



Mid-Term Review of FAO-GEF Project

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Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR

Final Report

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Mid-term review of ‘Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR’ (GCP/LAO/027/LDF)

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ABSTRACT

This Mid-Term Review (MTR) assesses the performance and progress of the FAO-implemented and GEF-funded project, “Climate Smart Agriculture and Agroforestry for Enhanced Climate Resilience in Lao PDR,” focusing on its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and the factors influencing implementation. The evaluation covers the period from the project’s inception through early 2025, drawing on document reviews, stakeholder interviews, and field observations in key provinces.

The project is well-aligned with national priorities for climate adaptation, food security, and sustainable land management. It addresses the needs of vulnerable upland communities and demonstrates contextual relevance through its integrated landscape approach. However, ambitious targets and planning assumptions did not fully account for institutional inefficiencies, limited implementation capacities, and geographic challenges, leading to delays in several components.

Effectiveness is emerging but remains uneven across outcomes. Institutional capacity has been strengthened, and groundwork has been laid for land use planning and climate-resilient agriculture. However, delays in identifying the Operating Partner, operationalizing Letters of Agreement (LoAs), recruiting civil society partners, and fostering effective stakeholder collaboration have hindered progress. While some interventions—particularly capacity building and awareness—show promise, field-level operations remain limited at mid-point.

Efficiency challenges stem from fragmented implementation, delayed fund disbursement, and complex partnership arrangements. Sustainability prospects are moderate, with encouraging capacity gains, but institutional limitations and the absence of demonstrated results at the sub-national level persist. Cross-cutting issues such as gender and environmental safeguards are partially addressed but require more systematic integration.

Key recommendations include enhancing coordination between the government and the Operating Partner, expediting LoA processes, prioritizing implementation in consolidated areas, aligning activities with local needs, and strengthening project management capacity at decentralized levels. The government is advised to revitalize its steering role and establish clear accountability and support mechanisms. FAO and GEF are encouraged to consider a project extension to sustain implementation momentum and ensure meaningful results.

Critical learning from the MTR emphasizes the need for realistic project design grounded in local context, improved operational timing, streamlined coordination among partners, and more effective institutional and financial planning. Experience offers broader insights into scaling climate resilience in complex, decentralized environments.

Overall, while the project retains strong strategic relevance and offers important learning, substantial course correction is needed in the second half to fully realize its intended outcomes and strengthen pathways to long-term impact.

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The evaluation consultants hope that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in this report will contribute to the successful completion of the current project and support the continuous improvement of similar initiatives in other countries and regions.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEZ	Agro Ecological Zone
AWS	Automatic Weather Station
CO	Country Office
CPF	Country Programming Framework
CSA	climate-smart agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVRA	Climate vulnerability and risk assessment
DAEC	Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperation
DAFO	District Agriculture and Forestry Office
DALAM	Department of Agricultural Land Management
DMH	Department of Metrology and Hydrology
DoPC	Department of Planning and Cooperation
DSMEP	Department of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion
EOD	End of Disbursement
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FAOLA	Food and Agriculture Organization in the Lao PDR
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KM	knowledge management
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
LoAs	Letters of Agreement
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MoM	Minutes of the Meeting
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAFRI	National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NC2	Second National Communication to the UNFCCC
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NGPES	National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy
NPD	National Project Director
NRM	Natural Resources Management
NSEDP	National Socio-Economic Development Plan
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
OP	Operational Partner

OPA	Operating Partner's Agreement
OPIM	Operational Partners Implementation Modality
p-FALUPAM	Participatory Forest and Agricultural Land-Use Planning, Allocation, and Management
PAFOs	Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMC	Project Management Cost
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPRs	Project Progress Reports
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RFPs	Request for Proposal
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SSFSNP	Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition Project
TA	Technical Assistance
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
THPD	Trade and Handicraft Promotion Department
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar
VFI	Village Focus International
WVI	World Vision International

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction - Purpose and Scope of MTR

1. The purpose of this Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to assess the progress, performance, and relevance of the project “*Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR*” at its implementation midpoint. The MTR aims to generate evidence-based findings and actionable recommendations to inform project adjustments for improved delivery, sustainability, and achievement of intended outcomes. It serves both accountability and learning functions for the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
2. The MTR addresses key evaluation questions aligned with GEF and FAO criteria, focusing on the project’s relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and likelihood of sustainability. It also explores the theory of change, stakeholder engagement, risk management, and progress toward enhancing the resilience of upland communities through climate-smart agriculture.
3. The scope of the MTR includes assessing the entire project implementation period to date (from July 2021 to April 2025), covering strategic design, institutional arrangements, implementation processes, field-level interventions, and results across both target provinces—Luang Prabang and Houaphanh.
4. Primary users of the evaluation include the Government of Lao PDR [Department of Agricultural Land Management (DALAM) / Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)], government departments, FAO, GEF, provincial and district agriculture offices, local communities, and development partners. Findings are intended to inform project adjustments, support strategic decision-making, and guide future climate-resilient investments in upland agriculture.
5. The evaluation was undertaken from May to July 2025, with a field mission conducted from 21st to 30th May. The data collection was completed in 28th of May.

Evaluation Methods

6. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) applied a participatory evaluation framework. Data sources included a review of project documents, progress reports, financial data, and planning tools. Primary data were collected through key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and field observations across all four districts of the two provinces. In total, 47 individuals were consulted—33 project stakeholders and 15 community members—along with two focus group discussions (9 men and 6 women) held at the community level.
7. Analytical tools included a theory of change review, implementation gap analysis, and participatory assessments to identify drivers and barriers to results. Findings were triangulated to ensure credibility.
8. Some limitations, such as challenging field conditions and data gaps, were addressed through sampling, stakeholder consultations, local support, and rigorous methods to enhance data reliability and minimize bias.

Findings

Strategic Relevance

9. The project is strongly aligned with the strategic priorities of the GEF/Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), particularly in addressing climate change adaptation and land degradation in vulnerable upland systems. It supports FAO's strategic framework for resilience and sustainable agriculture.
10. At the national level, the project is consistent with the Lao PDR's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), agriculture sector strategy, and climate adaptation priorities. While complementarity with other development agency programs is evident, coordination mechanisms remain limited.
11. Overall, the project maintains high strategic relevance, though stronger synergies with similar initiatives and sub-national climate actions could further enhance coherence and impact. Strategic relevance is rated '**Highly Satisfactory**'.

Effectiveness

12. Progress across the four project outcomes is rated **Moderately Satisfactory** at midterm, considering the recent momentum gained in the project implementation. Outcome 1 (policy) has made initial progress through a workshop mapping land-use investment networks and governance structures. Outcome 2 (climate-adaptive land use planning and climate risk assessments) has advanced through pilot implementation of p-FALUPAM, participatory climate risk assessments, and early FFS engagement, although progress remains slow due to delays in partner mobilization and LoA finalization.
13. Outcome 3 (scaling up of Climate Smart Agriculture Farmer Field School -CSA FFS) shows limited progress, as field piloting based on Outcome 2 results has yet to advance. Outcome 4 also faces delays, with few activities implemented in communication, knowledge management, learning, and adaptive improvement.
14. Several planned outputs are behind schedule, particularly those dependent on NGO/CSO engagement and sub-national LoAs. Nonetheless, encouraging local-level interest in land use and CSA demonstration activities, as well as initial community engagement, signal positive ownership.
15. The likelihood of achieving impact remains plausible but hinges on timely scaling, improved delivery mechanisms, and stronger knowledge integration. If addressed promptly, current bottlenecks may still allow the project to meet its intended outcomes by completion.

Efficiency

16. Implementation efficiency has been constrained by delays in project start-up, slow processing of Letters of Agreement (LoAs), and weak coordination and collaboration among key partners. The Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM) promotes national ownership but has added procedural complexity. Sub-national engagement and field-level

delivery remain limited to date. No detailed financial information is available, and fund disbursements are lagging behind planned timelines, affecting the timely achievement of outputs and reducing the project's adaptive capacity. The efficiency at mid-term is rated **'Moderately Unsatisfactory'**.

Sustainability of the project results

17. The overall sustainability of results is rated **Moderately Likely**. Financial sustainability is uncertain at this point, as there has been limited progress on securing future resources or planning post-project continuity. Socio-economic sustainability appears promising, driven by growing local demand for climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and participatory land use planning tools.
18. Institutional sustainability is moderate and depends on stronger collaboration at the national level and improved capacity at sub-national levels. Environmental sustainability is potentially strong due to the ecosystem-based adaptation focus. However, its long-term sustainability will depend on how well these approaches are mainstreamed and sustained through policy integration. Improved planning for transition and institutional integration is critical for lasting impact.

Stakeholder engagement

19. A stakeholder engagement structure has been formed, including a Project Steering Committee (PSC) chaired by the Deputy Minister, a Technical Advisory Group, and a Coordination Committee with representation from key stakeholders. While sub-national stakeholders have limited formal roles, they have actively participated in project operations.
20. Despite this structure, the project faced significant engagement challenges. The late onboarding of the Operational Partner (OP) delayed project mobilization. Stakeholder engagement has been uneven, with weak collaboration and sustained mistrust between the national coordinating agency and the OP. This undermined effective implementation.
21. Within the OPIM framework, FAO facilitated periodic dialogues and meetings to resolve coordination issues. While FAO's technical support has been valuable, the support from the country office in addressing operational bottlenecks has been insufficient.
22. Nonetheless, stakeholder engagement has led to some progress, such as increased awareness of climate-adaptive land use planning and CSA practices, and early-stage intersectoral coordination at the local level. For broader impact and sustainability, deeper and more systematic engagement across all levels is essential.

Progress in gender responsiveness

23. While gender considerations were integrated into project design, they have not been fully operationalized and systematically monitored yet. Gender indicators in the results framework are primarily limited to women's participation in activities. Although some gender-disaggregated data are being collected, delays in field-level implementation have limited the generation of evidence on gender-related barriers to participation, decision-making, and equitable benefit-sharing.

Knowledge management

24. The project's knowledge management (KM) component remains underdeveloped. While some knowledge products have been produced, progress has been limited. There is no formal KM strategy or operational plan to guide implementation. Moreover, structured learning loops that support adaptive management or policy engagement have not yet been established. A more systematic approach to KM, focused on documentation, learning, and exchange, will be crucial as community-level implementation expands.

Overall assessment

25. The project maintains strong strategic relevance and potential for impact. However, effectiveness has been constrained by delayed implementation, coordination challenges, and capacity gaps at various levels. Corrective actions, improved stakeholder collaboration, and stronger sub-national delivery mechanisms are urgently needed to meet objectives. While early signs of progress are noticeable, achieving transformative and sustainable outcomes will require intensified efforts in the remaining implementation period. The overall project performance is rated '**Moderately Satisfactory**' (see Table 1).

Conclusion

26. At midterm, the project demonstrates strong strategic relevance and alignment with national priorities, as well as with GEF/LDCF and FAO frameworks. However, progress has been constrained by delays in finalizing Letters of Agreement (LoAs), weak collaborative action among partners, inadequate field-level delivery, and limited engagement of NGOs/CSOs, among other factors.
27. While outcome-level achievements are yet to be visible, there is potential for good results if delivery mechanisms are strengthened and support systems are better aligned with local needs. OPIM modality provides ownership benefits but has also revealed coordination and efficiency gaps.
28. Encouragingly, there is growing interest and increased awareness among communities and sub-national stakeholders to engage in project interventions. Strengthening decentralized implementation, ensuring timely and coordinated delivery, and leveraging lessons learned are critical for achieving the project's intended objectives.
29. The sustainability of results will depend on enhanced institutional coordination, increased sub-national capacity, effective knowledge transfer, and realistic financial planning to extend and embed gains beyond the life of the project.

Recommendations

30. **Recommendation 1: Adjust the project start timeline and consider a no-cost extension, for at least one and a half years from GEF/LDCF to reflect a realistic implementation period (Responsibility – FAO/GEF and PSC).**
FAO and GEF in coordination with the Project Steering Committee (PSC) should consider shifting the End of Disbursement date to align with the actual date of the first disbursement rather than the approval date and seek a no-cost extension for one and a half years to

complete field activities, generate results, and allow space for learning and sustainability planning.

31. **Recommendation 2: Further strengthen FAO's facilitative and implementation role to accelerate project implementation and decide the implementation modality of the activities within the scope of FAO (*Responsibility - FAO*).**

FAO should consider enhancing coordination among stakeholders and regularly streamlining processes. The role of the focal point of FAOLA should be expanded throughout the project period, or an expert should be hired for fast-track delivery. Besides, FAO, in consultation with other stakeholders, should also provide guidance on the implementation of activities related to value chain piloting and investment (under 2.2.3, 3.1.1, and 3.1.2) to maintain technical quality, improve service delivery, and ensure efficient implementation.

32. **Recommendation 3: Strengthen decentralised implementation through targeted field delivery and strengthen technical and financial monitoring systems (*Responsibility - Government, PMU, FAO & OP*).**

Enhance decentralized implementation via participatory planning, prioritizing field delivery through deployment of technical staff at the sub-national level, adaptive management, and systematic knowledge generation to foster ownership, coordination, and learning. Develop strong monitoring, learning, and financial tracking systems to improve transparency, support evidence-based decisions and enable timely assessment of project benefits.

33. **Recommendation 4: Further strengthen strategic oversight and coordination through more engaged PSC, functional technical groups, and integrated risk management (*Responsibility - Government, OP and FAO*).**

Reinforce the PSC and technical groups to ensure stronger strategic oversight, coordination, and adaptive risk management, facilitating timely decisions, stakeholder alignment, and effective implementation.

34. **Recommendation 5: Strengthen operational efficiency through timely finalization and implementation of LoAs and review the project targets (*Responsibility - FAO, PMU, including OP*).**

Establish a fast-track approval mechanism for LoAs, clarify partner roles and timelines, and review project targets based on the current implementation context. The project should also review its targets considering the emerging context and resource availability.

35. **Recommendation 6: Prepare a sustainability plan by promoting partnerships and institutional alignment to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the results delivered by the project (*Responsibility - Government entities and OP*).**

Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan by fostering partnerships with ongoing initiatives and aligning with development priorities. Embed project practices within DAFOs and PAFOs to ensure institutional continuity post-project.

36. **Recommendation 7: Carry out a realistic assessment of partners' ability for co-financing and strengthen GEF's co-financing accountability (*Responsibility - FAO/GEF*).**

Conduct a realistic assessment of partners' readiness to co-finance during project design. Further strengthen guidance for projects to collect evidence and report, and a co-financing

monitoring tool to track commitments, detect shortfalls early, and ensure co-financing materializes during implementation.

Table 1. Project assessment and rating according to GEF criteria

GEF criteria and sub-criteria	Rating	Reference to relevant sections
A. Strategic relevance		
A1. Alignment with GEF and FAO Strategic Priorities	HS	3.1.1
A2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities	HS	3.1.2
A3. Complementarity with existing interventions	S	3.1.3
A4. Overall strategic relevance	HS	3.1
B. Effectiveness		
B1. Overall evaluation of project outcomes	MS	3.2.1
B1.1 Output delivery	MS	3.2.1
B1.2 Overall progress towards project outcomes and objectives	MS	3.2.2
B1.3 Probability of impact	N/A	3.2.3
C. Efficiency		
C1. Efficiency	MU	3.3
D. Sustainability of project outcomes		
D1. Overall probability of sustainability	ML	3.4.1
D2. Sustainability in relation to financial risks	ML	3.4.2
D3. Sustainability in relation to socio-economic risks	ML	3.4.3
D4. Sustainability in relation to institutional and governance risks	ML	3.4.4
D5. Sustainability in relation to environmental risks	L	3.4.5
D6. Catalysis and replication	ML	3.4.6
E. Factors affecting performance		
E1. Project design and preparation	S	3.5.1
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	3.5.2
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO	MS	3.5.2.1
E2.2 Project oversight by PSC	MS	3.5.2.2
E3. Quality of project execution and risk assessment	MS	3.5.3
E3.1 Project execution and management	MS	3.5.3.1
E3.2 Project risk assessment	MS	3.5.3.2
E4. Co-financing of the project	MS	3.5.4
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MU	3.5.5
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MU	3.5.6
E7. Overall quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	MS	3.5.7
E7.1 Design of the M&E system	MS	3.5.7.1

E7.2 Implementation of the M&E plan (including financial and human resources)	MS	3.5.7.2
E8. Overall evaluation of factors affecting performance	MS	3.5.8
F. Cross-cutting concerns		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	3.6.1
F2. Human rights issues	UR	
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	3.6.2
Overall project evaluation	MS	

Notes: Rating (Strategic Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Factors affecting performance; Cross-cutting issues): Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unable to rate (UR)
Sustainability: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U), Unable to rate (UR)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

37. The purpose of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to assess the project titled “Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR” (GCP/LAO/027/LDF)—hereafter referred to as “the project.” It aims to provide accountability to stakeholders (including government and beneficiaries) regarding progress made toward achieving the project’s objectives and results as outlined in the project document (see Appendix 1).
38. The MTR also seeks to analyze early indications of success and on-going challenges; extract lessons learned from implementation to date and identify necessary adjustments to guide FAO and stakeholders in future decision-making.
39. The evaluation covers the project’s design and implementation period from its inception in March 2023 through to April 2025. It includes all four project components, with a geographic focus on the northern upland provinces of Luang Prabang and Houaphan.
40. The MTR also reviewed the partnership arrangements among the institutions involved in the project and with other major initiatives.
41. The MTR systematically assessed the project’s progress against its stated objectives, outcomes, and outputs as outlined in the Project Document. It evaluated the project’s relevance/coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, performance-influencing factors, and cross-cutting issues.

1.2 Scope and Objective of the Mid-Term Evaluation

42. The objectives of the MTR are:
 - a. To assess progress toward achieving the project’s objectives and results as defined in the project document, and to analyze early signs of success or failure.
 - b. To identify any corrective actions needed to bring the project back on track and ensure achievement of the intended results; and
43. The evaluation was conducted by a team comprising a lead evaluator and one national consultant, who carried out field missions and stakeholder consultations.
44. The MTR major questions are presented below.

Intended users

Box 1: Major evaluation questions

a. **Relevance and Coherence**

- Is the project still relevant and coherent?

b. **Effectiveness of project results**

- To what extent is the project achieving its objectives and outcomes? (across all project's components)

c. **Efficiency**

- To what extent is the project being implemented efficiently and cost effectively?

d. **Financial management and co-financing**

- To what extent is the pledged co-financing being delivered?

e. **Sustainability**

- What is the likelihood that the project results will be useful or persist after the end of the project? and risks to Sustainability.

f. **Factors affecting progress**

- To what extent are implementing and executing agencies effectively discharging their roles and responsibilities? Focus on partnership strengths and challenges, OPIM
- To what extent and how have multi-sector stakeholders at different levels been involved in project design and implementation?
- How is the project assessing, documenting, and sharing its results, lessons learned, and experiences?
- M&E design and implementation: Is the project's M&E system adequate, practical, and sufficient?
- Does the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan?

Cross-cutting priorities

- To what extent are gender equality and empowerment—including indigenous peoples and other equity issues—mainstreamed in the project, both in design and implementation (including M&E)?
- To what extent are environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?

45. This mid-term evaluation is intended for the following stakeholders:
46. **Government agencies:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and its departments, such as DALAM, will use the evidence-based findings, lessons learned, and actionable recommendations to strengthen project implementation and inform future sector planning.
47. **FAO** (Country Office, Regional Office, project coordination team, headquarters focal points), and the **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**, together with the partner agency World Vision International (WVI), will use the findings and lessons to enhance implementation and support sustainability of project outcomes.
48. **The Global Environment Facility (GEF)** may use the evaluation findings to inform future investments in climate change, environmental, and agriculture-related projects in Lao PDR and the region.

49. **National and local partners** can use the evaluation results to plan future interventions.
50. **Project beneficiaries and community groups**, including farmer organizations, may engage more effectively with the project as a result of evaluation insights.
51. **Other donors, organizations, and academic or research institutions** interested in supporting or replicating similar projects may also find the findings useful.

1.3 Methodology

52. This mid-term evaluation adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and aligns with the Guide for Planning and Conducting Mid-Term Reviews of FAO–GEF Projects and Programmes (2020¹).
53. The evaluation adopted a robust participatory approach, ensuring active engagement of stakeholders throughout the process. Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to assess the contribution of project interventions toward the intended outcomes.
54. The review used original design documents (e.g., Prodoc, logframe) and the Theory of Change, with emphasis on intentionality and causal pathways. Where feasible, baseline data and relevant comparative contexts were used to assess the outcomes of project interventions. The evaluation applied an evidence-based approach, relying on credible linkages between inputs and results. Findings were presented clearly to support learning, and wider dissemination.
55. The evaluation team applied a three-phase approach: (i) inception phase; (ii) data collection; and (iii) data analysis and reporting.

Phase 1: Inception Phase

56. The objective of this phase was to establish a shared understanding between project stakeholders and the evaluation team regarding the objectives and scope of the assignment. Activities included an initial review of project documentation, stakeholder mapping, and refinement of the evaluation matrix based on consultations with FAO and the project staff. A preliminary stakeholder list was developed for the data collection phase. Based on the documentation reviewed, the team prepared the evaluation matrix (see Appendix 2) and subsequently produced an inception report.

Phase 2: Data Collection Phase

57. The evaluator adopted a mix of methods and tools, comprising secondary data analysis, as well as qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. A secondary documentary review began during the inception phase and continued throughout data collection as additional evidence became available. The review of project documents included, among others: the project document, annual progress reports, project implementation reports (PIRs), steering committee meeting reports, financial reports, communication materials, and knowledge products. In addition to content analysis of secondary data, the team relied

¹ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/bf566776-b4f3-41e4-8cb6-c5e6731a2609>

on the OP's presentation during the MTR mission and the 2024 PIR results matrix to assess the rate of physical implementation of activities and outputs. The full list of documents reviewed and analyzed is presented in Appendix 3.

