

SMALL GRANTS FACILITY



Responding to climate change

TERMS OF REFERENCE: TERMINAL EVALUATION

Taking Adaptation to the Ground: A Small Grants Facility for Enabling Local
Level Responses to Climate Change

4 September 2019

List of Acronyms

AF	Adaptation Fund
AN	Adaptation Network
BRC	Biodiversity and Red Meat Cooperative
CSA	Conservation South Africa
CFOC	Climate Finance Oversight Committee, SANBI
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF)
EDA	Enhanced Direct Access
EE	Executing Entity, SouthSouthNorth
ESP	Environmental and Social Policy
FA	Facilitating Agency – CHoiCE Trust (Mopani District), Conservation South Africa (Namakwa District)
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged People
NDA	National Designated Authority, DEFF
NIE	National Implementing Entity, SANBI
PAG	Project Advisory Group
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity institute
SGF	Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility
SGR	Small Grant Recipients
SSN	SouthSouthNorth
TAG	Technical Advisory Group

1. INTRODUCTION

SouthSouthNorth (SSN) wishes to procure the services of an independent consultant to undertake a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project entitled 'Taking Adaptation to the Ground: A Small Grants Facility for Enabling Local Level Responses to Climate Change'. The project, hereafter referred to as the 'Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility Project' (SGF), started on 16 September 2015 and is due to close by June 2020.

The Terms of Reference (ToRs) set out the requirements for the SGF Terminal Evaluation. The Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken between October/ November 2019 and February 2020 with a final report due on 1 March 2020.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility Project is funded by the Adaptation Fund, implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) as the National Implementing Entity (NIE), and executed by SouthSouthNorth Trust (SSN) as the Executing Entity. The SGF is locally facilitated in the target districts by Conservation South Africa (CSA) as the Namakwa Facilitating Agency and CHoiCe Trust as the Mopani Facilitating Agency. The project is endorsed by the Department of Environmental Affairs as the National Designated Authority (NDA) and is locally supported by the Namakwa and Mopani District Municipalities.

The SGF is a four-year community-based adaptation pilot project, which aims to ensure that vulnerable, rural communities in two project target areas in South Africa (Namakwa District in the Northern Cape and Mopani District in Limpopo) have reduced vulnerability and increased resilience to the anticipated impacts of climate variability and change. The project initially had a duration of four years (to September 2019) and a total budget of USD 2,442,682. A no cost extension, to end of June 2020 has been approved by the Adaptation Fund.

The SGF is piloting a small granting mechanism known as enhanced direct access (EDA), which allows civil society organisations to access climate finance to implement locally relevant adaptation projects at the community level in at least one of the three investment windows: Climate-Smart Agriculture, Climate-Resilient Livelihoods and Climate-Proof Settlements.

The project has three Components:

- Component 1: Providing small grants to vulnerable communities that deliver tangible and sustainable benefits;
- Component 2: Empowering local institutions to identify and implement adaptation response measures; and
- Component 3: Compiling and sharing lessons learned to facilitate future scaling up and replication of small grant-financing approaches.

The full project proposal is available [here](#).

3. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION

The terms of reference for the evaluation of the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility Project are drawn from the [Adaptation Fund Guidelines for Project Final Evaluation](#).

In line with these guidelines, the independent Terminal Evaluation has the following main objectives:

- Provide an independent assessment of the achievement of the project towards its output, outcome, and impact targets, including ratings (see Annex 2), and with particular consideration of achievements related to the proposed concrete adaptation measures as set out in the approved project proposal and in subsequent agreements with Small Grant Recipients;
- Assess the likelihood of the sustainability of the project outcomes and the risks to sustainability after project completion. This should include the sustainability of the investments in each of the Small Grant Recipients (SGRs);
- Evaluate the processes that influenced the achievement of the project results and outcomes, including an assessment of the preparation and readiness and SGF decision making structure and processes, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, financial management, adaptive management including responsiveness to the recommendations of the Mid Term Evaluation, project management and governance; and project start up and implementation time frames;
- Specifically address the questions that were identified for the Terminal Evaluation in the Mid Term Evaluation;
- Assess the contribution of the project to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal, including report on AF standard/core indicators; and
- Evaluate the project's M&E systems
- Provide a set of conclusions, lessons, and recommendations in the final evaluation report on all aspects of the project that they consider relevant.

