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Terminal evaluation of  
the project “Payments  
for Ecosystem Services  
to Support Forest  
Conservation and  
Sustainable Livelihoods”



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**Terminal evaluation of the project  
“Payments for Ecosystem Services to  
Support Forest Conservation and  
Sustainable Livelihoods”**

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## **Abstract**

The Payments for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods project, supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), sought to promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in the Miombo forest ecosystem. It aimed to strengthen the existing revenue sharing mechanism (RSM) that supports the sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife, and improves local livelihoods in Zambezia Province, the Republic of Mozambique.

The evaluation adopted a theory-based and mixed methods approach with an in-country field mission. The project contributed to the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and the integration of payments for ecosystem services (PES) in the new Forestry Law. However, results in terms of capacity building were modest. Natural resources management practices were introduced to local communities so that beneficiaries could access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods in terms of income generation, credit access and food consumption. Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES, which is important for when it becomes operational. Indeed, the prospects for community-level impact are promising.

Overall, the results achieved can lead to progress in enabling the environment, changing legal and regulatory frameworks, having communities adopt more sustainable practices and contributing to the preservation of biodiversity – especially in reducing deforestation. Key recommendations involve: flagging the most promising communities for national authorities as potential grant applicants under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) programmes; preparing an exit plan for the four districts that benefit from the project to ensure minimum technical follow up in the supported communities; and systematizing the approach, experience and good results achieved with the practices of the beekeeping and savings and credit groups to reinforce the project's learning dimension.



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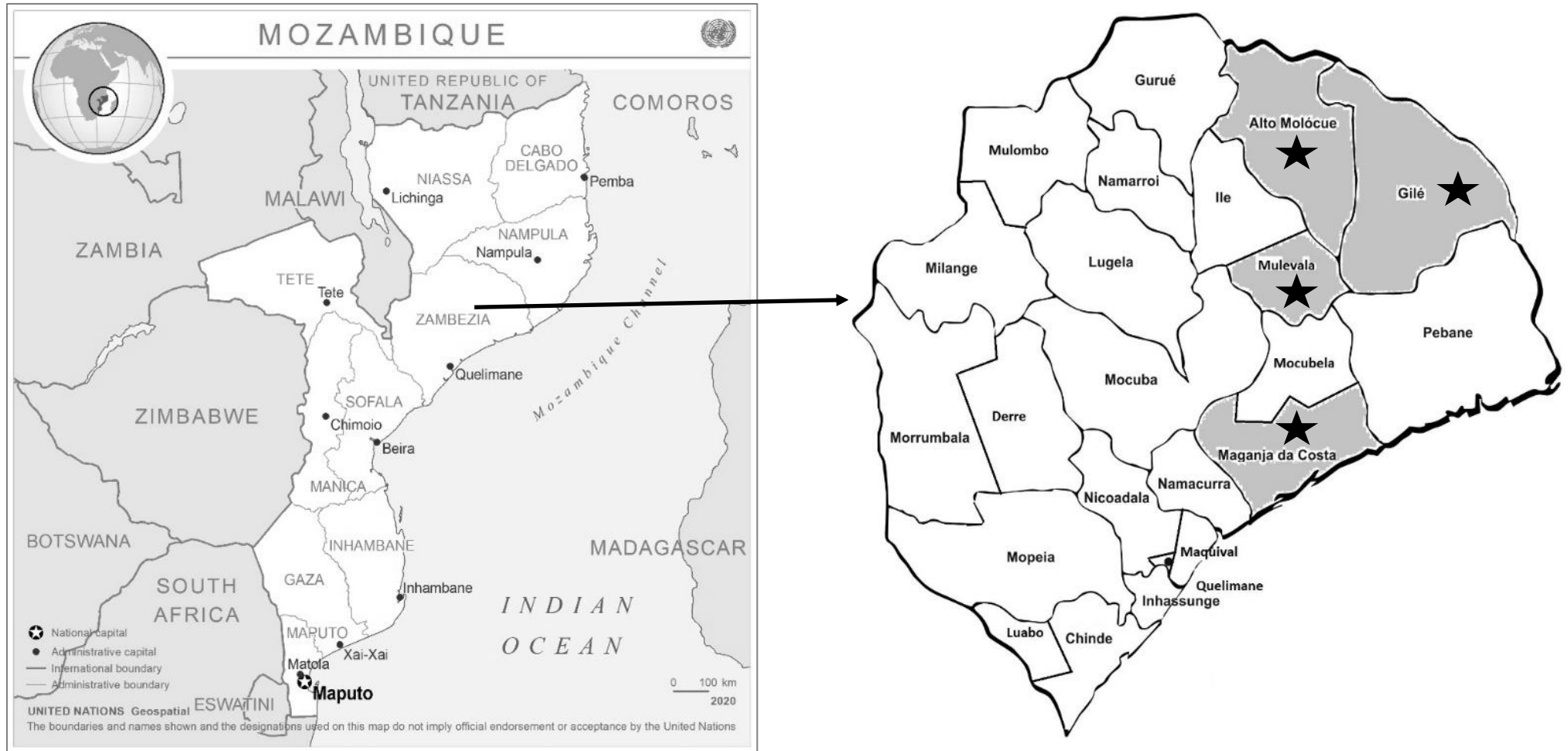
Further, the evaluation benefited from the inputs of many other stakeholders, including government officers, farmer organizations and staff from other United Nations agencies, research centres and the private sector. Their contributions were critical to the team's work and are deeply appreciated.



## Abbreviations

CBNRM	community-based natural resource management
CPF	Country Programming Framework
ESS	environmental and social safeguards
FNDS	National Sustainable Development Fund, by its Portuguese acronym
FPMIS	Field Programme Management Information System
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICEI	Institute for International Economic Cooperation, by its Italian acronym
ITC-F	Foundation Community Land Initiative, by its Portuguese acronym
LOA	letter of agreement
MTR	mid-term review
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRMC	Natural Resources Management Committee
PES	payments for ecosystem services
PIR	Programme Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPR	project progress report
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
RSM	revenue sharing mechanism
SDAE	District Services of Economic Activities, by its Portuguese acronym
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	sustainable forest management
SLM	sustainable land management
TOC	theory of change
UATAF	Functional Literacy Technical Assistance Unit, by its Portuguese acronym

## Map of the Republic of Mozambique and Districts of Zambezia Province



Source: UN Geospatial. 2021. *Map of Mozambique*. New York, United States of America (left), and Government of Zambezia Province, 2018 (right) adapted by the evaluation team. Map conforms with UN Geospatial. 2021. *Map of Mozambique*. New York, United States of America.

# Executive summary

## Introduction

1. The terminal evaluation of the Payments for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods project, funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), covered almost the entire original implementation period from August 2017 to August 2022. It had a dual purpose of accountability and learning, making it summative. The evaluation was carried out by a team of two independent consultants and covered the four districts of Zambezia Province where project activities were implemented: Alto Molocue, Mulevala, Maganja da Costa and Gile.
2. The objective was to provide an independent assessment of whether or not the planned inputs led or contributed to the achievement of the planned results in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact. It also sought to: examine and detail project achievements; identify barriers and challenges to implementation, and determinants for success or failure (reasons why the project results were delivered or not); and identify any broader results and impacts – positive or negative and intended or unintended – in order to advance future FAO-GEF projects that are similar.
3. The evaluation adopted a theory-based and mixed methods approach to gather data from different sources and informants. This allowed for the assessment of evaluation criteria according to FAO-GEF guidelines: relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; sustainability; factors that affected performance; and cross-cutting issues. The evaluation also adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the entire process. This involved the project team, central and provincial government departments, FAO Mozambique, direct beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders.
4. A detailed evaluation matrix was prepared. Each evaluation question had lines of inquiry and indicators, and the methods and sources guided the collection of data and evidence. The information was triangulated in order to validate the evidence and support the analysis that fed into conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned to inform future, similar projects, whether implemented by FAO-GEF or other development actors. The evaluation faced some constraints due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the lack of coherence of quantitative data available and the limited duration of the field mission. These challenges, however, were overcome by the flexibility of the Evaluation Team.

## Main findings

5. Relevance: the project's strategic relevance is highly satisfactory. It aligns with: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; FAO's regional priorities and its Country Programming Framework (CPF) for the Republic of Mozambique; and the GEF-4 Focal Area Strategy. The project responds to government priorities. It also responds to the needs of local communities because it creates income generation opportunities and maintains the sustainability of forest resources. The internal project design was coherent. However, a conditional approach to delivering the expected outcomes limited its strategic relevance. This was corrected by the midterm since there was an urge to both address the needs of local communities and improve the legal framework. The political, climatic and sanitary events that occurred throughout implementation did not change the project's relevance.

In fact, the overall country context remained favourable for forest conservation and the promotion of ecosystem services.

6. Effectiveness: the overall assessment of project results is moderately satisfactory. The targets for outputs under Component 1 were fully achieved. However, the involvement of the National Directorate of Forest in the delivery of technical assistance and legal draft proposals could have been stronger. The targets for outputs under Component 2 were only partially achieved (Output 2.3), and the actual number of people trained was rather low. The targets for outputs under Component 3 were almost fully achieved. Indeed, the option of working with communities through a “package” of ecosystem services with a choice for service providers was appropriate. Progress was made on technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the revenue sharing mechanism (RSM) legal framework and the inclusion of the payments for ecosystem services (PES) concept since these discussions now include eight different ministries. Many initial policy dialogue achievements can be as attributable to another FAO project (UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ) as they are to this one. The approval of the Forestry Law and its regulation has not been completed, and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular. This may compromise project impact. There is progress towards better understanding the PES concept, but there have been modest results in terms of capacity building. The project’s institutional strengthening dimension presents few results and lacks a tangible strategy, which may also hinder project impact. Regardless, the project managed to introduce several sustainable natural resource management practices in the target communities, and this led to greater capacity. Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES when it becomes operational. Therefore, the prospect of community-level impact is promising. At the same time, opportunities created for PES under the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+) programmes have been very limited.
7. Efficiency: overall, project efficiency is moderately satisfactory. The cost-effectiveness of Components 2 and 3 was very low (see Finding 16). Moreover, the project was affected by a number of external factors like Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, general elections and COVID-19. These factors strongly impacted the project, compromising its initial planning and leading to successive adjustments (see Finding 17). Nevertheless, the project built on synergies and complementarities with other projects. However, the late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the consolidation of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities.
8. Sustainability: the overall likelihood of risks to sustainability are moderately likely. The project strategy and results achieved have ensured environmental sustainability. Indeed, beekeeping and agroforestry systems show good prospects for continuing after project completion. The tested fish farming model, however, is not sustainable for communities. Potential financial sustainability through the 20 percent RSM is low, but opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in Zambezia Province are more promising. Although prospects for social sustainability are bolstered by opportunities to improve project beneficiaries’ livelihoods, institutional sustainability (at both the central and decentralized level) has not been sufficiently ensured. In fact, the project does not have a defined exit strategy.
9. Factors affecting performance: the overall assessment of factors affecting performance is satisfactory. The project’s strategy is adequate to respond to the challenges that the country faces in promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in the

Miombo forest ecosystem. The initial project coverage was unrealistic, and the project assumed that the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised. This assumption proved deleterious to project results. The weaknesses detected at midterm were overcome by revising the logframe's indicators and theory of change (TOC). The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system and procedures are adequate, allowing for a correct follow up of activities, data collection and information on progress, reporting and analysis to support corrective measures. The operational arrangement of the project was adequate to facilitate the decision-making process, but housing the Project Management Unit (PMU) at FAO instead of the National Directorate of Forest limited project performance. Oversight from FAO was adequate and the project staff interacted frequently with the Lead Technical Officer. However, interaction with the in-country GEF focal point and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent. Financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures. The co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated. However, the procedure has been reviewed by the project and the figures are more realistic and reasonable.

10. Stakeholder engagement: overall, stakeholder engagement is highly satisfactory. The project concept and design were subject to extensive consultations and discussions with relevant government partners and national stakeholders. Partnerships were established with a wide range of stakeholders, including high engagement from local authorities and fruitful collaboration with the private sector in the case of beekeeping. Partnerships with service providers proved to be adequate as they have shown strong technical expertise and good capacity for community mobilization. The strategy of signing letters of agreement (LOAs) with the district governments increased ownership and contributed to them taking on more responsibility in continuing the work at the community level. A specific partnership with the private sector through Agri-Mel proved particularly successful. Indeed, this company ensured the purchase of honey from the communities to support the entire honey value chain.
11. Knowledge management: this aspect is highly satisfactory. The flaws detected in terms of communications and knowledge management at midterm were overcome and an appropriate visibility strategy towards internal and external stakeholders was put in place. A strategy for collecting and disseminating lessons learned was implemented (see Finding 31). The project adequately systematized and documented its results, lessons learned and success stories, and managed to produce and deliver several knowledge materials like manuals, technical reports, infographics, videos and newsletters. These were useful in disseminating lessons learned and can be useful to support the scaling up of project results.
12. Gender: the project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation (see Finding 32). A sound gender analysis was included in the project design to identify the main barriers and problems affecting women. It also highlighted that women are vital stakeholders in managing and using forest resources through their subsistence and economic activities. A gender assessment was conducted right at the start of the project. This identified the challenges, risks and opportunities. It also provided recommendations towards gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment throughout implementation. A specific gender strategy was developed, and this defined concrete actions and steps to incorporate gender dimensions in all project components. This was also put into practice during implementation.

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** The project was relevant in responding to the country's needs. It promoted an enabling environment for sustainable forest management (SFM) and enhancing communities' capacities to implement good practices on the sustainable management of natural resources. The project was congruent with the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategy and FAO's CPF that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 Life on Land.

**Conclusion 2.** The project managed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law. An interministerial working group was successfully created with eight different government sectors that are engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions. A draft document to guide the sectors on the PES "rules of the game" was delivered to the National Directorate of Forest. In any case, the new Forestry Law that envisages the inclusion of PES has not been approved, and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular.

**Conclusion 3.** Some progress was achieved towards better understanding the PES concept by decision makers from different government sectors. However, overall project achievements in terms of capacity building were modest.

**Conclusion 4.** The project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices so that beneficiaries can access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods. This involves income generation, credit access and food consumption.

**Conclusion 5.** A number of external factors, such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, general elections and COVID-19 affected the project and compromised its efficiency. The project had planned to support seven districts but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints. The late start in Component 3 hindered project efficiency. More time was needed to implement certain activities and consolidate community work. The project's overall cost-effectiveness is low.

**Conclusion 6.** The main risks for environmental sustainability derive from deforestation, soil erosion and uncontrolled wildfires that continue to affect the landscape of Zambezia. However, beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation and fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities. In fact, some agroforestry practices are being applied at the community level. The main risk for financial sustainability comes from the fact the 20 percent revenue to the communities remains incipient.

**Conclusion 7.** Design and readiness problems were due to the internal conditional logic that had prevented the simultaneous start of various components. The project's operational arrangements were adequate, but the fact that the PMU had not returned to the National Directorate of Forest from 2020 onwards hindered project execution in that it reduced the project's capacity to provide more continuous support to activities on institutional capacity strengthening. Funding availability did not affect project performance, and disbursements of the GEF grant were on time. Co-financing reported throughout implementation was overestimated, but the project reviewed the procedure and now reports more realistic figures.

**Conclusion 8.** The results achieved can lead to broad changes in the enabling environment towards changing the legal and regulatory frameworks. The practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation.

**Conclusion 9.** The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation. A specific focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included, but

beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project’s strategy adequately focused on social and environmental aspects.

## Recommendations

13. Since this evaluation took place very close to the expected project closure, it was not possible to make constructive recommendations that could be implemented in a timely manner. Therefore, some recommendations were converted into lessons learned, as summarized in the following points.

**Recommendation 1.** (FAO, the National Directorate of Forest and the National Sustainable Development Fund [FNDS, by its Portuguese acronym]): identify and map the most outstanding communities and the Natural Resources Management Committee (NRMC) in terms of results achieved. Flag them to FNDS as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programmes.

**Recommendation 2.** (FAO and the local authorities): together with the district authorities, prepare an exit plan for the four districts that benefit from the project. This is to ensure that communities supported by the project continue to benefit from minimum technical follow up and that the investment and effort applied is not lost.

**Recommendation 3.** (FAO): systematize the approach, experience and good results achieved with the practices of the beekeeping and savings and credit groups to reinforce the project’s learning dimension.

**Lesson learned 1.** Working with communities requires constant presence on the ground.

**Lesson learned 2.** Partnerships with the private sector contribute to greater effectiveness and increase prospects for sustainability in working with local communities.

**Lesson learned 3.** Signing LOAs with the government, including the allocation of a small package of financial resources significantly contributes to greater engagement, commitment and ownership by the public institutions.

**Lesson learned 4.** The absence of the institutional and organizational strengthening dimension hinders the effectiveness of capacity building strategies towards government institutions.

**Lesson learned 5.** The start of community intervention components cannot depend on the results of the project components for improving legal frameworks.

