated communication team supported this GEF project in areas where the two projects were complimentary?**

317. UNEP is one of the influencing partners of TEEB and has published some knowledge products which could have been useful for the project (see ProDoc para 61). The ProDoc mentioned that the evaluation did not find an association with TEEB. TEEB has the potential to assist this project with the up-scaling of the project results and outcomes through its extensive network of experts comprising economists and related professionals through its communication team, especially in areas where the two projects are complementary. But the evaluation did not find any association between TEEB and the project team.

**Q4: What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might such changes have affected the project’s performance?**

318. The project field-level operation was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. The project’s final technical and financial reporting was slightly affected by COVID.

**6.2 Lessons Learned**

319. This chapter presents some of the most important lessons learned during the implementation of the project, focusing on those that could be most useful.

<b>Lesson Learned #1:</b>	<b>Formulation of the project along with a clear result framework by considering the local context is critical for ensuring effective project management and service delivery.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	As a common strategic framework for development management, responsibility and accountability for results rest with coherent and collective actions. Understanding of the broader picture, and developing results with their indicators and targets are to be identified through proper context analysis –the geography, technical, institutional and policy framework – in the given time frame of the project. An ambitious result framework may attract partners – especially the funding agencies but it is equally difficult for the project team to deliver. In addition, an inadequate baseline may pose challenges as noted at the output level in this project. The project carried out some activities but there was no baseline as demanded by the RF to compare the progress of those specific indicators or targets.

	<p>The geography and remoteness of the project also play important roles in the design and implementation of the project. In this case, the remoteness, agroecology and nature of the crop have some impact on the provision of project services. For example, the CSB in the mountains and Terai may have a different way of managing and even providing backstopping support to them. Unless these are considered during the project design and implementation, it is likely to have more challenges in making the initiative sustainable.</p>
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<p><b>Lesson Learned #2:</b></p>	<p><b>Collaboration among all the stakeholders and a participatory approach are fundamental for trust-building among the stakeholders and achieving the project objectives.</b></p>
<p><b>Context/comment:</b></p>	<p>The effective participatory approach and collaborative actions among the stakeholders develop the ownership and strong drivenness of stakeholders (such as governments and local communities) that contribute to achieving project outcomes/results. For effective collaboration to occur, the stakeholder should see the value of joint efforts. In addition, they should be involved in programme identification, planning and monitoring. This also requires transparency among the stakeholders, flexible project management and clear communication among the stakeholders. One of the key lessons is that when multi-stakeholders act collectively based on their comparative advantage, it's easy to achieve the results and change the lives and situations of target groups. To make an effective and sustainable initiative, the engagement of key stakeholders is inevitable.</p>

<p><b>Lesson Learned #3:</b></p>	<p><b>High-level political support with the provision of funded programmes is key to the kind of initiative that aims for transformational change by legalizing access and benefit-sharing mechanisms from agrobiodiversity resources. The legalizing and benefit-sharing mechanisms however need the active engagement of several stakeholders continuously beyond the sphere of influence of the Executing Agency.</b></p>
<p><b>Context/comment:</b></p>	<p>The mountain agroecosystems are not suitable for commercial farming with improved crop varieties, and the local crops have comparative advantages against those crops but it requires – enabling environment and dedicated financial support considering the value chain from the governments. Achieving and maintaining high-level political support should be considered during the project design and strategies should develop accordingly.</p> <p>High-level political support is a time-taking but complex process. Identification of influential stakeholders, beyond the EA, for the policy and investment is to be carefully considered and continuous engagements and influence are required. In this case, the project influence area did not go beyond the PSC and they were not even working collaboratively. A more catalytic role of the project could have been envisioned and performed.</p>

<b>Lesson Learned #4:</b>	<b>Support for people’s livelihoods and local crop value chain is paramount to ensure community ownership and sustainability of any community-driven biodiversity conservation initiatives.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	<p>Communities depend on farming for their livelihoods. Unless the local crops are generating income, it is difficult for farmers to adapt the crops to their farming systems. With the increasing demand for food and the promotion of improved crop varieties for more production, most farmers are attracted to commercial farming. It is known that local crops have nutritional and health benefits and can also be grown in marginal land but the local crop production process also faced some challenges such as weeding (for example in the case of <i>Chino</i>) and harvesting (<i>Chino</i>), inadequate market access and price.</p> <p>Farmers are interested to continue growing crops provided they get income out of it. The CSBs are at the early stage of creating a financial incentive for farmers involved in the process. With inadequate support and without incentives, likely, the initiative would not go longer. In this case, with the inadequate financial incentives, the scale of work of the CSBs was also reduced after the project was completed. Hence, there is a great need to see the value chain of the local crops from seed to consumer market so that farmers can get additional income and support for their livelihoods. With the increasing demand for healthy food products and organic products in urban areas, additional support can be provided to sustain the initiative. For this, the public-private partnership could provide a win-win situation.</p> <p>These aspects have to be addressed during the design and provide a complete package such as reducing the drudgery (of weeding and harvesting), product diversification, emphasis on one product from one place and supporting the market access with clear scaling up mechanisms.</p>

<b>Lesson Learned #5:</b>	<b>Achieving complex results – including developing an enabling environment and improving ecosystem services and resilience is not easy and requires longer-term strategic interventions by fostering collaborative work among the relevant stakeholders.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	<p>An enabling environment plays a key role in managing and using agrobiodiversity effectively. In Nepal, CSB may help for improving longer-term food security, community resilience, access and benefit-sharing mechanisms and climate adaptation by promoting local crop varieties. Nepal’s policy framework mentioned the use of agrobiodiversity but there are no clear provisions on how to efficiently use the agrobiodiversity resources in general and the CSBs in specific. There is no clear provision for CSB registration and no national protocol for CSB available. Without government support and appropriate policies, it is difficult to manage and sustain these seed banks effectively. This requires working strategically by engaging sectoral ministries (such as MoALD and MoFE), NPC and parliamentarians. In addition, influencing policies is a long process as it involves a lot of stakeholders and negotiations. In the current project, there was no scope for this kind of work; hence there was comparatively moderate success in the policy space.</p> <p>Similarly, achieving results on resilience and ecosystem services requires time and focused interventions with clear logic. For example, the dynamic and multi-faceted nature of resilience needs a clear understanding of concepts and appropriate assessment indicators which is not easy to get. It also requires longer-term investments and strong M&amp;E systems. Unless</p>

	these are properly assessed, considering these results in the project would be difficult to deliver.
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<b>Lesson Learned #6:</b>	<b>Innovative community-based biodiversity management (CBM) related good practices can help to improve ownership and ensure better engagement of stakeholders for agrobiodiversity conservation and use.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	<p>Community-based biodiversity management (CBM) is a participatory approach to empower farmers and their institutions for managing agrobiodiversity. This approach focuses on enhancing the capacity of communities and seeking practical solutions to the challenges faced by communities that promote the use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity.</p> <p>The project assisted to develop and promote various CBM good practices at the community level. Some of them include organizing biodiversity fairs for the collection of local genetic materials, participatory gene exchange - within communities and repatriation from the Gene Banks, carrying out PBP/PVS, performance assessment through biodiversity block testing, and biodiversity FFS to capacity the communities. These practices help to manage the project effectively and contribute to conserving and strengthening the local seed system and promoting globally important traditional crop varieties to ensure food and nutrition security and improve the livelihoods of the mountain communities.</p>

<b>Lesson Learned #7:</b>	<b>Project execution in a complex environment (agroecology, political and socio-economic) requires robust project management structure and mechanisms while ensuring trust and credibility among the partners.</b>
<b>Context/comment:</b>	<p>A project involves a great level of complexity and idiosyncrasies in a changing context. Result-oriented management can be boosted if due diligence, partnerships management, transparency and proactive risk mitigation are put into practice. These initiatives are likely to contribute to effectiveness management, especially in complex, and multi-stakeholder, initiatives such as this project. Projects should fully explore the opportunities during the project design and inception phase.</p> <p>The Governance Framework of this project constituted three tiers (project steering committee at the national level, PMU at the project level and site management team at the local level) with a well-designed project implementation framework. This structure is a robust approach to address the issues and challenges at different levels by engaging various experts and professionals.</p>

### 6.3 Recommendations

320. The following recommendations are presented for consideration in the future development of similar projects in support of agrobiodiversity/local crops in Nepal and similar agroecological zones outside Nepal.

<b>Recommendation #1:</b>	<b>Guidance for the project design of future GEF projects of this nature should be improved considering broader institutional context (by</b>
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	<b>considering the theory of change), realistic objectives and indicators and evidence-based M &amp; E systems, among others. In addition, the progress reporting and information required for the terminal evaluation should also be harmonized during the project design.</b> (82, 91, 122, 123, 124, 138, 166, 169, 170, 176, 177, 213, 214, 220 – 225)
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<p>In general, the project design was good but there were some challenges which could have been minimized. To improve the likelihood of success of the future project, the evaluation recommends improving the project design guidance by considering; i) analysis of context by adopting the theory change approach; ii) developing realistic objectives, indicators and targets considering the local context, time and resource availability; iii) aligning activities with the indicators and targets; iv) developing a comprehensive M &amp; E plan bearing in mind – ‘with and without’ and ‘before and after’ approach; v) having risk management approach; and vi) developing communication, knowledge management and outreach strategies and scaling up mechanisms and exit strategy.</p> <p>In this project the project did not report against the output indicators, financial expenses according to the components and co-financing information in the same format demanded by UNEP evaluation. Hence, the project design should also consider what data are needed at the later stage of the project evaluation or vice versa.</p>
<b>Priority Level<sup>78</sup>:</b>	Critical recommendation
<b>Type of Recommendation<sup>79</sup></b>	UNEP -wide
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP (Policy and Programme Division and the GEF Unit of the Corporate Services Division)
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	When designing the next project similar to this project.

<b>Recommendation #2:</b>	<b>The government of Nepal should consider improving mechanisms and policy frameworks that support local-level initiatives to conserve and use agrobiodiversity and promote collaborative work of all tiers of</b>
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<sup>78</sup> Priority level categories (as per UNEP guidelines):

**Critical recommendation:** address significant and/or pervasive deficiencies in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance cannot be provided regarding the achievement of program objectives.

**Important recommendation:** address reportable deficiencies or weaknesses in governance, risk management or internal control processes, such that reasonable assurance might be at risk regarding the achievement of program objectives.

**Opportunity for improvement:** comprise suggestions to improve performance that do not meet the criteria of either critical or important recommendations.

<sup>79</sup> **Project:** where the actions of those UNEP staff managing the evaluand can address the recommendation or the underlying problem independently.

**UNEP-wide:** (i) where the actions of those UNEP staff managing the evaluand cannot address the recommendation or the underlying problem independently or (ii) where the actions to be taken to resolve the problem, which could have been caused by systemic issues or gaps in UNEP’s operational requirements, require approval/leadership from UNEP senior management and/or coordination among several different parts of UNEP. In such a case, the Evaluation Office would need to pass on the UNEP-wide recommendation to the responsible entity(ies).

	<b>governments, sectoral ministries, provincial governments and other stakeholders including the private sector.</b> (cross-ref. # 148, 156, 158, 160, 166, 168, 174, 175, 176, 224, 237, 239, 255, 259, 267, 290, 291, 295,)
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<p>There is a lack of clarity on the role and responsibility of managing local-level initiatives such as CSBs among the three tiers of the government. In addition, there was inadequate collaborative work among the government tiers and with sectoral ministries such as MoFE and MoALD. Institutional and sector ‘silos’ within the government agencies are visible.</p> <p>Hence, it is suggested that the government should i) arrange the regulatory measures of CSBs along with national standards, ii) provide institutional and capacity-building support for enhancing market access (diversification, mechanization, seed trading certificate and engaging private sector); iii) integrate the CBM good practices in the regular programmes; iv) provide additional support for crop registration and in-situ conservation; vi) further strengthen the capacity of the national Gene Banks for conservation of gene, genetic material repatriation; and vii) engage stakeholders and MoFE to develop national policies/legal mechanisms on agrobiodiversity conservation and ABS from agrobiodiversity.</p>
<b>Priority Level:</b>	Critical recommendation
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	Partners (Government of Nepal – MoALD, Provincial and Local governments)
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP (Policy and Programme Division and the GEF Unit of the Corporate Services Division)
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	When designing the next project similar to this project.

<b>Recommendation #3:</b>	<b>Women are considered the main custodian of agrobiodiversity in mountain agriculture so gender equity issues should get further attention by having a clear gender gap analysis during project design and identifying gender-responsive actions to address equity issues in agrobiodiversity management.</b> (cross-ref. # 147, 213, 225, 280 – 282, 287, 312)
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	<p>The project included women in the training and other project activities and also being a part of the CSBs. But there was no contextual analysis of gender roles in agrobiodiversity and what are the gender gaps in agriculture resource mobilization and access and benefit sharing of resources. No specific interventions were identified based on the assessment.</p> <p>Hence, the evaluation suggests that for the future project: i) carry out socio-economic analysis to find out the gender gap and possible gender roles; ii) identify gender-responsive actions to address gender equity issues; and iii) develop a clear baseline, disaggregated data collection tools/methods and carry out M &amp; E; and iii) provide a clear periodic report change in position and status.</p>

<b>Priority Level:</b>	Critical recommendation
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	UNEP -wide
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP (Policy and Programme Division and the GEF Unit of the Corporate Services Division)
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	When designing the next project similar to this project.

<b>Recommendation #4:</b>	<b>Future interventions similar to this project should prioritize and equally emphasize the people’s livelihood that directly strengthens the economic interest of the community in agrobiodiversity conservation. These may include mechanization to reduce drudgery, product diversification, market information and access, eco-tourism and possibly other income streams such as organic agriculture certification.</b> (cross-ref. # 107, 108, 205, 240, 241, 246, 247, 251, 253)
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	The project mainly focused on the research and documentation of local crops and there were very few activities supported related to livelihoods promotion and income generation. But it has not created a strong incentive for the communities to protect and conserve the local crops.  So, the project while designing should consider the whole value chain of the crop (i.e., research, promotion, mechanization, processing, product diversification, market information, accessing the market, capacity building etc.)
<b>Priority Level:</b>	Critical recommendation
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	UNEP -wide
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP (Policy and Programme Division and the GEF Unit of the Corporate Services Division)
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	When designing the next project similar to this project.

<b>Recommendation #5:</b>	<b>Future projects should establish a stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning framework with a simple but complete project management information system (MIS) including placing an M&amp;E officer for better management of MEL functions.</b> (cross-ref. # 122 - 124, 191, 192, 195, 212-227, 234 and 235)
<b>Challenge/problem to be addressed by the recommendation:</b>	The project did not systematically record baseline data required for the projects (outputs/outcome). Project progress reports present data in partial form or with units that are inconsistent with log frame indicators, and do not always give a clear and comprehensive overview of progress – especially at the output level. In addition, the baseline is not available in

	<p>some cases. There are comprehensive electronic mechanisms to store and analyse data which can be used during reporting and review. The evaluation recommends that the project should have i) a result-based M &amp; E plan and implementation strategy; ii) a dedicated staff for MEL, iii) a simple computer-based MIS aligning with the resulting framework, and iv) review of the project performance (focusing with improvement and learning) including higher level expected changes. The new project design may also need to comply with the MEL framework with the UNEG Strategy 2020-2024.</p>
<b>Priority Level:</b>	Critical recommendation
<b>Type of Recommendation</b>	UNEP -wide
<b>Responsibility:</b>	UNEP (Policy and Programme Division and the GEF Unit of the Corporate Services Division)
<b>Proposed implementation time-frame:</b>	When designing the next project similar to this project.

## ANNEX I: RESPONSE TO STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

### Response to stakeholder comments received but not (fully) accepted by the reviewers, where appropriate

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
N/A	This is well drafted with a well-designed framework and expected results and recommendations. The consultant consulted me several times during the process of the evaluation. He also visited 3 out of 4 project sites. I am sure these field visits and interaction with key stakeholders in Nepal provided him to understand and assess the situation better, which are reflected well in the report.	No specific response is required.
N/A	Outcome 3 has been put as moderately satisfactory. Although at the output level, some of the achievements have been made, however in terms of benefit sharing mechanism, very few initiatives have been taken. The piloting which was done in Dolakha couldn't be considered successful. So instead of moderately satisfactory, it can be put as satisfactory (if the ranking is in the order of highly satisfactorily, moderately satisfactory, satisfactory and unsatisfactory).	Agree on the input but there is no need to change the rating scale. Agree with the comment. Here, the commenter thought the performance scale 'moderately satisfactory' is better than 'satisfactory' and she suggested giving 'satisfactory' (local scale) as she believed the performance related to the benefit-sharing mechanism is not successful. Considering the lower performance-related suggestion, it is not necessary to change the rating scale.
	The evaluation could have also reflected on the performance of executing agencies such as NARC and LIBIRD and the role of the project steering committee.	Input integrated  See #272 The performance of implementing agencies such as Bioversity, NARC and LIBIRD is satisfactory. The steering committee also steer the project planning and management process but it was mainly reactive in nature than being proactive and taking initiatives itself.
	The relevant organizations such as CCDABC, which didn't exist during the project formulation, could have been integrated during the implementation either after mid-term evaluation or by the project steering committee.	Input integrated  See # 262 Alternatively, the CCDABC (the centre is the Government mandated agency for agro-biodiversity conservation in Nepal) was formed after the project was started and the Steering Committee would have added the CCDABC as one of the partners of this project.
	Similarly, the role of province-level agricultural agencies is important for implementing agro-biodiversity conservation and management, the evaluation could have also reflected their missing role, which is also important for sustaining the project outcomes.	Input integrated  See # 262. Likewise, after the federalization, the project could have also included selected Provincial Governments as implementing partners. Also added explicitly in Recommendation # 2

Page Ref	Stakeholder comment	Evaluator(s) Response
	<p>Recommendations could also have been made regarding the role of the private sector in these types of projects.</p>	<p>Input integrated</p> <p>This point has been taken care of in the report. See under stakeholder participation and cooperation (# 278) and recommendation 2. I have made it now more explicit.</p> <p>Added text is highlighted.</p> <p>‘The government of Nepal should consider improving mechanisms and policy frameworks that support local-level initiatives to conserve and use agrobiodiversity and promote collaborative work of all tiers of governments, sectoral ministries and other stakeholders including private sector’.</p>
	<p>Similarly, the evaluation could have also included the exit strategy of the project in terms of sustainability and its performance. The CBM fund and its utilization at present could have given a brief picture. Whether this can be/has been internalized by the government is critical. The recommendation should have included the sustainability issue as this would be instrumental while designing the new project under GEF-UNEP.</p>	<p>Input integrated</p> <p>This has been discussed in # 248 and 299. Now this has also been reflected under ‘institutional Sustainability’ # 252</p> <p>The status of the CSB trust fund is briefly discussed within the institutional sustainability heading (# 252)</p> <p>The following text has been added (# 252).</p>