Conclusions represent the evaluators' interpretations and judgments based on findings and the empirical data gathered and analysed. Evaluators will be expected to give special attention to analysing factors that contributed to or hindered achievement of project objectives, sustainability of benefits, innovation, replication, and project M&E, identifying emerging lessons and best practice that are applicable to the project and/or to the Adaptation Fund's overall portfolio, and to proposing specific recommendations for the scaling up or replication of the small grants facility. Findings should be specific and recommendations should be explicit and practical.

The criteria and ratings framework that should be used by the evaluator are set out in the [Adaptation Fund Evaluation Framework](#).

4. APPROACH

An evaluation management team comprising SSN and SANBI will support the process. The Terminal Evaluation shall be undertaken by a consultant with evaluation and small grant-making expertise. It should examine and assess the perspectives of the various relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries. In this regard, the approach must include:

- A desk top review of relevant project documentation, including but not limited to the approved project proposal and will use the information generated by the project including, but not limited to, baseline data, quarterly reports and information generated by the project M&E system.
- Field visits to all of the Small Grant Recipients' project sites to determine project achievements (this may be 11 or 12 Small Grant Recipients).
- Interviews with Small Grant Recipients and Small Grant beneficiaries at each of their project sites.
- Interviews with the project partners and stakeholders at national and district level, including Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) (the National Designated Authority for the Adaptation Fund); representatives of the District Municipalities.
- Interviews with representatives of the NIE, EE and Facilitating Agencies
- Interviews with members of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in both districts.
- Feedback to relevant stakeholders including, at minimum, presentations to at least the PAG and NAFAB, and appropriate feedback to the TAGs and SGRs. Where appropriate, feedback sessions may be combined.

Evaluators should also seek the necessary contextual information to assess the significance and relevance of results. The Terms of Reference for this assignment are derived from Adaptation Fund guidelines. Therefore, evaluators should refer to the Adaptation Fund's guidelines for final evaluations for further information available [here](#).

Evaluators will abide by SANBI's Ethical Guidelines¹ and other policies relevant to evaluation.

i. Inception Phase

A briefing meeting with the SANBI and SSN will be scheduled.

The Evaluator will review the project document, work plans, project monitoring plans, progress reports, other documents on the project, evaluations on related interventions, government documents, meeting minutes, policy frameworks and other relevant documents that were produced through the project or by relevant stakeholders, as per guidance from SSN and SANBI.

Initial electronic or telephone interviews with key project informants could also be envisaged. The objective of the consultation is to reach a common understanding regarding the status of the project, the priority assessment questions, available data sources and data collection instruments and an outline of the final evaluation report.

The inception report should cover the following topics: status of logistical arrangements, project background and materials, key evaluation questions and priorities, outline of the final report. Based on the scope and purpose of the evaluation, document review, briefings and initial interviews, the evaluator will prepare an inception report with the final methodology and questions, and logistics including SGF team support, which will be reviewed by the evaluation managers.

ii. Data Collection Phase

The Evaluator will complete relevant consultations with internal and external stakeholders, as per the list of key stakeholders. If the Evaluator wishes to speak with other stakeholders beyond the list, this can be discussed with the evaluation management team during the inception phase. The Evaluator will undertake site visits to small grant recipient projects and will organise various meetings with stakeholders to get their views and feedback on the Project and its engagement with them. The Evaluator will work together with the evaluation management team to support this process. Based on these meetings and the document review, the Evaluator will build an initial set of findings, conclusions and possible recommendations.

iii. Report Writing Phase

Based on the inputs from discussions and interviews with key stakeholders, the Evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report. The draft report will be sent to the evaluation management team, who will share the report with key stakeholders for their inputs/comments. The evaluation management team will consolidate all comments and will then share them with the Evaluator. The Evaluator will finalize the report, taking into consideration the stakeholder comments and submit one complete report for approval by SANBI and SSN.

