MIDTERM REVIEW REPORT

Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia

UNDP-GEF PIMS ID: 6477
GEF Project ID number: 10363

31 January 2025

Evaluation timeframe: July – November 2024

Region and countries included in the project: Klang Valley, Middle and Upper Baram and Crocker Range Biodiversity Reserve, Malaysia

Focal Area: Multi-focal area (GEF-7): Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Climate Change Mitigation

GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program:

- BD-1-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors.
- CCM-1-1: Promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs.

Implementing Partner: UNOPS

GEF Agency: UNDP

MTR team member: Ms. Evelyn Teh, Independent Consultant

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFOLU	Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use BD
APR-PIR	Annual Project Report - Project Implementation Review
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BMU	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety
BPPS	(UNDP) Bureau of Policy and Programme Support
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCA	Community Conserved Area
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
COMDEKS	Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative
CPMU	Country Programme Management Unit
CRBR	Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DO	District Officer
EOP	End of project
FoBD	Friends of Bukit Dinding
FoBK	Friends of Bukit Kiara
FTS	Free Tree Society
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse gas
ha	Hectare
ICCA	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area
IP	Indigenous Peoples
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KM	Knowledge Management
KV	Klang Valley
LD	Land Degradation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
mGBC	Malaysian Green Building Council
MNRES	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Sustainability
MNS	Malaysian Nature Society
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Platform
MTR	Mid-term Review
MTR	Mid Term Review
MUBRB	Middle and Upper Baram River Basin
MYR	Malaysian Ringgit
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Steering Committee
NSC	National Steering Committee
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
OFP	Operational Focal Point

OP	Operational Phase
OP7	Seventh Operational Phase
PACOS Trust	Partners of Community Organizations in Sabah Trust
PDR	Project Delivery Report
PELIHARA	Persatuan Pemeliharaan Dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar Sarawak
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIMS	Project Information Management System
PIR	Project Implementation Review
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
ProDoc	Project Document
RTA	Regional Technical Advisor
RUGS	Rantaian Urban Green Spaces
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (UNDP)
SGP	Small Grants Programme
tCO2e	tons carbon dioxide equivalent
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TNB	Tenaga Nasional Berhad
TOR	Terms of Reference
UCP	Upgraded Country Programme
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biodiversity
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP CO	United Nations Development Programme Country Office
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USD	United States Dollar

1. Executive Summary

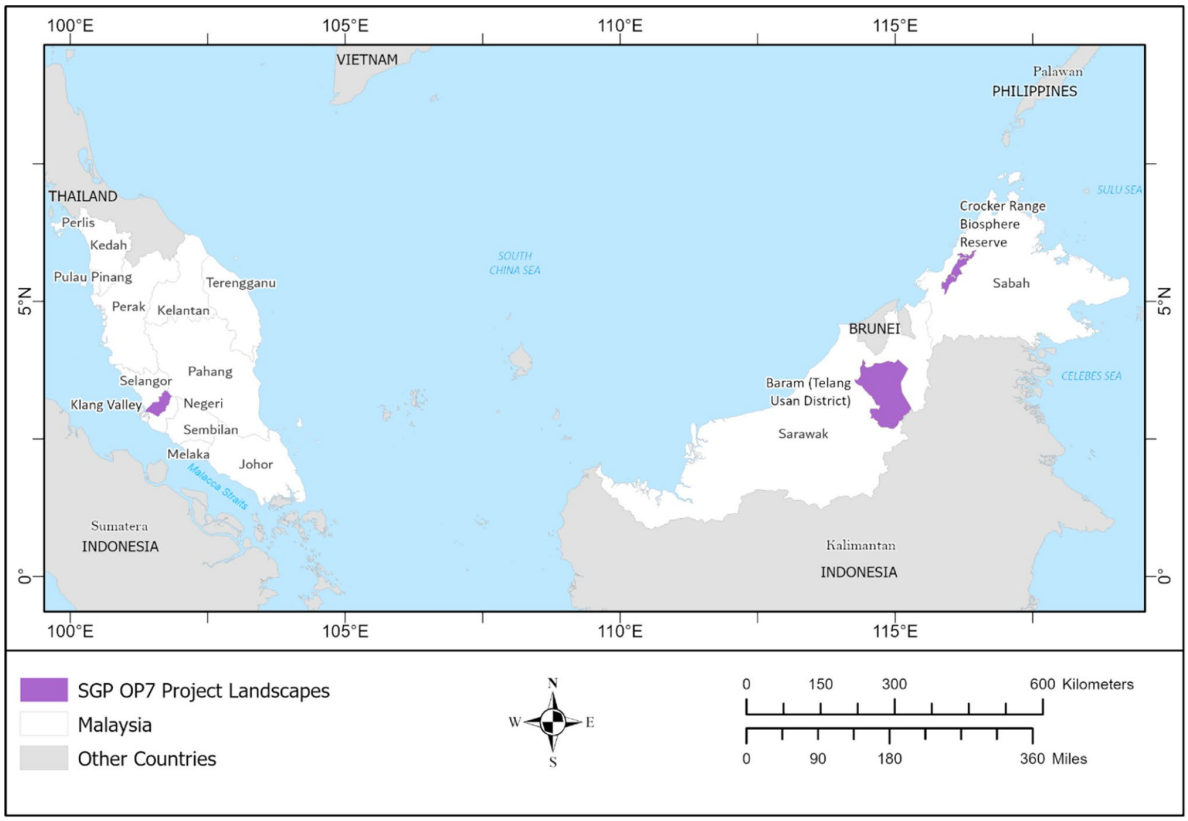
This section summarises the findings of the Midterm Review Mission conducted from July to November 2024 for the UNDP-GEF Project entitled: "Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia" (hereby referred to as the OP7 project or the Project), that received a US$ 2,500,000 grant from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in April 2022.

1.1 Project Information Table

PROJECT TITLE	SEVENTH OPERATIONAL PHASE OF THE GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME IN MALAYSIA			
GEF Project ID	10363		**At endorsement (million USD)**	**At Mid-Term (million USD)**
UNDP Project ID (PIMS #)	6477	**GEF Financing**	2,500,000	1,616,887.85
Country	Malaysia	**UNDP**	200,000 (in-kind)	47,582.46 (in-kind)
Region	Klang Valley (Peninsular Malaysia), Crocker Range (Sabah) and Baram (Sarawak)	**Government (MNRES)**	200,000 (in-kind)	80,000 (in-kind)
Focal Area	Biodiversity, Land Degradation, Climate Change Mitigation	**Sub-government (Sabah Parks)**	100,000 (in-kind)	0
		Others (The Habitat Foundation, ICCA GSI)	600,000 (Grant)	225,000 (in-kind)
		CSO Grantees	1,100,000 (in-kind) 550,000 (Grant)	67,953.97 (in-kind) 30212.16 (in cash)
FA Objectives (OP/SP)	• BD-1-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors. • CCM-1-1: Promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs.	**Total co-financing**	2,750,000	450,748.59
Implementing Partner (GEF Executing Agency)	UNOPS	**Total Project Cost**	5,250,000.00	2,950,748.59
Other Partners involved		**ProDoc Signature (date and project began)**		20 April 2022
		Planned Operational Closing Date	20 April 2026	

1.2 Project Description

The seventh Operational Phase (OP7) of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Malaysia builds on the program's long-standing achievements in the country. Its primary focus is on empowering civil society organizations and improving the socioeconomic conditions of local communities through participatory conservation, restoration, and climate change mitigation initiatives. The project's objective is to enable community organizations to collectively manage landscapes adaptively, fostering socio-ecological resilience. These efforts target three key landscapes: the Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve in Sabah, the Middle and Upper Baram in Sarawak, and the Klang Valley in Peninsular Malaysia, aiming to achieve global environmental benefits and support sustainable development.



The OP7 project is set out to achieve the following GEF-7 Core Indicators:

- Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares)
- Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)
- Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of $CO2_e$)
- Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

1.3 Project Progress Summary

The transition to the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) has been challenging for Malaysia, requiring extensive efforts to secure government approval for the ProDoc, organize the inception workshop, and help the National Steering Committee (NSC) understand the shift from OP6 to OP7. These

challenges, compounded by the impacts of COVID-19, delayed early implementation, hindered NGO engagement, and complicated the proposal development process for landscape strategies. Simultaneously, the CPMU had to wrap up OP6 projects, further delaying grant applications and pushing the signing of agreements with strategic grantees to early 2023—over a year after the ProDoc was finalized.

Despite these setbacks, OP7 projects are gaining momentum, with regular grant proposals recently approved during the 40th NSC meeting to address gaps in midterm and EOP targets. While financial delivery remains below expectations, progress is being made, and additional calls for proposals are planned to meet key targets. The postponed Midterm Review (MTR) aims to provide a more comprehensive assessment of project impacts, with adaptive management critical to ensuring OP7 achieves its objectives and overcomes initial delays.

1.4 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Table 1 MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for the Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia

MEASURE	MTR RATING	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION
Project Strategy	N/A	The Small Grants Programme (SGP) has achieved significant environmental and developmental impacts at the local level. However, the introduction of OP7 under Malaysia's Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) emphasizes broader landscape management, creating challenges in aligning national, state, and local priorities. While federal support is strong, engagement with Sarawak's government remains limited, making collaboration with local authorities crucial in addressing issues in regions like CRBR and MUBRB. OP7's success hinges on mainstreaming the landscape approach, building trust with communities affected by logging conflicts, and ensuring alignment with state priorities. Despite its potential, OP7 faces challenges in achieving its targets, particularly in Sarawak's Upper Baram Forest Area, where recent developments have hindered land restoration progress. Difficulties in tracking measurable indicators, capacity-building for NGOs, and redundant renewable energy projects further complicate efforts. To ensure sustainability and impact, maintaining consistent communication, fostering collaboration, and integrating gender equality to promote women's participation are essential priorities for overcoming these obstacles.
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: **Satisfactory**	OP7 has faced significant challenges in its early stages, despite meeting several midterm targets. Transitioning to the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) required substantial time for setup and familiarization, while securing government approval for the ProDoc and assisting the National Steering Committee (NSC) in understanding the shift from OP6 to OP7 caused further delays. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded these issues, postponing the appointment of strategic grantees and delaying project agreements until March 2023. This slow start cascaded into delays in the regular grant application process, pushing many projects' implementation to mid-2024 and delaying the Midterm Review (MTR). While some indicators have met or exceeded midterm targets, others, such as renewable energy adoption and landscapes under improved practices, remain behind schedule. The SGP's bottom-up approach, emphasizing stakeholder consultations and community engagement in remote areas, also contributed to delays. Notably, midterm targets often reflect proposed activities rather than

MEASURE	MTR RATING	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION
		actual progress toward end-of-project (EOP) goals. Adaptive management will be crucial to keeping the project on track for successful completion before the Terminal Evaluation in 2026.
	Outcome 1 .1 Achievement Rating: **Highly Satisfactory**	The midterm target has been surpassed and the EOP targets have been achieved with the 16 new partnerships established (the original target was 6 partnerships). This includes 3 women-led CBOs, which makes up 60% of the EOP target.
	Outcome 1.2 Achievement Rating: **Unsatisfactory**	The OP7 project has struggled to meet its midterm target for supporting alternative livelihoods through clean energy solutions in rural communities, particularly in Sabah and Sarawak. In Sarawak, the SARES project has already electrified target villages, making the SGP's clean energy initiatives redundant and jeopardizing the achievement of its current EOP target. Additionally, there has been no community uptake for renewable energy (RE) projects despite multiple calls for proposals, prompting the SGP team to explore partnerships with other organizations and consider reallocating funds if demand remains low. To address these challenges, the SGP team plans to engage partner organizations and consult the National Steering Committee (NSC) on reallocating resources. However, without a significant shift in demand or strategy, achieving the expected outcomes seems unlikely. A formal review of targets is recommended as a priority action, to be discussed and approved by the NSC following the finalization of the Midterm Review (MTR).
	Outcome 2.1 Achievement Rating: **Satisfactory**	All three outputs under Outcome 2.1 have been achieved to varying degrees by midterm. The multi-stakeholder platforms are in progress and will utilize existing structures (where available, such as in Sabah) rather than creating new ones, if possible. The landscape strategies have been formulated by the strategic partners, endorsed by the NSC, and are pending approval from the multi-stakeholder platforms (MSP) which have yet to be launched at the time of the MTR field missions. Additionally, partnerships and policy advocacy efforts have been actively pursued by the strategic partners since the start of their appointment in OP7. It is crucial to follow-up on the development and progress of the MSP during the progress update and at the NSC meetings.
	Outcome 2.2 Achievement Rating: **Satisfactory**	The CRBR and MUBRB strategic partners have scheduled key stakeholder dialogues, positioning these landscapes to achieve the EOP target for organized dialogues. In the Klang Valley, efforts have focused on scaling up tree-planting initiatives with TNB, which, while valuable, do not fully align with the envisioned multi-stakeholder dialogues. Despite this, no major barriers to meeting the target are anticipated. By the Midterm Review (MTR), most grants had been in implementation for only a few months, and no case studies were completed due to the project's early stage. However, with numerous approved projects, confidence remains high that sufficient case studies will be developed to meet the EOP target. To ensure timely completion, a detailed editorial timeline for translation, publication, and distribution will be essential, supporting broader goals of knowledge dissemination and project objectives.
	Outcome 3.1 Achievement Rating: **Satisfactory**	The National Steering Committee (NSC) has been convening regularly, exceeding its midterm target with five meetings held by the time of the Midterm Review (MTR). This increase in meetings may have been necessary to expedite the review and approval of additional grant applications to ensure that the End-of-Project (EOP) targets are met. While a zero draft of the sustainability plan does not yet exist, there is ample time to complete it by the project's end, indicating no major obstacles to achieving this target.

MEASURE	MTR RATING	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION
		Additionally, regular and small grantees have been consistently submitting reports for review, which have been integrated into the 2023 and 2024 PIRs. Most of the project's indicative activities are either completed or in progress, as outlined in the annual PIR. The assessment of GEF core indicators is ongoing through the MTR exercise, and remaining activities are expected to proceed as scheduled, without significant barriers.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The OP7 project has faced significant challenges in adapting to the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP), particularly in coordinating between the UNDP CO and the SGP Country Programme. While UNDP CO's support, especially its relationships with government ministries, has been crucial, administrative demands such as compliance and reporting requirements have diverted the SGP team's focus from community engagement and communication. The transition to the UCP, coupled with delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the wrapping up of OP6, has slowed progress and impacted the achievement of end-of-project targets, particularly in remote areas. Despite these setbacks, the project has made notable strides in promoting women's participation and leadership, with many initiatives emphasizing gender equality. However, financial risks persist due to low financial delivery, delayed disbursements, and capacity constraints among NGOs. Limited participatory M&E, constrained by a 5% budget allocation, remains a concern. Nonetheless, with adaptive management, capacity-building, and improved coordination, the project is expected to align with its core objectives and achieve long-term goals.
Sustainability	Moderately Likely (ML)	Malaysia's implementation of the landscape approach under the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) faces sustainability challenges, particularly with limited financial resources expected after GEF assistance for OP7 ends. Although funding has been secured for OP8, its continuation will depend on the strategy and selected landscapes, which may differ from those under OP7. Co-financing remains largely in-kind, and achieving the 1:1 ratio has been difficult. While income-generating projects like ecotourism and agroforestry may sustain with minimal funding, reforestation efforts require ongoing support for long-term monitoring. Building strong relationships between grantees in key landscapes like CRBR and MUBRB will be vital for securing additional funding. Government involvement and community engagement have shown mixed results, with positive collaboration in KV and CRBR but limited interest in Sarawak's MUBRB, posing risks to project success. Rural areas face challenges such as an ageing population and youth migration, while urban projects struggle with inconsistent volunteer participation. The CPMU plays a critical role in stakeholder coordination, but capacity and funding constraints limit its reach. Multi-stakeholder platforms have fostered some collaboration, but natural resource-based projects like reforestation remain vulnerable to climate change impacts, including heavy rainfall and landslides.

1.5 Summary of Conclusions

The OP7 project under Malaysia's Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) marks a significant shift toward a landscape approach, emphasizing collaboration at national and state levels. While federal support is strong, limited engagement with Sarawak's government poses challenges for success in critical regions like CRBR and MUBRB. The project's success depends on aligning local priorities, fostering trust in communities with historical conflicts, and empowering local change agents.

Administrative inefficiencies and fragmented focus hinder progress, while gender integration remains a priority to promote inclusive decision-making.

OP7 has faced delays due to the UCP transition, the wrap-up of OP6, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which have impacted early implementation and renewable energy targets. Financial sustainability is a major concern, with limited co-financing contributions and delays in grant disbursement. Income-generating projects like ecotourism and agroforestry show promise, but reforestation efforts require ongoing support. Mixed government buy-in and climate risks, such as heavy rainfall and landslides, further threaten sustainability, making adaptive management and strong stakeholder relationships essential for the project's long-term success.

1.6 Recommendations Table

NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME AND (PRIORITY LEVEL)	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
1.	***More engagement with the NSC beyond the meetings*** Establish a more frequent communication with NSC to make strategic decisions and raise high-level and high-risk management issues regularly so that challenges can be addressed promptly. One way to move forward is by forming a small technical working group made up of NSC members who have shown interest in taking on this task.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (High)	NSC, UNDP CO, CPMU
2.	***Revise the grant application template*** Grant application template should be simplified and made more intuitive, with clearer questions and improved user experience, while ensuring the technical glitches are addressed to prevent the loss of information.	Next operational phase (Medium)	UNDP CO, CPMU
3.	***Revisit the outcome and target levels*** ● Revisit OP7 outcome and target levels to align with the remaining time frame, focusing on adjustments rather than extensive indicator revisions. ● Review GEF-7 Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated, considering the challenges posed by high renewable energy implementation costs and the overlapping efforts like SARES. ● Consider reallocating funds towards capacity building in renewable energy options, system maintenance, and fostering shared infrastructure responsibility. ● Conduct an internal discussion within the UNDP CO, CPMU and NSC to evaluate the need for expanding the geographical scope or adjusting benchmarks to ensure effective grant disbursement before the EOP deadline.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (High)	CPMU, NSC, UNDP CO, UNOPS, CPMU
4.	***Update the workplans to include seasonal variability*** To manage reduced participation during agricultural seasons and festivities, grantees should mark these events in the workplan table under Section F: Implementation Plan and Timeframe. Regular updates in progress reports and clear mitigation plans will help track timelines and enable pre-emptive actions to address delays, including those caused by climatic unpredictability.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (Medium)	NSC, UNDP CO, UNOPS, CPMU, Strategic Grantees, Regular Grantees

NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME AND (PRIORITY LEVEL)	RESPONSIBLE PARTIES
5.	***Improve system access*** The SGP team could be granted viewing access of the Quantum Risk Register. Currently it is being updated through a staff who have access to the system, who refer to the SGP team for the details. As OP8 approaches and the SGP programme transitions under UNDP, it is crucial to address the reporting and monitoring challenges faced by the SGP team during the interim to improve access and streamline reporting for greater efficiency while OP7 is still ongoing.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (Medium)	CPMU, UNDP CO, CPMU
6.	***More consistent communication with state and local governments*** To boost buy-in from state and local governments, it's essential to establish consistent communication, particularly through regular updates on project progress and community benefits.	Throughout the rest of the OP7 duration (High)	NSC, UNDP CO, CPMU, Strategic Grantees
7.	***Increase the frequency of communication between the UNOPS Focal Point for UCP and the CPMU*** Strengthening communication would allow UNOPS to better address challenges faced by the Country Programme Management Unit (CPMU) whenever it arises. Rotating meeting times could overcome time zone differences, and a commitment to monthly check-ins, with a mutually agreed format, would support consistent collaboration and problem-solving.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (Medium)	CPMU, UNOPS Focal Point for UCP.
8.	***Enhance capacity for co-financing*** Both strategic and regular grantees are struggling to meet the 1:1 co-financing ratio. It is recommended to focus on building grantees' capacity to raise additional funds, possibly through training or support in identifying alternative funding sources. The role of the NSC in mobilizing co-financing including through the establishment of a Technical Advisory Group could also be explored.	Within the first or second quarter of 2025 (Medium)	CPMU, NSC, UNDP CO, CPMU, Strategic Grantees, Regular Grantees
9.	***Enhance climate change adaptation considerations*** • Integrate climate-resilient practices: Incorporate climate adaptation strategies, such as using resilient species in reforestation projects, to ensure survival under changing weather conditions. • Facilitate adaptive infrastructure development: Encourage collaboration between grantees and government stakeholders to address infrastructure needs (e.g., roads, bridges) in flood- and landslide-prone areas, ensuring access to project sites.	Within the first quarter of 2025 (Medium)	NSC, UNDP CO, CPMU, Strategic Grantees, Regular Grantees

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the MTR and objectives

Purpose: The Midterm Review (MTR) is a critical component of the project lifecycle, as it assesses the early success or failure of the project. Its purpose is to provide recommendations for interventions to the implementing partner, ensuring the project remains on track if adjustments are necessary. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability, including the project's Social and Environmental Risk.

Objectives: As mandated by the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, MTRs are required for all GEF-financed full-sized projects (FSP). The MTR functions as both an accountability tool and a mechanism for reviewing progress and making course corrections. It also offers an opportunity to engage in dialogue with the government and partners regarding UNDP's progress and program direction.

According to the guidance for conducting MTRs of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, the objectives of the MTR are to:

1. Assess progress toward achieving the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document.
2. Identify early signs of project success or failure and determine necessary changes to ensure the project achieves its intended results.

Additionally, the MTR will evaluate the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability, including social and environmental risks. Finally, based on these assessments, the MTR will provide recommendations for interventions where necessary.

2.2 Scope & Methodology

2.2.1 Principles of Design and Execution of the MTR

The scope of assessment to be conducted in the MTR shall cover four categories of project progress as stated in the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews Of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (C. Scope of Work and Key Tasks, page 42).

These four categories are as stated below:

1. **Project Strategy**
   The extent the project strategy is relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results
2. **Progress towards Results**
   The extend which the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far
3. **Project Implementation and Adaptive Management**
   An assessment of the project's overall efficiency, adaptability, effectiveness in monitoring and reporting, implementation of social and environmental measures, and any changes in risk assessment since the project's inception
4. **Sustainability**
   The extent of financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results

The scope of the MTR shall be guided by the core indicators presented in the Seventh Operational Phase (OP7) of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia Project Document (ProDoc) as presented in the following table:

Table 2 Description of end-of-project targets for GEF 7 Core Indicators

GEF 7 CORE INDICATORS	PROPOSED END-OF-PROJECT TARGETS AND DESCRIPTIONS
Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares)	**End-of-project target: 1,000 ha** The total estimated area of land restored is broken down by 500 ha of degraded agricultural lands restored (Sub-Indicator 3.1) and 500 ha of forest and forest land restored (Sub-Indicator 3.2). Restoration-rehabilitation projects are expected in each of the three landscapes.
Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)	**End-of-project target: 43,000 ha** The total estimated area of landscapes under improved practices in OP7 is 43,000 ha, broken down by 24,000 ha of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (Sub- Indicator 4.1), 8,000 ha of landscapes that meet national or international third-party certification and that incorporate biodiversity considerations (Sub-Indicator 4.2), and 11,000 ha of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (Sub-Indicator 4.3).
Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO2e)	**End-of-project target: 341,500 tCO2e (lifetime direct); 26,000 tCO2e (lifetime indirect)** Based on experiences during earlier SGP operational phases and potential in the project landscapes identified during PPG consultations, an estimated 6,500 tons of CO2e (lifetime direct) and 26,000 tons of CO2e (lifetime indirect) are estimated to be avoided through community RE and EE interventions (Sub-Indicator 6.2) - see breakdown of the estimations in **Annex 15**. GHG emissions avoided through interventions in the agriculture, forestry, and land use sector (AFOLU) are included in the Core Indicator 6 estimations (Sub-Indicator 6.1). Using the FAO Ex- Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), roughly 335,000 tCO2e over a 20-year lifetime are estimated to be avoided as co-benefits of the project interventions in the AFOLU sector (see **Annex 15** for EX-ACT output).
Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	**End-of-project target: 10,000** (of whom 5,000 are female and 5,000 are male) The end target is based on experience during earlier operational phases; the project's gender mainstreaming target for the proportion of direct female beneficiaries is 50%.

The MTR will assess the detailed indicators of this project as contained in Section **4.2 Progress Towards Results**. The matrix, as stated from page 12-17 of the ToR, is as presented in Annex 6.2 of this MTR Report.

2.2.2 MTR Approach

The approach which the MTR will adopt in carrying out its assessment, which covers the data collection methodologies, documents in review, the proposed questions and work plan presented in this section is as agreed in the Inception Report.

The evaluation criteria by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC) will be used as a guidance that shape the questions for the

MTR assessment, as referenced in Section 2 of the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (page 2)[1]. The criteria are as presented below:

RELEVANCE: Is the intervention doing the right things? The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to global and national needs, policies and priorities and those of beneficiaries and partner institutions and continue to do so as circumstances change.

COHERENCE: How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.

EFFECTIVENESS: Is the intervention achieving its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.

EFFICIENCY: How well are resources being used? The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

SUSTAINABILITY: Will the benefits last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue.

2.2.3 Data Collection Methodologies

The data collected for the purpose of the MTR were from both primary and secondary sources. Documents, reports, meeting minutes, policy documents, and other relevant records (secondary data) were provided by the project implementation team, which are listed in Annex **6.6 List of documents reviewed**. Primary data were collected through the field missions, either by way of in-person or online interviews, group discussions and site visits to all the three landscapes.

In total, 56 stakeholders were interviewed (Annex **6.5 List of persons interviewed**). They include two members of the National Steering Committee (NSC) (including the co-chair), two representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (who also play a role of UNFCCC focal point), a Malaysian focal point for UNCBD, four representatives from Sabah Parks, one person from the district office of Telang Usan (Sarawak), two non-governmental organisations, 10 members from the strategic grantees, 5 regular grant project teams and their community groups.

Apart from the above, a number of community group discussions were also held during the MTR field missions at every village visited in Crocker Range (Sabah) and Baram (Sarawak).

2.2.4 Limitations to the MTR

A standard MTR team typically includes 1 to 2 consultants with specialized roles, such as a team lead, evaluator, or gender expert, as recommended by UNDP and GEF guidelines. However, for the OP7 GEF SGP Malaysia 2024 MTR, only a Project Management Support Advisor was engaged.

To address the limitations in expertise, manpower, and timeframe, the Advisor implemented a practical methodology and delivery plan while adhering as closely as possible to reporting guidelines,

[1] Revised edition: June 2021

supported by the UNDP CO and CPMU. However, the following limitations should be considered when reviewing this MTR, as they have influenced both the report production process and its final output.

- **Lack of Specialized Expertise:** As previously mentioned, an MTR team can comprise up to two experts, each contributing specialized knowledge to the review process. Relying on a single advisor may result in an incomplete assessment, as no individual is likely to have the breadth and depth of expertise required across all areas. For instance, specialized fields such as gender safeguards demand distinct experience that a single expert may not fully address.

- **Workload Distribution:** Producing a comprehensive MTR involves managing several tasks, including data collection, stakeholder consultations, analysis, and report writing. A team can distribute these responsibilities more effectively, ensuring that each area receives adequate attention and is thoroughly addressed. A single advisor may handle these tasks, but not without its challenges. This also allows for greater specialization and focus on each aspect of the review, ultimately enhancing the depth and quality of the analysis and reporting.

  On a related note, the Programme Manager for Nature, Climate, and Energy from the UNDP CO played a pivotal role during field visits in Sabah and Sarawak, serving as a co-discussant with community groups—sometimes engaging with 10 to 25 participants in a single meeting—which significantly enhanced the engagement and evaluation process. Similarly, the Programme Assistant of the CPMU was instrumental in managing logistical arrangements, including travel, accommodation for field visits, and coordinating interview schedules. It is important to acknowledge their invaluable contributions in ensuring the smooth execution of the MTR process, which otherwise could not be attempted by a single consultant.

- **Diverse Perspectives:** A multi-member team brings diverse perspectives, which are essential for a balanced and comprehensive evaluation. Team members contribute unique insights and engage in constructive discussions, particularly during field missions and interviews, enhancing the depth and overall quality of the analysis. While a single advisor can offer specialized expertise, the complexity and scope of an MTR demand a team approach to ensure a broader and more well-rounded evaluation of the project's progress and outcomes.

- **Time Constraints:** The MTR process is time-sensitive, with tight deadlines for stakeholder engagement, field missions, and reporting. A team can handle simultaneous tasks, such as conducting interviews and site visits while others focus on data analysis and report drafting. A single advisor working alone may struggle to meet deadlines.

To ensure a robust Terminal Evaluation (TE), it is essential to allocate sufficient budget to hire a team of at least two consultants. The increased volume of documents, the expanded scope of evaluation, and additional field missions (as new projects were still being approved at the time of the MTR preparation) could make the workload extensive for a single consultant. Recommendation on this aspect is further deliberated in **Section 5.2 Recommendations (*Other recommendations for future considerations*).**

2.3 Structure of the MTR report

The MTR report is organised based on these following sections, as informed by the TOR (Individual Contractor Agreement for the Project Management Support – Advisor) and the Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report of the Guidance for Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects.

