

2019

Project Implementation Review (PIR)

**Reducing vulnerability from climate change in**

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# Basic Data

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| **Project Information** | |
| UNDP PIMS ID | 4630 |
| GEF ID | 5075 |
| Title | Reducing vulnerability from climate change in the Foothills, Lowlands and the lower Senqu River Basin |
| Country(ies) | Lesotho, Lesotho |
| UNDP-GEF Technical Team | Ecosystems and Biodiversity |
| Project Implementing Partner | Government |
| Joint Agencies | *(not set or not applicable)* |
| Project Type | Full Size |

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| **Project Description** |
| LesothoÔÇÖs vulnerability to climate change emanates from its high dependency on the flow of ecosystem goods and services for socio-economic developmentÔÇöparticularly water provisioning and quality regulation, soil formation and fertility maintenance, and rangeland resourcesÔÇöwhich are projected to be disrupted by the effects of climate change and variability. The small landlocked country occupies 30,588km2 of largely grasslands dominated habitats, divided into 4 ecological zones: the lowlands (17%), the foothills (15%), the mountains (59%), and the Senqu River Valley (9%) . Over 80% of productive arable land and the highest population densities are found in the lowlands. The foothills range in elevation from 1,800 to 2,000 metres above sea level along the lower mountain range. The Senqu River Valley (SRV) is a major grassland area marked by shallow soils. The mountain region ranges from 2,000 to 3,400m above sea level and is primarily used for summer grazing; it hosts some unique alpine and sub-alpine habitats of the Drakensburg range. The country is generally considered to be a grassland biome with a limited forest cover along rivers and in selected sheltered mountain hillsides, where dense woodlands were reported at the turn of the 18th century, dominated by Podocarpus, Cussonias, and Eucleas. Most forests, marshes, reed and Cyperus beds have however disappeared, and been replaced by grasslands and/or bare ground. |

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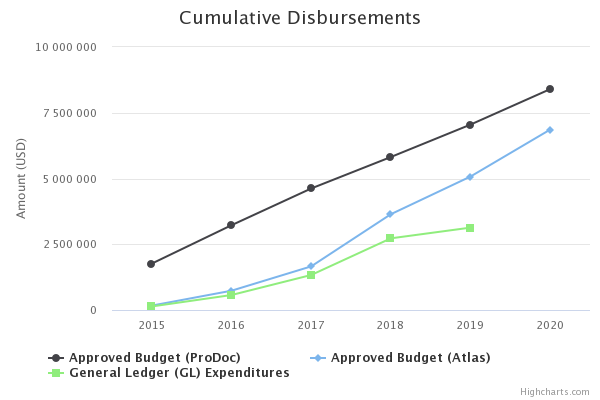
# Overall Ratings

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| Overall DO Rating | Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| Overall IP Rating | Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| Overall Risk Rating | Moderate |