58. The primary data collection consisted of interviews with partners, government officials, and communities through virtual and in-person means. Following initial interviews, additional key stakeholders were identified and interviewed to provide corroborative evidence and enhance the triangulation of emerging data.
59. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure the representation of project interventions and the inclusion of diverse stakeholders. Stakeholders and beneficiaries were selected based on their involvement in thematic interventions, geographic distribution, diversity of actors, and representation of key social groups (e.g., women, Indigenous Peoples, resource-poor households) to achieve a balance between project sites. The sampling approach aimed to ensure that at least one-third of the respondents were women.
60. Based on these criteria, field visits to four districts across two provinces were conducted from 21st May to 28th May 2025. In total, 47 individuals were consulted—33 project stakeholders and 15 community members—along with two focus group discussions (9 men and 6 women) held at the community level (see images 1-4). A summary of field sites and the list of participants in the evaluation are presented in Appendix 4.

Phase 2: Data analysis and reporting

61. All information collected from desk reviews, in-person and online interviews, were verified for accuracy. The evidence was reviewed using the key evaluation criteria. Primary data from interviews and discussions were transcribed, cleaned, and prepared for analysis. The evaluation conducted simple thematic coding and content analysis based on the evaluation questions. Findings were cross-referenced and triangulated. For instance, differing stakeholder responses were reviewed and verified with the project team and secondary information. This process helped identify key factors that influenced or contributed to the project's outputs and outcomes, in line with program logic. Preliminary findings of the review were presented on the last day of the country mission, 30 May 2025.
62. Evaluation criteria were rated using a six-point scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability and Likelihood of Impact were rated as Highly Likely (HL), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), and Highly Unlikely (HU), while UA was used where assessment was not possible. If sufficient evidence was unavailable, the criteria were not rated, with justifications provided accordingly².
63. The findings are presented according to the evaluation criteria in accessible formats, including tables, figures, and graphs. A draft report was shared with the evaluation manager and project responsible officers for feedback, comments, and suggestions. Valid inputs were incorporated into the final report (see Annex 2).

² See Guide for planning and conducting mid-term reviews of FAO–GEF projects and programmes – Annexe 11

1.4 Limitations

64. The wide geographical spread of the project sites and the poor road conditions in the project target regions made field visits challenging. Visiting all project sites would have required significantly more time than was available for field data collection. A representative sample of communities was therefore selected in line with the aforementioned criteria. Another key challenge was ensuring the coverage of all stakeholders and the availability of key informants to participate in the evaluation. Efforts were made to reach most stakeholders through either in-person meetings or online consultations to collect data and perspectives from different groups.
65. A risk of response bias³ was mitigated by ensuring that consultations did not raise unrealistic expectations. Language barriers during community engagement were addressed through support from national stakeholders and real-time translation for the lead evaluator.
66. The quality of evidence was mixed, especially regarding efficiency (e.g., financial data – planned and expenditure data, and cost-effectiveness). These limitations were addressed through careful planning and methodological rigour. The national evaluator, with strong contextual and thematic expertise, played a key role in identifying data gaps early. Systematic verification and triangulation helped reduce bias and improve the reliability of findings.

1.5 Structure of the report

67. Following this introduction section, Section II presents the background and context of the project. Section III presents the main findings for each evaluation question. Conclusions and recommendations are presented in Section IV, followed by lessons learned in Section V.

The report also includes the following appendices:

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

Appendix 2: Evaluation Matrix

Appendix 3: Major document reviewed

Appendix 4: List of people met

Appendix 5: Result matrix

Appendix 6: Co-financing from the government

³ When respondents perceive that the evaluation outcomes could lead to future benefits (e.g., continued funding or a new project phase).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

2.1 Background

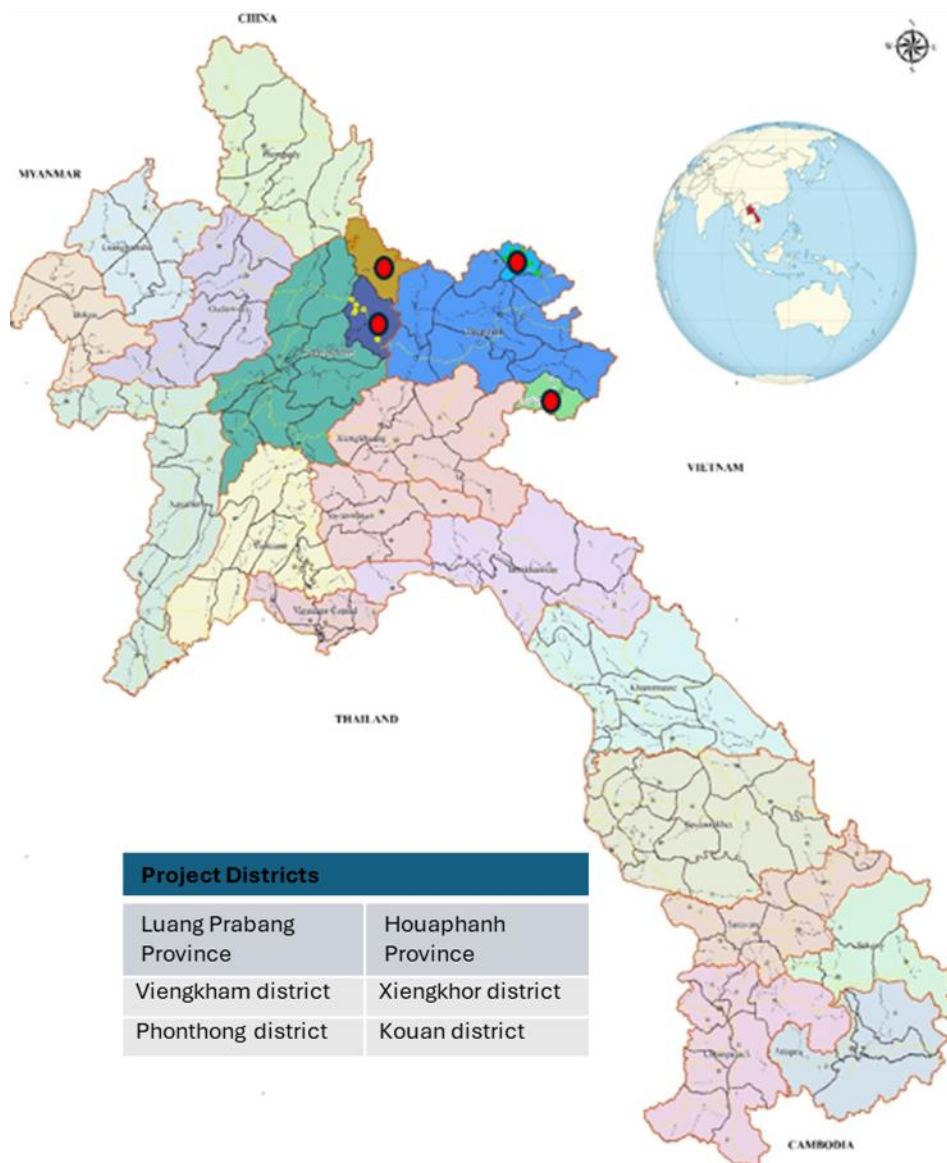
68. Lao PDR is the most rural country in Southeast Asia, with over three-quarters of the population residing in rural areas. Agriculture is a vital sector, contributing around 30% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing livelihoods for approximately 70–80% of the population⁴. Despite its importance, the country faces persistent food insecurity and undernutrition. The sector is also constrained by unsustainable practices such as swidden agriculture, soil erosion, and severe nutrient depletion.
69. Lao PDR is increasingly exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change, including erratic and extreme weather patterns. Projections suggest a split rainy season, more frequent extreme rainfall (causing floods), prolonged dry periods (leading to droughts), delayed rain onset and shorter seasons (triggering crop failures), and heightened weather variability. The project is being implemented in Luang Prabang and Houaphan Provinces (Figure 1).
70. According to the second National Communication of Lao PDR to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Luang Prabang ranks among the top five provinces with the highest climate risk, while Houaphan holds the second-highest classification for sensitivity and exposure⁵. Both provinces fall into the highest risk category for limited adaptive capacity.
71. Farmers in the northern uplands are particularly vulnerable to these threats (high exposure and high sensitivity) due to their dependence on rainfall and the low-yield, low-profit cultivation of relatively low-value crops such as rice and maize. These communities, along with supporting institutions, possess low adaptive capacity, especially at sub-national levels. Additionally, they face weak infrastructure, mismatched land-use planning and investments, and poorly coordinated value chains.
72. Farmers in the region are caught in a vicious cycle of climate vulnerability and environmental degradation. Traditional practices, such as shifting cultivation, contribute to soil erosion and deforestation, which in turn reduce productivity and increase climate risk. Weak land-use policies, lack of financial incentives for sustainable practices, limited CSA knowledge, policy fragmentation, and inadequate institutional capacity further constrain sustainable land management.
73. The project aims to address the following barriers:
- Insufficient coordination and budget allocations to support strategic priorities.
 - Land-use planning and agricultural value chains that lack integration of climate change considerations or adaptation measures.

⁴ Project Document page 28

⁵ Project Document Page 16

- Rural livelihoods and land-use practices in the northern uplands are neither resilient nor adaptive to changing climate conditions.

Figure 1: Project Districts



Source: WVI (2025)

74. In the absence of such an intervention, continued land degradation would worsen livelihoods, increase greenhouse gas emissions, and jeopardize national climate goals. The project supports national priorities, including the NAPA, National Adaptation Plan, NDC, and Agriculture Development Strategy—by integrating climate-smart agriculture (CSA) into local development planning and enhancing cross-sectoral coordination. Its focus on policy coherence, community empowerment, and scalable approaches aligns with GEF’s climate change mitigation strategy and the Lao PDR’s development goals.

75. This project seeks to enhance the resilience of vulnerable upland communities in Luang Prabang and Houaphan provinces to climate change. These northern areas are highly exposed to hazards—such as erratic rainfall, droughts, and soil degradation—compounded by low adaptive capacity and challenging geography (steep slopes and rough terrain). The project aims to bring 35,000 hectares under sustainable management and benefit 25,000 households by 2025.
76. The project is funded by the GEF/LDCF with a total amount of USD 3,502,968, complemented by co-financing from the Lao government amounting to USD 15,000,000⁶.

2.2 Project components, outcomes and outputs:

77. The project has the following components.

Component 1: Enabling environment to promote and incentivize resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR

Component 2: Resilient and sustainable land-use planning and value-chain networks in two provinces of the northern uplands.

Component 3: Climate-smart technologies and innovations deployed in two provinces of the northern uplands.

Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation, project communication, and lesson-learning

78. The following are the objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project.

Objective: To enhance resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change impacts through climate-smart agricultural practices in upland production systems.
Outcome 1.1.: Strengthened capacity to mainstream and access climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR.
<i>Output 1.1.1.:</i> Strengthened inter-sectoral planning and investment-prioritization processes at national and sub-national levels for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes.
<i>Output 1.1.2.:</i> Innovative financial instruments, investment models, and institutional arrangements developed and enabled to mobilize climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes.
Outcome 2.1.: Integrated, landscape-level planning strengthened using climate-smart practices for resilient and sustainable landscapes in the northern uplands.
<i>Output 2.1.1.:</i> Participatory climate risk and vulnerability assessments conducted for upland livelihoods, incorporating vulnerable ecosystems and agro-ecological suitability at the landscape level.

⁶ Pro Doc page number – 11, Co-financers: a) IFAD (type of co-financing In-kind and category – recurrent expenditure) amount USD 1,000,000; and b) Ministry of Agriculture and finance, (type of co-financing- public investment and category – investment mobilized) amount USD 14,000,000.

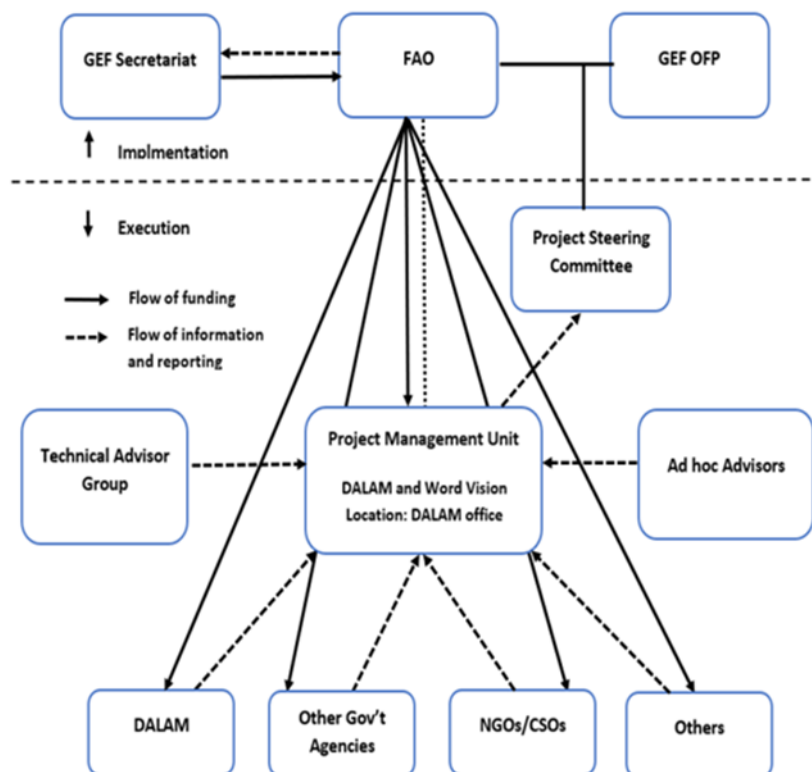
<i>Output 2.1.2.:</i> Capacities of local institutions and district-level governmental offices to identify, incentivize, promote, and disseminate climate-smart land-use approaches and practices, and nature-based solutions for resilient and sustainable landscapes strengthened.
<i>Output 2.1.3.:</i> Participatory, resilient, and sustainable land-use and investment plans incorporating innovative, evidence-based, locally appropriate, gender-responsive, and climate-smart livelihood options and nature-based solutions developed and demonstrated.
<u>Outcome 2.2.:</u> Innovative and resilient agricultural value-chain networks and financing options established to adopt and scale up climate-smart practices.
<i>Output 2.2.1.:</i> Resilient and sustainable agricultural value-chain networks mapped and established in two provinces of the northern uplands.
<i>Output 2.2.2.:</i> Inclusive climate-resilience and market-opportunity assessments for resilient and sustainable agricultural value chains, including options for improvement of periodic quantity- and price-planning activities through multi-sectoral collaboration.
<i>Output 2.2.3.:</i> Investment action plans for resilient and sustainable value chains incorporating periodic pricing guidance, financing options, incentives, models, and tools to encourage adoption and up-scaling of climate-smart practices developed and piloted.
<u>Outcome 3.1.:</u> Climate-smart livelihood practices scaled up at the landscape level to support resilient and sustainable rural landscapes that improve food security and nutrition.
<i>Output 3.1.1.:</i> Climate-smart land-use approaches and practices and nature-based solutions for resilient and sustainable landscapes deployed.
<i>Output 3.1.2.:</i> Investments for resilient and sustainable value chains to encourage adoption and up-scaling of climate-smart practices deployed.
<u>Outcome 4.1.:</u> Project monitored and evaluated, information disseminated, and lessons from project implementation, progress monitoring, review, and evaluations codified and shared.
<i>Output 4.1.1.:</i> A gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system developed, strengthening decision-making for CCA in the agricultural and NRM sectors.
<i>Output 4.1.2.:</i> Communication and knowledge-management strategy, including outreach programs and local knowledge-sharing and learning networks on climate adaptation and resilience, developed and implemented.

2.3 Partners involved in the project implementation

79. The main project partners for this project include:

- Food and Agriculture Organization
- World Vision
- Department of Agricultural Land Management (DALAM), MAF
- Department of Agriculture Extension and Cooperation (DAEC), MAF
- Department of Planning and Cooperation (DOPc), MAF
- National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), MAF
- Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH)
- Trade and Handicraft Promotion Department (THPD)
- Department of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion (DSMEP)
- Department of Policy and Legal Affairs, MAF
- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- PAFOs, DAFOs
- Village Lao Women Union
- Village Head
- Civil societies
- Beneficiary Community members

Figure 2: Project implementation arrangement

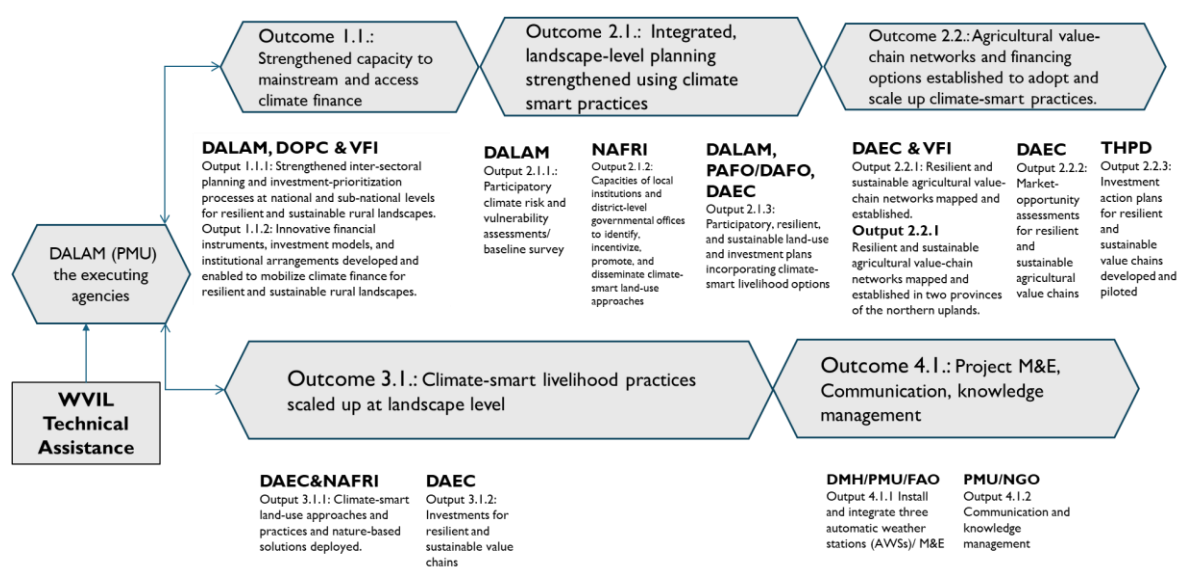


2.4 Implementation Arrangement

80. The project is implemented through OPIM where the Government of Lao PDR leads and coordinates the project's execution via a designated National Project Director (NPD), located in DALAM. It also involves substantial engagement from other government agencies along with relevant CSOs and NGOs. World Vision International (WVI) serves as the Operational Partner (OP) and provides Technical Assistance (TA) for the project, coordinates with DALAM and safeguards project results as per the Operating Partner's Agreement (OPA) signed with FAO. FAO oversees the implementation of the Operational Partners Agreement (OPA).

81. A Project Steering Committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)⁷ provides strategic guidance, supported by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)- a 10-member committee headed by DALAM to provide technical support and is coordinated by the Project Management Unit housed within DALAM (see Figure 2).
82. The OP is responsible solely for providing Technical Assistance (TA), while FAO worked directly with the executing agencies through Letters of Agreement (LoAs), each valued at less than USD 100,000. The executing agencies include five government departments, two Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs), four District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFOs), and one NGO.
83. The project outputs are being managed by different executing agencies and sometimes multiple agencies for generating a single output. See below the organizations responsible for delivering the project outputs (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Responsible organizations for delivering the project outputs



2.5 Reconstructed Theory of Change

84. The project aims to enhance the resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change impacts through the promotion of climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices within upland production systems. As articulated in the project's Theory of Change (ToC), the central premise is that if institutional capacity at various levels of government is strengthened and incentivized mechanisms are created, and if this is complemented by technical assistance for the design and implementation of integrated, landscape-level planning that incorporates CSA practices, alongside resilient agricultural value chains, inclusive financing options, and effective knowledge dissemination, then this will contribute

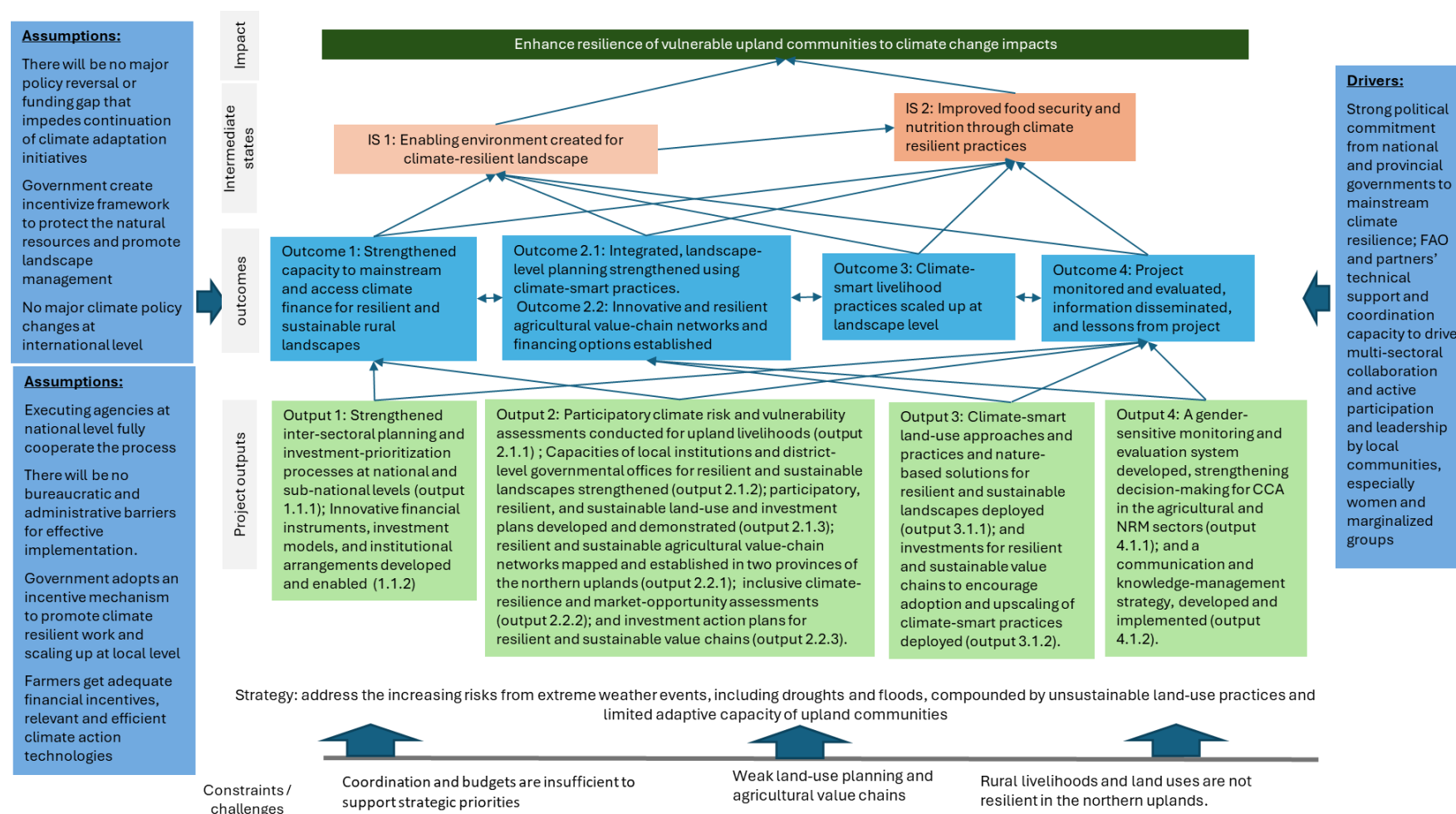
⁷ The second project steering committee (PSC) meeting was conducted on 24th May 2024. Chaired by the deputy minister, the other PSC members represented by an FAO representative in Lao PDR, 6 government departments and deputy governors from the two provinces (PSC agreement by the MAF dated 17th March 2023).

to a strengthened enabling environment for climate-resilient landscapes and improved food security. These changes are expected to be achieved through climate-responsive land use planning and the adoption of climate-resilient technologies for the sustainable management of land, agriculture, and forest ecosystems. The intended shift is a systemic transformation in upland areas toward enhanced resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of climate change.