Section 1 – Executive Summary

Section 2 – Introduction, explaining the purpose, scope, methodologies, data collection, structure and the limitations of the MTR.

Section 3 – Project description and background context of the OP7, including the problems that the project aims to address, the project description and strategy, the implementation arrangements, timing and milestones and the main stakeholders.

Section 4 – Findings, which includes the review and assessment of the project strategy, the progress towards results, project implementation and adaptive management, as well as the project sustainability.

Section 5 – Conclusions and recommendations

Section 6 – Annexes, which includes the MTR TOR, the evaluation matrix, example of questionnaire, rating scales, the MTR mission itinerary, list of persons interviewed, and documents reviewed and others.

3. Project Description and Background Context

3.1 Development context

Geographical and Biodiversity Overview

Malaysia, located in Southeast Asia, consists of 13 states and three Federal Territories, spanning approximately 330,345 km². It is geographically divided between Peninsular Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo Island, with over 8,840 km of coastline and 879 islands. Recognized as one of the world's twelve mega-biodiverse countries, Malaysia is home to a vast array of species, including 15,000 species of vascular plants, over 300 species of mammals, 742 bird species, and thousands of other flora and fauna.

Challenges and Threats to Biodiversity

Despite its rich biodiversity, Malaysia faces significant threats due to habitat loss, pollution, poaching, and climate change, driven by economic growth and increasing demand for resources. From 1998 to 2023, the country's population grew from 23 to 35 million, with a tripling of per capita GDP. However, this development came at a cost, with 2.93 million hectares of humid primary forest lost between 2002 and 2023, accounting for 33% of the country's total tree cover loss in the period.[2]

Strategic Efforts for Sustainability

In response to these challenges, Malaysia's 12th Plan (2021-2025) emphasizes sustainable resource management and low-carbon development. The Seventh Operational Phase (OP7) of the GEF Small

[2] https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/MYS/

Grants Programme (SGP) partners with NGOs and community groups in three key landscapes[3] to foster socio-ecological resilience. The program aims to enhance sustainable land management, biodiversity protection, and renewable energy use while improving the well-being of local communities through participatory and integrated land and resource management approaches.

3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted

The OP7 project targets three diverse landscapes in Malaysia, facing threats from infrastructure development, rising demand for food and plantation commodities, and climate change, which contribute to biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. These pressures also impact rural communities' ability to sustain nature-based livelihoods and access clean energy. The project aims to address the lack of participatory action necessary for adaptive management of natural resources, which is key to achieving sustainable development and global environmental benefits. It seeks to empower local communities to overcome organizational, technical, and financial barriers, thereby enhancing their capacity to build social and ecological resilience.

As identified in the ProDoc, the following are barriers faced by the local communities in the target urban and rural areas which are impeding the achievement of the long-term vision of the OP7 Project:

Barrier 1: Community organizations in rural landscapes, as well as NGOs in urban areas, lack greater long-term visions and strategies for ecosystem and resource management and suffer from weak adaptive management capacities, i.e. to innovate, test alternatives, monitor and evaluate results and adjust practices and techniques to meet challenges and lessons learned.

Barrier 2*:* Community organisations have insufficient organizational capacities to plan, manage, and implement initiatives and actions of their own design in favour of landscape resilience objectives in rural areas efficiently and effectively, and are not genuinely involved in decisions related to natural resource management made by State governmental entities and timber companies.

Barrier 3: Community organisations and NGOs coordinate insufficiently with other community organisations to pursue collective action for global environmental and landscape management outcomes at a landscape scale.

Barrier 4: Knowledge from project experience with innovation/experimentation is not systematically analysed, recorded or disseminated to policy makers or other communities, organizations and program initiatives.

Barrier 5: Community organisations and NGOs lack sufficient financial resources to lower the risks associated with innovating land and resource management practices and sustaining or scaling up successful experiences.

Therefore, the project aims to address these threats and barriers by employing participatory, integrated land and resource management approaches to enhance biodiversity, combat climate change, reduce land degradation, and improve community well-being.

[3] The Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve in Sabah, the Middle and Upper Baram River Basin in Sarawak, and the Klang Valley in Peninsular Malaysia.

3.3 Project description and strategy

In OP7, Malaysia joined the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP) of the Small Grants Programme (SGP), which adopts a landscape approach based on the UNDP model of community-driven planning and management. The project aims to build on SGP's achievements by focusing on strengthening civil society organizations and improving local communities' socioeconomic conditions through participatory conservation, restoration, and climate change mitigation initiatives. By empowering community organizations to take collective action in adaptive landscape management, the **project objective** is to enhance socio-ecological resilience in three key landscapes, delivering global environmental benefits and advancing sustainable development goals aligned with GEF-7 objectives.

- BD-1-1: Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors.
- CCM-1-1: Promote innovation and technology transfer for sustainable energy breakthroughs.

According to the ProDoc, the **project strategy** aims to remove the barriers previously stated in **Section 3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted** of this MTR report, by achieving the following mutually supportive outcomes:

Component 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental protection
Outcome 1.1: Strengthened conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services through community collaborative management and sustainable livelihood interventions

- *Output 1.1.1: Community level small grant projects on strengthening participatory conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services*
- *Output 1.1.2: Capacities of CBOs for participatory conservation, restoration and nature-based livelihood initiatives developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring*

Outcome 1.2: Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at community level

- *Output 1.2.1: Community level small grant projects on increasing adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and applications*
- *Output 1.2.2: Capacities of CBOs for community-level climate change mitigation interventions developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring*

Component 2: Durable landscape resilience through participatory governance, partnership building and knowledge management
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened community institutions for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience
Output 2.1.1: Multi-stakeholder platforms established and/or strengthened for improved governance of target landscapes

- *Output 2.1.2: Landscape strategies for effective governance developed based on results of participatory socio- ecological resilience baseline assessments in the selected intervention landscapes*
- *Output 2.1.3: Partnership building and policy advocacy among governmental stakeholders, civil society, financial institutions, and private sector for facilitating broader adoption of participatory approaches*

Outcome 2.2: Enabling environment for upscaling and replication strengthened through effective knowledge management of best practices and approaches

- *Output 2.2.1: Knowledge from innovative project interventions compiled, systemized, and disseminated across the landscapes, across the country, and to the global SGP network*

Component 3: Monitoring and evaluation
Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation

- *Output 3.1.1: Project implementation and results effectively monitored and evaluated*

Note: The indicative activities under each output stated above can be found in ProDoc

In line with these outcomes, the expected results (end-of-project targets) from the ProDoc are outlined in the following **Table 3**. However, it's important to emphasize that these descriptions are provisional due to the bottom-up approach of the SGP. The final types and number of projects will depend on the community's demand, priorities, and the quantity and quality of the submitted proposals.

Table 3 Expected results: End-of-project targets for GEF 7 Core Indicators

GEF 7 Core Indicators	Proposed end-of-project targets and descriptions
Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares)	**End-of-project target: 1,000 ha** The total estimated area of land restored is broken down by 500 ha of degraded agricultural lands restored (Sub-Indicator 3.1) and 500 ha of forest and forest land restored (Sub-Indicator 3.2). Restoration-rehabilitation projects are expected in each of the three landscapes.
Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)	**End-of-project target: 43,000 ha** The total estimated area of landscapes under improved practices in OP7 is 43,000 ha, broken down by 24,000 ha of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (Sub- Indicator 4.1), 8,000 ha of landscapes that meet national or international third-party certification and that incorporates biodiversity considerations (Sub-Indicator 4.2), and 11,000 ha of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems (Sub-Indicator 4.3).
Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO2e)	**End-of-project target: 341,500 tCO2e (lifetime direct); 26,000 tCO2e (lifetime indirect)** Based on experiences during earlier SGP operational phases and potential in the project landscapes identified during PPG consultations, an estimated 6,500 tons of CO2e (lifetime direct) and 26,000 tons of CO2e (lifetime indirect) are estimated to be avoided through community RE and EE interventions (Sub-Indicator 6.2) - see breakdown of the estimations in **Annex 15 of the ProDoc**. GHG emissions avoided through interventions in the agriculture, forestry, and land use sector (AFOLU) are included in the Core Indicator 6 estimations (Sub-Indicator 6.1). Using the FAO Ex- Ante Carbon Balance Tool (EX-ACT), roughly 335,000 tCO2e over a 20-year lifetime are estimated to be avoided as co-benefits of the project interventions in the AFOLU sector (see **Annex 15** for EX-ACT output).
Core Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment	**End-of-project target: 10,000 (of whom 5,000 are female and 5,000 are male)** The end target is based on experience during earlier operational phases; the project's gender mainstreaming target for the proportion of direct female beneficiaries is 50%.

3.4 Project implementation arrangements

Quick overview: The programme is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

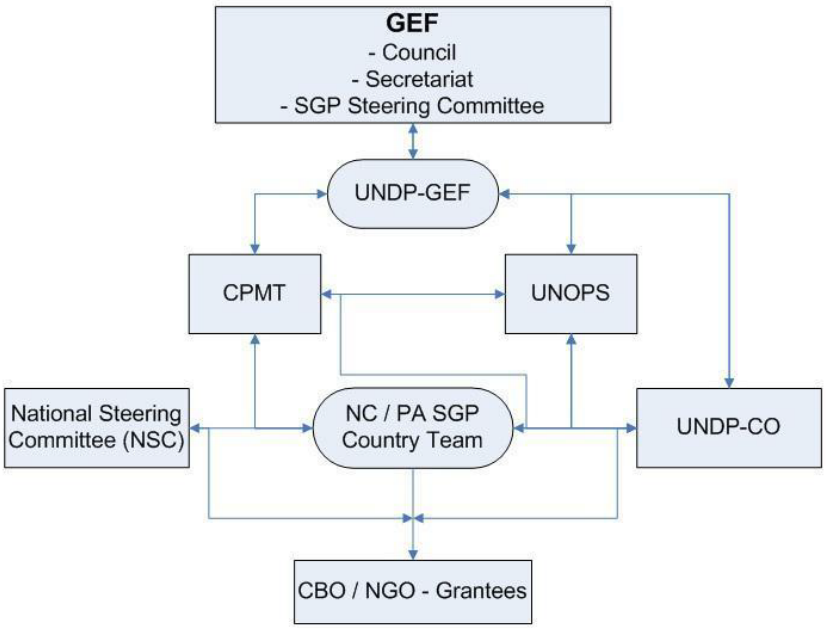


Figure 1 Organisational Structure (Source: SGP website[4])

Overview

- **UNDP** oversees the overall program and is responsible for managing the GEF project cycle, while also offering troubleshooting assistance. Additionally, UNDP provides high-level technical and managerial support through the UNDP GEF Global Coordinator for the SGP UPC.
- The **UNDP Country Office (UNDP CO)** contributes to providing oversight and support to the SGP Country Programme at the country level. It ensures that the project meets its objectives and delivers on targets. The UNDP Resident Representative appoints the **National Steering Committee (NSC)** members.
- The **NSC** helps with developing the Country Programme Strategy (CPS), evaluates grant proposals for feasibility and SGP criteria, approves grants, and oversees monitoring and evaluation. It also provides technical support, advises on implementation, promotes SGP nationally and internationally, and facilitates the replication of successful projects and practices.
- The **CPMU**, consisting of a National Coordinator (or Country Programme Manager) and a Programme Assistant, manages the project's daily operations.
- As the executing agency, **UNOPS** handles programme implementation services such as human resource management, budgeting, accounting, grant disbursement, auditing, and procurement. UNOPS also provides monthly financial reports and certified annual expenditure reports to UNDP.

The following is a more detailed description of the key roles in the project implementation arrangement:

[4] https://www.sgpmalaysia.org/index.cfm?&menuid=15

Implementing Partner: The **United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)** is responsible for executing the project and holds full accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of project outputs. Their tasks include:

- Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence- based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems.
- Risk management as outlined in this Project Document.
- Procurement of goods and services, including human resources.
- Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets.
- Approving and signing the multiyear workplan.
- Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year.
- Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

Project Assurance: Meanwhile, **UNDP CO** is accountable to the GEF for the project implementation, ensuring oversight of project execution to meet agreed-upon standards and provisions. Notably, this arrangement is a requirement for UCPs which is new to Malaysia. In its role, UNDP CO is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services, which include: 1) project approval and initiation, 2) project supervision and oversight, and 3) project completion and evaluation. Additionally, UNDP CO is responsible for providing Project Assurance for the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC).

In summary, the UNDP CO provides operational support (under a Country Office Support letter of agreement), for, inter alia:

- Hosting the CPMU Office
- Issuing appointment letters of NSC members, based on CPMT approval
- Participate as standing member of the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC)
- Engage in SGP Country Programme Strategy development as well as all key project cycle of SGP grant projects as part of the NSC, including project appraisal, approval, and monitoring
- UNDP RR signing the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) of the SGP grants on behalf of UNOPS.
- Promotes policy and programme linkages with the government and other partners for scaling up of SGP project approaches and tools, and support on resource mobilization

CPMU: Consisting of a National Coordinator (NC) and a Programme Assistant (PA), their responsibilities include supporting the NSC's strategic work, reviewing grant proposals, monitoring the grant portfolio, providing technical assistance to grantees, mobilizing resources, preparing donor reports, implementing capacity development for communities and NGOs, and executing a knowledge management strategy to share best practices.

Key responsibilities of the **National Coordinator (NC)** include:

- Facilitate the development of the Country Programme Strategy (CPS) for each operational phase
- Assist CSOs and CBOs in every step of the project cycle management, including development, implementation, and monitoring
- Serve as the ex officio secretariat for the NSC

- Oversee/undertake the financial, operational, and database management
- Resource mobilization
- Communication and knowledge management
- Support scaling up efforts, policy dialogue and advocacy
- Global reporting to the CPMT or UCP Global Coordinator, UNOPS, responding to audits, and other tasks as stipulated in their ToR.

The NC reports to the UCP Global Coordinator. Additionally, the NC collaborates closely with the UNDP Resident Representative (or their designee) at the country level, serving as their secondary supervisor. The NC's performance is evaluated annually.

Project Beneficiary Groups: Consists of CBOs and NGOs in the three target landscapes. These stakeholders design and implement the projects to generate global environmental benefits and community livelihood benefits with support of the multi-stakeholder governance platforms in each of the target landscapes, as well as technical and strategic assistance from the SGP.

Project Board (called the **SGP National Steering Committee, NSC**): Responsible for taking corrective actions as needed to ensure the project achieves its desired outcomes. To maintain UNDP's ultimate accountability, NSC decisions must align with standards that prioritize management for development results, best value for money, fairness, integrity, transparency, and effective international competition. The establishment and operation of SGP National Steering Committees follow the SGP Operational Guidelines (see Annex 18 of the ProDoc). The NSC is Chaired by the Representative from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia, and members comprised are majority of civil society organizations, as well as representatives of the government, UNDP CO, the academia, indigenous peoples' organizations, the private sector and the media.

Central Programme Management Team (CPMT): Develops and regularly updates Operational Guidelines that provide the framework for SGP operations globally and at the country level, ensuring consistency and accountability throughout the program. Additionally, the CPMT is responsible for global resource mobilization and, in consultation with country programs, prepares the global SGP funding proposal for each operational phase. The team is also responsible for creating partnerships at the global and regional level and promote linkages between SGP and GEF projects.

** More information on the project implementation arrangements as well as the operations can be found in Annex 18 of the ProDoc (GEF Small Grants Programme Operational Guidelines, April 2020)*

3.5 Project timing and milestones

The OP7 SGP Project was planned as a 4-year project, with a planned commencement date of 2 June 2022, and expected to end on 30 April 2026. The progress up to 30 June 2024, based on the Project Implementation Report (PIR) 2024, has received Implementation Progress (IP) and Development Objectives (DO) ratings of ***Moderately Satisfactory*** and rated ***Low*** on its Overall Risk Rating.

A summary of significant events for the first 24 months of the OP7 project include:

- The government of Malaysia signing the ProDoc on 20 April 2022
- First disbursement – 30 June 2022
- Inception Workshops were conducted as below (**report**):
    - Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve in Sabah, Kota Kinabalu - 18 August 2022
    - Middle and Upper Baram River Basin in Sarawak, Miri - 10 September 2022

    - Klang Valley in Peninsular Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur - 21 September 2022
- Development of the communication and knowledge management strategy - October 2022
- National Steering Committee/Board Meetings – 20 July 2022, 20 December 2022, 12 September 2023, 18 December 2023, 23 May 2024
- Crocker Range Landscape strategies consultation workshop with local stakeholders – 20 July 2023
- Landscape strategies finalised and approved by NSC – 12 September 2023
- First Project Implementation Report (PIR) - September 2023
- Second PIR – September 2024

- **Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve**
    - Call for regular grant proposals: 23 September 2023 and 18 January 2024
    - Two proposals approved at the 39th NSC meeting - 18 December 2023
    - PACOS issued a call through its network for grant proposals – 22 January 2024
    - PACOS organised a grant proposal writing workshop – 20 to 22 February 2024
    - Two more proposals were approved with conditions at the 40th NSC meeting - 23 May 2024
    - Grants awarded to 10 microprojects for Crocker Range – 7 June 2024
    - Proposal development and mentoring sessions by PACOS – 8 to 9 November 2023, 22-23 June 2024
    - Landscape strategies consultation workshop with local stakeholders (including government agencies, civil society organizations, and communities) - 20 July 2023

- **Upper and Middle Baram**
    - Landscape strategy presented at workshop for mainly NGOs/CBOs – 26 to 27 July 2024
    - FTA (Formerly known as Worming Up), the strategic grantees for this landscape, issued the first call for grant concept proposals - at the end of the past reporting period and another one on 23 January 2024
    - Proposal development and mentoring session – 5 to 13 July 2023 and 26 to 29 July 2023
    - Four proposals approved at the NSC meeting (18 December 2023), another three on 23 May 2024
    - A series of stakeholder consultations for the multi-stakeholder platform

- **Klang Valley**
    - Biodiversity surveys conducted for the landscape strategy – June to August 2023
    - First call for grant proposal – 23 September 2023
    - Proposal writing workshop – 14 October 2023
    - Mentoring sessions – 16 and 18 October 2023
    - Launch of the RUGS website – November 2023
    - Second call for grant proposal – 18 January 2024
    - Conducted seven meetings for the multi-stakeholder platform – between 3 July 2023 and 10 January 2024

3.6 Main stakeholders: summary list

a. Strategic Grant Recipients

1. Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) - Klang Valley
2. PACOS Trust- Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve in Sabah
3. Fly Technology Agriculture Sdn Bhd, FTA (formerly known as WormingUp) – Middle and Upper Baram River Basin in Sarawak

b. Regular Grant Recipients

1. Persatuan Sahabat Rimba Bukit Kiara (The Friends of Bukit Kiara)
2. Malaysia Green Building Council (malaysiaGBC), Klang Valley
3. Free Tree Society Kuala Lumpur, Klang Valley
4. Persatuan Sahabat Rimba Bukit Dinding, Klang Valley
5. Community-Led Environmental Awareness for Our River (CLEAR), Sabah
6. Persatuan Belia Kampung Terian, Penampang, Sabah
7. Intermediary: Persatuan Pemeliharaan Dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar Sarawak (PELIHARA); Local CBO: Long Anap, Sarawak
8. Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK) Long Banga, Sarawak
9. Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK), Long Moh, Lepo' Tau, Sarawak
10. Intermediary: Persatuan Pemeliharaan Dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar Sarawak
11. (PELIHARA); Local CBO: P'ng Jamok Long Tungan, Sarawak

c. Other Stakeholders

1. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability
2. Environmental and Natural Resources Economic Division, Ministry of Economy
3. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
4. United Nations Development Programme for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam
5. United Nations Office for Project Services
6. Telang Usan District Office
7. Sabah Parks
8. National Steering Committee (NSC)/ Project Board:
    i. *YBhg. Datuk Nor Yahati Awang - GEF Operational Focal Point / SGP Chairperson*
    ii. *Dr. Yuwana Podin - Co-Chair / Gender and Women Empowerment Focal point / Senior Lecturer, UNIMAS*
    iii. *Dr Noranida binti Zainal - GEF Political Focal Point*
    iv. *Mr Siva Kumar a/l Solay Rajah - CBD Focal Point*
    v. *Dr. Hartini Binti Mohd Nasir - UNFCCC Focal Point*
    vi. *Mr. Yee Chen Hua UNCCD Focal Point*
    vii. *Mr Niloy Banerjee - UNDP Resident Representative*
    viii. *Ms. Lee Sheu Jeen - Senior Project Manager, Community Engagement and ix. Education Manager, WWF Malaysia*
    ix. *Dr. M Rafee Majid - Urban & Regional Planning Programme at The Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia*
    x. *Dr. Colin Nicholas - Coordinator, Centre for Orang Asli Concerns*
    xi. *Ms. Ginny Ng - Independent*
    xii. *Ms. Azrina Abdullah - Independent*
    xiii. *Ms. Suraya binti Bujang - Chairperson, Purplelily Social Association Kuching*

xiv. Mr. Kon Onn Sein - Managing Director, Yayasan Kajian and Pembangunan Masyarakat
xv. Azrina Abdullah, Head Downstream Sustainability, PETRONAS

9. NGOs
10. Local Community Based Organisations (Selangor)
11. Local Community Based Organisations (Sabah)
12. Local Community Based Organisations (Sarawak)
13. Direct beneficiaries (Selangor)
14. Direct beneficiaries (Sabah)
15. Direct beneficiaries (Selangor)

d. Co-financing Partners

1. GEF Agency (UNDP)
2. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability
3. Sabah Parks
4. The Habitat Foundation
5. Donor Agency (German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) ICCA GSI, grant (investment mobilised)
6. CSO grantees

4. Findings

4.1 Project Strategy

4.1.1. Project Design

To what extent is the project responding to the national priorities and context?

According to the ProDoc, national stakeholders view the SGP as a "*successful and visible program that consistently delivers positive environmental and developmental benefits, with strong buy-in and ownership at both local and national levels*" (pages 7-8). While the project targets generally align with national priorities, as they build on previous SGP interventions in Malaysia, a more nuanced understanding is needed regarding the national context. This is because the SGP OP7 landscape approach differs significantly from the typical SGP projects that Malaysia has been familiar with in previous operational phases.

Based on an interview with government representatives on the NSC, the landscape approach was introduced in OP7 as the concept that shaped the current project design in Malaysia. For context and better understanding: GEF developed the Upgrading Policy, which required Malaysia to transition as part of OP7. This transition involved adopting a landscape approach during implementation.

Although the landscape approach does not necessarily conflict with the national priorities and context (such as the National Biodiversity Policy[5], Malaysia's Nationally Determined Contributions[6] for the Paris Agreement and the Malaysia Policy on Forestry 2021[7]), there are some challenges in its implementation. As representatives on the NSC, the government must now balance GEF core indicators with national priorities, ensuring that efforts are not duplicated with existing initiatives such as those under the 12th Malaysian Plan.

This perspective was echoed in another interview, where it was noted that the concept of the landscape approach originated from the COMDEKS/ Satoyama Initiative. Although the government is an NSC member, it largely relies on the UNDP CO and the CPMU to lead implementation and monitor progress. The government is perceived as playing a less direct role in shaping and guiding the main direction of SGP OP7 but still views the project as complementary to its national efforts.

It must also be noted, however, that the ownership of the SGP OP7 project appears to be stronger at the federal government level than at the state and local levels, where interest tends to vary. This arises partly because the NSC is primarily composed of federal government representatives, creating an inevitable gap in ownership at other governance levels. Several challenges have surfaced even during previous operational phases, where some project activities conflicted with state or local government policies and development plans.

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[5] National Policy on Biological Diversity 2022-2030: Malaysia is committed to conserve its biological diversity, promote its sustainable use, and ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of biological resources.

[6] https://climatepromise.undp.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/malaysia

[7] Five objectives of the Malaysia Policy on Forestry: 1) Ensure sufficient forest areas are managed through good governance and practices for the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. 2) Manage, conserve and rehabilitate the permanent reserved forests or forest reserves or permanent forests based on the principles of sustainable forest management. 3) Ensure continuous supply of raw materials from natural forests and forests plantations to sustain the development of wood-based and non-timber forests industries. 4) Encourage the participation of indigenous, native and local communities in the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of forests. 5) Strengthen capacity building; research, development and commercialisation; and innovation including providing adequate human financial resources to improve forest management and utilisation of forest resources.

However, there needs to be a consideration that there are occasions when state and local plans may not align with community interests. It could be due to factors such as a top-down approach, which often overlooks local needs and priorities, and instead focuses on broader economic or infrastructural goals. This lack of inclusive decision-making can lead to plans that inadequately address community needs and plans that prioritize economic gains over environmental and social equity.

Bureaucratic complexities can further impede the implementation of community-driven initiatives that the SGP promotes. Despite these complexities, efforts in OP7 are being made to equally engage state and local government stakeholders by involving them in the development of the landscape strategies, multi-stakeholder platforms and inviting their participation in meetings. It is crucial to balance federal decision-making authority with state-level jurisdiction, especially since SGP projects affect areas like forests, land, and rivers, all of which fall under the purview of the state authority.

On that note, the support received from local governments in Klang Valley and Sabah has been encouraging, but securing the same level of backing from the local government in Sarawak has not been forthcoming. To address this gap, the federal government, through MNRES, has written to the Sarawak Economic Planning Unit (EPU) to explain the OP7 landscape project, to which the state government responded positively, expressing support for the initiative. The District Officer (DO) of Telang Usan, which oversees a significant portion of the Middle and Upper Baram landscape, has shown openness to the project. However, the DO would appreciate more frequent communication and updates regarding the project's progress to stay better informed and engaged. These are welcome developments, but it has yet to translate into concrete collaboration between the state/ local authorities and the strategic partners.

Based on the OP7 ProDoc, the project objective was to ***"enable community organizations to take collective action for adaptive landscape management in building socio-ecological resilience".*** The three selected landscapes are facing ongoing and critical environmental challenges that demand greater community participation and targeted interventions. Through a landscape approach, these landscapes were chosen in collaboration with government and civil society partners, leveraging experiences and lessons from previous and current community initiatives supported by GEF 5 and 6. The goal is to replicate, scale up, and mainstream these successful efforts. Notably, the Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve (CRBR) in Sabah and the Middle and Upper Baram River Basin (MUBRB) in Sarawak are particularly significant due to the direct dependence of local communities on these landscapes for their livelihoods, food, and water security. As all three landscapes (including Klang Valley, KV) continue to face development pressures and environmental degradation, the OP7 project becomes increasingly critical in addressing issues related to community empowerment and environmental resilience.

Fundamental barriers (problems) identified as presented in the Project Document are as detailed in Section **3.2 Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted.**

The interviews and field missions conducted during the MTR exercise revealed that these threats and barriers are more prominent at different levels across various landscapes. Specifically, it is expected that small grantees in CBDR and MUBRB, which involve communities from multiple villages, will face these challenges more significantly than grantees from urban environments like those in KV.

Have the assumptions made during project design proven relevant?

The project's interventions are guided by several key assumptions outlined in the Theory of Change in the ProDoc (Section III: Strategy). One of these assumptions is that mainstreaming the landscape approach is essential for advancing project-level outcomes into longer-term, durable impacts. A critical component of this approach is identifying and strengthening the capacity of *'change agents'* to facilitate stakeholder engagement, which is also key to sustaining the multi-stakeholder landscape governance platforms.

However, this assumption is heavily influenced by another assumption: that identifying and strengthening these *'change agents'* will proceed without significant challenges. While the main assumption remains valid, the realization of the causal pathways in the Theory of Change will depend on underlying assumptions that may not have been fully evident at the time of writing the ProDoc which happened years before the project is implemented.

Another underlying assumption arises from Barrier 2, specifically regarding community involvement in natural resource management decisions made by state government entities and timber companies. To address this issue, the ProDoc proposed several indicative community projects, including partnerships with logging concession holders under the Malaysian Timber Certification Council (MTCC) certification process. The implicit assumption, however, is that both local communities and logging concession holders would collaborate through the OP7 projects despite the longstanding and unresolved conflict between them. Although the largest logging company, Samling Group, was consulted during the OP7 project preparation phase in 2020 and that the company has also formed a conflict resolution committee with some of the villages, this does not necessarily create an enabling environment for the partnership. Given the general sentiments among the villages against the persisting threats of logging, it is clear that for this partnership to succeed, a dedicated and sustained effort at a deeper level would be required to resolve existing strife and build trust between the two parties.

How effective is the selected strategy to achieve intended results?

In principle, the selected strategy—the landscape approach, based on the COMDEKS/ Sayotama Initiative[8] - is effective in achieving the intended results for GEF's Core Indicators. This initiative provides small grants to local community organizations to develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize socio-ecological production landscape and seascapes. In the same way, the OP7's landscape approach aims to enhance community-driven interventions that generate global environmental benefits, such as biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, land degradation prevention, and improved well-being of local communities through participatory, integrated land and resource management.