# Development Progress

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| **Description** | | | | | | |
| **Objective**  **To mainstream climate risk considerations in the Land Rehabilitation Programme of Lesotho for improved ecosystem resilience and reduced vulnerability of livelihoods to climate shocks.** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| The use of climate-driven vulnerabilities and cost-effective planning to inform the implementation of the Land Rehabilitation Programme. | Climate change risks are not integrated into the Land Rehabilitation Programme. Target sites are chosen on an ad hoc basis. Rehabilitation and management measures are not tailored to specific ecosystems. | *(not set or not applicable)* | Climate-driven vulnerabilities and cost-effective planning are used to inform site prioritisation of target sites and the implementation of appropriate climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures. | Following completion of project baseline studies including Land Degradation Baseline assessment, Climate Change Scenario Modelling and Risk Assessment and Socio-economic survey, the project is continuing to disseminate findings of such baselines and implementing interventions to address the identified gaps including capacity building of technical departments and skills of local communities. In 2018, a national climate and weather network was strengthened through installation of two (2) automatic weather stations (AWS) in the project site. The data collected through these AWS is used to improve weather forecasting and climate monitoring to inform decision-making by land managers and farmers. | In the absence of a specific, measurable set of targets, it is difficult to assess level of achievement, and our approach has been to set the status conservatively.    However, there has been notable progress towards achievement of the objective-level indicator, as evidenced by the use of land degradation hotspot maps by the MFRSC, all Local Authorities, all Community Councils and all the Chiefs in the project area.    The findings and recommendations of the Socio-economic study and the Climate Change Scenario Modelling and Risk Assessment have been used to inform project planning and appropriate delivery, land use planning, management practices and rehabilitation by the technical departments and communities at the project sites.    The Socio-economic Unit within the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) was established and capacitated between August and December 2018 and as a direct result of inputs from the PMU).  The project plans to engage a socio-economic specialist to support the Socio-economic Unit in the conducting cost-effective analysis of the land rehabilitation practices. The project will continue to work at all levels to ensure that climate-driven vulnerabilities and cost-effective planning informs the implementation of the Land Rehabilitation Programme on an on-going basis. |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **On track** | | | | |
| **Outcome 1**  **Increased technical capacity of the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and relevant departments to apply up-to-date climate science for the management of evolving risks and uncertainty linked to climate change.** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| Capacities of the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and relevant departments to identify, prioritise, implement, monitor and evaluate adaptation measures. | Baseline estimated at a score of 3.    Baseline to be verified during year 1 of project implementation. | *(not set or not applicable)* | Capacity increased to a score of 7.  Target to be verified during year 1 of project implementation. | In addition to capacity building of technical officers from line ministries on Land Degradation assessment and monitoring system, which included upgrading of GIS equipment of Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation, the project further installed Land Monitoring equipment on selected benchmark control and intervention sites that were identified by baselines studies. Land rehabilitation sites are being selected using land degradation hotspots maps developed by the project to inform rehabilitation within the catchments. | The PMU is currently investigating the UNDP Capacity Assessment Tool in order to be able to measure achievement against the indicator for subsequent reporting. In the absence of such as assessment the PMU judges achievement to be satisfactory, for reasons given below.    (Details relating to the works for this Outcome have been captured in Annex 1 which has been uploaded into the libra).    In summary, 12 capacity building excises were undertaken and a total of 207 technical staff were engaged. 55% of the trainees have been males and 45% have been females.  This has been a successful portion of the project with exception of GIS capacity building, as there are too few technical staff available relative to their responsibilities. To address this, the project is working towards appointment of a GIS specialist who will work within the PMU to support the partners. In addition to this, the absence of meaningful baseline and end of project targets makes it very difficult to measure the impact of these outputs.  The project has just had its MTR, and will work to set some firm, measurable targets for project end and to build these into a revised SRF, to be approved by the Project Steering Committee. |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **On track** | | | | |
| **Outcome 2**  **Communities empowered with skills, knowledge, partnerships and institutions for managing natural resources to reduce vulnerability to climate change and increase resilience of natural and social capital (over 7,000 households with potential for upscaling to cover over 20,000).** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| % of targeted population awareness of predicted adverse impacts of climate change and appropriate responses (score) – disaggregated by gender.    1= No awareness level (    2= Moderate awareness level (50-75% correct)    3= High awareness level (>75% correct) | Baseline level of awareness in target population to be verified during year one of project implementation. | *(not set or not applicable)* | Increase level of awareness in target population from 1 (No awareness level) to 2 (Moderate awareness level) | Community trainings and awareness campaigns continued and as a result, the number of community members reached increased from 352 to 2877 with 906 members adopting climate smart livelihoods strategies. Again, as result of on-going awareness interventions, 46% of the target population is aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change and appropriate responses.smart livelihood stratergies | Partially achieved, but with strategic adaptive management could be achieved by project end.    The PMU worked primarily with those households already engaged to ensure greater uptake of the information shared. Therefore the number of households reached increased only slightly, i.e. to 41.6% (2,913 of the targeted 7,000).    However, additional effort was put in to reach schools and a manual was produced aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into the curriculum (Climate Change Adaptation Manual for Schools, 2018) with 1100 manuals being distributed to 27 schools in the project area and to partners within and beyond the area. Copies were also distributed to the Ministry of Education.    In addition to this 15 Farmer Field Schools were established and capacitated in climate smart agriculture, land management and rehabilitation.    The mechanisms that are being used by the project to encourage voluntary participation by affected communities in project activities include the distribution of various incentives such as seeds, chickens, bee keeping equipment, etc. Details associated with the incentives that have been implemented by the project have been provided in Annex 2.  The challenge that faces the project is to extend this awareness creation effort to the male sector of the target population. Women are generally willing and available but the male sector is often unavailable as they are involved in agricultural activities away from the homes (e.g. in South Africa). In addition to this, there appears to be a general apathy towards participating in awareness creation activities.  In response, the project will introduce new incentives that are more meaningful to the male sector. Volunteers will receive food coupons in return for their contributions to land rehabilitation efforts. Low tech climate change mitigation options such as rocket and solar stoves, small scale solar power generation units, wonder bags and rain water harvesting equipment will be added to the list of incentives on offer and will hopefully stimulate an increase in the participation of males. |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **Off track** | | | | |
| **Outcome 3**  **Over 50,000 ha of land across the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin rehabilitated through operationalization of the climate-smart Land Rehabilitation Programme.** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| The number of ha of land successfully protected, better managed and rehabilitated under the climate-smart Land Rehabilitation Programme. | Baseline and target to be established during implementation. | *(not set or not applicable)* | By project end-point, at least 50,000 ha of land in the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin under climate-smart LRP. | The land under climate smart agriculture including rangeland rehabilitation, tree planting and conservation agriculture increased from 88ha to 3729 ha. | Achievement is currently off-track, but the extent of land under rehabilitation since last year has nearly tripled.    Currently 14,323 ha (29%) of land has been put under different land rehabilitation and management practices that include brush control, gully rehabilitation, conservation agriculture, rotational grazing and resting of rangelands across the project site. However, this figure needs to be verified through:  • the development of a monitoring and evaluation protocol for this aspect of the project’  • improved and more robust monitoring, and  • improved data collection, storage and evaluation.  There has been a significant increase in adoption of improved management practices evident through the responsiveness of the 4 existing Grazing Associations and an increase in the area of rangeland that is being rested and the implementation of rotational grazing. The area of degraded lands where brush packs have been placed has also increased as has the number of stone packs in gullies. At this point the PMU is unable to quantify these achievements and will work to ensure that this is addressed in the revised SRF.  Based on the target achievement is off-track and the PMU aims to increase its efforts to get more land under rehabilitation but also to review the target and possibly reduce it in the revised SRF (to be approved by the PSC) |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **Off track** | | | | |
| **Outcome 4**  **National strategies for rangelands and wetlands management strengthened by the integration of climate change/variability and ecosystems management.** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| Number of briefs on suggested policy revisions to the rangeland and wetland management strategies developed by the LDCF-financed project to address climate change and ecosystem management. | National strategies do not adequately include climate risk considerations. | *(not set or not applicable)* | By project end-point, at least two policy briefs developed that include recommendations for the incorporation of climate risk considerations into each of the national rangeland and wetland management strategies. | Following development of the Technical Summary and Policy Brief on Climate Change Scenario Modelling and Risk Assessment, the project further supported development of guidelines for incorporating Climate Change in the review and formulation of national, sectoral and local development strategies. | The level of achievement is off track because the project has not produced the required policy briefs. However, to lay the groundwork for this, the project has supported the development of guidelines for the integration of climate change into national, sectoral and local policies, strategies and development plans. The title of these guidelines are “Guidelines for integration of climate change in national, sectoral and local policies, strategies and development plans” published in June 2018.  The project further supported printing and dissemination of the guidelines which among other platforms were distributed during launch of the National climate change policy.  The PMU, together with the CTA and the relevant IPs will interrogate the existing policies and assess the extent to which these need to be amended for the integration of climate change adaptation requirements and considerations. The necessary policy briefs will then be compiled to reflect these findings and relevant recommendations. The focus will be on range and wetland policies. |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **Off track** | | | | |
| **Outcome 5**  **NSDP mainstreamed into local development strategies to support the constituency-wide adoption of the climate-smart Land Rehabilitation Programme** | | | | | | |
| **Description of Indicator** | **Baseline Level** | **Midterm target level** | **End of project target level** | **Level at 30 June 2018** | **Cumulative progress since project start** |
| Climate change adaptation (as provided for in the NSDP) integrated into local development strategies.    (adapted from AMAT 1.1.1) | Development strategies do not adequately include climate change (as provided for in the NSDP). | *(not set or not applicable)* | By project end-point, climate change adaptation is integrated into local policy processes and development strategies. (A score of 2= integrated to a large extent/completely) | In addition, to developed guidelines for mainstreaming Climate Change into national and sectoral strategies, the project also provided technical expertise to support mainstreaming of Climate Change into Productive and Non-Productive Sectors of the newly developed Second National Strategic Development Plan (NSDPII).. | The project is on track with this Outcome although it cannot provide a score related to the indicator.  It will investigate this and provide it in the next PIR.    During the development of the NSDP the project supported the Government of Lesotho to mainstream climate change into the 4 Key Performance Areas, namely:  1. Enhancing inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector job creation.  2. Strengthening human capital,  3. Building enabling infrastructure,  4. Strengthening national governance and accountability systems.  The PMU will now engage with the Ministry of Development Planning (NSDP Desk Officer) in order to ensure that the project can participate in the mainstreaming of the NSDPII into sectoral strategies and policies at both the national, district and community levels. |
| **The progress of the objective can be described as:** | | **On track** | | | | |

