UNDP/GEF Evaluation

Management Response and Tracking Template (update 19 may 2016)

Project Title/Evaluation title: Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Lao PDR's Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programmes (Agrobiodiversity Project)

Project PIMS #: UNDP PIMS ID: 2903/GEF PMIS ID: 2416

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Evaluation Period: Mid-term Review Report

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Key Issues and Recommendations	Management Response*	Tracking**				
	Response	Key Actions	Timeframe	Responsible unit(s)	Status***	Comments
Implementation and Execution Issues						
1. The ABP project should activate and utilize the PSC, representing a selection of key stakeholders in the agro-biodiversity realm. The PSC should serve its intended monitoring, oversight, information sharing, and stakeholder engagement functions. The PSC should be the main oversight mechanism for the project, with the opportunity to provide inputs to annual project workplanning, and approval of annual workplanning and budgeting. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Agree with recommendation.	UNDP and MAF to organize the 2014 annual review meeting jointly with the PSC meeting to discuss on the progress and workplan of the ABP for 2015 and other issues as required decision of PSC.	End of Q1 2015	MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The Project Steering Committee/Annual Review Meeting was held on 27 February, approved the 2014 Annual report and the Annual workplan for 2015. It also discussed on the MTE recommendations.
2. `This review recommends that UNDP, MAF, and FAO continue to urgently work together to respond to the audit recommendations, furthering the good progress made thus far, and ensure that the same issues are not raised in the audit for 2014. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Agree with recommendation.	Organizing the institutionalize minimum regulate meeting/working session with ABP project team in order to support the project team in implementing the pending audit actions planned for 2012/2013 and ensure staff commit to the NIM SOP Policy.	11 Dec 2014	MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	MAF officially submitted status of the audit action plan for 2012/2013 to UNDP in which all actions were implemented and supporting document to prove the implementation also provided as annexes of the letter to UNDP.
3. This review recommends that the ABP execution and implementation partners ensure prior to the 4th quarter of 2014 that adequate human resources will be available in the 2nd half of implementation to fully support highly dynamic and productive project execution, so that the project may achieve the	Agree with the recommendation.	Performance evaluation of the current project staff and CTA will be made in collaboration between MAF, UNDP and FAO as well as identify the possibility to get more human resource to support the project team such as intern.	End of Q1 2015	MAF, PSC, UNDP, FAO	Completed	An additional staff, a National Operational and Technical Manager has been recruited and started at the Vientiane office, mid May 2016 and quickly catching up with project activities. Budget revision for the CTA will be done as part of the FAO semiannual TA Progress report, July 2015.

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greatest results possible. This could imply contracting additional qualified national-level PMU staff, but in the interest of time, under current circumstances this may just mean revising the TORs of the current CTA and ensuring the budget is available for the CTA position for the remainder of the project. As such, this review recommends a re-assessment of the budgeting for the CTA position for the 2nd half of the project. [UNDP, FAO, PSC]						
4. This review recommends that the main project execution and implementation partners take immediate action to clearly document and justify actual co-financing amounts committed, with the goal of ensuring that the originally planned co-financing is contributed by the end of the project. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]	Agree with the recommendation.	UNDP to closely work with respective partners to annually estimate their co-financing contributions for inclusion in yearly progress reports.	End of 2015	UNDP, ABP, FAO	Completed	The CO-financing was estimated and report in the PIR2014/2015.
5. UNDP, FAO, and MAF should strengthen their monitoring and oversight of the project to ensure that the project is fully on-track, there are no bureaucratic delays, and any project risks are identified well in advance and proactively addressed. All project risks should be reviewed at the monthly technical coordination meetings, with discussion about	Agree with the recommendation.	UNDP, FAO and PMU will introduce new consultation and dialogue mechanism to increase oversight and proactive functions - e.g. weekly meeting/updating/ working session for specific activities and site visit, apart from the monthly meeting.	31 November 2014	PMU, UNDP, FAO	Completed	Field monitoring by UNDP and ABP was organized and to be continuously implemented from time to time during the remaining period.