During MTR interviews with stakeholders familiar with past SGP projects in Malaysia, many expressed their support for the landscape approach, viewing it as a step forward and a more systematic method for amplifying the collective impacts of individual community projects, ultimately benefiting the landscape as a whole. In contrast, the previous OPs' approach often resulted in fragmented impacts, with grant projects benefiting only certain localities. However, they also acknowledged the increased commitment required for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting under the Upgraded Country

[8] https://comdeksproject.com/

Programme (UCP) set by GEF. This represents a significantly heavier workload, not only for the SGP implementation team but also for the strategic grantees alike.

There is also a differing view about the effectiveness of the landscape approach of OP7 for Malaysia. From feedback in one of the interviews conducted during the MTR, it is said that the Crocker Range, as a biosphere reserve and protected area, has already attracted substantial funding, and UNDP's efforts are not necessarily addressing significant gaps in this region. Similarly, Ulu Baram receives support from organizations like the Bruno Manser-Fonds (BMF). While these areas are remote, they are neither unknown nor neglected; in fact, they are relatively well-established, as is Klang Valley. Therefore, the selection of these sites does not substantiate the argument that they are underserved.

Continuing this school of thought, interviewees noted that if the objective is to reach truly remote and vulnerable areas, there are many others in Malaysia that are more marginalized and in greater need of support. The core indicators would likely benefit from a broader approach, rather than being confined to specific landscapes. The landscape approach, as it currently stands, limits the pool of potential grantees and restricts the program's overall reach. In response to this, it is also crucial to acknowledge that in many places, community-based organizations and small NGOs often lack the capacity to apply for grants effectively. This limitation can pose a significant barrier when expanding efforts to include remote and vulnerable areas.

Alternatively, as it was proposed in one of the interviews, that the focus on landscapes could benefit from a broader approach, rather than limiting it to just three landscapes. Categories such as geoparks, biospheres, and Ramsar sites across the country should be considered for fund application to support the management of these sites. Significant efforts are already in place to designate these sites, and continued support is essential to maintain their status and ensure effective management – which the SGP funds would come in useful. While this point holds some merit, how the project design for these designated sites would ensure a community-driven, bottom-up approach was not discussed. This is considering that many of these designated areas may already have site management plans in place, which may be limiting or restrictive to community participation.

One suggestion to expand on this idea is to focus on landscapes managed by a single authority, such as Sabah Parks. In this approach, funds could be utilised to support activities within the community use zones across various parks, including marine and lesser-funded parks.

In addition, the relatively small size of SGP regular grants (up to USD 50,000) is insufficient for some organizations to carry out their intended projects. One example illustrating this was how the fund was not sufficient to implement renewable energy projects, which were rather costly than initially expected. This could lead to significant underspending of allocated funds at the SGP level, ultimately affecting the project's financial performance and ability to fully implement its objectives.

There is also a concern raised on whether the implementation of the landscape approach can be effective when the projects seem fragmented and lack a cohesive strategy. While each individual regular grant is supposed to contribute towards the GEF Core Indicators set in the ProDoc (see Table 3), it may also seem like disparate projects that are being pieced together without a clear, overarching vision. This brings into view again about whether the project is designed to respond to (and balance) the needs of the country and the state's priorities – both important to foster ownership and buy-ins to the SGP OP7.

During one of the MTR interviews, it was highlighted that consistent communication with the state government is crucial for a successful landscape project. However, it was perceived that many NGOs and landscape-focused organizations are not prioritizing this. While consultations with the state

government do take place, the absence of a formalized relationship and ownership leaves room for the government to disregard these efforts. To develop a strong landscape project, it should align with the state development plan. UNDP, in collaboration with SGP, could develop a program to strengthen relationships with state-level authorities. According to the interviewee, it seems that state officials may not even be fully aware of SGP's contributions within their own states.

This underscores the importance of ensuring that the actions taken towards achieving **Indicator 13 (mainstreaming landscape priority actions into local planning instruments)** is effectively implemented. Regular communication with the state government is key to demonstrating the benefits of SGP projects and how they align with state policies, positioning SGP as a supportive, rather than opposing, force in achieving the state's goals. This is also an important factor to ensure sustainability of the impacts from OP7 (see Section **4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability**). That said, UNDP, the CPMU, and the strategic partners may need to proceed cautiously and seek remediation in areas where disagreements and conflicts could compromise the project's outcome, and rope in support from the NSC (especially MNRES) where possible.

Were perspectives from all relevant stakeholders taken into account during project design?

Stakeholder perspectives were considered to the best extent possible during the **project design phase**, despite travel restrictions imposed by the global pandemic. According to the GEF-7 Project Identification Form (PIF), submitted on October 11, 2019, the project design identified key stakeholders along with their roles and responsibilities (as detailed in Table 1 of the PIF document). These stakeholders included civil society organizations (such as community-based organizations, CBOs, and non-governmental organizations, NGOs), federal, state, and local government units, as well as private sector entities and academic institutions. Stakeholder consultations continued throughout the project preparation phase (held between June and October 2020), and the feedback from these consultations is captured in detail in Annex 9 of the ProDoc.

The **ProDoc** emphasizes the continued importance of engaging these stakeholders by organizing a project inception workshop. This workshop aimed to familiarize key stakeholders with the detailed project strategy and provide an opportunity to discuss any changes in the broader context since the project's initial conception that may affect its strategy and implementation. This has since been carried out as planned.

The project design at the **strategic grant level** also integrates stakeholder perspectives through these inception workshops. Prior to the workshops, multiple discussions and stakeholder engagement meetings were already held to inform participants about the SGP OP7 program and to explore potential collaborations and their involvement in project implementation. Section 3.1 of the Inception Workshop Report includes meeting notes (see Table 2: Record of Stakeholder Discussions) from these discussions across the three target landscapes. These notes capture key inputs from stakeholders, particularly regarding potential collaborations within the SGP OP7 project.

Through the **inception workshops** in the three target landscapes, stakeholder engagements were conducted through plenary sessions and smaller working group discussions. The outcomes of these discussions were synthesized in the Inception Report, which shaped a project design that responds to the current environmental conditions, ongoing conservation initiatives, local livelihoods, potential sustainable land management practices, and community challenges related to climate change. Table 18 of the Inception Report captures stakeholder comments, including suggested intervention areas, concerns, and recommendations for improving the project design.

At the **regular grant level**, project proposals ensured that relevant stakeholders' perspectives were incorporated through consultations at the village and district levels. These engagements involved specific groups such as traditional authorities, farmers, affected persons, Forest Departments, local NGOs, local development committees, elected officials, and other stakeholders, including youth, traders, women's cooperatives, and indigenous leaders.

During the **project approval stage**, the NSC, as the final decision-making body, reviews the proposed project design and provides input based on their respective backgrounds, experiences, and expertise. These deliberations are well documented in the NSC meeting minutes.

To what extent were gender and social inclusion issues taken into account during project design?

The project preparation phase included a gender expert from Sarawak, who produced a **Gender Analysis and Action Plan** for OP7, outlining the project's gender mainstreaming strategy. Data and information were gathered through a desktop review of government statistics, NGO records, research journals, and primary data from phone and online interviews with key informants and community leaders from the three landscapes. The limitation however was the travel restrictions to the target landscapes during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the researcher had to rely only on qualitative methods in the assessment. The study also included a Monitoring and Evaluation section for the gender action plan, which will be tracked throughout the 4-year project timeframe via PIR and other progress reports.

The Gender Analysis and Action Plan introduced a Gender Mainstreaming Framework, built on five strategic principles: 1) Facilitating women's empowerment, 2) Enhancing gender equality, 3) Ensuring gender integration, 4) Promoting gender awareness, and 5) Promoting equal opportunity employment (refer to Table 1 – Gender Mainstreaming Framework in Annex 10 of the ProDoc). These principles are applicable to all levels, including the National Steering Committee (NSC), landscape-level multi-stakeholder governance platforms, and strategic and small grants.

The principle of *'Enhancing gender equality'* directly shaped Core Indicator 11 of the OP7 landscape approach, which requires that women make up half of the beneficiaries (5,000 out of 10,000 people). To monitor this, the number of direct beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, will be tracked as a co-benefit of GEF investment throughout the project reporting process. This also includes ensuring that attendance sheets for all project meetings, at both the strategic and small grants levels, feature a column for participants' gender.

At the **strategic grant application level**, gender considerations are integrated into Section 1.8 on Gender Mainstreaming in the proposal template. This section requires grant applicants to explain how their proposed projects will incorporate and address the roles of women – specifically to ensure there is equitable representation of women in project decision-making bodies. Not only that, but there are also plans to provide capacity building trainings for CBOs on financial management and access to microcredit opportunities, specifically targeting women and other marginalised groups, as stated in the MUBRB's landscape strategy.

At the **regular grant application level**, gender-based beneficiaries are addressed under Indicator 4 of the proposal template. Applicants are required to specify the percentage of female beneficiaries, the roles women will play, how the project ensures equal access to and control of natural resources for both women and men, and the approaches to improving women's participation in decision-making related to natural resource governance, among other considerations. This is to ensure that the

project's results framework targets are set up to guarantee a sufficient level of gender balance in its activities.

Beyond the grant application templates, strategic grantees must also include a dedicated section on gender in their **landscape strategy document**. Additionally, strategic grantees are required to report on the gender breakdown of participants (adults, youth, and children) in meetings and activities, as well as the involvement of other stakeholders, in their **progress reports.**

4.1.2 Results Framework/Logframe

The following SMART assessment is done based on the project's core indicators and logframe.

SPECIFIC: The outcomes and objectives are clearly deliberated in terms of what it sets out to achieve based on the issues that has been identified on the ground of these selected target landscapes. There is a coherence between the objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities that were identified in the results framework. The implementing entities' staff have a good sense of understanding of the objectives and the targets, as well as the local implementing partners. The timeframe set for the project, either for the OP7 as a whole, or for the regular grants and microgrants are also well understood.

MEASURABLE: While the indicators were designed to be measurable using quantifiable units, the specific methods for measuring them may not be clearly outlined. For instance, one strategic grantee raised a question regarding the measurement of the area of forest and forest lands restored—whether it should account only for the specific area where tree replanting takes place or include the broader forest area to which the reforestation efforts contribute. The lack of clarity on whether to measure the precise reforested section or the entire forest ecosystem affected by the project highlights a gap in the methodology for measuring the project's impact.

ACHIEVABLE: During the project preparation phase, indicators were developed through stakeholder consultations, lessons from previous SGP phases in Malaysia, and the professional judgment of the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) team of consultants. These figures, however, are indicative and depend on factors such as the types and number of projects initiated, community priorities identified through participatory baseline assessments, and the quality of submitted proposals. A clearer evaluation of the indicators' achievability will emerge in successive annual PIRs throughout the project period. Nevertheless, a preliminary review of midterm target achievements indicates that some indicators may not be fully attainable at this stage.

Regarding the indicator related to **GHG emissions avoided outside the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector**, the only project in OP7 that is currently contributing to this indicator assesses building-related carbon emissions and offers recommendations for reducing emissions. The direct contribution of this regular grant project to the EOP target (6,500 tCO2e mitigated) will ultimately depend on the actions taken by the premises owners to reduce their GHG emissions. The decision to reduce GHG emissions, and to what extent, rests entirely with the premises owners, making it challenging to rely on this factor to achieve the intended OP7 outcome within the given timeframe.

Whether the other targets are achievable is influenced by several factors, including the OP7 timeframe and significant changes in the respective landscapes since the ProDoc was drafted. This will be discussed further in Section

4.2 Progress Towards Results.

RELEVANT: As discussed in Section**3.3 Project description and strategy**, and Section **4.1.1. Project Design,** the indicators presented in the ProDoc were set to align with and contribute to the priorities of the national development framework. To ensure its relevance, these indicators were developed through consultations with key stakeholders in governmental bodies, drawing on experiences from previous SGP projects in Malaysia. The NSC plays an ongoing role in ensuring that approved projects in OP7 remain relevant and aligned with the national priorities.

TIME-BOUND: The Core Indicators are expected to be met by the project's completion in 2026. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the midterm targets are measured based on deliverables stated in the approved proposals. Additionally, the Multi-Year Work Plan (Annex 3 of the ProDoc) provides a comprehensive breakdown of the OP7 project's outputs and activities, with detailed timelines segmented by quarters over the four-year project duration. Each year, the work plan is updated to ensure the timeline remains current and relevant.

How effective are the logframe's indicators, baselines and targets to measure effects from the project?

From the aspects of practicality and feasibility, the OP7 outcomes are generic enough to be achieved. However, the challenge may lie in the quantifiable targets itself, i.e. the extent of land restored (1,000 ha) and land under improved practices (43,000 ha); the GHG emissions to be mitigated (341,500 tCO2e). While it is pertinent for the indicators to be specific and measurable, some of the provisional interventions to achieve the project outcomes and output that were listed in the ProDoc were found to be not feasible during the project implementation.

The main example is *Outcome 1.2: Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at community level: Output 1.2.1: Community level regular grant projects on increasing adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and applications.* During the project implementation, it was discovered that all target villages were being electrified through the Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES)[9] under the Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB) since the ProDoc formulation. As a result, the SGP support is no longer required, hence this output will have to be revisited. The case as to how it happened should be further understood as SEB (represented by the VP of Rural Electrification) was consulted during the project preparation phase in 2020, but the SARES programme was not brought up in the written record (meeting minutes).

These end of project (EOP) targets were also set before the appointment of strategic grantees were done. Although these targets were determined based on baseline studies, previous experience from past SGP projects in Malaysia and consultations with key stakeholders (including some of the strategic grantees themselves before their appointment) – strategic grantees have expressed that the extent of land under improved practices (43,000 ha) were rather ambitious, and that it may be an issue to achieve it within the given timeframe. The reason being that the projects proposals submitted by the regular grantees are not sufficient given that the local communities typically only manage small plots of lands within their villages, and it would take a large amount of regular grant projects to fulfil the envisioned target.

[9] https://www.sarawakenergy.com/sarawak-alternative-rural-electrification-scheme-sares

It is important to note that this issue stems from the initial expectation that the Baram Peace Park (BPP) movement would contribute significantly toward the target of placing 43,000 hectares of land under improved practices. However, unforeseen developments within the BPP movement have compromised progress toward that target. Remediation efforts are further complicated by ongoing land ownership disputes, negotiations with private entities (including a major logging company), and the erosion of trust between local communities and the state government due to unresolved past conflict. Nonetheless, the NSC has recently approved nine regular grant proposals, covering land areas under improved practices that exceed the midterm target of 20,000 hectares. However, additional grants will still need to be mobilised to meet the remaining portion of the end of project (EOP) target of 43,000 hectares within the next two years.

At the level of grant applications, a significant challenge exists due to the limited capacity of NGOs and CBOs to write high-quality proposals. In one of the MTR interviews, it was highlighted that many proposals lack clarity and structure, particularly in defining the logical framework with clear objectives, outputs, and outcomes. A common issue is that applicants, particularly newer NGOs, attempt to overreach with the available funding, leading to proposals that are vague and unfocused. This could be attributed to the fact that they may not have the necessary training in proposal writing or logical framework analysis. In another example, many NGOs in Sarawak focus primarily on land rights and legal issues, with few of them actually equipped to organize community-driven conservation projects or secure funding effectively. Meanwhile, in Peninsular Malaysia, many NGOs are young and led by individuals without formal training in proposal writing, leading to challenges in creating strong, outcome-focused projects. Without a clear Theory of Change (TOC) or logical framework, NGOs risk being pulled in multiple directions, ultimately diminishing their impact and hindering their ability to demonstrate success. This also complicates the SGP's ability to communicate project achievements effectively, as reporting without defined milestones can be inconsistent.

Based on the approved projects so far, there are several promising impacts that could contribute to **women's income generation and empowerment**, particularly in the governance of natural resource management and decision-making within their communities (particularly for CRBR and MUBRB landscapes). The progress of these developments is expected to be reflected in the reports submitted by project grantees and consolidated in the annual PIR. As discussed earlier in Section **4.1.1. Project Design,** addressing the gaps and inequalities between women and men has been a core focus of the project from the outset, as outlined in the ProDoc (Annex 10 – Gender Analysis Action Plan).

The project proposal development process emphasized the importance of including women's voices, and this practice continues throughout the project. Attendance lists in meetings and project activities, submitted with progress reports, must capture sex disaggregated data of the participants, which then informs the annual PIR. Additionally, having women in leadership roles within some of these projects fosters an enabling environment for other women to step into leadership positions over time, ensuring a long-term shift in community perspectives on women's active participation in traditionally male-dominated areas. To effectively monitor progress in gender equality, OP7 would benefit from periodic reviews against the baseline established in the Gender Analysis and Action Plan. This review, based on SMART development indicators, should ideally be conducted by the Gender Safeguard Consultant, who will be commissioned as part of the project's M&E requirements.

4.2 Progress Towards Results

4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis

To what extent have the expected outputs, outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved so far based on the corresponding indicators?

The following assessment on the "Progress towards outcome analysis" is based on several important **caveats** that have affected the progress of the report to varying extent:

1) **The slow start of OP7** – It is not unusual for countries that have just transitioned to UCP to grapple with setting the necessary modality and operations required to run a landscape approach programme. Securing the government's signature for the ProDoc was found to be a lengthy and resource-intensive process, requiring significant effort, time, and energy. Once the signature was obtained, there was little time for rest as work immediately began on organizing the project inception workshop. There were also significant challenges in helping the NSC understand the differences between OP6 and OP7. This transition requires substantial learning for all involved, and ensuring the NSC is fully informed is a critical component of gaining their support. As the decision-making body, they need sufficient information and time to make informed and impactful decisions. To compound on this, the CPMU was in the midst of wrapping up OP6 projects at the same time, with substantial financial and closing reports to complete – hence their attention and time were pulled into two directions.

2) **COVID-19** – The OP7 was launched as the world was entering a recovery period after the prolonged lockdown, and the Malaysian NGOs were no exception, struggling to regain stability. This led to delays in confirming and appointing strategic grantees. Many NGOs were still recovering from the lockdown's impact on their operations and manpower. It took time for these organizations to restructure and commit to new projects, particularly as becoming a strategic partner for OP7 requires significant planning due to the project's scale and four-year duration commitment. This slow start created a cascading effect, potentially affecting the ability to meet all EOP targets within the remaining time frame.

   The 2024 PIR indicated that COVID-19 contributed significantly to the delays during the first two years of project implementation, particularly hindering effective engagement with NGOs across the three landscapes. This complication affected the process of calling for proposals for strategic grants, with the signing of Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) delayed until March 2023, about a year after the ProDoc was signed (April 2022). As a result, the regular (small) grant application and approval process was also impacted, with the first round of approvals occurring in December 2023. Regular grantees signed their MOAs in March 2024, and many only began implementing their projects by April or May after receiving the first tranche of funding.

3) **Bottom-up approach**: The unique value of the SGP project lies in its bottom-up, grassroots approach. However, this approach also requires more time for stakeholder consultations. After strategic grantees are appointed, they must develop a landscape strategy, which involves extensive consultations with stakeholders and can take time. Once the strategy is approved, the call for regular grant proposals is issued. Strategic partners then conduct proposal writing workshops, and potential applicants must consult with their communities to shape the objectives and activities of the proposal. This process can be time-consuming, as gathering communities,

especially in remote, spread-out villages, is challenging. Additionally, explaining the project and discussing what the community wishes to achieve through the grant takes time.

4) **The targets are indicative**: As outlined during the project preparation phase and in the ProDoc, the final types and number of projects—which influences the achievement of midterm and EOP targets—depend on community demand, priorities, and the quality and quantity of submitted proposals. Therefore, there is always a possibility that targets may not be met, not necessarily because the approved projects fail to achieve the set targets, but it could be due to a lack of sufficient (and suitable) proposal submissions from the communities.

5) **Late start of the regular grant projects**: The delay also contributed to the postponement of the MTR exercise, as it was necessary to wait until sufficient community project activities were in progress to assess their impacts and effectiveness. The MTR Kick-off Meeting for all grantees took place on July 9, 2024, followed by field missions and interviews, which were conducted from the following week (July 14) through the end of August 2024. At that time, most regular grantees had only been implementing their projects for 2 to 3 months, which is still considered to be at their early stage for a two-year project. This makes it difficult to fairly assess the projects' efficiency and likelihood of achieving the targets by the end of project. After the MTR is completed, the next independent evaluation—the Terminal Evaluation (TE)—will only take place towards the end of the project period in 2026. The TE is expected to provide more critical insights into the implementation effectiveness and overall results of all OP7 projects.

The detailed assessment based on the midterm targets[10] is presented in the following Progress Towards Results Matrix (**Table 4**).

Reference - Indicator Assessment Key

Green = Achieved	***Yellow = On target to be achieved***	***Red = Not on target to be achieved***

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	**Highly Satisfactory (HS)**	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
5	**Satisfactory (S)**	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	**Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	**Unsatisfactory (U)**	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	**Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)**	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

[10] Caveat to this assessment: Some of the midterm targets are based on the number of projects approved and its proposed deliverables. It should not be considered as progress towards the EOP targets where the measure is different.

Table 4 – Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of Outcomes against midterm targets)[11] – based on the records in the 2024 PIR

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
Project Objective: To enable community organizations to take collective action for adaptive landscape management in building socio-ecological resilience in i) the Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve, Sabah; ii) the Middle and Upper Baram, Sarawak and iii) the Klang Valley, Peninsular Malaysia for global environmental benefits and sustainable development	**Mandatory Indicator** (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 3*): **Area of land restored** (hectares) SDG 15.3	SGP has supported restoration of degraded land, e.g., in Padawan areas in Sarawak.	500 ha included among the approved projects by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	1,000 ha	3,939.15 ha		S	The midterm target of 500 hectares of land included in approved projects has been significantly surpassed, with the current total at 3,939.15 hectares—nearly three times the EOP target. A majority of those are contributed by MUBRB (Sarawak) (3,616.93 ha). The final area of land restored will be validated at the EOP through the landscape studies.
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 4*): **Area of landscapes under improved practices** (excluding protected areas) (hectares) SDG 2.4; SDG 11.b; SDG 12.2; SDG 14.2; SDG 15.2; SDG 15.9; SDG 15.b	Strengthening community forest management in Klang Valley; upscaling agrobiodiversity-based systems, and developing sustainable animal husbandry practices in Sabah;	20,000 ha included among the approved projects by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	43,000 ha	24,957.57 ha		S	The midterm target has been achieved, as the NSC approved nine regular grant proposals, which will cover land areas under improved practices exceeding the 20,000-hectare midterm target. The breakdown of the landscape contributing to this figure is as follows: 1) CRBR: 11,224.75 ha, 2) MUBRB: 7,167.72 ha, and 3) KV: 6,565.10 ha. However, the project would still have to obtain more grants in order to make up the rest of the EOP target (approx. 20,000 ha) within the next two years. Therefore, the project will launch two calls for proposals that will directly contribute towards the achievement of this EOP target. As with Indicator 3 above, the final area of land will be validated through landscape strategies at the EOP. It is noted that there will be significant challenge in achieving this target by EOP due to the recent development in Sarawak. More is discussed in Section 4.2.2 (Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective)

[11] Caveat to this assessment: Some of the midterm targets are based on the number of projects approved and its proposed deliverables. It should not be considered as progress towards the EOP targets where the measure is different.

[12] Colour code this column only

[13] See the 6-point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 6*): **Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated** (million metric tons of CO2e) SDG 7.1; SDG 13.2; SDG 13.3	GHG emissions mitigated on projects implemented during earlier operational phases, including 120 kW of hydroelectric generation (12,000 tCO2e) and several projects in the AFOLU sector.	150,000 tCO2e direct lifetime GHG emissions mitigated estimated among the projects approved by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	341,500 tCO2e direct lifetime GHG emissions mitigated (335,000 tCO2e emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector, Sub-Indicator 6.1; 6,500 tCO2e emissions avoided outside the AFOLU sector, Sub-Indicator 6.2) 26,000 tCO2e indirect lifetime (outside AFOLU sector)	720,850 tCO2e GHG (based on approved proposals)		MS	The recently approved regular grants have the potential to contribute significantly to the EOP target, particularly within the AFOLU sector – thus it is indicated in Yellow - "On target to be achieved". The grants are expected to mitigate a total of 720,850 tCO2e in GHG emissions—590,850 tCO2e through forest land restoration and 130,000 tCO2e through improved land management practices, based on EX-ACT calculations. This figure is double the EOP target. However, the achievement of this target is directly dependent on the successful implementation of the projects on the ground, as the GHG emissions mitigated are a by-product of multiple projects under Core Indicators 3 and 4. In contrast, the non-AFOLU sector is unlikely to meet its portion of the EOP target, as there has been no uptake for related projects among the communities. There may be some emissions reduction through the Green Building Council (malaysiaGBC) and its CarbonScore project. However, the contribution of this grant to the EOP target will depend on the actions taken by premises owners to reduce GHG emissions, which will be closely monitored in the next reporting period.
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 11*): **#direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co-benefit of GEF investment** (individual people) SDG 1.4; SDG 1.b; SDG 5.a; SDG 7.1	Approximately 50,000 beneficiaries during OP2-OP6 (53% female, 47% male)	5,000 direct beneficiaries (of whom 2,500 are female) identified in the projects awarded by midterm	10,000 (of whom 5,000 are female)	564 people (232 are female)		S	Although the project has not achieved its midterm target of 5,000 direct beneficiaries, it should be noted that there has been a delay due to the slow start of the OP7, which requires that the landscape strategy be endorsed before the rollout of grants can take place. That said, more projects have been approved during the MTR period and it is expected that the total beneficiaries at the EOP will reach 14,574 people (of whom 7,372 are female). It is also important to note that some villages generally have more men than women, making it difficult to achieve a 50-50 gender parity among beneficiaries in such cases.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
Component 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental protection								
Outcome 1.1: Strengthened conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services through community collaborative management and sustainable livelihood interventions	**Indicator 5**: **Sustainable management of common resources,** as indicated by the number of new partnerships between CBOs and enabling stakeholders (including with NGOs, protected area management entities, private sector enterprises, government departments, etc.) for participatory conservation and restoration initiatives, disaggregated by gender	SGP Malaysia has facilitated a wide range of partnerships.	3 identified in the set of approved projects in the first call for proposals	6 new partnerships between CBOs (including 3 women-led CBOs) and enabling stakeholders for participatory conservation and restoration initiatives	16 new partnerships		HS	The midterm target has been surpassed and the EOP targets have been achieved with the 16 new partnerships established (instead of 6). This includes 3 women-led CBOs, which makes up 60% of the EOP target.
	Indicator 6: Strengthening gender quality and women's empowerment in control of natural resources, as indicated by the number of projects that are contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources by women and men SDG 5.a	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	5 of the awarded projects by midterm contribute to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men	10 projects	13 projects		HS	There are 13 projects (5 regular grant and 8 microprojects) approved which will contribute to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men. This surpasses not only the midterm target, but also the EOP target of 10 projects.
	Indicator 7: **Documentation of traditional knowledge related to biodiversity**, as indicated by the number of systems developed or strengthened where traditional biodiversity knowledge is	SGP Malaysia has extensive experience supporting traditional communities.	1 project included among the approved projects by midterm	2 systems developed or strengthened	4 projects approved		HS	The NSC has approved four grant proposals that, upon completion, will directly contribute to this indicator by documenting, preserving, and making traditional knowledge accessible to local communities. This exceeds the midterm target of one project.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
	documented, stored and made available to local people (e.g., traditional knowledge recordings, resource classification systems, etc.). SDG 15.1							
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.1	**Output 1.1.1**: Community level small grant projects on strengthening participatory conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services **Output 1.1.2:** Capacities of CBOs for participatory conservation, restoration and nature-based livelihood initiatives developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring						HS	Overall, the targets for midterm have been achieved, even surpassing the set EOP targets.
Outcome 1.2: Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at community level	**Indicator 8**: **Livelihood co-benefits**, as indicated by the number of households benefitting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions	SGP Malaysia has granted funding for clean energy interventions during previous operational phases.	100 households (50% female HH members) identified in projects approved by midterm	200 households (50% female HH members) benefitting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions	0 households		U	The outcome has not been able to achieve its midterm target. This indicator was specifically targeted at the rural communities in Sabah and Sarawak. However, to date, no households have benefited from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions. Initial consultations with stakeholders in Sabah suggested there would be demand, but this did not materialize during the call for project proposals. This has been attributed to how the amount provided by the regular grant is not sufficient to implement renewable energy projects, such as installation of solar PV. Meanwhile in Sarawak, the Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES) project has taken on the responsibility of electrifying all target villages, making the SGP support for clean energy solutions redundant. The SGP team will be taking some actions to remediate this issue, but it remains to be seen whether the RE solution will necessarily lead to an alternative livelihood. In a conservative assessment, the outcome may end up not achieving its current EOP targets and it is recommended that this target requires a review.
	Indicator 9: Strengthened resilience and increased energy security, as indicated by the number of community level renewable energy	SGP Malaysia has granted funding for RE interventions during previous operational phases.	2 projects approved by midterm	4 projects operationalized	0 projects		U	The outcome has not been able to achieve its midterm target. Despite several calls for proposals, there has been no uptake on projects related to renewable energy (RE) interventions from the community. It seems unlikely that this trend will change in the remaining years of the OP7 duration. The SGP team plans to address this issue (including the one faced in