## ANNEX II: PEOPLE CONSULTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
BI, Nepal	Dr Devendra Gauchan	Team Leader, LCP	M
BI, Rome	Dr Devra Jarvis	Project Director	F
CCDABC	Dr Ram Krishna Shrestha	Chief	M
Chandan Nath Multipurpose Cooperative limited, Jumla	Rishi Ram Pandey	Manager	M
CSB - Dolakha	Netra Bd Kadka	Chair, CSB	M
CSB - Lamjung	Bhakta Bahadur Gurung	Chair	M
CSB - Lamjung	Basanti Gurung	Member	F
CSB - Lamjung	Chandra Kurmari Gurung	Member	F
CSB - Lamjung	Chandra Kala Gurung	Member	F
CSB - Lamjung	Kiran Kashi Gurung	Member	F
CSB - Lamjung	Ram Kumari Gurung	Member	F
CSB - Lamjung	Ananta Gurung	Member	M
CSB - Lamjung	Purna Man Gurung	Member	M
CSB- Jumla	Kabita Jaishi	Chair	F
CSB, Dolakha	Mahendra Basnet	Member CSB	M
CSB, Dolakha	Ratna Maya KC	Member CSB	F
CSB, Dolakha	Makhana Kadka	Manager, CSB	M
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Sarita Neupane	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Asta Kanya Khatri	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Radhika Rawat	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Bipana Neupane	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Bishnu Maya Neupane	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Surya Maya Acharya	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Jhun Maya Adhikari	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Gorkh B Hamal,	CSB - Manager	M
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Chaya Devi Neupane	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani Jumla	Dipika Neupane	CSB member	F
CSB, Tatopani, Jumla	Ram Bhakta Kami	Secretary	M
DADO, Jumla	Laxmi Ram Mahat	Junior Technician	M
DADO, Jumla	Tram Shahi	Agri officer	M
Entrepreneur	Mukunda Rokaya	Proprietor	M
Ex- NARC	Mr Madan Bhatta	Chief NAGRC	M
GauriShankar Rural Municipality, Dolakha	Prakash Bd Kadka	Wardc chair	M
ICIMOD	Nakul Chhetri	Sr Biodiversity Specialist and Programme Manager	M
Jugu - Dolakha	Rabin Sarki	Farmer	M
LIBIRD	Dr Balaram Thapa	ED	M
LIBIRD	Dr Santosh Shrestha	Coordinator	M
LIBIRD	Mr Bharat Bhandari	Director	M

Organisation	Name	Position	Gender
LIBIRD	Mr Niranjan Pudasaini	Programme Officer	M
LIBIRD	Mr Saroj Pant	Programme Officer	M
LIBIRD	Sundar Rawat	Community Mobilizer	M
LIBIRD	Rita Gurung	Programme Officer	F
LIBIRD	Mohan Nepali	Community Mobilizer	M
LIBIRD	Kamala Budha	Community Mobilizer	F
MoALD	Shabanam Shivakoti (Ms)	Joint Secretary, Agriculture and Livestock Business Promotion Division Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.	F
NARC	Dr Bal Krishna Joshi	Senior Scientist	M
NARC	Mr Ganga Ram Bhandari	Engineer	M
NARC	Suk Bahadur Gurung	Scientist	M
NARC	Krishna Hari Ghimire	Senior Scientist	M
NARC/Gene Bank	Surendra Kurmar Shrestha	Finance Officer	M
NARC/Hill Crop station, Dolakha	Dr Bandhu Raj Baral	Chief	M
NARC/Hill Crop Station, Jumla	Hari Narayan Mandal	Technical officer	M
NARC/Hill Crop Station, Jumla	Ramesh Amgain	Chief	M
PSC member,	Ratna Kumari Gurung	Member	F
SQCC/MoALD	Dr Prakash Acharya	Officer	M
Tatopani Rural Municipality, Jumla	Amar Rokaya	Chair Ward no 4	M
Tatopani Rural Municipality, Jumla	Nanda Chaulagain	Chair	M
Tatopani Rural Municipality, Jumla	Bishal Khadka	Ward Chair ward no 6	M
UNEP	Sang Jin Lee	TM	M
UNEP	Marieta Sakalian	TM	F

## **ANNEX III: KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED**

- UNEP ProDoc, Full GEF Approved CEO Endorsement Request package
- formal revisions/amendments to the project during the implementation
- Project progress reports, including regular reports (PIR and biannual reports)
- Final technical report (annex 12)
- MTRs
- PSC minutes
- Financial reports / Expenditure to date/project budget for secured funds and co-finance
- Revisions to budgets, including no-cost extensions
- BI audit reports

## ANNEX IV: CUMULATIVE FINANCIAL INFORMATION AS OF JUNE 2020

Project title:		Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer Against Unpredictable Environment Change in the Nepal Himalayas									
Project number:		GPL-5060-2711-4-009									
Project executing partner:		Biodiversity International									
Project implementation period:		From:	1-Nov-13							To:	31-Mar-20
Project reporting period:		From:	1-Jan-20							To:	31-Mar-20
UNEP Budget Line		UNEP approved budget			Actual expenditures incurred						
		Total project budget *	Current year budget	Cumulative expenditures from previous period	Jan-March Qrt 1	April-June Qrt 2	July-Sept Qrt 3	Oct-Dec Qrt 4	Current Year Total	Cumulative Expenditures to date	Cumulative unspent balance to-date
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H=C+E+F+G	I=C+H	J=A-I
1103	Project Manager	339,899.89	19,893	320,007	19,893				19,893	339,899.89	-
1104	Technical staff	348,834.87	22,799	326,036	22,799				22,799	348,834.87	-
1201	National Agrobiodiversity	15,685.07	-	15,685	-				-	15,685.07	-
1202	Mountain Agricultural Ecosystems	13,380.72	-	13,381	-				-	13,380.72	-
1203	National Policy and Law	16,102.91	12,503	3,600	12,503				12,503	16,102.91	-
1204	Socio-Economics	49,367.23	41,757	7,600	41,757				41,757	49,367.23	-
1205	Participatory approaches	11,091.10	-	11,091	-				-	11,091.10	-
1206	Ecosystem services	12,097.95	-	12,098	-				-	12,097.95	-
1207	Genetic Diversity	22,459.73	3,400	19,050	3,400				3,400	22,459.73	-
1301	Administrative Assistant	43,488.63	-	43,489	-				-	43,488.63	-
1302	Financial Management	12,750.00	-	12,750	-				-	12,750.00	-
1303	National support staff	-	-	-	-				-	-	-
1601	International project staff	99,422.83	25,479	73,944	25,479				25,479	99,422.83	-
1602	National project staff	43,104.49	184	42,320	184				184	43,104.49	-
2201	Agrobiodiversity, variability, pest and disease and pollination levels: assessment and baseline data collection	105,009.54	-	105,009	0				0	105,009.54	-
2202	Technology diversifications, advancements, breeding and varietal mixtures	87,506.15	-	87,506	-				-	87,506.15	-
2203	Assessment of ecosystem services of agrobiodiversity and agricultural landscapes	108,091.34	(565)	108,656	(565)				(565)	108,091.34	-
2204	Enhanced capacity, Leadership, Gender Equity and Social Inclusion	35,272.42	(31)	35,303	(31)				(31)	35,272.42	-
2205	Increase availability of materials to promote productive gains and maintain ecosystem resilience	64,739.33	-	64,739	-				-	64,739.33	-
2206	Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders, including farmers	83,064.25	(1,886)	84,940	(1,886)				(1,886)	83,064.25	-
2207	Harmonizing policies and laws	55,982.95	-	55,983	-				-	55,982.95	-
2208	Policy support, recommendations, actions and benefit sharing	104,686.38	(4,001)	108,596	(4,001)				(4,001)	104,686.38	-
2209	Higher level of involvement of local communities in national decision making fora	57,702.42	(6)	57,708	(6)				(6)	57,702.42	-
2210	Crop biodiversity management and use	47,127.84	(12)	47,140	(12)				(12)	47,127.84	-
3201	Capacity building of producers, processors, etc.	16,367.14	(872)	17,229	(872)				(872)	16,367.14	-
3202	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion	11,769.25	3,750	8,019	3,750				3,750	11,769.25	-
3203	Biodiversity Assessments and Methodology	48,513.50	14,563	33,951	14,563				14,563	48,513.50	-
3301	Inception meeting	2,317.20	-	2,317	-				-	2,317.20	-
3302	Site coordination meetings	31,862.72	-	31,863	-				-	31,862.72	-
3303	Exchange visits	32,677.63	-	32,678	-				-	32,677.63	-
3304	Technical meetings	71,081.00	(1)	71,082	(1)				(1)	71,081.00	-
3305	Steering Committee meetings	25,779.00	-	25,779	-				-	25,779.00	-
4101	Office supplies	5,491.00	-	5,491	-				-	5,491.00	-
4102	Computer software	3,232.37	-	3,232	-				-	3,232.37	-
4103	Office equipment	7,452.52	-	7,453	-				-	7,452.52	-
4104	Office furniture	1,591.81	-	1,592	-				-	1,591.81	-
4201	Vehicles	38,723.65	-	38,724	-				-	38,723.65	-
4202	Computers	10,615.59	-	10,615	-				-	10,615.59	-
4203	Field and diversity processing equipment	1,394.85	-	1,395	-				-	1,394.85	-
4301	Office charges, maintenance and rent	22,563.72	-	22,564	-				-	22,563.72	-
4302	Laboratory charges, maintenance and rent	18,331.36	6,177	12,154	6,177				6,177	18,331.36	-
5201	Reports	33,642.33	-	33,643	(0)				(0)	33,642.33	-
5202	Publications	30,387.35	4,482	25,905	4,482				4,482	30,387.35	-
5203	Media publications and information networks	11,549.70	-	11,550	-				-	11,549.70	-
5301	Communication	28,000.00	-	28,000	-				-	28,000.00	-
5302	Postage, quarantine, clearance charges	15,010.30	-	15,010	-				-	15,010.30	-
5501	Mid term evaluation	23,989.00	9,433	14,556	-				-	14,556.85	9,433
5502	Final Evaluation	30,000.00	30,000	-	-				-	-	30,000
5503	Audit report	-	-	-	-				-	-	-
<b>99</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>2,300,000</b>	<b>187,047</b>	<b>2,112,953</b>	<b>147,814</b>				<b>147,814.03</b>	<b>2,280,687</b>	<b>39,433</b>

## ANNEX V: EVALUATION TORS (WITHOUT ANNEXES)

### Section 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

#### Project General Information

Table 1. Project summary

<b>GEF Project ID:</b>	4464	<b>Umoja no.:</b>	GFL-5060-2711-4C09
<b>Implementing Agency:</b>	UNEP	<b>Executing Agency:</b>	Bioversity International (formerly International Plant Genetic Resources Institute - IPGRI)
<b>Relevant SDG(s) and indicator(s):</b>	Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture Targets: 2.4, 2.5, 2a Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss Targets: 15.6		
<b>GEF Core Indicator Targets (identify these for projects approved prior to GEF-7<sup>80</sup>)</b>	Not identified		
<b>Sub-programme:</b>	SP3: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems	<b>Expected Accomplishment(s):</b>	
<b>UNEP approval date:</b>	15 November 2013	<b>Project type:</b>	FSP
<b>GEF approval date:</b>	8 April 2013	<b>Focal Area(s):</b>	Biodiversity
<b>GEF Operational Programme #:</b>	GEF V	<b>GEF Strategic Priority:</b>	BD2, BD4
<b>Expected start date:</b>	January 2013	<b>Actual start date:</b>	January 2014
<b>Planned operational completion date:</b>	December 2017	<b>Actual operational completion date:</b>	March 2020
<b>Planned project budget at approval:</b>	USD 8,131,104	<b>Actual total expenditures reported as of 30 June 2020:</b>	USD 2,260,567
<b>GEF grant allocation:</b>	USD 2,300,000	<b>GEF grant expenditures reported as of 30 June 2020:</b>	USD 2,133,711
<b>Project Preparation Grant - GEF financing:</b>	USD 100,000	<b>Project Preparation Grant - co-financing:</b>	USD 207,500
<b>Expected Full-Size Project co-financing:</b>	USD 5,831,104	<b>Secured Full-Size Project co-financing:</b>	USD 4,351,864
<b>Date of first disbursement:</b>	18 December 2013	<b>Planned date of financial closure:</b>	TBD
<b>No. of formal project revisions:</b>	2	<b>Date of last approved project revision:</b>	June 2018
<b>No. of Steering Committee meetings:</b>	6	<b>Date of last Steering Committee meeting:</b>	24 February 2020
<b>Mid-term Review (planned date):</b>	September 2018	<b>Mid-term Review (actual date):</b>	December 2018
<b>Terminal Evaluation (planned date):</b>	Not identified	<b>Terminal Evaluation (actual date):</b>	May 2022
<b>Coverage - Country:</b>	Nepal	<b>Coverage - Region:</b>	Asia Pacific
<b>Dates of previous project phases:</b>	N/A	<b>Status of future project phases:</b>	N/A

<sup>80</sup> This does not apply for Enabling Activities

## 1. Project Rationale

1. Mountain environments are considered to be one of the first areas to be severely affected by increased unpredictability of climatic parameters. Weather patterns in the Nepal Himalayas have become more unpredictable and extreme with prolonged dry spells and very strong storm events, which has caused concern over the long-term reduction in total water supply. This is affecting the lives and livelihoods of the Himalayan people, especially in agriculture practices and long-term food security. Additionally, high mountain agroecosystems are a complex transitional system of sub-tropical and temperate environments with low heritability. Consequently, single large solutions are not sufficient to meet both the current and future needs of the farmers who live in these high elevation areas.

2. Temperate crops such as barley, buckwheat, millets, amaranth, and beans found in these high elevation agroecosystems are rich in intra-specific diversity, but their useful traits are not adequately used to benefit local communities in mountain areas by classical national breeding programmes. Each time a species or variety becomes locally extinct, energy and nutrient pathways are lost, along with consequent alterations of ecosystem efficiency and inability of communities to respond to environmental fluctuations.

3. In natural ecosystems, the relationship between diversity and ecosystem regulating and supporting services has been given economic value<sup>81</sup>. This diversity has the potential to continue to evolve as farmers access the wild landscape to use the reservoir of wild relatives for these crops in the region. This will increase intraspecific diversity in their agricultural production system and provide ecosystem resilience.

4. Nepal is a center of evolution and speciation in the Himalayas and is one of the most important mountain environments for crop biodiversity in the world. Key in the sustainability of the high elevation mountain agricultural ecosystems, is that farmers have been able to maintain traits for cold and drought stress-tolerance in the crop biodiversity they manage, while at the same time continuing to keep a large diversity of other traits within the numerous traditional crop varieties to meet current and future needs.

5. The project focuses on the diversity of nine target crops of the mountain in 4 different agricultural production landscapes, i.e., Humla, Jumla, Kaski and Dolkha. Target crops were selected by national partners for the following reasons: high intra-specific diversity; the presence of globally important unique cold- and drought-tolerant traits; the existence of wild relatives (excepting common bean) for increasing the available gene pool in the agricultural production system; the importance of these crops to national and global food security for mountain environments; and the inclusion of these crops in the national agricultural research system. These four locations were selected to be representative of the different rainfed regimes of the mountain areas of Nepal, spanning the range from the east to the western Himalayas in Nepal, as well as social economic, genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, agroecological diversity, institutional diversity, farmer interest and logistics of the sites.

6. Although its focus is on agrobiodiversity maintenance and benefit-sharing and use to buffer against unpredictable environmental change and sustain mountain ecosystem services, the project was to also provide essential country-based experience on mainstreaming food security and ecosystem health combined with agrobiodiversity conservation. Through the project, benefit-sharing protocols and alternatives developed for these high mountain agricultural ecosystems would be of global significance for other highly isolated and vulnerable ecosystems around the world.

## 2. Project Results Framework

7. The goal of the project was **to contribute to the conservation of the globally important crop biodiversity**, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high elevation agricultural systems throughout the world.

8. The main objective of the project was to mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems.

9. The project was to achieve its goal and objective through three main components, as per the table below:

Table 2. Summary of the project’s programmed outputs and expected outcomes by component

Expected Outcomes	Programmed Outputs
<b>Component 1: Mainstreaming mechanisms that integrate diversity-rich solutions into breeding and technology</b>	
<b>Outcome 1:</b> The area devoted to sustainably managed agrobiodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity-rich solutions.	1.1: Diverse sets of varieties developed that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages 1.2: Technology/processing advancements adapted to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties 1.3: Ecosystem services from agrobiodiversity management practices valued and utilized in agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes.

<sup>81</sup> Diaz, S., Cabido, S., 2001. Vive la difference: plant functional diversity matters to ecosystem processes. Trends Ecol.

Evol. 16, 646–655. Loreau, M., Naeem, S., Inchausti, P., Bengtsson, J., Grime, J., Hector, A., Hooper, D., Huston, M., Raffaelli, D., Schmid, B., Tilman, D., Wardle, D., 2001. Biodiversity and ecosystem functioning: current knowledge and future challenges. Science 294, 804–808.

Expected Outcomes	Programmed Outputs
	1.4: Enhanced capacity and gender equity of farmer groups, local schools and technical colleagues and other community institutions to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources
<b>Component 2: Increasing access to local agrobiodiversity planting materials</b>	
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.	2.1: Sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials are available to small holders to increase productive gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience 2.2: Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders to provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials 2.3: Small holder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as providers of diversity and seed.
<b>Component 3: Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing of local agrobiodiversity planting materials</b>	
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit sharing mechanisms that support diversification of varieties	3.1: Recommendations and actions on how local and national institutions and strategies on plant genetic resources should address the use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas for mountain agricultural environments 3.2: Policy support for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination 3.3: Procedures identified and used for drafting PIC, which ensure that the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources go into the sustainable management of biodiversity by local farmer communities 3.4: Leadership and capacity built to enable a higher level of involvement in local communities in local and national decision-making forum

10. In addition, the following global environmental benefits were expected to be delivered by the project:

- Conservation of globally important biodiversity, of seven crop species which form the basis for food security on many high elevation agricultural systems throughout the world,
- Germplasm containing important genetic traits that will help the world cope with increased temperature and rainfall unpredictability in vulnerable environments is conserved and can be made available,
- Increase the conservation of crop biodiversity through a set of globally applicable technologies that improve use and diversify processing technology adapted to mountain agriculture production systems,
- Increased coverage of hectares that use crop genetic diversity to provide ecosystem services to regulate pests and diseases and improve levels of pollination services,
- Support indigenous and local communities in areas of high environmental instability and variability through the development of globally applicable community-based conservation models and tools , and
- Increase access and benefit sharing for high mountain agricultural ecosystems and other vulnerable and stress prone environments through the development of globally applicable protocols and alternatives

### 3. Executing Arrangements

11. UNEP was the GEF **Implementing Agency** for this project. UNEP was to be responsible for overall project supervision to ensure consistency with GEF and UNEP policies and procedures and provide guidance on linkages with related UNEP and GEF-funded activities. UNEP was to also monitor implementation of the activities undertaken during the execution of the project and provide the overall coordination and ensure that the project is in line with UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and its Program of Work (PoW), as approved by the UNEP Governing Council. Have a representative on the project steering committee

12. Bioversity International was the **Executing Agency**, responsible for overall execution of the project, and provide appropriate scientific support and technical expertise as required by the **National Executing Agencies / Co-Executing Agencies** and other project partners, in accordance with the objectives and key activities outlined in the Project Document. Bioversity International was expected to participate in project site visits, technical meetings, and promote mainstreaming of methodologies developed and project outputs. With the approval of the workplan and budget by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), Bioversity International was to be responsible for transferring funds through standard Letters of Agreement to the respective key partners and be responsible for ensuring that financial and technical reporting requirements are met, preparing biannual progress, quarterly financial and annual summary progress reports for UNEP, based on inputs from the National Executing Agencies.

13. The National Executing Agencies comprised of a collaborative framework of four organizations (also considered as the key partners) consisting of: the Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC), the Department of Agriculture (DoA), and the Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LI-BIRD).

14. On behalf of the Nepal Agricultural Research Council, the National Agricultural Genetic Resource Centre (NAGRC, refers to Gene Bank) was to be the Lead National Institute to coordinate and execute project activities and host the **Project Management Unit (PMU)**. The PMU was to serve as the critical link between the project sites and the partner national agencies, civil society organizations, local authorities and the lead project executing agencies, to ensure that lessons learned are shared among sites and within national committees and to provide visibility of the project at the national and international level. The PMU and

Bioversity International were to be responsible for ensuring adequate communication of information to all national and international partners.

15. In addition to hosting the PMU, The National Agricultural Genetic Resource Centre (NAGRC), was to provide expertise and leadership in the assessment and management of crop genetic resources of the target crops and link the Nepal National Gene Bank both to community Gene Banks, and to multilateral access and benefit sharing systems for important plant genetic resources for high mountain areas of the target crops.

16. The Department of Agriculture (DoA), as co-executing agency was to be responsible for: extension of results in similar agro-ecological domains; linking with local level service providers and mainstreaming emerging knowledge and skills through existing extension networks among stakeholders; and assessing implementation results.

17. Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LI-BIRD), also as co-executing agency, was to be responsible at the national level to support the organization of stakeholder workshops for sharing project components and findings. LI-BIRD will support the Agricultural and Forestry University and Vocational Schools under Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) for course content development and capacity building and providing orientation materials for technical schools and colleges on community biodiversity management and management of local genetic resources. LI-BIRD was to support the generation of field evidence for policy advocacy and support the organizing of policy dialogue workshops, work to ensure gender inclusion and equity and market linkages. At the local and site level, LI-BIRD was to support awareness raising activities on conservation and management of local genetic resources, participatory research, climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning, the coordination and linkage with local and district level stakeholders, community mobilization, on-field training, participatory plant breeding and participatory variety selection, and seed and product multiplication and diversification.

18. The project was to establish a **Project Steering Committee** (PSC) consisting of representatives of the partner institutions (and including UNEP and Bioversity international), the Ministry of Agricultural Development, the Nepal CBD focal point, the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and a female farmer representative with long-term experience in community based in situ conservation of crop genetic resources. The PSC was to be chaired by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agricultural Development.

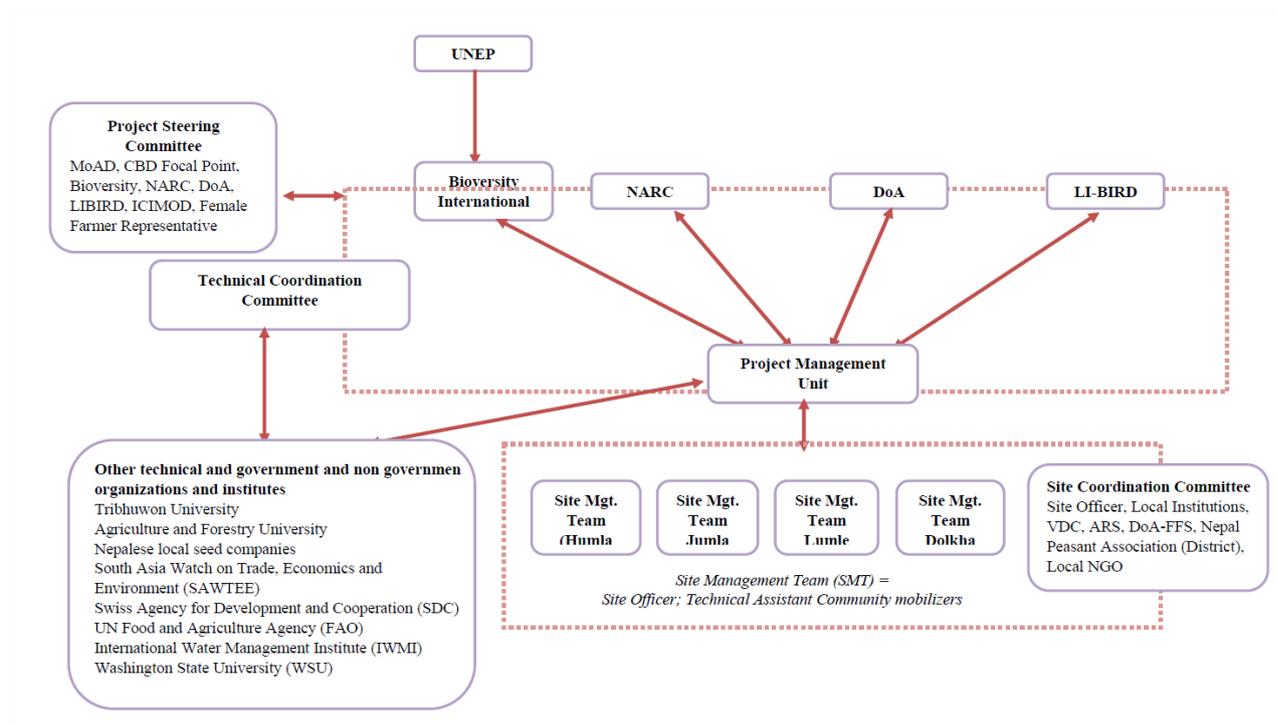
19. The PSC was to be responsible for taking policy decisions about the implementation of the project and meet physically once a year. Its functions were to evaluate the overall progress of the project relative to the outputs and milestones expected, to provide strategic direction for the implementation of the project and to guarantee the necessary inter-institutional coordination. The PSC was also to play a proactive role in mainstreaming good practices and be conducive to policy support in the country. All PSC members were to disseminate information about the project and its outputs through their various networks, conferences, meetings and other relevant consultations.

20. A **Technical Advisory Committee** (TAC) was to be set up to share cross sites experiences and to coordinate activities across sites. The Committee was to develop annual work plans and budgets, prepare bi-annual progress reports and annual summary reports and forward them to the PMU. In addition, the TAC was to coordinate activities of the different task teams at the sites and provide technical backstopping to the sites, peer review project research methods and outputs, and link Site Teams within country to ensure that lessons learned are shared among the sites and with other national and international programmes. The members of the Technical Advisory Committee were to be composed of Site Officers from each of the 4 project sites, technical thematic leaders, the Project Coordinator and Project manager, and Bioversity.

21. In order to share cross-site experiences and to coordinate activities across sites, a **Site Coordination Committee** (SCC) was to be established. SCC was to consist of a Site Officer, a site level Technical Assistant, Community Mobilizers, local thematic contact people, VDC Representative, farmers, NGOs, and development and extension staff, Farmer Field School (FFS) representatives and with the members of the Peasant Farmer association at District level in the four site districts. The Site Coordination Committee was to be responsible for developing the annual work plan and budget; preparing quarterly progress reports and annual summary report; and linking Site Teams within country to ensure that lessons learned are shared among the sites and with national and global level operation. The Site Coordination Committee were to hold two meetings each year.

22. A roster of Technical Experts was established organized by discipline of potential expertise that could be called upon during project implementation. Advisors were to support technical aspects of the project including, plant population genetics, pathology, entomology, pollination, ecology, anthropology, sociology, economics, agronomy, soil sciences, genetic diversity, breeding, ecosystem services, participatory approaches, law and policy.

23. The project’s institutional framework is illustrated in the following organigram.



#### 4. Project Cost and Financing

24. The total estimated project cost at design was **USD 8.1 million** of which USD 2.3 million was requested from GEF, and USD 5.8 million was to be leveraged from co-finance, both cash and in-kind from NARC, LI-BIRD, DoA, Bioveristy International, and UNEP.

25. The tables below shows the budget of the project broken down by GEF, co-finance and component:

Project Component	Budgeted GEF (USD)	Budgeted Co-finance (USD)	Total Budget (USD)
Component 1: Mainstreaming mechanisms that integrate diversity-rich solutions into breeding and technology	821,916	1,954,277	<b>2,776,193</b>
Component 2: Increasing access to local agrobiodiversity planting materials	654,010	1,517,064	<b>2,171,074</b>
Component 3: Promoting an enabling environment for access and benefit sharing of local agrobiodiversity planting materials	476,074	1,343,817	<b>1,819,891</b>
Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation	140,000	182,409	<b>322,409</b>
Component 5: Management	208,000	833,537	<b>1,041,537</b>

#### 5. Implementation Issues

26. There were notable issues that adversely affected project implementation. Based on the findings and conclusion of the project’s Mid-term Review (MTR), its overall performance was rated Highly Satisfactory. The report states that “the project has been most successful in mainstreaming conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems. By accomplishing this objective, the project contributes to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity, which forms the basis for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high elevation agricultural systems throughout the world.

### Section 2. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

#### 6. Objective of the Evaluation

27. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy<sup>82</sup> and the UNEP Programme Manual<sup>83</sup>, the Terminal Evaluation is undertaken at operational completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The Evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote operational improvement, learning and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP and Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Nepal; Department of Agriculture (DoA); Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LIBIRD) Nepal; and Bioversity International, Italy. Therefore, the Evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially where a second phase of the project is being considered. Recommendations relevant to the whole house may also be identified during the evaluation process.

## 7. Key Evaluation Principles

28. Evaluation findings and judgements will be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the Evaluation Report. Information will be triangulated (i.e., verified from different sources) as far as possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned (whilst anonymity is still protected). Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

29. **The “Why?” Question.** As this is a Terminal Evaluation and a follow-up project is likely [or similar interventions are envisaged for the future], particular attention will be given to learning from the experience. Therefore, the “why?” question should be at the front of the consultants’ minds all through the evaluation exercise and is supported by the use of a theory of change approach. This means that the consultant(s) needs to go beyond the assessment of “what” the project performance was and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of “why” the performance was as it was (i.e. what contributed to the achievement of the project’s results). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project.

30. **Attribution, Contribution and Credible Association:** In order to *attribute* any outcomes and impacts to a project intervention, one needs to consider the difference between what has happened with, and what would have happened without, the project (i.e. take account of changes over time and between contexts in order to isolate the effects of an intervention). This requires appropriate baseline data and the identification of a relevant counterfactual, both of which are frequently not available for evaluations. Establishing the *contribution* made by a project in a complex change process relies heavily on prior intentionality (e.g. approved project design documentation, logical framework) and the articulation of causality (e.g. narrative and/or illustration of the Theory of Change). Robust evidence that a project was delivered as designed and that the expected causal pathways developed supports claims of contribution and this is strengthened where an alternative theory of change can be excluded. A *credible association* between the implementation of a project and observed positive effects can be made where a strong causal narrative, although not explicitly articulated, can be inferred by the chronological sequence of events, active involvement of key actors and engagement in critical processes.

31. **Communicating evaluation results.** A key aim of the Evaluation is to encourage reflection and learning by UNEP staff and key project stakeholders. The consultant(s) should consider how reflection and learning can be promoted, both through the evaluation process and in the communication of evaluation findings and key lessons. Clear and concise writing is required on all evaluation deliverables. Draft and final versions of the Main Evaluation Report will be shared with key stakeholders by the Evaluation Manager. There may, however, be several intended audiences, each with different interests and needs regarding the report. The consultant(s) will plan with the Evaluation Manager which audiences to target and the easiest and clearest way to communicate the key evaluation findings and lessons to them. This may include some, or all, of the following; a webinar, conference calls with relevant stakeholders, the preparation of an Evaluation Brief or interactive presentation.

## 8. Key Strategic Questions

32. In addition to the evaluation criteria outlined in Section 10 below, the Evaluation will address the **strategic questions** listed below. These are questions of interest to UNEP and to which the project is believed to be able to make a substantive contribution. Also included are five questions that are required when reporting in the GEF Portal and these must be addressed in the TE

33. Nepal had an active United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in place (2008 – 2012) highlighting the priority area of economic growth and social services and providing useful co-ordination and communications framework with other development goals and activities according to the Project Document.

- (a) **Q1:** To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF coordination and implementation process?
- (b) **Q2:** What evidence can the evaluation identify as the project’s contribution to Nepal Country Programme Component 2 on “Improved household food security for enhanced resilience to shocks”?

34. UNEP is one of a number of partners hosting the study for The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) which published four comprehensive reports directed at educating specific interest groups (e.g. business, policymakers, etc.) about the concept of valuing ecosystems and biodiversity, and, currently in its third phase (implementation).

- (c) **Q3:** To what extent has the TEEB’s dedicated communication team supported this GEF project in areas where the two projects were complimentary?
- (d) **Q4:** What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might such changes have affected the project’s performance?

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82 <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/policies-and-strategies>

83 <https://wecollaborate.unep.org>

35. Address the questions required for the GEF Portal in the appropriate parts of the report and provide a **summary of the findings in the Conclusions section of the report**:

- (a) Under Monitoring and Reporting/Monitoring of Project Implementation: What was the performance at the project’s completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided<sup>84</sup>).
- (b) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation: What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project, as evolved from the time of the MTR? (*This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval*)
- (c) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality: What were the completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? (*This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent*)
- (d) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Environmental and Social Safeguards: What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. (*Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal*)
- (e) Under Factors Affecting Performance/Communication and Public Awareness:

What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project’s completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? (*This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval*)

## 9. Evaluation Criteria

36. All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. Sections A-I below, outline the scope of the criteria. A weightings table in excel format will be provided by the Evaluation Manager to support the determination of an overall project rating. The set of evaluation criteria are grouped in nine categories: (A) Strategic Relevance; (B) Quality of Project Design; (C) Nature of External Context; (D) Effectiveness, which comprises assessments of the availability of outputs, achievement of outcomes and likelihood of impact; (E) Financial Management; (F) Efficiency; (G) Monitoring and Reporting; (H) Sustainability; and (I) Factors Affecting Project Performance. The Evaluation Consultant(s) can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

### A. Strategic Relevance

37. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the donors, implementing regions/countries and the target beneficiaries. The Evaluation will include an assessment of the project’s relevance in relation to UNEP’s mandate and its alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. Under strategic relevance an assessment of the complementarity of the project with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups will be made. This criterion comprises four elements:

#### i. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy<sup>85</sup> (MTS), Programme of Work (POW) and Strategic Priorities

38. The Evaluation should assess the project’s alignment with the MTS and POW under which the project was approved and include, in its narrative, reflections on the scale and scope of any contributions made to the planned results reflected in the relevant MTS and POW. UNEP strategic priorities include the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building<sup>86</sup> (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC). The BSP relates to the capacity of governments to: comply with international agreements and obligations at the national level; promote, facilitate and finance environmentally sound technologies and to strengthen frameworks for developing coherent international environmental policies. S-SC is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries.

#### ii. Alignment to Donor/GEF/Partner Strategic Priorities

39. Donor, including GEF, strategic priorities will vary across interventions. GEF priorities are specified in published programming priorities and focal area strategies. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project is suited to, or responding to, donor priorities. In some cases, alignment with donor priorities may be a fundamental part of project design and grant approval processes while in others, for example, instances of ‘softly-earmarked’ funding, such alignment may be more of an assumption that should be assessed.

<sup>84</sup> This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

<sup>85</sup> UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) is a document that guides UNEP’s programme planning over a four-year period. It identifies UNEP’s thematic priorities, known as Sub-programmes (SP), and sets out the desired outcomes, known as Expected Accomplishments (EAs), of the Sub-programmes. <https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment/evaluation-office/our-evaluation-approach/un-environment-documents>

<sup>86</sup> <http://www.unep.fr/ozonaction/about/bsp.htm>

**iii. Relevance to Global, Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities**

40. The Evaluation will assess the alignment of the project with global priorities such as the SDGs and Agenda 2030. The extent to which the intervention is suited, or responding to, the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries, sub-regions or regions where it is being implemented will be considered. Examples may include: UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF), national or sub-national development plans, poverty reduction strategies or Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Action (NAMA) plans or regional agreements etc. Within this section consideration will be given to whether the needs of all beneficiary groups are being met and reflects the current policy priority to leave no one behind.

**iv. Complementarity with Relevant Existing Interventions/Coherence<sup>87</sup>**

41. An assessment will be made of how well the project, either at design stage or during the project inception or mobilization<sup>88</sup>, took account of ongoing and planned initiatives (under the same sub-programme, other UNEP sub-programmes, or being implemented by other agencies within the same country, sector or institution) that address similar needs of the same target groups. The Evaluation will consider if the project team, in collaboration with Regional Offices and Sub-Programme Coordinators, made efforts to ensure their own intervention was complementary to other interventions, optimized any synergies and avoided duplication of effort. Examples may include UNDAFs or One UN programming. Linkages with other interventions should be described and instances where UNEP’s comparative advantage has been particularly well applied should be highlighted.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders’ participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness

**B. Quality of Project Design**

The quality of project design is assessed using an agreed template during the evaluation inception phase, ratings are attributed to identified criteria and an overall Project Design Quality rating is established. The complete Project Design Quality template should be annexed in the Evaluation Inception Report. Later, the overall Project Design Quality rating<sup>89</sup> should be entered in the final evaluation ratings table (as item B) in the Main Evaluation Report and a summary of the project’s strengths and weaknesses at design stage should be included within the body of the report.

Factors affecting this criterion may include (at the design stage):

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality

**C. Nature of External Context**

42. At evaluation inception stage a rating is established for the project’s external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval<sup>90</sup>). This rating is entered in the final evaluation ratings table as item C. Where a project has been rated as facing either an Unfavourable or Highly Unfavourable external operating context, and/or a negative external event has occurred during project implementation, the ratings for Effectiveness, Efficiency and/or Sustainability may be increased at the discretion of the Evaluation Consultant and Evaluation Manager together. A justification for such an increase must be given.

**D. Effectiveness**

**i. Availability of Outputs<sup>91</sup>**

43. The Evaluation will assess the project’s success in producing the programmed outputs and making them available to the intended beneficiaries as well as its success in achieving milestones as per the project design document (ProDoc). Any *formal* modifications/revisions made during project implementation will be considered part of the project design. Where the project outputs are inappropriately or inaccurately stated in the ProDoc, reformulations may be necessary in the reconstruction of the Theory of Change (TOC). In such cases a table should be provided showing the original and the reformulation of the outputs for transparency. The availability of outputs will be assessed in terms of both quantity and quality, and the assessment will consider their ownership by, and usefulness to, intended beneficiaries and the timeliness of their provision. It is noted that emphasis is placed on the performance of those outputs that are most important to achieve outcomes. The Evaluation will briefly explain the

<sup>87</sup> This sub-category is consistent with the new criterion of ‘Coherence’ introduced by the OECD-DAC in 2019.

<sup>88</sup> A project’s inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

<sup>89</sup> In some instances, based on data collected during the evaluation process, the assessment of the project’s design quality may change from Inception Report to Main Evaluation Report.

<sup>90</sup> Note that ‘political upheaval’ does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project’s design and addressed through adaptive management by the project team. From March 2020 this should include the effects of COVID-19.

<sup>91</sup> Outputs are the availability (for intended beneficiaries/users) of new products and services and/or gains in knowledge, abilities and awareness of individuals or within institutions (UNEP, 2019)

reasons behind the success or shortcomings of the project in delivering its programmed outputs and meeting expected quality standards.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision<sup>92</sup>

**ii. Achievement of Project Outcomes<sup>93</sup>**

44. The achievement of project outcomes is assessed as performance against the project outcomes as defined in the reconstructed<sup>94</sup> Theory of Change. These are outcomes that are intended to be achieved by the end of the project timeframe and within the project’s resource envelope. Emphasis is placed on the achievement of project outcomes that are most important for attaining intermediate states. As with outputs, a table can be used where substantive amendments to the formulation of project outcomes is necessary to allow for an assessment of performance. The Evaluation should report evidence of attribution between UNEP’s intervention and the project outcomes. In cases of normative work or where several actors are collaborating to achieve common outcomes, evidence of the nature and magnitude of UNEP’s ‘substantive contribution’ should be included and/or ‘credible association’ established between project efforts and the project outcomes realised.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders’ participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Communication and public awareness

**iii. Likelihood of Impact**

45. Based on the articulation of long-lasting effects in the reconstructed TOC (*i.e. from project outcomes, via intermediate states, to impact*), the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the intended, positive impacts becoming a reality. Project objectives or goals should be incorporated in the TOC, possibly as intermediate states or long-lasting impacts. The Evaluation Office’s approach to the use of TOC in project evaluations is outlined in a guidance note available and is supported by an excel-based flow chart, ‘Likelihood of Impact Assessment Decision Tree’. Essentially the approach follows a ‘likelihood tree’ from project outcomes to impacts, taking account of whether the assumptions and drivers identified in the reconstructed TOC held. Any unintended positive effects should also be identified and their causal linkages to the intended impact described.

46. The Evaluation will also consider the likelihood that the intervention may lead, or contribute to, unintended negative effects (e.g. will vulnerable groups such as those living with disabilities and/or women and children, be disproportionately affected by the project?). Some of these potential negative effects may have been identified in the project design as risks or as part of the analysis of Environmental and Social Safeguards.

47. The Evaluation will consider the extent to which the project has played a catalytic role<sup>95</sup> or has promoted scaling up and/or replication as part of its Theory of Change (either explicitly as in a project with a demonstration component or implicitly as expressed in the drivers required to move to outcome levels) and as factors that are likely to contribute to greater or long-lasting impact.