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concrete steps to address risks, and follow-up before the next technical coordination meeting. This review also specifically supports the recommendation from the project audits that decisions made at the monthly technical coordination meetings must be followed-through on in a timely manner. [UNDP, FAO, MAF]						
6. ABP project workplanning should be done in a transparent and consultative manner with all key project partners, with final approval by the PSC. Workplanning for each year should be done in the 4th quarter of the previous year, for approval by the PSC before the end of the year. It must also be assured through the workplanning process that the project activities remain focused, and contribute directly to project results targets. [PMU]	Agree with the recommendation.	Increased transparency and consensus by all partners will be pursued. Proposed activities will be carefully assessed from the view of strategic agro-biodiversity importance, relevance to project objectives and contributing to results. The annual workplan will be discussed in-depth at monthly/coordination meetings and presented as a draft to PSC and at annual review meetings to get their advice and final endorsement.	End of Q1 2015	PMU UNDP and FAO	Completed	AWP was drafted in December 2014 and presented for discussion and approval by the PSC at the annual review meeting cum PSC meeting, on 27 February 2015.
7. The ABP project should strengthen support and oversight of field-level activities through quarterly monitoring visits, linked with the district planning meetings. This may be necessary for the remainder of the project, but at least should occur until the ABDI sub-projects are in mid-implementation. [PMU]	Agree with the recommendation. Mechanism to strengthen oversight of the field-level activities will be identifying in consultation with UNDP.	Quarterly mid-term monitoring visits schedules will be made in addition to requesting of progress report from the ABDI projects. UNDP, FAO and NPD to join the field monitoring visits as well. -	End of Q2 2015	PMU	Completed	ABDI review/evaluations mission and workshop was organized in Q3 of 2015 and back to back with the UNDP visit for field monitoring.

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8. It is recognized that the ABP project and TABI will not be carried out through a joint execution structure as originally planned, and any efforts to establish a joint execution approach with TABI should be dropped at this point. However, it is still necessary to improve coordination with TABI. The ABP project could still potentially utilize the same PSC structure as TABI, as the national stakeholders are likely to be the same for the two projects, and leveraging the same oversight mechanism would support a programmatic approach. There should be a review of TABI and ABP workplans to ensure harmonization and avoid overlap. If logistically feasible, the ABP project and TABI should share physical office space, which would allow the national project coordinator to play his joint role more effectively as the manager of both projects, and which would strengthen coordination between the two projects. [MAF, PMU, UNDP]	Not agree with the recommendation. As per ministerial notice ABP and TABI now has a joint PSC and joint activities will be further identified. Sharing the same office with TABI is still a challenge as the government has limited office space . The new NPC is playing an important role to ensure the coordination between the two projects.	ABP and TABI to identify how to work together on land use planning activities and other activities. PMU will organize ARM/PSC meetings in January 2014.	End of Q1 2015	MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The joint PSC of TABI&ABP was prepared and send official letter to inform UNDP on 18th June 2014.
9. To ensure cost-effectiveness by the end of the project, the project team should focus on delivering project results within the planned timeframe of the end of 2016. [PMU, UNDP, FAO]	Agree with the recommendation.	Key intervention areas for the remaining period with clear budget allocations to all outputs will be made, which UNDP and FAO will ensure that the activity plans are implementing as per approved	End of Q2 2015	PMU, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The 2015 AWP with clear budget for each activity/output was prepared to with the intention of making a realistic implementation plans. 2015 Budget Revision is ongoing. Extension of project duration to end 2016 is being

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		annual workplans.				prepared.
10. The ABP project should use the GEF biodiversity focal area tracking tool (available on the GEF website, and completed previously by this project) as a guide toward results-based management, by drawing focus and attention to outcome level results focused on the implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of agriculture sector policies supporting conservation of agro-biodiversity. The tracking tool provides inputs to one of the portfolio level indicators for the GEF biodiversity focal area results framework, and is a basic but important means of results monitoring. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]	Agree with the recommendation.	GEF biodiversity tracking tools table has been added as annex to the GEF annual report and the project team fill in information in the GEF biodiversity tracking tools for period of July 2013- June 2014.	28 Nov 2014	PMU, UNDP	Completed	GEF biodiversity tracking tools had been added to the GEF PIR Report for 2014 already.
Technical Focus						
11. In the 2nd half of implementation the ABP project needs to have a focused and results-oriented approach; this can be guided by a revised project results framework, including a focus on GEF-biodiversity focal area strategic targets, such a progress toward a score of "6" for mainstreaming of agro-biodiversity in agriculture policies and regulatory frameworks (as assessed through the GEF biodiversity tracking tool), and hectares under sustainable	No objection to the recommendation.	PMU, UNDP and FAO to review the suggestions in the Annex 9 of the MTR report and revise RRF of the project which including the revision of project targets, baselines, and indicators. After that PMU will present the revise RRF to PSC for approval.	End of June 2015	PMU, MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The revised of Project RRF was developed in consultation with the UNDP Regional Advisor. The revised version was presented and approved by the PSC at the Annual Review Meeting 2014.