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
	solutions (e.g., hydroelectric generators, off-grid solar PV systems, biomass gasification generator systems) operationalized. SDG 7.1							Indicator 8 above) by consulting with other potential organizations that could serve as conduits for villages in need of RE solutions. Additionally, they will discuss with the NSC the possibility of reallocating funds from this activity to other areas if the demand for RE solutions remains low. Like Indicator 8, the outcome may end up not achieving its current EOP targets and it is recommended that this target requires a review.
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.2	**Output 1.2.1**: Community level small grant projects on increasing adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and applications **Output 1.2.2**: Capacities of CBOs for community-level climate change mitigation interventions developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring						U	Under a conservative assessment, taking into consideration the barriers towards achieving the midterm targets – the outcome is not expected to achieve most of its EOP targets.
Component 2: Durable landscape resilience through participatory governance, partnership building, and knowledge management								
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened community institutions for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience	**Indicator 10: Participatory landscape management,** as indicated by the number of landscape strategies developed or strengthened through participatory consultation and based on the socio-ecological resilience landscape baseline assessments endorsed by multi-stakeholder landscape platforms SDG 1.b; SDG 11.b; SDG 15.9; SDG 17.17	Not applicable	3 landscape strategies developed	3 landscape strategies developed and endorsed by multi-stakeholder landscape platforms	3 landscape strategies developed		S	The OP7 has achieved its midterm target of developing 3 landscape strategies. The next step, which is to have them endorsed by the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms should be achieved by the EOP period.
	Indicator 11: Empowering women in natural resource governance, as indicated by the number of projects that improve the participation and decision-making of	Women's empowerment has been a priority during earlier operational phases	3 of the approved projects include measures aimed at improving participation	3 projects implemented that improve participation and decision-making of women in natural	5 projects approved		HS	The midterm target of approving three projects has been surpassed, with five projects approved. This provides additional flexibility to achieve the EOP target and increases the likelihood of implementing three projects that will enhance women's participation and decision-making in natural resource management, building on the baseline where women's empowerment has been a priority in previous OPs.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
	women in natural resource governance SDG 5.a		and decision-making of women in natural resource governance	resource governance				
	Indicator 12: Strengthening socioeconomic benefits for women, as indicated by the number of projects that target socioeconomic benefits and services for women SDG 5.a	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	5 of the approved projects address the strengthening of the socioeconomic benefits and services for women	10 projects completed that strengthens socioeconomic benefits and services for women	11 projects approved		HS	During the 2024 PIR period, the NSC has just approved an additional 11 grant proposals which, upon completion, will directly contribute to this indicator by strengthening socioeconomic benefits and services for women to meet the EOP target.
	Indicator 13: **Landscape priority actions mainstreamed into local planning instruments,** as indicated by the uptake priority actions outlined in the landscape strategies into local development plans SDG 1.b; SDG 11.b; SDG 15.9	Local and state government units are expected to have important roles on the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms	Priority actions described in the endorsed landscape strategies	3 local development plans, protected area management plans, or community forestry initiatives contain at least one priority action from the landscape strategies	0 plans		MS	Progress is underway, and the target is on track as all strategic grantees have actively engaged with relevant government agencies to integrate landscape priority actions into local development and protected area management plans. PACOS has made significant strides by being invited by Sabah Parks to participate in the District Action Committee Meetings, Technical Committee Meetings, and Management and Coordination Meetings for the Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve. These engagements focus on potential collaboration and community involvement in conservation efforts, providing a positive indication that landscape priority actions may be mainstreamed into CRBR management. In the Middle and Upper Baram River Basin (MUBRB), engagement with the Sarawak Economic Planning Unit (EPU) initially faced challenges but saw a breakthrough this year, gaining the EPU's support for the OP7 project following intervention from MNRES. Efforts have also been made to consult local and state governments for advice and input on the 'live' landscape strategy document, which serves as a mechanism for incorporating landscape priority actions into Sarawak's local development plans. Despite the above, the District Officer (DO) of Telang

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
								Usan indicated a general support for project of such nature, as the role of the DO also involves looking into ways to uplift the socioeconomic welfare of the communities within its district. However, the DO would like to be kept more informed about the OP7 projects that are happening there and how it benefits the communities involved. Meanwhile, in Klang Valley, MNS continues its long-standing collaboration with Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to preserve green spaces in the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2024. MNS is also working with MNRES' Biodiversity Management Division to integrate the OECM framework into national policy, a key step toward providing additional protection to non-protected areas, such as urban forests. At this stage, with two years remaining until the EOP, there do not appear to be any foreseeable major obstacles that would prevent the achievement of this target. However, if integrating the landscape priorities into local development action plans proves challenging, it may still be achievable through community forestry initiatives.
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.1	**Output 2.1.1**: Multi-stakeholder platforms established and/or strengthened for improved governance of target landscapes **Output 2.1.2**: Landscape strategies for effective governance developed based on results of participatory socio-ecological resilience baseline assessments in the selected intervention landscapes **Output 2.1.3**: Partnership building and policy advocacy among governmental stakeholders, civil society, financial institutions, and private sector for facilitating broader adoption of participatory approaches						S	All three outputs have been achieved to varying degrees by midterm. The multi-stakeholder platforms are in progress and will utilize existing structures (where available, such as in Sabah) rather than creating new ones if possible. The landscape strategies have been formulated by the strategic partners, endorsed by the NSC, and are pending approval from the multi-stakeholder platforms. Additionally, partnerships and policy advocacy efforts have been actively pursued by the strategic partners since the start of their appointment in OP7.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
Outcome 2.2: Enabling environment for upscaling and replication strengthened through effective knowledge management of best practices and approaches	**Indicator 14**: Mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, number of women-led projects supported SDG 5.a	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	3 of the approved projects by midterm are led by women	6 of the implemented projects are led by women	9 projects		HS	The OP7 has achieved above and beyond the target EOP by the midterm.
	Indicator 15: Upscaling initiated, as indicated by the number of dialogues organized with government entities on upscaling best practices SDG 15.9	Upscaling is enhanced under the socio-ecological resilience landscape approach, with engagement of multiple stakeholders and collective action to achieve impact at scale	1 dialogue organized	2 dialogues organized	0 dialogues		S	The strategic partners in CRBR and MUBRB have scheduled their respective dialogues with key stakeholders for the next reporting period. Meanwhile, Klang Valley has been engaging with TNB to scale up tree-planting initiatives. However, this engagement is not in the form of a multi-stakeholder dialogue anticipated for the EOP target. Nonetheless, there appears to be no obstacles to achieving the EOP target of two organized dialogues, which will be contributed by the CRBR and MUBRB landscapes.
	Indicator 16: **Knowledge shared**, as indicated by the number of project and portfolio experiences and lessons systematised and codified into case studies produced and disseminated, and cumulative number of views of the case studies from the SGP website, social media, or through direct dissemination SDG 17.6	Knowledge management is one of the hallmarks of SGP, with each approved project required to develop a case study to document best practices and lessons	Case studies from completed projects under preparation, and views tracked on SGP website, social media, and through direct dissemination	10 case studies disseminated, with 500 cumulative views of the case studies on the SGP website, social media, or through direct dissemination	0 case studies		S	At the time of the MTR, regular grants and microgrants had only been in implementation for three months, with additional grants still being approved between June and September 2024. As expected in the ProDoc, there will be no case studies completed by midterm since the project is still in its early stages. Based on the number of projects approved under OP7, there will be enough case studies to meet the EOP target. However, OP7 could benefit from having a detailed timeline for editorial (including translation, where required), publication, and distribution in order to meet the EOP targets within schedule.
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.2	**Output 2.2.1**: Knowledge from innovative project interventions compiled, systemized, and disseminated across the landscapes, across the country, and to the global SGP network						S	Given that there is a target to produce case studies (Indicator 16) and there will be multi-stakeholder platforms for knowledge exchange and information dissemination, this output is linked to those targets.

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Midterm Target	End of Project Target	Level at MT	Midterm Level & Assessment[12]	Midterm Level & Assessment[13]	Justification for Rating
Component 3: Monitoring and evaluation								
Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation	Indicator 17: Number of National Steering Committee meeting convened	0	4 meetings	8 meetings	5 meetings		HS	The NSC meetings have been convening routinely based on the multi-year workplan (twice a year). At the time of MTR, they have convened 5 times – which is more than the midterm target of 4. This is perhaps necessary to accelerate the review and approval process of the grant applications to meet the EOP targets.
	Indicator 18: Preparation and initial implementation of a sustainability plan	0	Zero draft sustainability plan available	Sustainability plan completed	Not completed		S	While no zero draft exists at the time of the MTR, the plan is to have a sustainability plan completed by the end of the project period. However, this target should be achievable without significant challenges, as there is still ample time to prepare one.
Outputs to achieve outcome 3.1	**Output 3.1.1**: Project implementation and results effectively monitored and evaluated						S	The regular and small grantees have been submitting their routine reports to the SGP implementation team for review and incorporation into the 2023 and 2024 PIRs.
Indicative activities under Output 3.1.1	**3.1.1.1.** Organise the project inception workshop, including review of multi-year work plan, project results framework, gender analysis and gender action plan, stakeholder engagement plan, social and environmental screening procedure, etc., and prepare an inception report to provide guidance for initiating the implementation of the project. **3.1.1.2.** Organise NSC meetings, providing strategic guidance to the country programme management unit and approving project grants. **3.1.1.3.** Monitor and evaluate the project progress, risks and results, facilitating adaptive management, and prepare annual PIR reports and other project progress reports. **3.1.1.4.** Monitor the implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan. **3.1.1.5.** Monitor the implementation of the gender action plan, review annually and regularly update the SESP, with the support of a Gender-Safeguards Consultant. **3.1.1.6.** Assess midterm achievement of GEF core indicator targets and other project results. **3.1.1.7.** Procure and support an independent midterm review of the project, according to UNDP and GEF guidelines. **3.1.1.8.** Assess end-of-project achievement of GEF core indicator targets and other project results. **3.1.1.9.** Procure and support an independent terminal evaluation of the project, according to UNDP and GEF guidelines. **3.1.1.10.** Prepare and initiate the implementation of a project sustainability plan.						S	Most of the indicative activities have either been completed or are already in progress as outlined in the annual PIR. The midterm achievement of the GEF core indicators is currently being assessed through this independent MTR exercise. The remaining activities are expected to proceed according to the annual workplan without foreseeable barriers.

4.2.2 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

At this point, some of the more significant barriers towards achieving the project objective currently are as below:

Limited time may pose a challenge in meeting some of the EOP targets, largely due to the delayed start of OP7. This delay was primarily because Malaysia was transitioning for the first time from the SGP Global to the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP), which required considerable time, and the CPMU faced a learning curve. The OP7 ProDoc was designed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was the first time that the GEF ProDoc template had changed. Additionally, OP7 was launched at a time when NGOs were recovering from the prolonged lockdown, which had impacted both their operations and manpower. It took time for many of these organizations to restructure and commit to new projects, especially given that becoming a strategic partner for OP7 requires significant planning due to the project's scale and four-year duration. This slow start created a ripple effect, potentially impacting the ability to achieve all the EOP targets within the remaining time frame.

Partnership with state and local governments. While some landscapes have benefited from positive interactions and collaboration with their respective state and local governments, which is promising for Indicator 13's target, continuous efforts will be needed to ensure ongoing support for the landscape projects. This support is crucial to avoid any arising barriers towards the achievement of any targets. More importantly, any unresolved issues related to land rights and land use that could compromise the projects must be addressed to ensure they progress as planned.

Co-financing may not be forthcoming as how it is presented in the ProDoc. Although financial delivery accelerated during the reporting period (currently at 71% committed funds for projects), the cumulative financial progress remains lower than expected at this stage of implementation, placing the project at risk of not achieving its intended financing targets. It is also important to note that regular grantees have found it difficult to meet the 1:1 co-financing ratio. While they could revert to in-kind contributions, some of the projects would require funds to ensure that the project remains sustainable.

What support has been required and received from UNDP in the project implementation?

The project held a training and knowledge exchange workshop on 22-24 May 2023, providing grantees with training on project management, implementation, monitoring, and reporting, and gathering feedback, where a UNDP CO consultant also conducted a session on knowledge management and communications. The UNDP Accelerator Lab to implement a real-time carbon emissions sequestration monitoring system in Klang Valley urban forests with several partners such as the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), Resource Stewardship Consultants Sdn Bhd (RESCU) and the Friends of Bukit Kiara.

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

4.3.1 Management Arrangements

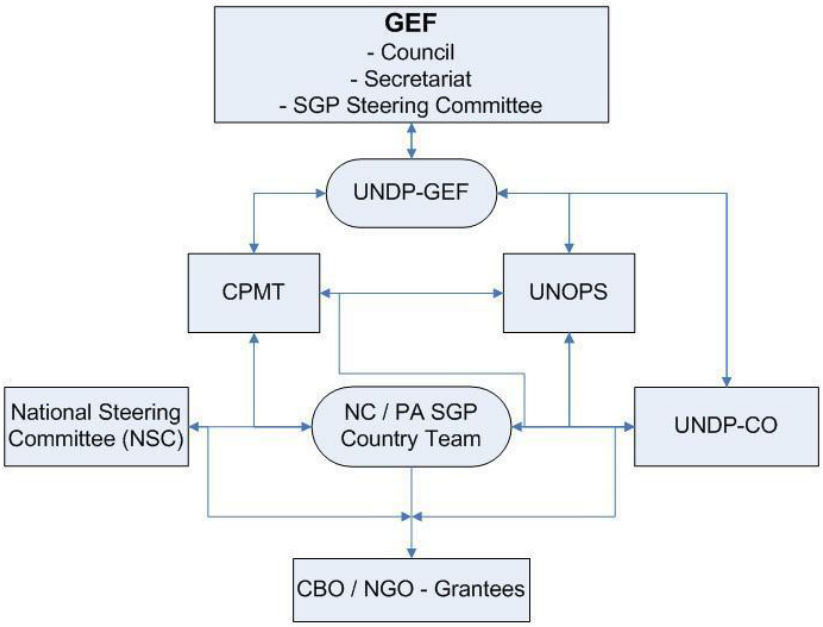


Figure 2 Organisational Structure (Source: SGP website[14])

Refer to **Section 3.4 Project implementation arrangements** for more details.

The project implementation arrangements for OP7 are adequate, and it mirrors the general structure that is present in other countries within the UCP. While the responsibilities and reporting lines are clear in principle, the actual implementation of the arrangements can be described as challenging to the UNDP CO and CPMU, which faced a learning curve rolling out OP7.

The management arrangements for the project, with UNOPS as the implementing agency and UNDP responsible for ensuring success of OP7, have encountered some challenges that may impact its overall effectiveness. One key issue has been the coordination between UNDP CO and CPMU. As the latter has operated independently in the previous OPs, there seems to be a challenge in the reporting arrangements to the UNDP CO (which is a new requirement). More on this in **Section 4.3.7 Reporting.**

The project's organizational structure outlines key assurance roles for the UNDP Global Coordinator for the UCPs, UNOPS, and the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor. However, it has been expressed during an interview there has been some confusion regarding task ownership and decision-making, particularly in project management and audit planning. While multiple stakeholders are involved, clearer direction on responsibilities could further enhance project management. Nevertheless, the UNDP CO has rendered management support required by the country team whenever the need arises.

Another issue raised during the MTR interviews was the limited role of UNDP CO in shaping the project, despite its responsibilities as the commissioning unit for the MTR, management and oversight body, and its accountability directly to GEF as the funder. UNDP CO is primarily tasked with oversight and often bears the consequences of project-related issues, including having limited influence over

[14] https://www.sgpmalaysia.org/index.cfm?&menuid=15

key decisions such as engaging additional consultants or increasing the hiring budget to be able to do so. While UNDP CO can provide input on the MTR Terms of Reference (TOR), it does not have final authority over contracting decisions and bears the responsibility for signing off on quality assurance.

For instance, in contracting the MTR consultant, it was found (by both UNDP CO and the CPMU) that the allocated budget was found to be insufficient to hire a team, which would have been the preferred outcome. While the CPMU consulted UNDP CO and have them clear the hiring decision together with the Regional Technical Advisor (RTA)[15], it was expressed that UNDP CO, as a commissioning unit for the MTR, expressed a preference for greater control over the process, such as the ability to contribute additional funding to hire a consultant team. This, however, was not feasible due to system constraints that do not allow for such arrangements. Once the project is approved, GEF policies apply, thus leaving very limited room for changes to the budget allocation.

Over time, GEF has increased its compliance requirements, subjecting UNDP CO to global audits that assess its support for GEF projects (i.e. the 2020 and 2022 audits for the UNDP Execution Support to GEF-financed Projects). These audits often necessitate the development of action plans to align with GEF standards. As one of the largest development agencies receiving GEF funding, UNDP CO is expected to prioritize compliance with these requirements. This outlines the stake of which UNDP CO have in the MTR delivery as it has direct implications to their compliance requirement. While this issue may be resolved if UNDP CO assumes project execution in the upcoming OP8 (and therefore, having greater/ direct control over the budget and hiring decision of the review consultants), this feedback is retained in this MTR to provide insights into the current challenges faced within OP7.

Despite the challenges mentioned, interviews with individuals familiar with other country SGP programmes highlighted that Malaysia benefits significantly from the strong support of its UNDP CO, as compared to other countries. The Country Office play a vital part in fostering successful outcomes of the project, especially through its close collaboration with government ministries, leveraging key relationships to enhance project success.

In summary, the **internal management arrangements (primarily between UNDP CO and CPMU**) have faced challenges related to monitoring and reporting, communication, clarity of roles and decision-making. While progress has been made to address some of these issues, there are opportunities to further strengthen these areas to ensure greater efficiency and smoother project implementation moving forward. By fostering clearer communication, setting mutual expectations, better coordination, and more defined roles between the CPMU, UNDP CO, and other related stakeholders, the project's governance and operational processes can be more effectively aligned with its goals.

At the **NSC level**, while the committee plays a critical role in ensuring that proposed projects align with national priorities and context, concerns were raised about the disproportionate focus on discussing technical details rather than evaluating projects from a broader strategic perspective. It is deemed that CPMU would have already vetted the proposals based on its extensive experience, suggesting that detailed technical reviews at the NSC meetings might be redundant. The focus on technicalities often leads to grants being returned to applicants for revision, contributing to delays in the approval process. A more efficient governance structure, or proposal approval approach, is needed to avoid these recurring issues and streamline project approvals.

On matters related to **gender**, the Executing Agency and Implementing Partner have the capacity to deliver benefits to and involve women, as demonstrated in the encouraging submissions of projects

[15] Meanwhile, UNOPS provides the implementation service in this process, i.e. contracting the consultant.

that caters to women participation and leadership. Based on the approved projects at midterm, there are:

1. Three approved projects are led by women from community-based organizations (CBOs).
2. Five approved projects incorporate measures to enhance women's participation and decision-making in natural resource governance.
3. Thirteen approved projects aim to promote equal access to and control of natural resources for both women and men.
4. Eleven projects approved that will address strengthening socioeconomic benefits and services for women.

Some of these projects focus on empowering women by involving them in mapping and natural resource inventory activities for community protocol development. The protocols enable women to assert control over natural resources, reinforcing their rights to self-determination and decision-making. Their participation helps address gender disparities and promotes inclusive governance. With the support of SGP projects emphasizing equity and women's participation in community protocol development, these initiatives can further enhance women's roles, knowledge, and leadership, resulting in more comprehensive and impactful outcomes for both communities and the environment.

In terms of **gender balance among project staff**, the teams are predominantly female. This is likely due to the existing staff composition within the organization, particularly the CPMU and the UNDP CO oversight team, both of which are entirely women. At the **Project Board** level (**NSC**), the gender composition is slightly skewed towards male members, with eight men and six women (at the time of writing). Nevertheless, the recently appointed GEF Focal Point is a female, alongside the currently serving co-chair who is also a woman. Whether having two women in leadership position necessarily shift the balance toward more equal gender representation in the Project Board remains to be seen as it ultimately depends on the power dynamics within the board. Notably, the GEF Small Grants Programme Operational Guidelines (Annex 18 of the ProDoc) specified that one NSC member should be designated as the focal point for gender expertise, who in this case is the current co-chair (Dr Yuwana Podin). It is safe to assume that gender issues could be well considered at the NSC level.

4.3.2 Work planning

As discussed earlier in Section **4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis**, the OP7 took longer than expected to gain momentum at the initial stage of the project. In summary, the slow start of OP7 is common due to challenges faced by countries transitioning for the first time to the UCP, compounded by the impact of COVID-19. NGOs, affected by the pandemic, took time to recover, restructure, and commit to new projects, delaying the appointment of strategic grantees.

This slow start, with its cascading effects on the rest of the project deliverables, may impact the ability to achieve all EOP targets within the remaining timeframe. Additionally, the bottom-up approach of the SGP, while valuable, requires extensive stakeholder consultations and community engagement, which can be time-consuming, especially in remote areas. This process has further contributed to delays in project implementation.

The challenges faced by OP7, such as the slow start due to the transition to the UCP and the impact of COVID-19, are likely one-time issues. These were caused by the need to establish new systems and disruptions from the pandemic, both of which are temporary. While the bottom-up approach requires time for stakeholder engagement, this is a built-in aspect of the program and not an ongoing issue if

adequate time is properly allocated to accommodate this process. Future phases are expected to proceed more smoothly once these initial hurdles are overcome.

Despite the initial challenges, the CPMU is guided by an annual workplan to ensure that planned activities are clearly outlined by quarterly timeframes, in line with the project's results framework and logframe. This workplan, prepared by the SGP National Coordinator (UNOPS), is reviewed by the Head of Sustainable and Resilient Development (UNDP CO) and the Officer in Charge (UNDP CO).

The work-planning process is results-based, which is also demonstrated by the completion of two annual PIR reports since the project began in 2022. These reports provide updates on project progress, drawing on information provided in the progress reports submitted by strategic partners and regular grantees. Additional supporting documents and evidence are annexed to ensure accountability and transparency. The PIR reports are reviewed by the UNDP BPPS Regional Technical Advisor and the UNDP Country Office Programme Officer. There is also a summary of logframe and indicators that are used as a tracking tool that captures the overview and updates of all the projects approved, and their contributions to the indicators and targets.

4.3.3 Finance and co-finance

The total project cost amounts to USD 5,250,000, funded by a GEF grant of USD 2,500,000 administered by UNDP, along with additional support totalling USD 2,750,000. As the GEF Implementing Agency, UNDP is responsible for overseeing the GEF resources and the cash co-financing that is transferred to its bank account. Further details of the financial planning and management is in Section VIII of the ProDoc.

According to the 2024 PIR, the project has recorded a low cumulative delivery rate against the total approved amount in the Project Document work plan and a low annual delivery rate against the approved 2023 Annual Work Plan. Additionally, grant disbursements have been delayed due to capacity challenges among the potential CSOs/NGOs in implementing the projects. With the project set for operational closure on 20 April 2026 and less than two years of implementation remaining, and no expectation of an extension, the implementation progress has been rated as Moderately Satisfactory by the UNDP Country Office Programme Officer.

Each year during the PIR, the NC sends emails to co-financers with documents outlining their initial commitments (letters of co-financing) made during the Project Document development stage. A draft letter is also provided for them to update with the actual amounts. However, despite follow-up emails, some co-financers have not responded. While co-financing letters from CSO/CBO partners show good progress in meeting the amounts committed in the ProDoc, obtaining written evidence of co-financing from other partners, such as federal and state governments and larger NGOs, has been more challenging.

To date, there haven't been changes to the fund allocation that require budget revisions. However, there might be one in the coming future in order to address the issue faced by **Indicator 8** (*Livelihood co-benefits, as indicated by the number of households benefiting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions)* and **Indicator 9** (*Strengthened resilience and increased energy security, as indicated by the number of community level renewable energy solutions (e.g., hydroelectric generators, off-grid solar PV systems, biomass gasification generator systems) operationalized).*

As discussed in **Section 4.2.1 Progress towards outcomes analysis** and **Table 4 – Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of Outcomes against midterm targets) – based on the records in the**

2024 PIR – there may be a need to discuss with the NSC the possibility of reallocating funds from this activity to other areas if the demands from the community and submission of proposals for RE solution remains low. These are the only two indicators that are expected to not meet the EOP targets, and any remedial measures to address this should be expedited soon given the limited time left to the OP7.

For the ease of tracking and reporting for the CPMU, UNOPS provided a Financial Management Tool (as an example) to allow both sides to track and monitor the budget and make informed decisions seamlessly.

Based on the co-financing monitoring table (**Table 5**), the delivery of both committed grant and in-kind funds has been slow, despite the project being halfway through its implementation. As a result, it is difficult to determine whether co-financing is being utilized effectively to support the project's objectives. During field missions, some grantees reported receiving additional funding that complements the SGP project, but they did not realize that this could be reported as co-financing. Guidance to improve the co-financing reporting from the grantees could help address this gap in co-financing delivery.

The CPMU regularly contacts co-financing partners for updates on their contributions, but responses have been inconsistent. For partners uncomfortable with formal documentation, an alternative approach has been to document discussions about co-financing contributions in meeting minutes. While this method offers a practical way to track and acknowledge support, it was not encouraged based on feedback received during this MTR draft review. The GEF requirements explicitly mandate that co-financing partners submit formal letters to update their contributions. As a temporary measure, using meeting minutes as a reference could still be helpful when following up on the formal letter submissions.

Table 5 Co-financing monitoring table

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
Recurrent expenditures	UNDP	In-kind	200,000	47,582.46 (in-kind)	23.8
Recurrent expenditures	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (MNRES)	Grant	200,000	80,000.00 (in-kind)	40.0
Direct co-financing of community projects generally on a 1:1 basis	CSO	In-kind	1,100,000	67, 953.97 (in-kind)	6.0
		Grant	550,000	30,212.16 (Grant)	
Recurrent expenditures	Sabah Parks	In-kind	100,000	0	0
CSO - Investment mobilised	The Habitat Foundation	Grant	100,000	25,000 (in-kind)	25.0
Donor Agency – Investment mobilised	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) ICCA GSI	Grant	500,000	200,000 (in-kind)	40.0

4.3.4 Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

According to the ProDoc, Component 3 (Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, M&E) was deliberated to ensure that project results are achieved, and safeguards are respected by consolidating, interpreting, and reporting M&E inputs from individual grant projects. These include the following approaches:

- **Project Inception Workshop**: A key M&E milestone to validate the project document, governance arrangements, stakeholder roles, risk assessment, and work plan. A report will be shared with NSC members.
- **CMPU Role**: Oversees monitoring of performance metrics with input from CBO grantees and feedback from individual projects. M&E also includes assessing the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Action Plan.
- **GEF Evaluations**: Two independent evaluations—midterm review and terminal evaluation—will be carried out, with assessments of GEF core indicators conducted by a local institute or consultant prior to each review.
- **Sustainability Plan**: Focuses on ensuring long-term sustainability of multi-stakeholder platforms, mainstreaming landscape strategies, continued CBO participation, and securing follow-up funding for knowledge management.

While the approaches listed above do not necessarily be in parallel with national systems, they are nonetheless useful in evaluating progress toward the project's objectives, with the findings informing adaptive management for project durability according to GEF's guideline.

Additional tools may be beneficial, as some UCP countries have already transitioned to digitalizing their M&E processes, which results in more transparent and organized reporting and tracking. Digital M&E tools allow grantees to input data in real-time, giving all involved immediate access to updates. This is particularly valuable for geographically dispersed projects, as it eliminates delays from physical reporting and reduces the need for frequent site visits, making it more cost-effective. Project progress can also be tracked transparently, with a clear audit trail. However, a limitation is that some project sites lack reliable internet access, and certain grantees may still require one-on-one guidance on how to submit their reports. In addition, digitalising M&E may only be feasible if there are resources and staff support that are dedicated to ensuring smooth transition, operation and sustainability of this approach.

According to Annex 4 (Monitoring Plan) of the ProDoc, the key personnel responsible for data collection are the SGP National Coordinator, the M&E Consultant, and the Gender-Safeguards Consultant. So far, the project is amid engaging a Gender-Safeguards Consultant, and perhaps later, an M&E consultant.

The budget for M&E, which is presented in **Table 6 – Monitoring and evaluation plan and budget** of the ProDoc (excerpt below) was set at a total of USD125,000 – comprising 5% of the GEF project grant. It is not made known in the ProDoc how these figures were allocated but given that M&E is an important element of GEF's requirement, the percentage can be considered rather low.