85. After reviewing the Theory of Change (ToC) prepared during the project design, a revised Theory of Change was developed and shared by the evaluator during the inception phase (Figure 4). The original ToC presented in the project document was generally vague and action-heavy. While the overall logic and objectives were broadly aligned with the project's goals, the formulation of pathways of change was overly detailed at the intervention level and did not sufficiently articulate the critical intermediate outcomes⁸ or necessary conditions for achieving the intended impact. Additionally, the original ToC included ambitious results that did not adequately account for contextual risks, institutional capacity constraints, or institutional analysis of the stakeholders. The revised ToC reviewed these gaps, to the extent possible, by proposing more clearly defined and logically sequenced intermediate states—particularly those related to strengthening enabling conditions, improving climate adaptive land-use, adopting climate resilient agriculture and achieving local food security improvements—thereby reinforcing the coherence between outputs, outcomes, and the project's long-term development objectives.
86. Some of the original assumptions embedded in the ToC were too broad and not easily testable. Assumptions such as *“improving intersectoral planning and investment will lead to improved climate-resilient practices”* and *“improved access to finance will result in diversified rural livelihoods”* were not sufficiently grounded in evidence and did not hold true during implementation. In practice, the project has faced challenges related to weak coordination, limited cross-sectoral planning, and slow decision-making processes among executing agencies, all of which have affected the delivery of climate-resilient services to communities. As a result, several assumptions required refinement in the revised ToC. The most critical assumptions include: (i) that farmers and value chain actors remain motivated over time to adopt climate-resilient practices (e.g., drought-tolerant crops), and that service providers possess the skills necessary to train and support them effectively, and (ii) the presence of adequate stakeholder collaborative action and institutional capability—both at national and sub-national levels—to prioritize and support climate adaptation measures.

⁸ The logic relations with the outputs of the outcomes 2 and 3 are not clear how they are going to contribute the corresponding outcome statements. For example, the project logic of contributing to outcome 3 (Climate-smart livelihood practices scaled up at the landscape level) from output 3.1.1 – 3.1.2 is vague – especially scaling up at landscape level.

Figure 4: Theory of Change



3. MAJOR FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance & Coherence

3.1.1 Alignment with GEF and FAO Strategic Priorities

Evaluation question: To what extent do the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change?

Finding 1: The project was designed to effectively contribute to the LDCF/GEF-7 priorities and strategies.

87. The intervention is well aligned with the GEF-7/LDCF objectives⁹ and strategies, particularly in enhancing the climate resilience of vulnerable rural communities and ecosystems. Specifically, the project contributes to GEF priorities by promoting climate-resilient agriculture, strengthening local adaptive capacity, and integrating climate risks into sectoral planning. The design reflects a clear understanding of GEF's strategic emphasis on gender equality, ecosystem-based adaptation, and sustainable livelihoods. By targeting upland communities highly exposed to climate variability, the intervention addresses urgent adaptation needs consistent with LDCF priorities. Incorporating nature-based solutions and community-led approaches further strengthens alignment with GEF-7's integrated programming principles and resilience-building strategies.

Finding 2: The project is well aligned with the FAO country priorities and FAO strategic framework 2022-2031.

88. As outlined in the project document, the project aligned with the FAO Country Programme Framework for Lao PDR (2016-2021¹⁰) – particularly
- Outcome 1: Fostering agricultural production and rural development (Outputs 1.1 and 1.2)
 - Outcome 3: Forests and other ecosystems are protected and enhanced (Output 3.1)
 - Outcome 4: Improving capacity to respond to food and agricultural threats and emergencies and the impact of climate change (Output 4.1)
89. The project is also highly relevant to the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) 2022–2026¹¹, particularly its three priority outcomes. It directly contributes to Outcome 1 by improving food and nutrition security among vulnerable upland communities through climate-resilient agriculture. It aligns with Outcome 2 by promoting inclusive and

⁹ LDCF/SCCF Objective 1: Reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation and LDCF/SCCF Objective 2: Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact

¹⁰ https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/FAO-countries/Laos/docs/CPF.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.fao.org/lao-people-democratic-republic/en/#:~:text=Country%20Programming%20Framework%202022%2D2026,9th%20National%20Socio%2DEconomic%20Development>

sustainable livelihoods, targeting women and ethnic minorities with capacity development and value chain support. The project strongly supports Outcome 3 by enhancing community and institutional resilience to climate change, promoting sustainable land and water management, and integrating ecosystem-based approaches. Its emphasis on local empowerment, agro-biodiversity, and climate-smart agriculture aligns well with FAO's strategic vision of inclusive prosperity and environmental sustainability.

90. The project is well aligned with the FAO Strategic Framework 2022–2031¹², particularly its vision of supporting the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agri-food systems. It contributes to the Four Betters—Better Production, Better Nutrition, Better Environment, and Better Life—by promoting climate-smart agriculture, enhancing food security, protecting natural resources, and strengthening the livelihoods of vulnerable upland communities in Lao PDR.
91. The alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities is therefore rated '**Highly Satisfactory**'.

3.1.2 Relevance to national, regional and global priorities

Finding 3: The project is highly consistent with the priorities of the government of Lao PDR, both at the time of design and during midterm.

92. The intervention is well aligned with the Government of Lao PDR's climate and sectoral priorities. It supports the Lao's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), where agriculture is one of the four key sectors; National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which identify agriculture, forestry, and water resources comprise three of the five key sectors designated as highly vulnerable to climate change and requiring priority adaptation actions. The first adaptation objective of Lao PDR's NDC is the promotion of resilient agriculture, which entails the promotion of resilient agricultural farming practices and technologies to address climate change impacts as well as crop and animal diversification and resilience, especially in areas where climate change is likely to exacerbate floods and droughts.

Image 1: Discussion with DALAM –the lead government Executing Agency



93. These national priorities and the project's objectives are well aligned to support climate-resilient upland farming systems and promote climate-smart agriculture. The project also

¹² <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/29404c26-c71d-4982-a899-77bdb2937eef/content>

aligns with the Agriculture Development Strategy (2011–2020) and the Agriculture and Forestry Development Strategy to 2025 (with a Vision to 2030), by improving productivity, sustainability, and climate resilience. It contributes to the National Agro-Biodiversity Programme (2016–2025) through the conservation and use of local genetic resources through sustainable landscape management. Furthermore, it contributes to the Forestry Strategy 2020 by promoting agroforestry and forest landscape restoration, thereby reinforcing cross-sectoral coherence in adaptation planning and implementation.

94. The project objectives and outcomes also align with the priorities of the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) 2016-2020. In addition, the project aligns with the Lao PDR's ratification of the Paris Agreement by following CCA priorities as indicated in the NDC and the Second National Communication to the UNFCCC (NC2) and support SDGs (SDG 1 and SDG 13 directly).
95. Hence, the relevancy of the project intervention to the national, regional and global priorities is rated 'Highly Satisfactory'.

Finding 4: The project objectives and design meet the needs of the communities and beneficiaries and existing interventions in the project area. The project interventions (such as land use planning, climate adaptation and agriculture value chain) remain highly relevant.

96. The project design demonstrates strong relevance to community needs, particularly those of smallholder and resource-constrained farmers in upland areas. Developed through a participatory process, the project incorporated extensive consultations with farmers and their groups, ensuring that local knowledge, priorities, and vulnerabilities informed the design. Its relevance remains high in light of increasing climate risks affecting agriculture and natural resource management in the target areas.

Image 2: Focus Group Discussion with community members



97. Key interventions, such as community- and district-level land use planning, climate risk assessments, and value chain development, respond directly to the needs of farmers for practical, context-specific adaptation solutions. The project's emphasis on farmer-centred approaches, particularly under Outcome 2 (land use planning and participatory climate risk assessment) and Outcome 3 (implementation of climate adaptation measures), strengthens local ownership and sustainability.
98. The MTR confirmed through stakeholder interviews that beneficiaries highly value the project's support. Some of the respondents mentioned that they would get more knowledge on farming practices, particularly in relation to climate-resilient agriculture and alternative income sources. These findings confirm that the project is not only aligned with local needs but also seen as timely and impactful by the communities it serves.
99. The relevancy of the project interventions with the local needs is rated '**Highly Satisfactory**'.

3.1.3 Complementarity with existing interventions

Finding 5: The project demonstrates moderate coherence, with good alignment to existing national priorities and interventions, but limited operational integration with other donor-funded initiatives.

100. The project aligned relevant national policies (e.g., Vision 2030, Strategy 2025, and the 8th Five-Year Plan) and draws lessons from FAO and other development partners' projects, such as Eco-friendly Intensification and Climate Resilient Agriculture Systems (EFICAS), Strategic Support for Food Security and Nutrition Project (SSFSNP), and the Northern Uplands Food and Nutrition Security Project. However, mechanisms to foster synergies and operational linkages were either weak or underdeveloped during implementation. Besides, there is also weak coordination and collaboration with other initiatives supported by other development partners such as irrigation projects supported by ADB.
101. Despite some design limitations, the project is found to be fully aligned with the priorities of the country, community, FAO, and GEF. The complementarity with the existing interventions is rated '**Satisfactory**'. Overall, the strategic relevancy is rated '**Highly Satisfactory**'.

3.2 Effectiveness, achievement of expected outcomes

3.2.1 Overall evaluation of project outcomes and outputs

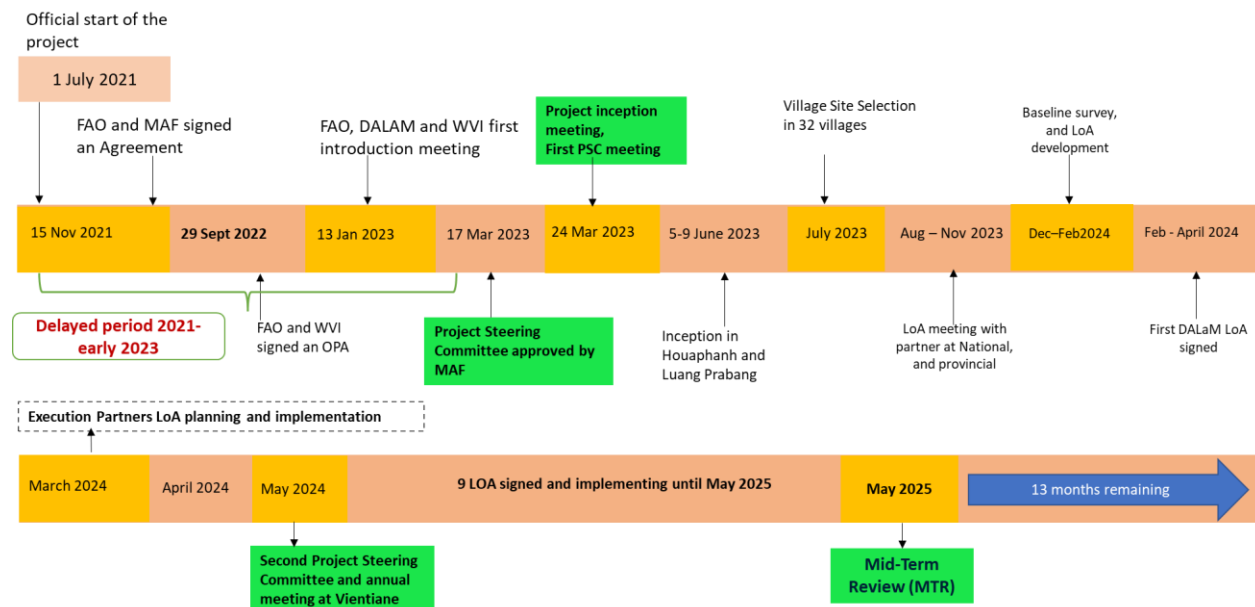
Evaluation question: To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of project outcomes and its overall objective of enhancing the resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change impacts so far, and how effective has it been?

102. The project has been operationally active in the FAO system since 1st July 2021 and was approved by the government on 15th November 2021. The Operational Partner Agreement (OPA) was signed between FAO and WVI on 29th September 2022. The project steering committee (PSC) was established on 17 March 2023, and the project was officially launched on 24 March 2023¹³ at Vientiane Capital and target provinces. This chronological analysis

¹³ Organized the first PSC meeting and project inception meeting

showed that the project implementation was significantly delayed by approximately 21 months (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Critical stages of the project decision-making



Source: WVI (2025)

Component 1

Evaluation question: To what level has the project strengthened its capacity to mainstream and access climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR? If so, how?

Finding 6: Progress under Outcome 1 has been delayed in delivering its expected outputs, primarily due to slow implementation by the executing partner and the unavailability of service providers, which have hindered capacity strengthening for climate finance access and resilience planning.

103. The Department of Planning and Cooperation (DoPC), responsible for Output 1, has delayed planned activities¹⁴. As of early 2025, only one workshop was conducted to map national and provincial multi-sectoral networks related to land-use investments. Although foundational, this is insufficient to meet the expected results for capacity strengthening. While WVI supported drafting multi-stakeholder consultation guidelines, DoPC has not yet piloted or institutionalized them at provincial or district levels.
104. The project faced significant challenges identifying experienced NGOs for Output 2 (innovative financing instruments and investment models). Although Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for NGO services were issued twice, none of the applicants were qualified. One suitable NGO, Village Focus International (VFI), was eventually identified and selected in April 2025 during the third attempt. FAO signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with VFI in June

¹⁴ LoA was finalised on 15th July 2024 and was expected to be completed by 30th April 2025

2025, however, the delay in finalizing the LoA had already affected the field activities related to developing financial instruments, investment models, and institutional arrangements.

105. Outcome 1 has seen minimal progress due to prolonged delays in formalizing partnerships and initiating activities. While foundational steps like stakeholder mapping have begun, the slow pace of implementation and pending agreements with key actors have constrained the project's ability to effectively strengthen institutional capacity, and systems for climate finance access and sustainable rural landscape management. Hence, the outcome is considered **'Moderately Unsatisfactory'**.

Component 2

Evaluation question: To what extent has the country's capacity been increased to mainstream and access climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes?

106. Outcome 2 is composed of two sub-outcomes and six outputs focused on participatory climate risk assessment at the landscape level (Outcome 2.1) and establishing innovative, resilient agriculture value chains and financing options (Outcome 2.2).

Finding 7: The project has made satisfactory progress under Outcome 2.1, particularly in building capacity and supporting integrated land use planning with toolkits and creating a foundation for climate-resilient agriculture, though field-level implementation of CSA practices and value chains remains pending.

107. Under Outcome 2.1, the project has made satisfactory progress, delivering most planned activities and producing solid results. Out of eight outcome-level indicators, six have already been achieved, while two remain in progress.

Image 3: Discussion with OP (WVI)



108. The Department of Agricultural Land Management (DALAM¹⁵) led key technical training and capacity development activities. Notable achievements include conducting vulnerability assessments and data collection in Houaphanh and Luang Prabang provinces, organizing provincial validation workshops, and rolling out the climate-adaptive Participatory Forest and Agricultural Land-Use Planning, Allocation, and Management (p-FALUPAM) toolkit in 10 villages.
109. Progress is also noted in developing practice-oriented training and toolkits, consultation meetings to raise ideas on CSA with relevant sectors at the provincial level, developing training courses and manuals on CSA and delivering practice-oriented training and toolkits, among others.
110. DALAM also supported the preparation of Village Action Plans that incorporate climate change adaptation considerations, laying the groundwork for adaptive land use planning at the community level.
111. The National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), identified and refined 187 CSA practices and developed 10 user-ready technical manuals for climate-smart agriculture, tailored to site-specific conditions¹⁶.
112. Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs) conducted participatory stakeholder mapping exercises at both provincial and district levels, developed menus of land-use and investment packages, hosted multi-stakeholder consultations, and prepared climate-adaptive land-use frameworks for two provinces and four districts¹⁷. One of the PAFO officers said, ‘we have integrated Agro-Ecological Zone (AEZ) data and CSA concepts into participatory land-use planning in targeted communities’.
113. Despite the progress in planning, capacity building, and tool development, the field-level demonstration of CSA practices and value chain implementation has yet to begin. This limits the current influence of these efforts on farming systems and livelihoods.
114. Overall, outcome 2.1 has laid promising progress in terms of planning, stakeholder engagement and capacity development. Foundational tools and frameworks for climate-resilient land use and CSA practices have been developed and piloted. However, field-level demonstrations and value chain implementation are on plan, requiring focused efforts to translate strategic outputs into tangible impacts on the ground.

Finding 8: Implementation of Outcome 2.2 has been delayed due to challenges in identifying and contracting suitable NGO partners, resulting in slow progress in establishing innovative and resilient agricultural value chain networks and financing mechanisms.

115. Outcome 2.2 focuses on establishing climate-resilient agricultural value chains and financing options to scale up CSA practices across the project sites

¹⁵ Two LoAs were carried out for this.

¹⁶ Through the first LOA with NAFRI

¹⁷ Through the first LOA with PAFOs

116. Progress under Outputs 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 has been minimal as the selection of qualified NGO partners took longer than planned. Originally designed to work with multiple NGOs, the project faced difficulty in identifying experienced national-level NGOs capable of delivering on the scope.
117. After multiple rounds of the procurement process, only one NGO—Village Focus International (VFI)—was selected¹⁸ and contracted recently to take on the implementation responsibility. This delay has impacted the timely rollout of critical activities related to value chain development, business model piloting, and access to financing—key enablers for scaling up climate-smart agriculture.
118. The project team recognizes that the rapid mobilization of VFI is now essential to recover lost time and achieve the strategic goals of scaling CSA innovations through functional value chains and financing mechanisms. One of the project team mentioned that ‘hiring of VFI can expedite the field implementation process’.
119. In summary, while Outcome 2.1 has established a strong technical and institutional foundation for climate-resilient planning, Outcome 2.2 lags behind due to delayed implementation. Overall, considering the volume of work carried out under Outcome 2.1, the progress of this outcome is considered ‘**Moderately Satisfactory**’.

Component 3

Evaluation question: To what extent do climate-smart livelihood practices scale up at the landscape level to support resilient and sustainable rural landscapes that improve food security and nutrition?

Finding 9: Limited progress was noted in scaling up climate-smart livelihood practices in the project sites, with only one outcome-level indicator partially achieved. Implementation delays under Outcome 2 mainly affected the smooth uptake of climate-smart practices to improve food security and rural resilience.

120. Outcome 3 aims to scale up climate-smart livelihood practices across landscapes to enhance food security and resilience. It includes two outputs to be implemented by DAEC, PAFOs, and DAFOs.
121. Output 3.1.1 focuses on climate-smart land use practices through Farmer Field Schools (FFS). Within this output, DAEC developed FFS packages tailored to local contexts, including manuals and training of trainers (ToT) programs. ToTs were conducted, and manuals integrating CSA techniques were prepared in local languages.
122. DAEC, in collaboration with DAFOs, selected one pilot village per district (with 11–30 farmers in each group) for FFS demonstration. The groups have also identified priority commodities and technologies for FFS; some of these include coffee, vegetables (in the rainy season), broom grass, and macadamia nut.
123. Despite these early preparations, on-the-ground implementation has been minimal. The scale-up of CSA technologies is awaiting validation of results from the first group. While

¹⁸ Through a direct selection based on experience.

piloting is a logical approach, significant international experience with FFS already exists, and FAO has been a pioneer in this area. Hence, evaluators believe the project could have initiated all FFS groups simultaneously to accelerate implementation.

124. Output 3.1.2 (deploying investment for resilient and sustainable value chains)

had not commenced by midterm, though some discussions and initial sensitization work had begun.

Image 4: Discussion with a DAFO technical team



125. Overall, Component

3 is also lagging in implementation. These activities were, however, planned for the latter part of the project, following the delivery of outputs under Outcome 2. While groundwork for CSA demonstration (training, materials, and village selection) has been laid under Output 3.1.1, field-level scale-up is expected once the LoAs with PAFOs and DAFOs are finalized. Based on the preparatory progress (e.g., LoAs nearing signature) and readiness of field partners, Outcome 3 is deemed '**Moderately Satisfactory**'.

Component 4

Evaluation question: Have the knowledge generated and learned from the project so far been effectively communicated with local, national and regional partners? Is a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in place and is the project monitored effectively and efficiently?

Finding 10: Component 4 has experienced notable delays in delivering the outputs, although some progress is being made, such as the development of a CCA toolkit and project introductory materials.