**Executive Summary Table 1. The GEF evaluation criteria rating table**

GEF criteria/subcriteria	Rating <sup>i</sup>	Summary comments
<b>A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE</b>		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	Section 3.1
A1.1. Alignment with the GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 1
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	Section 3.1 / Findings 2, 3
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 4 Section 3.3 / Finding 18
<b>B. EFFECTIVENESS</b>		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Section 3.2
B1.1. Delivery of project outputs	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 6, 7, 8
B1.2. Progress towards outcomes and project objectives		

<b>GEF criteria/subcriteria</b>	<b>Rating<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Summary comments</b>
- Outcome 1	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 8, 9, 10
- Outcome 2	MU	Section 3.2 / Findings 11, 12
- Outcome 3	S	Section 3.2 / Findings 13, 14, 15
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Section 3.2
B1.3. Likelihood of impact	S	Section 3.6 / Finding 32
<b>C. EFFICIENCY</b>		
C1. Efficiency	MS	Section 3.3 / Findings 17, 18
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Section 3.4
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 20
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 21
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Section 3.4/ Finding 21
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Section 3.4 / Finding 19
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
<b>E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE</b>		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	Section 3.5.1 / Finding 23
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1. Quality of project implementation by FAO (Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, Project Task Force, etc.)	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.2. Project oversight (project steering committee, project working group, etc.)	S	Section 3.5.3
E3. Quality of project execution For decentralized projects: PMU/Budget Holder	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	Section 3.5.4 / Findings 27, 28
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	HS	Section 3.5.5 / Findings 29, 30
E6. Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products	HS	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E7. Overall quality of M&E	HS	Section 3.5.2
E7.1. M&E design	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 24
E7.2. M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 25
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	Section 3.5
<b>F. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</b>		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	HS	Section 3.7.1 / Finding 32
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	HS	Section 3.7.2 / Finding 33
F3. Environmental and social safeguards (ESS)	HS	Section 3.7.1 / Finding 34
<b>Overall project rating</b>	<b>S</b>	

Note: <sup>i</sup> See the rating scheme in Appendix 5.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team.





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. This evaluation has a dual purpose of accountability and learning. On the one hand, it aims at obtaining an independent assessment of whether or not the planned inputs led or contributed to the achievement of the planned results in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact. On the other hand, it sought to: examine and detail project achievements; identify barriers and challenges to implementation and determinants for success or failure (reasons why the project results were delivered or not); and identify any broader results and impacts – positive or negative and intended or unintended – in order to advance future FAO-GEF projects that are similar.

## 1.2 Intended users

2. The primary intended users of the evaluation include: the Budget Holder; the Project Task Force; the technical adviser; FAO technical, programme and operation staff; the donor; and other external stakeholders, including government institutions linked to the project that can use the evaluation's findings to affect change. A detailed stakeholder analysis was carried out by the Evaluation Team in collaboration with the project team. This was done during the inception phase in order to identify the external stakeholders associated with the project and how they can use the evaluation, namely:
  - i. government institutions, such as the National Directorate of Forest, the National Sustainable Development Fund [FNDS, by its Portuguese acronym]), the National Directorate of Environment, the Provincial Directorate of Territorial Development and Environment, the Provincial Services of Environment, district administrations, and the District Services of Economic Activities (SDAE, by its Portuguese acronym);
  - ii. civil society, such as the Zambezia Network for Environment and Sustainable Community Development, and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Functional Literacy Technical Assistance Unit (UATAF, by its Portuguese acronym), the Institute for International Economic Cooperation (ICEI, by its Italian acronym) and the Foundation Community Land Initiative (ITC-F, by its Portuguese acronym).
  - iii. the private sector, such as the service provider, Ari-Mel, and academia, such as Zambezi University.

## 1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

3. The evaluand is GCP/MOZ/117/GFF, and the evaluation covers almost the entire original project implementation period from August 2017 to August 2022.<sup>1</sup> The evaluation focuses on the implementation that took place after the mid-term review (MTR), from June 2021 onwards, since it had already covered the first half. Nevertheless, this evaluation is summative. Geographically, it covered the capital of the Republic of Mozambique, Maputo, and the four districts of Zambezia Province where project activities were implemented: Alto Molocue, Mulevala, Maganja da Costa and Gile. When assessing the extent to which the project achieved its intended results, the evaluation sought to determine whether the

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<sup>1</sup> The evaluation had started before the project's not to exceed was extended until December 2022 (see Section 2).

project’s model and its specificities were tied to the Mozambican context, law and regulatory framework to warrant scaling up.

4. In addition, and following interviews during the inception phase, the Evaluation Team considered it appropriate that the scope focused on two key aspects: i) determining the sustainability of project results through the continued or new support of national authorities and other actors; and ii) generating insights and lessons learned to inform future similar projects, whether implemented by FAO-GEF or other development actors. Finally, the evaluation also sought to provide recommendations. This aspect aims to enhance the project’s exit strategy and to improve its effectiveness in the remaining implementation period and its possible impact thereafter. The reason why is supported by the fact that the project largely embodied a pilot model of payments for ecosystem services (PES). Moreover, the evaluation was conducted rather close to project closure, which was expected in August 2022 but extended in July 2022 until December 2022.
5. This evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the project achieved its intended results. More specifically, it sought to determine whether the project’s model and its specificities were tied to the country and Mozambican law to warrant scaling up.
6. Table 1 presents the evaluation questions based on the evaluation’s terms of reference and refined during the evaluation’s inception phase. This exercise intended to answer these questions. A detailed evaluation matrix was prepared and includes the lines of inquiry and indicators under each evaluation question, as well as the methods and sources that guided the collection of information and evidence (see Appendix 2 – please note the order of the question had been slightly amended, as has certain question wording for ease of readability; changes in wording of evaluation questions is evidenced by a “slash or “/” between the old and new phrasing).

**Table 1. Evaluation questions based on GEF criteria**

<p><b>Relevance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF)?</li> <li>▪ Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes and were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all of the involved stakeholders?</li> <li>▪ Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project’s objectives and goals?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness and the achievement of project results</b></p>	<p><u>Delivery of Output</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How effectively has the project delivered on its expected outputs in terms of their quality, quantity and timeliness (against milestones)?</li> </ul> <p><u>Effectiveness by outcome</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How effective was the project in achieving its intended outcomes/To what extent have project objectives been achieved and were there any unintended results? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extent to which the national revenue sharing mechanisms (RSM) and the integrated payment for ecosystem services (PES) improved</li> <li>○ Extent to which the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement the improved RSM have been enhanced</li> <li>○ Assessment of institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land and Environment, which is responsible for the management of natural forests, as well as</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>decentralized government agencies, NGOs and local communities to manage the improved revenue sharing mechanism, including the PES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Extent to which the pilot testing of improved RSM in Zambézia Province has been successful</li> <li>○ Extent to which the beneficiary communities are better prepared for the PES (through livelihoods and sustainable land management [SLM] practices, community-based natural resource management [CBNRM] and governance improvements) in the four districts in Zambézia/To what extent has the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement an improved RSM been enhanced? Has the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land and Environment – which is responsible for the management of natural forests, as well as decentralized government agencies, NGOs and local communities – to manage the improved RSM, including the PES element, improved and how?</li> </ul> <p><u>Effectiveness in terms of intended impact</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What results (intended and unintended) did the project achieve across its components? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can the attainment of results be attributed to the GEF-funded component?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?</li> <li>▪ To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects or partnerships and avoided the duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after project closure? What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of project benefits in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability?</li> </ul>
<b>Factors affecting performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How clear and coherent was the project design (including its causal logic/theory of change [TOC]) in addressing the needs of target groups and beneficiaries?</li> <li>▪ To what extent were the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed and context (political, institutional, social, etc.)?</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (M&amp;E design) Was the M&amp;E plan practical and sufficient? (M&amp;E implementation) Did the M&amp;E system operate as per the M&amp;E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner using appropriate methodologies?</li> <li>▪ Was the information from the M&amp;E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent did FAO deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval, start up, and oversight and supervision?</li> <li>▪ How well were risks identified and managed?</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of execution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent did the execution project partners and FAO effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project?</li> </ul>
<b>Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How was the quality, effectiveness and timeliness of financial planning and what were the actual project costs compared to the planned budget?/To what extent were the financial processes adequate (timeliness and adequacy of resources)?</li> <li>▪ To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and how did shortfall in co-financing affect project results?</li> </ul>
<b>Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent have stakeholders (e.g. government, civil society, rural communities, vulnerable groups, the private sector) been involved in project formulation and implementation and what has been the effect of their involvement or non-involvement on project results?/Were other actors such as civil society, Indigenous</li> </ul>

	<p>Peoples or the private sector involved in project design or implementation and what was the effect on the project results?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What were the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?</li> <li>▪ Have all stakeholders been made aware of the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) plan and the grievance complaint mechanism?</li> </ul>
<b>Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences? To what extent are communications products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?</li> </ul>
<b>Gender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental and social safeguards (ESS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project? Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS mitigation plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?</li> </ul>
<b>Progress towards impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is the likelihood of impact in terms of substantive contribution to broad changes, and what can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impact from the project? Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction (for example, in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks?</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What knowledge has been generated from the project results and experiences, which have a wider value and potential for broader application, replication and use?</li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation team based on terms of reference and at the inception stage.

## 1.4 Methodology

7. The methodology for this evaluation adopted a theory-based approach. It relied on specific tools so that the Evaluation Team could understand the project design and its performance, the direction that the project took throughout implementation and future prospects, particularly to ensure the sustainability of results and generating lessons learned.
8. This evaluation adopted a participatory and transparent approach throughout the whole process. It involved the project team, central and provincial government departments, FAO Mozambique, direct beneficiaries and other relevant stakeholders. The information was triangulated in order to validate evidence and support the analysis that fed into conclusions and recommendations.
9. A mixed methods approach was applied to gather data from different sources and informants, as presented in the evaluation matrix and summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. Evaluation methods and tools used in the evaluation**

Desk review	A desk review was conducted to collect and analyse existing documents, outputs and monitoring reports (e.g. project documents, the project inception report, annual work plans, data from the project monitoring and financial systems, steering committee minutes, all available biannual progress reports, backstopping mission reports, the mid-term review [MTR] and any other internal documents, including consultants' and financial reports). This provided a better understanding of the context and structure of the project so that its achievements could be identified. A documentation repository was created using a shared drive to facilitate consultation and document sharing among the Evaluation Team.
Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews with key informants were conducted to collect information and evidence from the most relevant stakeholders (e.g. all project staff and key partner institutions involved in project implementation, relevant government stakeholders at the central and provincial level and a sample of local authorities, and service providers, such as non-governmental organizations [NGOs] and the private sector) (see Appendix 1). Most interviews were conducted face-to-face (e.g. FAO-GEF staff in Rome) except for interviewees who were outside of Mozambique.
Field visit to Zambezia Province	Both team members carried out a 10-day visit to Zambezia Province during the field data collection phase. In-person interviews were also held alongside an on-site verification of project achievements and an assessment of the interest and capacities of beneficiaries and local stakeholders. Focus groups discussions were held with the main beneficiaries, notably women and men participating on the Natural Resources Management Committee (NRMC).
Thematic sessions with project staff	Bilateral discussion sessions were organized with the project staff, either face-to-face (during the field visit to Mozambique) or remote through Skype or Zoom (after the field visit). For the sake of efficiency and in order to not overload the project staff, the sessions were short (maximum 60 minutes) and organized around specific aspects (e.g. execution and management, budget and financial execution, results-based monitoring, communications and visibility).
E-survey	In addition to the interviews and focus group discussions, an e-survey was used for the following stakeholders: 1) government departments at the central, provincial and district level; 2) NGOs/civil society platforms; and 3) the private sector. This was done in order to collect opinions and perceptions on the project's progress and results, but also shed light on their satisfaction regarding key activities developed and results achieved (e.g. revenue sharing mechanism [RSM] improvements, changes in human and institutional capacities towards implementing the RSM and payments for ecosystem services [PES] mechanisms, and advances in natural resources management). The e-survey was anonymous and received a total of 44 valid responses (out of 110).
Briefings/debriefings	At the start and end of the field mission, sessions were carried out with the Evaluation Manager, project staff, the Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer and the Funding Liaison Officer to present preliminary findings and discuss preliminary recommendations. The evaluation team also participated in a workshop with external stakeholders.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team based on the evaluation terms of reference.

10. Site maps and targeted sampling: while some of the project's actions are national in scope (Component 1), the field activities *stricto sensu* are centred in Zambezia Province, specifically in the four districts of Gile, Maganja da Costa, Mulevala and Alto Molocue. According to the desk review and additional information from the inception interviewees, the project activities are concentrated in ten localities of these four districts,<sup>2</sup> directly covering 30 communities and targeting 12 NRMCs. The MTR, which was conducted in 2020 and therefore contended with high travel restrictions due to COVID-19, involved field visits to two districts: Alto Molocue and Maganja da Costa, where meetings and focus group discussions were held with four NRMCs. Taking into account the duration and feasibility of the field trips, the Evaluation Team proposed eight localities (80 percent coverage) and

<sup>2</sup> In administrative and territorial terms, the Republic of Mozambique has ten provinces that are divided into 154 districts, which are then divided into 419 administrative posts and these into localities. The latter are the lowest level of representation of the central state.

focus group discussions with eight NRMCS (66 percent coverage). Overall, the sample is representative. Furthermore, in each province, the Evaluation Team covered two or three NRMCS to mitigate any geographic bias. The selection of these communities deliberately targeted sites that had been visited during the MTR in order to corroborate and report on the progress of the identified results. It also covered sites not visited by the MTR in order to increase geographic coverage and representativeness.

11. Data collection: primary data collection was done through interviews (both in-person and remote), focus groups discussions, on-site observation and the e-survey. Following the preliminary review of key documentation during the inception phase, a systematic desk review continued throughout the exercise. This allowed for an ongoing analysis of secondary quantitative and qualitative information and accelerated the triangulation of information. The e-survey was conducted as part of the data collection and tailored to obtain the views and perspectives from main stakeholder groups.
12. Data analysis and triangulation: the methodology for this evaluation mixed quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques from primary and secondary sources. The Evaluation Team ensured triangulation by cross-checking and confirming findings and conclusions through the various sources. A series of remote team “discussion sessions” were held to analyse data, facilitate the triangulation of sources and discuss findings as part of the analytical process that benefits from different expertise brought by each team member. The Evaluation Team worked closely with the Evaluation Manager to get continuous feedback and guidance on methodological procedures and to ensure that the iterative draft versions met the expected quality and compliance level of FAO and the GEF for conducting terminal evaluations. Notwithstanding the quality assurance process and guidance provided, the Evaluation Manager did not interfere with the views and independence of the Evaluation Team. Rather, the Evaluation Manager ensured that the report provides the necessary evidence in a clear and convincing way, drawing its conclusions and recommendations from that basis.
13. Gender and minority groups: the United Nations Evaluation Group’s Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (UNEG, 2011) was used to shape and conduct the evaluation. In fact, the team used it as a basis to ensure that the gender and human rights aspects of the programme are integrated into the evaluation. In terms of gender analysis, the Evaluation Team assessed the project’s contribution to the objectives presented in the FAO Policy on Gender Equality (FAO, 2020a) and the GEF Policy on Gender Equality (GEF, 2017a). During data collection, the team ensured that all stakeholders were asked about gender issues related to the different activities in order to ensure an adequate gender focus in the report. The team conducted a gender-disaggregated data analysis where available and assessed the extent to which the different needs, priorities, voices and vulnerabilities of women and men and boys and girls were considered in the project’s design, implementation (including targeting and coverage) and monitoring. During the data collection process, the Evaluation Team emphasized gathering women’s views.
14. Ethical considerations: the evaluation was conducted in coherence with the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group’s Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct (UNEG, 2020) and Guidance on Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (UNEG, 2011). The Evaluation Team was responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics at all stages of the evaluation. The protocol included ensuring that respondent participation, particularly in focus group

discussions, was voluntary. It was made clear to respondents that no personally identifiable information would be collected by the Evaluation Team and that all responses would be anonymous so that findings could not be attributed to specific respondents. Informants were invited to speak in the language they felt more comfortable with (including national languages, by relying on other local focus group discussion participants for translation).