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management. This review, therefore, recommends that the project results framework be revised immediately with inputs from UNDP, FAO, and the PMU, for approval by the PSC in the 4th quarter of 2014. This review provides suggestions for revised results framework indicators and targets in Annex 9 of this review report. [UNDP, FAO, PMU]						
12. The project includes an information-sharing component, but little appears to have been done under this part of the project thus far. In the 2nd half of implementation the ABP project needs to emphasize a strategic focus on knowledge generation and information sharing. This should include a basic online presence, such as a minimal web page positioned on the overall MAF website. This could also include activities such as a brief quarterly electronic newsletter updating targeted stakeholders on project activities. By the 4th quarter of 2014 the ABP project should have a webpage as an information dissemination portal, as a sub-page of a large relevant website, such as the MAF website. [PMU, MAF, FAO]	Partially agree with the recommendation. x.	ABP to contact MAF on possibility to discuss options for creating website under MAF website. Project's communication plan will be developed as well as publication materials e.g video, brochure, etc and to be discussed with MAF, UNDP and FAO to post information in their website.	End of Q2 2015	PMU, MAF, , UNDP, FAO	Completed	Communication strategy with detailed action plan was finalized and has been implemented. Completed developed and update project brief, factsheet oyster mushroom, short successful story, several videos regarding field activities. Some videos were shown at the local TV channel, and posted in YouTube , with link at UNDP Websites and Facebook https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECrO6Vd1ays&index=6&list=PLzp5NgJ2-dK7L2qzBjfsWnNiIpVAvrNJZ ABP also provide Local consultant to support the improvement of the NAFRI website.
13. To consolidate results and enhance the likelihood for the	Agree with recommendation,	ABP to hire consultants to evaluate result/impact/lessons	End 2015	PMU, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The finalization of technical reports is an ongoing activitity and

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sustainability of project results, this review recommends that the project team and key stakeholders focus on documenting and publishing the lessons and experiences of the ABDI projects, ensure that the NABP II is finalized and adopted, and ensure that a few (i.e. 2-4) key publications documenting agro-biodiversity in Lao PDR are produced before the end of the project. The project could also, for example, provide information on the ABDI project experience to be included in the TABI newsletter. In addition, the project should produce a document highlighting the importance in Lao PDR of agro-biodiversity for resilience and adaptation to climate change at least six months prior to project completion. [PMU, NAFRI, FAO]	but also importance of ecosystem services should be added – and where feasible have joint technical reports with TABI.	learned of ABDI activities - ABP, assisted by FAO and consultants, will prepare key technical papers which will be included in the communication strategy.				expected to be finalized by end November, 2016.
14. The project should plan for a specific external independent "sub-evaluation" of the ABDI project portfolio, upon the completion of a majority of the sub-projects. This would not need to be done by an international consultant, and in fact it would likely be much more effective for it to be done by a Lao speaker who understands the rural context. The evaluation should systematically document the	Agree with the recommendation.	To be implemented as part of the action under recommendation 13 above.	End of 2015	PMU, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The implementation of the local activities are delegated to local authorities – and the reviews and final evaluations are done by the Vientiane team.