¹ SANBI's Ethical Guidelines are available on request

5. REPORT FORMAT

The Terminal Evaluation report should include:

- General information on the review such as the date and duration of the evaluation, places visited, who was involved, key questions, methodology and references used
- Project data and findings at the time of the evaluation: date of project cycle, achievement of outcomes and change observed as a result of project activities, project sustainability, processes influencing achievement of project results, contribution of project achievements to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal, M&E systems expected and actual financing, including actual expenditure, co-financing, changes in institutional arrangements, decision making bodies, processes and time frames, and changes in project objectives.
- Conclusions, lessons and recommendations.
- A copy of the terms of reference for conducting the evaluation

As per the guidance form the Adaptation Fund, the Terminal Evaluation report should:

- Present an assessment of all relevant outcomes and achievements of project objectives in the context of AF strategic priorities, sector, and project indicators. Ratings must be well substantiated.
- Present a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes for each of the small grant projects.
- Present lessons and recommendations that are supported by the evidence presented and are relevant to the AF portfolio and future projects.
- Include the actual project costs (totals per activity and per source).
- Include an assessment of the quality of the M&E plan at entry, the operation of the M&E system used during implementation, and the extent M&E was sufficiently budgeted for during preparation and implementation.
- Clearly state the quality of data used in the design and implementation of the evaluation
- Present data and evidence clearly and explicitly consider and explore alternative explanations of findings.

6. DELIVERABLES

The evaluator will produce four main deliverables:

- Draft Terminal Evaluation Report;
- Final Report in English, submitted in electronic format (MS Word) to SSN and SANBI.
- PowerPoint presentation of the final evaluation will be produced for purposes of restitution and dissemination of the evaluation results. This will need to be produced in English and limited to a maximum of 10 slides.
- Summary of the results of the Terminal Evaluation in a format appropriate for all SGRs.

An indicative structure of the final evaluation report, including potential content is compiled in the Adaptation Fund Guidelines for Project Evaluation (Annex 1).

7. REQUIRED COMPETENCIES, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER

To deliver the required scope of work the service provider(s) appointed to undertake this project should demonstrate the following competencies, skills and experience:

- Strong evaluation experience, requisite expertise in the project subject matter, and experience in economic and social development issues, with experience in the evaluation of small grant mechanisms an added advantage;
- Knowledgeable about the Adaptation Fund operations and strategy, and about relevant Adaptation Fund policies such as those on project life cycle, M&E, etc. would be an advantage;
- Master's degree in one of the following: Monitoring and Evaluation, Project Management, Social Sciences, Development studies, Demography, Economics or related graduate qualifications in other relevant fields, such as climate change adaptation, or equivalent experience.
- Preferably 10+ (minimum of 5) years work experience in the field of Monitoring and Evaluation of development projects, ideally also in the subject matter in question: climate change;
- Experience conducting evaluations of multi-million rand projects that involve foreign multilateral donors.
- Experience conducting evaluations of government-led projects in South Africa;
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and environmental management, experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis;
- Experience in conducting interviews and focus group discussions, particularly in community settings;
- Excellent analytical, writing and communication skills;
- Strong computer literacy skills (Microsoft: Word, Excel, PowerPoint,);
- Languages: Fluency in English. The ability to converse in Afrikaans, Sepedi and Xitsonga will be useful for consultations with SGRs and beneficiaries, but if necessary translation can be provided.

In addition, evaluators/evaluation teams will be:

- Independent of both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance to the project they are evaluating;
- Impartial and present a comprehensive and balanced appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the project being evaluated.

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSALS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Service providers interested in this evaluation should submit a concise proposal for undertaking the assignment.

The proposal must include:

- A description of the process that will be followed, indicating the methodology and proposed timeframes that shall be applied and how the evaluation milestones will be achieved. The proposal must include site visits to all the small grant recipient projects. This is expected to take one week for each District, and to take place in late November and early December 2019. The proposal should also include mechanisms to build capacity and transfer M&E skills to SSN and SANBI project staff.
- Details of the individual(s), who will provide the service, including relevant skills, experience and track record, responding to the main requirements and skills and competencies required as outlined above.
- Equity status of service provider (Historically Disadvantaged Individual (HDI), women and disability)
- Contact details of at least three current or recent clients.
- A budget for the time allocation to the proposed work, including VAT, which is clearly split between professional services and expenses, and that clearly indicates which project staff will be

working on the assignment. Hard costs such as travel, catering and booking of facilities will be reimbursed on a cost basis and provision should be made in the budget, whereby indicative costs are set out for this.

9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Accountability will be to the evaluation managers who are as follows:

Chief Director: Climate Change, SANBI and the Director, SSN.

Responsibility for contract management and other day-to-day direction may be delegated as required.

10. TIMEFRAMES

The total duration of the Terminal Evaluation will be between 30 and 50 person days over a period of approximately twenty weeks, from October/ November 2019 and shall not exceed the delivery deadline of 1 March 2020 for the final report.

11. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

The contract will be drawn up between SSN and the service provider. Invoices will be paid on completion of planned deliverables that are produced in accordance with the contract.

ANNEX 1: GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION AND RATINGS

The guidelines below are extracted and adapted from the guidelines that were prepared by the Adaptation Fund. Evaluators should refer to the [Adaptation Fund's guidelines for final evaluations](#) for further information.

1. EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

The Terminal Evaluation should assess the accomplishment of short- and medium-term project outcomes (including secondary outcomes) and provide ratings of their accomplishment. In evaluating project performance, the evaluation should focus on achievements in terms of output, outcome, and impact targets as set out in the approved project document and in the agreements between SSN and the Small Grant Recipients.

The evaluation should consider the recommendations of the SGF Mid-term Evaluation². The evaluation should also address the evaluation of long-term outcomes and impacts through the evaluation of risks to sustainability and progress towards impacts (see below).

Achievements of Outcomes: Criteria

The following criteria should be used in Terminal Evaluation when determining levels of achievement of project outcomes and objectives:

a. Relevance. Were the project's outcomes consistent with the AF goal, objectives and strategic priorities and country / region priorities, or, in the case of the Small Grant Recipients, with the goal and objectives of the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility project?

b. Effectiveness. Are the actual project outcomes commensurate with the original or modified project objectives (as a result of adaptive management)? If the original or modified expected results are merely outputs/inputs, the evaluators should evaluate if there were any real outcomes of the project and, if there were, determine whether these are appropriate with realistic expectations from such projects.

c. Efficiency. Were alternatives considered? How was the process of project preparation and implementation, compared with other projects? Include an assessment of the processes of small grant making. Wherever possible, the evaluator should also compare the costs incurred and the time taken to achieve outcomes with that for similar projects.

Achievement of Outcomes: Rating

The Terminal Evaluation should assign a rating to each of the small grant recipient projects and an overall rating to the achievement of the project outcomes. This rating is based on achievements in projects outcomes for each of the evaluation criteria, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

- Highly satisfactory (HS). The project had no shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

² The SGF Mid-term Evaluation Report can be found on the Adaptation Fund website at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/25SGFMTEReportAugust2018Final1.pdf>

- Satisfactory (S). The project had minor shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Moderately satisfactory (MS). The project had moderate shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Moderately unsatisfactory (MU). The project had significant shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Unsatisfactory (U). The project had major shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU). The project had severe shortcomings in outcome achievement in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

2. EVALUATION OF RISKS TO SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACTS

Evaluation of risks and sustainability: Criteria

The Terminal Evaluation should assess the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes and progress towards impact at project completion, and provide a rating for this. This should include the outcomes of the project as a whole, and those of individual Small Grant Recipients.

Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of the achieved outcomes continuing after the funding ends. The outcomes, according to the chain of results and logical framework of the project, will contribute to achieve the desired impacts³.

Progress towards impacts is understood as the likelihood of clear connections between the achieved outcomes and impacts, as presented in the chain result or logical framework of the project. Given the long-term nature of many of the intended project impacts, it might not be possible for the evaluators to identify or fully assess these at the time of project completion. When this is the case, the evaluation should indicate the steps taken to assess the likelihood of achieving long-term project impacts, replication effects, and other effects.⁴

In assessing the sustainability of outcomes, the evaluation should consider the following:

- **Financial and economic risks and assumptions.** Are there any financial or economic risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources being available once the AF grant ends?
- **Socio-political risks and assumptions.** 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 project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives?
- **Institutional framework and governance risks and assumptions.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits? Are requisite systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know-how, in place?
- **Environmental risks and assumptions.** Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes?

³ Adaptation Fund; Guidelines for Project/Programme Final Evaluations, pg. 9

⁴ Adaptation Fund; Guidelines for Project/Programme Final Evaluations, pg. 10

- **Uncertainties about climate change impacts.** Uncertainties in climate models and vulnerability assessments may have affected project design and implementation. The evaluation should consider the quality of the models used and the relevance and appropriateness of the design:
 - What is the risk that vulnerability assessments, existing adaptive capacity assessments, reference and scenario development, and other assessments would be insufficient to allow interventions to be sustained or linkages to impacts analysed?
 - Vulnerability assessments require value judgements, and any attempt to define and measure vulnerability must be the result of a consultative, stakeholder-driven process, rather than the result of sole technical analysis resulting in a simple metric. Was the vulnerability assessment conducted at the beginning of the project appropriate and scientifically based?