## 1.5 Limitations

15. The lack of or little coherence of available quantitative data was a limitation. The Evaluation Team applied various data collection methods (quantitative and qualitative) and worked closely with project staff to ensure access to reliable data. In addition, the methodology ensured an adequate triangulation of data and information. However, the planned endline study, which was expected to provide quantitative data, was not completed by the end of this evaluation. In fact, this was an important limitation since its results were not available for use.
16. The limited duration of the field mission was also a constraint in collecting data from primary sources, namely local authorities and communities (beneficiaries). In order to mitigate this constraint, the Evaluation Team proposed splitting the team into two in order to make a more efficient use of the time available and cover more project sites and communities. Additional virtual interviews were carried out after the field mission to reach stakeholders that had not been available during the in-country field mission.
17. The e-survey got 44 responses (out of 110), which means a response rate of 40 percent. This is considered good. However, a limitation stems from the fact that 42 percent of respondents (18 out of 44) only had connection or participation with the project in its final implementation phase. This may limit the reliability of the answers obtained as respondents did not have a complete picture of the project and its history.
18. COVID-19 in the country affected the availability of some interviewees. Therefore, the Evaluation Team remained flexible to adjust to their availability. Continued communication with FAO Mozambique and the Evaluation Manager was maintained to allow for this.
19. Following this introduction, Section 2 presents the background and context of the project. Section 3 presents the main findings for each evaluation question. Conclusions and recommendations are in Section 4, followed by lessons learned in Section 5. The report is accompanied by the following annexes:
  - i. Annex 1. Terms of reference for the evaluation
  - ii. Annex 2. E-survey





## 2. Background and context of the project

### Box 1. Basic project information

- The GEF project ID number: 5516
- Recipient country: Mozambique
- Executing partners: Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development through the National Directorate of Forest; the National Directorate of Environment; decentralized government services at the provincial level (Provincial Services of Economics Activities, former Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Food Security); and the Provincial Directorate for Territorial and Environment Development, plus the district government of the four districts through the District Services of Economic Activities (SDAE) and the FNDS (National Sustainable Development Fund)
- Date of project start and expected end: 25 August 2017 and 24 December 2022
- Date of mid-term review: conducted in September 2020 and published in June 2021

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team based on project documentation.

20. The Payments for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods five-year project was signed between the Government of the Republic of Mozambique through the former Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development – now called the Ministry of Land and Environment – and FAO in June 2017 (GEF, 2016a).
21. Problems and challenges: it is estimated that the Republic of Mozambique has 34 million ha of natural forest covering 43 percent of its territory. Miombo is the most important ecosystem, covering about two-thirds of the total forest area (World Bank, 2018). Deforestation and forest degradation caused by shifting cultivation, unsustainable timber and charcoal exploitation, and uncontrolled forest fires reduce the availability of forest ecosystem goods and services to rural communities, threatening globally important biodiversity and increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Zambezia Province has some of the highest forest cover (15 percent of national forest cover) and the second highest deforestation rate (0.9 percent per year, behind Nampula) (FNDS, 2018) – threatening the livelihoods of local communities and the country’s economy. Illegal logging and charcoal exploitation are rife in many parts of the country. This causes environmental degradation and robs local communities of the benefits that they would have received from legal forest harvesting activities. The general context presented in the project document is also supported by available national studies (CEAGRE, 2016; Falcão and Noa, 2016).
22. Miombo is the forest ecosystem that is characteristic of Zambezia Province. Thanks to its presence, the province is rich in wildlife species. In fact, the people in the project area are highly dependent on Miombo for their livelihoods. Although quantitative data on the benefits that local communities get from Miombo are rare, available studies show that forests and other natural areas account for 28 percent of household income. Household studies show that Miombo woodland resources are a critical element of the rural household economy and contribute significantly to mitigating the impacts of poverty. The Miombo woodlands are also a critical part of many farming systems in the area. In the traditional rotational systems of crop production, the Miombo forest is selectively cut so that useful trees are left standing (Deweese *et al.*). The vegetation is subsequently burnt to sterilize the soil and release nutrients for farming. This can be a sustainable system in the absence of modern inputs and low population densities. However, if cultivation and fires are too frequent, then Miombo regeneration is impaired. During wetter times of the year, open

grassy patches within the Miombo forest can be heavily used for grazing. However, Miombo itself becomes quite important as these grassy patches are either burnt or fully grazed late in the season. Miombo is seasonal and loses much of its leaf cover during the dry winter season. In the early spring, the so-called late dry season flush sees the Miombo coming back to life with vast swathes of woodland covered in bright red, orange and yellow foliage. Environmental services from the Miombo woodlands are thus essential for carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, tourism and watershed management. Indeed, this could become major income generation opportunities for local communities.

23. Over the past two decades, the Republic of Mozambique has developed a number of laws, policies, strategies, programmes and action plans to address conservation and the sustainable management of the country's natural forests, as well as mechanisms for sharing revenue from commercial forestry and wildlife conservation activities with local communities. The implementation of this legal and regulatory framework, however, has remained a challenge. The Ministerial Diploma No. 93/2005 of 4 May (commonly referred to as the "20% Decree") (Government of Mozambique, 2005) establishes a benefit-sharing arrangement with local communities whose customary lands are under commercial exploitation from forest and wildlife concessions. The existing government RSM allocates 20 percent of taxes paid by forestry operators to local communities. This RSM has been an important step in promoting forest governance and creating opportunities for communities by channelling financial resources that can be applied to forest management and conservation, while contributing to better livelihoods within the local communities. However, the effective implementation of this mechanism has not been achieved by the government due to two main problems. The first concerns the lack of an adequate enabling policy and regulatory environment. Currently, gaps in the policy and regulatory frameworks lead to poor law enforcement and the partial implementation of regulations. This is reinforced by a lack of awareness on behalf of decision makers on the potential for RSM to contribute to ecosystem conservation and restoration, as well as rural livelihoods. As such, the RSM-related regulations are interpreted in very different ways by different stakeholders at different levels. The regulatory framework is inadequately enforced, and there is a lack of coordination between different stakeholders. Furthermore, no environmental performance criteria are applied, so communities that burn the forest and facilitate illegal logging receive the same amount as communities that control fire. The second problem concerns insufficient human and institutional capacity to implement the RSM. The institutional capacity of government institutions in charge of forests that implement the decree is limited due to a combination of factors, including the limited allocation of human resources in all Provincial Forest and Wildlife Services and the absence of more detailed guiding principles for the implementation of the 20% Decree. This hinders its correct application on the ground and leads to conflicts as the basis for revenue sharing is not transparent for the beneficiaries.
24. Objective: in response to the aforementioned problems and challenges, the project's objective is to promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems. This is done through the improvement of the existing RSM that supports the sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife and improves local livelihoods.
25. Components: the project supports government-financed RSM through four components (Project document, revised version 19 October 2016) in order to: i) provide the project with a legal basis (Component 1); ii) improve local capacity to measure and verify the conservation impacts (Component 2); iii) assist the local communities in developing

capacities and engaging in income generation activities that are in line with ecosystem conservation principles (Component 3); and iv) follow a solid M&E framework (Component 4). The project strategy within each component is summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Summary of project strategy by component**

Components	Strategy
COMPONENT 1 National forest and wildlife RSM	Component 1 seeks the improvement of an existing national forest and wildlife revenue sharing mechanism (RSM) by making it more transparent and equitable and by integrating a payment for ecosystem services (PES). Under this component, the project: i) develops a common set of rules for investing in the provision of, and compensation for ecosystem services; and ii) promotes their adoption through existing government sector funds and RSM, including forestry, mining, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, energy, environment and infrastructure. This way, the project contributes to mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the country's development policy framework.
COMPONENT 2 Human and institutional capacity development	Component 2 seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land and Environment. This ministry is in charge of natural forest management, decentralized government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities. The ministry is expected to manage the improved RSM, including the PES element. This involves developing institutional capacities and operating procedures, as well as training individuals.
COMPONENT 3 Testing of the improved government forest and wildlife RSM in Zambezia Province	Component 3 builds upon the PES rules developed under the first component and concerns the detailed design and practical testing of the improved government forest and wildlife RSM in Zambezia Province. Under the improved RSM, payments will become conditional on the environmental performance of communities. The improved mechanism will be operationalized in four districts. On-the-job training for district and provincial government officials involved in implementing this component will further enhance the institutional capacity developed under the second component.
COMPONENT 4 M&E framework	Component 4 seeks to implement a sound monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to track project progress and measure impacts on the health of ecosystems and on people's well-being. Special attention is given to women's roles, constraints and opportunities in decision-making and benefit-sharing in all components through the development and implementation of a gender strategy.

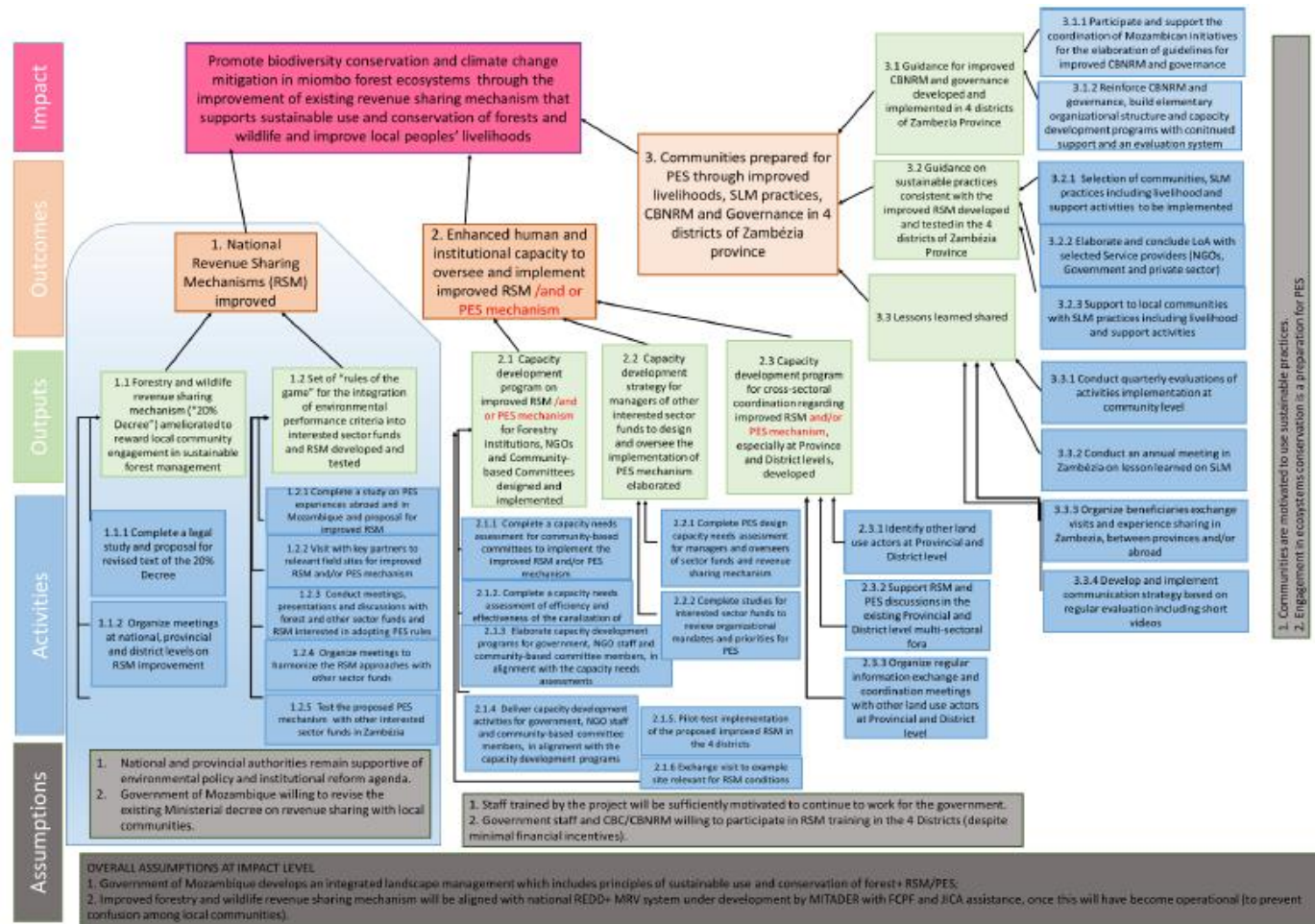
Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team based on the project document.

26. The project was endorsed by the GEF Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson in October 2016 with a total budget of USD 3 637 748.00 (GEF, 2016b). However, according to the MTR, its implementation only started in December 2018 when the funding agreement was operationalized. The project is implemented by FAO in partnership with the government through the National Directorate of Forests at the national level and through both the provincial forest services under the Ministry of Land and Environment and the SDAE at the district level. The LOAs were signed with service providers in the private and public sector, and with civil society organizations to support the implementation of activities on the ground.
27. The project is closely aligned with a government's flagship initiative that is currently being implemented in the same target of Zambezia Province: the Zambezia Integrated Landscape Management Program, which aims at REDD+ in the same districts as the FAO-GEF project. This Zambezia Integrated Landscape Management Program is funded by the government through a grant received from the World Bank-financed Forest Investment Program (FNDS, 2023a).

## 2.1 Theory of change

28. The Evaluation Team considers that the theory of change (TOC) proposed by the MTR remains valid and accurately depicts the changes that the project intends to achieve and the respective logical strategy (IF-THEN sequence) for doing so (see Figure 1). Furthermore, the desk review and the interviews carried out by the Evaluation Team during the inception phase confirmed that the assumptions in the MTR remain valid and relevant, particularly those on: the willingness of the government to revise the existing Ministerial Decree on revenue sharing with local communities; the motivation of communities and staff trained to engage in ecosystem conservation in preparation for PES; and the alignment of the government's RSM with the REDD+ system and related initiatives either under development or being implemented by the Ministry of Land and Environment. For this reason, the Evaluation Team does not consider it opportune to redesign the TOC as the current one remained a valid support for this evaluation and was therefore used to guide the interrogation of the retrospective elements of the project, namely the assumptions underlying the cause-effect relationships.

Figure 1. The project's theory of change



Note: PES refers to payments for ecosystem services; SLM to sustainable land management; CBNRM to community-based natural resource management; NGO to non-governmental organization; REDD+ to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries; MITADER to the Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development; CBC to community-based conservation; MRV to measuring, reporting and verification (of carbon credits); FCPF to Forest Carbon Partnership Facility; and JICA to Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Source: Elaborated by the evaluation team. The project's TOC was developed during the MTR and remains valid.



## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Relevance

*Evaluation question 1.1: Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and the FAO CPF?*

**Finding 1.** The project is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, FAO's regional priorities and CPF, as well as the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategy. The project also responds to the government's priorities.

14. This project is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 Life on Land by promoting the adoption of SFM practices by local communities (SDG Target 15.2). Through the improvement of the existing RSM and the inclusion of the PES concept, it also promotes fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise from the utilization of forest resources and appropriate access to such resources (SDG Target 15.6).
15. The project contributes to FAO Regional Priority 3 (Climate action and sustainable natural resource management) since its strategy focuses on promoting the adoption of practices and technologies for sustainable, adapted and resilient production systems, as well as reversing deforestation and enhancing ecosystem services across the Zambebian landscape. On FAO's strategy in the Republic of Mozambique (CPF 2016–2020) (FAO, 2016) – extended until 2022 – the project contributes to Priority Area B (Ensure transparent and sustainable management of natural resources and environment) and, more specifically, Output 2.2 (Government institutions and rural communities with enhanced capacity to implement best practices on sustainable management of natural resources and the environment). Within the scope of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2017–2020) (UNSDG, 2023), this project contributes to Outcome 9 (Most vulnerable people in Mozambique benefit from inclusive, equitable and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment).
16. The project contributes to the following GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies: i) Biodiversity by focusing on conservation, the sustainable use of biodiversity, and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services; ii) Climate Change, for reducing deforestation and forest degradation, and promoting SFM; and iii) SFM/REDD+ by reducing pressure on forest resources and generating sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.
17. The project's outcomes are congruent with the government's Five-Year Programme (PQG 2020–2024) (Government of Mozambique, 2020c), which includes SFM, biodiversity conservation and reduced deforestation as national priorities. They are also aligned with the National Development Strategy (END 2015–2035) (Government of Mozambique, 2014), where the sustainable management of natural resources is also identified as a critical factor for the country's development. In addition, the project is also consistent with various sectoral instruments (policies, programmes, strategies) that place SFM as a priority for government action, namely: the National Environment Policy; the Conservation Policy; the Territorial Planning Policy; the National Land Policy; the Strategic Plan for Agrarian Sector Development Strategy; the National Reforestation Strategy; and the National Action Programme for Adaptation to Climate Change.



**Finding 2.** The project responds to the needs of local communities because it creates opportunities to generate income while maintaining the sustainability of forest resources.

18. Forest resources are important assets for Mozambique and fundamental sources of income and livelihoods for many rural communities. These resources constitute an important path for economic development through the various value chains and other forest-related activities within the Zambebian landscape. The project's strategy responds to the country's needs by strengthening the political and institutional framework and human capacities of public administration. This promotes an enabling environment for SFM. The project responds to the needs of local communities by creating development opportunities based on productive practices that simultaneously promote the sustainability of forest resources and generate income. This is relevant in a context that has experienced accelerated deforestation and where climate change makes it critical to increase the capacity of households to adopt coping strategies that better respond to related risks and shocks. In the focus group discussions with communities, it was noticeable that families are aware of the need to preserve ecosystems and natural resources through more sustainable practices as they rely on them to make a living. Seventy-seven percent of the e-survey respondents considered the project very relevant, giving it 9 or 10 points on a scale of 1 to 10.

*Evaluation question 1.2: Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes? Were the project's strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all of the involved stakeholders?*

**Finding 3.** The project's internal design was coherent, but a conditional approach to delivering the expected outcomes limited its strategic relevance. This was corrected at midterm, which urged addressing the needs of local communities alongside a better legal framework.