# Implementation Progress



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| Cumulative GL delivery against total approved amount (in prodoc): | 37.3% |
| Cumulative GL delivery against expected delivery as of this year: | 44.43% |
| Cumulative disbursement as of 30 June (note: amount to be updated in late August): | 3,132,467 |

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| **Key Financing Amounts** | |
| PPG Amount | *(not set or not applicable)* |
| GEF Grant Amount | 8,398,172 |
| Co-financing | 27,600,000 |

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| **Key Project Dates** | |
| PIF Approval Date | May 2, 2013 |
| CEO Endorsement Date | Mar 25, 2015 |
| Project Document Signature Date (project start date): | Jun 8, 2015 |
| Date of Inception Workshop | Jun 18, 2015 |
| Expected Date of Mid-term Review | Feb 28, 2019 |
| Actual Date of Mid-term Review | Feb 19, 2019 |
| Expected Date of Terminal Evaluation | Dec 1, 2021 |
| Original Planned Closing Date | Dec 31, 2021 |
| Revised Planned Closing Date | *(not set or not applicable)* |

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| **Dates of Project Steering Committee/Board Meetings during reporting period (30 June 2018 to 1 July 2019)** |
| 2018-10-23 |
| 2018-12-19 |
| 2019-01-14 |
| 2019-04-26 |
| 2018-07-26 |

# Critical Risk Management

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| Current Types of Critical Risks | Critical risk management measures undertaken this reporting period |
| Organizational | The Ministries are unwilling to adopt recommendations on policies: The project has contributed to mainstreaming of climate change into the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), which is yet to be launched. The plan, along with the Guidelines for the Integration of Climate Change in National, Sectoral and Local Policies, Strategies and Development Plans that was also developed with the support of the project, is meant to inform sectors on how to mainstream climate change.    High staff turnover and poor institutional memory result in disruptions or delays in project implementation and coordination: This has been, and it is still, a challenge, especially on the partners’ side where there is significant staff movement. The PSC has been engaging with partners, especially the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC), which is the key partner, but that has not had positive results. The other challenge is that movement happens even at a higher level of the ministry. The project is committed to act as a catalyst to engage the Public Service to amend its policies on staff turn-over. In addition, the project is also engaging with community councils to capacitate them on project intentions so that capacity stays on the ground despite staff turn-overs within the relevant ministries.  The project intends to work with the UNDP office to facilitate a donor agency-wide approach to the Public Service and potentially compile and submit and policy brief motivating for changes to the national l policy in this regards. |

# Adjustments

**Comments on delays in key project milestones**

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| **Project Manager: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.** |
| To date, none of the key project milestones have been significantly delayed. The mid term review was conducted between 3rd December 2018 and 29th April 2019. The project mid-term was scheduled for completion in February, but was only finalized in April. The MTR provided some good recommendations, e.g. increase the number of grazing associations, introduction of Farmer Field schools, and address gender disaggregation through the introduction of incentives (Food for Asset) to attract more men and youth as volunteers. The delay in finalization of the MTR Report, and, subsequently the Management Response means that implementation of adaptive management measures has also been slightly delayed from Q2 to Q3. |

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| **Country Office: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.** |
| There have been no significant delays in project milestones, except of the slight delay in conclusion of the MTR Report. |

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| **UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser: please provide comments on delays this reporting period in achieving any of the following key project milestones: inception workshop, mid-term review, terminal evaluation and/or project closure. If there are no delays please indicate not applicable.** |
| No significant delays, except for the slight delay in finalization of the MTR Report. The Management Response was drafted in May 2109, but was only considered and endorsed by the Project Steering Committee at its most recent meeting. This means that the scheduling of some responses has had to be adjusted from Q2 to Q3. |