Evaluation of risks and sustainability: Rating

Each of the above dimensions of risks to sustainability and linkages towards impacts and goals of project outcomes should be rated based on an overall evaluation of the likelihood and magnitude of the potential effect of the risks considered within that dimension. The following ratings should be provided for each of the small grant recipient projects and the project as a whole:

- Likely (L). There are no or negligible risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/ linkages.
- Moderately likely (ML). There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/ linkages.
- Moderately unlikely (MU). There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/ linkages.
- Unlikely (U). There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability/ linkages.

All the risk dimensions of sustainability and linkages are critical. Therefore, overall rating for sustainability/linkages will not be higher than the lowest rated dimension. For example, if a project has an “unlikely” rating in any dimension, its overall rating cannot be higher than “unlikely.”

3. EVALUATION OF PROCESSES INFLUENCING ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS

Evaluation of processes influencing achievement: Criteria

The Evaluator should consider the following aspects influencing project implementation and achievement of project results for the project as a whole and for the small grant recipient’s projects. Evaluators are not expected to provide ratings or separate evaluations on these issues, but these should be considered in the performance and results sections of the report:

a) Preparation and readiness. Were the project’s objectives and components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame? Were the capacities of the executing entities and its counterparts properly consulted when the project was designed? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project approval? Were climate models considered and vulnerability assessments conducted? What was the quality of the models used?

b) Country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sectoral and development priorities and plans of the country or of participating countries in the case of multicountry projects? Are project outcomes contributing to national development priorities and plans? Were the relevant country representatives from government and civil society involved in the project? Has the

government approved policies or regulatory frameworks in line with the project's objectives? What was the role of local communities?

c) Stakeholder involvement. Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information sharing and consultation and by seeking their participation in project design, implementation, and M&E? For example, did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns? Did the project consult with and make use of the skills, experience, and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, private sector entities, local governments, and academic institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities? 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 while taking decisions? Were the relevant vulnerable groups (including women, children, elderly, disabled and the poor) and powerful supporters and opponents of the processes properly involved? Were gender balance perspectives of those affected and involved in the project assessed?

d) Financial management. Did the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds? Was there due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits? Financial audits of the project, if available at the time of the evaluation, should be used as a source of information.

e) Implementing Entity supervision and backstopping. Did Implementing Entity staff identify challenges in a timely fashion and accurately estimate their significance? Did Implementing Entity staff provide quality support and advice to the project, approve modifications in time, and restructure the project when needed? Did the Implementing Entity provide the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, and frequency of field visits for the project?

f) Delays in project start up and implementation. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, what were the reasons? Did the delays affect project outcomes and/or sustainability, and, if so, in what ways and through what causal linkages?

g) Adaptive management and responsiveness to the Mid Term Evaluation. How did the project respond to emerging lessons and how did the project respond to the findings of the Mid Term Evaluation.

4. EVALUATION OF CONTRIBUTION OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS TO THE ADAPTATION FUND TARGETS, OBJECTIVES, IMPACT AND GOAL

Evaluation of contribution to Adaptation Fund targets: Criteria

The evaluation should:

Assess how project outcomes and possible impacts have aligned with and contributed to Adaptation Fund goals, impacts and outcomes. (Please refer to the relevant Adaptation Fund documentation in this regard)

Conduct an assessment of AF standard/core indicators found in Annex 1 and 2 of the [AF Results Based Management \(RBM\)](#). Specifically, the evaluation should assess how project indicators have aligned with Adaptation Fund Strategic outcomes and outputs indicators and targets.

Evaluation of contribution to Adaptation Fund targets: Rating

The project will have an overall rating in the contribution of project achievements to the adaptation fund targets, objectives, impact and goal.

This rating is based on ratings of contribution:

- Highly satisfactory (HS). The project has made clear contributions to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal Satisfactory (S). The project had minor shortcomings in achieving contribution to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal
- Moderately satisfactory (MS). The project had moderate shortcomings in achieving contribution to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal
- Moderately unsatisfactory (MU). The project had significant shortcomings in achieving contribution to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal Unsatisfactory (U). The project had major shortcomings in achieving contribution to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU). The project had severe shortcomings in achieving contribution to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal

5. EVALUATION OF M&E SYSTEMS

Evaluation of M&E systems: Criteria

The evaluation should assess the quality of the project M&E systems according to the following four dimensions: (1) M&E plans; (2) indicators, (3) baselines; and (4) alignment with national M&E frameworks.

a) M&E plans, including three aspects:

Design: What is the assessment of the M&E plan to monitor results and track progress toward achieving project objectives? Was the plan based on the project RBM framework? Did the plan provide a timetable for various M&E activities, such as specific evaluations, reviews and supervisions as well as an appropriate budget?