19. The Republic of Mozambique made a strong commitment to reducing emissions, and important steps were then taken with the approval of the National Strategy for the Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Conservation of Forests and Increase of Carbon Reserves through Forests (REDD+ 2016–2030) (Government of Mozambique, 2016). The project design is aligned with this priority and responds to the needs of the different stakeholders. The existing RSM, framed by the "20% Decree" (Government of Mozambique, 2005), is weak and, in practice, has not been applied. Therefore, under Component 1, the project seeks to improve the national forest and wildlife RSM by making it more transparent and equitable and by integrating a PES mechanism. This strategy is relevant and aligned with the country's priorities. It also responds to the need of promoting an enabling environment towards mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into the country's development policy framework. In order for this to be put into place, it is necessary to strengthen stakeholder capacities at the central and decentralized levels, which is envisaged under Component 2. This is to be done by developing institutional capacities and operating procedures, as well as training individuals to oversee and implement the improved RSM and PES mechanisms. At the grassroots level, the project seeks to prepare local communities for PES by strengthening community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) and testing sustainable agriculture and forestry practices since it is expected that payments will become conditional on the environmental performance of communities. Although the project design is coherent and responds to the needs of various stakeholders, a conditional approach during implementation posed challenges. This is because the design assumed that the work with local communities could only start after the legal framework was approved. This issue was flagged at midterm and

the strategy was revised. In fact, this allowed Component 3 to move forward, making the project's strategy and its planned actions more integrated rather than sequential.

*Evaluation question 1.3: Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project's objectives and goals?*

**Finding 4.** The political, climatic and sanitary events that occurred throughout implementation did not change the relevance of the project. The overall country context remained favourable for forest conservation and the promotion of ecosystem services.

20. Mozambique has been affected by political and institutional changes since project approval in 2016. This includes elections and a change in government officials in 2019, climate crises (droughts, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth – especially 2019 and 2020) and a sanitary crisis (COVID-19). Nevertheless, the project's strategic relevance was not affected as the overall country context remained favourable. The country's commitments to REDD+ strategies have been consolidated since 2016, leading to a significant mobilization of resources to strengthen policies and practices for the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in Zambezia Province (e.g. over USD 500 million were mobilized through the Mozambique Forest Investment Project, which aims to improve the practices and enable the environment for forest and land management in targeted landscapes) (World Bank, 2017); the Sustenta Programme, which aims to integrate family farming into productive value chains for better livelihoods of rural households through the promotion of sustainable agriculture (FNDS, 2020); and the Zambezia Integrated Landscapes Management Program funded by the World Bank (Government of Mozambique, 2015). This innovative pilot programme with decentralized governance arrangements at the national, provincial and district level integrates government, private sector and civil society stakeholders. Its goal is to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation while promoting rural development. In 2021, the Republic of Mozambique became the first country to receive payments from a World Bank trust fund (over USD 6.4 million) for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (World Bank, 2021). This has created a favourable political and institutional context for the project's objectives and goals by raising the interest of different stakeholders in the project's strategy and creating an enabling environment for its implementation. Seventy-two percent of the e-survey respondents considered that the project was able to successfully adapt to external factors.
21. Overall, the strategic relevance of the project is assessed as highly satisfactory since it is consistent with relevant national policies, legislation and strategic priorities, as well as aligned with FAO's CPF and the GEF-5 funding cycle priorities. The needs of local communities were well addressed. In fact, the project created income generation opportunities based on sustainable productive practices that promote the sustainability of forest resources.

## 3.2 Effectiveness

*Evaluation question 2.1: How effectively has the project delivered on its expected outputs in terms of their quality, quantity and timeliness (against milestones)?*

**Finding 5.** The targets for outputs under Component 1 were fully achieved. However, the involvement of the National Directorate of Forest in the delivery of technical assistance and legal draft proposals could have been stronger.

22. On Output 1.1 (Forestry and wildlife RSM – the “20% Decree” – ameliorated to reward local community engagement in sustainable land management [SLM]), the project delivered technical assistance to the National Directorate of Forest, organized technical meetings and produced various studies and legal assessments. A legal study and iterative proposals to revise the “20% Decree” were completed and submitted to the National Directorate of Forest, as well as a technical proposal for the inclusion of PES in the new Forestry Law. However, the evaluation found that involvement of the National Directorate of Forest in initial assessments and legal studies was weak. In practice, and according to the interviews carried out, the National Directorate of Forest felt that its technicians were not sufficiently engaged in the studies, for example, in integrating the teams of consultants. However, it was also found that the government had the opportunity to request the inclusion of other provinces in the study. For example, the assessment was initially carried out only in Zambezia Province. After a government request, the assessment was then expanded to include six other provinces, but even so, the National Directorate of Forest did not consider it sufficiently representative of the whole country.
23. On Output 1.2 (Common set of “rules of the game” developed for the integration of environmental performance criteria into existing sector funds and RSM, both for forestry and for other sectors), the project conducted a study on PES experiences abroad and in the Republic of Mozambique to substantiate the technical and political discussion. An article entitled “Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: learning experiences from the forestry sector” (FAO, 2020c) was also produced. It documents relevant PES experiences from the Republic of Mozambique and other countries, orients those embarking on the PES plan and disseminates PES at various fora that target forest and climate audiences, such as REDD+ and the National Adaptation Programme of Action working groups.
24. A concept note to set up the interministerial working group was prepared. It discussed the road map to improve the RSM and include the PES concept. In total, eight different sectors were engaged in the interministerial working group (the Ministries of Land and Environment; Agriculture and Rural Development; Interior Waters and Fisheries; Energy; Mining; Economy and Finance; Gender and Social Affairs; and Public Administration). The group was successfully created but met only once. On a more positive note, a draft document to guide the sectors on the PES “rules of the game” was delivered to the National Directorate of Forest and was expected to be discussed and concluded in the next interministerial working group in the second semester of 2022. However, gender rules have not been delivered as planned – even though the project expects to conclude this in the second semester of 2022, together with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES.

**Finding 6.** The targets for outputs under Component 2 were only partially achieved (Output 2.3) and the actual number of people trained is very low.

25. On Output 2.1 (Capacity development programme on improved RSM and/or PES mechanism for forestry institutions and NGOs designed and implemented), the project delivered an assessment of the government’s capacity and processes related to needs and gaps for the implementation of the “20% Decree” that was validated by the National Directorate of Forest. The exercise served as a basis to develop terms of reference for the capacity development of government and NGO staff. As part of the project’s capacity strengthening strategy for RSM and PES, a training of trainers session on community governance for natural resource management was carried out in October 2021, targeting

a total of 21 individuals (six from government institutions and 15 from civil society organizations) out of the 30 planned for this output. The training was delivered by the country's CBNRM network.<sup>3</sup> Overall, all interviewees who had participated in the trainings expressed satisfaction with the quality of the trainings received.

26. On Output 2.2 (Capacity development strategy for managers of other interested sector funds to design and oversee the implementation of the PES mechanism elaborated), the project delivered five workshops and awareness raising sessions, particularly targeting the interministerial working group where community governance for natural resources management and various aspects of RSM and PES were discussed. A specific discussion session on PES was also delivered in 2021, targeting a total of 12 government staff from different institutions (Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Directorate for Environment, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries). The discussion was led by the National Directorate of Forest, with technical assistance from FAO in the framework of the interministerial coordination working group on PES. An agreement was signed with the National Directorate of Forest to implement an action plan to improve the existing RSM, but a document to guide the sectors on the PES "rules of the game" was not yet approved.
27. On Output 2.3 (Cross-sectoral coordination regarding an improved RSM and/or PES mechanism, especially at the provincial and district levels, developed), the project could not engage sectors to improve cross-sectoral coordination at the provincial and district levels. An agreement was reached with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambezia for holding biannual meetings, including PES discussions. This partnership worked well until COVID-19. Unfortunately, after that, it was difficult to convene meetings due to restrictions imposed by the pandemic, preventing the project from adequately engaging local stakeholders in the provincial discussion. For example, two plenary meetings planned with the platform to discuss the RSM and PES were not held. Nevertheless, the project has engaged with stakeholders in various situations and seminars organized in the province (project inception, identification and discussion of project activities, experience sharing).

**Finding 7.** The targets for outputs under Component 3 were almost fully achieved. The option of working with communities through a "package" of ecosystem services and a choice in service providers were appropriate.

28. On Output 3.1 (Sustainable livelihood models including SLM practices, CBNRM and governance developed and tested), the project signed LOAs with four service providers to test and introduce innovative approaches towards improving livelihoods and SLM practices in local communities: i) Agri-Mel, responsible for beekeeping activities; ii) ICEI, for aquaculture, agroforestry, anti-fire brigades and nutrition activities; and iii) UATAF, for the savings and credits groups; and iv) ITC-F, for NRM governance. The project sought to introduce and test the same package of services in all beneficiary communities. This option was appropriate in that it increased the communities' access to different types of strategies for better livelihoods (income generation, credit access, food consumption). Overall, the evaluation found that the service providers presented good technical capacity and knowledge of the territory, which facilitated their work in supporting the communities.

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<sup>3</sup> The CBNRM network was established in 2018 and functions as an institutional platform that aims to improve livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management, and the conservation of wildlife and its habitat through the effective participation and empowerment of rural communities.

However, several factors limited their work – especially distances between districts and lengthy internal FAO processes. The project reached 2 376 (48 percent of which were women) direct beneficiaries in 12 communities of the four target districts, meaning 91 percent of the expected target.<sup>4</sup> A total of eight new CBNRM committees were also created and ten others revitalized in the four target districts. It is worth mentioning, however, that when the Evaluation Team collected data, the creation and revitalization of more CBNRM was still ongoing.

29. On Output 3.2 (Lessons learned are shared), the project managed to deliver a range of communications and reporting materials, as well as systematize and disseminate testimonies from the field and lessons learned. For example, a study on Payments for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods in Mozambique (FAO and IIED, 2019) provides an assessment of PES plans, highlights the potential forms to distribute this compensation at the local level, and identifies potential opportunities and constraints based on selected experiences. A paper (FAO, 2020c) reveals the benefits that a PES mechanism would represent for the integrated development of the Republic of Mozambique based on lessons from the Federative Republic of Brazil and Africa. Testimonies from the field and success stories were systematized and disseminated in both progress reports and online, for example in (FAO, 2022a). A gender assessment (FAO, 2019a) was conducted, which synthesized project lessons and testimonies pertaining to women. A gender strategy (FAO, 2019b) was then developed to provide shared knowledge on gender issues and opportunities to strengthen women’s preparedness, leadership and gender-adapted alternative sustainable activities based on project lessons. In addition, three videos and at least two newsletters documenting project results and lessons learned were produced. It is worth mentioning, however, that when the Evaluation Team collected data, the production of additional communications materials (videos and newsletters) was still ongoing.

*Evaluation question 2.2: To what extent have project objectives been achieved, and were there any unintended results? / Evaluation question 2.3: What results, intended and unintended, did the project achieve across its components?*

### **3.2.1 Outcome 1. National RSM improved**

**Finding 8.** Progress has been made in the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and inclusion of the PES concept since these discussions now include eight different ministries.

30. The project strengthened cross-sectoral policy dialogue by engaging different government sectors in policy discussions on the revision and harmonization of the existing RSM. Technical and policy discussions about the PES concept and its practical inclusion and applicability in national legislative and regulatory frameworks have also progressed. Traditionally, these discussions were restricted to the forestry and environment sectors. They now, however, involve eight different ministries. This creates new opportunities to strengthen the RSM for communities. The RSM can now include revenue derived from sectors other than forestry and the environment, such as fees, licences or concessions in the mining, energy or fishing sectors. Furthermore, the direct involvement of the territorial, agriculture, gender and social affairs sectors is underscored as their awareness and

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<sup>4</sup> These are actual figures based on the monitoring matrix that was provided by the project team (August 2022). According to the project team, the target will be reached by project closure once the ongoing NRMC strengthening activities are completed.

responsibility towards local communities benefits the practical application of RSM and PES mechanisms, particularly in regard to the mobilization and engagement of local communities under their responsibility.

**Finding 9.** Many initial policy dialogue achievements are as attributable to another project, FAO's UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ, as they are to this one.

31. Several meetings and working groups for the revision of the Forestry Law were financed, initiated and developed under FAO's UTF/MOZ/123/MOZ project (FAO, 2022b). The attribution of policy dialogue achievements to this project is thus shared. For example, the inclusion of the PES concept in the Forest Policy (Government of Mozambique, 2020a) and the Forest Agenda 2019–2035 (Government of Mozambique, 2019), which were both approved in 2019, opened an important window to strengthen and ensure the protection, conservation, creation, enhancement and sustainable use of forest resources. To a great extent, this resulted from the efforts of the previous FAO project, as well as the discussions in the initial phase of the present project, particularly in 2018 and 2019. Nevertheless, although synergies and complementarities between projects are positive, attribution cannot be strictly determined as they increase efficiency in the use of resources.

**Finding 10.** The approval of the Forestry Law and its regulation has not been completed, and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular. This may compromise project impact.

32. The Forest Policy states that it is critical to recognize the role of communities in conserving biodiversity, water, soils and the carbon cycle, and therefore, that they should be paid for these environmental services. However, such policy is a mere strategic guidance instrument, implying the necessity to also improve the Forestry Law and its regulatory mechanisms for their effective implementation. Such improvement was expected through this outcome but did not occur, despite the technical assistance provided to the National Directorate of Forest. The various studies and the technical and legal support put in place by the project contributed to identifying gaps in the current "20% Decree" on the RSM and the integration of PES into the new Forestry Law. A proposal for the inclusion of PES in the new Forestry Law was submitted to the National Directorate of Forest and 63 percent of the e-survey respondents rated the project's contribution to the review of legislation and regulation as "good". Nevertheless, the law has not been approved (as of October 2022), even though the National Directorate of Forest asserts that there are good prospects for approval in the short term. As a consequence, there are still no concrete results on RSM improvement. Indeed, this should have come from policy dialogue and the legal, technical support provided by the project vis-à-vis the initial scenario. However, the payments to communities remain incipient and irregular, as confirmed by the Evaluation Team through field visits and interviews with the National Directorate of Forest. For example, out of the eight NRMCS visited in the summer of 2022, five had not received payments for more than four years and only three had received payments in 2021.
33. Overall, Outcome 1 on effectiveness is assessed as moderately satisfactory. Although the project contributed to identifying gaps in the current "20% Decree" on the RSM and the integration of PES into the new Forestry Law, the latter has yet to be approved and the payments to communities remain incipient and irregular. Concrete steps were taken to provide technical assistance to the National Directorate of Forest and to strengthen interministerial coordination so that the existing RSM and PES could be ameliorated with a total of eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions. Although the interministerial working group was successfully created, it

remains an ad hoc structure. To date, there has been only one interministerial meeting. The draft document to guide the sectors on the PES “rules of the game” has been delivered to the National Directorate of Forest but not officially approved.

### **3.2.2 Outcome 2. Enhanced human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM and/or PES**

**Finding 11.** There has been progress towards better understanding the PES concept but modest results in terms of human capacity strengthening.

34. The evaluation found progress towards better understanding the PES concept, especially at the central level. In fact, 56 percent of the e-survey respondents rated the project’s contribution to strengthening human and institutional capacities as “good”. This was also visible in the interviews with key informants, who were able to explain the concept and how important it is to recognize (and reward) the role of communities in the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. The trainings and workshops were instrumental in clarifying the PES concept among technical staff and policy makers. However, trainings were very limited in terms of the number of people reached – only 21 people (six from the government and 15 from civil society) against a target of 30. The project’s strategy was to involve different sectors in the discussion on the RSM and PES, for example, the government and other stakeholders, including the provincial and municipal government and civil society representative. However, limiting the training to just a few national government and civil society representatives unnecessarily restricted the project’s capacity building efforts.

**Finding 12.** The project’s institutional strengthening dimension presents few results and lacks a tangible strategy that can hinder impact.

35. No sound progress was detected on the project’s institutional strengthening dimension. This would have been particularly important at the National Directorate of Forest level since it is the institutional locus for coordinating the “rules of the game.” In fact, it also assumes the technical and political tutelage of the legal and regulatory instruments for operationalizing the RSM and incorporating the PES. The interviews conducted at the central level revealed that no significant progress could be attributed to this project in terms of organizational domain improvement, such as through improved tools and systems for analysis and diagnosis, planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, communications, M&E and equipment. Another example where the project fell short of implementing a tangible strategy or leaving a defining mark is linked to the recurring lack of internet access. This was repeatedly noted by the interviewed ministry officials as a recurrent problem. The project, with its USD 3.6 million budget, could have sought to address this, even partially.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, based on statements by government staff, the option of placing project staff directly in the National Directorate of Forest could have contributed to this dimension through an on-the-job training approach. This was done in previous projects. In fact, it was considered common practice by FAO Mozambique. According to the National Directorate

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<sup>5</sup> The internet access issue requires paying for a modem and signing up for internet service. This would cost around USD 200/month for the entire building and all staff, not just those directly connected to the project. This would then be USD 12 000 for over five years of project implementation. Providing this service to the National Directorate of Forest through project implementation would have made a tangible though limited contribution to its institutional strengthening.

of Forest, this significantly contributed to shared experiences, improved day-to-day work routines and increased knowledge.