# Ratings and Overall Assessments

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| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **Project Manager/Coordinator** | Moderately Unsatisfactory | *- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -* |
| Overall Assessment | Considerable improvements, through capacity building of technical staff and communities, have been achieved on the understanding of climate driven vulnerabilities and how proper land use planning and management can help minimize the associated risks (outcome 1&2). For instance the capacities of the staff of the Ministry of Forestry, Range, and Soil Conservation (MFRSC), Local authorities (Community Councils and Chiefs) in the project area have been improved through the use land degradation hot spots maps. The capacities have enhanced the ability of the communities on adaptation measures to build their resilience to climate shocks. A socio-economic unit has been established within the MFRSC that will monitor and assess the impact of project interventions on people’s livelihoods. There has been considerable improvement in the area of capacity building, where 12 capacity building exercises were undertaken. Nevertheless, more still needs to be done in the area of capacities in climate science especially for the engineering and planning staff of Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation. As part of targeting population who are aware of predicted adverse impacts of climate change, additional effort was put to reach schools and a manual was produced aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into the curriculum, as well as establishment of 15 farmer field schools. A significant area of land has been put under rehabilitation and management practices such as resting the range, rotational grazing and brush control as well as gully rehabilitation. This has been achieved through voluntary actions of the community members. However, much still has to be done to reach the set target of 50,000 ha (outcome 3) as was also observed by the Mid-Term Review (MTR)). It is also worth mentioning that much of the work has been done mostly by women. The project is making efforts to engage with herders, who are mostly men to participate. One of the strategies to engage men is through formation of grazing associations which are responsible for proper management of the rangelands. The project played an important role to support mainstreaming of climate change into NSDP and development of guidelines (outcome 4&5). However, much still needs to be done to mainstream climate change into sectoral policies and strategies. The project will engage with the Ministry of Development Planning in order to assure that the project can participate in the mainstreaming of the NSDP into sectoral strategies. Given the current level of achievement, and as also established by the MTR that some of the outcomes are lagging behind, the project undertook an evaluation of the findings and developed practicable activities and solutions in response to the MTR recommendations – these are reflected in the Management Response where some measurable targets have been set that could help achieve some results.  Challenges:  There has been delays in effecting cost benefit analysis as the socio-economic unit that was established encountered problems with analysis of data that was collected. The plan is to engage a socio-economic specialist to support the unit in conducting of the cost benefit analysis. The project has struggled in the area of collecting georeferenced data on project interventions due to lack of capacity and to address that it the project planning to appoint a GIS specialist who will work with the PMU and also support the partners. Regarding awareness of predicted adverse climatic events and appropriate responses, the challenge that faces the project is that of poor participation of other members of the communities. This is one of the factors that have offset the achievement of the land under rehabilitation. Women are generally willing and available to partake in land rehabilitation activities compared to men. In response, the project is planning to introduce incentives that will attract other sectors of the community including men. One of the key challenges is the indicators and targets framework with no midterm targets set while others are difficult to measure but the project is working on their revision. The project has also had staff turnover where by far three project managers have been engaged with the latest joining late in 2018 and also changes in CTAs, with the latest only joining in May 2019. As part of the project’s plan to enhance its performance, the CTA has come on 2 in-country missions. | |
| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **UNDP Country Office Programme Officer** | Moderately Unsatisfactory | Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| Overall Assessment | The project is continuously gaining momentum with implementation of its strategic interventions towards integrating climate risks into land rehabilitation initiatives including ecosystems management and building resilience of communities` livelihoods against climate change impacts. However, following review of the PMU structure and resignation of the project CTA due to health problems, the project experienced delays in replacement of both the Project Manager and Chief Technical Advisor, which also impacted the implementation hence slow delivery as the project expenditure less than approved budget by 38.3%. This gap slightly increased by around 13.1% as compared to 2018 delivery gap. Moderately Unsatisfactory rating for overall assessment was selected based on the above-mentioned delivery rate and the outcome of Mid-Term Review (MTR) conducted during this reporting. The findings of MTR indicate that the project is lacking behind towards its targets for Outcomes 2 & 3. However, a significant achievement was made towards Outcome 4 and 5 even though there is still room for improvement to ensure that project end target is fully achieved. Furthermore, the project made progress towards achievement of Outcome 1 targets but it was noted that there is need to revisit some outputs under Outcome 1 in order to ensure that all outputs will deliver expected outcome.  Now the Project has a full and functional PMU as both the Project Coordinator and Chief Technical Advisor are on board and the project is continuing to enjoy leadership and technical support of both Project Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee respectively | |
| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **GEF Operational Focal point** | *(not set or not applicable)* | *- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -* |
| Overall Assessment | *(not set or not applicable)* | |
| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **Project Implementing Partner** | Moderately Satisfactory | *- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -* |
| Overall Assessment | Implementation is proceeding as planned with minor deviations. Cumulative financial delivery and management of risks are mostly on track, with minor delays. The project is managed well. | |
| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **Other Partners** | *(not set or not applicable)* | *- IP Rating provided by UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser and UNDP Country Office only -* |
| Overall Assessment | *(not set or not applicable)* | |
| **Role** | **2019 Development Objective Progress Rating** | **2019 Implementation Progress Rating** |
| **UNDP-GEF Technical Adviser** | Moderately Unsatisfactory | Moderately Unsatisfactory |