126. Outcome 4 focuses on M&E, communication, and lesson learning, with two outputs assigned to the Project Management Unit (PMU), implementing NGO (VFI), and the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH). Significant delays have affected both outputs.
127. A critical task under Output 4.1.1 is the installation and integration of three automatic weather stations:
- Equipment procurement faced a major setback due to delays in government tax exemption approvals.

- The issue remained unresolved for a long time, eventually forcing the project to proceed by paying the import tax.
 - A contract with a private supplier has been signed, and delivery of the equipment is expected within 3 months after the MTR period.
128. Knowledge-sharing and lesson learning activities are beginning. For example, NAFRI developed toolkits for farmers' CSA practices on vegetable production in greenhouses. In addition, the project developed an introductory leaflet project to share with a broader audience. However, no substantive progress has been made in developing and deploying a knowledge management system. Respondents noted that the project is now entering the field implementation phase, during which relevant knowledge is expected to emerge. Evaluators noted the immediate need to develop a strategy to capture and share this knowledge with local, national, and regional stakeholders.
129. The project is in the process of developing M&E systems using an Excel-based tool, but there is limited evidence of structured monitoring, data utilization, or reporting processes. Similarly, although some joint meetings and dialogues have been held among the implementing, executing, and TA partners, integration of feedback loops and adaptive learning approaches remains minimal.
130. In summary, Component 4 is delayed. Delays in importing key equipment and weak follow-through on M&E and knowledge-sharing responsibilities have hampered the project's ability to monitor results and promote adaptive learning. Without timely corrective action, the missed opportunity to inform local and national actors through evidence and experience will undermine broader institutional and sustainability goals. Hence, the outcomes and outputs are considered **'Moderately Unsatisfactory'**.
131. While two outcomes are rated as Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) and the other two as Moderately Satisfactory (MS), the overall performance of outcomes and outputs is assessed as **'Moderately Satisfactory'**. This reflects the active preparation within communities, strong stakeholder engagement in recent periods at both national and local levels (particularly by PAFOs and DAFOs), and the completion of foundational work that will help expedite the remaining activities.

3.2.2 Overall progress towards project outcomes and objectives

Finding 11: The project is behind in achieving outcome-level progress due to delayed implementation and limited field activities. While foundational work has been initiated—particularly in planning and institutional engagement—tangible results, especially at the beneficiary and landscape levels, are minimal at the midpoint of the project.

132. The evaluation found that overall project progress towards achieving outcome-level results remains limited when taking reference to the official starting date of the project. It is noted that the project inception meeting was carried out only in March 2023. The start-up and ongoing procedural delays have affected the timely delivery of project outputs overall.
133. Only 6 of the 38 performance indicators identified for the project (16 percent) were reported as fully met by the implementing partner (See Appendix 5). The project's reach to its

intended beneficiaries is also low. While the total proposed beneficiary population is 887,210 (with 5,710 direct beneficiaries targeted by the end of the project), only 145 individuals have been reported as benefiting from the project interventions as of the Midterm Review (MTR). This constitutes just 2.5 percent of the total proposed direct beneficiaries and falls significantly short of the expected midterm milestone. This indicates a concerning lag in overall delivery.

134. However, the evaluation team also appreciated that most project activities have been carried out over the past year during which the project gained momentum. Initial engagement at the district and community level in late 2024 and early 2025 showed some positive developments including a growing sense of urgency among stakeholders to expedite implementation and the creation of enabling engagement at the sub-national level. For example, the project has succeeded in developing integrated land-use planning frameworks at provincial and district levels, conducting participatory climate vulnerability assessments, and building institutional capacities—all of which lay a critical foundation for scaling up climate-smart interventions. In particular, tools such as P-FALUPAM and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are progressing well and are ready to be deployed more broadly once field-level implementation begins in earnest.
135. If these are leveraged effectively through quick and efficient operationalization at the sub-national level, they could support accelerated implementation in the remaining period. Overall, the outcome rating is ‘**moderately satisfactory**’.

Evaluation question: Is there any unexpected outcomes noted from the project interventions?

Finding 12: No significant unexpected outcomes were identified during the review.

136. The Midterm Review did not identify any significant or clearly defined unexpected outcomes arising directly from the project’s technical interventions or field activities.

3.2.3 Probability of Impact

Evaluation Question: Are there any obstacles or risks that could impede the future progress of the project and the achievement of its objectives?

Finding 13: Delay in field operation and community engagement and limited catalytic progress to date pose moderate to high risks to the project’s ability to achieve its intended impacts. While foundational work at the community level shows early promise, the lack of robust coordination, strategic implementation, and a clear exit strategy may constrain the project's objectives.

137. There is no evidence so far that the project has achieved a catalytic effect, scaled innovations, or stimulated replication beyond its immediate implementation areas. However, the approach being adopted—integrating climate risk into land use and agricultural practices—has the potential to generate useful learning and local innovation if implementation is accelerated and supported with the right systems.
138. Encouragingly, the evaluation team noted a positive willingness to adopt the technologies proposed by the project among local officials and communities, including increased awareness of climate-smart agriculture and land-use planning. This early momentum,

however, requires deliberate consolidation, deeper outreach to communities, and more sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration.

139. Despite these positive indications, significant risks remain. These include continued operational delays, fragmented coordination among stakeholders and absence of a clear exit or sustainability strategy for scaling up results. Without addressing these structural and institutional barriers, there is a moderate to high likelihood that the project may fall short of delivering a durable and transformational impact.

3.3 Efficiency

Efficiency: To what extent to the intervention deliver, or is likely to deliver, results (/outputs) in an economic (cost-saving) and timely way. Is the project disbursement rate satisfactory.

Finding 14: The project efficiency so far is inadequate. Implementation delays and low financial disbursement are mainly due to delayed recruitment of OP and staff, procedural bottlenecks, institutional capacity gaps, and logistical constraints in remote project areas.

140. The transition from SNV (identified during the project design) to WVI as the Operating Partner (OP) and the slow readiness of the government hindered smooth implementation during the initial phase. The unavailability of NGOs also hampered early field-level activities.
141. In addition, challenges in signing, managing, and completing too many Letters of Agreement (LoAs) with government partners affected smooth implementation. By midterm, four LoAs are completed and six are in progress, of which one is delayed. It is also noted that four are in the process of signing, and there will be another nine LoAs to be carried out (see Table 2).
142. The LoA approval process was also hindered by complex structures, slow bureaucratic procedures, and delays caused by the need for translation and internal alignment.

Table 2: Status of LoA (April 2025)

	LOA Partners	Budget (USD)	Start date	End date
Completed				
1	DALAM- I	19,031	Nov-23	28-Feb-24
2	NAFRI -I	61,630	1-Apr-24	30-Nov-24
3	Houaphanh PAFO -I	53,892	1-May-24	30-Dec-24 NCE 30Apr-25
4	Luang Prabang PAFO-I	52,413	2-May-24	30-Dec-24 NCE 30Apr-25
In progress				
5	DALAM- II	97,948	15 Feb 2025	30-Jun-25
6	DAEC –I	60,842	20-Feb-25	30-Nov-25
7	NAFRI- II	57,451	1-Apr-25	31-Dec-25
8	THPD	54,054	01-Feb-25	31-Dec-25
In progress but delayed (as per the contract)				

9	DOPC	24,916	15-Jul-24	30-Apr-25 NCE 30Sep-25
10	NGO Village Focus International ¹⁹	99,000	1 July 2025	30 October 2025
In the process of approval				
11	DAFO-I Phonthong district	95,000		
12	DAFO-I Viengkham district	95,000		
13	DAFO-I Xienkhor district	95,000		
14	DAFO-I Kuan district	95,000		
To be carried out (expected)				
15	Luang Prabang PAFO-II			
16	Huaphanh PAFO-II			
17	DAEC-II			
18	DALAM-III, IV, V			
19	DAFO-II Phonthong district			
20	DAFO-II Viengkham district			
21	DAFO-II Xienkhor district			
22	DAFO-II Kuan district			
23	DAEC-II			

Source: WVI (2025)

143. In terms of financial management, it was difficult to obtain detailed information disaggregated by component or budget line, such as planned and actual expenditures on an annual basis. There is also confusion between FAO and the OP regarding the preparation of the project-level financial report²⁰. However, the FAO country focal person provided aggregate figures indicating that the project received an overall budget of USD 1,866,000 from the GEF, and that project expenditure stood at USD 937,360 by June 2025 against the planned budget of 548,000 until Dec 2024. The expenditure rate until June 2025 is 27% against the total budget from GEF/LDCF.
144. The aggregate financial report is presented in Table 3 below.

¹⁹ The LoA has been signed during the MTR process.

²⁰ There is confusion about who should be preparing the financial report between FAO and OP. FAO suggests that preparing financial report, according to the OPA, is OP's responsibility, whereas OP views that they do not have access of FAO's FPMIS.

Table 3: Project expenditure until June 2025

Budget lines	Project Budget	Planned until Dec 2024	Actual Expenditure Until June 2025	Balance
Component 1	144,737	68,000	24,916	119,821
Component 2	1,323,530	373,000	396,419	927,111
Component 3	849,000	99,000	60,842	788,158
Component 4	44,500	8,000	-	44,500
OPA planned included PMC and each com	970,401		417,711	552,690
FAO	170,800		37,472	133,328
Total	3,502,968	548,000	937,360	2,565,608

Source: FAOLA (2025)

145. Expenditure through the LoA has also been slow. As shown in Table 4, overall expenditure by the government department was approximately 38%, while the OP had used 43% of its allocated funds to date.

Table 4: Fund disbursement through the Executing Agencies and OP by midterm

LoA Partners	Planned	Expenses	Balance	Expenditure %
DALaM	60,000	19,031	40,969	31.7
DALaM (pFALUPAM)	416,000	97,948	318,052	23.5
NAFRI	200,000	119,081	80,919	59.5
Houaphanh PAFO	50,000	53,892	(3,892)	107.8
Luang Prabang PAFO	50,000	52,413	(2,413)	104.8
DOPC	25,000	24,916	84	99.7
DAEC	414,000	60,842	353,158	14.7
THPD	55,000	54,054	946	98.3
DMH	27,000	10,000	17,000	37
Sub-total	1,297,000	492,177	804,823	37.9
OP (WVI)	970,401	417,711	552,690	43
FAO	170,800	40,000	130,800	

Source: FAOLA, 2025

146. A common concern among executing partners—particularly government agencies such as DALAM—was the rigid reimbursement structure of FAO contracts – especially for the final payment, which require pre-financing by the implementing entity. This reimbursement-based model proved challenging for government institutions lacking flexible operational budgets or the capacity to pre-finance activities. In addition, there were also cases where the reporting from the partners was delayed thereby slowing implementation during the initial phases.

147. The evaluators also noted that the project implementation modality was centralized, limiting early engagement of PAFO and DAFO in planning and implementation. In addition, the geographical remoteness of target provinces and districts in northern Lao PDR added logistical challenges. Poor road conditions and long travel times to project villages impeded timely implementation. The lack of transport facilities, such as project vehicles, constrained access to sites. Although some communication was facilitated through social media platforms, it was not sufficient for effective project delivery and monitoring.
148. Respondents reported that the project follows standard FAO financial procedures. Respondents noted no significant deviations in expenditure at the outcome level compared to the planned budget. Some mentioned that minor variations in spending fall within permitted financial rules and regulations. However, no detailed financial information is provided to evaluators to verify this, reflecting weak planning, reporting, and financial oversight.
149. Despite these challenges, the project has aligned effectively with national plans, particularly in climate-resilient land use and agricultural planning. Strong ownership and commitment from DAFOs and PAFOs, as well as support from district and provincial governors, have facilitated multi-sectoral collaboration at the subnational level.
150. The performance rating for efficiency is considered as **‘Moderately Unsatisfactory’**.

3.4 Sustainability

Question: Does the project include provisions to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes and benefits (i.e. an exit strategy), and are these provisions in place? What are the main risks that could affect the sustainability of the outcomes and benefits (i.e. financial, socio-economic, institutional and environmental)?

3.4.1 Overall probability of sustainability

Finding 15: While the project has initiated steps to accelerate delayed activities and reinforce coordination, additional efforts—particularly in technical and managerial areas—are needed to ensure that the achieved outcomes are sustained over time.

151. The project has laid a foundation and generated some early results, particularly through institutional anchoring and technical capacity building. Besides, the project also regains momentum through renewed implementation efforts at both the national and field levels, the project lacks a clearly defined exit strategy. However, delayed field implementation, limited financial disbursement, weak local capacity, and coordination challenges pose moderate risks. Socio-economic benefits and environmental outcomes are not yet fully visible, and external threats such as climate risks may further affect sustainability. Strengthening private sector engagement, accelerating CSA adoption, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and addressing capacity gaps at the local level is essential to ensuring that the project’s good results are sustained and scaled beyond its duration. Overall, at midterm, the overall sustainability of the project results is rated as **Moderately Likely**.

152. The following factors are important to consider for the sustainability of the result of this project.

3.4.2 Sustainability in relation to financial risks

Questions: what is the sustainability of project results from the financial point of view?

Finding 16: Financial sustainability of the project outcomes is at moderate risk due to delays in implementing field activities and uncertainty around co-financing and private sector engagement.

153. One of the core project outcomes (Outcome 3.1) aims to increase household net income²¹ through the adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices. However, field activities have yet to begin, putting this objective at significant risk. Farmers expressed readiness but awaiting project support, which jeopardizes income enhancement and sustainability of CSA adoption.
154. While the project intends to scale up agricultural value chains and engage private sector actors, there is currently no immediate plan in place to develop sustainable market linkages. Farmer feedback indicates their unawareness of the project plan on this.
155. There is a possibility of demonstrating good financial benefits from the project activities if the project addresses delay promptly and adequately. Hence financial sustainability is rated **‘Moderately Likely’**.

3.4.3 Sustainability in relation to socio-economic risks

Questions: what is the sustainability of project results from a socio-economic point of view?

Finding 17: Due to limited field progress and lack of observable livelihood outcomes by midterm, the socio-political sustainability remains unsure. However, there is ongoing engagement at the local level and, specifically with communities, there is a good chance that the project intervention may contribute to socio-economic benefits in the project area.

156. The project aims to enhance livelihoods and address gender and social inclusion. By midterm, activities such as land use planning and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) have just begun in selected pilot villages. Although the village selection considered climate risks, gender, and poverty, tangible socio-economic benefits for targeted groups are not yet evident.
157. While gender and inclusion are emphasized in design, no clear examples demonstrate improved well-being or empowerment of women, indigenous groups, or climate-vulnerable communities to date. Early-stage implementation in the communities limits the assessment of social benefits at the mid-point.
158. The project plans to support farmers with small equipment and materials for CSA adoption. However, remoteness and limited local capacity pose logistical challenges, potentially

²¹ Outcome indicator 3.1 g – Increase the net income of the participating households (average LAK/year), 60,000 LAK by midterm and 600,000 LAK by the end of the project.

hindering the uptake of these practices. To improve sustainability, effective engagement of stakeholders at the national and local level, including communities and mechanisms to deliver field implementation, is required. As there is an increasing engagement noted recently, the sustainability of outcomes at the local level is rated ‘**Moderately Likely**’.

3.4.4 Sustainability in relation to institutional and governance risks

Questions: what is the sustainability of project results from an institutional point of view?

Finding 18: While institutional weaknesses, coordination challenges, and limited field-level capacity present sustainability risks, the project has built important institutional foundations—such as alignment with government systems, established coordination mechanisms at sub-national level, and early capacity-building efforts—that can be leveraged for long-term institutional sustainability if properly reinforced.

159. The project has emphasized institutional integration by aligning with national policies and embedding interventions into ongoing government programs. Coordination mechanisms such as the PSC and inter-agency meetings are in place. These have created a platform for institutional dialogue and potential cross-sectoral collaboration, which, if managed properly, can support longer-term sustainability.
160. The project operates under the OPIM modality, with DALAM serving as the main executing partner and supervised by the Project Steering Committee (PSC). This structure places the project within existing government systems and aligns it with national development priorities. There is a strong sense of institutional ownership, particularly at the sub-national level (province, district, and community levels), where government officials are actively engaged.
161. Capacity-building is a key element of the project, and efforts are underway to strengthen technical skills within implementing institutions. However, these efforts have largely focused on central-level stakeholders. Respondents at the district and community levels indicated limited exposure to project activities or capacity support. Going forward, deploying technical support closer to the field could further enhance institutional capacity, coordination, and responsiveness.
162. Despite these efforts, several institutional risks remain. The project suffers from long decision-making processes and coordination inefficiencies due to multiple implementing partners, administrative burdens²² and limited facilitative capacity within FAO. Confusion exists between partners regarding roles, responsibilities, and the pace of implementation. A lack of formal linkage with other ongoing initiatives in similar thematic areas (e.g., land use,

²² The other challenge in this case is the design of the project with multiple partners. There are however some logics (such as to carry out LoA which is limited within the 100,000 USD per LoA) of why the project proposed multiple partners but this has also created extra administrative burden (such as developing LoAs and supervising them) and coordination inefficiency. This has further impacted where there is inadequate resources available to FAO LA to coordinate and facilitate the process.

climate risk, agriculture) limits opportunities for synergy, learning, and resource optimization.

163. Addressing these gaps through stronger stakeholder engagement, decentralization of technical support, devising a project exit strategy and partnership with ongoing initiatives will be essential to sustain the project's institutional outcomes. Based on progress so far and project's potential of further strengthening the institutional capacity, the institutional sustainability is rated as **'Moderately Likely'**.

3.4.5 Sustainability in relation to environmental risks

Evaluation questions: what is the sustainability of project results from an Environmental point of view?

Finding 19: The project was designed to enhance environmental sustainability through integrated land use planning, climate-smart agriculture (CSA), and improved resource management. However, growing external environmental pressures—such as increased climate variability, forest fires, and soil erosion—may pose moderate risks to sustaining outcomes unless adaptive measures are adopted in a timely manner.

164. Environmental sustainability is central to the project's design, which aims to promote sustainable land management, climate-resilient agriculture, and ecosystem preservation in highland areas vulnerable to degradation. The project interventions are technically aligned with these objectives and are guided by national strategies on climate change and land use.
165. Despite this alignment, the environmental context remains fragile. Escalating climate risks, particularly prolonged dry periods, increasing forest fires, and soil erosion, though largely beyond the project's direct control, threaten to undermine long-term gains. These risks highlight the importance of integrating ecosystem-based adaptation, soil conservation, and fire risk reduction more systematically into field-level planning and extension services.
166. Nevertheless, the project has developed technical resources, including training manuals, land use planning tools, and CSA guides, which can support replication and continuation of environmentally beneficial practices beyond the project's duration. Capacities built at institutional levels (e.g., DALAM and sub-national agencies) and among early community participants, if reinforced, could contribute to sustaining environmentally sound land use and farming approaches over time.
167. Although the anticipated environmental benefits are yet to fully materialize, there is a good likelihood that environmental sustainability would be maintained if the project carried out the activities as per the plan. Hence, environmental sustainability is rated **'Likely'**.

3.4.6 Catalysis and replication

Evaluation questions: To what extent does the project demonstrate replication potential?

Finding 20: The project demonstrates a catalytic potential at the local level, but evidence of replication remains limited due to delayed implementation and weak knowledge capture.

168. The project's integrated approach to climate-smart agriculture, decentralized planning, and inclusive stakeholder engagement holds significant promise for replication and scale-up

across similar upland ecosystems in Lao PDR. Its alignment with national priorities and engagement of provincial and district actors lays the groundwork for institutional uptake. However, due to implementation delays, insufficient documentation of field-level results, and underdeveloped knowledge management systems, the project has yet to systematically catalyze broader adoption. Some promising field interventions, such as Farmer Field Schools and participatory land-use planning, are gaining local traction and have the potential for expansion if effectively documented and disseminated.

169. To fully realize its catalytic role, the project must urgently prioritize lesson harvesting, showcase success stories, and link with other government and donor programs aiming at climate resilience and sustainable agriculture. The catalysis and replication potential of the project is considered '**Moderately Likely**'.

3.5 Factors affecting the project performance

3.5.1 Project design and readiness:

Evaluation question: What was the quality of the project design (programme logic and emerging context), including the level of involvement of stakeholders at different levels? To what level of readiness of the stakeholders to implement the project?

Finding 21: The project design is generally coherent and builds on national-level consultations, but has key weaknesses related to inadequate local-level consultations, an overly ambitious results framework, and limited emphasis on leveraging local capacities for implementation.

170. The project was designed in 2019. The overall theory of change remains plausible, linking the enabling environment, land-use planning, CSA deployment, and MEL. The project is fully aligned with national policies and development priorities (related to land use and climate change adaptation) and has selected project sites based on climate risks and poverty levels. It also included stakeholder mapping and emphasized the role of women and indigenous peoples in the project.
171. Discussions with respondents also indicated that the design primarily emerged from consultations at the national level. No evidence is available on how and to what extent local stakeholders – especially the farmers and their groups, were engaged in the design phase, limiting responsiveness to ground-level needs and their potential role in effective project implementation.
172. The results framework is overly detailed, focusing more on outputs than behavioural outcomes. Many outcome-level indicators correspond more with deliverables at the output level. They also lack baseline data and proper monitoring mechanisms to assess regular progress. Several targets are overly ambitious, given the absence of clear implementation pathways and sequencing logic (also see Appendix 5). Due to limited time available for the review, the evaluation team couldn't review and assess the likelihood of achieving these targets; it is therefore advised that the project team review the targets and make necessary decisions through the PSC. Some of the targets for review include:

- Outcome 2.1 indicator g – Number of villages in which p-FALUPAM is applied²³.
- Outcome 2.1 indicator h – Number of LUP beneficiaries.
- Outcome 3.1 – b. Number of community members trained in climate-adaptive land uses—increase from baseline.
- Outcome 3.1 – c. Number of people benefiting from more climate-resilient land-use practices—increase from baseline.
- Outcome 3.1 – d. Number of people benefiting from diversified livelihoods—increase from baseline.
- Outcome 3.1 – g. Increase in net income of participating households (average LAK/year).
- Outcome 3.1 – h. Number of communities with local adaptation plans--increase from baseline.
- Outcome 3.1 – i. Number of local infrastructures improved or installed to increase local climate adaptability.
- Outcome 3.1 – j. Number of beneficiaries from community-led resilience investment packages (CRIPs).
- Outcome 4.1- e. Number of people benefiting from improved agro-meteorological information.