48. Ultimately UNEP and all its partners aim to bring about benefits to the environment and human well-being. Few projects are likely to have impact statements that reflect such long-lasting or broad-based changes. However, the Evaluation will assess the likelihood of the project to make a substantive contribution to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP’s Expected Accomplishments and the strategic priorities of funding partner(s).

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

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<sup>92</sup> In some cases ‘project management and supervision’ will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

<sup>93</sup> Outcomes are the use (i.e. uptake, adoption, application) of an output by intended beneficiaries, observed as changes in institutions or behavior, attitude or condition (UNEP, 2019)

<sup>94</sup> All submitted UNEP project documents are required to present a Theory of Change with all submitted project designs. The level of ‘reconstruction’ needed during an evaluation will depend on the quality of this initial TOC, the time that has lapsed between project design and implementation (which may be related to securing and disbursing funds) and the level of any formal changes made to the project design.

<sup>95</sup> The terms catalytic effect, scaling up and replication are inter-related and generally refer to extending the coverage or magnitude of the effects of a project. Catalytic effect is associated with triggering additional actions that are not directly funded by the project – these effects can be both concrete or less tangible, can be intentionally caused by the project or implied in the design and reflected in the TOC drivers, or can be unintentional and can rely on funding from another source or have no financial requirements. Scaling up and Replication require more intentionality for projects, or individual components and approaches, to be reproduced in other similar contexts. Scaling up suggests a substantive increase in the number of new beneficiaries reached/involved and may require adapted delivery mechanisms while Replication suggests the repetition of an approach or component at a similar scale but among different beneficiaries. Even with highly technical work, where scaling up or replication involves working with a new community, some consideration of the new context should take place and adjustments made as necessary.

- Quality of Project Management and Supervision (including adaptive management)
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality
- Country ownership and driven-ness
- Communication and public awareness

#### **E. Financial Management**

49. Financial management will be assessed under three themes: *adherence* to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures, *completeness* of financial information and *communication* between financial and project management staff. The Evaluation will establish the actual spend across the life of the project of funds secured from all donors. This expenditure will be reported, where possible, at output/component level and will be compared with the approved budget. The Evaluation will verify the application of proper financial management standards and adherence to UNEP’s financial management policies. Any financial management issues that have affected the timely delivery of the project or the quality of its performance will be highlighted. The Evaluation will record where standard financial documentation is missing, inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable in a timely manner. The Evaluation will assess the level of communication between the Project/Task Manager and the Fund Management Officer as it relates to the effective delivery of the planned project and the needs of a responsive, adaptive management approach.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness
- Quality of project management and supervision

#### **F. Efficiency**

50. Under the efficiency criterion the Evaluation will assess the extent to which the project delivered maximum results from the given resources. This will include an assessment of the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution.

51. Focusing on the translation of inputs into outputs, cost-effectiveness is the extent to which an intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its results at the lowest possible cost. Timeliness refers to whether planned activities were delivered according to expected timeframes as well as whether events were sequenced efficiently. The Evaluation will also assess to what extent any project extension could have been avoided through stronger project management and identify any negative impacts caused by project delays or extensions. The Evaluation will describe any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe and consider whether the project was implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternative interventions or approaches.

52. The Evaluation will give special attention to efforts made by the project teams during project implementation to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities<sup>96</sup> with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

53. The factors underpinning the need for any project extensions will also be explored and discussed. As management or project support costs cannot be increased in cases of ‘no cost extensions’, such extensions represent an increase in unstated costs to implementing parties.

Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Preparation and readiness (e.g. timeliness)
- Quality of project management and supervision
- Stakeholders participation and cooperation

#### **G. Monitoring and Reporting**

54. The Evaluation will assess monitoring and reporting across three sub-categories: monitoring design and budgeting, monitoring implementation and project reporting.

##### **i. Monitoring Design and Budgeting**

55. Each project should be supported by a sound monitoring plan that is designed to track progress against SMART<sup>97</sup> results towards the provision of the project’s outputs and achievement of project outcomes, including at a level disaggregated by gender, marginalisation or vulnerability, including those living with disabilities. In particular, the Evaluation will assess the relevance and appropriateness of the project indicators as well as the methods used for tracking progress against them as part of conscious results-based management. The Evaluation will assess the quality of the design of the monitoring plan as well as the funds allocated for its implementation. The adequacy of resources for Mid-Term and Terminal Evaluation/Review should be discussed if applicable.

##### **ii. Monitoring of Project Implementation**

56. The Evaluation will assess whether the monitoring system was operational and facilitated the timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. This assessment will include consideration of whether the project gathered relevant and good quality baseline data that is accurately and appropriately documented. This should include monitoring the representation and participation of disaggregated groups (including gendered, marginalised or vulnerable groups, such as those living with disabilities) in project activities. It will also consider the quality of

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<sup>96</sup> Complementarity with other interventions during project design, inception or mobilization is considered under Strategic Relevance above.

<sup>97</sup> SMART refers to results that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-oriented. Indicators help to make results measurable.

the information generated by the monitoring system during project implementation and how it was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensure sustainability. The Evaluation should confirm that funds allocated for monitoring were used to support this activity.

57. The performance at project completion against **Core Indicator Targets** should be reviewed. For projects approved prior to GEF-7, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided.

### **iii. Project Reporting**

58. UNEP has a centralised project information management system (Anubis) in which project managers upload six-monthly progress reports against agreed project milestones. This information will be provided to the Evaluation Consultant(s) by the Evaluation Manager. Some projects have additional requirements to report regularly to funding partners, which will be supplied by the project team (e.g. the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool for GEF-funded projects). The Evaluation will assess the extent to which both UNEP and donor reporting commitments have been fulfilled. Consideration will be given as to whether reporting has been carried out with respect to the effects of the initiative on disaggregated groups.

#### Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Quality of project management and supervision
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. disaggregated indicators and data)

## **H. Sustainability**

59. Sustainability<sup>98</sup> is understood as the probability of the benefits derived from the achievement of project outcomes being maintained and developed after the close of the intervention. The Evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the endurance of achieved project outcomes (i.e. ‘assumptions’ and ‘drivers’). Some factors of sustainability may be embedded in the project design and implementation approaches while others may be contextual circumstances or conditions that evolve over the life of the intervention. Where applicable an assessment of bio-physical factors that may affect the sustainability of project outcomes may also be included.

### **i. Socio-political Sustainability**

60. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which social or political factors support the continuation and further development of the benefits derived from project outcomes. It will consider the level of ownership, interest and commitment among government and other stakeholders to take the project achievements forwards. In particular the Evaluation will consider whether individual capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

### **ii. Financial Sustainability**

61. Some project outcomes, once achieved, do not require further financial inputs, e.g. the adoption of a revised policy. However, in order to derive a benefit from this outcome further management action may still be needed e.g. to undertake actions to enforce the policy. Other project outcomes may be dependent on a continuous flow of action that needs to be resourced for them to be maintained, e.g. continuation of a new natural resource management approach. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which project outcomes are dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained. Secured future funding is only relevant to financial sustainability where a project’s outcomes have been extended into a future project phase. Even where future funding has been secured, the question still remains as to whether the project outcomes are financially sustainable.

### **iii. Institutional Sustainability**

62. The Evaluation will assess the extent to which the sustainability of project outcomes (especially those relating to policies and laws) is dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance. It will consider whether institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. are robust enough to continue delivering the benefits associated with the project outcomes after project closure. In particular, the Evaluation will consider whether institutional capacity development efforts are likely to be sustained.

#### Factors affecting this criterion may include:

- Stakeholders participation and cooperation
- Responsiveness to human rights and gender equality (e.g. where interventions are not inclusive, their sustainability may be undermined)
- Communication and public awareness
- Country ownership and driven-ness

## **I. Factors Affecting Project Performance and Cross-Cutting Issues**

*(These factors are rated in the ratings table but are discussed within the Main Evaluation Report as cross-cutting themes as appropriate under the other evaluation criteria, above. If these issues have not been addressed under the evaluation criteria above, then independent summaries of their status within the evaluated project should be given.)*

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<sup>98</sup> As used here, ‘sustainability’ means the long-lasting maintenance of outcomes and consequent impacts, whether environmental or not. This is distinct from the concept of sustainability in the terms ‘environmental sustainability’ or ‘sustainable development’, which imply ‘not living beyond our means’ or ‘not diminishing global environmental benefits’ (GEF STAP Paper, 2019, Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment)

**i. Preparation and Readiness**

63. This criterion focuses on the inception or mobilisation stage of the project (i.e. the time between project approval and first disbursement). The Evaluation will assess whether appropriate measures were taken to either address weaknesses in the project design or respond to changes that took place between project approval, the securing of funds and project mobilisation. In particular the Evaluation will consider the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the project team, the confirmation of partner capacity and development of partnership agreements as well as initial staffing and financing arrangements. *(Project preparation is included in the template for the assessment of Project Design Quality).*

**ii. Quality of Project Management and Supervision**

64. In some cases ‘project management and supervision’ may refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects<sup>99</sup>, it may refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping and supervision provided by UNEP. The performance of parties playing different roles should be discussed and a rating provided for both types of supervision (UNEP/Partner/Executing Agency) and the overall rating for this sub-category established as a simple average of the two.

65. The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of project management with regard to: providing leadership towards achieving the planned outcomes; managing team structures; maintaining productive partner relationships (including Steering Groups etc.); maintaining project relevance within changing external and strategic contexts; communication and collaboration with UNEP colleagues; risk management; use of problem-solving; project adaptation and overall project execution. Evidence of adaptive management should be highlighted.

**iii. Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation**

66. Here the term ‘stakeholder’ should be considered in a broad sense, encompassing all project partners, duty bearers with a role in delivering project outputs and target users of project outputs and any other collaborating agents external to UNEP and the Executing Agency. The assessment will consider throughout the project life and the support given to maximise collaboration and coherence between various stakeholders, including sharing plans, pooling resources and exchanging learning and expertise. The inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender groups should be considered.

67. The progress, challenges and outcomes regarding engagement of stakeholders in the project/program occurring since the MTR should be reviewed. *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval).*

**iv. Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equality**

68. The Evaluation will ascertain to what extent the project has applied the UN Common Understanding on the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Within this human rights context the Evaluation will assess to what extent the intervention adheres to UNEP’s Policy and Strategy for Gender Equality and the Environment<sup>100</sup>.

69. In particular the Evaluation will consider to what extent project-implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible inequalities (especially those related to gender) in access to, and the control over, natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups (especially women, youth and children and those living with disabilities) to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of disadvantaged groups (especially those related to gender) in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation.

70. The completed gender-responsive measures and, if applicable, actual gender result areas should be reviewed. (This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent).

**v. Environmental and Social Safeguards**

71. UNEP projects address environmental and social safeguards primarily through the process of environmental and social screening at the project approval stage, risk assessment and management (avoidance, minimization, mitigation or, in exceptional cases, offsetting) of potential environmental and social risks and impacts associated with project and programme activities. The Evaluation will confirm whether UNEP requirements<sup>101</sup> were met to: *review* risk ratings on a regular basis; *monitor* project implementation for possible safeguard issues; *respond* (where relevant) to safeguard issues through risk avoidance, minimization, mitigation or offsetting and *report* on the implementation of safeguard management measures taken. UNEP

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<sup>99</sup> For GEF funded projects, a rating will be provided for the Project Management and Supervision of each of the Implementing and Executing Agencies. The two ratings will be aggregated to provided an overall rating for Quality of Project Management and Supervision

<sup>100</sup>The Evaluation Office notes that Gender Equality was first introduced in the UNEP Project Review Committee Checklist in 2010 and, therefore, provides a criterion rating on gender for projects approved from 2010 onwards. Equally, it is noted that policy documents, operational guidelines and other capacity building efforts have only been developed since then and have evolved over time. [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender\\_equality\\_and\\_the\\_environment\\_Policy\\_and\\_strategy-2015Gender\\_equality\\_and\\_the\\_environment\\_policy\\_and\\_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7655/-Gender_equality_and_the_environment_Policy_and_strategy-2015Gender_equality_and_the_environment_policy_and_strategy.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

<sup>101</sup> For the review of project concepts and proposals, the Safeguard Risk Identification Form (SRIF) was introduced in 2019 and replaced the Environmental, Social and Economic Review note (ESERN), which had been in place since 2016. In GEF projects safeguards have been considered in project designs since 2011.

requirements for proposed projects to be screened for any safeguarding issues; for sound environmental and social risk assessments to be conducted and initial risk ratings to be assigned are evaluated above under Quality of Project Design).

72. The Evaluation will also consider the extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP’s environmental footprint.

73. Implementation of the management measures against the Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval should be reviewed, the risk classifications verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant should be shared with the Task Manager.

**vi. Country Ownership and Driven-ness**

74. The Evaluation will assess the quality and degree of engagement of government / public sector agencies in the project. While there is some overlap between Country Ownership and Institutional Sustainability, this criterion focuses primarily on the forward momentum of the intended projects results, i.e. either a) moving forwards from outputs to project outcomes or b) moving forward from project outcomes towards intermediate states. The Evaluation will consider the engagement not only of those directly involved in project execution and those participating in technical or leadership groups, but also those official representatives whose cooperation is needed for change to be embedded in their respective institutions and offices (e.g. representatives from multiple sectors or relevant ministries beyond Ministry of Environment). This factor is concerned with the level of ownership generated by the project over outputs and outcomes and that is necessary for long-lasting impact to be realised. Ownership should extend to all gendered and marginalised groups.

**vii. Communication and Public Awareness**

75. The Evaluation will assess the effectiveness of: a) communication of learning and experience sharing between project partners and interested groups arising from the project during its life and b) public awareness activities that were undertaken during the implementation of the project to influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large. The Evaluation should consider whether existing communication channels and networks were used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalised groups, and whether any feedback channels were established. Where knowledge sharing platforms have been established under a project the Evaluation will comment on the sustainability of the communication channel under either socio-political, institutional or financial sustainability, as appropriate.

76. The project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions should be reviewed. This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval.

**Section 3. EVALUATION APPROACH, METHODS AND DELIVERABLES**

77. The Terminal Evaluation will be an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used as appropriate to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is highly recommended that the consultant(s) maintains close communication with the project team and promotes information exchange throughout the Evaluation implementation phase in order to increase their (and other stakeholder) ownership of the evaluation findings. Where applicable, the consultant(s) will provide a geo-referenced map that demarcates the area covered by the project and, where possible, provide geo-reference photographs of key intervention sites (e.g. sites of habitat rehabilitation and protection, pollution treatment infrastructure, etc.)

78. The findings of the Evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A desk review of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP MTS 2014-2017 and MTS 2018-2021, Programmes of Work, GEF policies, Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- Project design documents (including minutes of the project design review meeting at approval); Annual Work Plans and Budgets or equivalent, revisions to the project (Project Document Supplement), the logical framework and its budget;
- Project reports such as six-monthly progress and financial reports, progress reports from collaborating partners, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence and including the Project Implementation Reviews and Tracking Tool etc.;
- Project deliverables, including but not limited to: technical reports, training materials and reports, articles and publications, survey reports on traditional knowledge at community level, seed variety fact sheets in local language/video documentaries, seed balance sheets of companies, their seed collection and records, etc.
- Mid-Term Review of the project;

(b) **Interviews** (individual or in group) with:

- UNEP Task Manager (TM);
- Project management team, including the Project Manager within the Executing Agency, where appropriate;
- UNEP Fund Management Officer (FMO);
- Portfolio Manager and Sub-Programme Coordinator, where appropriate;
- Project partners, including Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Nepal; Department of Agriculture (DoA); Local Initiatives for Biodiversity Research and Development (LIBIRD) Nepal; and Bioversity International, Italy;
- Relevant resource persons;
- Representatives from civil society and specialist groups (such as women’s, farmers and trade associations etc).

(c) **Surveys** as deemed necessary and designed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

- (d) **Field visits** these will be determined during the inception phase of the evaluation together with the restrictions on international/national travel plans due to COVID-19.
- (e) Other data collection tools as deemed necessary and designed during the inception phase of the evaluation.

## 10. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

79. The Evaluation Consultant will prepare:

- **Inception Report:** (see Annex 1 for a list of all templates, tables and guidance notes) containing an assessment of project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, project stakeholder analysis, evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule.
- **Preliminary Findings Note:** typically in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, the sharing of preliminary findings is intended to support the participation of the project team, act as a means to ensure all information sources have been accessed and provide an opportunity to verify emerging findings. In the case of highly strategic project/portfolio evaluations or evaluations with an Evaluation Reference Group, the preliminary findings may be presented as a word document for review and comment.
- **Draft and Final Evaluation Report:** containing an executive summary that can act as a stand-alone document; detailed analysis of the evaluation findings organised by evaluation criteria and supported with evidence; lessons learned and recommendations and an annotated ratings table.

80. An **Evaluation Brief**, (a 2-page overview of the evaluation and key evaluation findings) for wider dissemination through the UNEP website may be required. This will be discussed with the Evaluation Manager no later than during the finalization of the Inception Report.

81. **Review of the Draft Evaluation Report.** The Evaluation Consultant(s) will submit a draft report to the Evaluation Manager and revise the draft in response to their comments and suggestions. Once a draft of adequate quality has been peer-reviewed and accepted, the Evaluation Manager will share the cleared draft report with the Task Manager and Project Manager, who will alert the Evaluation Manager in case the report contains any blatant factual errors. The Evaluation Manager will then forward the revised draft report (corrected by the Evaluation Consultant(s) where necessary) to other project stakeholders, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions as well as providing feedback on the proposed recommendations and lessons. Any comments or responses to draft reports will be sent to the Evaluation Manager for consolidation. The Evaluation Manager will provide all comments to the Evaluation Consultant(s) for consideration in preparing the final report, along with guidance on areas of contradiction or issues requiring an institutional response.

82. Based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the Evaluation Consultants and the internal consistency of the report, the Evaluation Manager will provide an assessment of the ratings in the final evaluation report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and the Evaluation Manager on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

83. The Evaluation Manager will prepare a **quality assessment** of the first draft of the Main Evaluation Report, which acts as a tool for providing structured feedback to the Evaluation Consultant(s). The quality of the final report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in template listed in Annex 1 and this assessment will be appended to the Final Evaluation Report.

84. At the end of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Office will prepare a **Recommendations Implementation Plan** in the format of a table, to be completed and updated at regular intervals by the Task Manager. The Evaluation Office will track compliance against this plan on a six-monthly basis for a maximum of 12 months.

## 11. The Evaluation Consultant

85. For this evaluation, the evaluation team will consist of an Evaluation Consultant who will work under the overall responsibility of the Evaluation Office represented by an Evaluation Manager (Pauline Marima), in consultation with the UNEP Task Manager (Sang Jin Lee), Fund Management Officer (Michael Atogoh) and the coordinator of the Healthy and Productive Ecosystems Sub-programme (Marieta Sakalian). The consultant will liaise with the Evaluation Manager on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, each consultant's individual responsibility to arrange for their visas and immunizations as well as to plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, obtain documentary evidence and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Task Manager and project team will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings etc.) allowing the consultants to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

86. The Evaluation Consultant will be hired over a period of 7 months [01 May 2022 to 30 November 2022]. A university degree in environmental sciences, agriculture, international development, or other relevant sciences area is required, and an advanced degree in the same areas is desirable. A minimum of 10 years of technical is required. Experience in evaluation is required, preferably including evaluating large, regional or global programmes and using a Theory of Change approach; and a good/broad understanding of agrobiodiversity, food security, and climate change adaptation. Working knowledge of the UN system and specifically the work of UNEP is an added advantage.

87. For this consultancy, fluency in oral and written English is a requirement; knowledge of Nepali would be highly advantageous. The work will be home-based with possible field visits.