36. Overall, Outcome 2 on effectiveness is moderately unsatisfactory. Although there has been progress towards better understanding the PES concept, the results in terms of human capacity strengthening are very modest. Trainings were very low in terms of the number of people reached and targeted. Again, there were only a few national government and civil society representatives, and this unnecessarily limited the project's capacity building plan. Furthermore, no sound progress was detected on the project's institutional strengthening dimension. This could prove critical in improving the capacity of the National Directorate of Forest to move forward and coordinate the "rules of the game" that would operationalize the RSM and integrate PES once the Forestry Law is approved.

### **3.2.3 Outcome 3. Communities prepared for PES through sustainable livelihood models, including SLM practices, the CBNRM and governance in four districts of Zambezia Province**

**Finding 13.** The project managed to introduce several sustainable natural resource management practices in the target communities that had contributed to greater capacities in the communities.

29. Component 3 represents a central pillar of the project's strategy in preparing communities to receive PES. Opportunities for income generation in these communities are scarce due to the low level of organization and difficulties in accessing inputs, credit, technical assistance and markets. Quite often, communities use unsustainable and environmentally damaging practices like uncontrolled fire, deforestation, agrochemical misuse and intensive charcoal production. The Evaluation Team observed important changes in the beneficiary communities as a result of this project in the four target districts. The field visits revealed that the introduced practices contributed to greater capacities of the communities in three senses: i) they have an environmental function because they contribute to the preservation of natural resources (land, water, forests, biodiversity) as a counterbalance to intensive agriculture and forest exploitation; ii) they are based on simple practices, low technology and therefore adapted to the capacities, knowledge and development of the communities; and iii) they improve livelihoods by increasing and diversifying food consumption (improved nutrition), as well as income generation (sales).

**Finding 14.** Evidence was found that communities are more prepared for PES when it becomes operational. Indeed, community-level impact prospects are promising.

37. E-survey respondents rated the project's contribution towards preparing communities for PES as either "excellent" (40 percent) or "good" (32 percent). The introduced agroforestry practices have the potential to reduce carbon emissions, especially by reducing deforestation. Through project support, a total of 300 beneficiaries were trained on agroforestry practices (162 women) from the service provider, ICEI. Based on the project's internal monitoring system, a total of 48 individual farmers in the districts of Gile, Muleva, Alto Molocue and Maganja da Costa introduced pineapple in their agroforestry systems. The evaluation observed that the two communities visited in Alto Molocue have agroforestry plots. Although still incipient, it was observable that these plots have a greater capacity to retain moisture in the soil. However, these activities had just started in 2021. Done earlier, these activities would have consolidated results and underscored real benefits for the communities and ecosystem. It is crucial to see tangible results so that rural communities adopt such practices. Moreover, agroforestry practices require years before real benefits like greater soil fertility and crop stability can be seen in both the ecosystem



and the production systems. As it stands, agroforestry practices are underway and show promise, provided that they continue.

38. In the case of beekeeping, changes in livelihoods are more visible. This is an activity whose tangible results can be achieved relatively quickly (one year). This made it possible to observe that most communities have already been producing honey and enjoying the increased income generated. In 5 out of 8 NRMCs visited, the beneficiaries were developing beekeeping (Maganja da Costa, Alto Molocue, Gile).<sup>6</sup> All of them expressed satisfaction with this activity and were unanimous in considering it profitable. With support from the project, the beneficiaries received hives, bee catching boxes, protective suits, masks and fumigation tools. A total of 120 beneficiaries were trained on beekeeping (61 women). Through the service provider Agri-Mel, they received training on improved beekeeping techniques: apiary management; the identification of major pests and diseases; honey extraction; preservation; and packaging. They were also trained on the importance of beekeeping for forest preservation as bees are essential for pollination and the production of quality honey depends on the native flora. This represents a significant step forward from traditional beekeeping practices that had relied on the use of tree bark to build the artisanal hives. Honey production by the traditional method was very low (maximum of 6 to 8 kg/hive) compared to the new, improved beekeeping technique (about 20 kg/hive). The sale of honey has been backed through Agri-Mel, which ensures the entire commercialization process and that the honey produced and the income generated from its sale reaches the producer for better livelihoods. Each hive can produce twice a year. Agri-Mel buys the honey from the producers at 100 MZN/kg (approximately USD 1.60/kg), which means an annual average income of USD 64/hive. The project has distributed over 200 hives for demonstration purposes. Interested beneficiaries can extend the number of hives by purchasing them from Agri-Mel for 5 000 MZN/hive (approximately USD 78). This means that the return on investment of each additional hive can be achieved in just over one year. A beneficiary can easily manage five hives individually by applying the management practices introduced by the project. This means an average annual income of around USD 320/year from this activity. In fact, this is very close to the average annual income in the country. The most recent data from the Republic of Mozambique's National Statistics Institute included in the 2019–2020 household budget survey shows that Mozambicans earn an average of USD 365 per year and are mainly self-employed in agriculture (INE, 2020).
39. In the case of the anti-fire brigades, the project supported the creation of 12 brigades in the four target districts and trained 180 beneficiaries (29 women) on fire management practices through the service provider, ICEI. The brigades were formed and active in all eight NRMCs visited. Besides the training, the beneficiaries received personal protective equipment. Each kit had overalls, protective helmets, gloves, nasal masks, fire boots, bicycles, firefighting sprayers, machetes and rakes. The evaluation also observed that these groups are responsible for prevention and raising awareness among other community members. The areas most prone to fires were also mapped for greater preventive attention. This was done through project support and an activity with technicians from the provincial government. Radio messages were also produced and broadcasted in the four target districts. The presentations reached 54 transmissions, done three times a day in one of three languages (Portuguese, Elomwe or Nharinga) to increase territorial coverage. In focus group discussions with the beneficiaries, it was noticeable that the communities are more

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<sup>6</sup> The project did not develop beekeeping activities in Mulevala.

aware of the importance of preventing uncontrolled fires. For example, in Mulevala, the community of Nadala reported being mobilized by the anti-fire brigade to combat an uncontrolled fire. However, the other communities (brigades of 7 out of 8 NRMCS) reported that they mainly focus on raising awareness for prevention but have not started to put the learned techniques into practice. Although the theory appears strong, in practice, the effects of anti-fire brigades will only be observable in a few years' time after several agricultural seasons. Only then will it be clear whether communities have in fact consolidated the anti-fire brigades and whether these have effectively adopted controlled fire practices.

40. The savings and credit groups are still being consolidated, but in the eight NRMCS visited, it was possible to observe that communities already show a good level of organization. The project supported the creation of 48 groups in the four target districts and trained 1 156 beneficiaries (548 women) on savings practices and credit granting mechanisms through the service provider UATAF. In Alto Molocue and Maganja da Costa, community savings started in July 2020, while in Gile and Mulevala started in January 2021. Data from the internal monitoring system provided by the UATAF indicate a total of MZN 1 114 751 of savings (approximately USD 17 500). The savings and credit groups have also granted small credits to their members for productive investments with a total of MZN 846 550 granted (approximately USD 13 250). The most recent data available report a total of 135 beneficiaries who applied for credit regarding small investments, which means an average of MZN 6 270/investment (approximately USD 98). Furthermore, the evaluation also found that these groups play an important social role. For example, if a family needs support because someone needs to go to a local health centre but has no money (for transport, for example), then the group supports that family. In practice, these groups also function as community safety nets.
  
41. In the case of pisciculture, and despite some positive progress reported by the service provider ICEI (ICEI, 2022), the visits carried out by the evaluation did not find evidence of great success. The introduction of pisciculture in the communities was based on a technical model promoted by the provincial government. The evaluation found that the dimensions of the fish ponds were not for small-scale pisciculture and required significant investment in food, as well as a heavy recurring investment to purchase the alevins required to repopulate the fish ponds. The tanks were first populated with 2 000 to 2 500 alevins. Once grown, the fish are sold or – as in the case of the fish ponds in the community of Ganga, Muzu (Maganja da Costa District), where the tanks were dried out due to the lack of rain and all alevins were taken out – they need to be repopulated by the community. The evaluation also detected a risk of competition between food for human consumption and animal feed as several of the raw materials used to prepare the feed at the community level are part of families' diets (for example, dried fish, dried shrimp, beans, peanuts and cassava). Furthermore, communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the required amount of feed for the fish ponds, as recommended by the project. The project suggests feeding the fish ponds with a portion the size of a PET bottle (approximately 500 mg) once a day. However, in all communities visited, the beneficiaries were only feeding the fish ponds with two or three handfuls of *farelo* (the husks, straw and dust or corn bran only), and it was not clear if this amount was given daily. Fish seen in the tanks were of small size. The ICEI reported that the main challenges with the pisciculture activity were: i) partial success in the identification made by the provincial government's technicians specialized in aquaculture on the installation of fish ponds since, in some cases, the locations suffer from a scarcity of water in the dry season that limits the production to

one cycle per year instead of the expected two; and ii) difficulties for the commercial alevins supplier to meet the project's schedule and supply the alevins on time (procurement process managed by FAO).<sup>7</sup> These constraints are structural and come from the model adopted. Only the second can, at this stage, hope to be addressed through government cooperation provided that a clear exit strategy is jointly defined.

42. On nutrition, the project supported the creation of 12 groups in the four districts targeting 120 women. Through the service provider ICEI, women participated in awareness raising sessions on balanced and healthy diets. In addition, each group benefited from demonstration kits for cooking and received training on food processing and conservation. Four technicians (one in each district) from the SDAE were also trained on nutrition issues.
43. The project also strengthened the community governance's systems for natural resource management. In total, the project managed to create eight new NRMCs and revitalize ten existing NRMCs in the four target districts.<sup>8</sup> Through the service provider ITC-F, the project trained 393 beneficiaries (157 women) on the community governance of natural resources and the organizational strengthening of committees. This capacity development process also sought to increase communities' capacities to access funds from the existing REDD+ mechanisms, as described in the LOA signed with the service providers.

**Finding 15.** Opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited.

44. Various REDD+ initiatives are underway in the Zambebian landscape. Most are implemented by FNDS and financed by the World Bank which, in fact, already include PES mechanisms for communities. The most relevant are the benefit-sharing plan and the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Local Communities Project. The benefit-sharing plan aims to define the share of monetary benefits generated by the reduction of emissions, especially the reduction of deforestation in Zambezia Province. These monetary benefits will be shared between different beneficiaries based on the annual performance of the landscape, i.e. payments will be made after verifying the reduced area of deforestation (FNDS, 2019b). The Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Local Communities Project aims to support initiatives that facilitate the socioeconomic development of local communities that adapt to and mitigate climate change in Zambezia Province (FNDS, 2023b). These programmes include provisions for communities to apply for small grants in order to implement sustainable natural resource management activities. Furthermore, in the case of this project, it is worth mentioning that the LOAs signed with the service providers included support to beneficiary communities in the preparation of small project proposals to these programmes. Examples of a current call for proposals for small community projects is available at (FNDS, 2023c). However, only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation: i) a community exploring a forest concession benefited from the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Local Communities Project to rehabilitate sawmill equipment for timber processing and value chain development; ii) one community (Teniua in Gile) that implements beekeeping under this project was selected for the benefit-sharing plan. The project has been supporting its legalization and opening of a bank account, which is mandatory to receive the benefit-sharing funds; and iii) although not through a grant, it is worth noting that a

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<sup>7</sup> The information was provided by ICEI after the field mission and sent to the Evaluation Team by the project staff.

<sup>8</sup> As mentioned, when the Evaluation Team collected data, the creation and revitalization of more CBNRM was still in progress.

group of anti-fire brigades established by the project was recently integrated into a forest plantation company, Portucel, with a team of wildfire firefighters on its payroll.

45. Overall, Outcome 3 on effectiveness is assessed as satisfactory because the project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices by providing the same package of services in all beneficiary communities. This was appropriate since it increased the communities' access to different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods in terms of income generation, credit access and food consumption. Nevertheless, opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited. In fact, only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation.

### 3.3 Efficiency

*Evaluation question 3.1: To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?*

**Finding 16.** The cost-effectiveness of Components 2 and 3 was very low.

46. Appendix 3 show the project's financial data, including a breakdown of project costs by project component and budget line. Overall, about USD 1.8 million was spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a 3.6 million budget. This means that 50 percent of the total budget was spent on human resources, including staff and consultants. Based on the results obtained, there was no efficient use of human resources. It is understandable that the project strategy included the production and delivery of several studies and diagnostics, especially related to the analysis of the RSM and within the scope of technical assistance for the inclusion of PES. However, these costs seem exaggerated considering the modest progress in the outcomes and outputs of Components 1 and 2 (see Section 3.2). Component 2 accounted for almost 30 percent of the total project costs. This means that almost USD 1 million has been spent, despite the limited progress on human and institutional capacity strengthening.
47. Component 3 accounted for 40 percent of the total project costs. The costs assigned under the budget line for contracts (USD 870 000) seems more reasonable, taking into account that the project strategy for Component 3 was to sign LOAs with service providers rather than external consultants. However, to date, over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support a total of 2 376 people directly reached through sustainable natural resource management practices (i.e. almost USD 500/beneficiary).

*Evaluation question 3.2: To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?*

**Finding 17.** A number of external factors (Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, general elections, COVID-19) strongly impacted the project, compromising its initial planning and leading to successive adjustments.

48. The project was affected by a set of external factors, some of which occurred simultaneously. These hampered the execution of the initial plan. The 2019 general elections resulted in subsequent institutional changes, including a merger in the ministries, the nomination of new ministers and changes in the administrative structure of provincial administrations. Even in early 2020, the National Directorate of Forest was not sure under whose ministerial umbrella it fell, and FNDS moved from one ministry to the other.

Dialogue and technical discussions were difficult during that transition period. To aggravate the situation, the country was affected by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which devastated several regions of the country and refocused all – including FAO's – attention and efforts towards emergency actions and relief. In February 2020, the world experienced the global COVID-19 pandemic, which led to lockdowns, declarations of a state of emergency and travel restrictions. Changes in FAO Representation led to an internal restructuring of the Country Office, which was still ongoing at the time of the field mission (summer 2022). This led to several changes in human resources management and rendered the hiring of staff and non-staff members lengthy and administratively burdensome.

49. As a result, various project activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. For example, under Component 2, the capacity needs assessment on SLM practices and on the RSM was planned for Year 2 but postponed to Year 3. The trainings on PES for government staff and NGOs were planned to start in Years 1 and 2 but only took place in Year 4. The PES exchange visit to a country relevant for Mozambican activities was cancelled. The two plenary meetings planned with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambezia to discuss the RSM and PES were cancelled due to the project's failure to adequately engage local stakeholders in the provincial discussion. Under Component 3, the development and implementation of a communications strategy was planned for Year 2 but started in Year 3. The strengthening of the NRMCM at the community level was planned to Year 2 but started in Year 3. The LOA with the SDAE departments were planned for Year 2 but were only signed in Year 3.

**Finding 18.** The project built on synergies and complementarities with other projects. However, the late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the consolidation of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities.

50. Forty-four percent of the e-survey respondents considered that the project was able to generate good synergies and complementarities with other ongoing actions in Zambezia Province. The strong synergies with different stakeholders, in particular the quality of partnerships with service providers (see Finding 7), contributed to project efficiency by allowing a smooth implementation of the activities and complementarities with the different REDD+ programmes underway in Zambezia (see Finding 4). The project planned to support seven districts but ended up reducing activities to only four due to budget constraints identified at midterm. Furthermore, activities under Component 3 related to sustainable alternative livelihoods models (agroforestry, aquaculture, beekeeping, anti-fire brigades, nutrition, savings and credit) initiated in Year 3 but only in two districts (Maganja da Costa and Alto Molocue). At midterm, the project team and the MTR realized that work with communities should speed up immediately, rather than wait for the foreseen legislative changes. The project then decided to expand community work under this component to two more districts (Gile and Mulevala). By design, Component 3 activities were actually planned to start from Year 3 onwards when advances in the legal and regulatory frameworks of the RSM and PES were expected to be consolidated. In practice, however, this has resulted in low efficiency for this component. Community work demands time in order for the results be tangible, visible and consolidated. Some expected results may be visible more quickly (beekeeping, for example), but in other cases they keep demanding significant time to prepare the communities and achieve the expected results. This is especially true for fish farming, a reduction in uncontrolled burning, soil recovery and increased production based on agroforestry systems, and the consolidation of community dynamics in terms of savings and credit. Project efficiency in this component

would have increased if activities with communities had started at the very beginning of the project, rather than – as envisaged in the design – waiting for progress in the revision of the legal framework. The latter depends on the government's political will.

51. Overall, project efficiency is assessed as moderately satisfactory due to a number of external factors: Cyclones Idai and Kenneth; general elections; and COVID-19. Such factors compromised the project's initial planning and led to successive adjustments as various activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. Furthermore, the project planned to support seven districts but ended up reducing activities to only four due to budget constraints identified at midterm. Also at midterm, the project team realized that work with communities should be fast tracked rather than stalled while awaiting the expected legislative changes. The late start in implementing Component 3 hindered the efficiency of community work and the possibility of achieving practical results to better prepare the local communities. The project's overall cost-effectiveness is very low considering the amount (USD 1.8 million) spent on salaries and consultants in a project with a USD 3.6 million budget – especially under Component 2. In fact, there is little to show as a result. The same applies to Component 3 since over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support just over 2 000 people through sustainable natural resource management practices.