173. The project experienced an extended readiness period from November 2021 to March 2023, mainly due to the need to select a new Operating Partner (WVI) after SNV withdrew. No inception (analysis) report²⁴ was prepared to provide a comprehensive assessment of context, validate the project relevance and design, or propose any necessary adjustments in the project scope and its arrangements. The government demonstrated a readiness to engage and coordinate the project, despite some concerns over fund sharing and the OP selection process.

174. The project design and readiness for implementation, therefore, are rated **‘Satisfactory’**.

3.5.2. Quality of project implementation

3.5.2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO

²³ However, there are different views on the possible achievement of targets. While DALAM believes that the end of the project target of 150 is possible, other stakeholders view that it is not possible given the current progress (10 p-FALUPAMs by mid-term) and time require to complete 150 p-FALUPAMs.

²⁴ There was a brief inception meeting note available, and the objective of the inception meeting was ‘to present the key executive summary and background, description, outcomes, outputs, work plan, and results framework on the Project’. Inception report, however, should go beyond a brief introduction, providing a comprehensive assessment of the context, validating the project relevance & design, proposing adjustments as needed, and detailing implementation, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, agreeing on monitoring framework, and risk management arrangements, etc.

Evaluation question: To what extent has the implementing agency fulfilled its responsibilities in terms of project concept identification and preparation and start-up, as well as monitoring and supervision?

Finding 22: FAO has fulfilled key reporting and technical support obligations, but its supervisory role in-country was weakened by staff turnover and lack of dedicated resources.

175. FAO was fully engaged and managed the project design and preparation phase well. During implementation, while FAO has fulfilled core reporting obligations—such as submitting Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), conducting annual supervision missions, and providing technical backstopping through technical and GEF coordination teams, the quality and consistency of in-country supervision have been hampered by internal limitations.
176. One major issue shared by respondents is the high staff turnover at the FAO country office, with three different focal persons managing the project over its life, leading to reduced institutional memory. It was noted that there was no separate budget allocated for the position, and FAOLA has been funded through internal resources. This limited their engagement and capacity to provide consistent support.
177. The absence of formal risk assessment (see risk assessment chapter above), insufficient coordination among the government coordinating agency, Operational Partner, and FAO, and weak facilitation at critical stages have affected the timeliness and quality of decision-making and troubleshooting. In addition, some procedural delays are noted from the FAO side²⁵. These gaps were particularly evident during project implementation.
178. Additionally, the review of the project activity plan indicates that some activities fall under the scope of PMU, where FAO has to determine who will execute them and how they are implemented. These include the piloting of value-chain investment packages (2.2.3), the development of CRIPs (3.1.1), and the funding of value-chain investment packages (3.1.2). It is important to assess and decide how these activities and their associated funds can be most effectively managed to support efficient project delivery. Some respondents suggested that establishing criteria and procedures for CRIPs may be better handled at the local level, while the piloting and funding of value-chain investments (2.2.3 and 3.1.2) require technical expertise and would benefit from national-level oversight. There is also a pressing need to revisit the work plan and clarify responsibilities to ensure timely implementation.
179. Stakeholders widely acknowledged FAO's strategic value and technical inputs. While FAO has delivered certain oversight tasks, its role in periodic project facilitation and strategic supervision, especially at the national level, has been limited. This has created coordination gaps and slowed response mechanisms needed to address implementation challenges for a complex, multi-stakeholder initiative. Based on the discussion above, the role of FAO in project supervision is rated '**Moderately Satisfactory**'.

²⁵ Some of the examples noted during the assessment was delay in paying last installment of LoAs (as the executing agencies had to spent before they get reimbursement from FAO), requiring four approval of LoAs approvals for each LoA (LoA, inception report, mid-term report, and final report) and taking long term of getting approval for other project decision making process partly due to frequent change of focal persona at the country office.

3.5.2.2 Project Oversight from PSC

180. The Project Steering Committee (PSC), composed of nine government departments and FAO representatives, was designed to provide high-level oversight, strategic direction, and coordination among government stakeholders, FAO, and OP. It was convened twice so far (March 2023 and May 2024). The PSC provided overall leadership of the project, assessed project progress, and demonstrated government ownership.
181. However, it has not functioned optimally. Meetings were held only once per year and lacked strategic action or risk mitigation. One of the respondents said ‘given the complexities of the project and institutional dynamics, the level of oversight from PSC is not adequate. Critical issues such as delayed Letters of Agreement (LoAs), coordination gaps, and implementation delays were insufficiently addressed. Furthermore, there was no strong monitoring and learning mechanisms to support course correction. It is also noted that the 2025 annual work plan is yet to be approved. Strengthening the PSC’s functionality—including more regular meetings, clearer accountability, and the integration of risk management into its agenda—will be critical to steering the project effectively during the remaining implementation period.
182. Hence, the project oversight from the PSC is considered ‘**Moderately Satisfactory**’.

3.5.3. Quality of project execution and risk management

3.5.3.1 Quality of project execution

Evaluation question: What is the quality of execution of the project, and to what extent was the risk management approach followed?

Finding 23: Project execution has been moderate. The PMU is functioning fairly well and is discharging the regular roles of the project. However, it is also constrained by unclear roles, procedural delays, differing expectations, and institutional coordination challenges.

183. The PMU (jointly managed by DALAM and World Vision International) has been established within the DALAM office and is led by a senior official from DALAM. The PMU has been engaged in planning, coordinating among executing agencies, and conducting periodic joint monitoring. Field data are being collected, and periodic review meetings are conducted.
184. The performance of the joint PMU (between DALAM and World Vision International) has been weakened by inconsistent collaboration, unclear role definitions, and administrative inefficiencies. Coordination between DALAM and the OP was not consistently operationalized. Based on discussions with respondents and a review of the Minutes of Meetings (MoM), the evaluation team noted that the use of the Operational Partner Implementation Modality (OPIM) raised government expectations for a greater financial and managerial role, which was not fully realized during implementation. These confusions and tensions contributed to weak consolidated planning, limited learning loops, and reduced adaptive management. Furthermore, inadequate use of technical working groups limited the project’s capacity to address emerging challenges.

185. World Vision International (WVI), engaged as the Operational Partner (OP) under the OPIM modality, has added value by providing critical procurement services, including contracting consultants and procuring equipment that the government could not directly manage. WVI's operational systems have supported compliance with FAO and GEF standards and have been a responsive partner as per the OPA. Despite these contributions, the OP's effectiveness in project management has often been limited by several factors. Persistent misunderstandings with DALAM over roles and expectations, compounded by inconsistent communication, have weakened collaboration. Frequent changes of FAO focal persons further disrupted timely problem-solving. Additionally, reliance on short-term consultants has constrained WVI's capacity to deliver sustained technical assistance and build trust with government stakeholders. Overall, while WVI has played an important enabling role in operational delivery, its contribution to effective project management has been further increased through clearer role definition of stakeholders, stronger relationships, and sustained technical support.
186. Staffing and human resource challenges also hindered delivery. Recruitment of short-term consultants with minimal time allocations, coupled with weak technical capacity at DAFO and PAFO levels, hampered field activities. DALAM also expressed concerns over OP staffing quality in certain cases and a lack of transparency in consultant selection, contributing to trust deficits and technical gaps.
187. Addressing these gaps requires institutional strengthening, deployment of full-time technical staff, streamlined administrative processes, and improved coordination across implementation levels to ensure smoother and more effective delivery during the remaining project period.
188. However, recent improvements in implementation momentum suggest that the project can course-correct and improve delivery going forward. The quality of project execution, therefore, is rated '**Moderately Satisfactory**'.

3.5.3.2 Risk Management

Evaluation question: What is the status of risk assessment in the project, and how does it support adaptive management?

Finding 24: Risk management in project implementation was not adequately institutionalized, contributing to implementation delays and ineffective mitigation efforts.

189. While FAO maintains a corporate risk log through its Project Implementation Report (PIR) system—particularly flagging high-risk issues—risk management has not been a proactive feature of this project. Despite the PIR indicating an overall moderate risk, the project experienced major implementation delays, suggesting that risks were either underestimated or not adequately managed.
190. Notably, the project did not conduct a structured risk assessment with stakeholders or at the Project Steering Committee (PSC) level. This reflects a lack of systematic engagement in risk governance and the absence of a dedicated focal point for leading risk management. For instance, the risk that “relevant national, provincial, and district sector agencies lack sufficient capacity to support project activities” was appropriately rated as High in PIR 2024,

yet no meaningful mitigation strategies were implemented, resulting in coordination and service delivery gaps.

191. Furthermore, the evaluation identified inconsistencies in risk identification and rating in the PIR. For example, risks such as “resistance from land/natural resource users to adopt locally appropriate CCA practices” and “limited participation of women” were rated as High, yet field consultations revealed strong community willingness and high potential for women’s participation. This suggests that some risks were overstated and not validated during implementation.
192. Overall, the project’s risk management approach has been reactive rather than anticipatory. A more dynamic and participatory risk management system—aligned with GEF’s principles of shared risk ownership, continuous monitoring, and proportional risk-taking—is needed for the remainder of the project. This includes regular review of assumptions, mitigation measures sensitive to local capacities and clearly assigned responsibilities for risk oversight.
193. Based on discussions with partners and communities, the risk assessment and mitigation measures that may affect the achievement of desired outcomes are presented in Table 5.
194. A rating of **‘Moderately Satisfactory’** is applied to project risk management. Although the project did not establish a structured approach to institutionalize risk tracking or consistently adopt adequate mitigation measures, there were regular meetings and interactions among stakeholders, and some precautionary approaches were implemented.

Table 5: Risk assessment and mitigation measures

Risk Categories	Rating	Assessment and mitigation measures
CONTEXT		
Climate	Moderate	The project operates in high-risk zones with increasing climate variability (droughts, floods). Despite this, climate risk assessments have yet to be integrated into adaptive planning. Mitigation: Identify climate risks and integrate climate (seasonal) forecasts into activity scheduling, strengthen local early warning systems, and incorporate climate risk maps in land-use planning and CSA promotion to enhance resilience.
Environment and Social	Moderate	Project adopted both environmental and social risk concerns in project interventions (such as focusing of Nature-based Solutions, increasing participation of women) but they need additional focus to minimize risks of unintended harm to vulnerable groups and ecosystems. Safeguard instruments were neither approved nor operationalized. Mitigation: to finalize and operationalize FAO’s ESS instruments. Provide training to implementing partners and ensure gender, Indigenous Peoples, and vulnerable group considerations are mainstreamed into planning, implementation, and monitoring.
Political and Governance	Substantial	The project implementation arrangements are in place under the OPIM modality with an OPA with WVI. The project has a PSC to steer and provide an oversight role. The project works with the inter-sectoral team for the project planning and implementation but there exists institutional

		fragmentation, unclear roles, conflict and weak coordination impede cross-sectoral coordination and policy uptake. Mitigation: to clarify and formalize roles; conduct regular joint reviews; use the PSC as a platform for accountability and cross-sector dialogues.
INNOVATION		
Institutional and Policy	Substantial	The project emphasizes establishing better coordination among institutions and contributing to a national and sub-national level enabling environment for the project through PMU and PSC but coordination among stakeholders remains inadequate. Mitigation: to build provincial and district-level capacities to interpret and implement CSA guidelines and encourage policy dialogues to embed CSA in local planning and budget processes.
Technological	Low	The adoption of CSA technologies is delayed due to slow implementation – especially at the local level. Sustainable supply to technology is a challenge. Mitigation: increase on-farm demos, strengthen farmer field schools, and co-develop technology packages with farmers to ensure cultural and economic suitability. Enhance feedback loops to assess adoption barriers.
Financial and Business Model	Moderate	Access to climate finance, incentivising mechanisms and the agriculture value chain remain a major barrier at the local levels. The project, however, plans to work closely with multi-sectoral stakeholders to develop the financial and business model related to the project intervention. Mitigation: Engage the private sector and/ or local financial institutions and/or farmers' cooperative to get CSA financing, provide financial literacy training to farmers, and explore performance-based incentives for adoption of CSA practices.
EXECUTION		
Capacity for Implementation	Moderate	As a result of insufficient operational partner's capacity or inefficiencies, deliverables may be of poor quality and/or unsuitable for the intended purpose, which would lead to delays in project implementation, financial losses, agreement not finalized. Mitigation: conduct capacity gap assessments and implement structured training plans – especially for the DAFO level. Leverage national consultants for technical backstopping and empower village-level structures to bridge delivery gaps.
Fiduciary	Moderate	FAO relies on the operational partner. If the partner is facing financial difficulties, legal issues, or other challenges, this may result in a disruption in FAO's own operations. Mitigation: Streamline FAO and execute partner financial processes and strengthen internal controls. Offer financial management training for district-level implementers and ensure timely audits.
Stakeholder	Substantial	Stakeholder engagement during the implementation is weak, and conflict between the OP and DALAM is noted to affect ownership and sustainability. Mitigation: institutionalize regular review and work for better coordination, regular community consultations, develop a stakeholder engagement strategy with timelines, feedback mechanisms, and responsibility mapping.

Overall Risk Rating	Moderate	Overall Risk Rating: MODERATE Overall, management context and execution risks, especially around governance, capacity, and safeguards—can elevate the overall risk level in this project. Urgent corrective actions, including institutional coordination, operational safeguard instruments, and dynamic risk tracking, are essential to avoid further delays and ensure impact.
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3.5.4. Co-financing for the project

Evaluation question: How is the co-financing? To what extent does co-financing leverage the delivery of the project outputs?

Finding 25: Co-financing from the government is progressing as planned in-kind, but IFAD co-financing, as mentioned in the document, is nowhere reported. The project lacks adequate mechanisms for tracking and verifying co-financing contributions.

195. The total co-financing from the government is USD 15,000,000²⁶. Co-financing from IFAD—initially envisaged as a critical complementary input—had not materialized by the time of the evaluation. It was noted that when the project was designed in 2017, IFAD was working in the area, so IFAD’s co-financing was also mentioned in the project document, but the IFAD project was completed before this project began operations in the country.
196. The project’s co-financing structure includes in-kind support from the Lao government in the form of salaries, office rent, admin support, government vehicles and in-kind materialization. Based on the DALAM cofinancing report, the total co-financing provided by MAF from April 2023 to June 2025 (27 months) was USD 5,828,854.63(see Appendix 6). The remaining co-financing from the government is USD 9,171,145.37.
197. It is observed that the co-financing commitments were determined during the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) stage and were not revised during project implementation. The government submitted its co-financing report based on the original estimates made at the PPG stage. However, the analysis indicates that the reported co-financing amounts appear to be significantly overestimated, particularly when assessed against the local context and the actual resources utilized by the project. For instance, the costs attributed to the Project Steering Committee (PSC), Technical Advisory Group (TAG), and Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) under the categories of ‘Salary’ and ‘In-kind Contributions’ appear inflated and do not reflect realistic valuations²⁷.
198. Some respondents mentioned that, although co-financing is formally committed, they do not have sufficient financial and human resources to meet project expectations. Others noted that the country’s actual capacity was not assessed when proposing or committing to the co-financing. They suspect that the high co-financing commitment was made to enhance the project’s attractiveness and funding potential.

²⁶ <https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/10187>

²⁷ For example, the PSC sits once in a year (in the co-financing reporting period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2025 – there was only one PSC meeting), the amount reported is 124,187.17 USD (salary- 30,885.48 USD and from In-kind Materialization such as use of materials like a computer, printer, other office materials, etc., for daily work – 93,311.69 USD).

199. Considering all these factors, co-financing is rated as **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

3.5.5. Project Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement

Evaluation question: To what extent are implementing and executing agencies effectively discharging their roles and responsibilities in relation to project management and administration?

Finding 26: Central-level coordination has been constrained by trust deficits and role ambiguity, while stronger subnational engagement demonstrates potential for improved collaboration and project delivery.

200. The effectiveness of implementing and executing agencies in project management has been uneven. At the central level, coordination between DALAM and the Operational Partner (OP) has been hindered by early skepticism. According to DALAM, this stemmed from limited involvement in key decision-making of the project, such as OP selection, consultant recruitment, and financial arrangements to manage PMU effectively. They also viewed that despite some feedback provided to FAO and WVI, they are mostly unheard.
201. Conversely, the OP viewed that, despite its efforts, institutional inefficiencies—including prolonged decision-making and procedural delays—significantly slowed project implementation. These delays also stemmed from competing priorities, ministry restructuring, frequent changes in focal staff, and bureaucratic procedures, especially regarding Letters of Agreement (LoAs) and procurement. For instance, procurement of the automated weather stations (AWS) was significantly delayed due to unresolved tax exemption issues for a year. Additional procedural constraints, such as time-consuming translation requirements and coordination inefficiencies, further undermined timely action.
202. Moreover, the project’s TAG and coordination committee, while strategically designed, lacked the operational clarity needed to align partners under a shared implementation approach.
203. Delays on the FAO side in making timely decisions were also noted. This created persistent role ambiguity and weakened collaboration, which FAO’s facilitation efforts could not fully resolve. While repeated coordination meetings were held, they were insufficient to address underlying operational frictions.
204. The evaluators identified this as **a core challenge** affecting smooth project implementation.
205. Conversely, subnational engagement has been promising, with provincial and district stakeholders demonstrating commitment. Furthermore, institutional buy-in from other executing agencies and alignment with national priorities remain strong, offering a foundation for improved coordination and delivery in the remaining project period.
206. Overall, while central-level coordination and collaboration remain weak due to skepticism and unclear roles, subnational engagement and institutional ownership offer opportunities for improved implementation. Hence, project partnership and stakeholder engagement are rated as **‘Moderately Unsatisfactory’**.

3.5.6. Communication, awareness and Knowledge Management

Evaluation question: Has the project been effective in consolidating, communicating and promoting its key messages and outcomes to partners, stakeholders and the general public? How could this be improved?

Finding 27: The project has developed some knowledge products, but in general, limited progress has been noted in communication, awareness, and knowledge management, missing key opportunities to strategically engage stakeholders and showcase outcomes.

207. The project was designed with a strong emphasis on knowledge management and communication, aiming to inform decision-making and engage stakeholders through timely dissemination of information and project outcomes. It aligned with FAO's knowledge strategy principles and allocated specific resources for this purpose. A communication strategy was developed at the project design stage to ensure that project-generated materials would be produced with end users in mind and reach a wide audience, including stakeholders at different levels.
208. The project further elaborated the communication plan in 2025 which identified the target groups, communication tools and methods for sharing information. However, the project has yet to meaningfully implement these communication and knowledge-sharing components. Some knowledge products, such as a CSA toolkit developed by NAFRI, have been prepared, but there is little evidence of strategic dissemination or awareness campaigns that could bridge the gap between project objectives and community-level understanding or engagement. While the project conducted some awareness activities, these were limited in scope and lacked an overarching strategy or consistent visibility. Stakeholders indicated that knowledge-sharing activities were delayed, largely due to broader implementation delays in other components.
209. The evaluators view this as a missed opportunity, as the project's results and innovations could have been more widely shown to improve visibility, foster replication, and strengthen stakeholder buy-in. Even early results could have been shared to sustain interest and momentum, particularly at the local level, where greater engagement is critical.
210. The evaluation team noted that the lack of communication and outreach has created an information gap between the project and its intended beneficiaries and stakeholders. If not corrected, this could diminish the project's long-term influence and visibility. The overall rating for communication and knowledge management is '**Moderately Unsatisfactory**'.

3.5.7. Overall Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Evaluation question: Is the project's M&E system adequate, practical, and sufficient? Does the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan?

3.5.7.1 M&E Design and Budgeting

Finding 28: A simple M&E plan was proposed with a dedicated budget, but it was not robust enough given the project's complexity. No improvements were made during the inception period, although efforts are now underway.

211. The project's M&E design provided basic guidance, identifying some indicators and targets, and assigning responsibilities to relevant actors. A total of USD 193,550 from GEF funding was allocated to M&E activities. While this signaled early commitment, the design was not comprehensive enough to accommodate the ambitious and qualitative nature of the project's intended outcomes.
212. The M&E plan lacked robust baseline data (except for a couple of outcome indicators), clear data collection methods²⁸, indicator frequency, and comprehensive tracking mechanisms for both outcomes and outputs. Although the M&E plan proposed a participatory revision at inception, this was not conducted, and a simplified Excel-based M&E plan is being developed by the Operational Partner (WVI) at the time of the review. This ad hoc approach has limited its usefulness for performance tracking or for providing decision-support feedback loops.
213. The results framework includes indicators that are measurable and time-bound, but several outcome indicators do not adequately reflect behavioral change or situational transformation, leaning more toward output-level deliverables. For example, Outcome 2.1 (integrated, landscape-level planning strengthened) includes indicators limited to training people and conducting studies. While these are important prerequisites, they are not sufficient to demonstrate the achievement of the outcome, namely the strengthening of integrated landscape-level planning. Furthermore, some targets are considered overly ambitious for a project operating under tight timeframes and logistical constraints in rural, under-resourced settings (see chapter 3.5.1).
214. Overall, the M&E design included a broad framework and dedicated funding, but the plan was limited in scope and quality, lacking essential elements such as baseline data and mechanisms for assessing complex results. Hence, the M&E design and budgeting are rated **'Moderately Satisfactory'**.

3.5.7.2. M&E Plan Implementation

Finding 29: While some project monitoring tasks are ongoing and indicator tracking is underway, the implementation of the M&E plan is inadequate, under-resourced, and lacks systematic learning and adaptive management mechanisms.

215. The project monitoring is being carried out through annual work plans, PIRs, and PPRs. Day-to-day monitoring is led by the PMU, supported by a part-time consultant from the OP. The OP has started an Excel-based monitoring format to assess progress made through the project interventions and the status of activity implementation. Stakeholders confirmed that information is being gathered as per the results framework. However, the structure is not sufficiently robust to match the complexity or critical stage of project implementation. Furthermore, evidence of using M&E data for adaptive programming and improvement is limited. For example, the M&E system was still under development during the review, and no

²⁸ For example, outcome 4.1. indicator e (number of people benefiting from improved agro-meteorological information), no baseline or data collection methods are available to assess this target at project end.

records or meeting minutes demonstrated that monitoring data were systematically used to inform decisions or adapt project implementation strategies.