88. In close consultation with the Evaluation Manager, the Evaluation Consultant will be responsible for the overall management of the Evaluation and timely provision of its outputs, data collection and analysis and report-writing. More specifically:

Inception phase of the Evaluation, including:

- preliminary desk review and introductory interviews with project staff;
- draft the reconstructed Theory of Change of the project;
- prepare the evaluation framework;
- develop the desk review and interview protocols;
- draft the survey protocols (if relevant);
- develop and present criteria for country and/or site selection for the evaluation mission;
- plan the evaluation schedule;
- prepare the Inception Report, incorporating comments until approved by the Evaluation Manager

Data collection and analysis phase of the Evaluation, including:

- conduct further desk review and in-depth interviews with project implementing and executing agencies, project partners and project stakeholders;
- (where appropriate and agreed) conduct an evaluation mission(s) to selected countries, visit the project locations, interview project partners and stakeholders, including a good representation of local communities. Ensure independence of the Evaluation and confidentiality of evaluation interviews.
- regularly report back to the Evaluation Manager on progress and inform of any possible problems or issues encountered and;
- keep the Project/Task Manager informed of the evaluation progress.

Reporting phase, including:

- draft the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that the evaluation report is complete, coherent and consistent with the Evaluation Manager guidelines both in substance and style;
- liaise with the Evaluation Manager on comments received and finalize the Main Evaluation Report, ensuring that comments are taken into account until approved by the Evaluation Manager
- prepare a Response to Comments annex for the main report, listing those comments not accepted by the Evaluation Consultant and indicating the reason for the rejection; and
- (where agreed with the Evaluation Manager) prepare an Evaluation Brief (2-page summary of the evaluation and the key evaluation findings and lessons)

Managing relations, including:

- maintain a positive relationship with evaluation stakeholders, ensuring that the evaluation process is as participatory as possible but at the same time maintains its independence;
- communicate in a timely manner with the Evaluation Manager on any issues requiring its attention and intervention.

## 12. Schedule of the Evaluation

89. The table below presents the tentative schedule for the Evaluation.

Table 3. Tentative schedule for the Evaluation

Milestone	Tentative Dates
Evaluation Initiation Meeting	May 2022
Inception Report	May 2022
Evaluation Mission	June 2022
E-based interviews, surveys etc.	May – June 2022
PowerPoint/presentation on preliminary findings and recommendations	July 2022
Draft report to Evaluation Manager (and Peer Reviewer)	August 2022
Draft Report shared with UNEP Project Manager and team	September 2022
Draft Report shared with wider group of stakeholders	October 2022
Final Report	November 2022
Final Report shared with all respondents	November 2022

## 13. Contractual Arrangements

90. Evaluation Consultants will be selected and recruited by the Evaluation Office of UNEP under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) on a “fees only” basis (see below). By signing the service contract with UNEP /UNON, the consultant(s) certify that they have not been associated with the design and implementation of the project in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and project partner performance. In addition, they will not have

any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project’s executing or implementing units. All consultants are required to sign the Code of Conduct Agreement Form.

91. Fees will be paid on an instalment basis, paid on acceptance by the Evaluation Manager of expected key deliverables. The schedule of payment is as follows:

**Table 4. Schedule of Payment for the Evaluation Consultant**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Percentage Payment</b>
Approved Inception Report (as per annex document #9)	30%
Approved Draft Main Evaluation Report (as per annex document #10)	30%
Approved Final Main Evaluation Report	40%

92. Fees only contracts: Where applicable, air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the Daily Subsistence Allowance for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel will only be reimbursed where agreed in advance with the Evaluation Manager and on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

93. The consultants may be provided with access to UNEP’s information management systems (e.g PIMS, Anubis, SharePoint etc) and if such access is granted, the consultants agree not to disclose information from that system to third parties beyond information required for, and included in, the evaluation report.

94. In case the consultants are not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these guidelines, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Director of the Evaluation Office until the consultants have improved the deliverables to meet UNEP’s quality standards.

95. If the consultant(s) fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the consultants’ fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

## ANNEX VI: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
<b>Key Strategic Questions</b>				
	<b>Q1:</b> To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF coordination and implementation process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF coordination process?</li> <li>- To what extent was the project mainstreamed into the UNDAF implementation process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent of mainstreaming into the UNDAF coordination and implementation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNDAF and project document/reports</li> <li>- Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders</li> </ul>
	<b>Q2:</b> What evidence can the evaluation identify as the project’s contribution to Nepal Country Programme Component 2 on “Improved household food security for enhanced resilience to shocks”?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does the project support Nepal country programme component 2?</li> <li>- What is the evidence of the project’s contribution to Nepal Country Programme Component 2?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Types and nature evidence of the project contribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project document/reports</li> <li>- Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders</li> </ul>
	<b>Q3:</b> To what extent has the TEEB’s dedicated communication team supported this GEF project in areas where the two projects were complimentary?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How and to what level does the communication team support the project?</li> <li>- What is the evidence of support or collaborative work?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent of support to the GEF project by TEEB’s communication team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project document/reports</li> <li>- Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders</li> </ul>
	<b>Q4:</b> What changes were made to adapt to the effects of COVID-19 and how might such changes have affected the project’s performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What are the challenges encountered and what is the level of impact on the project intervention due to COVID -19?</li> <li>- What type of changes or adaptation in the project made to respond to COVID-19 risk?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent of impact</li> <li>- Types and nature of changes made to adapt to the COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project document/reports</li> <li>- Interviews with the project team and the stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>A. Strategic Relevance</b>				
<b>Key question: To what extent were the Project interventions and objectives relevant and suited to the priorities, policies and strategies of the target groups, implementing agencies and donors?</b>				
i.	Alignment to the UNEP Medium term strategy (MTS), programme of Work (POW), and other strategic priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the Project in line with UNEP’s mandate and how?</li> <li>- Is the Project responding to UNEP strategies and programmes of work, and how (qualitative and quantitative contributions)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of alignment with UNEP MTS and POW</li> <li>- Degree of alignment with UNEP Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) and South-South Cooperation (S-SC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNEP publications (MTS, PoW)</li> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- PIR reports/ progress reports</li> <li>- Interviews with Task Manager (TM) )</li> <li>- UNEP publications (including BSP, S-SC)</li> </ul>
ii.	Alignment to Donor Strategic Priorities (GEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the Project responding to GEF Strategic priorities, and how?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent of alignment with other GEF strategic policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- PIR reports/ progress reports</li> </ul>

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interviews with TM, Project/stakeholders</li> <li>- GEF publications</li> </ul>
iii.	Relevance to Regional, Sub-Regional and national Environmental Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the Project responding to the stated environmental concerns and needs of the countries/sub-regions/regions and was aligned with SDGs/UNDAF, and climate policies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of alignment with National and (sub) regional plans, strategies, policies and agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
iv.	Complementarity with existing interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent did the Project, at the design and/or mobilization phase, take account of ongoing and/or planned initiatives?</li> <li>- To what extent did the Project team make efforts to ensure that the Project was complementary to other UNEP and UN interventions (i. e. UNDAF, one-UN programming), and optimize any synergies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Degree of potential synergies identified</li> <li>- Absence of duplication of efforts</li> <li>- Potential duplications identified at the design stage</li> <li>- Degree of identified complementarities with other projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
<b>B. Quality of Project Design</b>				
<b>Key question: How adequate was the Project design to achieve the Project Outputs, Outcomes and Objectives?</b>				
	Relevance and logic of Project Objectives, Activities, Outputs and Outcomes according to Project Quality Design template (see appendix C).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Quality of Project Design is assessed using the template provided by the UNEP Office.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Result of Overall Project Design Quality rating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc, including the Project Review Committee review sheet</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and stakeholders (NARC, Biodiversity and LIBIRD)</li> </ul>
<b>C. Nature of External Context</b>				
<b>Key question: To what extent does the project consider external factors which might have an effect on project implementation?</b>				
	Aspects related to external operating context (considering the prevalence of conflict, natural disasters and political upheaval) (also see appendix C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has the Project faced an unusually challenging operational environment that negatively affected project performance, such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conflicts or security issues?</li> <li>- Risks of natural disasters? and</li> <li>- Government instability?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duration of project delay and number of extensions, ProDoc / log frame revisions and budget revisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
<b>D. Effectiveness</b>				
<b>Key question: To what extent did the projects achieve the expected outputs and Outcomes?</b>				
i.	Availability of Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were Outputs and milestones delivered on time and as planned? If not, what were the reasons for the delay/changes?</li> <li>- What is the quality of these Outputs? To what extent do the Outputs contribute to their planned Outcomes?</li> <li>- How useful did beneficiaries find the Outputs produced by the Project?</li> <li>- Which factors contributed to the achievement of Outputs (and/or what were the reasons Outputs were not produced)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concrete evidence of Outputs (quantity and quality) being used by intended beneficiaries</li> <li>- Approved Project extensions/budget revisions</li> <li>- Involvement of stakeholders in the production of Outputs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
ii.	Achievement of direct Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What direct Outcomes (as per the reconstructed TOC) have been achieved?</li> <li>- Are these Outcomes a result of Project intervention? What is the evidence?</li> <li>- Would these have been achieved without the direct involvement of UNEP? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Amount of functional diversity of the local crops in respect of environmental stress</li> <li>- Extent availability of suitable landraces for the project sites</li> <li>- No of farmers and extent of benefits realized by farmers through genetic materials</li> <li>- Level of engagement of other stakeholders (private and public)</li> <li>- No. of local groups and amount of supply of local planting materials</li> <li>- No. of benefit-sharing mechanisms adopted</li> <li>- Level of operationalization of PIC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
iii.	Likelihood of Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the likelihood of expected positive (intended/unintended) impacts to be realized?</li> <li>- To what extent have any possible negative effects been identified in the Project as risks?</li> <li>- How successful was the Project in playing a catalytic role and/or promoting the scaling up or replication of Project results?</li> <li>- Is the Project likely to contribute to the long-lasting changes represented by the Sustainable Development Goals, and/or the intermediate-level results reflected in UNEP’s MTS, POW and national strategic priorities in Nepal?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Per cent increase in the number of globally significant crop biodiversity used to improve ecosystem resilience in mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal</li> <li>- A clear policy document by the government of Nepal highlighting the importance of the use of agrobiodiversity in mountain agricultural production landscapes for ecosystem resilience</li> <li>- A number of government and non-government stakeholders include crop genetic diversity deployment as one of the strategies to buffer production in vulnerable mountain environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Likelihood of Impact Assessment</li> <li>- Reconstructed ToC at Design and Evaluation</li> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with national project stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with communities</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
<b>E. Financial Management</b>				

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
<b>Key question: How conducive was the financial management for the achievement of project Outputs and Outcomes?</b>				
i	Adherence to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Was the Project implemented in compliance with UN financial management standards and procedures?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of contracting documents, Project reports and financial reporting</li> <li>- Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- Financial reports, audit reports</li> <li>- Interview with UNEP FMO</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with Project partners that received financial support</li> </ul>
ii	Completeness of financial information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was the actual expenditure across the life of the Project?</li> <li>- To what extent were the projects’ expenditures in line with the corresponding approved budget?</li> <li>- What changes, if any, have been made to the projects’ budget and why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of contracting documents, Project reports and financial reporting</li> <li>- Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- Financial reports, audit reports</li> <li>- Interview with UNEP FMO</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with Project partners that received financial support</li> </ul>
iii	Communication between financial and Project management staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent did the quality of communication between Project management and financial management staff affect project efficiency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approval of contracting documents, Project reports and financial reporting</li> <li>- Alignment of expenditures during Project implementation with the approved budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- Financial reports, audit reports</li> <li>- Interview with UNEP FMO Interviews with TM and PC</li> <li>- Interviews with Project partners that received financial support</li> </ul>
F. Efficiency				
<b>Key question: To what extent and how were cost-effectiveness and timeliness considered during Project implementation? How did these factors affect Project performance?</b>				
	Cost-effectiveness and timeliness of Project execution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed on Project timeframe?</li> <li>- Did the Project make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, etc. to increase Project efficiency? How?</li> <li>- What factors have caused delays (if any) and have affected Project execution, costs and effectiveness? How?</li> <li>- Were events leading to the completion of activities sequenced efficiently?</li> <li>- What was the role of the Project’s governance structure and management approach on its efficiency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of Project extensions, budget adjustments, revisions</li> <li>- Number of measures to mitigate delays</li> <li>- Timeliness of report submission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Mid-term review reports</li> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Financial reports</li> <li>- Monitoring reports</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> </ul>
G. Monitoring and Reporting				

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
<b>Key question: How were monitoring, evaluation and reporting used to support, adapt and improve Project implementation?</b>				
i.	Monitoring design and budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent were the monitoring plans designed to track progress against indicators?</li> <li>- To what extent were the allocated funds adequate for monitoring purposes, and the mid-term and terminal evaluations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality of monitoring plan along with the budget for M &amp; E</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> </ul>
ii.	Monitoring of Project implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent were the monitoring plans operational?</li> <li>- To what extent did the monitoring system facilitate the timely tracking of results and progress toward Project Objectives?</li> <li>- To what extent was the information, generated by the monitoring system, used to adapt and improve Project execution, achievement of Outcomes and ensure sustainability?</li> <li>- To what extent were the allocated funds for monitoring used to support monitoring?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and quality of monitoring documents</li> <li>- Existence and quality of mid-term review reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Mid-term review reports</li> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Financial reports</li> <li>- Monitoring reports</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> </ul>
iii.	Project reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have the 6-monthly status reports been delivered on time?</li> <li>- To what extent have other UNEP and donor reporting requirements been fulfilled?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and quality of reports delivered in line with reporting requirements</li> <li>- Number and quality of approved reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Mid-term review reports</li> <li>- Project budget</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Financial reports</li> <li>- Monitoring reports</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC</li> </ul>
<b>H. Sustainability</b>				
<b>Key question: How do socio-political, financial and institutional factors affect the probability of Project Outcomes being maintained and developed after the Projects end?</b>				
i.	Socio-political sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is the level of ownership, interest and commitment among governments and other main stakeholders?</li> <li>- What is the likelihood that the Project achievements will be taken forward at the national level, by the government (including allocation of budgets) and by the main stakeholders?</li> <li>- What is the likelihood that capacity development efforts continue?</li> <li>- Has increased capacity in the country been sustained until today?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of follow-up local landraces / agrobiodiversity initiatives and planning by governments (including designated budgets)</li> <li>- No. of workshops/events or other activities by other organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- Steering Committee meetings</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC/ national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
ii.	Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent are Project Outcomes dependent on future funding for the benefits they bring to be sustained? Is there any government funding secured to sustain the use of Local Crops/ Landraces or fund future use of the local crop outcomes designed by the Project?</li> <li>- What efforts are being made to secure funding for future complementary activities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of follow-up initiatives</li> <li>- Amount of funding available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
iii.	Institutional sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent were institutional frameworks, policies, and legal and accountability frameworks in place and robust enough to support the sustainability of Project Outcomes?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and quality of policies and legal and accountability frameworks</li> <li>- Number of follow-up activities initiated by governments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
<b>I. Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance</b>				
<b>Key question: How and to what extent did certain factors – preparation and readiness, quality of Project management and supervision, stakeholder participation and cooperation, responsiveness to human rights and gender, and environmental and social safeguards - affect Project performance?</b>				
i.	Preparation and Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were appropriate measures taken to either address weaknesses in the Project design or respond to changes that took place between Project approval, securing of the funds and Project mobilisation? Which measures?</li> <li>- What was the nature and quality of engagement with stakeholder groups by the Project team during Project preparation?</li> <li>- What process was followed to assess the capacities of implementing partners and develop the partnership agreements?</li> <li>- Were initial staffing and financing arrangements sufficient to drive implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and quality of appropriate measures taken - when necessary</li> <li>- Quality of partner agreements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
ii.	Quality of Project Management and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- -Was Project management technical backstopping and supervision) by UNEP/ Bioversity proactive and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of issues complicating sound Project implementation solved timely (as opposed to unsolved issues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> </ul>

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas”

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- responding timely and adequately to any issues encountered within the Project?</li> <li>- What was the nature of communication and collaboration with stakeholders?</li> <li>- To what extent the UNEP/Bioversity provides leadership for adaptive management of the project?</li> <li>- To what extent and how were risks managed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Amount of) evidence of adaptive management is applied.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
iii.	Stakeholder Participation and Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Were all Project stakeholders properly identified at Project design and duly involved in Project implementation?</li> <li>- What consultation and communication mechanisms were put in place to ensure active stakeholder engagement and ownership? Were these effective?</li> <li>- What was the level of support provided to maximise collaboration and coherence between stakeholders?</li> <li>- What measures were taken to ensure inclusion and participation of all differentiated groups, including gender and vulnerable groups?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of stakeholders identified and actively involved in Project implementation</li> <li>- Number of stakeholders satisfied with the stakeholder participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
iv.	Responsiveness to Human Rights and Gender Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent did the Project intervention adhere to UNEPs policy and strategy for gender and human right?</li> <li>- To what extent did Project implementation and monitoring take into consideration (gender; specific vulnerabilities of disadvantaged groups to environmental degradation or disasters)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of gender and human rights stakeholders identified and actively involved in Project implementation</li> <li>- The number of stakeholders satisfied with the stakeholder participation realized</li> <li>- Evidence that sensitivity in gender and inclusion has been observed in Project design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation activities, including gender distribution in participation in Project activities and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UN policies and strategies on gender and human rights:</li> <li>- UN Common Understanding on the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)</li> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
V	Environmental and Social Safeguards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent were UNEP’s requirements, for environmental and social safeguards, met (through the process of environmental and social screening at the Project approval stage, risk assessment and management) of potential environmental and social risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing responses to safeguard issues;</li> <li>- To what extent did the Project management minimise UNEP’s environmental footprint? What measures, if any, were taken?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas”

No	Evaluation Criteria	Sub Questions	Indicators / Means of verification	Data Sources
		<p>and impacts associated with Project and programme activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent were the following activities carried out (Review of risk ratings regularly; Monitoring of Project implementation for possible safeguard issues; and providing responses to safeguard issues)</li> <li>- To what extent did the Project management minimise UNEP's environmental footprint? What measures, if any, were taken?</li> </ul>		
vi	Country Ownership and Driven-ness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To what extent was the government qualitatively involved with the Project? (in respect to the need to embed the Outputs and Outcomes of Project work in their respective institutions)</li> <li>- How did this contribute to embedding changes in their respective institutions and offices?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of Project Outputs and Outcomes entrenched in government institutions</li> <li>- The degree to which Project results have been adopted and championed nationally</li> <li>- The degree to which countries have willingly resourced the Project and its Outcomes and indicated ongoing budgetary funding and capacity for the local crops monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>
vii	Communication and Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How was project learning communicated between Project partners and interested groups?</li> <li>- Which public awareness activities were undertaken during Project implementation?</li> <li>- To what extent did they influence attitudes or shape behaviour among wider communities and civil society at large? How?</li> <li>- To what extent were existing communication channels and networks used effectively, including meeting the differentiated needs of gendered or marginalized groups?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operative communication platforms/websites</li> <li>- Degree in awareness of stakeholders</li> <li>- Participation in Decision-making and Access and benefits sharing mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ProDoc</li> <li>- Project progress reports</li> <li>- PIR reports</li> <li>- Final report</li> <li>- Interviews with TM and PC / NC / other national stakeholders</li> <li>- Interviews/surveys with government representatives</li> </ul>

## ANNEX VII: STATUS OF THE PROJECT OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

### Output level

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
<b>Output 1.1</b> Diverse sets of varieties developed that buffer against unpredictable environmental change and mainstreamed into local and national extension and development packages	Number of farmer practices evaluated, mixtures developed, and participatory plant breeding experiments.	Information on number of varieties exists to some extent at all sites but only very limited information of levels of variation of to abiotic and biotic stress	Analysis of variation of levels of resistance in respect to abiotic and biotic stress for materials in all four sites	20% more varieties available with variation in levels of resistance in respect to abiotic and biotic stresses are available in the farmers production system in all four of the project sites and beyond	About 20% increase in the number of target mountain crop varieties with variations in functional traits are deployed and evaluated in sites.  A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species are deployed and evaluated, out of which seeds of 60 varieties with functional traits are increased.
	Number of varieties with a broad genetic base that can evolve in mountain environments produced through community led breeding programmes	At baseline, limited work on screening local PGR for identifying promising materials for promotion	At least three varieties are identified and/or developed through community led breeding programmes	At least eight varieties are identified and/or developed through community led breeding programmes	Eight varieties are identified.  60 locally adapted diverse crop varieties of 8 target crops are identified from the on-farm evaluation
	Number of participatory plant breeders that develop and deploy planting materials with a broaden genetic base for high elevation sites	Low number of breeders training in participatory plant breeding (PPB) within the national system	A training programme and materials are available for national breeders to be trained in PPB approach and to use PPB methods and materials and varietal mixtures with broaden genetic base	20% of breeders use participatory breeding programmes that use diversity to produce cultivars that are superior in marginal environments with a broadened genetic base	Breeders from NARC (from Hill Crop Research station)/LIBIRD were involved in the process.  14 PP breeders (4 from LI-BIRD, 4 from Gene Bank, 2 from ABD, Khumal, 2 from ARS Jumla, 2 from HCRP, Kabre.