### 3.4 Sustainability

*Evaluation question 4.1a: What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after project closure? Evaluation question 4.1b: What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of the project benefits in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability?*

**Finding 19.** The project's strategy and results achieved have ensured environmental sustainability. Beekeeping and agroforestry systems show good prospects for continuing after project completion, but the fish farming model tested is not sustainable for communities.

52. Eighty-four percent of the e-survey respondents considered that some benefits of the project can continue in the long term, while only 9 percent considered that the project results are not sustainable. The main existing risks for environmental sustainability derive from problems affecting the Zambebian landscape: deforestation; soil erosion; and uncontrolled wildfires. The sustainable natural resource management practices tested and introduced by the project contribute to minimizing these risks. The practice of beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation. Integrated fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities, even by the anti-fire brigades trained. This indicates good prospects for reducing uncontrolled wildfires. Conservation agriculture through agroforestry systems will still take some time to consolidate, but it is visible that communities have already understood and are applying techniques of direct seeding or planting, permanent soil cover, crop rotation or intercropping food and forest crops. These techniques are also important to increase the resilience of communities towards the impact of climate change, which continues to be a risk of environmental crises and shocks in the country. There is evidence that project beneficiaries will continue the beekeeping activity as it is being well appropriated and already generating income. However, the aquaculture model tested is not sustainable for the project beneficiaries because they will not be able to restock the fish ponds with alevins, nor will they be able to secure sufficient feed with locally available raw materials. The option

of buying industrial feed or even more alevins to repopulate the ponds is neither expected nor feasible due to their high price in local markets.

**Finding 20.** Prospects for financial sustainability through the 20 percent RSM are low. Opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in Zambezia Province are more promising.

53. The project strategy for financial sustainability was based on the assumption that the RSM would be improved, leading to a more regular channelling of financial resources to communities. Despite some advances in political and technical discussions, payments of the 20 percent to communities remain incipient. Out of the eight NRMCS visited, five had not received payments for more than four years and only three had received payments. For example, the community of Nadala (Mulevala District) received MZN 54 000 (approximately USD 850) in 2021. In 2019, however, the funds were used to buy basic materials and rebuild the school. The community of Ganga (Maganja da Costa District) received MZN 100 000 (approximately USD 1 500) in 2016, which was used to buy a grinding mill. In 2021, the community received USD 900, which it used to rehabilitate the road. Since then, they have never received more resources because the local forestry operator stopped paying for the licences. The NRMCS in the community of Mussaia (also in Maganja da Costa) was revitalized in 2016 but has not received any amount from the 20 percent RSM.
54. Furthermore, apart from the forestry sector, there are still no visible advances in other sectors (mining, tourism, energy), indicating increased revenues from fees or licences channelled to communities. However, as mentioned, important REDD+ programmes are underway in Zambezia Province that contemplate PES mechanisms. These are the cases, for example, of the benefit-sharing plan or the Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Local Communities Project. These programmes will continue beyond the end of this project. The beneficiary communities of the four target districts are more prepared to receive PES since they apply sustainable practices that also contribute to the reduction of emissions, namely through the reduction of deforestation and uncontrolled wildfires.

**Finding 21.** The prospects for social sustainability are more promising due to opportunities to improve project beneficiaries' livelihoods and institutional sustainability (central and decentralized level). However, institutional sustainability has not been sufficiently ensured, and the project does not have a defined exit strategy.

55. An interministerial group was established with support from the project, including representation from eight government sectors. However, the ad hoc nature of this group indicates that it is unlikely to maintain a regular meeting dynamic without external financial support. At the central level, particularly the National Directorate of Forest, there are still many organizational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication that need to be further strengthened. In addition, the high turnover of government staff and the low level of public budget allocation to the forest sector pose risks to institutional sustainability. At the level of project beneficiaries, it is possible to observe that livelihoods have improved. Activities such as beekeeping are already generating income, which is guaranteed by the purchase of honey by Agri-Mel. The same was observed regarding the savings and credit groups, which are operating with an increased volume of savings in almost all communities, as well as granting small credits (10 percent interest rate) to community members. However, this is an ad hoc, piecemeal approach: the project does not have an exit strategy, which would be important to not only consolidate results but

also leave a road map for public institutions and other stakeholders involved for defining the necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of the project after it ends.

56. Overall, the project's sustainability is assessed as moderately likely in that moderate risks were found. The main risks for environmental sustainability come from deforestation, soil erosion and uncontrolled wildfires that continue to affect the landscape of Zambezia. However, beekeeping has raised the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation, fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities and some agroforestry practices are being applied at the community level. The main risk for financial sustainability come from the fact the 20 percent revenue to the communities remains incipient. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in Zambezia Province to render more promising financial sustainability prospects. At the community level, opportunities were created to improve beneficiaries' livelihoods that reduce risks for social sustainability. However, there are still many organizational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication that need to be further strengthened at the level of the National Directorate of Forest. Further, the absence of a concrete exit strategy increases risks for institutional sustainability.

### 3.5 Factors affecting performance

#### 3.5.1 Project design and readiness

*Evaluation question 5.1a: How clear and coherent was the project design (including its causal logic/TOC) in addressing the needs of target groups and beneficiaries?*

**Finding 22.** The project's strategy is adequate in responding to the challenges that the country faces in promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems.

57. The project's strategy is adequate in responding to the challenges that the country faces in promoting biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems. Indeed, this is done through the improvement of the existing RSM and the introduction of PES to support the sustainable use and conservation of forests and better livelihoods. The project design is logical in the sense that it intends to improve the policy framework. It aims to do so by defining a common set of rules for investing in and establishing the provision of compensation for ecosystem services that involves different government sectors (Component 1). It seeks to strengthen the institutional capacity of stakeholders in charge of natural forest management, including the government (National Directorate of Forest, Ministry of Land and Environment) and decentralized government bodies, NGOs and local communities towards improving the RSM and introducing a PES element (Component 2). It seeks to assist the local communities in developing capacities and engaging in income generation activities that are in line with ecosystem conservation principles. This allows them to receive payments based on environmental performance (RSM) and the ecosystems services they bring PES (Component 3). The project's results chain provides a logical and coherent sequence of inputs – outputs – outcomes – impact in order to produce changes in institutions, local communities and the Zambezan landscape. However, while the project strategy is logical and coherent, the project's results hinge on the approval of laws and regulations under Component 1, especially the improvement of the current RSM and inclusion of PES, which ultimately determines the project's impact and its sustainability prospects.



*Evaluation question 5.1b: To what extent were the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed and context (political, institutional, social, etc.)?*

**Finding 23.** The initial project coverage was not realistic and the project assumed that the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised. This assumption proved deleterious to project results.

58. The project was initially designed to be implemented in seven districts of Zambezia Province. These were selected on the basis of the following technical criteria: i) existence of forest cover and biodiversity of global significance; ii) 20 percent RSM operational; iii) NRMC in place and operational; iv) existing NRMC willing to participate in forest conservation and related natural resource management activities; v) potential for synergies with other actor's initiatives, particularly the government's Zambezia Integrated Landscape Management Program. However, the number of districts was clearly overestimated as the project quickly realized financial resources would not be sufficient to cover them all. It is important to note that Zambezia Province is very large (more than 103 000 sq. km), which means that the distances between districts, within them and between communities are very long. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that the condition of the roads, particularly secondary and tertiary roads, is poor, requiring several hours to reach communities. In addition to the technical criteria, such practical factors should have been considered but were omitted in determining the project coverage. As a result, at midterm, it was concluded that covering seven districts was unrealistic and that the project should focus on only four.
59. In addition, the project had a central design flaw in that it assumed the strategy and related activities of Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised. In other words, Component 3 would begin only after the RSM had improved and included the PES element. In practice, this led to significant delays in starting Component 3 activities, including the mobilization and the testing of innovative sustainable forestry practices in the communities. This design and readiness problem was detected by the MTR and led to a review of the project strategy, including adjustments in its TOC. The recommendation was promptly accepted by the project in 2020 and contributed to speeding up Component 3 activities on the ground.
60. Overall, the project's design and readiness is assessed as moderately satisfactory in that, by design, it was assumed that the strategy and related activities under Component 3 would only start once the "20% Decree" was revised. This had hindered the project's readiness, leading to a review of the project strategy at midterm that helped to speed up Component 3 activities on the ground.

### **3.5.2 Monitoring and evaluation system**

*Evaluation question 5.7a: Was the M&E plan practical and sufficient? Did the M&E system operate as per the M&E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner using appropriate methodologies?*

**Finding 24.** The weaknesses detected at midterm were overcome by revising the logframe indicators and the TOC.

61. The original logframe template only included indicators for the project objective and outcomes, not the outputs. At midterm, it was found that there was not enough information to measure qualitative indicators due to the absence of custom criteria for their assessment. Following the MTR recommendations, the project revised the TOC

(reproduced in Section 2.1 of this report) and the results framework, which were cleared by the Lead Technical Officer and became effective in February 2021.

62. The revised logframe, annual work plans and budgets have been used by the project team for monitoring purposes. An M&E plan was prepared by the M&E Officer in which basic procedures and routines for collecting data, processing, analysing and storing information in a systematic way were defined. A rural rapid assessment was carried out in 2018 (Narandas, Cachomba, Buchili, and Huybrechts, 2018) by the project team to understand the pre-project situation of the identified CBNRM committees and the concerned communities. Further, a baseline study was carried out in 2019 (Zambezi University, 2019). The inception report was prepared following the inception workshop organized by FAO, together with the National Directorate of Forest in March 2019 (FAO, 2019c).

*Evaluation question 5.7b: Was the information from the M&E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?*

**Finding 25.** The M&E system and procedures are adequate, allowing for a correct follow up of activities, data collection and information on progress, reporting and analysis to support corrective measures.

63. Seventy-two percent of the e-survey respondents considered the project's M&E of good quality. The evaluation also found that the M&E system captures information that can: i) track project activities (training sessions, number of participants, meetings held, documentation-like reports, assessments, lists of beneficiaries in the different project components); and ii) track the achievement of results by reporting against outputs and outcome indicators. The M&E system is centrally managed from FAO Mozambique. The M&E Officer is experienced and dedicated. She is primarily responsible for these tasks, despite continued support as of project start from the Zambezia-based project facilitator. Since the second half of 2021, the Technical Officer recruited to support Component 3 has also participated in the monitoring visits. This improved the efficiency of the M&E system as visits to municipalities and communities, often very distant from each other, could be split among three individuals instead of being carried out by one. These monitoring visits by the project team to Zambezia were conducted on a quarterly basis, with the exception of 2020 when they were suspended due to COVID-19.
64. In terms of reporting, the main tools are the project progress reports (PPRs), prepared every six months, and the annual Programme Implementation Report (PIR), covering 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. The latter are also prepared with the Lead Technical Officer, the Budget Holder and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer who cleared the report. The reports have been submitted on time and provide adequate information to track the project's progress towards achieving the intended results and status on the implementation of activities. A results matrix is included in each report in which the progress (percentage) of each indicator is identified and accompanied by a narrative description or justification. Overall, it was found that the information provided allows for obtaining a general picture of progress on the ground. When necessary, corrective measures were also proposed in the PPRs and the PIR. It was found that the annual work plans have been systematically adjusted to respond to changes in the context. This way, the project's strategy can be adjusted accordingly, similar to the re-scheduling of activities during COVID-19. All reports were sent to the steering committee for accountability purposes and subsequent feedback and follow up to inform implementation. The Lead Technical Officer also conducted technical and monitoring missions to the Republic of Mozambique, including visits to

project sites in Zambezia. Back-to-office reports were prepared by the consultants and project staff for every mission, often including recommendations to adjust the intervention strategy and the content of some activities. An MTR of GCP/MOZ/117/GFF was conducted in 2020, and the implementation status of the recommendations was monitored by the project.

65. Overall, the project's M&E is assessed as highly satisfactory in that an M&E plan was prepared and included basic procedures and routines for collecting data, processing, analysing and storing information in a systematic way, as well as an adequate tracking of project activities and results. The overall quality of reporting is good. Quarterly monitoring visits were conducted, as well as monitoring missions by the Lead Technical Officer.

### **3.5.3 Quality of implementation and execution**

**Finding 26.** The project's operational arrangement was adequate to facilitate the decision-making process, but housing the PMU at FAO instead of the National Directorate of Forest limited project performance. Oversight from FAO was adequate and project staff interacted frequently with the Lead Technical Officer, but interaction with the GEF focal point in the Republic of Mozambique and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent.

66. On execution, the project's operational arrangement was adequate to support decision-making and facilitate the implementation of activities. The National Directorate of Forest was the government's counterpart for this project. It was responsible for ensuring coordination with other relevant initiatives in government sectors, both in Zambezia Province and at the national level. A Project Task Force was set up, comprising the Budget Holder, the Lead Technical Officer, the GEF Funding Liaison Officer and other relevant technical staff who were responsible for the coordination and daily management of activities. In terms of decision-making, a project steering committee was set up with representatives from various government bodies (Ministry of Land and Environment/National Directorate of Forest, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Protection Ministério do Género, Criança e Acção Social, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Ministério da Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Ocean Rivers and Fisheries Ministério do Mar, Águas Interiores e Pescas and the FNDS) and FAO Mozambique. Various bilateral and multilateral donors, such as the World Bank, the European Union, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the German Agency for International Cooperation also take part in the steering committee as observers.
67. The project design envisaged that the PMU would be located at the National Directorate of Forest as the project's national counterpart. During the first year, the technical adviser and other project consultants were based directly at the National Directorate of Forest. However, in 2020, the PMU moved to teleworking. The reasons given for this decision were the constraints caused by COVID-19, which limited face-to-face work. However, from the end of 2020 onwards, work routines in the ministries have progressively returned to normality. The PMU could have moved back to the National Directorate of Forest. This could have contributed to better project performance as it would have not only allowed for a more continuous discussion on progress and technical advances but also increased the efficiency of activities related to institutional capacity strengthening envisaged in Component 2.

68. On implementation, FAO provided: adequate oversight and supervision of the work plans and agreements established; technical and methodological guidance for project interventions; support in the preparation and review of progress reports; and adequate support to the administration of financial resources. This is visible from the analysis of the various progress reports (PPR and PIR), as well as the back-to-office reports of national and international consultants. The regular monitoring visits from the M&E team were also important to support implementation, whose reports also gave recommendations to various partners, namely local governments and NGOs who had signed LOAs with FAO. Oversight by FAO headquarters was appreciated by the project team. According to interviews, frequent interactions with the Lead Technical Officer were important to provide overall guidance on project implementation, the review of work plans, the terms of reference, progress reports and the quality of deliverables. However, from the interviews conducted, interaction with both the in-country GEF focal point and the GEF Funding Liaison Officer seem to have been less frequent, particularly in the first half of implementation. This was reflected, for example, in inadequate co-financing reporting, which was only corrected in the last year of implementation.
69. Overall, the project's implementation and execution are assessed as moderately satisfactory. The project's operational arrangements were adequate, particularly as a Project Task Force was set up to ensure overall project coordination and the daily management of activities. The project steering committee, which included representatives from various government bodies and bilateral and multilateral donors, adequately supported decision-making. However, the fact that the PMU did not return to the National Directorate of Forest when work routines in the ministries had progressively returned to normality from the end of 2020 onwards hindered project execution. In fact, this reduced the project's capacity to provide a more continuous support to institutional capacity strengthening activities.

### **3.5.4 Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing**

*Evaluation question 5.4a: To what extent were the financial processes adequate (timeliness and adequacy of resources)?*

**Finding 27.** Financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures. Disbursements of 100 percent and global financial execution of 93 percent against 92 percent of implementation time elapsed.

70. It was possible to observe that overall financial management complies with FAO rules and procedures, namely documentation, eligibility, allocation and the justification of expenses. This management is carried out by a Financial Officer, supervised by the FAO Representative in the Republic of Mozambique, as Budget Holder. The Field Programme Management Information System (FPMIS) is used to record expenses and for budget control according to FAO procedures. Financial management through Oracle and the FPMIS system can control expenses and track the total budget but cannot immediately understand where resources are being channelled vis-à-vis project components, activities, outputs and outcomes. Nevertheless, there is a continuous mapping of the expenses that allows the project team to know the resource allocation according to project components.
71. Funding availability has not affected project performance, and 58 percent of the e-survey respondents considered that financial resources allocated to the project were adequate. The total budget of the project is USD 3 637 748, fully financed by the GEF grant. Disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and, to date, have reached the full

amount of the planned funding. The cumulative disbursements were as follows: USD 825 000 (2019), USD 2 095 000 (2020), USD 2 534 935 (2021) and USD 3 637 749 (2022), corresponding to 100 percent. These payments allowed for smooth project implementation in terms of available financial resources.