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results and lessons of the sub-project portfolio, including outcome and impact level results. This "sub-evaluation" would be a critical input to the ABP terminal evaluation, as the terminal evaluation would not have the capacity to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the sub-projects. Similar documentation of sub-project portfolio results have been carried out in UNDP-GEF projects in Bulgaria (GEF ID #2730), Croatia (GEF ID #2105), and Hungary (GEF ID #1527). [PMU, PSC]						
15. This review recommends that the project shift the focus of Outputs 2.5 and 2.6 to address improving the understanding of the economic incentives and market forces that threaten various aspects of agro-biodiversity in Lao PDR, with a primary focus on crop and crop-associated biodiversity. Economic incentives and market forces are one of primary drivers of threats to agro-biodiversity as outlined in the project document, but do not appear to be clearly understood or documented. This is a significant gap in the project's logic chain. [PSC, UNDP, FAO]	Agree with recommendation, but should also include aquatic organisms and done in collaboration with TABI.	- ABP to revisit the activities under Output 2.5 and 2.6 and redesign the focus of the activities, which will be done together with the revision of RRF.	End of Q2 2015	PMU, MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	The project's result framework has been changed.
16. This review also recommends that UNDP and the ABP project take whatever steps necessary	Agree with the recommendation.	ABP to support MAF, UNDP and FAO in providing technical and strategic inputs to the sWG ABD	End of 2015	PMU, FAO, UNDP	Completed	UNDP,FAO and the project team regularly participate in sector and subsector working group meetings.

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to overcome any bureaucratic issues to the ABP project providing financial support for the organization of the agro-biodiversity sub-sector working group meetings, as this is clearly and specifically indicated in the project document. This would also provide the ABP project with the opportunity to ensure that the working group fulfills its opportunity to be a dynamic strategic guiding body. [UNDP, MAF-DoP, PMU, FAO]						Further, FAO, since mid of May 2015, has become co-chair of the subsector working group on agrobiodiversity with ABP supporting the secretariat.
17. The project results focus must be strengthened, and consequently the project would benefit from an internal discussion to generate a clearly articulated project logic chain, such as can be generated under the GEF Independent Evaluation Office "Review of Outcome to Impacts" methodology.1 [UNDP, FAO, MAF]	Further discussion with BRH is required.	- UNDP to discuss with Regional Technical Advisor on how to proceed with this.	End of June 2015	UNDP	Completed	In consultation with the regional technical advisor, the project result framework has been changed and approved by the PSC.
18. While integrating biodiversity considerations into relevant sector policies, plans, and legislation is a major focus of the project, this review recommends that the project should immediately apply a very focused scope in working on this issue, only taking the opportunity to provide inputs to	Agree with recommendation, with the addition of more information sharing by involved parties.	PMU, MAF, UNDP and FAO to assist to identify the key biodiversity related legal framework at monthly meetings, that can be commented and/or supported by the project.	End of Q2 2015	PMU, MAF, UNDP, FAO	Completed	List of legislation related to agro-biodiversity has been identified. The project is continuously providing inputs to the ongoing legislation as well as policy and strategy work. Recently (May 2015), the project has, through FAO, provided inputs and suggestion to the draft Natural Resources and Environment

[1] See http://www.thegef.org/gef/ROtI.

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relevant new policies being developed or revised. The project likely does not have the time or resources to carry out a comprehensive adjustment or revision to all Lao policies and legislation currently on the books that are related to agro-biodiversity. [PSC, MAF, PMU, FAO, UNDP]						Strategy and MoNRE Vision towards 2030. The ongoing formulation of the NABP-II is also generating an excellent platform for dialogues with multiple stakeholders working with or having an interest in agro-biodiversity.
19. National policy priorities in the agriculture sector tend to relate to national production targets, and the conditions and inputs necessary to achieve those targets. This can make it difficult for broader critical agriculture sector goals, such as conservation of Lao PDR's globally significant agro-biodiversity, to be given sufficient attention and priority. This review recommends that the ABP project support the agro-biodiversity sub-sector working group to develop national targets for agro-biodiversity related production, and conservation targets. [PMU]	Agree with the recommendation but should also be linked to the NABP. .	ABP continue to support the government to develop the NABP and ensure endorsement and implementation will be led by the government. FAO and UNDP to propose add national agro-biodiversity targets in the workplan of the sSWG ABD.	offend of June 2015	PMU, UNDP, FAO	Completed	ABP has extensively worked with NAFRI to develop, and finalize the NABP. Discussion on putting NABP into central administration for guiding the implementation of ABD work in Lao PDR was made at the SSWGABD Meeting in Q3 of 2015. ABP International Consultant and local consultants has been closely working with government agencies to update and revise the final dart of draft NABP report and to be resubmit to government for consideration and endorsement. .

* Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will fill the columns under the management response section.

** Unit(s) assigned to be responsible for the preparation of a management response will be updating the implementation status. Assigned with an oversight function monitors and verifies the implementation status.

*** Status of Implementation: Completed, Partially Completed, Pending