<sup>102</sup> Results extracted from final report (reporting period 1 July 2019 to 30 March 2020) technical report (2019 – March 2020), updated under field missions 2022. Only output wise progress available from the technical report (2019 to March 2020). Also see the PIR 2020 where % of achievement is also provided

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
	Number Farmer Field School (FFS), and other extension units of the Department of Agriculture that use crop genetic diversity as an agricultural production and risk management option	DoA and NGOs do not use local intra-specific diversity as a component of their FFS programme	Training materials are available for FFS trainers are trained to include local crop genetic diversity within their FFS programme	DoA and NGOs in Nepal incorporate the use of crop genetic diversity within their system of Farmer field Schools (FFS) and the DoA extension networks	The project has used the FFS /diversity schools in the communities but no record is available from DoA and NGO on the number of FFS <sup>103</sup> . The project also used DoA's extension process. DADO used the learning before it was dismantled after the federalization started in Nepal.
	Percentage of variety information data bases made in farmer friendly formats	Information of variety traits is not in a format for easy access to farmers	30% of all variety information data bases made in farmer friendly formats for target sites	80% of all variety information data bases made in farmer friendly formats for target sites	A total of 130 local farmers' varieties of 8 mountain crops are characterised and 90 % of them are evaluated in project sites for their functional traits and data-based are made in farmer-friendly format.
<b>Output 1.2</b> Technology/ processing advancements adapted to traditional varieties and diverse sets of varieties	Number of technologies that have been modified or adapted to use traditional variety diversity and varietal mixtures or diverse sets of intra-specific varieties of target crops	Most technologies are not adapted to use, process, or refine diversified crop biodiversity materials	Appropriate technologies identified and a strategy for comparison testing established	At least three technical schemes that use crop genetic diversity to reduce vulnerability (in terms of probability of crop loss in the future) tested and used.	The project supported harvesting, processing and storage of the crop. The project developed a processing mill (called chino Kutak for proso-millet), a processing machine for finger millet, product diversification (such as making cakes from finger millet) and promotion of local crops through a diversity kit.
	Number of processing companies that use	At baseline, processing companies or groups are	At least two companies test the feasibility of processing	At least one processing company or group per project	The project demonstrated and there was also support from the

<sup>103</sup> The project did not have actual use of FFS by DOA where the crop genetic diversity from project sites is being used. But it is clear that DoA /AKC are using crop genetic resources of the project in their extension programs (e.g., seed distribution, block production programs etc.). For instance, the Bariyo kaguno foxtail millet variety of Ghanapokhara project site is being promoted by AKC Lamjung and also AKC and NGOs from other districts have bought seeds from the local CSB. NGO like LI-BIRD have promoted Dolakha bean varieties from Jugu Dolakha project sites to Sindhupalchowk and other districts. Ramechhap Hariyo Latte variety of Amaranth is widely promoted by some AKCs, NGOs and private seed companies like *Anamol* Seed Company of Chitwan. Dudhe chino variety of Proso-millet of Humla is being promoted by local NGO.

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
	different technologies or processing equipment that are adapted to use diversified materials	not using such processing equipment that can use diversified materials	equipment that can use diversified materials	site/district use different processing equipment that can use diversified materials	government to use Chino Kutak in Humla and millet harvester in Lamjung and Dolakha. In addition, an entrepreneur is involved in the processing of local crop products in Humla. No other data/information is available
	Number of producers trained in improved processing techniques with linkages to credit institutions to develop and acquire appropriate processing equipment	At baseline, trained persons in operating processing units do not exist nor are there persons linked to credit institutions that are willing to put funds in such ventures	Six interested people are trained in operating processing units  Two entrepreneurs are linked with credit institution for establishing processing units	12 people are trained in operating processing units  All the processing units in project districts acquire credit for their business from formal credit institutions to establish and operate processing business	109 farmers (male 79 and 30 female) were trained in food recipe preparation and the use of proso-millet and agri machinery and farm tools  Farmers get credit (mainly from informal sources, trust funds or cooperatives) but not from the banks to establish and operate a processing business
	Develop farmer-friendly information sharing mechanism	Farmers lack early warning climate and market information to help manage their crops to changes in temperature and rainfall	Information collected that will allow project beneficiaries to have information tools to access to weather information from nearest weather stations	Early warning text messaging available for 60% of farmers in project sites	Early warning text sharing was done on the Ghanpokhara project site. The information and knowledge materials are being shared through training, workshop, visit, and biodiversity fairs but no early warning text messages were shared with the farmers.
<b>Output 1.3</b> Ecosystem services from agrobiodiversity management practices valued and utilized in	Number of extension or development workers that have the knowledge and understanding of the role of crop genetic diversity to	At baseline, relevant national plans and strategies show limited awareness of the benefit and value of	Indicators to monitor the role of crop genetic diversity of the target crop in promoting higher levels of pollination, regulating pest and diseases,	50% of researchers, scientists and extension and development workers that promote the use of crop genetic diversity as a provider	Agriculture experts, local agriculture technicians and researchers were found to be having increased knowledge about the use of crop-genetic diversity.

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
agricultural and environmental development and extension programmes.	provide ecosystem services	agrobiodiversity to support ecosystem services	and improving water soil management are developed	of ecosystem goods and services	<p>Diverse crop varietal mixtures field trials are evaluated for pest and disease management, soil regulation and pollination services. Diversity field schools are operationalized in the community to make them aware of their ecosystem value. Papers, flyers, posters of crop varietal mixtures &amp; ecosystem services were developed as an extension package.</p> <p>No data available no of % of researchers, scientists and extension and development workers that promote the use of crop genetic diversity.</p>
	Area of land under which farmers use crop varietal diversity to regulate pest and diseases in their cropping systems as means to minimize crop damage without increasing pesticide use	Knowledge of the use of crop varietal mixtures in mountain environments, pesticide use is low, but pressures to increase pesticide use and other chemical inputs are a currently promoted government extension system and seed companies	Methods developed to document the land area the target sites that use crop varietal diversity as a means to minimize crop damage in project sites without increasing pesticide use	50% of the target land area is documented to use crop varietal diversity as a means to minimize crop damage in project sites without increasing pesticide use	A large size of the target land area used the crops to address pest attacks thereby reducing pesticide use but no data is available on the target land area (of documentation)
	Number of researchers and farmers who use intra-specific diversity of project target crops to increase levels of pollination	Locally driven good practices that support ecosystem services piloted (e.g. farmers invite mobile beehives in the orchards at	Information developed for the beneficiaries in project sites are made aware about the value of intra-specific	70% the beneficiaries in project sites are made aware about the value of intra-	Although no specific studies were carried out, the discussions with beneficiaries indicated that most of the beneficiaries were aware of the

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
	resulting in higher levels of crop productivity	the time of flowering on payment basis) exist, but the use of the intra-specific diversity of the crop itself has not been documented	diversity of the crop in increasing productivity	specific diversity of the crop in increasing productivity	value of diversity, and medicinal and food security value.  No systematic data is available about the comparative crop diversity (with and without / before and after)
	Number of soil water management projects that make use of intra-specific diversity in their agricultural production schemes	Soil – water management projects exist in the mountain areas of Nepal but information is lacking on the use of intra-specific diversity in these systems	Identification of appropriate levels of intra-specific diversity for diverse soil and water management practices in project sites	40% increase in projects from the baseline figure in projects that take into account the use of intra-specific diversity in their water and soil management projects	A review of the proposed activities showed that there were no adequate activities implemented but provided some technical advisory support and knowledge sharing during training to support or influence soil water management projects.
	Valuation of the use of intra-specific diversity compared to alternative methods to provide ecosystem services for specific services: pest and disease regulation, enhancing pollination levels, moderating weather extremes and their impacts, maintaining water quality and quantity, and generating and preserving soils and renewing their fertility.	Economic valuation methods such as damage abatement and Willing to Accept Payment for crop genetic resources have been developed. The methods have not been tested or used in the mountain areas of Nepal	Economic framework and tools developed to estimate the value of diversity-based approach to supporting regulating ecosystem services, including damage abatement and Willingness to Accept payment (WTA) valuation methods	Dollar values attributed to farmers and society value for the use of local crop genetic diversity to regulate ecosystem services in target sites	The project carried out the value of the use of intra specific diversity and provided enhancing ecosystem services (such as reducing pesticide and improving pollination) but no specific data available. In addition, activity 1.3.9 due to unavailability of an expert.
<b>Output 1.4</b>	Number of courses at local technical colleges and schools that teach the	Local technical colleges and schools do not teach on the use of crop genetic	Courses developed for technical colleges and schools that teach the use of	1000 people trained at local technical colleges and university on the use of crop	Some orientations /sensitization events were carried out to the representative of Educational institutions but no course was

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas”

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
Enhanced capacity and gender equity of farmer groups, local schools and technical colleagues and other community institutions to support the conservation and use of diverse local genetic resources	use of crop genetic diversity as a production tool for agricultural management	diversity as a production tool for agricultural management	crop genetic diversity as a production tool for agricultural management	genetic diversity as a production tool for agricultural management	developed as such for the Educational institution.
	Educate importance of diversity for community resilience to local service providers, NGOs and youth clubs etc so that they do not support conflicting interventions	No systematic effort to integrate existing local service providers and NGOs are on board yet	Training materials available for local service providers, NGOs and youth clubs on local crop diversity management	100 local service providers, NGOs and youth clubs are trained and supported on local crop diversity management	The project provided training and organized other knowledge-building events for local institutions and clubs.
	Equitable number of women and men in leadership courses, and technical courses, and in management positions for the management of crop genetic diversity	Gender equity in decision-making roles is low	Two of the four Site officers are female. At least 50% participation of women in all training courses. Project Steering Committee has one female farmer representative	100% of project training opportunities have gender equity (50% male and 50% female participation)	The capacity of the beneficiaries (55%) and stakeholders were enhanced through training, and other conservation practices such as Diversity Field Schools (DFS), community seed bank and exposure visits. But, no consolidated data is available to demonstrate gender equity (as targeted).
<b>Output 2.1</b> Sufficient crop genetic diversity in the form of seeds and other planting materials are available to small holders to increase productive gains while at the same time maintaining ecosystem resilience	Number of farmer communities with access to public and public-private systems that promote increased access to locally adapted materials in population size large enough to buffer against environmental change	Limited access to suitable genetic materials in the form of seeds and other planting materials available to small holder farmers in mountain ecosystem	30% of beneficiaries in project areas have access to seeds of their choice through Diversity Kit distribution mechanism	80% of beneficiary farmers in project districts in mountainous areas have sustained and affordable access to quality planting materials	Four CSBs made available 20 mt locally adapted seeds of over 60 varieties of 8 target crops beyond project sites (about 20,000 hhs) across different parts of Nepal in the project period to increase productivity gains and maintain ecosystem resilience. With the creation of CSBs, there was a high possibility of increasing farmers'

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
					access to crop genetic resources from the CSBs.
	Number of local varieties received from national Gene Banks multiplied and made available to farmer communities	At baseline, no local variety has been received from Gene Bank and multiplied and distributed to farmers	At least one variety per mandate crop is received from the National Gene Bank and multiplied and distributed to farmers in project sites	In total, 15 local varieties from the national Gene Bank are multiplied and made available to farmers	More than 15 genetic materials are shared from national Gene Banks to local communities/repatriation
<b>Output 2.2</b> Diversification of seed suppliers and other stakeholders to provide locally adapted crop genetic diversity planting materials	Number of recommendations for re-aligning policies to support diversification of seed suppliers who supply genetically diverse planting materials of the target food subsistence crops for high elevation environments	Limited research stations mandated for high altitude crop improvement	One recommendation for re-aligning policy to support diversification of seed suppliers	At least two recommendations for re-aligning policies to support diversification of seed suppliers of planting materials	Policy recommendations for the agrobiodiversity bill and seed act provided
	Number of new initiatives developed through government and non-government partnerships to continue/expand the diversification of seed multipliers and other seed actors	No Nepalese seed companies at the moment are dealing with high altitude crops	Drafts for at least two potential initiatives developed	At least 4 new initiatives development to continue/expand the diversification of seed suppliers and seed multipliers and other seed actors	The project has facilitated the linkage of community seed banks of the sites with seed traders, to supply locally adapted seeds and promote diversification in seed supplies. The government has also integrated the results into its programmes.
<b>Output 2.3</b> Small holder farmers are recognized not only as recipients of technology and seeds but also as	Amount of materials supplied by farmer groups to commercial seed suppliers	At baseline, this action is not happening	2 sets of diverse materials supplied by farmer groups to commercial seed suppliers	5 sets of diverse materials supplied by farmer groups to commercial seed suppliers	More than 5 sets of seeds are supplied by the CSBs to farmers and agro-vets/traders

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
providers of diversity and seed.					
	Grassroots breeding initiatives are enhanced to support local institutions to train, select and multiply local varieties in high altitude	No relevant quick and simple plant breeding method available for isolated, remote and fragile mountain environments for improving access of new genotypes of mountain crops	Relevant grassroots breeding applied in mandated crops for mountain ecosystem	At least 4% of total volume of transaction of seeds of partner commercial seed companies are occupied by project identified varieties	Smallholder farmers are supported and trained in healthy seed production, supply, registration and maintenance of their local varieties. They are mobilized as an active member of community seed banks and providers of seeds of diverse varieties.  PIR 2017 and 2018 provided some data on seed distribution to farmers
	Number of farmer-researcher collaborative groups involved in seed multiplication and dissemination at local levels	At baseline, the number of farmer-researcher collaborative groups involved in seed multiplication and dissemination of mandated crops at local level is none	At least 2 farmer-researcher collaborative groups are involved in seed multiplication and dissemination at local level, in collaboration with formal sources of varieties and seeds	At least 4 farmer-researcher collaborative groups are involved in seed multiplication and dissemination at local level, in collaboration with formal sources of varieties and seeds	4 collaborations between the farmers (CSBs, cooperatives and farmer groups) and researchers reported from the project support and outside (such as Hill crop stations) involved
	Number of locally developed systems for knowledge and seed and seed sharing to improve access of different sources of local materials	At baseline, locally developed systems for knowledge and seed sharing is limited to only a few project sites	At least 4 diversity fairs, and 100 farmers will participate in cross site visits by mid-term of the project	At least 8 diversity fairs, 4 community seed banks, 200 farmers will participate in cross site visits by project end	The project organized more than 8 diversity fairs, created 4 CSBs and more than 200 farmers participated in the cross visits and other kinds of exposures.
<b>Output 3.1</b> Recommendations and actions on how local and national institutions and strategies on plant genetic	Number of recommend amendments drafted and submitted to policies in the sector of seed systems and	Current seed vision and genetic resources policies requires to be reviewed whether the document is diversity friendly	Information and stakeholders available to draft relevant policy recommendations	A set of amendments is recommended to policies, development strategies and legal frameworks to better serve the needs of vulnerable	Provided support to the preparation of the draft Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Utilization Act (2018), Access and Benefit-sharing legislation (2018), Drafting Guidelines/Process for Relaxed Provision of Farmers' variety

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
resources should address the use of crop genetic diversity in their agendas for mountain agricultural environments	agrobiodiversity conservation			farmers with regard to access to planting materials	Registration under Seed Regulation (2013), Recommendation for strengthening community Seed Bank recommendation through National Workshop in 2018.
	Number of local and national institutions that implement actions to support the use of local crop diversity in seed supply systems	At baseline, only a few local and national institutions implement actions to support the use of local crop diversity in seed supply systems	Local and national institutions have information to develop institutional policy and mechanism in place to implement actions to support local crop diversity in seed supply systems	At least 5 local and national institutions have institutional policy and mechanism in place to implement actions to support local crop diversity in seed supply systems	Supports were provided to the institution but no 5 local and national institutions (such as DADO/AKC, local NGOs such, local CTEVT, seed company etc) have an institutional policy and mechanism in place
<b>Output 3.2</b> Policy support for the establishment of alternative methods of variety registration and dissemination	Number of different alternatives to varieties registration promoted by policy makers	At baseline, limited diversity of alternative methods of varieties registration promoted by policy makers (truthfully labeled and registration of local varieties)	An evaluation of alternative methods to variety registration (e.g., certification of geographically identifiable agricultural products; national release and registration of bulk line, Plant varieties common knowledge (VCK); Quality declared seed (QDS). Truthfully labeled seed laws that focus on seed quality rather than seed purity, Registries of native crops)	Policy makers promote at least two alternative methods of variety development and dissemination	Policy consultation meetings and training workshops were organized and supported technically by stakeholders and decision-makers in the development and registration of farmers' varieties.  Drafting for simplified procedures for farmers' variety registration was initiated by carrying out dialogue with national seed authorities (SQCC) and sensitization to policymakers carried out to advocate for a simplified process for variety registration. The government has adopted a new simplified method for local crop registration.
<b>Output 3.3</b>	Number of model agreements that regulate	No relevant PIC developed	Development and testing of model agreements that	At least, 5 cases of PIC reported and recorded	The project piloted a PIC form which is signed between Jugu

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
Procedures identified and used for drafting PIC, which ensure that the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources go into the sustainable management of biodiversity by local farmer communities	access to crop genetic resources and traditional knowledge maintained by farmers		regulate the access to crop genetic resources and traditional knowledge maintained by farmers		(Dolakha) farming community and a private <i>Anamol</i> seed Company for rare local common bean varieties ( <i>Khairo Ghiu</i> and <i>Panhelo simi</i> ) to enhance benefits derived from the use of genetic resources and ensuring the benefits to Jungu communities for its sustainable management.  It is yet to formalize due to a lack of adequate policy framework.
	Number of information sharing agreements	At baseline, no such arrangement exists	Development of information sharing agreements and information portals	Information sharing agreements models developed with 8 farming communities that provide information	No information available
<b>Output 3.4</b> Leadership and capacity built to enable a higher level of involvement in local communities in local and national decision-making forum	Number of relevant male and female lead farmer organizations are established or strengthened by the project to support the deployment of crop biodiversity to buffer against abiotic and biotic stress	No relevant project-initiated farmer associations established at site levels	At least one relevant farmer association per community/site is identified by the project to support the deployment of crop biodiversity to buffer against abiotic and biotic stress	At least one relevant farmer associations per country are established or strengthened by the project to of crop biodiversity to buffer against abiotic and biotic stress	The capacity of 100 farmers in four project sites including two private agro-entrepreneurs in Humla are built to enable them in a higher level of involvement in local and national decision-making for agrobiodiversity management
	Number of male and female farmer representatives in national and international decision fora	At baseline, limited male farmer representatives in national and international fora	Networks to increase gender equity in management roles identified and used to recruit candidates for decision making roles established and made available to National	At least, 6 female and 6 male farmer representatives take part in national and international decision fora	More than targeted farmers were supported.

Project outputs	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term target	End of project target	Progress made by March 2020 <sup>102</sup>
			and local policy and research units.		