| Overall Assessment | This is the fourth PIR for this 6-year project which was launched in 2015. Known as the RVCC (Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change) Project, this LDCF-financed intervention seeks to strengthen capacities in Lesotho to plan for and implement climate change adaptation responses, using an ecosystem management approach. The project is structured under five outcomes: (i) Climate risk considerations mainstreamed into the Land Rehabilitation Programme of Lesotho; (ii) Increased technical capacity of the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and relevant departments to apply up-to-date climate science for the management of evolving risks; (iii) Over 50,000 ha of land across the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin rehabilitated through operationalization of the climate-smart Land Rehabilitation Programme; (iv) national strategies for rangelands and wetlands management strengthened by the integration of climate change/variability and ecosystems management; and, (v) NSDP mainstreamed into local development strategies to support the constituency-wide adoption of the climate-smart Land Rehabilitation Programme. The project operates in the Mohale’s Hoek area, with a focus on three districts: Lithipeng, Khoelenya and Thaba-Mokhele.  Both the DO and Implementation Progress Ratings are given as Moderately Unsatisfactory. This is the same as in previous years, although there have been some important improvements in the last reporting period under certain outcomes.    DO PROGRESS RATING: MODERATELY UNSATISFACTORY.  The project is making steady progress towards achievement of the objective, although progress in three out of five outcomes is currently off-track. On its current trajectory, the project can be expected to partially achieve its end-of-project targets, but with some significant shortfalls. With swift application of strategic adaptive management, it may be possible to meet most targets by project closure, although some targets may need to be adjusted.  There has been good progress toward achieving the objective level outcomes, but, given the vagueness of the indicator and target it is difficult to make a reasoned assessment of the level of achievement. The approach the project has taken has been quite strategic, in that it has worked on: (i) delivering hard outputs (CC hotspot maps and a Climate Scenario Planning and Risk Assessment) that can then be built into district scale plans and the Land Rehabilitation Program; and (ii) putting in place a well-trained Unit in the Ministry to drive this forward. What it will take to say that the objective has in fact been achieved is not really clear, and it may be something that is difficult to judge within the lifespan of the project.    At Outcome level, it is again in some cases difficult to make an evidence-based assessment due to weaknesses in the indicator/target framework. This said, progress is currently more or less on track under Outcomes 1 and 5, whilst progress under Outcomes 3 (ha under rehabilitation) and 4 (policy briefs) is currently off-track. Under Outcome 2, progress towards the target for the number of households aware of climate change and how to manage its risks is currently standing at 41.6% of target. This may represent a slight underestimate of the real reach of the awareness raising campaign as it does not take into account the impact of the schools awareness programme (through incorporation of the CC Manual into the school curriculum), or the multiplier effect that working through the Farmer Field Schools may have. It may be worth identifying criteria for assessing levels of awareness beyond using the number of households reached.    The rating of Moderately Unsatisfactory for DO progress may not be a true reflection of the on-the-ground gains made by the project, partly due to the weaknesses in the indicator/target framework against which progress is being tracked, and also because of weaknesses in the way the project is tracking progress, and its lack of a systematic knowledge management system – these are areas that require significant attention moving forward, and are already under discussion with the Chief Technical Advisor.    IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS RATING: MODERATELY UNSATISFACTORY  Although key project milestones (inception and MTR) are more or less on track, this project has suffered significant setbacks and delays in generating results and cumulative delivery. The project has a formal governance system in place, and the Project Board and Technical Working Group meet regularly, but there are some inefficiencies in the governance system due to its complexity (see below). The project is aware of risks and is putting measures in place to manage them, but it would be advisable to update the project’s SESP and risks log, so that revised mitigation strategies can be built into the next AWP. The project put focused effort into the development of the Management Response to the MTR, but there was a delay of several months in getting it approved by the Project Board. All management response activities should be built into future workplans.  Some of the key challenges that have impeded performance and delivery have included:  • Discontinuity in project leadership and strategic guidance: The project has had three project managers and three Chief Technical Advisors since its inception – the current Project Manager only came on bodar towards the end of 2018. This has created instability and discontinuity in terms of strategic approach, and has caused delays as new incumbents have first to familiarize themselves with the project – both technically and in terms of project processes – before getting ‘up to speed.’    Similarly, rapid turnover of senior decision-makers in the IP and other government partners creates discontinuity, and hampers effective engagement.    • Significant delays and inefficiencies relating to procurement (and other administrative processes) slow down both performance and delivery  • The project’s Strategic Results Framework includes no midterm targets and some of the indicators are rather vague – this has made it hard to plan workflows to ensure that performance and delivery is on track or not; the project also has not been setting clear – or realistic – annual targets under each indicator to ensure that overall project targets are met; these should be revised under guidance of the CTA and require approval from only the Project board and UNDP-GEF RTA  • Some targets are unrealistic (e.g. the number of hectares to be rehabilitated), given the project scale and implementation context, and others are confusing (e.g. the type and number of policy briefs to be generated); some activities are ill-matched to the circumstances in the operating environment.  • Confusion regarding which SRF should be guiding the project – the project team has been following the ‘revised SRF’ which was developed in 2017; however, this was never officially endorsed or adopted, so the indicator and target framework against which the project was evaluated is (correctly) the one that is in the Prodoc; however, this does not take into account information and baselines that were established through a study undertaken after project inception  • Weak workflow planning, knowledge management and M&E systems, with inadequate (perceived or real) active engagement of the IP and other partners in government.  • Complex governance structures involving a Project Board, Technical Working Group, District Implementation Committees, and District Coordination Committees. Whilst this makes better stakeholder inclusivity, it is an ongoing challenge to ensure full participation of all members, and to avoid duplications and miscommunications.    To enhance implementation going forward, the project is working under the focused guidance of the newly-appointed Chief Technical Advisor to identify challenges and bottlenecks, and devise a practicable delivery acceleration plan – this is being developed in close consultation with the IP and other relevant government partners. This should have the dual benefit of speeding up delivery AND forging closer working ties with government counterparts, which should contribute to much stronger stakeholder ownership of the project moving forward. This could also help in mitigating the risk posed by the apparent reluctance of ministries to take up policy recommendations. | |