72. Appendix 3 details the project's financial data, including a breakdown of project costs by project component and budget line. As of August 2022, the total financial execution rate was 93 percent, which is adequate as the project nears completion (92 percent implementation elapsed time). The training item has a very low execution rate (36 percent), which was due to the cancellation of capacity building activities within Component 2 due to restrictions posed by COVID-19. This limited the overall performance of Component 2. All other items have an adequate execution rate, considering the level of activities and deliverables that have been achieved so far, which are also aligned with the overall financial execution of each project component.
73. The annual financial execution was in line with the activity plan and budget defined each year. The remaining execution time and available financial resources are being used to close some activities (under Component 3 in particular) and conduct the endline survey, taking advantage of the approved three-month extension. However, as of September 2022, the LOA required to carry out the exercise had yet to be finalized.

*Evaluation question 5.4b: To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and how did the shortfall in co-financing affect project results?*

**Finding 28.** The co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated. However, the project reviewed the procedure and has been reporting more realistic and reasonable figures.

74. The total co-financing amount included in the GEF Chief Executive Officer endorsement was USD 37 600 00. However, throughout implementation, the annual PIR clearly overestimated the figures. For example, the 2019 and 2020 PIRs reported an actual, materialized co-financing amount of USD 49 200 000, which was already above the estimate at endorsement. But the 2021 PIR (available at the time of the field mission) reported a remarkable and actual, materialized co-financing amount of USD 139 600 000 and an expected total disbursement by the end of the project of USD 169 700 000. The Evaluation Team discussed and raised this concern during interviews with project staff and the Funding Liaison Officer. It was mentioned that the current procedure to report the co-financing is based on the information provided by the different partners, including the government, but mainly the World Bank through its ongoing REDD+ programmes in Zambezia Province that account for several millions of dollars. Overall, it was found that the project's rationale to report the co-financing assumed that the resources from those REDD+ programmes should be considered as co-financing because of their thematic relation and implicit synergies with the objectives of this project. However, and according to the GEF guidelines, co-financing means financing that is additional to the GEF grant that supports project implementation and for which supporting evidence should be provided. Indeed, the project was designed as part of the REDD+ programme and related to it. However, it is unreasonable to assume that all resources available in the REDD+ programme are in fact being (directly or indirectly) channelled to support its activities as the co-financed report suggests. Therefore, the utility of the materialized co-financing is limited because: i) at the local level, this project has direct intervention in only four municipalities of Zambezia Province, while the REDD+ programmes cover the entire

province; ii) opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been limited (see Finding 15); and iii) apart from the forestry sector, there are still no visible advances in other sectors (mining, tourism, energy), indicating increased revenues from fees or licences channelled to communities (see Finding 21). Nonetheless, it is clear from the analysis of the latest 2022 PIR (made available in August 2022) that the project reviewed the procedure since the current co-financing amount reported is USD 33 100 000. This is considered reasonable and far below the previous USD 139 600 000. The co-financing data provided by project staff is detailed in Appendix 4 of this report.

75. Overall, the project's implementation and execution are assessed as satisfactory. Funding availability has not affected project performance. Disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and, as of August 2022, the total financial execution rate was 93 percent. This is adequate as the project has reached 92 percent implementation elapsed time. However, the co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated as, in 2021, the project reported a remarkable actual, materialized co-financing amount of USD 139 600 000 and an expected total disbursement by project closure of USD 169 700 000 against USD 37 600 00 anticipated at endorsement. In 2022, the project reviewed the procedure and has now been reporting more realistic and reasonable figures.

### **3.5.5 Project/programme partnerships and stakeholder engagement (including the degree of ownership of project/programme results by stakeholders)**

*Evaluation question 5.5a: Were other actors, such as civil society, Indigenous Peoples or the private sector, involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results?*

**Finding 29.** The project concept and design were subject to extensive consultations and discussions with relevant government partners and national stakeholders.

76. The first national workshop was held in Maputo in 2015. Forty people from government agencies, civil society, and bilateral and multilateral donors attended. FAO carried out three field missions to Zambezia Province in 2015 for project preparation. In the first mission, Pebane, Maganja da Costa, Gile, Alto Molocue and Ile Districts were visited to explain the objective of the project and gather stakeholder ideas for project design. The mission met with the provincial governor, district administrators, the Zambezia Network for Environment and Sustainable Community Development, the Mozambican timber producers' association and NRMC members. In the second mission, the Maganja da Costa and Mocubela Districts were visited to discuss the functioning of the existing forestry and wildlife RSM in more detail. The third mission focused on the various sector funds and RSMs (agriculture, energy, fisheries, mining, tourism) to find out more on what they were doing and to gauge their interest in investing in ecosystem management and restoration, as well as PES. A final multistakeholder consultation workshop was held in Zambezia Province, also in 2015, to share the conclusions of the project preparation phase with about 50 stakeholders. The views and opinions of the different stakeholders were heard and considered during project design, namely: i) invest in the creation or revitalization of community-level NRMC in the project areas; ii) integrate PES in the government forestry and wildlife RSM; iii) improve the transparency of how the 20 percent forest tax revenue share is calculated and disbursed; and iv) ensure that the project complements existing initiatives, thereby creating synergies and avoiding duplication.

*Evaluation question 5.b: What were the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?*

**Finding 30.** Partnerships were established with a wide range of stakeholders, including the high engagement of local authorities and fruitful collaboration with the private sector (in the case of beekeeping).

77. Partnerships with both the central and provincial government and civil society were rated by e-survey respondents as "good" – and "excellent" in the case of partnerships with district governments. The project managed to establish partnerships with different government sectors, including: the Ministry of Land and Environment; the Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs; the Ministry of Economy and Finance; the National Directorate for Environment; the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy; the Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries; the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action; and the FNDS, particularly for discussions under Component 1. Along with the World Bank, these stakeholders also took part in the project's steering committee. This increased their ownership of the project strategy as they participated in the decision-making process. At the decentralized level the project managed to engage with the Provincial Directorate of Land and Environment and the Provincial Service of Environment, which were responsible for providing technical insights and follow up in terms of the implementation of field activities in the four target districts. The project established partnerships with service providers (Agri-Mel, UATAF, ICEI, ITC-F) to test and introduce innovative approaches with local communities – all of them with strong technical expertise and good capacity for community mobilization (see Section 3.2). In what relates to academia, the project established a partnership with Zambezi University to conduct research and socioeconomic studies, as well as the project's baseline and endline (the latter is ongoing). A partnership was established with the CBNRM network to provide a training on natural resources management for government staff and NGOs. However, the partnership with the Platform for the Integrated Development of Zambezia was rather unsuccessful since the two biannual meetings did not take place as planned due to COVID-19.
78. In general, the local authorities engaged well under Component 3. This was a direct result of the strategy of signing LOAs with the district governments. The signing of direct LOAs with these stakeholders acted as an incentive for them to take responsibility in continuing the work at the community level. This incentive also provided them with a small amount of working capital (USD 5 000/year) that is being used to purchase basic equipment and consumables (printers, software, toners, fuel for technicians' travel) that they would otherwise find difficult to acquire. In practice, this option also unexpectedly contributed to strengthening the institutional capacities of district governments since it was not deliberately implemented under Component 2.
79. In terms of the private sector, the excellent partnership with Agri-Mel on beekeeping is underscored. This company was found to have a high degree of commitment to the beekeeping promotion strategy. This includes ensuring the purchase of honey from the communities as it is aligned with their business model. Two findings prove this success: i) continued support from this service provider beyond the end of the LOA with FAO; and ii) the service provider will open a new "honey house" in Alto Molocue that will function as a hub to support this value chain in the region.

*Evaluation question 5.5c: Have all stakeholders been made aware of the environmental and social safeguards (ESS) plan and the grievance complaint mechanism?*

80. The project developed an ESS mitigation plan. The key environmental risks come from climate change impacts on Miombo forest ecosystems. These risks were mitigated by introducing improved sustainable forest practices and by strengthening communities' capacities to cope with climate shocks. The key social risk in this project was "leakage".<sup>9</sup> The project actively mitigated this risk. In fact, it did not aim to displace local communities engaged in destructive forest use. Rather, it helped them to engage in the sustainable use of natural resources. However, the evaluation found no evidence on a specific awareness by local communities or other stakeholders on the ESS plan. The monitoring visits carried out by project staff did not report any critical complaint, and the project did not set up a specific grievance complaint mechanism. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the FNDS has a specific grievance complaint mechanism in place for all REDD+ projects underway in the Zambebian landscape. This mechanism could have been used by the project (Government of Mozambique, 2018).
81. Overall, the project's partnerships and stakeholder engagement are assessed as highly satisfactory. The project managed to establish partnerships with different government sectors on the steering committee. This contributed to greater ownership of the project's strategy by participating in decision-making processes. Partnerships with service providers prove to be adequate as they have shown strong technical expertise and good capacity for community mobilization. The strategy of signing LOAs with the district governments increased ownership and enabled them to take more responsibility in continuing the work at the community level. A specific private sector partnership through Agri-Mel proved particularly successful since this company even ensured honey purchases from the communities. In fact, it supported the entire honey value chain.

### **3.5.6 Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products**

*Evaluation question 5.6a: How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences? / Evaluation question 5.6b: To what extent are the communications products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?*

**Finding 31.** The flaws detected in terms of communications and knowledge management at midterm were overcome, and an appropriate communications and visibility strategy towards internal and external stakeholders was put in place. A strategy for collecting and disseminating lessons learned has been implemented, which can also be useful to support the scaling up of project results.

82. At midterm, the project was neither supported by a specific communications and visibility plan to promote its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and a general audience, nor by a knowledge management mechanism aimed at assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences. FAO and the GEF acknowledge that communication is essential for project effectiveness and sustainability and that communication for development activities should be planned from the beginning to ensure stakeholder engagement, access to relevant information and ownership (FAO, 2023). A comprehensive communications strategy should therefore be designed to effectively

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<sup>9</sup> As stated in the project document, the "leakage" term gained credence in the REDD+ debate and indicates the displacement of destructive forest use activities from the project area to other areas without a net positive environmental benefit at the larger scale. This is inherent in any forest conservation intervention implemented at the subnational level.



promote participation, dialogue and improve the visibility of project results. The project document states that information should be shared on a transparent and continuous basis.

83. The evaluation found that in the second half of implementation, following the midterm review and its recommendations, communications and visibility procedures had been adequately applied. A communications and visibility plan focusing on the different project components was developed. This allowed for the definition of: i) key messages for the project to focus on; ii) the project's target audience; and iii) the means to get such communications to national-, provincial- and community-level stakeholders. Seventy percent of the e-survey respondents rated the quality of the communications strategy as "good".
84. The communications dimension, both external and internal, is critical in this project since many interventions consist of pilot initiatives through which to test methodologies, new procedures, approaches and best practices, particularly with local communities. In addition, this project also aims to strengthen institutional capacities and promote changes in laws and regulations towards SFM. The project adequately managed to communicate its objectives, strategy and approach with external stakeholders, both at the national (ministries, cooperation agencies, donors, the private sector) and local level, namely with organizations that support communities (local associations, NGOs, multistakeholders platforms, provincial and district administrations, local public services). The project also managed to share its progress and results with internal stakeholders, particularly through the project steering committee. Communications with different stakeholders was achieved through the reporting system (work plans, progress reports, technical reports).
85. In terms of knowledge management and visibility, the evaluation found that the project's documentation (reports, assessments, studies, technical notes) include FAO's identification and proper reference, including the respective logos, to the GEF as donor. In particular, from the second half onwards, the project developed several materials that facilitated the communication and visibility of its actions on the ground and their results. The project has adequately systematized and documented its results, lessons learned and success stories. Several materials were produced by the project (manuals, technical reports, infographics, videos, newsletters, stories from the field), which have been useful in disseminating the project's experience both in-country and abroad (see Appendix 8). Such materials can be useful to not only enhance project visibility but also support the scaling up of project results. For example, they can function as reference materials with concrete examples and lessons learned so that future projects implemented by FAO, NGOs and the government itself can capitalize on and scale up the results achieved with these practices at the community level. Seventy-four percent of the e-survey respondents rated the quality of the knowledge management strategy as "good".
86. Overall, the project's communications and knowledge management is assessed as satisfactory. The project managed to produce and deliver various communications and visibility materials that contribute to disseminating key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and the general audience. Several knowledge materials were produced by the project (manuals, technical reports, infographics, videos, newsletters), which have been useful to disseminate lessons learned and can also be useful to support the scaling up of project results.

## 3.6 Progress towards impact

*Evaluation question 8.1: How is the likelihood of impact in terms of substantive contribution to broad changes, and what can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impact from the project? / Evaluation question 8.2: Is there any evidence of environmental stress reduction (e.g. in direct threats to biodiversity) or environmental status change (such as an improvement in the populations of target species), reflecting global environmental benefits or any change in policy, legal or regulatory frameworks?*

**Finding 32.** The project has made contributions that can lead to broad changes in policies, laws and legislation. It has also succeeded in promoting sustainable practices at the community level that have the potential to reduce environmental stress.

87. Although the Forestry Law – which will contemplate improved mechanisms for the RSM and PES – has not been approved yet, the likelihood of long-term impact from this project with respect to the enabling environment is promising. The project has contributed to political discussions towards changing the legal and regulatory framework for the RSM. The inclusion of PES and concrete proposals (technical and legal) have been delivered to the National Directorate of Forest and are under consideration by the government (see Finding 5). Evidence in this direction also derives from the fact that several sectors of the government are already involved in this discussion, whereas, at the beginning of the project, this was mainly linked to the forestry and environmental sector (see Finding 8). The main risks for this substantive contribution in the medium and long term are related to the lack of political will from the government, which is unlikely as the government has been affirming its commitment to REDD+ and seen the benefit of several initiatives in the country in this area. The likelihood of long-term impact for these broad changes in policy and legislation is promising because of the improved knowledge and understanding on the PES concept generated by the project (see Finding 11). However, weak performance in terms of institutional strengthening may be a risk in ensuring that the National Directorate of Forest has effective capacities to put these mechanisms into practice when approved (see Finding 12).
88. The impact on reducing environmental stress is visible at the community level. The practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation and using integrated (and controlled) fire management. Positive environmental impact is also likely to be seen in the long term through the adoption of beekeeping practices and agroforestry systems, which contribute to the preservation of forest ecosystems (see Findings 13 and 14).

## 3.7 Cross-cutting issues

### 3.7.1 Gender

*Evaluation question 7.1a: To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? / Evaluation question 7.1b: Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?*

**Finding 33.** The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation.

89. The project document included a sound gender analysis, identifying the main barriers and problems that affect women. It highlighted that women are vital stakeholders in managing and using forest resources through their subsistence and economic activities. However,

they are often marginalized in decision-making by the NRMC. A gender assessment was conducted in May 2019 (FAO, 2019a) in order to identify the challenges, risks and opportunities, and provide recommendations towards gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the project. Subsequently, a specific gender strategy was developed in October 2019 (FAO, 2019b), defining concrete actions and steps to incorporate gender dimensions in all project components. The project also appointed several women to support its activities, both as technical staff (Zambezia provincial facilitator and M&E Officer), as well as service providers who developed activities in the communities. This was important to facilitate the interaction between women, bringing them together as beneficiaries.

90. Under Component 1, the Ministry of Gender and Social Affairs has participated in the interministerial working group to discuss the inclusion of PES. Nevertheless, the expected "gender rules" were not defined by the time of evaluation. In fact, they should be discussed with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES (currently being finalized). Under Component 3, the methodology applied for community governance promotes gender equality. During the visits to communities and focus group discussions with beneficiaries, it was possible to observe that equal access for women to participate in activities has been promoted and their role in the management of NRMC has been encouraged. For example, women's participation in the NRMC governing bodies is high, reaching almost half in the majority of them.<sup>10</sup> In some cases, such as the savings and credit groups, women are in fact leading pilot initiatives introduced by the project. During the evaluation's visits, it was shown that women had been included in the fire control brigades – even though this, traditionally, would have been considered a male task. Finally, the awareness raising activities on nutrition developed by the project had women as a priority target group. Overall, 51 percent of project beneficiaries reached under Component 3 are women. In sum, the project is consistent with the GEF policy on gender mainstreaming and fully aligned with the FAO gender policy (FAO, 2020a) since the specific needs and roles of both women and men were addressed. The majority of the e-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to address gender concerns as "excellent" (40 percent) or "good" (40 percent).

### **3.7.2 Minority groups, including Indigenous Peoples, disadvantaged, vulnerable and people with disabilities, and youth**

**Finding 34.** A sound participatory approach was applied throughout implementation, including prior consultations with project beneficiaries.

91. The term "Indigenous Peoples" is not applicable in the Republic of Mozambique, but the project developed a sound participatory approach by conducting a thorough consultation at the design stage. This includes visits to target districts and discussions with local authorities regarding beneficiaries' needs. Throughout implementation, the NRMC and beneficiary communities were consulted by project staff regarding their needs and priorities. The project's planned activities were explained to foster motivation and engagement. The majority of the e-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to work with vulnerable and minority groups as "good" (46 percent) or "excellent" (25 percent). The evaluation found no evidence of specific focus on some disadvantaged groups, such as

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<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, there is no baseline value to compare this figure.

youth or people with disabilities, which could also have been targeted through the activities at the community level, thus increasing the project's contribution to social inclusion.