Table 6: Monitoring and evaluation plan and budget

GEF M&E requirements	Indicative costs (US$)	Time frame
Inception Workshop	26,240	Within 60 days of CEO endorsement of this project.
Inception Report[59]	None	Within 90 days of CEO endorsement of this project.
M&E of GEF core indicators and project results framework	28,140	Annually and at mid-point and closure..
GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)[60]	None	Annually typically between June-August
Monitoring of gender action plan, SESP, stakeholder engagement plan	20,140	On-going
Supervision missions[61]	None	Annually
Independent Mid-term Review (MTR)	25,240	31 December 2024
Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE)	25,240	1 June 2026
TOTAL indicative COST	**125,000**	5% of GEF project grant

The MTR and TE are two independent evaluations that require the commissioning of an external team of consultants to conduct the reviews. However, the indicative costs allocated for these evaluations, which typically involve rigorous assessments and specialized expertise, does not align with the current market rates in Malaysia. This had made it challenging to engage suitable consultants (even for this MTR itself), particularly those who are familiar with the evaluation process and guidelines for GEF-financed projects, which often require experience due to its complexity and requirements. The insufficient allocation of budget for M&E (particularly for evaluation) is a common problem that was also captured in the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines' *Section 7.4 Evaluation Implementation*[16].

4.3.5 Stakeholder engagement

As discussed thoroughly in Section **4.1.1. Project Design,** local and national government stakeholders are actively engaged and consulted throughout the project implementation process, particularly during the development of landscape strategies and in NSC meetings. Overall, they have expressed support for the project's objectives, and depending on the landscape, they provide advice and on-the-ground support to varying degrees. While government stakeholders may not participate directly in project decision-making outside the NSC, continuous consultations ensure that the project aligns with existing policies, management plans, and regulations at the project site. This approach does not imply that official approvals from government bodies are required to implement any of the OP7 projects, but it is critical to consider all perspectives to mitigate potential issues and ensure smooth project execution.

Outside of the NSC meetings, federal government bodies have limited direct involvement in project implementation, relying primarily on the CPMU to monitor and report on the project progress. Some NSC members have noted that it is challenging to fully understand how certain projects align with national priorities solely by reviewing written proposals. As a result, they have expressed interest in visiting project sites to observe firsthand, better understand the context, and explore potential ways to support project implementation if challenges arise (case in point, by writing a formal letter to gain

[16] https://erc.undp.org/pdf/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf

the support from the Sarawak state government for the MUBRB landscape project). However, they also acknowledged their ability to attend site visits is often constrained by other priorities and lack of time.

The extent of **public awareness and participation** in the projects is not fully evident at this stage, as it is not one of the core indicators required by OP7. However, strategic partners such as MNS have taken steps to raise public awareness by promoting their landscape strategy, *'Rangkaian Urban Green Spaces*' (RUGS), through various platforms, including a news article[17], a radio podcast[18], and a dedicated website launched in November 2023[19]. Notably, MNS collaborated with GERIMIS / Creative 126, a women-led group, to curate and design the RUGS website in August 2023. The website serves as a communication tool to provide the public with information, plans, and updates on project activities. Additionally, MNS published a special issue on RUGS in the Malayan Nature Journal in September 2024. These efforts fall under Objective 5 (Knowledge Management) of their strategic project plan (Activity 5.3), which aims to increase public interest in nature-based recreational activities and attract potential funders, sponsors, and Environmental Social Governance (ESG) partnerships. At this stage, the monitoring and reporting of these objectives have yet to be captured in the second progress report – hence it is not possible to assess whether the public awareness have contributed to the progress towards achievement of the overall project objectives.

Apart from that, overall public awareness will be addressed toward the end of the project through the publication of case studies that document best practices and lessons learned from OP7 projects. These case studies will be shared via the SGP website, social media platforms, and direct dissemination channels.

The project design, proposal development, progress reporting, and M&E requirements integrate **gender considerations** to ensure ongoing engagement with women. Although OP7 does not explicitly target girls due to the nature of the projects, it is expected to produce positive outcomes for both women and men. However, a particular emphasis is placed on empowering women to have a greater role in natural resource management and decision-making. In the urban setting of Klang Valley, three out of five projects are led by women, who actively participate in discussions on natural resource governance with both CSOs and government authorities. This trend is not unusual in Malaysia, where many environmental NGOs are led by women.

As for Sabah, there has been a stronger focus on integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in the development of project proposals in CRBR (based on the 2024 PIR assessment). Field missions revealed that women in these communities play a significant leadership role in guiding the direction and progress of the projects. In communities like Kampung Bolotikun, where an existing committee is in place, task delegation is clearer among the different sub-groups. These include groups managing the two *tagals* — the community forest and riparian system, both protected and managed for conservation and subsistence purposes — and a separate ecotourism sub-group. The tagal management sub-groups, typically comprising men (there are also some women in the forest tagal), handle the physically demanding tasks that require traveling deep into the forest, while the ecotourism sub-group, led by women, which also include socioeconomic activities such as crafting items for sale.

[17] https://www.thestar.com.my/metro/metro-news/2023/09/25/difficult-green-task

[18] https://www.bfm.my/podcast/bigger-picture/earth-matters/rantaian-urban-green-spaces

[19] https://www.rugs.my/

In contrast, in MUBRB (Sarawak), cultural norms have traditionally limited women's involvement in resource governance or leadership (although women have rights to inherit land from their ancestors). There are exceptions, though, such as in Long Tungan, where women have stepped up to take on leadership roles to ensure that the project remains viable. In general, women in the communities (both in Sabah and Sarawak) tend to take on tasks and responsibilities that keep them close to home, such as farming, tending animals, and germinating seeds in village nurseries. This allows them to balance their participation in the project with household duties and childcare. Nonetheless, women are expected to participate in developing and managing the *tagang* system[20].

The project can further enhance its gender benefits through the advice of the Gender Safeguard Consultant who will be hired to advice the project team on what would be the best way forward.

4.3.6 Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

There are two sets of interrelated risks identified, one which is presented in the **UNDP Risk Register (Annex 6 of the ProDoc)** and the other from the **Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, SESP (Annex 5 of the ProDoc)**. They are as listed below:

UNDP Risk Register (Annex 6 of the ProDoc) – all identified as having "**Moderate**" impact and probability:

Risk 1	Community-based organizations (CBOs) have a low level of technical and management capacity to implement grant projects.
Risk 2	Low capacities of the different CBOs to coordinate with each other and with different government levels.
Risk 3	Impacts of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic or similar public health crisis on the continuity and delivery of the project.
Risk 4	Impacts of exchange rate fluctuations and/or a possible global economic recession on project delivery.

Social and Environmental Screening Procedure, SESP (Annex 5 of the ProDoc) – all identified as having "**Moderate**" impact and probability:

Risk 1	Vulnerable or marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples, might be excluded from fully participating in decisions regarding priority actions on lands claimed by them and including utilization of natural resources; and there may be a heightened risk of vulnerability due to a prolonged or recurrent outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic or similar crisis.
Risk 2	Project activities and approaches might not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and girls and ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit; and there is a risk that a prolonged or recurrent COVID-19 pandemic would exacerbate gender inequality and possibly also increase gender-based violence.
Risk 3	Poorly designed or executed project activities could damage critical ecosystems, including through the introduction of invasive alien species during land or forest rehabilitation or restoration, or result in human-wildlife conflicts.
Risk 4	Micro hydropower installations may alter environmental flows, possibly resulting in adverse impacts to local ecology.

[20] The "Tagang system" in Sarawak, adapted from Sabah's "Tagal system", is a community-led approach to managing water resources. It temporarily prohibits fishing to restore fish populations, prevent pollution, and promote sustainable fishing. The system supports both environmental conservation and socioeconomic development, relying on strong cooperation between the community and government.

Risk 5	Project interventions, e.g., involving the installation and use of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies, may result in release of pollutants to the environment and in the generation of hazardous waste.
Risk 6	Climatic unpredictability, periodic droughts, changes in rainfall distribution, altered frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures may affect project results, including agroecological practices, rehabilitation of degraded terrestrial and coastal-marine ecosystems, etc.; and a potential economic downturn as a result of a prolonged or recurrent COVID-19 pandemic (or similar) may increase the vulnerability and coping capacities of local communities.
Risk 7	Local community members involved in project activities may be at a heightened risk of virus exposure, e.g., stakeholder meetings, workshops and trade fairs, community field work, etc.

The risks listed in the **UNDP Risk Register** remain largely relevant, with the exception of Risk 3 (*Impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic or similar public health crises on project continuity and delivery*). While it's not essential to reassess this risk, it could be reviewed, if necessary, as the likelihood of its (re)occurrence is considered low in the last couple of years (also see Risk 7 of the SESP).

Regarding **Risk 4** (*Impacts of exchange rate fluctuations and/or a potential global economic recession on project delivery*), OP7 projects initially benefited from a favourable exchange rate earlier this year. However, with the steady strengthening of the Malaysian ringgit since August, there could be a minor impact on the budget in the short term. Despite this, the risk does not currently justify revision, as the effects are expected to be less significant compared to those that might arise from a global economic recession. Nevertheless, the project has undertaken annual budget reviews and may consider adjustments to mitigate the potential impacts of exchange rate fluctuations and global economic recession on the project.

To cope with a risk related to the relatively low level of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) technical and management capacity (**Risk 1**), the project has, since inception, engaged closely with CBOs in all three landscapes to assist them in developing quality grant proposals. This has been done in close collaboration with relevant government stakeholders and the UNDP CO. The project has followed the participatory approach developed under the Community Development and Knowledge Management to mitigate a risk of low capacity for CBOs to coordinate with each other and with different government levels. Members of some of the CBOs have demonstrated a positive perspective towards learning new skills and increasing their capacity through the project during the field mission discussions.

Linked to Risk 1 is the fact that many OP7 projects are led by community members who do not reside in the villages (particularly for MUBRB and CRBR). While villagers are actively involved in the projects, they remain dependent on the leadership and guidance of the project leader or project committee. This is particularly true in the cases of Long Moh, Long Anap, and Long Tungan (MUBRB), where the project leaders are based in Miri. The journey to these villages takes 6 to 9 hours on logging roads, depending on weather conditions, requiring a four-wheel drive vehicle; and it usually costs between RM200 – RM300 per trip. The leadership team, which has the capacity to manage the projects, funds, and reporting, is based in Miri due to existing work commitments or medical reasons. Although they have committed to returning to the project sites regularly to ensure smooth operations, their inconsistent presence may hinder the momentum of the project. To mitigate this, a local resident has been appointed as the go-to person in the absence of the project leader. However, it is crucial that consistent communication is maintained to ensure decision-making and project monitoring proceed without disruption.

The risks listed in the **Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)** and the risk factor assigned to it are still relevant to various degree. There may be a need to revisit Risk 4 and 5, which are related to the possible adverse environmental impacts from the RE projects within the community. Reason because there are no projects currently that contributes to **Indicator 8**[21] and **Indicator 9**[22] at the moment despite various calls for proposal submissions.

Risk 6, particularly concerning climatic unpredictability, should be revised, as heavy rainfall has caused significant issues such as landslides and road damage, hindering access to project and nursery sites in the short and medium term. The likelihood of heavy rainfall patterns is expected to increase in the near future. For instance, the project at Long Moh is facing difficulties accessing the site in Nawan due to the complete collapse of its only access road after a heavy downpour. The alternative route involves a complex arrangement: traveling by river, trekking through the forest, and then taking another boat to reach the site. This route is not feasible for most villagers involved, as some have physical limitations and cannot make the round trip within a day. Additionally, transporting tree seedlings via this route is challenging, as it limits the number that can be carried and the risk of damage to the seedlings also increases. The CPMU and the strategic partner are in discussion with the regular grantees to find the best way forward to navigate this issue, which will likely cause delay to the project progress.

The 2024 PIR identified low financial delivery as a critical risk. Although financial delivery improved during the reporting period, the cumulative figures remain below expectations at this stage of implementation, putting the project at risk of underperforming against the ProDoc workplan. To address this, the project is encouraged to expedite efforts in securing additional co-financing in the upcoming period to meet its initial financial commitments.

It is recommended that risk management should be included as one of the main agenda items in the National Steering Committee to ensure that community-based projects are resilient, sustainable, and able to adapt to challenges, ultimately leading to better project outcomes and long-term success.

4.3.7 Reporting

The use of UNDP CO's transparency and reporting systems has posed certain challenges. While the project's progress is tracked through UNDP CO's Quantum risk register, updates on OP7 are often delayed, with the CPMU managing data entry manually. Despite having access to UNDP email, the CPMU does not have access to the Quantum Risk Register[23] and have to do it through an intermediary person. Although risk monitoring falls under the responsibility of UNDP CO (through *Atlas*), the necessary inputs must come from the CPMU. Granting the team at least view-only access to the portal would provide them with a clearer understanding of what is required, reducing miscommunication and delays. Without such access, the additional workload falls on the National Coordinator, ultimately affecting the efficiency of reporting.

It was also expressed that the new GEF compliance and monitoring requirements have added extra workload. While UNDP CO provides oversight, the SGP team is still required to report to SGP Global through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and submit the Project Implementation Report (PIR) to

[21] Indicator 8: Livelihood co-benefits, as indicated by the number of households benefiting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions

[22] Indicator 9: Strengthened resilience and increased energy security, as indicated by the number of community level renewable energy solutions (e.g., hydroelectric generators, off-grid solar PV systems, biomass gasification generator systems) operationalized.

[23] This is because the CPMU were hired through UNOPS, not UNDP CO.

GEF, alongside additional reporting from UNDP CO, such as the Midyear Progress Report (MYPR) and Annual Year Progress Report (AYPR).

Despite having discussions about this matter with UNDP CO, the CPMU still feels like they are doing triple the work. For example, even though UNOPS provides budgeting, accounting, and grant disbursement services, the work plans need to be converted to a format acceptable to UNDP CO. This takes time away from community engagement and communicating SGP's efforts, which is an area the CPMU feel is lacking. The NSC also frequently asks whether the project's work has been communicated to a wider audience. However, there is no dedicated communications person to manage this task as a lot of time is spent on operations and administration.

Previously, under OP6, the reporting was more direct, with the CPMU only required to report to the Central Programme Management Team (CPMT). This allowed more time for outreach, such as attending conferences and presentations. However, with OP7 being a full-sized project, the administrative burden has increased significantly. Unlike OP6, which focused solely on grant management without the need to engage MTR or TE consultants, the OP7 requires more in-depth reporting and compliance.

The work arrangement described above highlights several inefficiencies that are impacting the overall effectiveness of the project management. The compliance and reporting requirements, while necessary, have led to significant administrative burdens, causing the implementing team to spend additional time on operational tasks rather than focusing on community engagement and communicating project outcomes as they would have preferred.

The need to convert documents for different reporting requirements and annual workplan added to the workload. If this issue is not addressed and a more effective solution is not implemented, it could lead to fatigue and burnout among the affected parties, be it the CPMU or the UNDP CO team.

Recognising the need to improve the project's reporting performance, the following corrective and/or adaptive measures were proposed by the CO Programme Manager (based on the 2024 PIR):

1. Continue organizing regular capacity-building sessions for strategic partners and grant recipients. These sessions, in collaboration with UNDP CO's Management & Oversight Unit and Learning Committee, should focus on best practices in project management, financial management, results-based reporting, and measuring technical indicators.
2. Ensure risk management, gender, knowledge management, and stakeholder engagement are included as regular agenda items during National Steering Committee meetings.
3. The SGP team participates in bi-weekly CO NCE meetings to keep the office updated, attends internal meetings related to procurement and project delivery, and provides quarterly progress reports to CO senior management, flagging issues that may require intervention from senior leadership or engagement with the GEF Focal Points in Malaysia.

The lessons from adaptive management are documented in the two annual PIRs, which integrate inputs from the progress reports submitted by strategic grantees. These reports, along with the minutes from the NSC meetings, serve to provide a structured and thorough record of discussions and decisions. By ensuring the key points and actions are clearly captured, these reports become valuable tools for adaptive management. This comprehensive documentation helps the implementing and executing partners reflect on past actions, identify areas for improvement, and adjust strategies as needed, ultimately enhancing the project's ability to respond to evolving challenges and opportunities.

4.3.8 Communications & Knowledge Management

The Project Board (NSC) only convenes when there are a sufficient number of project submissions requiring approval. Ahead of these meetings, the board receives reports and updates along with the meeting invitations. However, these meetings are infrequent. Feedback suggests increasing the frequency of updates provided to a quarterly basis, rather than waiting until the NSC meets to address any outstanding issues. When meetings are infrequent, problems can persist for extended periods before they are raised. Although the NSC discusses project risks, this only happens during meetings. Occasionally, the CPMU reach out for feedback and consult with the OFP and the chairperson on how to resolve specific issues. Even at the NSC meetings, it was made known that there is no established feedback loop after providing input or requesting intervention from the federal government. While the CPMU would receive feedback from the projects, it remains unclear whether they are informed by the ministry or receive updates on feedback from the state level, which operates at a higher level of governance.

Moreover, the absence of a dedicated communications resource exacerbates the situation, limiting the team's ability to effectively share the project's successes with a broader audience. This is particularly concerning, given the NSC's frequent requests for more visibility on the project's impact.

There is a request to increase the frequency of communication between the CPMU and the UNOPS Focal Point for UCP throughout the remainder of the OP7 project period. Strengthening this communication allows UNOPS to offer more assistance in addressing potential challenges. Although the time difference between the Malaysia and New York offices has been a key factor limiting regular meetings, it is suggested that rotating the meeting times could be implemented to accommodate both time zones. A commitment to at least monthly check-ins could help ensure more consistent collaboration and problem-solving. The frequency and approach to these meetings are to be mutually determined by both parties.

Regarding external project communication, the SGP Malaysia website[24] currently serves as a platform for sharing information about the OP7 programme. However, it is not regularly updated with new content, leaving project progress and the intended public impact unrepresented. To improve transparency and engagement, more consistent updates are needed to showcase ongoing developments and results, allowing the public to better understand the progress and contributions of the OP7 projects. This needs to be considered in view of the current situation where there is no dedicated communications person to manage this task.

Based on the assessment of the categories above, the overall Project Implementation and Adaptive Management rating is at **Moderately Satisfactory (MS) -** *Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.*

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only a few that are subject to remedial action.
4	**Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**	**Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.**

[24] https://www.sgpmalaysia.org/index.cfm?&menuid=2

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Financial risks to sustainability

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML) - Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review

Since Malaysia is implementing the landscape approach for the first time under the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP), it remains uncertain whether sufficient financial resources will be available to sustain the OP7 projects at the landscape scale after GEF assistance ends for this cycle. Although funding has been secured for OP8, the continuation of support for the work initiated in OP7 depends on the country programme strategy—particularly which landscape(s) are selected in the next operational phase (as there is a possibility that it will differ from OP7).

This may reduce the amount of funding available for any one dedicated landscape. Several factors also contribute to this assessment: 1) government co-financing has primarily been in-kind, 2) both strategic and regular grantees are struggling to meet the 1:1 co-financing ratio, and 3) grantees have limited capacity and ability to raise additional funds to co-finance their projects without additional help from NSC, for example.

It is worth noting that the 2023 PIR introduced a new opportunity to generate income and engage the state government's continued support for ongoing conservation efforts through monitoring carbon emission reductions to generate carbon credits. This proposal, known as 'Digital X,' will be developed in collaboration between a project grantee in KV and the UNDP Accelerator Lab. However, the current status of the proposal is unclear, as it is not part of the SGP project and is not considered essential for sustaining the OP7 project outcomes.

Regular grant projects may be sustainable if their ongoing activities require only minimal funding for operations and maintenance, without the need for significant capital. Projects focused on ecotourism, agrotourism, and agroforestry—which are income-generating activities—can potentially become self-sustaining if they achieve their intended objectives. That being said, the success of these income-generating tourism projects is highly dependent on external factors such as the climate and accessibility to the villages. On the other hand, reforestation projects may still require additional funding to support long-term monitoring and evaluation of tree growth and health.

It is crucial for the strategic grantees to maintain an active relationship with their regular grantees, especially in CRBR and MUBRB, to serve as a resource contact for communities seeking assistance and guidance in securing additional funding. Although this responsibility extends beyond the obligations of the strategic grantees after GEF assistance ends, it could significantly enhance the financial sustainability of the OP7 projects. Additionally, maintaining a functional multi-stakeholder platform will play a key role in mitigating financial risks and supporting long-term sustainability.

4.4.2 Socio-economic to sustainability

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML) - Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review

Assessing from the aspect of **government buy-in** to the OP7 projects, the collaborative interactions between state and local government stakeholders and strategic grantees in KV and CRBR provides a positive signal. The same cannot be said for the MUBRB landscape. Efforts have been made to bridge this gap, but the continued lack of interest from Sarawak government bodies towards the OP7 project in MUBRB remains a concern. This uncertainty, combined with the low-level of buy-in by the government of Sarawak, and the unresolved issues related to land use rights — potentially pose a moderate risk to the success of projects in MUBRB. More about this aspect has been previously elaborated in Section **4.1.1. Project Design**.

At the **rural community level within the project sites**, there remains an opportunity for regular grantees to further deepen the broader community's understanding of the project's purpose, objectives, benefits, and the importance of participation. While efforts have been made to engage beneficiaries through regular discussions and outreach, the response has been mixed. Some community members have expressed that, since the project introduces an entirely new concept to them, it will take time for them to fully grasp the broader objectives. However, they are confident that as the project progresses, its purpose will become clearer. With a better understanding and appreciation of the project, it may cultivate a more sustained interest to be part of the project's success in the long run.

In urban areas like **Klang Valley**, where many residents do not have a direct stake in the project sites, there is often little interest or commitment to volunteer. An exception is the Bukit Dinding project, where local residents, concerned about the risk of landslides, were keen to participate in tree replanting and other activities. The Bukit Dinding project also benefitted from a large group of volunteers due to the support from sports groups, environmentalist, corporations and government representatives. However, in general for most projects in KV, the availability and number of volunteers at any given time can be rather inconsistent. Generating sufficient interest is crucial, as project committee are small—typically comprises of 3 to 4 members, who are often volunteers with full-time jobs themselves. Hence, these projects often rely heavily on additional volunteers to carry out many of the planned activities. As a result, the lack of consistent volunteer participation, coupled with the potential burnout of the project team, poses a moderate risk to the long-term sustainability of the regular grant projects.

In the **CRBR and MUBRB landscapes**, many villages lack younger, physically fit individuals, as most of the younger generation has migrated to towns for better work opportunities and quality of life after completing their education. This is a common trend across villages in Sabah and Sarawak. As a result, the current projects in these landscapes often face challenges due to the physical limitations of ageing community members, many of whom may have health issues that require regular medical treatment in the city – often resulting in their inconsistent presence in their respective villages.

As alluded to earlier, the level of understanding of the project among community members varies from village to village. Villages with well-organized, more established community-based committees or cooperatives tend to have a stronger grasp of the project's objectives and their respective roles. In contrast, communities coming together for the first time to work on an unfamiliar project may face challenges in understanding the context and purpose for the project. However, a lower level of understanding does not necessarily mean a lack of acceptance, as some community members continue to contribute in various ways in their own capacity. The sustainability of the project in the short and medium term depends heavily on the community's organizational capacity and their ability

to build strong working relationships among each other. This includes navigating internal community politics and addressing the absence of clear leadership to unite the community within and among the villages. Therefore, the project's success is closely tied to the sustainability and dynamics of these internal relationships.

It may be too early in the project to ascertain whether these key stakeholders recognize the long-term value of ensuring that the project's benefits continue to flow. Most of the regular grant projects only began in March 2024, making it difficult to provide reliable indicators at this stage, and several new projects were just approved in July 2024. However, this does not diminish the fact that the OP7 project's impacts will yield long-term benefits if efforts are sustained and built upon after its completion.

Although this section normally focuses on the socioeconomic conditions of stakeholders, project grantees and its beneficiaries, vis-a-vis their impact on project sustainability, an equally important but often overlooked aspect is the working conditions and limitations of the CPMU itself and how it could affect the sustainability of the projects. Field observations and interviews with stakeholders have highlighted the crucial role the CPMU plays in bridging the gap between NGOs, CBOs, communities, and government bodies, while also meeting its reporting obligations to UNOPS, UNDP CO, and GEF. Government stakeholders have acknowledged the need to strengthen the CPMU as Malaysia transitions to the next operational phase (OP8). They expect more from the team but also recognize its limitations.

Expanding the team would enable them to offer more support, particularly in capacity building for newly established NGOs, ensuring more grassroots organizations can access SGP grants. Additionally, with a larger Country Programme team, outreach efforts could be enhanced, promoting the SGP more widely and helping potential grantees understand how to access SGP funding. Compounding this issue is also the requirement for a more stringent reporting in OP7, which is discussed in Section **4.3.7 Reporting.**

During field mission conversations, strategic partners and regular grantees have expressed that the support provided by the CPMU has been invaluable. The team is always accessible, allowing partners and grantees to contact them at any time with questions or requests for assistance. Their swift and reliable responses have built a sense of trust and confidence, especially within the CBOs, particularly as many are navigating project implementation for the first time.

However, discussions about expanding the CPMU often face constraints due to the design of the SGP's financing architecture itself. Currently, only 10% of the total project budget can be allocated for staff time, which may have been sufficient in previous operational phases, but is now inadequate given the increased workload in OP7 under the UCP. There is an expectation that the government should bridge this gap by increasing its co-financing contributions to expand the CPMU, but as it is, the government could only provide contributions in-kind and that they are also lacking in manpower who can dedicate their time for SGP. Unfortunately, at this time, there seems to be no clear or viable solution to resolve this issue.

4.4.3 Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML) - Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review

From the outset, the institutional framework, policies, and governance structure, particularly in KV and CRBR, provide opportunities for community engagement in nature conservation. However, challenges—primarily due to limited capacity within government bodies—have prevented these opportunities from fully materializing as envisioned. The OP7 project, through its landscape approach, has been pivotal in addressing these gaps. By offering essential platforms, training, and funding, the project has strengthened community participation and enhanced the implementation of natural resource protection initiatives, thereby complementing the existing governance structures that may eventually contribute towards the sustainability of the projects in these landscapes.

In general, the collaborative approach to developing the landscape strategies across all three landscapes has brought together key stakeholders from government, civil society, the private sector, and academia to identify priority issues and actions. This inclusive process created a valuable opportunity to foster shared ownership of both the process and the OP7 project as a whole. The cross-sectoral involvement can strengthen confidence in a collective buy-in from all parties, which will be crucial for ensuring the project's sustainability beyond the SGP period.

One of the key outputs of the OP7 project, aimed at improving governance in the target landscapes, is the establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) for each landscape (Output 2.1.1). This platform is crucial for ensuring the project's sustainability by fostering connections between communities within the landscape (with representation by local civil society organisations, state and local government departments, private sector enterprises and/or associations, women's groups, and others), sharing information, promoting understanding of global environmental values, and their link to socio-ecological resilience. It also serves as a space to agree on actions and outputs to achieve desired future outcomes. Due to the unique circumstances and contexts of the three landscapes, the MSPs will vary in structure across the three landscapes. However, they all share the common goal of strengthening and building upon existing committees and coalitions that are working toward the same outcomes as to ensure the sustainability of this platform.

That said, establishing the MSP has not been without its challenges. The launch of the MSP in the three landscapes has faced delays due to the prolonged time required for consultations with government stakeholders and obtaining their feedback. Additionally, there are concerns about the sustainability of the MSP beyond the project's lifespan, particularly when SGP funding ends, and there are no active projects to drive its agenda. Other risks include the potential redundancy of the MSP if other programmes or structures take over its functions, as well as challenges arising from political interference or personal-interest agendas among its members or leadership. This risk must be assessed and anticipated, to identify if there are any possible actions that are within the ambit of SGP to continue supporting the strategic grantees to ensure the MSP's sustainability.

4.4.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

Rating: Moderately Likely (ML) - Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review

Most of the projects are natural resource-based and conducted outdoors, making them directly vulnerable to climatic variations. As a result, climate change poses a significant risk to the medium and long-term sustainability of project outcomes. Even now, several reforestation projects have already been impacted by heavy and prolonged rainfall, which has hindered grantees from meeting and conducting outdoor activities. In some cases, access to project sites was lost due to road collapses caused by landslides.

Projects involving the collection of tree seeds from forests are particularly vulnerable to rainfall variability, which could affect the timing of peak seed richness and fruiting intensity[25]. Moreover, prolonged rainy seasons may present challenges for communities attempting to navigate the forests to collect seeds.

In addition, communities in the CRBR and MUBRB landscapes will prioritize their farms, which provide essential sustenance and income, such as paddy. As a result, their time and energy are likely to focus on maintaining crop productivity, especially during planting and harvesting seasons – which are also susceptible to climate impacts. This may reduce the number of people available to continue working on the OP7 projects. In CRBR, the villages involved in the project are widely dispersed, with some requiring an hour or more of walking to reach a meeting point or project site. Therefore, when it rains, travel becomes impossible for these communities.

Villages near rivers face a high risk of flooding, which could result in loss and damage. This, in turn, may impact their capacity to sustain the OP7 projects in the long term. This assessment aligns with the "Summary of the Climate and Disaster Screening Report" attached to the ProDoc – where it had indicated a "High" exposure rating to climate and geophysical hazards, including a "High" impact to the project's physical infrastructure and assets.