216. There has been limited training or capacity building in M&E for project staff, which is necessary given the complex nature of the project and ongoing management challenges. Institutional capacity and interest among stakeholders in conducting regular reviews and generating feedback were also limited. These constraints affect the quality of data collected and its use for timely decision-making. Although some gender-disaggregated data are collected, the absence of a robust M&E framework undermines the system's ability to support learning, manage risks, or adapt to evolving implementation challenges.

Finding 30: Project reporting is moderately regular but lacks depth, analysis, and corrective measures. CCA tracking tools are not updated regularly, limiting their value for accountability and learning.

217. The project maintains a reporting rhythm, producing six-monthly Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and annual Project Implementation Reports (PIRs). These documents cover progress updates, project challenges, action plans to address the challenges along with responsible organizations and timelines, risk assessment logs, and work plans.
218. However, they often do not comprehensively address all the gaps and challenges in project implementation or the delivery of the expected results. The PIR reports include outcome-level indicators, although these mainly correspond with output-level deliverables. Notably, no output-level indicators were presented in the PIR or used to assess implementation performance, which undermines efforts to measure success in a results-based manner. The absence of an inception report further diminishes accountability and transparency to donors.
219. Field-level data collection systems have supported some monitoring, but due to the remoteness of project areas and complex coordination needs, deeper analysis and reflection have not consistently occurred. The Evaluation Team concludes that while some reporting structures exist, they fall short of capturing the full scope of project performance and fail to provide adequate analysis of implementation progress.
220. The project did not report against the Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) tracking tool—a critical element for assessing resilience outcomes in earlier project reporting, nor was the project team fully aware of the reporting requirements. Upon request, the project provided a preliminary progress status update on the CCA tracking tool at the end of the MTR (Annex 1).
221. In summary, M&E implementation is ongoing but constrained by limited capacity, under-resourcing, and weak adaptive management. Monitoring mechanisms exist but are not yet comprehensive enough to support learning or strategic adjustments. While reporting is underway, it needs to become more proactive to support project implementation and learning. The M&E system implementation is rated '**Moderately Satisfactory**'.

3.5.8. Overall Assessment of Factors Affecting Performance

Finding 31: Project performance has been moderately satisfactory, constrained by ambitious project design targets, weak oversight, inconsistent coordination, and limited institutional and technical capacities at various levels.

222. Project performance was affected by multiple interrelated factors across design, implementation, and oversight dimensions. The project design includes ambitious targets, with insufficient consideration of contextual and institutional risks, leading to unrealistic planning assumptions.
223. FAO, while fulfilling key reporting and backstopping roles, faced internal staffing constraints that affected continuity and field-level support. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) also lacked strategic oversight, meeting only annually and not engaging in proactive risk management or course correction. Project execution was hindered by unclear roles between DALAM and the Operational Partner, administrative delays—especially around Letters of Agreement (LoAs)—and reliance on short-term consultants.
224. Financial disbursements were slow, and in-kind co-financing was not systematically tracked. Stakeholder engagement was stronger at the provincial and district levels but lacked cohesion nationally. Knowledge management was weak, with few learning output generated. The M&E system was poorly designed and underutilized, limiting adaptive learning and strategic decision-making. These systemic weaknesses must be addressed to improve delivery during the remaining project period. The overall rating for factors affecting performance is ‘**Moderately Satisfactory**’.

3.6 Cross-cutting issues

3.6.1 Gender and other equity dimensions

Evaluation question: To what extent are gender and other equity dimensions adequately reflected in design and translated in the implementation of project activities?

Finding 32: The project incorporated gender and other equity considerations into design, but the depth of analysis and strategic tailoring was limited.

225. The project integrated gender concerns during the design phase by conducting a gender analysis aligned with GEF and FAO guidance. The project design acknowledged the vulnerability of upland communities to climate change, poverty, and social exclusion. A gender action plan was developed covering institutional, technical, and capacity development dimensions. Gender-responsive indicators were incorporated into the results framework, and activities across several outputs addressed gender issues, such as climate-resilient livelihoods, gender-responsive supply chains, and a gender-sensitive M&E system.
226. The project also considered contextual factors like local literacy levels and gender roles in NTFP management. However, the gender analysis remained relatively high-level and lacked detailed strategies to address the distinct needs of women and ethnic minorities, particularly in remote upland communities.
227. While gender mainstreaming was embedded structurally, more nuanced planning would have strengthened its potential impact. No explicit strategies were in place to address accessibility barriers (e.g., language, geography, institutional bias) or to further explore traditional knowledge systems and customary land rights issues.

Finding 33: Initial gender-responsive activities have begun, but women’s involvement in decision-making and access to project benefits remain limited by mid-term.

228. Project implementation has included gender-sensitization training for staff and stakeholders, supported by a gender and socio-economic expert. Gender-disaggregated data (e.g., 38% of event participants were women) are being collected and used to inform M&E. However, field observations indicate that women's voices are still underrepresented in local decision-making processes, and they are not consistently informed about project activities.
229. Implementation of gender-sensitive measures shows some progress, yet consistent application to enhance women's roles—not only in participation but also in decision-making on natural resources and services—across all project sites remain a challenge.
230. While efforts to promote women's participation are evident, such as planned support for livelihoods and input access, these interventions have yet to fully materialize in the field. Additionally, no targeted measures were observed to address cultural or logistical barriers that restrict women's participation. Without such tailored approaches, women and marginalized groups risk remaining peripheral to the project's benefits.
231. In brief, the project made a solid start in gender integration by embedding gender-responsive design elements and initiating sensitization activities. However, both the analytical depth at design and the consistency of field-level implementation falls short of ensuring equitable participation and benefit-sharing. More deliberate and locally adapted strategies are needed to translate this commitment into meaningful outcomes for women and minority groups across all sites. Hence, gender integration in the project is rated '**Moderately Satisfactory**'.

3.6.2. Environmental and Social Safeguards

Evaluation question: To what extent have environmental and social concerns, including the effects of the project on the most vulnerable local populations, been taken into account in the project design and implementation?

Finding 34: The project demonstrated commitments to environmental and social safeguards during the design phase. However, implementation of these safeguards—particularly regarding Indigenous Peoples and grievance redressing mechanisms—has been limited and inconsistently applied

232. During the design phase, the project adhered to FAO's Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) requirements, addressing key elements such as Indigenous Peoples, cultural heritage, and the potential social impacts on vulnerable groups. It incorporated an Environmental and Social Risk Management Plan and committed to addressing potential grievances in the project areas with Indigenous Peoples, as outlined under Output 4.1.2 and required by FAO and GEF.
233. Environmental risks were proactively addressed through integrated measures such as climate vulnerability and risk assessments (CVRA), sustainable land management interventions, forest conservation, soil erosion control, and planned climate-smart agriculture activities. These were complemented by awareness-raising and capacity-building efforts targeting local communities and institutions, contributing positively to long-term environmental sustainability and social inclusion.

234. Despite these strengths, the implementation of social safeguards has not been fully realized. Specifically, mechanisms for grievance redress have not been initiated, and field consultations revealed limited awareness of this requirement among implementing partners, government officials, and communities. There is no evidence of a structured or documented redress process being considered in field activities. This gap in implementation undermines the otherwise strong design intent and raises concerns about the effectiveness of safeguard commitments in practice. Hence, the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) are rated as **‘Satisfactory’**. Based on the review done, the MTR team considers that the risk at CEO Endorsement should be maintained as Moderate.

235. In overall, the project performance is rated as **‘Moderately Satisfactory’**.

Table 6. Project assessment and corresponding section

GEF criteria and sub-criteria	Rating	Reference to relevant sections
A. Strategic relevance		
A1. Alignment with GEF and FAO Strategic Priorities	HS	3.1.1
A2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities	HS	3.1.2
A3. Complementarity with existing interventions	S	3.1.3
A4. Overall strategic relevance	HS	3.1
B. Effectiveness		
B1. Overall evaluation of project outcomes	MS	3.2.1
B1.1 Output delivery	MS	3.2.1
B1.2 Overall progress towards project outcomes and objectives	MS	3.2.2
B1.3 Probability of impact	N/A	3.2.3
C. Efficiency		
C1. Efficiency	MU	3.3
D. Sustainability of project outcomes		
D1. Overall probability of sustainability	ML	3.4.1
D2. Sustainability in relation to financial risks	ML	3.4.2
D3. Sustainability in relation to socio-economic risks	ML	3.4.3
D4. Sustainability in relation to institutional and governance risks	ML	3.4.4
D5. Sustainability in relation to environmental risks	L	3.4.5
D6. Catalysis and replication	ML	3.4.6
E. Factors affecting performance		
E1. Project design and preparation	S	3.5.1
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	3.5.2
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO	MS	3.5.2.1
E2.2 Project oversight by PSC	MS	3.5.2.2
E3. Quality of project execution and risk assessment	MS	3.5.3
E3.1 Project execution and management	MS	3.5.3.1
E3.2 Project risk assessment	MS	3.5.3.2

E4. Co-financing of the project	MS	3.5.4
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	MU	3.5.5
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	MU	3.5.6
E7. Overall quality of monitoring and evaluation (M&E)	MS	3.5.7
E7.1 Design of the M&E system	MS	3.5.7.1
E7.2 Implementation of the M&E plan (including financial and human resources)	MS	3.5.7.2
E8. Overall evaluation of factors affecting performance	MS	3.5.8
F. Cross-cutting concerns		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	3.6.1
F2. Human rights issues	UR	
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	3.6.2
Overall project evaluation	MS	

Notes: Rating (Strategic Relevance; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Factors affecting performance; Cross-cutting issues): Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), Unable to rate (UR)

Sustainability: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (MU), Unlikely (U), Unable to rate (UR)

The definition of each criterion is provided in Appendix 7.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the above analysis are presented below.

Relevance

Conclusion 1: The project is highly relevant to national priorities, community needs, and global climate and biodiversity agendas, though weaknesses in the results framework and M&E design constrained full alignment with its intended project objectives.

236. The project design aligns well with Lao PDR's national strategies on climate change adaptation, biodiversity, and sustainable livelihoods, and also reflects priorities under the GEF and FAO mandates. It addresses the specific needs of upland and vulnerable communities through interventions on land restoration, value chains, and ecosystem resilience. However, the formulation of results and indicators lacked sufficient specificity to fully reflect the complexity and ambition of the project's objectives, limiting the coherence between planned actions and envisioned transformational outcomes.

Effectiveness

Conclusion 2: Progress across the four outcomes is uneven, with foundational activities largely completed but key transformative results still limited.

237. While limited output has been delivered, many output-level activities remain in progress. Progress under Outcomes 1 (policy) and 4 (information systems) has been limited, focusing mainly on institutional groundwork, stakeholder mapping, and the initial rollout of climate information services. In contrast, Outcome 2 (land use planning and climate change adaptation interventions)—particularly sub-outcome 2.1—has shown comparatively strong progress. Outcome 3 (scaling up) has yet to be implemented at the community level, though some preparatory work has begun.

238. Project effectiveness has been constrained by limited stakeholders' collaborative engagement and misunderstanding by mid-term, slow outreach to vulnerable groups, and delays in mobilizing technical expertise. Weak coordination between national and sub-national actors, along with the lack of robust implementation structures, has further hindered inclusive delivery and slowed overall momentum. Without significant course correction, the project risks falling short of its intended outcomes.

Conclusion 3: The likelihood of achieving long-term impact remains unsure unless field-level momentum and institutional linkages are significantly strengthened.

239. The project's design and early institutional efforts lay a foundation for potential future impact. However, unless implementation accelerates and community-level engagement is systematically deepened, the likelihood of achieving meaningful and sustained outcomes remains unclear. Enhanced coordination, targeted delivery mechanisms, and adaptive management approaches are essential to bridge the gap between planning and transformative change.

Efficiency

Conclusion 4: Project efficiency is moderately unsatisfactory, with adequate resource planning and coordination. Slow implementation progress, weak fund disbursement, and limited adaptive adjustments have reduced operational effectiveness.

240. The project was designed with clear institutional roles, coordination mechanisms, and a dedicated M&E budget, providing a reasonable basis for efficient execution. However, prolonged delays in activity roll-out, limited deployment of the M&E system, and lack of timely adaptive responses to implementation challenges have undermined operational efficiency. Budget disbursement is limited, and human resources availability is a challenge. While financial management during the midterm was found to be satisfactory, efficiency gains could be realized by strengthening project oversight and ensuring targeted capacity support to local implementing partners and field teams.

Sustainability

Conclusion 5: The project's sustainability prospects are moderately likely, with some good signs of institutional buy-in, especially at the local level and environmental viability. Greater emphasis on local ownership, financing strategies, and social safeguards is needed.

241. The project has taken important steps to embed sustainability, notably through government partnerships, multi-stakeholder platforms, and climate-resilient land use approaches that build ecological and institutional resilience. Training activities and awareness-raising efforts have increased stakeholder knowledge, creating a favorable environment for long-term change. However, limited country capacity, premature project results, non-existence of exit strategies, and lack of financing pathways for scaling key interventions pose sustainability risks.
242. Moreover, social safeguards—particularly grievance redress mechanisms and engagement with Indigenous Peoples—require further institutionalization to avoid undermining trust and legitimacy. For sustained impact, the project must enhance field-level ownership, link local innovations with national policies, and develop financing mechanisms, possibly leveraging private sector and co-financing opportunities, to ensure continuity beyond project completion.

Factors affecting the project's performance

Conclusion 6: Gaps in project design, M&E architecture, and safeguard implementation weakened strategic orientation and adaptive delivery.

243. While the project was conceptually aligned with national priorities and GEF/FAO mandates, weaknesses in the results framework—particularly vague logic with too detailed activities and ambiguous targets—undermined its ability to measure higher-level changes and track progress effectively. The M&E system lacked strategic design and was slow to operationalize, limiting timely data collection, feedback loops, and learning. Although gender and environmental safeguards were embedded in the design, key mechanisms such as grievance redressing mechanisms were not started, and community awareness of

safeguards remained low. These deficiencies point to a need for more rigorous readiness assessments and context-responsive design in future programming.

Conclusion 7: Stakeholder engagement with major stakeholders at the national level remains inadequate and sometimes creates barriers, affecting effective implementation and decision-making.

244. The project secured participation from national and provincial institutions and established formal coordination platforms, such as the Project Steering Committee. However, a trust deficit persists among stakeholders, and FAO's ability to address this challenge has been limited by inadequate resources.

Conclusion 8: Operational delays, human resource gaps, and weak communication have slowed progress and coordination, though some foundations are in place.

245. Persistent delays in the recruitment of service providers and staff, procurement of equipment, and field-level mobilization significantly affected implementation timelines. The absence of technical staff at the sub-national level, reliance on short-term, and high staff turnover impeded project continuity and institutional memory. Communication across implementation units and with communities was often fragmented, undermining coherence and responsiveness. Nonetheless, foundational structures such as project governance mechanisms, strong commitments from the local level and encouraging community engagement for field implementation offer opportunities to recover momentum. To enhance performance, the project must address coordination bottlenecks, invest in technical capacity, and strengthen two-way communication between central and field levels.

4.2 Recommendations

246. While no major programmatic changes are proposed, the recommendations emphasize the need for a strong management response to foster an enabling environment, improve coordination among stakeholders, and accelerate implementation by leveraging sub-national capacities, addressing delays, and optimizing institutional and operational strengths on the ground. The following recommendations are proposed to improve program performance for consideration by stakeholders.

Recommendation 1: Adjust the project start timeline and consider a no-cost extension, for at least one and a half years from GEF/LDCF to reflect a realistic implementation period (Responsibility – FAO/GEF and PSC).

247. FAO and GEF in coordination with the PSC should consider shifting the End of Disbursement date to align with the actual date of the first disbursement rather than the approval date. Given the delays encountered in identifying the OP and operationalizing activities and the long process of decision making, the project has experienced a compressed implementation window. Adjusting the timeline would provide the necessary operational flexibility to complete the remaining activities and ensure the delivery of intended outcomes.

248. Additionally, a formal no-cost extension could also be pursued to safeguard the quality of implementation and avoid rushed or incomplete field-level results. This would also provide

the project with more time for adaptive learning, documentation, and early sustainability planning.

Recommendation 2: Further strengthen FAO's facilitative and implementation role to accelerate project implementation and decide the implementation modality of the activities within the scope of FAO (*Responsibility - FAO*).

249. FAO should further enhance its facilitative role to foster an enabling environment for effective implementation of the project activities by taking into confidence DALAM, other government departments, and the Operational Partner (OP). This includes exploring the possibility of authorization of larger LoAs, expediting the finalization of Letters of Agreement (LoAs), streamlining administrative procedures, and reinforcing coordination between national and sub-national actors.
250. The project should explore a way to consider additional engagement of the FAO CO focal person without changing the role or engaging a qualified expert from outside who can provide the necessary support to facilitate the meaningful stakeholder engagement and collaboration. For this, additional funds could be used by FAO to provide effective oversight to the project, with the consent of the PSC and within the framework of the OPM modality.
251. FAO, in consultation with other stakeholders, should further clarify its role and the executing arrangements for PMU led activities (mainly 2.2.3, 3.1.1, and 3.1.2), exploring opportunities to delegate appropriate responsibilities—such as CRIPs—to local actors, while retaining technically complex value chain tasks at the national level to ensure technical integrity and the provision of quality services that enhance implementation efficiency.

Recommendation 3: Strengthen decentralised implementation through targeted field delivery and strengthen technical and financial monitoring systems (*Responsibility - Government, PMU, FAO & OP*).

252. To enhance effectiveness at the field level, the project should institutionalize participatory planning and review processes with DAFOs, PAFOs and communities. This must be supported by the timely deployment of qualified technical staff at local levels to accelerate delivery of key interventions such as land-use planning, Farmer Field Schools, and climate-smart agriculture; and deploying context-appropriate innovations (e.g., solar pumps, community water ponds) in farming systems. It is also important to start FFS activities the early as possible without waiting for the effectiveness of the first piloting batch. Strengthening the field presence of technical staff will also support adaptive management and facilitate local learning and innovation.
253. The project should also reinforce robust output and outcome monitoring and learning systems and strengthen project financial recording & tracking mechanisms to ensure transparency, support evidence-based decision-making and enable timely assessment of project benefits, including gender equality.

Recommendation 4: Further strengthen strategic oversight and coordination through more engaged PSC, functional technical groups, and integrated risk management (*Responsibility - Government, OP and FAO*).

254. Further activate the Project Steering Committee (PSC) to meet biannually with clear mandates for decision-making, resolving bottlenecks, and aligning priorities based on systematic risk assessment and feedback from monitoring processes. Further stimulate the technical advisory and coordination committees to provide adaptive technical support and improve collaboration across stakeholders. Integrate participatory risk monitoring into planning processes, ensuring regular review of assumptions and mitigation measures. These improvements will enhance strategic guidance, foster accountability, and support timely and coherent implementation across levels.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen operational efficiency through timely finalization and implementation of LoAs and review the project targets (*Responsibility - FAO, PMU, including OP*).

255. The project should expedite the planning, reviewing finalization and activation of Letters of Agreement (LoAs), particularly with key government agencies and NGO/CSO partners. The PMU and FAO Country Office should strengthen the capacity of the relevant stakeholders, establish a fast-track protocol for LoA approval, and clarify roles and timelines. Besides, the project should also consider reviewing the project targets (such as outcome 2.1 - g and h; outcome 3.1 - b, c, d, g, h, i, & j and outcome 4.1 -e), based on the merit and accountability and considering the implementation challenges, institutional ability, resource availability and opportunities.

Recommendation 6: Prepare a sustainability plan by promoting partnerships and institutional alignment to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the results delivered by the project (*Responsibility - Government entities and OP*).

256. To ensure results beyond the project period, government actors at central and provincial levels should prepare an exit or sustainability plan by actively seeking partnerships with ongoing or complementary initiatives in target areas. This includes aligning implementation plans, sharing technical resources, and planning for post-project handover. Building institutional anchoring, including DAFOs and provincial departments, will be essential for sustaining outcomes such as Farmer Field Schools, land-use planning, and climate-resilient livelihoods.

Recommendation 7: Carry out a realistic assessment of partners' ability to co-financing and strengthen GEF's co-financing accountability (*Responsibility - FAO/GEF*).

257. The GEF/LDCF and FAO should institutionalize a realistic assessment of partners' ability to provide co-financing and establish a due diligence mechanism to track and verify co-financing commitments throughout the project lifecycle. The current project demonstrates that while co-financing commitments are often made during the design phase, their realization during implementation is challenging. To mitigate this risk, FAO/GEFCU should provide further guidance for projects to collect evidence to report and should also develop a co-financing monitoring tool to be used by both implementing and executing agencies. This would enable early detection of shortfalls, trigger timely mitigation, and safeguard delivery of expected outcomes. Clear accountability for co-financing delivery would also enhance credibility and planning for future climate finance interventions.

5. LEARNING

Learning 1: Aligning project design with local capacity and contextual realities enhances feasibility and ownership (Learning category: Project design, appraisal and planning)

258. Project design must be grounded in an in-depth understanding of local institutional capacity, geographical disparities, and community dynamics. The current project revealed that overly ambitious targets, particularly in remote and capacity-constrained provinces, created challenges in operationalizing activities. Project interventions are more likely to be adopted and sustained when targets and implementation strategies are tailored to existing administrative capacity, local planning processes, and resource constraints. Early engagement with decentralized stakeholders to shape the design phase can ensure realistic expectations and stronger buy-in.

Learning 2: Effective implementation requires synchronization with seasonal and geographic factors (Learning category: Project management)

259. The effectiveness of field activities depends heavily on their alignment with local agricultural and climatic calendars. Several delays in this project led to missed planting and cropping seasons, reducing both impact and community engagement. Planning must account for the agricultural cycle and regional variability, especially when working with climate-sensitive interventions such as climate-smart agriculture (CSA). Moreover, consolidating efforts in fewer, strategically selected areas—rather than dispersing resources widely—can improve efficiency, reduce transaction costs, and increase the depth of support to communities.