## Outcome level

Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
<b>Outcome 1:</b>  <b>The area devoted to sustainably-managed agrobiodiversity in agricultural production systems is improved through increased use of diversity rich solutions.</b>	1. The area of farmer management systems that enable and affect ecological and evolutionary processes documented and the methods mainstreamed into agricultural development.	At baseline, the concept of an amount of local functional diversity in respect to environmental stresses in farmers field is negligible.	At least one farmer management system per crop/per site that enable and affect ecological and evolutionary processes are documented and made available to breeders and seed suppliers.	The amount (area) of local functional diversity in respect to environmental stresses in farmers' fields is increased by 20% from the baseline figure in project sites.	A dozen of target crop varieties with disease, insect and cold tolerance and climate resilience were promoted to increase the area in mountain environments. The project sites have increased by 20% the crop under foxtail millet in Lamjung and common beans and naked barley in Dolakha compared to baseline situations, no aggregate percentage however available.
	2. Number of development or extension packages that use crop genetic diversity as an agricultural production and risk management option.	At baseline, there is limited number of development or extension packages that use crop genetic diversity as an agricultural production and risk management option.	Criteria and materials developed for development and extension packages that use crop genetic diversity as production and risk management options.	At least four national development and extension packages include the use of local genetic resources and indigenous knowledge for mountain environments.	8 Farmers' Friendly Seed Production "Flyers one each for all the eight mandate crops and one varietal mixture flier developed with applicable farmer seed management system and made available to farmer breeders and seed suppliers  A Field disease guide for 8 target mountain crops and a national variety catalog of publicly released varieties and one farmers' variety catalog with functional traits for mountain crops are developed, published and distributed widely as an extension package to frontline extension staff, researchers, breeders and

Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
					private seed suppliers’ extension officials that use crop genetic diversity
	3.Number of crop varieties characterized for functional traits that allow the capacity of the target crops to evolve and adapt to local conditions for inclusion into extension packages.	Characterization and evaluation of locally adapted crop varietal diversity with the capacity to evolve and adapt to local conditions are limited for high altitude communities.	30% of the crop varietal diversity of target crops in project sites are evaluated for functional traits	70% of the crop varietal diversity of target crops in project sites is evaluated for functional traits that allow the capacity of the target crops to evolve and adapt to local conditions for inclusion into extension packages.	A total of 300 cultivars of 8 target crops are tested on-farm, out of which 129 local farmer varieties are fully characterised and 90 % of them are evaluated in project sites for functional traits to evolve and adapt to local conditions for inclusion in extension packages. The special features and their functional traits were documented and published in the National and Farmers’ Variety Catalog.
<b>Outcome 2: Farmers benefit from having locally adapted materials in populations sizes large enough to buffer against change to ensure sustainable agriculture.</b>	1. Number of public and public-private partners committed to multiplying, supplying, and marketing promising planting materials with large enough population sizes to buffer against change.	Limited public and public-private systems that promote increased access to diversified materials.	Strategy developed for the public-public and public-private partners in the project community resources to explore local plant genetic resources valued by smallholder farmers.	50% of the public-public and public-private partners in the project commit resources to explore local plant genetic resources valued by smallholder farmers.	Strategies/mechanisms developed to strengthen the multiplication and supply of important local varieties from the national Gene Bank (public) to four project site Community Seed Banks & local Seed dealers & Anamole seed Company (private) as well as between Gene Bank, agricultural Knowledge centre (public) and other NARC research centres (Public).  CCDABC has already committed resources and developed a program to mainstream target mountain crop genetic resources in Lamjung, Humla and Bajura in mountain districts under their “Indigenous Crop Promotion Programmes”.
	2. Number of local institutions in mountain areas with the capacity	Local institutions in mountain areas lack the capacity to access,	Four community-based organizations have information to improve	Eight community-based organizations supply at least one promising local	Four community seed banks in four project sites and other four community-based organisations (farmers groups and

Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
	to access, multiply, and disseminate diversified planting materials.	select and multiply planting materials that are not promoted by private seed companies.	their access, selection, multiplication and supply of appropriate planting materials.	planting material from each project site to private seed companies for promotion and sale.	cooperatives) in project sites are supplying seeds of two or more promising varieties each to local private seed dealers (Agrovets) and seed companies (i.e., <i>Anamol</i> )
<b>Outcome 3: Communities and other stakeholders gain from benefit sharing mechanisms that support diversification of varieties</b>	1. Number of diverse strategies for monetary and non-monetary benefits are in place.	At baseline, no benefit sharing mechanisms exist in the mountain sites.	Potential nonmonetary benefits described and documented.	At least five benefits sharing mechanisms developed and adopted by farmer communities and national programs.	Five benefits-sharing mechanisms (genetic resource, processing technology, community seed bank, organic farming, GI Protection, CBM fund) were assessed, developed and suggested for the farming communities and national programs. Some of these mechanisms were however at the early stage of piloting / demonstration (such as GI protection, organic farming, and processing technologies).
	2. Locally and nationally accepted platform for PIC identified.	Benefit sharing mechanisms have been developed in mid-hills and can be adapted. At baseline, no such nationally accepted platform for PIC exists	Locally and nationally accepted platform for PIC identified and tested in project sites.	Local and national accepted platform for PIC operationalized	A community seed bank has been identified and piloted for PIC for access and benefit-sharing mechanisms (in the Dolakha site). But no further work was carried out.

### Project objectives/impact

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
	1. Percent increase in the number of globally significant crop	230,000 hectares of agricultural land in mountain	Assessment of targeted mountain agricultural sites for	At least 20% increase in the number of globally significant target crop	About a 20% increase in the number of target mountain crop varieties with variations in functional traits. These

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
Objective <sup>104</sup> : To mainstream the conservation and use of agrobiodiversity in the mountain agricultural production landscapes of Nepal to improve ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems.	biodiversity used to improve ecosystem resilience in mountain agri-production landscapes Nepal	environments of Nepal are planted to crop biodiversity of global significance, with the number of intra-specific known only in two sites.	the amount and distribution of diversity of target crop species.	species and intraspecific varieties with variation in functional traits on 230,000 hectares of mountain agricultural ecosystems of Nepal.	crops were evaluated on sites. 4 CSBs - established conserved 232 crop varieties of 35 crop species  A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species were evaluated, out of which seeds of 60 varieties with functional traits are increased to reach over 20,000 households
	2. The Nepal government has a clear policy document highlighting the importance of the use agrobiodiversity in mountain agricultural production landscapes for ecosystem resilience	At baseline, relevant national plans and strategies show limited awareness of the benefit and value of ecosystem services and access and benefits sharing capacity in mountain ecosystems.	Project has drafted recommendations for revision of relevant national strategies and plans.	At least one politically significant national document drawing attention to the importance of conservation and deployment crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental change by the end of the project.	National Variety Catalog of promoted and the Farmers' variety Catalogue of farmers' local varieties published and shared widely. A good practice book for mainstreaming mountain agrobiodiversity was developed.  A public website has been developed and regularly updated with the latest project events, news blogs and publications on agrobiodiversity & ecosystem services ( <a href="http://www.himalayancrops.org">www.himalayancrops.org</a> )
	3. An increased number of government & other stakeholders who in a coordinated manner include crop genetic diversity deployment as one of the strategies to buffer	At baseline, few ministries, NGOs or private sector consider deployment of crop genetic diversity to buffer against environmental change. There is no	Public awareness materials and lobbying of relevant Ministries, NGOs or private sector to promote best practices for deployment of functional diversity	At least five government agencies, three NGOs and one private seed company routinely promote good practices to deploy crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental	Crop Development and Agrobiodiversity Conservation Centre of DoA, NAGRC, NARC, Agriculture Offices of four local Governments in Project sites, one Anamo/ Private Seed Company and three local NGOs including LIBIRD are deploying crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental changes in the mountain

<sup>104</sup> Add rows if your objective has more than 3 outcome indicators. Same applies for the number of outcomes.

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas”

Project objective and Outcomes	Indicator	Baseline level	Mid-Term Target or Milestones	End of Project Target	Observations/ justification on rating
	production in vulnerable mountain environments where they operate.	coordinated effort from govt, NGOs and private sector in conservation actions	using local plant genetic resources.	change by the end of the project	

## ANNEX VIII: GEF PORTAL INPUTS

**Question:** What was the performance at the project’s completion against Core Indicator Targets? (For projects approved prior to GEF-7<sup>105</sup>, these indicators will be identified retrospectively and comments on performance provided<sup>106</sup>).

**Response:**

The project targeted mainly three core indicators:

- At least 20% increase in the number of globally significant target crop species and intraspecific varieties with variation in functional traits on 230,000 hectares of mountain agricultural ecosystems of Nepal
- At least one politically significant national document drawing attention to the importance of conservation and deployment crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental change by the end of the project
- At least five government agencies, three NGOs and one private seed company routinely promote good practices to deploy crop biodiversity to buffer against environmental change by the end of the Project

There are other outcome-level indicators.

Some of the major achievements are:

About 20% increase in the number of target mountain crop varieties with variations in functional traits are deployed and evaluated in sites. Four community Seed Banks established by the project have conserved 232 crop varieties of 35 crop species for use in mountain agro-ecosystem A total of 300 varieties of 8 target crop species are deployed and evaluated, out of which seeds of 60 varieties with functional traits are increased to reach over 20,000 households

The project supported the local crop registration process and supported drafting some acts such as ABS and the agrobiodiversity act.

Developed some good knowledge products such as the National Variety Catalogue officially promoted and Farmers’ variety Catalogue of farmers local varieties are developed, published and shared widely.

There has been increased involvement and engagement of stakeholders in the promotion of Local crops and agrobiodiversity.

In addition, a dozen of target crop varieties with the disease. insect and cold tolerance and climate resilience are being promoted to increase the area in mountain environments.

Agricultural systems and cultivation practices of target 8 crops and promising varieties with functional traits are documented and promoted

Strategies developed to strengthen the multiplication and supply of important local varieties from the national Genebank (public) to four project site Community Seed Banks & local Seed dealers

Some benefits sharing mechanisms (genetic resource, processing technology, community seed bank, organic farming, GI Protection, CBM fund) are assessed, developed and suggested for the farming communities and national programs.

<sup>105</sup> The GEF is currently operating under the seventh replenishment period of the GEF Trust Fund covering the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022. The GEF Portal Reporting Guide for FY20 Reporting Process indicates that GEF-6 projects that have yet to map existing indicators to GEF-7 Core Indicators need to do so at MTR stage or (if already there) at the time of the TE.

<sup>106</sup> This is not applicable for Enabling Activities

There was good progress noted but the project should have also focused more on the livelihoods improvement of the local communities.

**Question:** What were the progress, challenges and outcomes regarding the engagement of stakeholders in the project/program as evolved from the time of the MTR? *(This should be based on the description included in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent documentation submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval)*

**Response:**

The project focused on stakeholder engagement from the very beginning of the project design. The project adopted a good strategy of engaging the focal ministry (MoALD), sectoral ministries, project partners and beneficiaries by creating a steering committee which was headed by the MoALD. There were clear ToRs for the committee and the committee sat six times during the project implementation. The process helped to steer the process and develop ownership of the government. There were also technical committees which used to provide technical /thematic input whereas local-level coordination committees were also formed for smooth implementation and local-level coordination.

The project provided a lot of training and capacity-building support both at the national and local levels. The project also supported to development of new technologies that are helpful to reduce the drudgery of farmers (especially women).

The project has engaged national-level researchers and experts and managed to develop a lot of knowledge products (more than 100) for the project use and future reference. These knowledge products are widely recognized by the stakeholders.

There were however no specific stakeholder engagement plans noted during the evaluation. Due to the change in governance structure, frequent transfer of the government staff (partly on the project side also), and inadequate working level involvement of the sectoral ministries in the project (they just participate in the steering committee and there were no dedicated focal persons to participate the steering committee regularly) – the steering committee was not adequately effective to provide the thematic input in the project implementation process. In addition, the project was not able to engage the Department of Agriculture as envisioned in the ProDoc. Their engagement could have helped for the smooth scaling up of local crops across the country.

With the new federal structure, local governments have a strong role in the conservation of local crops and agro-biodiversity. This project was designed before the structure was in place. The project attempted to engage the local government by devising various strategies but there was room to improve so that they are also actively engaged in the process (to ensure sustainability).

**Question:** What were the completed **gender-responsive measures** and, if applicable, actual gender result areas? *(This should be based on the documentation at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including gender-sensitive indicators contained in the project results framework or gender action plan or equivalent)*

**Response:**

The ProDoc mentioned gender integration in the project planning and implementation. Gender mainstreaming was proposed as an important component of this project. The project made some efforts to mainstream gender in program implementation at the local and national levels. Some of the major activities included engaging women in field-level project activities, recruiting women field technicians in project sites to mobilize women farmers in the implementation of project activities and involving women farmer representatives from a project site in the PSC. Women's participation during the training and workshop was also encouraging. Discussions with most of the staff mentioned that gender was integrated through women's participation in the project activities.

It is however noted that the design was somewhat weak in bringing up gender issues. Overall gender dimension and gender equity issues were understood with a narrow focus on women’s participation in the project activities. The project did not adequately assess the gender gap and identify activities to respond to gender and equity issues. There was inadequate focus on how to increase the role of women in the decision-making process of natural resources management and empowering them. No disaggregated data, except the number of participants of women in the project-related events<sup>107</sup>, were collected and reported.

**Question:** What was the progress made in the implementation of the management measures against the **Safeguards Plan submitted at CEO Approval**? The risk classifications reported in the latest PIR report should be verified and the findings of the effectiveness of any measures or lessons learned taken to address identified risks assessed. *(Any supporting documents gathered by the Consultant during this review should be shared with the Task Manager for uploading in the GEF Portal)*

**Response:**

The ES safeguards were considered in the project design. The project design had a short but sufficient safeguards analysis. Environmental sustainability was a core concern in the design of project activities. The project used various measures for environmental and social safeguards (ESS). Some of the examples of ESS are the use of protection and use of agro-biodiversity, promotion of ecosystems services, climate resilience, promotion of locally adapted crops, promotion of organic agriculture (less use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides) and working with the poor and women groups in the remote areas.

The project was about improving the environmental amenities and the ProDoc did not mention the negative environmental consequences.

Regarding social safeguards, the project provided support to women and marginalized communities in remote areas. These activities were included in the management plan but they are not adequately comprehensive. No proper gender analysis was carried out, and gender-responsive activities were identified. No such baseline was carried out.

Project planning and implementation risks were identified in (Section 3.5 of) the ProDoc and all the risks are considered low. But, except for one – all proposed risk statements appear to be assumptions. For example – one of the risk statements is ‘sufficient marketing channels exist where certification schemes would work’.

The PIRs reported the internal and external risks of the project. The PIRs rated major proposed risks in the ‘low risk’ category including financial management. For example, in the PIRs (2016, 2017 and 2018), it is reported that there was a ‘low risk involved’ in budget management as the project activities were implemented within the proposed budget but it was also indicated that there was a need to minor budget reallocation (within 30% of total budget) to make effective implementation

The PIR reports mentioned the challenges faced by the project, such as the Earthquake, economic blockade, federalization, and policy impediments for ABS. But there was no clear explanation of how these challenges affected the risk profile of the project and changed the project assumptions and, in effect, how these were mitigated. These aspects were not well addressed in the project monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

<sup>107</sup> The PIR 2020 mentioned that ‘Good participation of women (60%) is made in farmers groups of Diversity Field Schools and Community Seed Bank members. Women participation in Karnali technical schools (KTS) for agrobiodiversity courses taken by project teams is also good (40%).’

The operational level risk assessments were carried out regularly. These assessments were reflected in the PIRs but no risk assessment of the major contextual changes such as federalization and policy framework related to ABS was carried out.

**Question:** What were the challenges and outcomes regarding the project's completed Knowledge Management Approach, including: Knowledge and Learning Deliverables (e.g. website/platform development); Knowledge Products/Events; Communication Strategy; Lessons Learned and Good Practice; Adaptive Management Actions? (*This should be based on the documentation approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval*)

**Response:**

The project knowledge management approach was effective and relatively successful when dealing with stakeholders under the sphere of influence of the executing/co-executing agencies and related to biodiversity scientific communities.

The project was good at publication and wide sharing of project results and good practices in different forms of knowledge products (such as books, field guides, journal papers, reports, flyers, posters, News blogs etc.) in both English and Nepali languages. These knowledge products were instrumental in creating awareness, and effective implementation of the project activities. Over 100 knowledge products (over 75 publications including project videos, national and local media news etc.) were developed and disseminated at the local and national levels as well as at the global level by developing and operationalizing its project Website ([www.himalayancrop.org](http://www.himalayancrop.org)). This was complemented by scientific publications and lesson-learned documents. The knowledge products were also shared through the executing/co-executing agencies' outreach on the international level.

The Project-related communication and awareness were also created through various events such as training and workshops. The project organized national and local level events and shared the project approach and findings.

It is however noted that the knowledge products were either distributed through its PMU or available on the website. There was however no record available of how the knowledge products were used by the relevant stakeholders and how these reached farmers such as in similar agroecological zones of Nepal. This non-structured way of communication was probably due to a lack of communication/dissemination strategy for the project. The project would have benefited from a full-fledged communication strategy to raise awareness of the key stakeholders from the government and non-government sectors.

**Question: What are the main findings of the evaluation?**

**Response:**

The project played a relevant role in promoting local crops and agrobiodiversity in Nepal through the development of high-quality evidence (data/knowledge), field demonstration of community-based management approaches on agrobiodiversity, local crop registration process and registration of high-performing local crops in the gazette of the government of Nepal. Strategic Relevance was rated highly satisfactory.

The project's relevance stands out as the project supported the Government's policy frameworks for the conservation of agrobiodiversity and responded to the need of using the local biodiversity for food security, nutrition and climate change adaptation.

The evaluation noted that the project has contributed a lot in raising awareness, developing knowledge, strengthening institutional capacity and supporting in developing policy guidelines for

the conservation and promotion of local crops which would have not been supported by other funding streams.

For improving agrobiodiversity conservation and use through the increased use of diversity-rich solutions in the agriculture production systems, the project supported participatory breeding and varietal selection process, crop improvement, value addition, and institutional capacity building. Farmers got some monetary and non-monetary benefits from the locally adapted materials whereas some preliminary works were carried out to gain benefits from ABS.

The project outcomes in combination positively contributed to integrating the local crops in government programmes and improving ecosystem resilience, ecosystem services and capacity of ABS) and finally contributed to the conservation of globally important crop biodiversity for food security in areas of high environmental instability and variability in many high-elevation agricultural systems.

## ANNEX IX: BRIEF CV OF THE EVALUATOR

<b>Name</b>	Ram Chandra Khanal
<b>Profession</b>	Independent Evaluator
<b>Nationality</b>	Nepali
<b>Country experience</b>	Asia: Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Viet Nam, Cambodia, China, India, Mongolia, Tajikistan
<b>Education</b>	PhD

### Short biography

Mr Ram Chandra Khanal is an experienced evaluation specialist and development practitioner in the field of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem management, sustainable agriculture, environment, water, climate change adaptation, resilience, people livelihood and economic transformation sectors for the last two decades in Asia. He has worked with various national and international agencies including government ministries, UN agencies, ADB and the World Bank. He has substantive knowledge and skills in developing evaluation frameworks and conducting independent evaluations in complex and multicultural settings. He has also experience in project design, planning and monitoring, action research, data collection by using qualitative and quantitative approaches and data analysis. He has an interest in testing innovative approaches of evaluation focusing on emergent issues and results.

He holds an MSc in agriculture and a PhD in development studies and has published more than two dozen research articles in the area of evaluation, climate change, agriculture and ecosystems management.