# Gender

**Progress in Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

This information is used in the UNDP-GEF Annual Performance Report, UNDP-GEF Annual Gender Report, reporting to the UNDP Gender Steering and Implementation Committee and for other internal and external communications and learning.  The Project Manager and/or Project Gender Officer should complete this section with support from the UNDP Country Office.

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| **Gender Analysis and Action Plan:** *not available* |
| **Please review the project's Gender Analysis and Action Plan. If the document is not attached or an updated Gender Analysis and/or Gender Action Plan is available please upload the document below or send to the Regional Programme Associate to upload in PIMS+. Please note that all projects approved since 1 July 2014 are required to carry out a gender analysis and all projects approved since 1 July 2018 are required to have a gender analysis and action plan.** |
| *(not set or not applicable)* |

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| **Please indicate in which results areas the project is contributing to gender equality (you may select more than one results area, or select not applicable):** |
| Contributing to closing gender gaps in access to and control over resources: Yes |
| Improving the participation and decision-making of women in natural resource governance: Yes |
| Targeting socio-economic benefits and services for women: Yes |
| Not applicable: No |

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| **Atlas Gender Marker Rating** |
| **GEN2:** gender equality as significant objective |

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| **Please describe any experiences or linkages (direct or indirect) between project activities and gender-based violence (GBV). This information is for UNDP use only and will not be shared with GEF Secretariat.** |
| Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Lesotho is reported to be exacerbated by food shortages. Food insecurity is therefore a major public concern. The most important source of food for households in the three community councils is home-grown crops and vegetables and fruits, and to a lesser extent food bought from shops. However, food security patterns are changing with a large percentage of households reporting that yields from own production are decreasing and price of bought food increases as a result. These all indicate increasing food insecurity. In the context of food crisis and the underlying socio-economic inequalities, food becomes a valuable commodity, lack of which could result in sexual exploitation and gender based violence.  In Lesotho, women, and girl children are mostly affected by food insecurity arising from soaring food prices because of their gender roles within the household and limited access to livelihood resources. Despite having limited access to resources, women are regarded primary providers of food to their families and also bearing the responsibility to care for children, elderly and chronically ill household members. Women and girls continue to assume that it is their responsibility to ensure food availability in their families. As a result, they turn to engage in risky sexual relations in order to provide food for children and other household members while exposing themselves to sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).  To address issues underlying food insecurity, RVCC has supported households with improved summer and winter seed varieties, bushveld chickens, irrigated green/shade houses in an effort to increase local food production and income generation with surplus produce. The project has capacitated women with food drying equipment and trainings to enhance their capacity in practicing different practices such as solar drying, canning and bottling. Following food preservation trainings approximately 500 households have started food preservation and this has contributed towards improved food security.  With this contribution the project through promotion of climate smart practices has increased the adaptive capacity of the households and as a result it appears there is a contribution towards a reduction of GBV within the families. However, this still needs to be verified. |

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| **Please specify results achieved this reporting period that focus on increasing gender equality and the empowerment of women.**    **Please explain how the results reported addressed the different needs of men or women, changed norms, values, and power structures, and/or contributed to transforming or challenging gender inequalities and discrimination.** |
| A significant proportion of households in Khoelenya, Lithipeng and Thaba-Mokhele Community councils are female headed households. A large proportion of all households do not have enough family members (human capital) to carry out activities due mainly to the fact that households are comprised largely of old and very young people, who struggle to carry out livelihood activities. This is largely due to able bodied members of the households being migrant labour.  Remitted money by family members with employment constitutes a significant proportion of household incomes and very little income is generated by the household members living at home. Home based enterprises are an important generator for household income and do contribute significant cash income. There is also a high dependence on state old age pensions. Households are therefore financially very vulnerable. The major household expenses are primary consumables and there is very little or no investment in savings or climate change adaptation strategies to build resilience.  Project interventions intended to build resilience and improve land management in these community councils focuses not only on addressing the signs and symptoms of climate change, but also the underlying drivers of vulnerability such as addressing a range of capacity building needs for livelihoods diversification and these are listed and briefly discussed below.  1. Beekeeping is considered as one of the income-generating activities for resource-poor farmers including women, youth and the unemployed sectors of the community. The knowledge and skill of honey and beeswax production of farmers is still very traditional which implies limitations in terms of quality and quantity of honey produced. Thus far RVCC has conducted five (5) beekeeping training courses, targeting both men and women (18 females and 64 males) to venture into male dominated bee farming to enhance their knowledge to process the hive produce into shelf ready products; propolis tincture, wax creams, balms and candles, pollen granules, and honey.  Currently, these farmers including men can process the raw bee hive products to marketable products required by the consumers. They generate a remarkable income to sustain the livelihoods. For example, in a recently (04/07/19) held project exhibition at one of the project sites where farmers show cased their produce and products gained through the project interventions, one bee farmer managed to generate approximately $142.00 in one day through sale of honey to the public that graced the event. The demand for the products go beyond the project site boundaries as some also sell the products to the neighboring country and thus contributing significantly to income generated for households’ sustainability and reducing their vulnerability.  2. Culturally, food availability in the household is regarded a responsibility of women and food scarcity impact negatively on women. As a means of addressing food security, the project capacitated 380 community members (18 males and 362 females) with skills in food handling, hygiene and preservation. The project managed to break cultural norms by inclusion of men in food preservation activities. Households have started preserving available food using different methods demonstrated during the training.  Preserving the fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers and homesteads in a healthy way is a necessity to reduce food wastage and ultimately ensuring that preserved food retains its nutritive value and appearance. Food loss mostly occurs during and after harvest and therefore increasing level of vulnerability of the rural communities and exposing most households to food insecurity. Thus far the project has distributed 90 solar driers to the communities within the project area. The impact of this intervention still needs to be measured.  Other than home consumption, the trainees also package and sell their products to generate income for the household, in the form of dried fruits and vegetables. This was also evidenced by the income generated by individuals through the sale of the packaged dried fruits during the project exhibition (04/07/2019). Moreover, there is an increase in demand for solar driers by household. |

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| **Please describe how work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment enhanced the project's environmental and/or resilience outcomes.** |
| The capacity building interventions are integrated with the direct physical interventions, such as rangeland rehabilitation and improved agricultural practices, in order to form a holistic resilience building approach that reflects the multiple facets of vulnerability in these Community Councils.  Benefiting directly from the project interventions such as trainings and inputs provision are both women and men participating in land rehabilitation. A targeting strategy that is inclusive of the needs of women, men and youth and people with disability was incorporated in the planning and implementation of interventions, to ensure gender equality through mainstreaming gender aspects into capacity development and project activities.  The livelihood roles and responsibilities of men, women and youth differ and these differences are considered in the planning and implementation of interventions so that the needs of women, men and the youth are effectively addressed, such as in provision of inputs for crop production and different trainings to ensure capacity building of the participating community members. |

# Social and Environmental Standards

**Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)**

The Project Manager and/or the project’s Safeguards Officer should complete this section of the PIR with support from the UNDP Country Office. The UNDP-GEF RTA should review to ensure it is complete and accurate.