Summarising the sustainability assessment above, the rating assigned is Moderately Likely (ML).

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	**Moderately Likely (ML)**	**Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review**
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

[25] Numata, S., Yamaguchi, K., Shimizu, M., Sakurai, G., Morimoto, A., Alias, N., ... & Satake, A. (2022). Impacts of climate change on reproductive phenology in tropical rainforests of Southeast Asia. Communications biology, 5(1), 311.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

Project Strategy

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is recognized by national stakeholders for its positive environmental and developmental benefits, particularly at the local level. However, the landscape approach introduced in OP7 presents a shift from SGP projects implemented in Malaysia thus far. This new approach requires alignment with broader landscape management strategies in the country, which has posed challenges in balancing national priorities with state and local government interests. While federal support has been encouraging, engagement with Sarawak's government remains a concern, and collaboration with local authorities is crucial to ensure the project's success in addressing key environmental challenges in landscapes like CRBR and MUBRB.

The success of OP7 is largely contingent on mainstreaming the landscape approach, empowering 'change agents,' and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. However, this strategy faces challenges, such as building trust in areas with historical conflicts, like those involving local communities and logging companies. While the approach holds promise in addressing global environmental issues, the increased administrative workload and fragmented project focus may hinder its full potential. A stronger alignment with state priorities and consistent communication are essential for ensuring greater buy-in and sustainability. Additionally, gender integration efforts in OP7 are significant, with principles of empowerment and equality embedded at all project levels, ensuring women's active participation in decision-making processes.

Key points from the SMART assessment:

1. **Specific**: The project outcomes, objectives, and activities are well aligned, clearly addressing the identified issues in the target landscapes. Both implementing staff and local partners have a good understanding of the objectives, targets, and timelines.

2. **Measurable**: While the indicators are quantifiable, there is some ambiguity in how they will be measured, particularly regarding areas of forest restoration. Clearer methods for measurement are needed.

3. **Achievable**: The indicators were initially developed through stakeholder consultations and insights from past SGP phases, but they are indicative and dependent on project types, community priorities, and proposal quality. Based on midterm assessments, some indicators appear unachievable due to the OP7 timeframe and significant changes in the respective landscapes since the ProDoc was drafted.

4. **Relevant**: The OP7 indicators were ensured to align with Malaysia's national development priorities, as established through consultations with key stakeholders. The National Steering Committee (NSC) plays a role to ensure that the submitted proposals are relevant to and aligned with national goals.

5. **Time-Bound**: The Core Indicators for the OP7 project are expected to be achieved by 2026, with midterm targets based on deliverables outlined in approved proposals. The project's progress is guided by a detailed Multi-Year Work Plan and is updated annually to ensure the project remains on track with recent developments and adjustments.

OP7's outcomes are feasible but face challenges, particularly with ambitious targets such as land restoration and GHG emissions reduction. Some planned interventions, like renewable energy projects, were made redundant by existing government programs, requiring adjustments. Additionally, many NGOs struggle with limited capacity to submit well-structured proposals, especially newer organizations. This affects project execution and reporting. Further complications include setbacks in the Baram Peace Park movement, where land disputes and strained relations with the Sarawak government have slowed progress toward land restoration targets.

Progress Towards Results

While the project has met quite a number of its midterm targets, the progress of OP7 has been hindered by several challenges, including the transition to the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP), which required considerable time and effort to set up. Securing government approval for the ProDoc and supporting the National Steering Committee (NSC) in understanding the differences between OP6 and OP7 also caused delays. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the first two years of project implementation, delaying the appointment of strategic grantees and the signing of agreements until March 2023. This slow start caused cascading delays in the regular grant application process, pushing many projects' implementation to mid-2024 and postponing the Midterm Review (MTR).

The bottom-up approach of the SGP, which involves extensive stakeholder consultations and community involvement, particularly in remote areas, further contributed to delays. While some project indicators have already met or surpassed their midterm targets, others, particularly related to renewable energy adoption, have lagged behind. It is an important reminder that the midterm targets are based on approved proposals rather than actual progress toward the end-of-project (EOP) goals, emphasizing the need for adaptive management to keep the project on track for completion before the Terminal Evaluation in 2026.

Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

The OP7 project has encountered several implementation challenges, particularly in coordination between UNDP CO and the CPMU, as both adapt to the new management structure under the Upgraded Country Programme (UCP). Although roles and responsibilities are clearly defined[26], UNDP CO highlighted some inefficiencies in reporting during the implementation phase. One feedback highlighted that the CPMU operates independently of UNDP CO in several aspects, despite UNDP CO being responsible for publishing project outcomes and outputs on its Quantum portal for all projects it oversees, including that of SGP. Regarding oversight roles, it was noted that these are duplicated, as even project managers have oversight responsibilities, creating confusion about accountability.

Additionally, the CPMU is required to submit monthly financial reports, where late or non-submission could impact UNDP CO's financial expenditure tracking. For the MTR, while the process falls under the UNDP CO dashboard, their role was limited to just providing input on the Terms of Reference (TOR) and clearing the hiring decision, leaving them with limited decision-making authority over the evaluation consultant selection.

[26] An Inception Workshop was conducted on 16 August 2022 for the SGP OP7, by the Associate Portfolio Manager, GMS, NYSC, UNOPS where the roles and responsibilities of the CPMU, UNCP CO, UNOPS and UNDP GEF were defined.

Despite these challenges, UNDP CO's support remains essential, particularly through its strong and established connections with the Malaysian government ministries. However, administrative burdens, including compliance and reporting requirements from multiple entities, have led to some frustration within UNDP CO. Additionally, the extra reporting demands placed on the CPMU have diverted their attention from key project priorities, such as community engagement and effective communication.

The project has made significant progress in promoting women's participation and leadership, with many projects emphasizing gender equality and socioeconomic development. Gender balance at the decision-making level, particularly on the Project Board, is slightly skewed towards men. Nevertheless, the newly appointed Chair is a female, who will be serving alongside the existing female co-chair (who also plays the role as the gender focal point in the NSC). The slow start to OP7, impacted by the country's transition to the UCP and the COVID-19 pandemic, has delayed project timelines, with cascading effects on the achievement of end-of-project targets. The bottom-up approach, while beneficial for community engagement, has also contributed to slower implementation in remote areas, further highlighting the need for adaptive management to keep the project on track.

Financial challenges have emerged as a critical risk, particularly low financial delivery and delays in disbursements due to capacity issues among NGOs. To mitigate these risks, efforts are being made to address co-financing gaps and improve documentation processes. Participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E) remain a key focus, but the 5% allocation for M&E activities is considered insufficient for the rigorous assessments required, potentially complicating the engagement of qualified consultants for midterm and terminal evaluations.

Overall, while the OP7 project has encountered delays and challenges, particularly with government buy-in and financial management, it remains aligned with its objectives. Ongoing efforts to address these issues through adaptive management, capacity-building, and improved coordination are expected to help the project achieve its long-term goals.

Sustainability

The OP7 projects potentially face sustainability challenges due to the uncertainty of securing similar financial resources after GEF assistance ends. Key factors include limited co-financing, mostly in-kind, the difficulty of achieving the required 1:1 co-financing ratio, and grantees' limited capacity to raise additional funds. Although a potential solution through carbon credit generation has been proposed, its direct contribution remains uncertain. The sustainability of income-generating projects like ecotourism and agroforestry depends on minimal funding for operations, while reforestation projects may require ongoing support for long-term monitoring. Maintaining strong relationships between strategic grantees and regular grantees, particularly in CRBR and MUBRB, will be crucial for securing additional funding and ensuring the financial sustainability of the projects.

Government involvement and community engagement have shown mixed results, with positive collaboration in KV and CRBR, but limited interest from Sarawak in MUBRB, which poses a moderate risk to project success. Rural areas also face participation challenges due to an ageing population and the migration of younger generations, while urban projects struggle with inconsistent volunteer involvement. The CPMU plays a vital role in connecting stakeholders, but limited capacity and funding restrict its ability to expand. Overall, the process of establishing the multi-stakeholder platforms has fostered collaboration and ownership to some extent, strengthening governance structures and supporting long-term socio-ecological resilience. However, climate change risks, particularly

prolonged rainfall and landslides, threaten the progress of many natural resource-based projects, such as reforestation and seed collection.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations listed below are focused on the timely delivery of the OP7 project targets within the given timeframe of the current operational phase.

5.2.1. Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

Design

1. ***More engagement with the NSC beyond the meetings***
   In the MTR interviews, there is an expressed interest to be more actively involved in the progress and implementation of OP7 projects beyond the scheduled meetings. This includes establishing more frequent communication to make strategic decisions and raising risk management issues regularly (particularly those that are high-level and high-risk), allowing challenges to be addressed promptly instead of waiting for the next formal meeting. Since not all NSC members were consulted during the MTR interview, it would be beneficial to revisit this recommendation with the full committee. The mode of engagement—whether through meetings or circulars—along with its frequency and format, should be fine-tuned in a discussion between the project management team and NSC members to determine the most effective approach. One recommendation is to establish a small technical working group consisting of some of the NSC members who have expressed an interest in taking up this task. The aim of this increased engagement is to keep the NSC in the loop with the latest project developments and provide timely support, particularly in addressing risk management.

2. ***Revise the grant application template***
   Many grantees have shared feedback that the grant application template is not as user-friendly as they would prefer. Although the level of difficulty in navigating the template varies among grantees depending on their experience with grant applications, there is consensus that the questions and information requests could be more straightforward and less rigorous. Although many of the CBOs received help from the CPMU and strategic grantees on proposal writing, it would seem that they would still not be able to do it by themselves even after this experience. Additionally, some grantees have reported technical issues with the online template, noting that glitches sometimes lead to the loss of information or error in formatting during the application process.

3. ***Revisit the outcome and target levels***
   During the MTR interviews, a recurring concern was raised about the insufficient time to achieve all OP7 EOP targets (refer to **Table 3 Expected results: End-of-project targets for GEF 7 Core Indicators**). Some participants suggested revisiting these targets where feasible. While adjusting indicators may be more difficult, changes at the outcome and target levels could still be explored. While revising the landscape approach may not be feasible at this stage, there could be opportunities to revisit the strategy for the remainder of the OP7 timeline. One core indicator that requires review is **GEF-7 Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (measured in million metric tons of CO2e).**

Several factors have hindered the achievement of this target, including higher-than-expected implementation costs for renewable energy solutions at the start of OP7. Additionally, many of the target villages were already being electrified through the Sarawak Alternative Rural Electrification Scheme (SARES), which inadvertently rendered *Outcome 1.2—Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at the community level*— redundant (Refer to **Section 4.1.2 Results Framework/Logframe**). To address this, a suggestion put forward was to reallocate funds towards capacity building in renewable energy options, system maintenance, and fostering a shared responsibility for infrastructure upkeep.

Secondly, **GEF-7 Core Indicator 4 (Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)**, may also not be achievable due to a significant evolving situation in MUBRB, where the Sarawak Forest Department abruptly terminated the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO)- led funding of USD1.4 million for the Upper Baram Forest Area (UBFA). It was primarily on the basis of preventing "interference of NGOs in the project", deemed to be manipulating the UBFA projects to push an agenda that compromises the needs of the majority of local communities in Upper Baram.[27] Initially launched as the Baram Peace Park by local communities as an Indigenous community-led conservation effort, the project had been submitted to ITTO for funding by the Malaysian government as the "Upper Baram Forest Area" (UBFA). The project, which is supposed to have contributed towards the achievement of Core Indicator 4, extends over 283,500 hectares of forest and agricultural lands in Sarawak Upper Baram region.[28]

All of these mentioned above calls for an in-depth internal discussion within the CPMU, UNDP CO and the NSC to assess whether expanding the geographical scope or adjusting the target benchmarks is necessary to achieve the objectives within the remaining OP7 time frame. Such a review is crucial to ensure that the remaining grants are effectively disbursed well before the EOP deadline.

Project Management

1. ***Update the workplans to include seasonal variability***

   Communities will need to prioritize agricultural activities during planting and harvesting seasons, as well as annual festivities that can last up to two weeks, which may lead to reduced participation in SGP projects. While grantees are responsible for identifying these seasons in their grant applications and workplans, and were reminded during new grant training to adjust their plans accordingly, it would also be helpful to clearly mark these anticipated events in the workplan table of Section F: Implementation Plan and Timeframe, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan, specifically based on the months these are expected to occur, where possible (such as the harvest festivals). This may require adding additional rows to capture these events as the current structure of the table is based on the project activities only.

   It is also advisable to periodically update this workplan in project progress reports and clearly define mitigation plans where applicable. This information should be integrated into the larger workplan at the project management level (including the UNDP CO, NSC, and CPMU), if one exists. Such a proactive approach will not only help manage timelines and expectations but also improve

[27] https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/10/1121287/sarawak-canned-baram-project-indigenous-natives-cut-ngo-interference

[28] https://saverivers.org/2024/10/15/international-flagship-project-sunk-by-sarawak-forestry-agency/

tracking and monitoring, allowing the project management team to take pre-emptive actions to address potential delays or risks, particularly those caused by climatic unpredictability.

Monitoring and Reporting

1. ***Improve system access***
   The SGP team should be granted direct access to the necessary UNDP dashboards and systems, with contracts adjusted as needed to facilitate this. Given that the upcoming OP8 will bring about significant changes, where the SGP programme will revert to the global programme and likely transition the SGP team under UNDP instead of UNOPS, it is still essential to foster clearer communication and understanding of the reporting and monitoring challenges faced by the SGP team during the interim. This will help identify the support needed to improve access to UNDP dashboards and systems and explore ways to streamline reporting for greater efficiency while OP7 is still ongoing.

Communications

1. ***More consistent communication with state and local governments***
   To enhance buy-in from state and local governments, it is crucial to establish more consistent communication channels with the sub-governments, particularly to provide regular updates on project implementation progress and its benefits to local communities.

2. ***Increase communication between the UNOPS Focal Point for UCP and the CPMU***
   Strengthening communication would enable UNOPS to provide better support in addressing challenges. While time zone differences between Malaysia and New York have limited regular meetings, rotating meeting times could help accommodate both parties. A commitment to at least monthly check-ins, with the frequency and format mutually agreed upon, could foster more consistent collaboration and problem-solving.

Sustainability

1. ***Enhancing co-financing***
   Both strategic and regular grantees are struggling to meet the 1:1 co-financing ratio. It is recommended to focus on building grantees' capacity to raise additional funds, possibly through training or support in identifying alternative funding sources. In addition, there was a proposal to have the NSC play a more active role in mobilizing co-financing through the establishment of a Technical Advisory Group, if required. This warrants further discussion among UNDP CO, CPMU and the NSC to see how this can be materialised.

2. ***Enhance climate change adaptation considerations***

- **Integrate climate-resilient practices:** Since most of the projects are vulnerable to climatic variations, it is crucial to incorporate climate adaptation strategies, such as using climate-resilient species in reforestation projects. These species should be more resistant to prolonged rainfall or drought conditions, ensuring they survive and thrive despite changing weather patterns.
- **Develop adaptive infrastructure**: In landslide- and flood-prone areas such as the CRBR and MUBRB landscapes, investment in infrastructure (e.g., bridges and roads) is essential to maintain access to project sites. Although this falls outside the scope of the SGP funding mechanism,

government stakeholders could play a critical role. The SGP team could facilitate discussions between grantees and government stakeholders to explore potential support and collaboration.

5.2.2. Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

Outlined below are additional recommendations gathered from field visits and interviews. While these may not be directly tied to the timely delivery of OP7 targets, they are important to consider as lessons learned or gaps that should be addressed in future SGP operations in Malaysia in order to ensure the continuation of the benefits from these OP7 projects. Taking these recommendations into account can contribute to the program's long-term effectiveness and relevance.

1. ***Streamline reporting processes***
   To reduce redundancy, it is important to streamline reporting requirements across UNOPS, UNDP CO, and the CPMU. All three entities should come together to discuss and agree on the best way forward, ideally developing a unified reporting format that meets everyone's needs. This approach would eliminate the need to convert documents between systems, allowing the CPMU to allocate more time to strategic activities, such as engaging with communities and driving project goals.

2. ***Appoint a dedicated communications resource***
   If possible, a dedicated communications officer should be hired or allocated from within existing resources to focus on promoting the project's work and increasing visibility. This would help address the NSC's concerns and ensure that project achievements are shared with a wider audience, and perhaps would also inspire the public to participate as volunteers. Apart from that, relieving the current team of communication responsibilities also allows them to better concentrate on project management and engagement.

   Alternatively, the SGP Team could consider allocating a special grant from the existing funds for regular grantees, allowing the applicant to serve as the communication partner to publicize the progress and findings of OP7 projects in collaboration with the SGP team. NGOs with a good track record in social media campaigns and promotions could be considered for this role. Since matching funds are required from all project grantees, the selected NGO could also seek additional external funding opportunities available for Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) initiatives.

   A strong publicity program for SGP projects not only highlights the benefits of the initiative but also raises its visibility, fostering greater public awareness. This increased visibility can inspire interest from potential funders, creating opportunities for co-financing in future SGP projects. By effectively showcasing the program's impact, a well-executed publicity strategy can attract broader support and enhance its sustainability.

3. ***Digitalising M&E***
   Transitioning to digital Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) tools can significantly improve transparency, organization, and real-time data tracking for project progress. These tools offer immediate access to updates, streamline reporting for geographically dispersed projects, and reduce costs by minimizing the need for site visits. However, challenges such as unreliable internet access in some project areas and the need for personalized guidance for grantees may limit the

effectiveness of digital M&E systems in certain contexts. Perhaps this can be piloted with the strategic grantees to test the viability.

4. Allocate sufficient fundings for M&E

To ensure a thorough and high-quality Terminal Evaluation (TE), it's crucial to allocate enough budget for a team of consultants rather than relying on one consultant. A team can handle the increased volume of reports, field missions, and provide specialized focus on areas like data analysis and stakeholder engagement, ensuring a more reliable and comprehensive evaluation. It is also noted that the project has a very limited budget to implement this adjustment at this point; therefore, while it is important to put this recommendation on record, it may not be feasible to address in the current operational phase.

Where feasible, a matching grant from government stakeholders could be pursued. Co-financing from UNDP CO for M&E may be explored as well. Alternatively, a retrospective project could be funded to gather insights and best practices from past Malaysia SGP projects, similar to the initiatives carried out for the Resilient Food Systems Programme[29], Coral Reef Management[30], and Sustainable Cities[31].

5. Engage in climate risk monitoring

Monitoring climatic patterns such as rainfall, temperature, and storm frequency should be embedded into the project's management structure. This could be done with the help of relevant government agencies. This data can be used to anticipate potential impacts on project activities and allow for pre-emptive adaptation measures, ensuring that the projects remain resilient over the medium and long term.

[29] https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/publications/lessons-learned-resilient-food-systems-program

[30] https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/2856

[31] https://www.thegef.org/newsroom/publications/gef-6-sustainable-cities-iap-program-emerging-lessons-global-partnership

6. Annexes

6.1 MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

TERMS OF REFERENCE
(Individual Contractor Agreement)

Title:	Project Management Support – Advisor
Project:	FSP OP7 Malaysia
Duty station:	Home Based (with travel to Klang Valley, Middle and Upper Baram and Crocker Range)
Section/Unit:	SGP Malaysia, GMS, SDC, NYPO
Contract/Level:	ICS-11
Supervisor:	Edriss Riffat, Senior Portfolio Manager, P-4

1. General Background

UNOPS supports partners to build a better future by providing services that increase the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of peace building, humanitarian and development projects. Mandated as a central resource of the United Nations, UNOPS provides sustainable project management, procurement and infrastructure services to a wide range of governments, donors and United Nations organizations.

New York Portfolio Office (NYPO) supports the United Nations Secretariat, as well as other New York-based United Nations organizations, bilateral and multilateral partners in the delivery of UNOPS mandate in project management, infrastructure management, and procurement management.

Sustainable Development Cluster (SDC) supports diverse partners with their peacebuilding, humanitarian and development operations. It was formed by combining the following portfolios: Grants Management Services (GMS), UN Technology Support Services (UNTSS), Development and Special Initiatives Portfolio (DSIP) It provides Services to partners' programmes that are designed, structured, and managed with a global perspective and primarily serving partners that are headquartered in New York. The SDC has a footprint of approximately 125 countries.

UNOPS has signed an agreement with the UNDP Country Office (CO) in Malaysia to implement the project activities for the Small Grants Programme.

The seventh Operational Phase (OP7) of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Malaysia aims to build upon the long-standing achievements of SGP in the country, specifically involving strengthening civil society organisations and improving socioeconomic conditions for local communities through implementation of participatory conservation, restoration, and climate change mitigation interventions.

Starting in OP7, Malaysia has transitioned to a SGP Upgraded Country Programme (UCP). With the aim of achieving impacts at scale and ensuring sustainability of results achieved, the programme level strategy of the UCP is based on a landscape approach, following the UNDP approach of community-driven planning and management of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes. The three selected landscapes (Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve in Sabah; Middle and Upper Baram River Basin in Sarawak; and the Klang Valley in Peninsular Malaysia) cover expansive and complex rural and urban geographies. Globally significant biodiversity in these regions faces a variety of threats influenced by a variety of drivers, e.g., infrastructure

development and increased global demand for food and plantation commodities. These factors, many of which have been exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, have led to biodiversity loss, degradation of fragile ecosystems, and restricted opportunities for local communities to sustain nature-based livelihoods. Many of the local communities in the target regions also lack knowledge and access to clean energy solutions. The project strategy addresses the threats and barriers in the target regions to generate multiple benefits for biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, and the well-being of local communities through participatory, integrated land and resource management approaches implemented across socio-ecological production landscapes.

Reaching an estimated 10,000 direct beneficiaries, 50% of whom are women, the project facilitates community-driven interventions that generate global environmental benefits, including bringing an estimated 43,000 ha under improved management practices to benefit biodiversity, restoring 1,000 ha of degraded ecosystems, and increasing adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient solutions at the community level, resulting in the mitigation of more than 341,500 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent of greenhouse gas emissions (lifetime direct). The durability of the results achieved will be ensured through implementation of integrated landscape approaches, supported by multi-stakeholder governance platforms that foster enabling partnerships among civil society organisations, national and local government entities, private sector enterprises, and academic-research institutions.

The total project budget administered by UNDP is USD 2,500,000. The total co-financing planned for the project is USD 2,750,000. The lifetime of the project is 4 years and is set to close in April 2026. The project is implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The incumbent of this position will be a personnel of UNOPS under its full responsibility.

2. Purpose and Scope of Assignment

In line with Guidance for conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects, the MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability, including the project's Social and Environmental Risk.

The MTR is essential in the project lifetime to determine early success/failure of the project to give recommendations for interventions to the implementing partner to keep the project on track -if needed. This MTR fits within the UNDP Malaysia evaluation plan. The final MTR report should describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach, making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The Project Management Support – Advisor will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs,

project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the Project Management Support – Advisor considers useful for this evidence-based review. The Project Management Support – Advisor will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The Project Management Support – Advisor is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach[1] ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office, the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme SUpport Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability;
- United Nations Development Programme for Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam;
- State government agencies;
- National Steering Committee;
- NGOs;
- Local CBOs;
- Direct Beneficiaries

Executing agencies, senior officials and task team/ component leaders, key experts and consultants in the subject area, Project Board, project stakeholders, academia, local government and CSOs, etc. Additionally, the Project Management Support – Advisor is expected to conduct field missions to *the target landscapes* of Klang Valley, Middle and Upper Baram and Crocker Range including the project sites that will be determined after selection of the evaluator.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the Project Management Support – Advisor and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. The Project Management Support – Advisor must use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, the RTA and other key stakeholders and the Project Management Support – Advisor.

The final MTR report must describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

[1] For ideas on innovative and participatory Monitoring and Evaluation strategies and techniques, see UNDP Discussion Paper: Innovations in Monitoring & Evaluating Results, 05 Nov 2013.

For a Detailed Scope of the MTR, please refer to Annex A of these ToRs.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Project Management Support – Advisor will include a section in the MTR report should draw conclusion and findings, as well as lesson-learned from evidence presented. With the findings, recommendations are to be made to the project management and UNDP to ensure the project stay on course to meet its objectives.Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for guidance on a recommendation table. Please ensure there are no more than 10 recommendations in total.

Ratings

The Project Management Support – Advisor will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a *MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table* in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See Annex E for ratings scales. No rating on Project Strategy and no overall project rating is required.

Table. MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table for (Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia)

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	
Progress Towards Results	Objective Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 1 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 2 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Outcome 3 Achievement Rating: (rate 6 pt. scale)	
	Etc.	
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	(rate 6 pt. scale)	
Sustainability	(rate 4 pt. scale)	

3. Monitoring and Progress Controls

#	Deliverable	Description	Timing	Responsibilities
1	**MTR Inception Report**	Project Management Support – Advisor	No later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission	Project Management Support – Advisor submits to the Commissioning Unit and project management
2	**Presentation**	To present initial findings post mission and seeks clarifications or request for more information/stakeholders' interview	End of MTR mission	Project Management Support – Advisor presents to project management and the Commissioning Unit
3	**Draft MTR Report**	Full draft report (using guidelines on content outlined in Annex B) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the MTR mission	Sent to the Commissioning Unit, reviewed by RTA, Project management Unit, GEF OFP
4	**Final Report***	Revised report with audit trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to the Commissioning Unit

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is the UNDP Country Office. The Management and Oversight Analyst will be the overall evaluation manager.

UNOPS, on behalf of the Commissioning Unit will contract the consultant and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within Malaysia for the Project Management Support – Advisor and will provide an updated stakeholder list with contact details (phone and email). The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Project Management Support – Advisor to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

4. Duration of Work

The total duration of the MTR will be over a time period of *9 weeks*, and shall not exceed five months from when the consultant(s) are hired. The tentative MTR timeframe is as follows:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS	COMPLETION DATE
Document review and preparing MTR Inception Report (MTR Inception Report due no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission)	*~10 days*	*03 June 2024*
MTR mission: stakeholder meetings, interviews, field visits	*~25 days*	*15 July 2024*
Presentation of initial findings to UNDP & UNOPS	*~1 day*	*30 July 2024*
Preparing draft report (due within 3 weeks of the MTR mission)	*~25 days*	*15 August 2024*
Finalization of MTR report/ Incorporating audit trail from feedback on draft report (due within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on the draft)	*~9 days*	*31 October 2024*

Options for site visits should be provided in the Inception Report.

6. Payment Schedule

- 20% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR Inception Report and approval by the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the draft MTR report to the Commissioning Unit
- 40% payment upon satisfactory delivery of the final MTR report and approval by the Commissioning Unit and RTA (via signatures on the TE Report Clearance Form) and delivery of a final presentation (PPT) to the Project National Steering Committee

Criteria for issuing the final payment of 40%[2]:

- The final MTR report includes all requirements outlined in the MTR TOR and is in accordance with the MTR guidance.
- The final MTR report is clearly written, logically organized, and is specific for this project (i.e. text has not been cut & pasted from other MTR reports).
- The Audit Trail includes responses to and justification for each comment listed.

7. Travel

[2] The Commissioning Unit is obligated to issue payments to the Project Management Support – Advisor as soon as the terms under the ToR are fulfilled. If there is an ongoing discussion regarding the quality and completeness of the final deliverables that cannot be resolved between the Commissioning Unit and the Project Management Support – Advisor, the UNDP Regional M&E Advisor and Vertical Fund Directorate will be consulted. If needed, the Commissioning Unit's senior management, will be notified as well so that a decision can be made about whether or not to withhold payment of any amounts that may be due to the evaluator(s), suspend or terminate the contract and/or remove the individual contractor from any applicable rosters. See the UNDP Individual Contract Policy for further details: https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Individual%20Contract_Individual%20Contract%20Policy.docx&action=default

- Travel will be required to *project sites (Klang Valley, Middle and Upper Baram and Crocker Range)* during the TE mission;
- The BSAFE course must be successfully completed prior to commencement of travel;
- The Project Management Support – Advisor is responsible for ensuring they have vaccinations/inoculations when traveling to certain countries, as designated by the UN Medical Director.
- The Project Management Support – Advisor is required to comply with the UN security directives set forth under: https://dss.un.org/dssweb/

8. Qualifications and Experience

An evaluator will conduct the MTR. The evaluator cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation, and/or implementation (including the writing of the Project Document) and should not have a conflict of interest with project's related activities.

a. Education

Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in the areas of Environmental Sciences, Social Studies, Engineering, Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Development, Climate Change, or other closely related fields. A Bachelor's degree in combination with two additional years' experience is acceptable.

b. Work Experience

- Minimum of seven (7) years of experience in relevant technical areas;
- Minimum 7 years of relevant experience with project design and application of results-based management approach, including but not limited to Theory of Change, SMART indicators and validating baseline scenarios is desired;
- Competency in the subject matter , as applied to climate change mitigation/adaptation, land degradation, international waters, chemicals and waste and biodiversity is desired;
- Knowledge of and experience with UNDP and/or GEF projects is an advantage;
- Experience working in climate change and natural resources management in the Southeast Asia region and Malaysia is desired;
- Experience in gender and indigenous communities engagement in the context of project management and/or evaluation is desired;
- Experience with the GEF Small Grants Programme is an advantage;

d. Language

- Fluency in written and spoken English is required.
- Knowledge of Malay will be considered an advantage.

e. Key Competencies

	Develops and implements sustainable business strategies, thinks long term and externally in order to positively shape the organization. Anticipates and perceives the impact and implications of future decisions and activities on other parts of the organization.
	Treats all individuals with respect; responds sensitively to differences and encourages others to do the same. Upholds organizational and ethical norms. Maintains high standards of trustworthiness. Role model for diversity and inclusion.
	Acts as a positive role model contributing to the team spirit. Collaborates and supports the development of others. **For people managers only:** Acts as positive leadership role model, motivates, directs and inspires others to succeed, utilising appropriate leadership styles
	Demonstrates understanding of the impact of own role on all partners and always puts the end beneficiary first. Builds and maintains strong external relationships and is a competent partner for others (if relevant to the role).
	Efficiently establishes an appropriate course of action for self and/or others to accomplish a goal. Actions lead to total task accomplishment through concern for quality in all areas. Sees opportunities and takes the initiative to act on them. Understands that responsible use of resources maximizes our impact on our beneficiaries.
	Open to change and flexible in a fast paced environment. Effectively adapts own approach to suit changing circumstances or requirements. Reflects on experiences and modifies own behaviour. Performance is consistent, even under pressure. Always pursues continuous improvements.
	Evaluates data and courses of action to reach logical, pragmatic decisions. Takes an unbiased, rational approach with calculated risks. Applies innovation and creativity to problem-solving.