### Key specialities and capabilities related to evaluation cover:

- Facilitate and manage evaluation and capacitate programme staff on result-based management and evaluation and development of evaluation plan;
- develop and execute evaluation framework and guidelines;
- undertake programme/project evaluator (baseline, midterm and terminal evaluations/thematic, programme learning);
- prepare reports, develop evaluation-related outreach materials and organize training and workshops;
- work as a programme designer, manager and technical advisor in the area of agriculture, ecosystems management and climate change, social change (gender and equity) and economic development;
- design survey design/methods, data collection and their analysis;
- use of tools and methods including theory-based evaluation independently in complex settings; and

### Selected assignments and experiences:

- Carried out 2 country programme evaluations for UNDP Nepal and FAO Nepal
- Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Agro-biodiversity conservation/local crops and landscape management in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region for UNEP
- Forest, livelihood and climate change – FAO Mongolia
- Renewable energy, agriculture and climate change adaptation – Tajikistan
- Farm and Forest project – Nepal and Vietnam for FAO

## ANNEX X: QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

### Quality Assessment of the Evaluation Report

**Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/GEF Project: Integrating Traditional Crop Genetic Diversity into Technology: Using a Biodiversity Portfolio Approach to Buffer against Unpredictable Environmental Change in the Nepal Himalayas**

All UNEP evaluations are subject to a quality assessment by the Evaluation Office. This is an assessment of the quality of the evaluation product (i.e. evaluation report) and is dependent on more than just the consultant’s efforts and skills. Nevertheless, the quality assessment is used as a tool for providing structured feedback to evaluation consultants, especially at draft report stage. This guidance is provided to support consistency in assessment across different Evaluation Managers and to make the assessment process as transparent as possible.

	UNEP Evaluation Office Comments	Report Rating
<b>Substantive Report Quality Criteria</b>		
<p><b>Quality of the Executive Summary:</b></p> <p>The Summary should be able to stand alone as an accurate summary of the main evaluation product. It should include a concise overview of the evaluation object; clear summary of the evaluation objectives and scope; overall evaluation rating of the project and key features of performance (strengths and weaknesses) against exceptional criteria (plus reference to where the evaluation ratings table can be found within the report); summary of the main findings of the exercise, including a synthesis of main conclusions (which include a summary response to key strategic evaluation questions), lessons learned and recommendations.</p>	<p>The summary is concise and detailed enough, covering all the required elements</p>	6
<p><b>I. Introduction</b></p> <p>A brief introduction should be given identifying, where possible and relevant, the following: institutional context of the project (sub-programme, Division, regions/countries where implemented) and coverage of the evaluation; date of PRC approval and project document signature); results frameworks to which it contributes (e.g. Expected Accomplishment in POW); project duration and start/end dates; number of project phases (where appropriate); implementing partners; total secured budget and whether the project has been evaluated in the past (e.g. mid-term, part of a synthesis evaluation, evaluated by another agency etc.)</p> <p>Consider the extent to which the introduction includes a concise statement of the purpose of the evaluation and the key intended audience for the findings?</p>	<p>The Introduction is complete; consultant included all additional information requested at draft stage</p>	6
<p><b>II. Evaluation Methods</b></p> <p>A data collection section should include: a description of evaluation methods and information sources used, including the number and type of respondents; justification for methods used (e.g. qualitative/quantitative; electronic/face-to-face); any selection criteria used to identify respondents, case studies or sites/countries visited; strategies used to increase stakeholder engagement and consultation; details of how data were verified (e.g. triangulation, review by stakeholders etc.).</p>	<p>Section is covered in sufficient depth; only minor improvements were requested at draft stage. Gender consideration in data collection and analysis could have been more explicitly described.</p>	5

<p>Methods to ensure that potentially excluded groups (excluded by gender, vulnerability or marginalisation) are reached and their experiences captured effectively, should be made explicit in this section.</p> <p>The methods used to analyse data (e.g. scoring; coding; thematic analysis etc.) should be described.</p> <p>It should also address evaluation limitations such as: low or imbalanced response rates across different groups; gaps in documentation; extent to which findings can be either generalised to wider evaluation questions or constraints on aggregation/disaggregation; any potential or apparent biases; language barriers and ways they were overcome.</p> <p>Ethics and human rights issues should be highlighted including: how anonymity and confidentiality were protected and strategies used to include the views of marginalised or potentially disadvantaged groups and/or divergent views. Is there an ethics statement?</p>		
<p><b>III. The Project</b></p> <p>This section should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Context</i>: Overview of the main issue that the project is trying to address, its root causes and consequences on the environment and human well-being (i.e. synopsis of the problem and situational analyses).</li> <li>• <i>Results framework</i>: Summary of the project’s results hierarchy as stated in the ProDoc (or as officially revised)</li> <li>• <i>Stakeholders</i>: Description of groups of targeted stakeholders organised according to relevant common characteristics</li> <li>• <i>Project implementation structure and partners</i>: A description of the implementation structure with diagram and a list of key project partners</li> <li>• <i>Changes in design during implementation</i>: Any key events that affected the project’s scope or parameters should be described in brief in chronological order</li> <li>• <i>Project financing</i>: Completed tables of: (a) budget at design and expenditure by components (b) planned and actual sources of funding/co-financing</li> </ul>	<p>The section is complete. All the recommended aspects of the project have been discussed to the extent possible. Only minor improvements were recommended at draft</p>	6
<p><b>IV. Theory of Change</b></p> <p>The <i>TOC at Evaluation</i> should be presented clearly in both diagrammatic and narrative forms. Clear articulation of each major causal pathway is expected, (starting from outputs to long term impact), including explanations of all drivers and assumptions as well as the expected roles of key actors.</p> <p>This section should include a description of how the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i><sup>108</sup> was designed (who was involved etc.) and applied to the context of the project? Where the project results as stated in the project design documents (or formal revisions of the project design) are not an accurate reflection of the project’s intentions or do not follow UNEP’s definitions of different results levels, project results may need to be re-phrased or</p>	<p>The TOC is presented in both diagram and detailed narrative. A description of how the TOC at evaluation was developed is included.</p> <p>It presents a relatively clear description of the causal pathways from outputs to Impact, including a description of the assumptions, drivers and intermediate states. A comparison table describing the differences between the results</p>	6

<sup>108</sup> During the Inception Phase of the evaluation process a *TOC at Evaluation Inception* is created based on the information contained in the approved project documents (these may include either logical framework or a TOC or narrative descriptions), formal revisions and annual reports etc. During the evaluation process this TOC is revised based on changes made during project intervention and becomes the *TOC at Evaluation*.

<p>reformulated. In such cases, a summary of the project’s results hierarchy should be presented for: a) the results as stated in the approved/revised Prodoc logframe/TOC and b) as formulated in the <i>TOC at Evaluation</i>. <i>The two results hierarchies should be presented as a two-column table to show clearly that, although wording and placement may have changed, the results ‘goal posts’ have not been ‘moved’.</i></p> <p>Check that the project’s effect on equality (i.e. promoting human rights, gender equality and inclusion of those living with disabilities and/or belonging to marginalised/vulnerable groups) has been included within the TOC as a general driver or assumption where there was no dedicated result within the results framework. If an explicit commitment on this topic was made within the project document then the driver/assumption should also be specific to the described intentions.</p>	<p>framework in the Prodoc and the reconstructed TOC at evaluation is also included. Gender considerations were meaningfully included in the Toc narrative</p>	
<p><b>V. Key Findings</b></p> <p><b>A. Strategic relevance:</b></p> <p>This section should include an assessment of the project’s relevance in relation to UNEP’s mandate and its alignment with UNEP’s policies and strategies at the time of project approval. An assessment of the complementarity of the project at design (or during inception/mobilisation<sup>109</sup>), with other interventions addressing the needs of the same target groups should be included. Consider the extent to which all four elements have been addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alignment to the UNEP Medium Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (POW)</li> <li>2. Alignment to Donor/GEF Strategic Priorities</li> <li>3. Relevance to Regional, Sub-regional and National Environmental Priorities</li> <li>4. Complementarity with Existing Interventions</li> </ol>	<p>The section is complete and covers all the recommended aspects of relevance in a satisfactory manner</p>	6
<p><b>B. Quality of Project Design</b></p> <p>To what extent are the strength and weaknesses of the project design effectively <u>summarized</u>?</p>	<p>The section is complete and summarises the data in the PDQ table in a satisfactory manner.</p>	6
<p><b>C. Nature of the External Context</b></p> <p>For projects where this is appropriate, key <u>external</u> features of the project’s implementing context that limited the project’s performance (e.g. conflict, natural disaster, political upheaval<sup>110</sup>), and how they affected performance, should be described.</p>	<p>The section is complete and provides a satisfactory summary of the external context in a satisfactory manner</p>	6
<p><b>D. Effectiveness</b></p> <p><b>(i) Outputs and Project Outcomes:</b> How well does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of the a) availability of outputs, and b) achievement of project outcomes? How convincing is the discussion of attribution and</p>	<p>The assessment of ‘availability of outputs’ is presented in a detailed manner and includes both quantitative and qualitative assessments. Only minor improvements were required at</p>	5

<sup>109</sup> A project’s inception or mobilization period is understood as the time between project approval and first disbursement. Complementarity during project implementation is considered under Efficiency, see below.

<sup>110</sup> Note that ‘political upheaval’ does not include regular national election cycles, but unanticipated unrest or prolonged disruption. The potential delays or changes in political support that are often associated with the regular national election cycle should be part of the project’s design and addressed through adaptive management of the project team.

<p>contribution, as well as the constraints to attributing effects to the intervention.</p> <p>The effects of the intervention on differentiated groups, including those with specific needs due to gender, vulnerability or marginalisation, should be discussed explicitly.</p>	<p>draft stage (e.g., corelations to other findings/ criteria)</p> <p>While the assessment of outcomes is done to a satisfactory level of detail, some issues to do with verification /corroboration of findings and independence have been noted and communicated to the consultant</p>	
<p><b>(ii) Likelihood of Impact:</b> How well does the report present an integrated analysis, guided by the causal pathways represented by the TOC, of all evidence relating to likelihood of impact?</p> <p>How well are change processes explained and the roles of key actors, as well as drivers and assumptions, explicitly discussed?</p> <p>Any unintended negative effects of the project should be discussed under Effectiveness, especially negative effects on disadvantaged groups.</p>	<p>The assessment provides a clear progression of the causal linkages from the Outputs and Outcomes discussed in the previous section. The assessment also includes an analysis of the validity of Assumptions as well as the status of Drivers identified in the TOC. Progression of Outcomes to Intermediate Sates, and on to the intended Impact is also clearly described.</p>	6
<p><b>E. Financial Management</b></p> <p>This section should contain an integrated analysis of all dimensions evaluated under financial management and include a completed ‘financial management’ table.</p> <p>Consider how well the report addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adherence</i> to UNEP’s financial policies and procedures</li> <li>• <i>completeness</i> of financial information, including the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used</li> <li>• <i>communication</i> between financial and project management staff</li> </ul>	<p>The section is complete and adequately covers all the required aspects of financial management to a sufficient level of detail</p>	5
<p><b>F. Efficiency</b></p> <p>To what extent, and how well, does the report present a well-reasoned, complete and evidence-based assessment of efficiency under the primary categories of cost-effectiveness and timeliness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implications of delays and no cost extensions</li> <li>• Time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed project timeframe</li> <li>• Discussion of making use during project implementation of/building on pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc.</li> <li>• The extent to which the management of the project minimised UNEP’s environmental footprint.</li> </ul>	<p>The section is complete and provides an analysis of the project’s efforts in maintaining timeliness and cost-effectiveness, including the implications of delays and availability of funds. Only minor amendments were required at draft stage to correct inconsistencies</p>	5

<p><b>G. Monitoring and Reporting</b> How well does the report assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring design and budgeting (<i>including SMART results with measurable indicators, resources for MTE/R etc.</i>)</li> <li>Monitoring of project implementation (<i>including use of monitoring data for adaptive management</i>)</li> <li>Project reporting (<i>e.g. PIMS and donor reports</i>)</li> </ul>	<p>The section is complete and covers most of the required aspects of monitoring. Examples are included to corroborate some of the analyses. Strengths and weaknesses of the M&amp;E system are discussed. Section presents a relatively clear picture of the quality of the project’s monitoring plan and implementation</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>H. Sustainability</b> How well does the evaluation identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of achieved project outcomes including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socio-political Sustainability</li> <li>Financial Sustainability</li> <li>Institutional Sustainability</li> </ul>	<p>All aspects of sustainability have been assessed, to varying levels of depth and quality.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p><b>I. Factors Affecting Performance</b> These factors are <u>not</u> discussed in stand-alone sections but are <b>integrated in criteria A-H as appropriate</b>. Note that these are described in the Evaluation Criteria Ratings Matrix. To what extent, and how well, does the evaluation report cover the following cross-cutting themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation and readiness</li> <li>Quality of project management and supervision<sup>111</sup></li> <li>Stakeholder participation and co-operation</li> <li>Responsiveness to human rights and gender equity</li> <li>Environmental and social safeguards</li> <li>Country ownership and driven-ness</li> <li>Communication and public awareness</li> </ul>	<p>The is section is complete and is based on the general findings already presented and discussed in other sections of the report</p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>VI. Conclusions and Recommendations</b></p> <p><b>i. Quality of the conclusions:</b> The key strategic questions should be clearly and succinctly addressed within the conclusions section. It is expected that the conclusions will highlight the main strengths and weaknesses of the project and connect them in a compelling story line. Human rights and gender dimensions of the intervention (e.g. how these dimensions were considered, addressed or impacted on) should be discussed explicitly. Conclusions, as well as lessons and recommendations, should be consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report.</p>	<p>Conclusion section is complete and summarises the main highlights (strengths and weakness) of the project. The key strategic questions are addressed here in a satisfactory manner. A brief look at human rights and gender considerations are included. The summary of the ratings (Table) is also clearly presented .</p>	<p>6</p>
<p><b>ii) Quality and utility of the lessons:</b> Both positive and negative lessons are expected and duplication with recommendations should be avoided. Based on explicit evaluation findings, lessons should be rooted in real project experiences or derived from problems encountered and mistakes made that should be avoided in the future. Lessons are intended to be adopted any time they are deemed to be relevant in</p>	<p>Lessons learned are satisfactory and are anchored on findings presented in the report</p>	<p>5</p>

<sup>111</sup> In some cases ‘project management and supervision’ will refer to the supervision and guidance provided by UNEP to implementing partners and national governments while in others, specifically for GEF funded projects, it will refer to the project management performance of the executing agency and the technical backstopping provided by UNEP.

<p>the future and must have the potential for wider application (replication and generalization) and use and should briefly describe the context from which they are derived and those contexts in which they may be useful.</p>		
<p><b>iii) Quality and utility of the recommendations:</b>                  To what extent are the recommendations proposals for specific action to be taken by identified people/position-holders to resolve concrete problems affecting the project or the sustainability of its report results? They should be feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available (including local capacities) and specific in terms of who would do what and when.                  At least one recommendation relating to strengthening the human rights and gender dimensions of UNEP interventions, should be given.                  Recommendations should represent a measurable performance target in order that the Evaluation Office can monitor and assess compliance with the recommendations.                  In cases where the recommendation is addressed to a third party, compliance can only be monitored and assessed where a contractual/legal agreement remains in place. Without such an agreement, the recommendation should be formulated to say that UNEP project staff should pass on the recommendation to the relevant third party in an effective or substantive manner. The effective transmission by UNEP of the recommendation will then be monitored for compliance.                  Where a new project phase is already under discussion or in preparation with the same third party, a recommendation can be made to address the issue in the next phase.</p>	<p>The recommendations identify the contextual information and even cross references to the relevant sections in the main report, the proposed action and agency, priority level and proposed timelines for implementation.</p>	<p><b>5.5</b></p>
<p><b>VII. Report Structure and Presentation Quality</b></p>		
<p><b>i) Structure and completeness of the report:</b> To what extent does the report follow the Evaluation Office guidelines? Are all requested Annexes included and complete?</p>	<p>The report is complete, follows the requirements in the TOR</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>ii) Quality of writing and formatting:</b>                  Consider whether the report is well written (clear English language and grammar) with language that is adequate in quality and tone for an official document? Do visual aids, such as maps and graphs convey key information? Does the report follow Evaluation Office formatting guidelines?</p>	<p>The report is well written with clear grammar and professional language.</p>	<p><b>6</b></p>
<p><b>OVERALL REPORT QUALITY RATING</b></p>		<p><b>Highly Satisfactory (5.6)</b></p>

A number rating 1-6 is used for each criterion: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. The overall quality of the evaluation report is calculated by taking the mean score of all rated quality criteria.

At the end of the evaluation, compliance of the evaluation process against the agreed standard procedures is assessed, based on the table below. *All questions with negative compliance must be explained further in the table below.*

Evaluation Process Quality Criteria	Compliance	
	Yes	No
<b>Independence:</b>		
1. Were the Terms of Reference drafted and finalised by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
2. Were possible conflicts of interest of proposed Evaluation Consultant(s) appraised and addressed in the final selection?	Y	
3. Was the final selection of the Evaluation Consultant(s) made by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
4. Was the evaluator contracted directly by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
5. Was the Evaluation Consultant given direct access to identified external stakeholders in order to adequately present and discuss the findings, as appropriate?	Y	
6. Did the Evaluation Consultant raise any concerns about being unable to work freely and without interference or undue pressure from project staff or the Evaluation Office?		N
7. If Yes to Q6: Were these concerns resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both the Evaluation Consultant and the Evaluation Manager?		
<b>Financial Management:</b>		
8. Was the evaluation budget approved at project design available for the evaluation?		
9. Was the final evaluation budget agreed and approved by the Evaluation Office?	Y	
10. Were the agreed evaluation funds readily available to support the payment of the evaluation contract throughout the payment process?		N
<b>Timeliness:</b>		
11. If a Terminal Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within the period of six months before or after project operational completion? Or, if a Mid Term Evaluation: Was the evaluation initiated within a six-month period prior to the project's mid-point?		N
12. Were all deadlines set in the Terms of Reference respected, as far as unforeseen circumstances allowed?		N
13. Was the inception report delivered and reviewed/approved prior to commencing any travel?	Y	
<b>Project's engagement and support:</b>		
14. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and identified project stakeholders provide comments on the evaluation Terms of Reference?		
15. Did the project make available all required/requested documents?	Y	
16. Did the project make all financial information (and audit reports if applicable) available in a timely manner and to an acceptable level of completeness?	Y	
17. Was adequate support provided by the project to the evaluator(s) in planning and conducting evaluation missions?	Y	
18. Was close communication between the Evaluation Consultant, Evaluation Office and project team maintained throughout the evaluation?	Y	
19. Were evaluation findings, lessons and recommendations adequately discussed with the project team for ownership to be established?	Y	
20. Did the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and any identified project stakeholders provide comments on the draft evaluation report?	Y	
<b>Quality assurance:</b>		
21. Were the evaluation Terms of Reference, including the key evaluation questions,		

peer-reviewed?		
22. Was the TOC in the inception report peer-reviewed?	Y	
23. Was the quality of the draft/cleared report checked by the Evaluation Manager and Peer Reviewer prior to dissemination to stakeholders for comments?	Y	
24. Did the Evaluation Office complete an assessment of the quality of both the draft and final reports?	Y	
<b>Transparency:</b>		
25. Was the draft evaluation report sent directly by the Evaluation Consultant to the Evaluation Office?	Y	
26. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) of the cleared draft report to the project team, Sub-Programme Coordinator and other key internal personnel (including the Reference Group where appropriate) to solicit formal comments?	Y	
27. Did the Evaluation Manager disseminate (or authorize dissemination) appropriate drafts of the report to identified external stakeholders, including key partners and funders, to solicit formal comments?	Y	
28. Were all stakeholder comments to the draft evaluation report sent directly to the Evaluation Office	Y	
29. Did the Evaluation Consultant(s) respond adequately to all factual corrections and comments?	Y	
30. Did the Evaluation Office share substantive comments and Evaluation Consultant responses with those who commented, as appropriate?	Y	

**Provide comments / explanations / mitigating circumstances below for any non-compliant process issues.**

<b><u>Process Criterion Number</u></b>	<b><u>Evaluation Office Comments</u></b>
10	Delays experienced in making payments for the inception phase and the planned mission. EOU followed up with the project’s FMO to ensure that evaluation funds are made available
11	Evaluation was initiated in 2022, however the project’s operational closure was in 2020
12	Delays experienced in undertaking the field mission due to insufficient funds. Other delays (field visits, draft report review process) extreme weather conditions in the Himalayas coupled with religious festivals, and the holiday season, in Nepal and Kenya respectively.