Implementation: The final evaluation should verify that an M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of progress toward project objectives by collecting information on chosen indicators (which include selected AF standard/core indicators) continually throughout the project implementation period; annual project reports (PPR) were complete and accurate, with well-justified ratings; the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project implementation to improve performance and to adapt to changing needs (adaptive management); and projects had an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be compiled and used after project closure. In addition to making reference to the approved proposal documentation, it should also examine the system that was in place for capturing and tracking progress towards objectives of the Small Grant Recipients, which were determined iteratively over the lifetime of the project.

Budgeting and funding for M&E activities. The evaluators will determine whether the M&E plan was sufficiently budgeted for at the project planning / design stage and whether M&E was funded adequately and in a timely manner during implementation.

b) Indicators. Where possible, it is suggested that a mix of quantitative, qualitative and narrative tools be used, so that results can be triangulated to give the most accurate picture possible of progress towards adaptation and the factors involved.

c) Project baselines.

In adaptation projects, baselines have two primary uses. First, there is the project baseline: where is the project starting from? Who is vulnerable? What is vulnerable? And what is currently being done to reduce that vulnerability? Project baselines are site specific and limited to the duration of the project. Depending on the approach used in an adaptation project, a project baseline could be described by a set of quantitative or qualitative indicators, and may take the form of, for example, a vulnerability baseline, a climate risk baseline, an adaptive capacity baseline, or an adaptation baseline. Project baselines can later be used in the M&E process to measure change (in, for example, vulnerability, adaptive capacity, climate risk) in the priority system, and the effectiveness of adaptation strategies, policies and measures.

Second, depending on project needs and design, project proponents may choose to develop reference scenarios that represent future conditions in the priority system in the absence of climate adaptation. Scenarios may also be developed in which various adaptation measures are applied. Both reference scenarios and adaptation scenarios may be compared with baselines to evaluate the implications of various adaptation strategies, policies and measures. Scenarios differ from project baselines in that they deal with the longer term and are used for informing policy decisions concerned with various development pathways at the strategic planning level.

Therefore, the review of baseline is a significant part of AF project evaluations. Have baselines been designed through a participatory approach, using cost-effective and accessible information? Were reference and adaptation scenarios considered by the project? Have vulnerability baselines, climate risk baselines and adaptive capacity baselines been described and assessed? Have baselines (specifically vulnerability, climate risks, reference and adaptation scenarios) been reviewed during project implementation?

d) Alignment of Project M&E Frameworks to National M&E Frameworks. The M&E of long-term changes should be incorporated in AF-supported projects as a separate component and may include determination of baselines, scenarios and their probability, specification of indicators; and the provision of equipment and capacity building for data gathering, analysis, and use.

This section of the final evaluation report will describe project interventions and accomplishments toward establishing or using long-term monitoring systems. The review will address the following questions:

- Did this project's M&E system make optimal use of existing (local, sectoral, national) M&E systems, including existing indicators? Could these systems be used as they are, do they need to be revised or are new and additional systems required?
- Did this project contribute to the establishment of a long-term monitoring system? If it did not, should the project have included such a component? What were the accomplishments and challenges in establishment of this system? Is the information generated by this system being used as originally intended? Is the system mainstreamed— that is, is it embedded in a proper institutional structure and does it have financing?

- Did the project include plans to feedback and disseminate results from monitoring and reporting implementation as to allow for lessons learned and good practices identified to be shared with the wider community of adaptation planners and practitioners at all levels and other existing M&E systems?

Evaluation of M&E systems: Ratings

The above aspects should be assessed using the following ratings:

- Highly satisfactory (HS). There were no shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Satisfactory (S). There were minor shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Moderately satisfactory (MS). There were moderate shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Moderately unsatisfactory (MU). There were significant shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Unsatisfactory (U). There were major shortcomings in the project M&E system.
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU). The project had no M&E system. The overall rating of M&E will be based on the overall quality of the four dimensions described above.