	Expresses ideas or facts in a clear, concise and open manner. Communication indicates a consideration for the feelings and needs of others. Actively listens and proactively shares knowledge. Handles conflict effectively, by overcoming differences of opinion and finding common ground.

Contract holder (Name/Title):	
Signature	Date

Annexes to the TE ToR

- ToR Annex A: Detailed Scope of the MTR
- ToR Annex B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the Project Management Support – Advisor
- ToR Annex C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template
- ToR Annex D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants[3]
- ToR Annex E: MTR Ratings
- ToR Annex F: MTR Report Clearance Form
- ToR Annex G: Audit Trail Template
- Project Logical/Results Framework

Annex A: Detailed Scope of the MTR

The Project Management Support – Advisor will assess the following four categories of project progress. See the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for extended descriptions.

i. Project Strategy

Project design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.
    - Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?
- If there are major areas of concern, recommend areas for improvement.

[3] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to, or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's empowerment, improved governance etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.

ii. Progress Towards Results

Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis:

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix and following the *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects*; color code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target to be achieved" (red).

Table. Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
Project Objective: To enable community organizations to take collective action for adaptive landscape management in building socio-ecological resilience in i) the Crocker Range Biosphere Reserve, Sabah; ii) the Middle and Upper Baram, Sarawak and iii) the Klang Valley, Peninsular Malaysia for global environmental benefits and sustainable development	**Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 3*): Area of land restored** (hectares) SDG 15.3;	SGP has supported restoration of degraded land, e.g., in Padawan areas in Sarawak.	500 ha included among the approved projects by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	1,000 ha			
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 4*): Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (hectares) SDG 2.4; SDG 11.b; SDG 12.2; SDG 14.2; SDG 15.2; SDG 15.9; SDG 15.b;	Strengthening community forest management in Klang Valley; upscaling agrobiodiversity-based systems, and developing sustainable animal husbandry practices in Sabah;	20,000 ha included among the approved projects by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	43,000 ha			
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 6*): Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (million metric tons of CO2e) SDG 7.1; SDG 13.2; SDG 13.3;	GHG emissions mitigated on projects implemented during earlier operational phases, including 120 kW of hydroelectric generation (12,000 tCO2e) and several projects in the AFOLU sector.	150,000 tCO2e direct lifetime GHG emissions mitigated estimated among the projects approved by midterm, and end target validated through the landscape strategies	341,500 tCO2e direct lifetime GHG emissions mitigated (335,000 tCO2e emissions avoided in the AFOLU sector, Sub-Indicator 6.1; 6,500 tCO2e emissions avoided outside the AFOLU sector, Sub-Indicator 6.2)			

[4] Colour code this column only

[5] see the 6 point Progress Towards Results Rating Scale: HS, S, MS, MU, U, HU

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
				26,000 tCO2e indirect lifetime (outside AFOLU sector			
	Mandatory Indicator (*GEF-7 Core Indicator 11*): #direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as a co-benefit of GEF investment (individual people) **SDG 1.4; SDG 1.b; SDG 5.a; SDG 7.1;**	Approximately 50,000 beneficiaries during OP2-OP6 (53% female, 47% male)	5,000 direct beneficiaries (of whom 2,500 are female) identified in the projects awarded by midterm	10,000 (of whom 5,000 are female)			
Component 1: Resilient landscapes for sustainable development and global environmental protection							
Outcome 1.1: Strengthened conservation of biodiversity and protection of ecosystem services through community collaborative management and sustainable livelihood interventions	**Indicator 5**: **Sustainable management of common resources,** as indicated by the number of new partnerships between CBOs and enabling stakeholders (including with NGOs, protected area management entities, private sector enterprises, government departments, etc.) for participatory conservation and restoration initiatives, disaggregated by gender	SGP Malaysia has facilitated a wide range of partnerships.	3 identified in the set of approved projects in the first call for proposals	6 new partnerships between CBOs (including 3 women-led CBOs) and enabling stakeholders for participatory conservation and restoration initiatives			
	Indicator 6: Strengthening gender quality and women's empowerment in control of natural resources, as indicated by the number of projects that are contributing to equal access to and control of natural resources by women and men **SDG 5.a;**	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	5 of the awarded projects by midterm contribute to equal access to and control of natural resources of women and men	10 projects			
	Indicator 7: **Documentation of traditional knowledge related to biodiversity**, as indicated by the number of systems	SGP Malaysia has extensive experience supporting traditional communities.	1 project included among the approved projects by midterm	2 systems developed or strengthened			

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
	developed or strengthened where traditional biodiversity knowledge is documented, stored and made available to local people (e.g., traditional knowledge recordings, resource classification systems, etc.). SDG 15.1;						
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.1	**Output 1.1.1**: Community level small grant projects on strengthening participatory conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity resources and ecosystem services **Output 1.1.2:** Capacities of CBOs for participatory conservation, restoration and nature-based livelihood initiatives developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring						
Outcome 1.2: Increased adoption of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies and mitigation solutions at community level	**Indicator 8**: **Livelihood co-benefits**, as indicated by the number of households benefitting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions	SGP Malaysia has granted funding for clean energy interventions during previous operational phases.	100 households (50% female HH members) identified in projects approved by midterm	200 households (50% female HH members) benefitting from alternative livelihoods supported by clean energy solutions			
	Indicator 9: Strengthened resilience and increased energy security, as indicated by the number of community level renewable energy solutions (e.g., hydroelectric generators, off-grid solar PV systems, biomass gasification generator systems) operationalized. SDG 7.1;	SGP Malaysia has granted funding for RE interventions during previous operational phases.	2 projects approved by midterm	4 projects operationalized			
Outputs to achieve Outcome 1.2	**Output 1.2.1**: Community level small grant projects on increasing adoption of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies and applications **Output 1.2.2**: Capacities of CBOs for community-level climate change mitigation interventions developed through learning-by-doing, skills training, and financial management mentoring						

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
Component 2: Durable landscape resilience through participatory governance, partnership building, and knowledge management							
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened community institutions for participatory governance to enhance socio-ecological resilience	**Indicator 10: Participatory landscape management,** as indicated by the number of landscape strategies developed or strengthened through participatory consultation and based on the socio-ecological resilience landscape baseline assessments endorsed by multi-stakeholder landscape platforms **SDG 1.b; SDG 11.b; SDG 15.9; SDG 17.17;**	Not applicable	3 landscape strategies developed	3 landscape strategies developed and endorsed by multi-stakeholder landscape platforms			
	Indicator 11: Empowering women in natural resource governance, as indicated by the number of projects that improve the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance **SDG 5.a;**	Women's empowerment has been a priority during earlier operational phases	3 of the approved projects include measures aimed at improving participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance	3 projects implemented that improve participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance			
	Indicator 12: Strengthening socioeconomic benefits for women, as indicated by the number of projects that target socioeconomic benefits and services for women **SDG 5.a;**	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	5 of the approved projects address strengthening socioeconomic benefits and services for women	10 projects completed that strengthening socioeconomic benefits and services for women			
	Indicator 13: **Landscape priority actions mainstreamed into local planning instruments,** as indicated by the uptake priority actions outlined in the landscape strategies into local development plans **SDG 1.b; SDG 11.b; SDG 15.9;**	Local and state government units are expected to have important roles on the multi-stakeholder landscape platforms	Priority actions described in the endorsed landscape strategies	3 local development plans, protected area management plans, or community forestry initiatives			

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
				contain at least one priority action from the landscape strategies			
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.1	**Output 2.1.1**: Multi-stakeholder platforms established and/or strengthened for improved governance of target landscapes **Output 2.1.2**: Landscape strategies for effective governance developed based on results of participatory socio-ecological resilience baseline assessments in the selected intervention landscapes **Output 2.1.3**: Partnership building and policy advocacy among governmental stakeholders, civil society, financial institutions, and private sector for facilitating broader adoption of participatory approaches						
Outcome 2.2: Enabling environment for upscaling and replication strengthened through effective knowledge management of best practices and approaches	**Indicator 14: Mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment**, number of women-led projects supported **SDG 5.a;**	Gender mainstreaming has been a priority during earlier operational phases	3 of the approved projects by midterm are led by women	6 of the implemented projects are led by women			
	Indicator 15: Upscaling initiated, as indicated by the number of dialogues organized with government entities on upscaling best practices **SDG 15.9;**	Upscaling is enhanced under the socio-ecological resilience landscape approach, with engagement of multiple stakeholders and collective action to achieve impact at scale	1 dialogue organized	2 dialogues organized			
	Indicator 16: **Knowledge shared**, as indicated by the number of project and portfolio experiences and lessons systematised and codified into case studies produced and disseminated, and cumulative number of views of the case studies from the SGP website, social media, or through direct dissemination **SDG 17.6;**	Knowledge management is one of the hallmarks of SGP, with each approved project required to develop a case study to document best practices and lessons	Case studies from completed projects under preparation, and views tracked on SGP website, social media, and through direct dissemination	10 case studies disseminated, with 500 cumulative views of the case studies on the SGP website, social media, or through direct dissemination			

	Objective and Outcome Indicators	Baseline	Mid-term Target	End of Project Target	Mid-term Level & Assessment[4]	Mid-term Level & Assessment[5]	Justification for Rating
Outputs to achieve Outcome 2.2	**Output 2.2.1**: Knowledge from innovative project interventions compiled, systemized, and disseminated across the landscapes, across the country, and to the global SGP network						
Component 3: Monitoring and evaluation							
Outcome 3.1: Sustainability of project results enhanced through participatory monitoring and evaluation	Indicator 17: **Number of National Steering Committee meeting convened**	0	4	8			
	Indicator 18: Preparation and initial implementation of a sustainability plan	0	Zero draft sustainability plan available.	Sustainability plan completed.			
Outputs to achieve outcome 3.1	**Output 3.1.1**: Project implementation and results effectively monitored and evaluated						

Indicator Assessment Key

Green= Achieved	Yellow= On target to be achieved	Red= Not on target to be achieved

In addition to the progress towards outcomes analysis:

- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.

iii. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements:

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?

Work Planning:

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance:

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Co-financing amount confirmed at CEO Endorsement (US$)	Actual Amount Contributed at stage of Midterm Review (US$)	Actual % of Expected Amount
recurrent expenditures	UNDP	in-kind	$200,000		
recurrent expenditures	Ministry of Environment and Water	Grant	$200,000		
Direct co-financing of community projects generally on a 1:1 basis	CSO	In-kind	$1,100,000		
		Grant	$550,000		
recurrent expenditures	Sabah Parks	In-kind	$100,000		
CSO - Investment mobilised	The Habitat Foundation	Grant	$100,000		
Donor Agency – Investment mobilised	German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) ICCA GSI	Grant	$500,000		

- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes each co-financing amount as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditures'. (This template will be annexed as a separate file.)

Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?

- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of *Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects* for further guidelines.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
  - The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
  - The identified types of risks[6] (in the SESP).
  - The individual risk ratings (in the SESP) .
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures.

A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting:

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project Board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)

[6] Risks are to be labeled with both the UNDP SES Principles and Standards, and the GEF's "types of risks and potential impacts": Climate Change and Disaster; Disadvantaged or Vulnerable Individuals or Groups; Disability Inclusion; Adverse Gender-Related impact, including Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation; Biodiversity Conservation and the Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources; Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement; Indigenous Peoples; Cultural Heritage; Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention; Labor and Working Conditions; Community Health, Safety and Security.

- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications & Knowledge Management:

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

iv. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the Quantum Risk Register are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the

required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?

ToR ANNEX B: List of Documents to be reviewed by the Project Management Support – Advisor

1. PIF
2. Project Initiation Plan
3. Project Document
4. Project Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)
5. Project Inception Report
6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
8. Audit reports
9. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools/Core Indicators at CEO endorsement and midterm
10. Oversight mission reports
11. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
12. Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team
13. Annual Work Plans

The following documents will also be available:

14. Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems
15. UNDP country/countries programme document(s)
16. Minutes of the (Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia) Board Meetings and other meetings (i.e. Project Appraisal Committee meetings)
17. Project site location maps
18. Any additional documents, as relevant.

ToR ANNEX B: Guidelines on Contents for the Midterm Review Report[7]

i. Basic Report Information *(for opening page or title page)*
- Title of UNDP supported GEF financed project
- UNDP PIMS# and GEF project ID#
- MTR time frame and date of MTR report
- Region and countries included in the project
- GEF Operational Focal Area/Strategic Program
- Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and other project partners
- MTR team members
- Acknowledgements

ii. Table of Contents

iii. Acronyms and Abbreviations

1. Executive Summary *(3-5 pages)*
- Project Information Table
- Project Description (brief)
- Project Progress Summary (between 200-500 words)
- MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

[7] Please refer to "Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects"(http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guidance.shtml#gef). The Report length should not exceed *40* pages in total (not including annexes).

- Concise summary of conclusions
- Recommendation Summary Table

2. Introduction *(2-3 pages)*
- Purpose of the MTR and objectives
- Scope & Methodology: principles of design and execution of the MTR, MTR approach and data collection methods, limitations to the MTR
- Structure of the MTR report

3. Project Description and Background Context *(3-5 pages)*
- Development context: environmental, socio-economic, institutional, and policy factors relevant to the project objective and scope
- Problems that the project sought to address: threats and barriers targeted
- Project Description and Strategy: objective, outcomes and expected results, description of field sites (if any)
- Project Implementation Arrangements: short description of the Project Board, key implementing partner arrangements, etc.
- Project timing and milestones
- Main stakeholders: summary list

4. Findings *(12-14 pages)*

4.1 Project Strategy
- Project Design
- Results Framework/Logframe

4.2 Progress Towards Results
- Progress towards outcomes analysis
- Remaining barriers to achieving the project objective

4.3 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management
- Management Arrangements
- Work planning
- Finance and co-finance
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems
- Stakeholder engagement
- Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)
- Reporting
- Communications & Knowledge Management

4.4 Sustainability
- Financial risks to sustainability
- Socio-economic to sustainability
- Institutional framework and governance risks to sustainability
- Environmental risks to sustainability

5. Conclusions and Recommendations *(4-6 pages)*

5.1 Conclusions
- Comprehensive and balanced statements (that are evidence-based and connected to the MTR's findings) which highlight the strengths, weaknesses and results of the project

5.2 Recommendations
- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
- Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
- Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

6. Annexes

- MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)
- MTR evaluative matrix (evaluation criteria with key questions, indicators, sources of data, and methodology)
- Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection
- Ratings Scales
- MTR mission itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- List of documents reviewed
- Co-financing table (if not previously included in the body of the report)
- Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form
- Signed MTR final report clearance form
- *Annexed in a separate file:* Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report
- *Annexed in a separate file:* Relevant midterm tracking tools (*METT, FSC, Capacity scorecard, etc.) or Core Indicators*
- *Annexed in a separate file: GEF Co-financing template (categorizing co-financing amounts by source as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditure')*

ToR ANNEX C: Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix Template

This Midterm Review Evaluative Matrix must be fully completed/amended by the consultant and included in the MTR inception report and as an Annex to the MTR report.

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
(include evaluative question(s))	(i.e. relationships established, level of coherence between project design and implementation approach, specific activities conducted, quality of risk mitigation strategies, etc.)	(i.e. project documents, national policies or strategies, websites, project staff, project partners, data collected throughout the MTR mission, etc.)	(i.e. document analysis, data analysis, interviews with project staff, interviews with stakeholders, etc.)
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			

ToR ANNEX D: UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluators/Midterm Review Consultants[8]

Evaluators/Consultants:

Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.

Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.

Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.

Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.

Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.

Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.

Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

Must ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

Must confirm that they have not been involved in designing, executing or advising on the project being evaluated.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: _____

Name of Consultancy Organization (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at _____ *(Place)* on _____ *(Date)*

[8] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

ToR ANNEX E: MTR Ratings

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

ToR ANNEX F: MTR Report Clearance Form

(to be completed and signed by the Commissioning Unit and RTA and included in the final document)

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:

Commissioning Unit (M&E Focal Point)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Regional Technical Advisor (Nature, Climate and Energy)

Name: _____

ToR ANNEX G: Audit Trail Template

Note: The following is a template for the Project Management Support – Advisor to show how the received comments on the draft MTR report have (or have not) been incorporated into the final MTR report. This audit trail should be included as an annex in the final MTR report.

To the comments received on (*date*) from the Midterm Review of (Seventh Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme in Malaysia**) (UNDP Project ID** 00134613-***PIMS*** 6447***)***

The following comments were provided in track changes to the draft Midterm Review report; they are referenced by institution ("Author" column) and not by the person's name, and track change comment number ("#" column):

Author	#	Para No./ comment location	Comment/Feedback on the draft MTR report	Project Management Support - Advisor response and actions taken

6.2 MTR evaluative matrix

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
1. Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
1.1 Project Design			
1.1.1. To what extent is the problem addressed by the project relevant to its context?	- Relevance of the problem in project sites - consistency with human development needs of the target provinces and the intended beneficiaries	- Project planning documents - Local stakeholders, including community members and groups, government stakeholders and other local stakeholder groups - National government stakeholders - UNDP/ GEF SGP team	- Desk review - Interviews with project staff - Interview with UNDP senior management - Interviews with project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries
1.1.2 How effective is the selected strategy to achieve intended results?	- Extent to which selected methods of delivery are appropriate to the development context - Level of coherence between outcomes, outputs and activities - Evidence of planning documents utilizing lessons learned/ recommendations from previous projects (i.e. OP5/6) as input to planning/strategy process	- Project planning documents - Local stakeholders, including community members and groups, government stakeholders and other local stakeholder groups - National government stakeholders - UNDP/ GEF SGP team	- Desk review - Interviews with project staff - Interview with project assurance officers - Interviews with project partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries
1.1.3 To what extent is the project responding to the national priorities and context?	- Level of alignment of the project outcomes and outputs with national priorities (a) at project inception; (b) at midterm	- Project planning documents - National policies, strategies and plans, including relevant sectoral policies - National government stakeholders - UNDP/ GEF SGP team	- Desk review - Data analysis - Interviews with project partners and national stakeholders
1.1.4. Were perspectives from all relevant stakeholders taken into account during project design?	- Number and types of stakeholders consulted during project design - Evidence of concerns expressed being used to adjust project strategy	- Project planning documents - Local executing partners, including community members and groups, government stakeholders and other local stakeholder groups - National government stakeholders - Workshop/planning meeting minutes and action items	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
1.1.5. To what extent were gender and social inclusion issues taken into account during project design?	- Number and types of activities undertaken during project design to assess gender-related needs for the project - Evidence of incorporation of these needs into the project document	- Project planning documents - Local executing partners, including community members and groups, government stakeholders and other local stakeholder groups - National government stakeholders - Workshop/planning meeting minutes and action items	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
1.2 Results Framework / Logframe			

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
1.2.1 How clear, practical and feasible are the project's outcomes and objectives? How realistic are the targets and timeframes?	- Coherence between objective, outcomes, outputs and activities - Feasibility of stated targets, outcomes and objectives within the project timeframe - Implementing entities' staff understanding of objectives, targets and timeframe - Local implementing partners' understanding of objectives, targets and timeframe	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
1.2.2 How effective are the logframe's indicators, baselines and targets to measure effects from the project?	- Use of SMART sets of indicators, baseline, target and mean of verification - Use of gender-disaggregated indicators and targets - Evidence of effects of the project on development or environment not measured by current indicators.	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
2. Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far? Proposed questions for specific outcomes/ outputs to assess their progress.			
2.1 To what extent have the expected outputs, outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved so far based on the corresponding indicators? (refer to ANNEX 1)	- Extent to which the stated objectives, outcomes and outputs have been achieved - Progress between the most recent GEF Tracking Tool and its Baseline version	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
2.2 What are the main barriers to address in order to achieve project objectives, within the remaining time of project period? What are the main opportunities to leverage based on current progress towards results?	- Nature and extent of barriers hindering progress towards results - Nature and extent of opportunities generated by most successful achievements to date	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews with project partners and stakeholders - Site visits
2.3 What support has been required and received from UNDP in the project implementation?			
3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
3.1 Management Arrangements			

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
3.1.1 How effective are the management arrangements? Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? How is the workload divided among the project team?	- Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities established - Evidence of timely and transparent decision making - Level of responsiveness of project team and of respective implementing bodies to changing project needs	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.1.2 What is the quality of execution of the project by the Executing Agency/ Implementing Partner(s)? Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP). Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board?	- Level of alignment in actual and planned amount of budget and staff time devoted to the project - Perceived quality of management response to project team members' inquiries, needs and concerns - Quality of supervision of IA and EA (rating on a scale), respectively - Gender balance of project staff and of the Project Board.	- Project planning documents, baseline report, monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team, other implementing partner's staff - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.2 Work Planning			
3.2.1 Have there been any delays in implementation? If so, why?	- Timing and sequence of outputs against work plan - Cause and total delays (in months)	- Project planning, progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.2.2 Are work-planning processes results-based?	- Proportion of results-based planning and reporting documents	- Project planning, progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.2.3 Was the logical framework used during implementation as a management and M&E tool?	- Extent of management use of the log frame (number and type of usage)	- Project planning, progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team	- Desk review - Interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Has there been any changes made to it since the project started?		- Local and national stakeholders	
3.2.4 Is work planning for the project effective and efficient?	- Fund disbursement, scheduling, monitoring and capacity building.	- Project planning, progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.2.5 What constraints were faced in implementing the project plan, which was addressed, and what key challenges remain?	- Timeline and achievement of indicators.	- Project progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national - stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.3 Finance and co-finance			
3.3.1 To what extent are the outputs being achieved in a cost-effective manner?	- Cost per output compared to costs of similar projects - Level of alignment between planned and incurred implementation costs and nature of divergences	- Project planning, progress reports, and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.3.2 Is there any variance between planned and actual expenditures? Why? Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions.	- Planned budget per year, outcome and output - Actual budget execution per year, outcome and output	- Project planning, progress reports, financial expenditure reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.3.3 Does the project have the appropriate financial controls to make informed management decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?	- Number and proportion of financial reports available - Timeliness of available financial reports - Quality of available financial reports - Availability of yearly audit reports	- Project planning, progress reports, financial expenditure reports, audit reports and monitoring reports	- Desk review
3.3.4 To what extent is the project leveraging its planned co-financing? Is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?	- Number of resources that project has leveraged since inception (and source(s)) - Number and difference between planned and actual executed co-financing activities - Degree of integration of externally funded components into overall project strategy/design	- Project planning, progress reports, financial expenditure reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Management teams from co-financing projects	- Desk review - Interviews
3.4 Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems			

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology

3.4.1 Is the M&E system operational and effective?
 	
- Do they provide the necessary information?
- Do they involve key partners?
- Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems?
- Do they use existing information?
- Are they efficient?
- Are they cost-effective?
- Are additional tools required?
- How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Are the Project M&E tools adequate to guide ongoing project management?
	- Existence and quality of:
	  o Roles and responsibilities
	  o Budget and timeframe/ work plan
	- Proportion of executed M&E budget against planned amount
	- Proportion and types of M&E reporting materials submitted on time
	- Alignment with national systems and UNDP /GEF reporting requirements
	- Quality of M&E reporting materials
	- Evidence of consultation of all relevant stakeholders, including women and vulnerable populations
	- Extent to which the M&E systems that the project has in place helped to ensure that programmes are managed for proper accountability of results
		- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports
		- UNDP/ GEF SGP team
		- Local and national stakeholders
			- Desk review
			- Interviews

3.4.2 Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. - Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? - Are these resources being allocated effectively?		- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.5 Stakeholder Engagement			
3.5.1 To what extent were effective partnership arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country, district and community councils? Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?	- Number and types of partnerships developed between project and international, national and local bodies/organizations - Extent and quality of interaction/exchange between project implementers and international, national and local partners	- Meetings/workshop minutes (Steering Committee) - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders - Project beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - Field visits - Focus groups
3.5.2 To what extent is the project country-driven?	- Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and	- Project planning and management documents - Key national project partners	- Desk review - Interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
- Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? - Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?	implementation to national realities and existing capacities - Existence and use of mechanisms to ensure national government stakeholders have an active role in project decision-making		
3.5.3 To what extent are the public/community stakeholders aware and supportive of the project's objectives? - To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?	- Number and type of public awareness activities - Number of people reached by these activities - Perceived benefits of the project by the public - Contribution of public awareness to the progress towards achievement of project objectives	- Monitoring reports - Community stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
- To what extent are women and girls engaged? - Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? - Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. - What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?	- Extent of participation of women and girls - Evidence of barriers to the participation of women and girls and extent of effort to address barriers - Likelihood of same level of positive and/or negative effects of the project on women and men, girls and boys	- Meetings/workshop minutes (Steering Committee) - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders - Project beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - Field visits - Focus groups
3.6 Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)			
3.6.1 To what extent are the risks identified in the project's latest SESP valid? Are any revisions needed? (Note: A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the	- Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of identified risks, risk categorisation, and individual risk ratings - Evidence of appropriate revision of risks during implementation - Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of risk mitigation measures	- Meetings/workshop minutes (Steering Committee) - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders - Project beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - Field visits - Focus groups

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
time of the project's approval)			
3.6.2 To what extent is the implementation of the project's social and environmental management plan effective and efficient?	- Alignment of management plans with relevant UNDP safeguards policy at time of project approval - Extent of progress in the implementation of the environmental and social management plan	- Meetings/workshop minutes (Steering Committee) - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders - Project beneficiaries	- Desk review - Interviews - Field visits - Focus groups
3.7 Reporting			
3.7.1 How were lessons derived from the adaptive management process documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners? How well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly rated PIRs, if applicable?)	- Proportion of adaptive management processes documented - Proportion of these processes shared with partners - Evidence of use of lessons from these reports by partners	- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.8 Communication and Knowledge Management			
3.8.1 How effective are communications to ensure stakeholder awareness about the project? - Is communication regular and effective? - Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? - Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? - Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?	- Existence of an internal communication plan, communication protocols, and feedback mechanisms - Perceived level of awareness about project outcomes and activities by stakeholders	- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
3.8.2 Are effective external communication mechanisms in place? - Are proper means of communication established or being established to express	- Number and type of external communication mechanisms or activities implemented - Perceived usefulness of communications by stakeholders	- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? - Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?)			
3.8.3 Has knowledge management been effective?	- Existence of a knowledge management plan - Comprehensiveness and relevance of planned activities on knowledge management - Number and type of knowledge activities and products developed - Quality and effectiveness of the knowledge management activities conducted	- Project planning, progress reports, audit reports and monitoring reports - UNDP/ GEF SGP team - Local and national stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews
4. Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
4.1 Are the risks identified in the project document the most important? Are they still up to date?	- Existence of an exit strategy - Robustness of the exit strategy - Level of alignment of risk identified in the project document with (a) actual risks at project inception and (b) current risks - Appropriateness of risk rating	- Local executing team and executing partners - Project document and progress reports	- Desk review - Interviews
4.2 What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends?	- Type and cost of activities that would require continued financial support after the end of the project to maintain outcomes - Existence of sources of funding for these activities	- Local executing team and executing partners - Project document and progress reports	- Desk review - Interviews
4.3 Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? - What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? - Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow?	- Existence and type of political and social conditions potentially affecting the sustainability of direct outcomes - Existence of mechanisms to document and exchange lessons learned (including technical knowledge) - Existence of champions that could promote the sustainability of project results	- Local implementation partners - Local communities - Project monitoring and reporting documents/data - Government stakeholders	- Desk review - Interviews

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
- Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? - How are these risks being managed? - Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?			
4.4 Do the legal and institutional frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize the sustenance of project benefits?	- Consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place. - Existence and type of frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes that may jeopardize project benefits - Type of frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes currently lacking to ensure sustainability of project benefits - Look into how the risks are being managed.	- Local implementation partners - Government stakeholders, technical staff - Policy documents	- Desk review - Interviews
4.5 Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes? How are the risks being managed?	- Existence and intensity of biophysical conditions affecting the sustainability of project outcomes	- Local implementation partners - Government stakeholders, technical staff - Policy documents	- Desk review - Interviews

6.3 Example Questionnaire or Interview Guide used for data collection

No.	Interview Questions for Government Stakeholders
1.	a) How often do you receive updates and reports on the progress of the ongoing OP7 projects? b) How are the assessments from these updates or progress reports integrated into your scope of work? c) What mechanisms ensure that this is a country-driven project and that government stakeholders play an active role in project decision-making? d) Are there any changes or suggestions to further enhance the role of government stakeholders in this project? e) Do you foresee the current roles of the stakeholders continuing beyond the timeline of the GEF OP7 project? Please provide a reason for your response.
2.	a) What roles or levels of involvement do local and national government agencies have in supporting the objectives of the project? b) How can your participation and contribution to this project be further improved to align with your agency's or ministry's priorities? c) What barriers prevent effective involvement by local and national government agencies? d) What best practices could be replicated to promote effective involvement?
3.	a) At this stage of the landscape project inception and midterm implementation, to what extent is the OP7 project responding to and aligned with national priorities and context? b) Are the aims and indicators set in the Project Document still relevant and achievable, or do they require revisiting and revision? c) If they require a review, what mechanisms are available to ensure these indicators remain relevant? d) What are the main barriers that need to be addressed to achieve project objectives within the remaining project period? e) What are the main opportunities to leverage based on current progress towards results?
4.	a) At this point, what opportunities or challenges do you recognize in the landscape approach (OP7) compared to the previous approaches in OP6? b) What reflections do you have that could be considered for future GEF projects in Malaysia?
5.	a) To what extent has progress been made on cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, women's empowerment, and social and environmental safeguards? b) How are these aspects aligned with national priorities and policies, and why are they important?
6.	a) Has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective? b) What factors do you think have contributed to its effectiveness? c) What areas could be further improved?
7.	a) Is communication across the board regular and effective? b) Who is typically included in the communication correspondences? c) How is information disseminated to those who may not be directly involved but may benefit from it? d) What are the feedback mechanisms when communication is received? e) Is there a person responsible for overseeing and maintaining a record of all correspondences, meeting minutes, etc., in your agency?
8.	a) What feedback or concerns do you have regarding the monitoring and evaluation process? b) Are the current mechanisms and processes for monitoring and evaluation clear and effective? c) How do you utilize the monitoring and evaluation outputs, such as progress reports, in your scope of work?