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| **1) Have any new social and/or environmental risks been identified during project implementation?** |
| No |

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| **If any new social and/or environmental risks have been identified during project implementation please describe the new risk(s) and the response to it.** |
| Not applicable |

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| **2) Have any existing social and/or environmental risks been escalated during the reporting period? For example, when a low risk increased to moderate, or a moderate risk increased to high.** |
| No |

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| **If any existing social and/or environmental risks have been escalated during implementation please describe the change(s) and the response to it.** |
| Not applicable |

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| **SESP:** [PIMS 4630\_SESP\_15.01.2015\_Final.docx](https://undpgefpims.org/attachments/4630/213443/1666934/1667215/PIMS%204630_SESP_15.01.2015_Final.docx)  **Environmental and Social Management Plan/Framework:** *not available* |
| **For reference, please find below the project's safeguards screening (Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) or the old ESSP tool); management plans (if any); and its SESP categorization above. Please note that the SESP categorization might have been corrected during a centralized review.** |
| *(not set or not applicable)* |

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| **3) Have any required social and environmental assessments and/or management plans been prepared in the reporting period? For example, an updated Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or Indigenous Peoples Plan.** |
| Not Applicable |

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| **If yes, please upload the document(s) above. If no, please explain when the required documents will be prepared.** |
| not applicable |

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| **4) Has the project received complaints related to social and/or environmental impacts (actual or potential )?** |
| No |

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| **If yes, please describe the complaint(s) or grievance(s) in detail including the status, significance, who was involved and what action was taken.** |
| Not applicable |

# Communicating Impact

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| **Tell us the story of the project focusing on how the project has helped to improve people’s lives.**  **(This text will be used for UNDP corporate communications, the UNDP-GEF website, and/or other internal and external knowledge and learning efforts.)** |
| The project sites are located in a rural settlement that is mainly dependent on livestock and crop production for livelihoods. The project sites are characterized by different forms of land degradation that threaten the livelihood means of the communities in the project site. Land degradation coupled with climate change, pose challenges for survival and livelihoods amongst the communities in Lithipeng, Thaba Mokhele and Khoelenya community councils.    The Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change - RVCC project and partners have been implementing Climate Smart Agriculture and Sustainable Land Management interventions in three community councils. The project and partners, in an effort to enhance skills and capacity of the communities to cope with the effects of climate change and to deal with land degradation, have engaged with the local authorities, chiefs and the communities. It all started with raising awareness to the communities on climate change and its effects and challenges, and further exploration of opportunities and ways to cope and adapt to climate change. Through the understanding instilled in the communities, the community leadership, local authorities and communities initiated voluntary interventions under the supervision of the government technical officers. The interventions included rehabilitation of degraded lands through construction of soil erosion structures, rotational grazing, resting and rehabilitation. The communities have been voluntarily participating in these land rehabilitation interventions with the understanding of addressing the climate change induced land degradation.    Supporting vulnerable regions directly talks to goal 13 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which says: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. In a recent project tour by the local newspaper, Mr Mafethe, who is also the chief of Ha-Mafethe Village, said the advent of the project has brought a positive impact to the community as they are now taking better care of their previously diminished grazing lands. He said they used to struggle to manage their grazing lands, often with deadly clashes breaking out between livestock farmers and persons entrusted with preserving the ranges. “Violent clashes would occasionally erupt leading to loss of lives when it comes to preserving range lands as many members of the community did not buy into the idea&quot;. (See newspaper articles in the File Library)    “But now everybody understands that it is our collective responsibility as a community to take care of our range lands for the benefit of all of us. “Now, we have ample of grass for our livestock to graze, while we also have thatch grass for roofing our traditional houses. We now have people coming from other areas to buy thatch grass here, thereby increasing opportunities for income generation. Our livestock feeding has noticeably improved,” Mr Mafethe said. He further said that the community has been able to practice rotational grazing, to avoid overgrazing and soil erosion on the range lands. The community has also weeded out invasive species commonly seen in the degraded range lands and re-planted grasses that are useful and palatable to livestock.    The RVCC and partners intervened in these community initiatives by providing motivation and incentives to the participating communities in the form training and capacity building in climate change adaptation and sustainable land management strategies and livelihoods. These include training on soil and water conservation 82 males and 147 females participated soil and water conservation training. This has led to an increase in capacity of community members in applying appropriate land rehabilitation practices in the project area. For livelihood strategies, the communities have been offered an advanced training on bee products processing and have started harvesting honey and producing bee-hive products including propolis, wax, and candles as alternative sources of income from the enterprise.    The communities were further provided with training on food handling, hygiene and preservation. Households are now preserving excess produce using different methods demonstrated during the training; and were further provided with solar food dryers for household food preservation. The food stuffs are usually kept for future use or sold in order to generate household income. This further ensures availability of seasonal vegetables and fruits are available for the households throughout the year. The project has further supported community initiatives in diversification of livelihoods strategies.    For example, a fruit farmer-Palamang Ranku, in Lelinyane community says” due to the UNDP-RVCC project support with fruit tree seedlings and training since 2016; I normally dry and bottle fruits; mainly during the month of March hoping to sell during winter when there are no fruits, but the demand of dried fruit is very high so much that by June, I would have run out of stock to sell”. “I assure you that I need not seek employment as my family is well looked after with the money I make from selling my products and have achieved more things than I achieved while working in the mines”. “with my orchard, I create jobs for fellow community members; I am very proud that I have brought change to my community”. I sell a bottle of canned fruit and produce more than 1000 cans/bottles each year, which I normally dry about 300 kg or more depending on the harvest, without doubt, I make enough money to sustain my family, ranging from US $1000.00-US $2000.00 |