Learning 3: Overly complex partnership arrangements can undermine accountability and delay results (Learning category: Stakeholder engagement)

260. While multi-stakeholder engagement is essential for broad-based ownership, the project's large number of LoA partners created additional challenges of creation, approval, reporting and concluding. This complexity, coupled with weak communication, contributed to implementation delays and unclear reporting structures. Streamlining institutional arrangements, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and fostering more direct communication channels are critical to improving delivery and ensuring that each partner remains focused and accountable.

Learning 4: Operational modalities must be matched with institutional readiness and coordination structures (Learning category: Project management)

261. The OPIM modality, while intended to enhance national ownership, introduced coordination and decision-making delays due to unclear role definitions and limited implementation support. A clearer framework for collaboration between FAO, the government, and the operational partner is essential for future projects using this model. Additionally, greater technical backstopping and capacity development from FAO at sub-national levels is needed to ensure that responsibilities under OPIM are fully understood and carried out.

Learning 5: Realistic co-financing expectations are essential for strategic planning and risk management (Learning category: Co-financing)

262. The project experience highlights a recurring issue in GEF-funded projects—securing co-financing at the design stage without adequate due diligence on partner capacity or likelihood of disbursement during implementation. Unrealized co-financing commitments created funding gaps and reduced the scope of planned interventions. Future project planning should include robust risk assessments of co-financing sources, regular monitoring tools for financial flows, and contingency strategies to address potential shortfalls.

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

Name:			
Job Title: Lead MTR Consultant			
Division/Department: FAOLA			
Programme/Project Number:		Mid-Term Review of ‘Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR	
Location: Home-based with a mission to headquarters and Lao PDR			
Expected Start Date of Assignment:		1 April 2024	Duration: XX days
Reports to:	Name: Chanthalath Pongmala	Title:	Assistant FAO Representative (AFAOR)
General Description of task(s) and objectives to be achieved			
<p>Background information about the project:</p> <p>The GEF-funded project “Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR” (GCP/LAO/027/LDF) was designed to work in two provinces of the northern uplands of the country—Luang Prabang and Houaphan—which suffer from high exposure to increasing climate hazards, high sensitivity to shocks, and very low adaptive capacities to climate change.</p> <p>This GEF-funded project will contribute to <i>enhancing the resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change impacts through climate-smart agricultural practices in upland production systems</i> in two provinces of the northern uplands of the country—Luang Prabang and Houaphan, the project will achieve its objective by addressing those barriers with the following components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling the environment to promote and incentivize resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR 2. Resilient and sustainable land-use planning and value-chain networks in two provinces of the northern uplands 3. Climate-smart technologies and innovations deployed in two provinces of the northern uplands 4. Monitoring and evaluation, project communication, and lesson-learning <p>The project Mid Term Review (MTR):</p> <p>The project is at the mid-point of its planned implementation duration and is now required to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR).</p> <p>The objectives of the MTR are to assess the progress made in achieving the project objectives and results set out in the project document, to analyse early signs of success or failure, and to identify any changes needed to bring the project back on track and achieve the desired results.</p> <p>The FAO <i>Guide for planning and conducting mid-term reviews of FAO–GEF projects and programmes</i> (2020)²⁹ provides the corporate guidance on planning, formulating, and conducting the mid-term reviews</p>			

²⁹ <https://www.fao.org/3/ca7788en/ca7788en.pdf>

(MTRs) of projects and programmes implemented by FAO that have received grant financing from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund. It describes the requirements at various stages of the MTR process and clarifies the tasks, roles, and responsibilities of the various parties involved in FAO–GEF project MTRs.

Under the overall supervision of the project’s budget holder (BH), Kyung-Mee Kim, FAO Representative, and under the direct day-to-day Supervision of the Senior MTR Specialist/Team Leader, the National MTR Specialist is responsible for assisting in the coordination of the MTR team’s contribution to the MTR of “Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR” (GCP/LAO/027/LDF)” and has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the MTR report. His/her mandate is derived from and must fully comply with the overall terms of reference of the MTR. He/She reports to the BH and to the GCU MTR focal point.

A project-specific *Terms of reference for the mid-term review of the project*, ‘Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives for Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR’ (GCP/LAO/027/LDF) (referred to below as the ‘MTR terms of reference’) has also been prepared to direct the overall approach to, and method of conducting the MTR, for this project, including how to address the GEF evaluation criteria, the main general and project-specific questions, and the data sources and choice of tools for the assessment.

Key Functions and Responsibilities of the National MTR Consultant:

Under the direct supervision of FAO GEF Coordination Unit Monitoring and Reporting Officer and in coordination with the FAO MTR Manager, the **International MTR Team Leader** will be responsible for coordinating the MTR consulting team’s contribution to the project’s MTR and ensuring that the final MTR report is prepared.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Review relevant background documentation made available by the designated MTR manager and project team, including the project document, the project’s logframe, progress and final reports, workshop and technical reports, among others as listed in the MTR terms of reference;
- Review and complement (expand as appropriate) the methodology described in the MTR terms of reference, prepare data-collection tools, including questionnaires, checklists and interview protocols as appropriate;
- Coordinate preparation, drafting and finalization of the MTR inception report, including an MTR matrix, theory of change and stakeholder table, and participate in the finalization of the team’s work programme;
- Lead and coordinate the collection of primary data by the MTR team through interviews and meetings (face-to-face or virtual) with relevant FAO officers in headquarters and/or Project Coordination Unit, among other things, and during country visits with key stakeholders including the government, FAO Representatives, external partners, project teams, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia, research institutes and ultimate beneficiaries, as appropriate, as described in the MTR terms of reference;
- By working with National MTR Consultants, coordinate the collection of primary data by the MTR team during country visits and relevant secondary data, according to the methodology presented in the MTR terms of reference and detailed in the inception report;

- Lead the analysis and discussion of evidence collected within the MTR team to identify key findings and preliminary conclusions that respond to the MTR's issues and questions, and formulate preliminary recommendations in line with the findings and conclusions;
- Ensure that all the findings are sufficiently triangulated and validated;
- Present the preliminary MTR findings to key stakeholders, as required;
- Lead, coordinate and prepare all deliverables planned in the MTR terms of reference, according to specifications provided in the terms of reference and detailed in the FAO–GEF MTR Guide and annexes;
- Coordinate the participation and contribution of team members in all deliverables, as required;
- Lead the preparation of the first and second drafts of the MTR report, integrate comments received, as appropriate, from the Budget Holder, FAO-GEF Coordination Unit, other FAO and government agency staff, and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate;
- Lead the finalization of the MTR report and coordinate the inputs of other members of the MTR team into the final version, as needed.

In terms of reporting, or if information, advice or guidance is required from FAO by the International MTR Team Leader, he should address requests to the FAO MTR Manager and to the FAO GEF Coordination Unit Monitoring and Reporting Officer.

The consultant may also be requested to perform other on-demand duties to the GEF Coordination Unit relating to project design, implementation and reporting, as required.

key performance indicators

Expected outputs:	Required completion date:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTR Inception report (including MTR questions) • Briefing on preliminary findings of the MTR following the field mission(s) • First draft of the MTR report • Second draft of the MTR report • Final MTR report, including comments matrix/audit trail. • Two-page summary of MTR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 April 2025 • 28 April 2025 • 30 May 2025 • 15 June 2025 • 15 July 2025 • 30 July 2025
<p>Partial payments of the honorarium will be authorized on completion of fieldwork and completion of the above deliverables, as agreed with the BH and FAO MTR focal point.</p>	

Minimum Requirements:

- Advanced degree in agriculture, land use, climate change topics, forestry or environment;

Technical skills and competencies:

- Proven international evaluation or mid-term review experience in developing or least developed countries (actual experience in Asia, specifically Lao PDR, and in the evaluation or review of projects related to climate change adaptation, value chain, land use, climate smart agriculture will be an advantage);

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART targets and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios and in elaborating and/or reconstructing a project's Theory of Change;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to climate change adaptation;
- Experience working with environmental projects or with the UN System (previous work experience with the GEF or GEF evaluations and with FAO will be an advantage);
- Work experience of at least 12 years including project/programme or country evaluations and/or reviews;
- Experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Excellent communication, presentation and writing skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills and ability to deliver high-quality evaluation or MTR reports;
- Should be capable of working with people of different national and cultural backgrounds.

Note: Applicants should be independent of any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising on any aspect of the project being evaluated in the MTR and should not have been involved in any aspect of the project previously.

Appendix 2: Evaluation Matrix

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
<p>Relevance and coherence: The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change. The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.</p>			
<p>Extent of policies and priorities align with the Government, community, donor, and FAO. Level of coherence with other initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the Project responding to the stated country policies and priorities including environmental, climate risks and agricultural concerns of the country? Are the project objectives and outcomes aligned with GEF themes/programmatic strategies, environmental priorities and FAO Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) for Laos DPR as well as its regional priorities in the Asia and Pacific? Has the relevance of the project changed since its development, as a result of new policies, plans or programmes? If so, what changes are needed to make the project more relevant? To what extent did the Project, at the design and/or mobilization phase, take account of ongoing initiatives? 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partners and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII and secondary sources/document review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
Effectiveness: The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.			
Level of progress towards achieving the objective, outcomes and outputs. Extent of the likelihood of result sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main evaluation questions: To what extent has progress been made towards the achievement of project outcomes and its overall objective of enhancing the resilience of vulnerable upland communities to climate change impacts through climate-smart agricultural practices in upland production systems so far, and how effective has it been? • Component 1: To what level the project has strengthened its capacity to mainstream and access climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR? If so how? • Component 2: To what extent are the integrated landscape level planning and resilient agriculture value chain networks along with financing options supported/established to adopt and scale up climate resilient practices? 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partner and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII, FGD, direct observation and secondary sources/document review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Component 3: To what extent do climate-smart land use practices scale up at the landscape level to support resilient and sustainable rural landscapes that improve food security and nutrition? Component 4: Have the knowledge generated and learned from the project so far been effectively communicated with local, national and regional partners? Is a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system in place and is the project monitored effectively and efficiently? What methods, experiences and lessons have the project been able to share with stakeholders? Conversely, what lessons has the project learned from other projects? Effectiveness of partnerships: Are the partnerships established by the project so far functional? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the project's partnerships and interactions with 		

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	<p>local fishing communities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any unexpected outcomes so far? • What are the opportunities and challenges for smooth Implementation of the project? • Likelihood of impact: Are there any obstacles or risks that could impede the future progress of the project and the achievement of its objectives? 		
Efficiency: The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.			
Level of cost effectiveness and timeliness of in terms of utilization of Budget/ resources and implementation (achievement of planned outputs, outcomes etc) of the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the project been implemented cost-effectively? • Were any cost or time-saving measures put in place to maximise results within the secured budget and agreed-upon Project timeframe? • To what extent has its management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of its implementation? Did the Project make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, etc. to 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partner and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII and secondary sources/document review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	<p>increase Project efficiency? How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are project disbursements to date satisfactory? • How the co-financing is being made? To what extent does co-financing leverage the delivery of the project outputs? • To what extent has the project developed agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects and partnerships, and avoided duplication of similar activities by other groups? • What factors have caused delays (if any) and have affected Project execution, costs and effectiveness? How? 		
Sustainability: The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue.			
<p>Likelihood of continuation of positive effects (likelihood) from the intervention after it has ended</p> <p>What are major risks (financial, socio-political, institutional, governance or environmental)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the project include provisions to ensure the sustainability of its outcomes and benefits (i.e. an exit strategy) and are these provisions in place? • What are the main risks that could affect the sustainability of the outcomes and benefits (i.e. financial, socio-economic, 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partner and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII, FGD, direct observation and secondary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
for the sustainability	institutional and environmental)?	sources/document review	
Factor affecting the performance: How and to what extent did certain factors affect Project performance?			
What was the status of the project design and readiness for implementation Extent of the project implementation: Status of financial management, co-financing Level of stakeholders' engagement Status of communication, awareness and KM during the project implementation Level of M&E systems – design and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project design: Is the project design appropriate to lead to the anticipated outcomes? Is its logic clear and coherent? To what extent are the objectives and components of the project clear, concrete and feasible over the life of the project? Has the project adequately identified capacity gaps and needs? Project implementation and management: To what extent have the project's implementing partners fulfilled their roles and responsibilities in relation to project management and administration? What have been the main management and administrative challenges so far and what changes are needed to improve its implementation in the second half of the project? Financial management and co-financing: What challenges have 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partner and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII, FGD, direct observation and secondary sources/document review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	<p>been faced in the financial management of the project, and to what extent has the pledged co-financing been fulfilled?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project supervision, the role of the implementing agency: To what extent has FAO fulfilled its responsibilities in terms of project concept identification and preparation, evaluation, preparation, approval and start-up, as well as monitoring and supervision? • Partnerships and stakeholder engagement: In addition to the main project partners, to what extent have other partners, such as civil society, local fishing communities, and particularly the private sector (through the Challenge Fund) been involved in the design and implementation of the project?3 What has been the impact of their involvement/ noninvolvement on the project outcomes so far? • Communication and knowledge management: How successful has the 		

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	<p>project been in consolidating, communicating and promoting its key messages and outcomes to partners, stakeholders and the general public? How could this be improved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and M&E implementation: Is the M&E plan practical and sufficient? Is the M&E system functioning according to the M&E plan? Is the project monitored effectively and efficiently? 		
<p>Cross-cutting</p> <p>Level of inclusion of gender, Indigenous people and Human rights</p> <p>Extent of integration of Environmental and social safeguards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and minorities: To what extent has gender been taken into account in project design and implementation (e.g. gender analysis, indicators and targets addressing gender mainstreaming needs)? Have women been able to benefit equally with men from project activities? In general, what progress has been made in terms of implementing gender-sensitive measures? • Environmental and social safeguards: To what extent have environmental and social concerns – 	<p>Government, development organizations, implementing partner and beneficiaries</p> <p>KII, FGD, direct observation and secondary sources/document review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ProDoc - Project progress reports - Interviews with project staff - Interviews with national stakeholders - Interviews/surveys with the government representatives

Main evaluation questions/ criteria	Sub-evaluation questions	Methods/ approach	Data sources
	including the effects of the project on the most vulnerable local populations – been taken into account in the project design and implementation?		

Appendix 3: Major document reviewed

1. GEF PIF with technical clearance
2. Comments from the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and GEF Council members on project design, plus FAO responses
3. FAO prod doc notes and FAO Project Review Committee report
4. Request for GEF CEO endorsement
5. GEF-approved project document and any updated approved document following the inception workshop, with the latest budgets showing budget revisions
6. Six-monthly FAO PPRs (June 2024 to Dec 2024)
7. Annual workplans and budgets (partial)
8. One annual GEF PIR reports (July 2023 – June 2024)
9. Monitoring reports prepared by the project
10. List of stakeholders
11. List of project sites and site location maps (for planning mission itineraries and fieldwork)
12. Execution agreements under OPIM and letters of agreement
13. Relevant technical, backstopping and project-supervision mission reports, including back-to-the-office reports by relevant project and FAO staff, including any reports on technical support provided by FAO headquarters or regional office staff
14. Minutes of the meetings of the PSC, FAO PTF and other relevant groups
15. Awareness-raising and communications materials produced by the project, such as brochures, leaflets, presentations for meetings, project web address, etc.
16. FAO policy documents in relation to topics such as FAO Strategic Objectives and gender
17. Finalized GEF focal-area tracking tools at CEO endorsement, as well as updated tracking tools at mid-term for GEF projects
18. Basic Financial Management Information
19. Project-related documents from Provinces and Districts

Appendix 4: List of people met (along with organizations and place)

SN	Name and family name	Position	Organization
1	Ms. Kyung Mee Kim	Representative to the Lao PDR	FAO
2	Mr. Chanthalath Pongmala	Assistant Representative	FAO
3	Mr. Alfred Marie Andriantianasolo	International Operations Specialist	FAO
4	Mr. Chasy Somwhang	M&E Consultant	FAO
5	Mr. Chanthaphone Thammavong	National Climate and Livelihoods Expert	FAO CSA & CCA-LL Project
6	Mr. Kenglid Lee	HO	WVIL
7	Mr. Sinthone	OSM	WVIL
8	Mr. Thevine Vongsaphay	Communication	WVIL
9	Mr. Thipamphone Saylath	LUA	WVIL
10	Mr. Chansone Lounsipaseuth	Livelihoods	WVIL
11	Ms. Ketsaline Xayyasone	M&E	WVIL
12	Mr. Bounsangong Fongnaly	NPC CSA Project	Department of Agricultural Land Development and Management, DALaM
13	Mr. Maiphet	Technical Staff	Department of Agricultural Land Development and Management, DALaM
14	Mr. Vilaysak XAYASITH,	Deputy Director	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative, DAEC
15	Mr. Sinthanou	Technical Staff	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative, DAEC
16	Mr. Thanousone Vathnoy	Technical Staff	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative, DAEC

SN	Name and family name	Position	Organization
17	Mrs. Lay	Technical Staff	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative, DAEC
18	Mrs. Inpeng Thipthilath	Technical Staff	Department of Agricultural Extension and Cooperative, DAEC
19	Mr. Sanya Xoumphonphakdy	Deputy Director	PAFO of Luang Phrabang Province
20	Mr. Chanpheng Phatphongsavath	Director	Provincial Agriculture Land Management and Development Section
21	Mr. Thongphet Thonglanivong	Director/Coordinator	DAFO of Phonthong District
22	Mr. Phaivone Sounady	Assistant Coordinator	DAFO of Phonthong District
23	Pakhum villages	6 women	Phonthong District
24	Mr. Khamphew Vilaydeng	Director/Coordinator	DAFO of Viengkham District
25	Mr. Thongda Phanthavong	Assistant Coordinator	DAFO of Viengkham District
26	Mr. Sang Somthina	Director	DAFO of Kuan District
27	Mr. Nanthaphanh Keomixay	Assistant Coordinator	DAFO of Kuan District
28	Mr. Chayphet Huengthavone	Director	PAFO of Huaphanh Province
29	Mr. Phonda Visisombath	Director	Provincial Agricultural Land Management (PALAM)
30	Mr. Khamning Bounmixay	Director	DAFO of Xiengkhor District
31	Mr. Bounair Duangphonxay	Assistant Coordinator	DAFO of Xiengkhor District
32	Villagers in Taonhtai	9 prs	Xiengkhor District
33	Dr. Nivong Sipaseuth	DG	DALaM and National Project Director

Appendix 5: Result matrix

Direct and Impact Beneficiary Progress by Indicator

No	Indicator	Beneficiary Type	Target beneficiary				Actual beneficiary			
			Total	Male	Female	F (%)	Total	Male	Female	F (%)
1.1.b	100 institutional personnel (30% women) trained in facilitation of the planning and investment processes in the published guidelines.	Direct	100	70	30	30%				
2.1.a	80 extension officers (or other pertinent personnel) trained to conduct climate vulnerability assessments (20% female)	Direct	80	64	16	20%	50	42	8	16%
2.1.d	150 governmental staff (25% female) trained in the integration of CCA approaches into local land uses and governance	Direct	150	113	38	25%	75	46	29	39%
2.1.h	63,000 beneficiaries (50% female) of climate-adaptive land-use planning	Impact	63,000	31,500	31,500	50%				
2.2.e	60 extension staff (20% female) trained as trainers for value-chain network coordination	Direct	60	48	12	20%				
2.2.f	1,200 community members (30% female) trained for value-chain network coordination	Direct	1,200	840	360	30%				
3.1.a	40 extension staff (20% female) trained to deliver FFS	Direct	40	32	8	20%	20	13	7	35%
3.1.b	4,000 community members (30% female) trained in climate-adaptive land uses	Direct	4,000	2,800	1,200	30%				
3.1.c	22,300 people (50% female) benefitting from more climate-resilient land-use practices	Impact	22,300	11,150	11,150	50%				
3.1.d	14,900 people (50% female) benefitting from diversified livelihoods	Impact	14,900	7,450	7,450	50%				
3.1.j	11,000 beneficiaries (50% female) from community-led resilience investment packages (CRIPs)	Impact	11,000	5,500	5,500	50%				
4.1.e	770,300 people (50% female) benefitting from improved agro-meteorological information	Impact	770,300	385,150	385,150	50%				

No	Indicator	Beneficiary Type	Target beneficiary				Actual beneficiary			
			Total	Male	Female	F (%)	Total	Male	Female	F (%)
4.1.f	80 governmental staff (25% female) trained for integration of AWSs	Direct	80	60	20	25%				
Government staff direct beneficiaries			510	387	124	24%	145	101	44	30%
Community direct and impact beneficiaries			886,700	444,390	442,310	50%	0	0	0	
Overall Beneficiary			887,210	444,777	442,434	50%	145	101	44	30%
Direct beneficiaries			5,710	4,027	1,684	29%	145	101	44	30%
Indirect beneficiaries			881,500	440,750	440,750	50%	0	0	0	

Direct Beneficiaries: People who actively participate in the project activities or directly receive support. *Example: Farmers trained in CSA, farmers receiving inputs or financial support, extension and government staff trained.*

Impact Beneficiaries: People who benefit from project activities but do not directly participate. *Example: Household members of trained farmers, markets benefiting from increased production, communities benefiting from environmental improvements.*

Progress Update at Midterm (As of June 2025)

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
Component 1: Enabling environment to promote and incentivize resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR						
Outcome 1.1.: Strengthened capacity to mainstream and access climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes in Lao PDR.						
Output 1.1.1.: Strengthened inter-sectoral planning and investment-prioritization processes at national and sub-national levels for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes.	a. Published guidelines on participatory, gender-sensitive inter-sectoral planning and investment processes at national and sub-national levels.	1 national 2 provincials	-	Delayed	The achievement of this indicator is under DOPC's responsibility. The guideline was developed by the CTA and its publication is under the responsibility of DOPC upcoming activity 1.1.2 (Establish Guidelines). Progress has been delayed due to DOPC's unavailability to implement the activity as scheduled, leading to a postponed LoA timeframe. The midterm target of 40 institutional personnel trained (with at least 30% female participation) has not yet been achieved.	
	b. Number of institutional personnel trained in facilitation of the planning and investment processes in the published guidelines (% women).	100 (f: 30%)	-	Delayed		
	c. Number of inter-sectoral coordination plans published for four districts of Luang Prabang and	4	-	Delayed	The achievement of this indicator is under DOPC's responsibility. The delay in achieving this indicator stems from the pending implementation of Activity 1.1.2.	