No.	Interview Questions for Regular Grantees
1.	a) How clear and understandable did you find the application instructions? b) Were the criteria for grant eligibility and selection clearly communicated? c) Were there any sections of the application that you found confusing or difficult to understand? d) How much time did it take you to complete the application? e) What were the main challenges you encountered during the application process? f) Did you face any technical issues while submitting your application? g) How confident were you in understanding the next steps after submitting your application?
2.	a) Did you find the support and guidance provided during the application process adequate? b) Was there sufficient help available when you had questions or needed assistance? c) How effective was the communication from the grant provider during the application process? d) Did you receive timely updates and responses to your inquiries?
3.	Progress and Milestones: a) What key activities or milestones have been completed so far? Can you provide specific examples of progress towards your project objectives? b) How closely is the current implementation of your project aligning with the original project proposal and timeline? c) Have there been any delays or accelerations in the project schedule?
4.	Challenges and Actions: a) What barriers or challenges have you faced during the early implementation phase? b) How have these challenges impacted the project's progress? c) What actions have you taken to address these challenges?
5.	a) At this initial stage of project implementation, have your activities been affected by climatic unpredictability, droughts, changes in rainfall distribution, etc that may have affected the project progress towards results? b) What are the measures taken to overcome these challenges?
6.	a) What new partnerships have been developed with NGOs, protected area management, private sector, and government departments? What roles and influence do these partners have on the project? b) How are existing partnerships involved in the landscape approach project, and what roles do they play? c) What lessons have been learned and best practices identified in fostering and strengthening partnerships for the landscape approach?
7.	a) What roles or levels of involvement do local and national government agencies have in supporting the objectives of your project? b) Are there barriers preventing effective involvement by local and national government agencies? c) What has been done to further improve the effective involvement of the government agencies?
8.	a) How much progress has been made on gender equality, women's empowerment, and social and environmental safeguards? b) How do the projects include the views of women and youth? Can you give examples where they are empowered to make decisions and benefit from the project? c) How does the project ensure the participation of indigenous people, including in decision-making and benefiting from activities? d) What steps were taken to ensure project activities do not harm critical ecosystems, introduce invasive species, or cause human-wildlife conflicts?
9.	a) Are the resources (financial, human, material) being utilized as planned in the proposal? b) Is there any variance between planned and actual expenditures? Why? c) What are some of the measures taken to address any issues faced with regards to expenditures?

No.	Interview Questions for Regular Grantees
10.	a) Has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective? b) What factors do you think have contributed to its effectiveness? c) What areas could be further improved?
11.	a) Is communication across the board regular and effective? Between UNDP – GEF, Strategic Grantees and Small Grantees. b) Who is typically included in the communication correspondences? c) How is information disseminated to those who may not be directly involved but may benefit from it? d) Who is the person responsible for overseeing and maintaining a record of all correspondences, meeting minutes, etc., in your team?
12.	a) Are there any feedback or concerns you have regarding the monitoring and evaluation process? b) Are the mechanisms and processes for monitoring and evaluation clear and effective?
13.	What additional feedback and comments should be considered in the Midterm Review?

OTHER QUESTIONS

Progress towards Results

1. What is your view on the extent to which the project has achieved its expected outputs, outcomes, and objectives?
2. In your initial assessment, what are the main barriers that might hinder the achievement of the project objectives within the remaining project period?

D. Management Arrangements

1. How effective are the management arrangements in terms of clear roles and responsibilities, timely and transparent decision-making, and the responsiveness of the project team and implementing bodies to changing project needs?
2. What is your assessment of the Executing Agency's project execution in terms of overall management of project grants, fund disbursement, scheduling, monitoring, and capacity building?

E. Work Planning

1. Are there any identified constraints in implementing the project plan, and whether they have been addressed, and if there are still any key challenges that remain?

F. Co-Financing

1. Is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project?

G. Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Is the M&E system operational and effective? Does the executing agency/ GEF team provide the necessary information with regards to submission of reporting materials on time, the quality of M&E reporting against the requirements, and evidence of consultation of all relevant stakeholders including women and vulnerable populations?
2. Are the Project M&E tools adequate to guide ongoing project management?

3. How well does the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements?

H. Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

1. To what extent are the risks identified in the project's latest SESP valid? Are any revisions needed?
2. To what extent is the implementation of the project's social and environmental management plan effective and efficient?

I. Communication and Knowledge Management

1. How effective are the communications in ensuring the Implementing Agency's awareness of the project?
2. Are the information, reports and resources of the projects organized and shared effectively between the Implementing and Executing agency?

J. Sustainability

1. Are the risks identified in the project document the most important?
2. Do you foresee any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes?

6.4 Ratings Scales

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of-project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of-project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.

Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as "good practice".
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project's closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

6.4 MTR field mission itinerary

No	Field Mission Locations	Date	Interviewee
1.	Klang Valley	14 Jul	Friends of Bukit Dinding (FoBD)
2.			Friends of Bukit Kiara (FoBK)
3.		15 Jul	Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)
4.			RESCU
5.		16 Jul	Free Tree Society (FTS)
6.			Malaysia Green Building Council (mGBC)
7.	Putrajaya	17 Jul	UNDP Malaysia management and Oversight Team

8.			UNFCCC focal point
9.			UNCBD focal point
10.		18 Jul	CPMU
11.			Fly Technology Agriculture Sdn Bhd
12.	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul	PACOS Trust
13.		23 Jul	Kampung Terian
14.		24 Jul	Kampung Bolotikun
15.	Miri, Sarawak	13 Aug	District Officer of Telang Usan
16.			Save Rivers
17.	Baram, Sarawak	14 Aug	Long Anap
18.		15 Aug	Long Tungan
19.		17 Aug	Long Moh

6.5 List of persons interviewed

No.	Name	Affiliation	Group/ Position	Location	Date (2024)
1.	Adrihazim Rashid	Friends of Bukit Dinding (FoBD)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	14 Jul
2.	Inci Syafruddin	Friends of Bukit Dinding (FoBD)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	14 Jul
3.	Tan Boon Hua	Friends of Bukit Kiara (FoBK)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	14 Jul
4.	Linda Yeoh	Friends of Bukit Kiara (FoBK)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	14 Jul
5.	Vivian Soon	Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)	Strategic partner	Klang Valley	15 Jul
6.	Donovon Louis	Malaysian Nature Society (MNS)	Strategic partner	Klang Valley	15 Jul
7.	Teckwyn Lim	RESCU	Landscape strategy consultant	Online interview	15 Jul
8.	Peter Leong	Friends of Bukit Kiara (FoBK)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	15 Jul
9.	Carolyn Lau	Free Tree Society (FTS)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	16 Jul
10.	Baida Hercus	Free Tree Society (FTS)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	16 Jul
11.	Intan Maizura Shafei	Malaysia Green Building Council (mGBC)	Regular grantee	Klang Valley	16 Jul
12.	Mitchell Evan Gelber	Malaysia Green Building Council (mGBC)	Regular grantee	Online interview	1 Aug
13.	Niloy Banerjee	UNDP Malaysia	Resident Representative (RR)	Online interview	17 Jul
14.	Hugo Remaury	UNDP	Regional Technical Advisor, Nature Climate and Energy, UNDP	Online interview	7 Aug
15.	Nosrat Ravichandran	UNDP Malaysia	Programme Manager, Nature, Climate & Energy	Putrajaya	17 Jul
16.	Lee Siow Ling	UNDP Malaysia	Management and Oversight	Putrajaya	17 Jul
17.	Aisyah Razihan	UNDP Malaysia	Management and Oversight	Putrajaya	17 Jul
18.	Puan Marhaini Mat	UNFCCC focal point	Government stakeholder	Putrajaya	17 Jul
19.	Puan Fazirah	UNFCCC focal point	Government stakeholder	Putrajaya	17 Jul
20.	Puan Farahin	UNCBD focal point	Government stakeholder	Putrajaya	17 Jul

No.	Name	Affiliation	Group/ Position	Location	Date (2024)
21.	Lee Shin Shin	CPMU	National Coordinator	Putrajaya	18 Jul
22.	Nurul Fitrah Mohd Ariffin Marican	CPMU	Programme Assistant	Putrajaya	18 Jul
23.	Jeff Wee Hung Yee	Fly Technology Agriculture Sdn Bhd	Strategic partner	Putrajaya	18 Jul
24.	Tan Pei Chin	Fly Technology Agriculture Sdn Bhd	Strategic partner	Online interview	18 Jul
25.	Lisandra	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
26.	Gordon	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
27.	Rozika	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
28.	Dr Felix	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
29.	Anne	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
30.	Charlene - Finance	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
31.	Yoggie	PACOS Trust	Strategic partner	Penampang, Sabah	22 Jul
32.	Diana	Kampung Terian	Regular grantee	Kg Terian, Penampang	23 Jul
33.	Community of Kampung Terian	Kampung Terian	Beneficiaries, project team	Kg Terian, Penampang	23 Jul
34.	Winnie	Kampung Bolotikun	Regular grantee	Kg Bolotikun, Penampang	24 Jul
35.	Sister Calista	Kampung Bolotikun	Regular grantee	Kg Bolotikun, Penampang	24 Jul
36.	Flavianus (Kipol - Pengerusi)	Kampung Bolotikun	Regular grantee	Kg Bolotikun, Penampang	24 Jul
37.	Community of Kampung Bolotikun	Kampung Bolotikun	Beneficiaries, project team	Kg Bolotikun, Penampang	24 Jul
38.	Ginny Ng	National Steering Committee	Independent		31 Jul
39.	Manon Bernier	UNDP Malaysia	Deputy Resident Representative (DRR)	Online interview	2 Aug
40.	Dr Yuwana Podin	National Steering Committee (NSC)	Co-chair	Online interview	2 Aug
41.	Fazrullah Razak	Sabah Parks	State government	Online interview	5 Aug

No.	Name	Affiliation	Group/ Position	Location	Date (2024)
42.	Nelly Majuakim	Sabah Parks	State government	Online interview	5 Aug
43.	Norafiza Maradani	Sabah Parks	State government	Online interview	5 Aug
44.	Billie Andrew Jivinson	Sabah Parks	State government	Online interview	5 Aug
45.	Samban Tugang	Save Rivers	NGO partner	Miri, Sarawak	13 Aug
46.	Ezra Uda	District Officer of Telang Usan	Local government stakeholder	Miri, Sarawak	13 Aug
47.	Thomas Jalong Apoi	Long Anap	Regular grantee	Long Anap, Baram	14 Aug
48.	Community of Long Anap	Long Anap	Beneficiaries, project team	Long Anap, Baram	14 Aug
49.	Monica	Long Tungan	Regular Grantee	Long Tungan, Baram	15 Aug
50.	Jessica	Long Tungan	Regular Grantee	Long Tungan, Baram	15 Aug
51.	Community of Long Tungan	Long Tungan	Beneficiaries, project team	Long Tungan, Baram	16 Aug
52.	Tinggan Aran @ William	Long Moh	Regular grantee	Long Moh, Baram	17 Aug
53.	Community of Long Moh	Long Moh	Beneficiaries, project team	Long Moh, Baram	17 Aug
54.	Hilda Lydwina	Persatuan Pemeliharaan dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar (Sarawak), PELIHARA	Regular grantee	Online interview	12 Sep
55.	Dominic	Persatuan Pemeliharaan dan Pemuliharaan Alam Sekitar (Sarawak), PELIHARA	Regular grantee	Online interview	12 Sep
56.	Rosanna Luca	UNOPS	UCP Focal Point	Online interview	17 Sep
57.	James Lenoci		Consultant for OP7 PPG	Online interview	25 Sep

6.6 List of documents reviewed

1. Project Identification Form (PIF)
2. Summary of Logframe
3. 2023 Project Implementation Report (2023 PIR)
4. 2024 Project Implementation Report (2024 PIR)
5. 2023 – 2024 Stakeholder Engagement Plans (Klang Valley, Crocker Range, Baram)
6. Malaysia SGP OP7 Project Document (ProDoc), including:
    a. Annex 1 – GEF Budget
    b. Annex 2 – Project Map
    c. Annex 3 – Multi-Year Workplan
    d. Annex 4 – Monitoring Plan
    e. Annex 5 – SESP
    f. Annex 6 – Risk register
    g. Annex 8 – Stakeholder Engagement Plan
    h. Annex 9 – PPG stakeholder consultation
    i. Annex 10 – Gender Analysis Action Plan
    j. Annex 13 – Climate Screening
    k. Annex 15 – Estimations of Core Indicators
    l. Annex 18 – SGP Operational Guidelines
7. Klang Valley Landscape Strategy
8. Crocker Range Landscape Strategy
9. Baram Landscape Strategy
10. Annual Workplans 2023 and 2024
11. NSC Meeting Minutes (36^{th} – 39^{th} Meeting)
12. SGP OP7 Inception Workshop Report
13. SGP OP7 Project List (up to September 2024) (Excel Worksheet)
14. Co-financing Monitoring (Excel Worksheet)
15. Guidance for conducting Mid-Term Reviews of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects
16. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP (2021)
17. UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (Policy Update, OPG Approved) (January 2021)
18. United Nations Development Programme. 2017. The A to Z of the SGP: A Guide to the GEF Small Grants Programme. UNDP
19. GEF Guidelines on Core Indicators and Sub-Indicators, ME/GN/02 (2019)

6.7 Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

(Each UNEG member to create its own forms for signature)

Annex 2: United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: TEH LAY HOON, EVELYN

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant)**:**

_____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (KUALA LUMPUR) on (13 JULY 2024)



Signature: _____

6.8 Annexed in a separate file: Signed MTR final report clearance form

6.9 Annexed in a separate file: Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report

6.10 Annexed in a separate file: OP7 Core Indicator Worksheet

6.11 GEF Risk Template

Risks to Achieving Outcomes

GEF GUIDANCE: Summarize risks that might affect the achievement of desired outcomes and the mitigation measures which are planned or already undertaken to address these. The risk rating should reflect the *residual* risk to achieving outcomes after considering the implementation of mitigation measures. The rating scale is: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low. See the *GEF Risk Appetite* document (GEF/C.66/13) for more information and its Annex B for a description of each risk category. Note that the rating for the "Environment and Social" category should be the same as the risk rating in the SESP.

UNDP GUIDANCE: Please use the following as further guidance to help ensure risk information provided to the GEF is also aligned with UNDP ERM and the project Risk Register.

GEF RISK CATEGORIES	GEF DEFINITIONS	GEF Risk Appetite Level	Additional Guidance to Align with UNDP ERM and Project Risk Register	Risk RATINGS (see table below)	ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION MEASURES
CONTEXT					
Climate	This is the project or program's residual risk stemming from the potential for adverse consequences of a climate-related hazard, or of adaptation or mitigation responses to such a hazard, on lives, livelihoods, health and well-being, ecosystems and species, economic, social and cultural assets, services (including ecosystem services), and infrastructure. Risk results from the interaction of vulnerability (of the affected system), its exposure over time (to the hazard), as well as the (climate-related) hazard and the likelihood of its occurrence. Addressing these risks requires identifying the	Substantial	Social and Environmental	Moderate	Climatic unpredictability, periodic droughts, changes in rainfall distribution, altered frequency of extreme weather events, rising temperatures may affect project results, including agroecological practices, rehabilitation of degraded terrestrial, etc.; may increase the vulnerability and coping capacities of local communities. To mitigate this, a Climate and Disaster Risk Screening was prepared during the project PPG phase. The report

	hazards; assessing vulnerability and exposure; identifying measures to manage the risk; and finally rating the residual risk.				includes a description of risk mitigation measures and plans which will be undertaken during the implementation. SGP Country Programme Team and the strategic partner are in discussion with the regular grantees to find the best way forward to navigate this issue, which will likely cause delay to the project progress.
Environment and Social	This category captures the risk that environmental and social changes pose to the viability of an intervention or its achievement of targeted outcomes. This includes environmental factors such as toxic pollution, biodiversity loss, soil degradation or water scarcity (including those linked to climate factors above), as well as social factors such as demographic change, labor dynamics, or patterns of social exclusion. The Environmental and Social Safeguard exercise in projects and programs, as required by Agency and GEF policy and guidelines (SD/PL/03; SD/GN/03) includes analysis of these factors and how to mitigate negative project-related effects on people. This includes special attention to gender equality, youth, indigenous peoples, and activity and engagement in fragile and conflict-affected situations. The rating reported by project under this category is identical to the Overall Safeguards Risk rating provided at PIF, CEO Endorsement, MTR and TE stage.	Substantial	Social and Environmental	Moderate	The environmental and social risks for the project involve the potential exclusion of the local communities from fully participating in the discourse on matters regarding their land and inequitable opportunities for women and girls to reflect their views. The project could potentially damage critical and sensitive ecosystems by inadvertently releasing pollutants or disrupting local ecologies as a result of poorly designed and/or executed activities. The project team prepared several measures to mitigate and manage the risk of the project, including the development of a stakeholder engagement plan, gender analysis and action, and climate and disaster risk screening.
Political and Governance	Political and Governance risks describe situations that may interfere with preparation, implementation and the	Substantial	Political	Moderate	Political and Governance risks in one of the landscapes which is Middle and Upper Baram due to

	achievement of the project or program outcomes in areas such as the political context of a country (or region in the case of transboundary projects), governance situation and security. This could include considerations of change in political developments (elections, change in government), governance challenges (transparency, accountability), or security context (terrorism, armed conflict, violence). It may also include the likely consequences of such changes or economic developments on co-financing.				the low-level of buy-in by the government of Sarawak which is not in line with the government development agenda, and the unresolved issues related to land use rights of indigenous communities. Further complications include setbacks in the Baram Peace Park movement, where land disputes and strained relations with the Sarawak government have slowed progress toward land restoration targets. To mitigate this issue the project team has requested the Federal Ministry to issue a letter to the Sarawak Government regarding this project and request support. Due to the reshuffling of government management thus result in the change of the Chairperson of the NSC a couple of times resulting in the lack of understanding of SGP OP7 mandate and grant modality. Project team provides briefing to the chairperson and other new NSC members
INNOVATION					
Institutional and Policy	This category covers risk related to innovative approaches adopted by a project or program to address institutional and policy challenges and create an enabling environment for success. This may include new laws,	High	Operational	Moderate	The institutional and policy risk includes the conversion of the remaining green spaces in Klang Valley into development projects and land right issues in CRBR and

	regulations, market mechanisms or standards that support investment objectives, when there is some degree of uncertainty as to whether these will be adopted or achieve their intended outcomes. It also captures the uncertainty of success of activities aimed at reforming informal institutions and behaviors (values, beliefs, customs, traditions, consumer preferences). It may also include targeted change in organizations and the relationships among them—such as novel efforts to devolve authority from national to local agencies; to empower farmers' organizations or religious, cultural, and civil society advocacy networks; or to tap the influence of industry and trade organizations or other business associations.				MUB. To mitigate these risks, community projects are designed to form a multistakeholder platform for collective actions to strengthen collaboration amongst NGOs, CBOs and government entities. Community is further strengthened through community mapping and development of community protocol to protect their native lands.
Technological	This category relates to the uncertainty of success from the development or application of technological innovations applied in projects and programs to support environmental objectives and enable transformation. Examples include harnessing "big data," remote sensing, or artificial intelligence to improve the targeting of interventions or improve service delivery; testing new crop management, transportation solutions or waste cleanup practices; or piloting novel nature[1]based solutions to replace more carbon- and resource-intensive infrastructure. It reflects the risk that such technological innovation may not achieve intended environmental outcomes (or not at the pace or scale intended), which may increase for experimental technologies with limited track	High	Strategic	Low	No risks foreseen

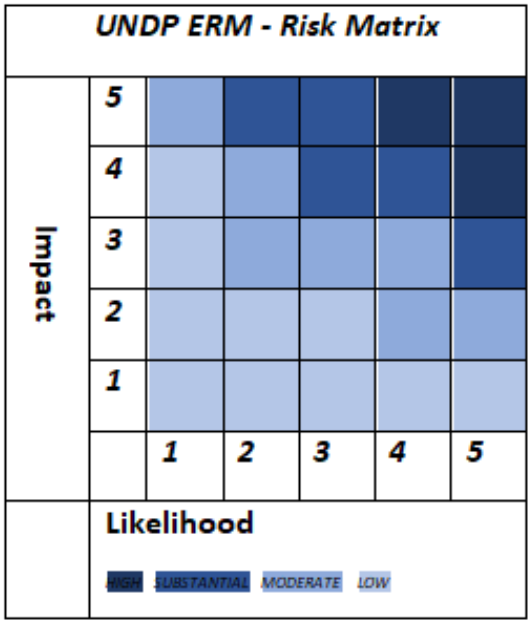
	record, or technical solutions that are untested in the particular context in which they will be applied.				
Financial and Business Model	This category captures risk carried by any financing mechanism that helps mobilize financing by tapping new funding sources or by engaging new financing partners to support solutions promoted by the project or program. This includes financial mechanisms that: enhance the 'efficiency' of financial flows by reducing delivery time and/or cost; expand the reach of an intervention far beyond the scale of the initial investment; or deepen its impact and durability. This category also covers risk related to the uncertainty of success from new business models intended to deliver environmental benefits, for example by restoring ecosystems, reducing waste, or shifting consumer behaviors.	High	Financial	Low	No risks foreseen
EXECUTION					
Capacity for Implementation	This category addresses risk stemming from the capacity of the Executing Entity and other key actors to execute the project or program activities in a way that supports the achievement of expected environmental outcomes. Assessing this risk requires considering capacity elements required for successful design, adaptive management during implementation, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements through to project or program completion. Capacity elements may cover the availability of adequate	Moderate	Operational	Moderate	The community-based organizations (CBOs) in two (out of three) landscape areas are largely rural communities that generally have lower levels of technical and management capacities to implement the grant projects. These CBOs may also not have the capacity to coordinate with each other and with government officials. These could potentially result in

	organizational processes, staff with adequate skills and knowledge, extent of reliance on third-party providers, coordination and convening power, as well as the quality of monitoring and evaluation resources and information systems.				reduced support from the government and recognition of the integrated landscape, thus delaying the achievements of the project outcomes. To mitigate this, the project team will adopt a proactive approach to build the capacity of the local CBOs to actively participate in community development initiatives. Further, the project NSC, comprising representatives from local CSOs, government ministries and agencies and donor are kept abreast of the project's progress and risks and will play a guidance role to effectively manage the implementation of the project.
Fiduciary	This category captures risk related to financial management and procurement arrangements of a project or program, including the successful implementation of measures to ensure full compliance with relevant policies. Agencies assess fiduciary risks and develop and implement mitigation measures under their own internal controls, processes, policies and practices in adherence with GEF minimum standards. This includes reviewing that sufficient skilled staff are available to support the project, with clear lines of accountability and separation of functions in procurement and financial management, clear performance targets in contracts and manageable delays in undertaking	Moderate	Organizational	Moderate	The set-up of the project, i.e., UNDP as the implementing agency and UNOPS as the executing agency, hinders the efficiency of the project to be compliant with GEF and UNDP's project management rules and regulations. The project team contracted by UNOPS do not have access to UNDP's project management portal and requires support from UNDP's personnel to update the necessary input into the portal. This added an additional layer of work and could lead the project to be non-compliant.

	procurement, as well as clear mechanisms to identify and report wrongdoing.				
Stakeholder	This category relates to the risk associated with inadequate participation, engagement and inclusion of stakeholders in projects and programs, and how this may impact results. Such risk may affect country ownership and partnerships, including with civil society, Indigenous Peoples, communities and the private sector. It may also affect the ability of the project or program to harness the knowledge, experience and capabilities of affected and interested individuals and groups. Mitigation measures include: consultations or co-design processes undertaken to ensure that design reflects concerns and priorities expressed by diverse stakeholders; project or program management arrangements that incorporate key stakeholder groups in decision-making; and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes to support the achievement and durability of outcomes.	Moderate	Strategic	Moderate	There is a potential risk that the vulnerable or marginalized groups, including the Indigenous communities, could not fully participate or are excluded from meaningfully participating in the discussions involving decisions regarding priority actions on lands claimed by themselves and matters involving the utilization of natural resources. As a mitigation measure, the project team has developed a stakeholder engagement plan, which includes a plan to establish multi-stakeholder platforms. The project team will also undertake a more hands-on approach by providing assistance to the CBOs from the Indigenous communities in the preparation of grants.
Other	Additional risks may arise beyond those covered in the nine categories above. The “other” category is optional and may be used to describe one or more important risks that may affect achievement of outcomes from a project or program and are not already covered. Examples may include mobility restrictions related to a pandemic or other health emergency, natural disasters, or rapid shifts in global market conditions.	n/a	As relevant	Not rated	

Overall Risk Rating	UNDP guidance: select the most appropriate risk rating. This does not need to be the highest rating.			Moderate	< Insert text >

Risk Rating: based on the likelihood and impact the risk significance level (High, Substantial, Moderate or Low) is determined using the UNDP ERM Risk Matrix shown below.



ERM Criteria Model – Determining Likelihood and Impact

Determining Likelihood (at Project, Programme/Unit, Corporate levels):

Likelihood	Not likely 1	Low likelihood 2	Moderately likely 3	Highly likely 4	Expected 5
Description ("The risk is expected to materialize....")	Every 5 years or less **and/or** very low chance (<20%) of materializing	Every 3-5 years **and/or** low chance (20% - 40%) of materializing	Every 1-3 years **and/or** chance of materializing between 40% - 60%	Once or twice a year **and/or** high chance of materializing (60% - 80%)	Several times a year **and/or** chance of materializing above 80%

Determining Impact:

Project Level –

Impact	Negligible 1	Minor 2	Intermediate 3	Extensive 4	Extreme 5
Description ("If the risk materializes,....")	Negligible/no impact on project results, positive or negative. Negligible or no potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment.	5-20 % of the applicable and planned results affected, positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment very limited and easily managed.	20-30% of the applicable and planned results affected positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment of low magnitude, limited in scale and duration, can be avoided, managed or mitigated with accepted measures.	30-50% of the applicable and planned results/outcome affected positively or negatively. Potential adverse impacts on people and/or environment of medium to large magnitude, spatial extent and duration.	More than 50% of the applicable and planned results/outcome affected positively or negatively. Adverse impacts on people and/or environment of high magnitude, spatial extent and/or duration.

6.12 Annexed in a separate file: GEF Co-financing template