**Knowledge Management, Project Links and Social Media**

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| **Please describe knowledge activities / products as outlined in knowledge management approved at CEO Endorsement /Approval.**    **Please also include: project's website, project page on the UNDP website, blogs, photos stories (e.g. Exposure), Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, as well as hyperlinks to any media coverage of the project, for example, stories written by an outside source. Please upload any supporting files, including photos, videos, stories, and other documents using the 'file lirbary' button in the top right of the PIR.** |
| Project website page below.  www.lrvcc.org    An article published by Lesotho Times News paper (see File Libarary)  https://www.dropbox.com/s/txoy8lh317a335e/lt-20.pdf?dl=0    An article published by Sunday Express News Paper  https://sundayexpress.co.ls/re-claiming-lost-land-from-the-jaws-of-climate-change/ |

# Partnerships

**Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagment**

Please select yes or no whether the project is working with any of the following partners. Please also provide an update on stakeholder engagement. This information is used by the GEF and UNDP for reporting and is therefore very important!  All sections must be completed by the Project Manager and reviewed by the CO and RTA.

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| **Does the project work with any Civil Society Organisations and/or NGOs?** |
| Yes |

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| **Does the project work with any Indigenous Peoples?** |
| No |

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| **Does the project work with the Private Sector?** |
| No |

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| **Does the project work with the GEF Small Grants Programme?** |
| No |

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| **Does the project work with UN Volunteers?** |
| No |

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| **Did the project support South-South Cooperation and/or Triangular Cooperation efforts in the reporting year?** |
| No |

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| **CEO Endorsement Request:** [4630 Lesotho LDCF CEO\_Endorsement\_resubmission 12 Mar 2015.docx](https://undpgefpims.org/attachments/4630/213443/1666917/1667219/4630%20Lesotho%20LDCF%20CEO_Endorsement_resubmission%2012%20Mar%202015.docx) |
| **Provide an update on progress, challenges and outcomes related to stakeholder engagement based on the description of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan as documented at CEO endorsement/approval (see document below). If any surveys have been conducted please upload all survey documents to the PIR file library.** |
| Stakeholder engagement at the district and site level (i.e. working with communities) is proceeding well, although this does not always translate into uptake of appropriate land-use practices by communities (for reasons discussed elsewhere).    At the District Level engagement is directed through District Implementation Committees (which include subject-matter specialists from line ministries), and District Project Co-ordination Committees (which work at a more operational level) to ensure inclusivity in the stakeholder engagement process. It is sometimes a challenge, though to ensure that there is proper linkage and coordination between these committees).    At the local level, in addition to ongoing community engagement in line with the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, the project will also channel engagement efforts through the newly-established Farmer Field Schools and Grazing Associations, as these provide new points of interface with a broader spread of householders and land users.    The opportunity to engage with schools, and the Department of Education, (through development of the Climate Change Manual), which was not envisaged previously, has also widened the scope of the engagement process. If children become more informed about climate change, and what actions can be taken to mitigate or adapt to it, this should have a strong multiplier effect, as they will bring this knowledge and awareness into their homes - they can become young champions for climate change awareness.    The EXPO in which the project participated also provided a useful platform for widening the reach of the stakeholder engagement process.    Engagement at senior level with line ministries is an area that needs to be strengthened in future. The high turnover rate of senior decision-makers (e.g. at PS level) in the IP and other key ministries, means that the project must continually brief new incumbents, and build a relationship with them. It also influences representation on and participation in the project's governance structures. As a first step in strengthening the engagement, the project has convened a meeting with partner ministries to work on development of a delivery acceleration plan. |

# Annex - Ratings Definitions

**Development Objective Progress Ratings Definitions**

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Project is on track to exceed its end-of-project targets, and is likely to achieve transformational change by project closure. The project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Project is on track to fully achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. The project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Project is on track to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with minor shortcomings only.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is expected to partially achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure with significant shortcomings. Project results might be fully achieved by project closure if adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is not expected to achieve its end-of-project targets by project closure. Project results might be partially achieved by project closure if major adaptive management is undertaken immediately.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Project is off track and is not expected to achieve its end-of-project targets without major restructuring.

**Implementation Progress Ratings Definitions**

(HS) Highly Satisfactory: Implementation is exceeding expectations. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and risk management are fully on track. The project is managed extremely efficiently and effectively. The implementation of the project can be presented as 'outstanding practice'.

(S) Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and risk management are on track. The project is managed efficiently and effectively. The implementation of the project can be presented as 'good practice'.

(MS) Moderately Satisfactory: Implementation is proceeding as planned with minor deviations. Cumulative financial delivery and management of risks are mostly on track, with minor delays. The project is managed well.

(MU) Moderately Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces significant implementation issues. Implementation progress could be improved if adaptive management is undertaken immediately. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and/or management of critical risks are significantly off track. The project is not fully or well supported.

(U) Unsatisfactory: Implementation is not proceeding as planned and faces major implementation issues and restructuring may be necessary. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones, and/or management of critical risks are off track with major issues and/or concerns. The project is not fully or well supported.

(HU) Highly Unsatisfactory: Implementation is seriously under performing and major restructuring is required. Cumulative financial delivery, timing of key implementation milestones (e.g. start of activities), and management of critical risks are severely off track with severe issues and/or concerns. The project is not effectively or efficiently supported.