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	Houaphan provinces.				Although Activity 1.1.3 is expected to yield provincial-level results, the midterm target set to completed 1 at the national level, which remains unmet as Activity 1.1.2 has not started.	
	d. Number of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms established.	1 national and 2 provincials	-	Delayed		
	e. A memorandum of understanding between relevant ministries—including MAF, MoIC, MoNRE, MPI, and LWU—detailing endorsement of the guidelines, including a cascade-based approach to blended financing.	1	-	Delayed	This indicator is under the responsibility of DOPC, the development and signing of the MOU is planned for a later stage following the publication and piloting of the national guidelines. As these preparatory steps have been delayed, no progress has been made on this indicator to date. The activity is expected to move forward once DOPC resumes implementation under the upcoming LoA.	
Output 1.1.2.: Innovative financial instruments, investment models, and institutional arrangements developed and enabled to mobilize climate finance for resilient and sustainable rural landscapes.	f. Number of endorsed landscape investment packages.	4	-	Delayed	Responsibility for this indicator rests with VFI NGO. Progress has been delayed, and the midterm target of achieving 2 remains unmet as activities have not yet started. The project recently identified a suitable NGO partner, and the drafting of the LoA is currently in progress.	
	g. Number of institutions with increased capacities to	3	-	Delayed		

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	access or manage climate finance.					
Component 2: Resilient and sustainable land-use planning and value-chain networks in two provinces of the northern uplands.						
Outcome 2.1.: Integrated, landscape-level planning strengthened using climate-smart practices for resilient and sustainable landscapes in the northern uplands.						
<u>Output 2.1.1.: Participatory climate risk and vulnerability assessments conducted for upland livelihoods, incorporating vulnerable ecosystems and agro-ecological suitability at landscape level.</u>	a. Number of extension officers (or other pertinent personnel) trained to conduct climate vulnerability assessments.	80 (f: 20%)	50 (f: 16%)	On track	Progress on training extension officers in climate vulnerability assessments is on track with 50 individuals trained, representing 63% of the target of 80. However, the proportion of female participants (16%) is currently below the overall gender target. Updates on additional related training will be provided as they become available.	
	b. Number of districts in which participatory climate vulnerability and risk assessments conducted.	4	4	Met	Climate vulnerability and risk assessments have been completed in all 4 target districts by DALaM LoA1. This output has been achieved as planned.	
	c. Number of agricultural products for which similarity and suitability analyses conducted in	5	6	Met	Suitability and sensitivity analyses for 6 priority crops have been completed, exceeding the target. Technical validation was supported by DALaM.	

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	targeted provinces.					
<u>Output 2.1.2.: Capacities of local institutions and district-level governmental offices to identify, incentivize, promote, and disseminate climatesmart land-use approaches and practices, and nature-based solutions for resilient and sustainable landscapes strengthened.</u>	d. Number of governmental staff trained in the integration of CCA approaches into local land uses and governance--increase from baseline.	150 (f: 25%)	75 (f: 39%)	On track	75 individuals (39% female) trained, reaching 50% of the endline target. The training program is currently on schedule, and NAFRI will be implementing additional capacity-building activities to further contribute to this indicator.	
<u>Output 2.1.3.: Participatory, resilient, and sustainable land-use and investment plans incorporating innovative, evidence-based, locally appropriate, gender-responsive, and climate-smart livelihood options and nature-based solutions developed and demonstrated.</u>	e. Number of climate-adaptive provincial land-use frameworks generated.	2	2	Met	The development of climate-adaptive provincial land-use frameworks has been completed in both targeted provinces; this indicator has been achieved as planned by the respective PAFO teams. The official documents from both provinces are submitted to PMU.	
	f. Number of climate-adaptive district land-use frameworks generated.	4	4	Met	The development of climate-adaptive district land-use frameworks has been completed in 4 targeted districts, this indicator has been achieved as planned by the respective PAFO teams. The official documents from both provinces are awaiting submission to PMU and FAO.	

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	g. Number of villages in which P-FALUPAM conducted using suitability analyses and climate forecasts-- increase from baseline.	150	-	Delayed	Achievement against the target of 150 villages for this indicator is currently Delayed. The midterm target for this indicator is 50 villages, and now DALaM is in the process of implementing activities under LoA II, with an initial focus on reaching 20 target villages.	To achieve the target, the project would need to cover 150 villages in the next 12 months, an average of 12.5 villages per month. The project defined target area includes only 32 villages (21.33%). The remaining 118 villages (78.67%) are located within the target districts but lie outside the designated target villages. The current progress is 0% and, completing the full PFALUPAM target within the project timeframe presents a considerable implementation challenge. There is a possibility of achieving 50 villages (midterm target) at the final stage.

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	h. Number of LUP beneficiaries.	63,000 (f: 50%)	-	Delayed	<p>The midterm beneficiary target of 21,000 people has not been reached, indicating a Delayed status for this indicator. Achievement is dependent on the ongoing implementation of P-FALUPAM activities and beneficiary data recording by DALaM in the target villages.</p>	<p>The indicator targets 63,000 beneficiaries (50% female), but progress is currently at 0%. The population of the 32 target villages is only 13,568—just 21.5% of the target. Even including all 240 villages in the districts (approx. 102,520 people), meeting the target would require reaching over 50% the total population. Given the scale, population variability, and limited time remaining, this indicator will be challenging to achieve. There is a possibility to achieve 21,500 beneficiaries (midterm target) at the final stage.</p>
Outcome 2.2.: Innovative and resilient agricultural value chain networks and financing options established to adopt and scale up climate-smart practices.						

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
<u>Output 2.2.1.: Resilient and sustainable agricultural value-chain networks mapped and established in two provinces of the northern uplands.</u>	Number of networks mapped and coordinated for agricultural value chains in Luang Prabang and Houaphan.	5	-	Delayed	VFI NGO is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered, and the midterm target of 5 networks mapped remains unmet as activities have not yet started. A suitable NGO partner was recently identified, and the LoA is currently being drafted.	
	Number of semi-annual value-chain network meetings hosted.	10	-	Delayed	VFI NGO is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered, and the midterm target of 4 semi manual hosted meeting remains unmet as activities have not yet started. A suitable NGO partner was recently identified, and the LoA is currently being drafted.	
	Number of extension staff trained as trainers for value-chain network coordination.	60 (f: 20%)	-	Delayed	VFI NGO is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered, and the midterm target of 30 extension staff trained as trainers remains unmet as activities have not yet started. A suitable NGO partner was recently identified, and the LoA is currently being drafted.	
	Number of community members trained for value-chain	1,200 (f: 30%)	-	Delayed	DAEC is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, and	The indicator requires training target 1200 community members with an average of 300

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	network coordination.				consequently the midterm target of 700 community members trained has not been reached. This indicator is linked to the training of extension staff as trainers for value-chain network coordination.	per district (or ~38 per village). Progress is 0% which is currently limited as this activity depends on the prior completion of extension staff ToT, led by VFI.
<u>Output 2.2.2.: Inclusive climate-resilience and market-opportunity assessments for resilient and sustainable agricultural value chains, including options for improvement of periodic quantity- and price-planning activities through multi-sectoral collaboration.</u>	Number of value chains in Luang Prabang and Houaphan for which climate-vulnerability and market-opportunity assessments conducted.	5	-	Delayed	VFI NGO is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, and consequently the midterm target 3 assessment reports have not been reached. A suitable NGO partner was recently identified, and the LoA is currently being drafted.	
<u>Output 2.2.3.: Investment action plans for resilient and sustainable value chains incorporating periodic pricing guidance, financing options, incentives, models, and tools to encourage adoption and up-scaling of climate-smart practices developed and piloted.</u>	Number of investment action plans for agricultural value chains piloted and endorsed by MAF and MoIC.	3	-	Delayed	THPD is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, and the midterm target which should be in the pilot stage not being achieved. . THPD is now preparing to implement the first activity, focusing on data collection on the value chain from traders and related stakeholders.	
Component 3: Climate-smart technologies and innovations deployed in two provinces of the northern uplands						

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
<u>Outcome 3.1 Climate-smart livelihood practices scaled-up at landscape level to support resilient and sustainable rural landscapes that improve food security and nutrition</u>						
<u>Output 3.1.1.: Climate-smart land-use approaches and practices and nature-based solutions for resilient and sustainable landscapes deployed.</u>	a. Number of extension staff trained to deliver FFS.	40 (f: 20%)	20 (f: 35%)	On track	DAEC is responsible for this indicator, which is currently rated as on track. The midterm target of training 30 extension staff with 20% female representation has been met, evidenced by the completed training in Houaphan Province. With upcoming training activities planned for Luangprabang Province, full achievement of this indicator is anticipated.	
	b. Number of community members trained in climate-adaptive land uses--increase from baseline.	4,000 (f: 30%)	-	Delayed	DAEC is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 2000 individuals (30% female) not being reached according to FFS records. With no baseline data established, while progress is expected after the FFS delivery staff training, reaching the final target of 4000 community members trained presents a	The indicator targets 4,000 community members trained (30% female) in climate-adaptive land uses—averaging 1,000 per district or approximately 125 per village. This training is linked FFS group set up and record. A total of 64 FFS are planned, expected to reach

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
					significant challenge due to the large number involved.	1,600 members (25 participants per FFS, led by either DAEC and DAFO). While the FFS model supports structured training delivery, the current scale will only cover 40% of the final target.
	c. Number of people benefitting from more climate-resilient land-use practices— increase from baseline.	22,300 (f: 50%)	-	Delayed	This indicator is the responsibility of DAEC and DALaM. Delays have been encountered as the community activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 2,200 individuals (50% female) not being reached. With no baseline data established, progress is expected upon the community activities begin in the target villages. However, the final target of 22,300 beneficiaries poses a significant challenge given the total population of 13,568 in the 32 target villages.	Achieving the indicator's 22,300 beneficiary target (50% female) for climate-resilient land-use practice is a significant challenge. The 32 target villages have a total population of just 13,568 (61% of the target), assuming full coverage of all population, the project would still fall short by over 8,700 people and no midterm progress

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	d. Number of people benefitting from diversified livelihoods— increase from baseline.	14,900 (f: 50%)	-	Delayed	This indicator is the responsibility of DAEC and DALaM. Delays have been encountered as the community activity has not yet started, leading to the final target of 2,200 individuals (50% female) not being reached. With no baseline data established, progress is expected upon the community activities begin in the target villages. However, the final target of 22,300 beneficiaries poses a significant challenge given the total population of 13,568 in the 32 target villages.	Reaching 14,900 people (50% female) with diversified livelihoods is a challenge, given the 32 target villages' population of just 13,568 (91% of the target).
	e. Area (ha) agricultural land under climate-smart land-use practices-- increase from baseline.	32,300	-	Delayed	DAEC is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 3,200 hectares not being reached according to FFS records. With no baseline data established, progress on this indicator is expected to be observed after the FFS module is implemented in the target area.	

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	f. Area (ha) degraded forest converted to secondary or open forest--increase from baseline.	40,300	-	Delayed	DALaM is responsible for data collection for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 2,000 hectares not being reached according to registered PFALUPAM plans. With no baseline data established, progress on this indicator is expected to be observed after the PFALUPAM plans are implemented in the target area.	
	g. Increase in net income of participating households (average LAK/ year).	600,000	-	Delayed	DAEC is responsible for data collection for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the community activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of a 60,000 KIP increase in net income not being reached. With no baseline data established, progress on this indicator is expected to be observed in next phase.	
	h. Number of communities with local adaptation plans--increase from baseline.	240	-	Delayed	DAEC is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 24 local adaptation plan not being	The target is 240 communities with local adaptation plans (60 per district), but only 32 are planned through FFS in the 32

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
					reached according to adaptation plans and FFS records. With no baseline data established, progress on this indicator is expected to be observed in next phase	target villages—just 13.3% of the final target. While the midterm target may still be achievable in the next phase, reaching the full target within the remaining time is challenging.
<u>Output 3.1.2.: Investments for resilient and sustainable value chains to encourage adoption and up-scaling of climate-smart practices deployed</u>	i. Number of local infrastructures improved or installed to increase local climate adaptability.	44	-	Delayed	The PMU is responsible for data collection for this indicator, with implementation led by DAEC, PAFO, and DAFO. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 22 local infrastructure not being reached according to CRIP records. Progress on this indicator is expected to be observed in the next phase after the local adaptation plan implemented.	The indicator targets 44 local infrastructures (11 per district), but with only 32 target villages, this covers 72.7% of the final target. As no infrastructure has been reported to date, and considering the limited coverage and time remaining, achieving the full target will be challenging.
	j. Number of beneficiaries from community-led resilience investment packages (CRIPs).	11,000 (f: 50%)	-	Delayed	The PMU is responsible for data collection for this indicator, with implementation led by DAEC, PAFO, and DAFO. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 2,800 (with	The indicator targets 11,000 beneficiaries (50% female), or approximately 2,750 per district. With a total population of 13,568 across the 32

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
					f: 50%) not being reached according to CRIP records. Progress on this indicator is expected to be observed in the next phase after the local infrastructures improved.	target villages, nearly the entire population would need to benefit. As of midterm, no progress has been recorded. While achieving the midterm target of 2,800 (700 per district) in the next phase is possible, reaching the full target will require significant effort.
	k. Number of investments for increased climate adaptability of agricultural value chains	15	-	Delayed	The PMU is responsible for data collection for this indicator, with implementation led by DAEC, PAFO, and DAFO. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of 15 investments not being reached according to Value-chain investment records. Progress on this indicator is expected to be observed in the next phase.	
Component 4: Monitoring and evaluation, project communication, and lesson-learning						
Outcome 4.1 Project monitored and evaluated, information disseminated, and lessons from project implementation, progress monitoring, review, and evaluations codified and shared						

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
<u>Output 4.1.1.: A gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system developed, strengthening decision-making for CCA in the agricultural and NRM sectors.</u>	a. Integrated KMS established with layered reporting	1	-	Delayed	The PMU tracks the establishment of an Integrated KMS with layered reporting through data collected from activity implementation records. The current delay in achieving the midterm target of one report is primarily because the development of a cloud-based KMS and app-based data collection system has not yet been finalized. This system is critical for collecting and processing farm-level and other data needed for reporting against GEF-7 indicators, SDGs, and other relevant frameworks. Progress on this indicator is anticipated to materialize in the subsequent phase once the data collection system is fully operational and generating records.	
	b. Mid-term evaluation completed	1	-	On track	The midterm evaluation is currently in progress. The evaluation team has been mobilized, and data collection is underway. The final report is expected in the coming period. The indicator remains on track.	

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
	c. Final evaluation completed	1	-	Delayed	The final evaluation is scheduled for the end of the project period. Preparations for evaluation design and planning will begin in the final year. No concerns have been raised regarding its implementation. The indicator remains on track.	
<u>Output 4.1.2.: Communication and knowledge-management strategy, including outreach programs and local knowledge-sharing and learning networks on climate adaptation and resilience, developed and implemented.</u>	d. Number of automatic weather stations installed	3	-	Delayed	DMH is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the activity has not yet started, leading to the midterm target of three AWS installed not being reached. Progress is anticipated in the next phase, dependent on the completion of the AWS import process and overcoming installation challenges encountered by DMH. The current inability of DMH to sign the LoA is being addressed and have to find a solution to ensure the indicator's advancement.	
	e. Number of people benefitting from improved agro-meteorological information	770,300 (f: 50%)	-	Delayed	DMH is responsible for this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the the AWS has not yet installed, leading to the midterm target of 513,500 individuals (50% female) benefitting from improved agro-	Targeting 770,300 beneficiaries (50% female) of improved agro-meteorological information presents a major challenge, as the combined

Results Progress update	Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement in reporting period	Overall status (on track, delayed, met)	Narrative assessment and comments	Remarks
					meteorological information not being reached. Progress is expected in the next phase following the completion of the AWS installation. The large number of beneficiaries targeted warrants careful attention in future implementation.	population of Houaphanh and Luang Prabang (the direct implementation area) is only 102,520 (13.3% of the target). Even with broader dissemination via national channels and expansion to neighboring provinces, the significant population deficit makes this indicator difficult to achieve.
	f. Number of governmental staff trained for integration of AWSs	80 (f: 25%)	-	Delayed	PMU is responsible for data collection in this indicator. Delays have been encountered as the AWS has not yet installed, leading to the midterm target of 50 individuals (25% female) governmental staff trained not being reached. Progress is expected in the next phase following the completion of the AWS installation.	

Source: WVI (2025)

Appendix 6: Co-financing from the government

Sources of Co-financing ³⁰	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing ³¹	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at Mid Term Review (07 July 2025)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)	Public Investment	14,000,000	5,828,854.63
Donor Agency	IFAD	In-kind	1,000,000	-
		TOTAL	15,000,000	5,828,854.63

³⁰Sources of Co-financing may include: GEF Agency, Donor Agency, Recipient Country Government, Private Sector, Civil Society Organization, Beneficiaries, Other.

³¹Grant, Loan, Equity Investment, Guarantee, In-Kind, Public Investment, Other (please refer to the *Guidelines on co-financing* for definitions

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_FI_GN_01_Cofinancing_Guidelines_2018.pdf



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Department of Agricultural Land Management
Climate Smart Agriculture Alternatives
For Upland Production Systems in Lao PDR.

Ref: 0525-.../DALaM
Vientiane, Dat: 07 JUL 2025

Co-financing of Government for CSA Project
Period from 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2025 (27 months)

Item	People	Estimate cost per unite	Month	Estimate cost in LAK	USD
1. Salary					
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	9	2,753,000	27	668,979,000	30,875.48
Technical Advise Group (TAG)	10	2,570,000	27	693,900,000	32,025.66
Coordination Committee member (CCM)	13	2,520,000	27	884,520,000	40,823.37
PAFOs	6	2,420,000	27	392,040,000	18,093.88
DAFOs	8	2,320,000	27	501,120,000	23,128.26
2. Office rent					
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	9	12,100,000	27	2,940,300,000	135,704.07
Technical Advise Group (TAG)	10	12,100,000	27	3,267,000,000	150,782.30
Coordination Committee member (CCM)	13	12,100,000	27	4,247,100,000	196,016.98
PAFOs	3	12,100,000	27	980,100,000	45,234.69
DAFOs	6	12,100,000	27	1,960,200,000	90,469.38
3. Admin support					
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	9	14,300,000	27	3,474,900,000	160,377.53
Technical Advise Group (TAG)	10	14,300,000	27	3,861,000,000	178,197.26
Coordination Committee member (CCM)	13	14,300,000	27	5,019,300,000	231,656.44
PAFOs	3	14,300,000	27	1,158,300,000	53,459.18
DAFOs	6	14,300,000	27	2,316,600,000	106,918.36
4. Government Vehicles					
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	9	77,000,000	27	18,711,000,000	863,571.33
Technical Advise Group (TAG)	10	71,500,000	27	19,305,000,000	890,986.29
Coordination Committee member (CCM)	13	73,700,000	27	25,868,700,000	1,193,921.63
PAFOs	3	75,240,000	27	6,094,440,000	281,277.52

DAFOs	6	74,800,000	27	12,117,600,000	559,265.24
5. In-kind materialization					
Project Steering Committee (PSC)	9	8,320,100	27	2,021,784,300	93,311.69
Technical Advise Group (TAG)	10	9,320,000	27	2,516,400,000	116,139.75
Coordination Committee member (CCM)	13	11,320,000	27	3,973,320,000	183,381.18
PAFOs	3	12,350,000	27	1,000,350,000	46,169.29
DAFOs	6	14,320,000	27	2,319,840,000	107,067.89
Total				126,293,793,300	5,828,854.63
Exchange rate (on 7/7/2025) is 1\$=21667 LAK					

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Appendix 7: Rating schema

Rating scheme

Additional explanation on how to assess ratings for specific criteria, for example, whether they are highly satisfactory or moderately satisfactory, can be found in Tables A11.4 to A11.7.13

Overall outcome ratings

MTRs should use mid-term targets per the project's logframe to assess outcome delivery. If no mid-term indicator targets are available, the MTR should base outcome ratings on an assessment of the delivery of results to date against milestones in workplans and delivery compared with end-of-project targets.

Table: How to assess ratings for specific criteria

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	<i>Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no shortcomings</i>
Satisfactory (S)	<i>Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor shortcomings</i>
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	<i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings</i>
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	<i>Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings</i>
Unsatisfactory (U)	<i>Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major shortcomings</i>
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	<i>Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe shortcomings</i>
Unable to assess (UA)	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements</i>

In line with similar guidance on the assessment of ratings for GEF terminal evaluations (GEF, 2017c), the overall rating of the outcomes of the project should be based on performance on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The calculation of the overall outcome rating will consider all three criteria, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical. The relevance rating will determine whether the overall outcome rating is in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU = unsatisfactory range). If the relevance rating is unsatisfactory, the overall outcome will be unsatisfactory as well. However, where the relevance rating is satisfactory (HS to MS), the overall outcome rating could, depending on its effectiveness and efficiency rating, be either satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Table: Factors affecting performance (assess each element separately; M&E is treated differently)

Rating	Description
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Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results meet expectations.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results more or less meet expectations.
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results were somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management and results were substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of design and readiness/project implementation/project execution/co-financing/partnerships and stakeholder engagement/communication and knowledge management.

Table: Monitoring and evaluation design or implementation ratings *(Overall M&E design, design and implementation assessed separately)*

Rating	Description
Highly satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation meets expectations.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation more or less meets expectations.

Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U)	There were major shortcomings and quality of M&E design or M&E implementation substantially lower than expected.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	There were severe shortcomings in M&E design or M&E implementation.
Unable to assess (UA)	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design or M&E implementation.

Table: Sustainability

Rating	Description
Likely (L)	There is little or no risk to sustainability.
Moderately likely (ML)	There are moderate risks to sustainability.
Moderately unlikely (MU)	There are significant risks to sustainability.
Unlikely (U)	There are severe risks to sustainability.
Unable to assess (UA)	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.