### **3.7.3 Environmental and social safeguards**

*Evaluation question 6.1a: To what extent were ESS taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?*

*Evaluation question 6.1b: Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS mitigation plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?*

**Finding 34.** The project's strategy adequately focuses on ESS by including communities in SFM models.

92. The project's ESS risk was initially assessed as low and remained so throughout implementation. No evident environmental or social threats related to project activities were found by the evaluation. On the contrary, the major threats are those that the project is trying to overcome, such as deforestation and forest degradation caused by shifting cultivation and unsustainable timber and charcoal exploitation, as well as uncontrolled forest fires. These threats reduce the availability of forest ecosystem services to rural communities. The project does not pose risks, which means that the potential environmental and social impacts do not significantly affect populations or ecologically sensitive areas. The majority of the e-survey respondents rated the project's strategy to address environmental concerns as "excellent" (56 percent) or "good" (35 percent). Although the risk matrix identifies risks related to climate change, they only refer to increased fire frequency and less rainfall. Inherent risks related to extreme weather events, especially cyclones, were not identified. This could have enriched the risk matrix and the ESS mitigation plan, considering that the Republic of Mozambique is one of the world's most prone countries to such risks, as seen throughout implementation.
93. Overall, the cross-cutting issues are assessed as highly satisfactory. The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation since a sound gender analysis was included in the project design, a gender assessment was conducted right from the start and a gender strategy was developed and put into practice throughout implementation. On social inclusion and the rights of minorities, a focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included. Regardless, beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project's strategy adequately focused on ESS.



## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1** (Relevance). The project was relevant as it responded to the national priorities for SFM and addressed the needs of beneficiary communities. The project contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 15 (Life on Land), and is congruent with the GEF-5 Focal Area Strategy and FAO's CPF by enhancing communities' capacities to implement good practices on the sustainable management of natural resources and the environment. The project is well aligned with government priorities, as stated in the main policy instruments as national goals: the Five-Year Plan (2020–2024) and the National Development Strategy (2015–2035). The project's strategy responded to the country's needs in that it promoted an enabling environment for SFM. However, a conditional approach to implementation posed challenges. By design, the start of Component 3 was dependent on the approval of legislation under Component 1. After the midterm, the project's strategy and its planned activities became more integrated, rather than sequential.

**Conclusion 2** (Effectiveness, Outcome 1). The project managed to identify gaps in the current "20% Decree" regarding the RSM and the integration of PES in the new Forestry Law. The interministerial working group was successfully created with eight different government sectors engaged in policy dialogue and technical discussions. However, the draft document to guide the sectors on the PES "rules of the game" was delivered to the National Directorate of Forest but has yet to be officially approved. Similarly, the new Forestry Law that envisages the inclusion of PES has not been approved and payments to communities remain incipient and irregular. In fact, of the eight NRMCs visited, five had not received payments for more than four years and only three had received payments in 2021.

**Conclusion 3** (Effectiveness, Outcome 2). Project achievements in terms of human capacity strengthening are very modest. Some progress was achieved towards better understanding the PES concept by decision-makers from different government staff across sectors – beyond forest and environment. However, trainings only reached a few national government and civil society representatives, hindering the capacity building envisaged and undertaken by the project. Regarding the institutional strengthening dimension, no sound progress was achieved, for example, through improved tools and systems for analysis or diagnosis, planning, budgeting, resource mobilization, communication, M&E and equipment.

**Conclusion 4** (Effectiveness, Outcome 3). The project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices so that beneficiaries can access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods in terms of income generation, credit access and food consumption. The choice of service providers was appropriate as they revealed the necessary experience and expertise to support the beneficiary communities. On beekeeping, beneficiaries were unanimous in considering it profitable. The anti-fire brigades are active and these groups have been responsible for not only fire prevention but also raising awareness among other community members about the need to prevent uncontrolled fires. The savings and credit groups have started to show a good level of organization as the volume of savings and small credits granted have increased. However, agroforestry practices will require years before their real benefits in the ecosystem and production systems can be observed. In the case of pisciculture, there is no evidence of great success since communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the required amount of feed for the fish ponds, as recommended by the project, and no significant amount of fish was found in the fish ponds visited. The project also strengthened the community governance's systems for natural resources management – especially by bolstering the NRMC.

However, opportunities created for PES under the REDD+ programmes have been very limited. On a more positive note, the project managed to deliver a range of communications and reporting materials (see Appendix 8), as well as systematize and disseminate testimonies from the field and lessons learned.

**Conclusion 5** (Efficiency). A number of external factors, such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, general elections and COVID-19, affected the project and compromised its efficiency. As a result, various activities were cancelled or postponed, particularly under Components 2 and 3. The project planned to support seven districts but ended up reducing activities to only four districts due to budget constraints identified at midterm. At that time, the project team realized that work with the communities needed to be accelerated. Nevertheless, the delay in Component 3 hindered project efficiency since its activities would have benefited from starting at the very beginning of the project. More time would have been available to implement and consolidate community work. Overall, the project's cost-effectiveness is very low considering that USD 1.8 million was spent on salaries and consultants for a project with USD 3.6 million. This is particularly true of Component 2 where only modest results were achieved, as well as Component 3. Over USD 1.3 million has been spent to support just over 2 000 people through sustainable natural resource management practices.

**Conclusion 6** (Sustainability). The main risks for environmental sustainability come from deforestation, soil erosion and uncontrolled wildfires that continue to affect the Zambebian landscape. However, beekeeping has increased the communities' awareness of biodiversity preservation, fire management techniques have been disseminated in the communities and some agroforestry practices are being applied at the community level. The main risk for financial sustainability comes from the fact the 20 percent revenue to the communities remain incipient. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for PES through the ongoing REDD+ programmes in Zambezia Province, making financial sustainability prospects more promising. At the community level, opportunities were created to improve beneficiaries' livelihoods. There are, however, still many organizational gaps in terms of planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication. These aspects need to be further strengthened at the level of the National Directorate of Forest, and the absence of a concrete exit strategy increases risks for institutional sustainability.

**Conclusion 7** (Factors affecting performance). The design and readiness problems due to the internal, conditional logic that had prevented the simultaneous start of the various components led to a review of the project's strategy at midterm. This then contributed to the acceleration of Component 3 activities on the ground. The overall quality of reporting is good. Quarterly monitoring visits by project staff and regular missions by the Lead Technical Officer have been conducted as planned. The project's operational arrangements were adequate, particularly as a Project Task Force was set up to ensure overall project coordination and the daily management of activities. However, the fact that the PMU had not returned to the National Directorate of Forest after 2020 hindered project execution. In fact, it reduced the project's capacity to provide more continuous support to activities related to institutional capacity strengthening. Funding availability has not affected project performance, disbursements of the GEF grant were made on time and, as of August 2022, the total financial execution rate was 93 percent. This is adequate as the project has reached 92 percent implementation elapsed time. The co-financing reported throughout implementation was clearly overestimated. However, the project reviewed the procedure and ended up reporting more realistic figures. Partnerships with service providers prove to be adequate, and a specific partnership with the private sector through Agri-Mel has been successful as this company even ensures the purchase of honey from the communities. The strategy of signing LOAs with the district governments increased ownership. The project managed to produce and deliver various communications and visibility materials. This contributed to disseminating key messages, results and lessons learned to partners, stakeholders and general audiences.

**Conclusion 8** (Progress towards impact). Political discussions and concrete proposals (technical and legal) delivered to the National Directorate of Forest can lead to broad changes in the enabling environment towards changing the legal and regulatory framework for the RSM and the inclusion of PES. The practices adopted by communities are more sustainable and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, such as reducing deforestation and using integrated (and controlled) fire management, thus contributing to reducing environmental stress.

**Conclusion 9** (Cross-cutting issues). The project made strong efforts to integrate gender considerations in its design and implementation since a sound gender analysis was included in the project design, a gender assessment was conducted upon project launch and a gender strategy was developed and put into practice throughout implementation. Although a specific focus on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups was not included, the beneficiary communities were extensively consulted regarding their needs. The project's strategy adequately focuses on ESS.

## 4.2 Recommendations

94. This evaluation took place very close to the expected project closure. As a result, it was not possible to make constructive recommendations that could be implemented in a timely manner. Some recommendations were converted into possible lessons learned, which may be useful for future projects (see Section 5).

**Recommendation 1.** To FAO, the National Directorate of Forest and the FNDS: identify and map the most outstanding communities and NRMCS in terms of results achieved. Flag them to FNDS as potential eligible candidates to apply for grants under the ongoing REDD+ programmes.

95. Currently, there are numerous funding opportunities in the Zambezi landscape to support small community projects that can actually be considered as payments for ecosystem services. In this sense, it would be important to identify and map, by project closure, the communities with great potential or whose NRMCS are better organized. These can then be flagged to the FNDS as potential candidates in the frame of the REDD+ initiatives. This is key since communities have little access to information. In fact, this could further support and strengthen the results achieved by the project in certain communities.

**Recommendation 2.** To FAO and the local authorities: with the district authorities, prepare an exit plan for the four districts that benefit from the project. This is to ensure that communities supported by the project continue to benefit from minimum technical follow up and that the investment and effort applied is not lost.

96. The four district governments involved in this project showed a strong degree of commitment and engagement. It is important to prepare an exit plan that identifies key tasks and responsibilities that these institutions could develop to continue supporting beneficiary communities. This should be done together with the district governments, especially the administrators and technical services (SDAE) so that the exit plans are realistic, adjusted to their real capacities and ensure ownership of the plan.

**Recommendation 3.** To FAO: systematize the approach, experience and good results achieved with the practices of the beekeeping and savings and credit groups to reinforce the project's learning dimension.

97. The project achieved good results in terms of systematization and the dissemination of lessons learned. However, considering the good results achieved within the beekeeping and savings and credit group activities, more detailed documentation of the practices are required. This can be done using appealing formats and materials with a didactic purpose



in order to serve as inspiration for future projects – either implemented by FAO or national NGOs. This would also help to increase the replication potential of the tested models, as well as give more visibility to the results achieved.

## 5. Lessons learned

**Lesson 1.** Working with communities requires constant presence on the ground. In this project, most of the technical staff were based at FAO Mozambique, in the capital, Maputo. Only one provincial facilitator was permanently based in Zambezia Province, where activities with communities were developed. The project's strategy was also to work with local service providers (mostly NGOs) that had local technicians in the field. These, however, are contracted by the project through LOAs, so their work must also be closely tracked by project staff. Technical or administrative problems often arise. These are difficult to be solved remotely, as it happened in this project. In this sense, future projects that include direct work with communities must provide adequate resources (human and financial) to deploy staff in the locations where activities will be developed. This would allow for a more responsive technical assistance, follow up and monitoring for both the beneficiary communities and the service providers contracted through projects.

**Lesson 2.** Partnerships with the private sector contribute to greater effectiveness and increase prospects for sustainability in working with local communities. The inclusion of direct partnerships with the private sector is not common practice in most projects, as the preference is usually to work with NGOs. In the case of this project, there was a direct partnership with the private sector through Agri-Mel, which was contracted as a service provider to support beekeeping activities. The project's experience showed very positive results with this partnership, as the company guaranteed the purchase of honey from the communities and provided continuous technical assistance – even after the end of its contract. The main goal of the private sector is to generate profit, and these actors will not partner with anyone unless they expect that their action will add value to their business and will deliver and play their expected part to ensure said value is generated. Thus, future projects involving income generation activities with communities should, when possible, include stronger partnerships with the private sector partly to ensure the success of the activity and partly to provide a built-in exit strategy and sustainability plan for such activities.

**Lesson 3.** Signing LOAs with the government, including the allocation of a small package of financial resources, significantly contributes to a greater engagement, commitment and ownership by the public institutions. In general, GEF-financed projects typically do not allow the signing of LOAs for the direct transfer of resources to government institutions. However, for this project, this was done with the district governments in the four target regions of the project. Although the amount of these LOAs was low (about USD 5 000), this contributed to a greater commitment and engagement of local authorities. Based on this experience, it would be desirable for future GEF-funded projects to replicate this example, not only at the district level but also the central level, as a way of increasing engagement and ownership by government authorities.

**Lesson 4.** The absence of the institutional and organizational strengthening dimension hinders the effectiveness of capacity building strategies towards government institutions. Most projects that include an institutional strengthening dimension often limit their activities to provide training to government staff. This strategy contributes to strengthening human capital. However, it is important to bear in mind that public institutions staff participate in numerous training sessions throughout the year as all projects include such activities. Further, beyond individual training, public institutions need to strengthen their organizational capacities, namely in terms of strategic planning, budgeting, monitoring and communication. They also need to be adequately equipped to fulfil their mandates, which is a concept known as organizational readiness. In the case of this project, this institutional and organizational strengthening dimension was weak. Indeed, this limited the effectiveness of the expected results.

**Lesson 5.** The start of community intervention components cannot depend on the results of project components focused on improving legal frameworks. The design and initial intervention logic of this project posited that the community work would only start after the revision of the existent legal and regulatory framework took place. However, legal and regulatory changes always depend on external factors, such as the political will or political opportunity to approve such revisions. This project had significant delays in the community work component, as it was awaiting the results of the legal and regulatory revision and eventual approval. When the project decided to speed up the community work, even without the new legal framework approval, the time available for implementation was no longer sufficient to consolidate results. Therefore, it is desirable that future projects move forward with activities at the community level without depending on the approval of laws or regulations, as envisaged in other components of the project.

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## Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Abdul	Renato	Technician	SDAE, Mulevala
Afonso	Claudio	National Director and GEF Focal Point, Mozambique	National Directorate of Forest
Alfredo	João	SDAE	SDAE, Maganja da Costa
Bastique	Tomás	REDD+ Coordinator, Zambezia Province	FNDS
Benate	Amílcar	Project Officer	ITC-F
Boscolo	Marco	Lead Technical Officer	FAO
Caetano	Domingos	Technician	SEDAE, Gile
Calisto	Marta	Chief of Locality	Mulevala District Service
Camase	Azarias	Technician	SEDAE, Alto Molocue
Cambenbe	Ivone	Director	SEDAE, Gile
Candua	Arsénio	Director	SEDAE, Alto Molocue
Coelho da Silva	Hernâni	FAO Representative	FAO Mozambique
Cônsul	Raquel	Community Management Technician	National Directorate of Forest
Cruz	Regina	Programme Coordinator	FNDS
Cuambe	Julião	Head of Department	National Directorate of Forest
Cuambe	Carla	Programme Officer	FAO Mozambique
Cuambe	Oraca	Natural Resources Management Specialist	ANAC
Dinis	Ariane	Financial Officer	FAO Mozambique
Eliseu	Arminda	Head of Aquaculture Department	Provincial Government of Zambezia
Ferro	Giacomo	International Consultant	FAO Mozambique
Fotia	Giovanna	Country Representative	ICEI
Francisco	Minoso	Community Facilitator	SEDAE, Mulevala
Jaime	Amílcar	Technician	SDAE, Maganja da Costa
Joaquim	Isidro	Executive Director	UATAF
Junior	Rogério	Communication Officer	FAO Mozambique
Lidia	Guilhermina	District Administrator	Mulevala District
Locheremue	Venancio	Technical Coordinator	ICEI
Luís	Tongai	Supervisor	ITC-F
Machel	João	Project Coordinator	Provincial Government of Zambezia
Mapanda	Walter	Technical Adviser	FAO Mozambique

Last name	First name	Position	Organization/location
Matusse	Félix	Head of Department	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Action
Mingas	Regina	Local Staff	Ministry of Land and Environment, National Directorate of Environment
Morebotsane	Kuena	Funding Liaison Officer	FAO-GEF Coordination Unit
Muqueio	Gelito	Local Staff	Ministry of Land and Environment, National Directorate of Environment
Narandas	Ângela	Provincial Facilitator	FAO Mozambique
Nube	Teresa	Natural Resources Management Specialist	CESC
Pereira	Pedro	Natural Resources Management Specialist	ANAC
Pereira	Claudia	FAO Assistant Representative	
Serra	António	Landscape Manager	WWF Mozambique
Sitoe	Isabel	Monitoring Officer	FAO Mozambique
Taquidir	Muino	PES National Consultant	FAO Mozambique
Van der Merwe	Heinrich	Director	Agri-Mel
Zimba	Álvaro	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Action

### Focus group discussions held

District	NRMC/community
Alto Molocue	NRMC/Community Rugula (12 men / 9 women)
Alto Molocue	NRMC/Community Namahala (7 men / 8 women)
Gile	NRMC/Community Teniua (10 men / 15 women)
Gile	NRMC/Community Nrule (12 men / 13 women)
Gile	NRMC/Community Nanepa (23 men / 13 women)
Mulevala	NRMC/Community Jajo (19 men / 11 women)
Mulevala	NRMC/Community Nadala (24 men / 11 women)
Maganja da Costa	NRMC/Community Ganja (11 men / 5 women)
Maganja da Costa	NRMC/Community Mussaia (6 men / 14 women)
<b>Total</b>	124 beneficiaries (80 percent women)

## Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
<b>1. Relevance</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 1.1:</b> Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational programme strategies, country priorities and FAO CPF?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Degree of alignment of project’s strategy and country priorities (i.e. national policies and strategies)</li> <li>▪ Level of alignment between project’s strategy and FAO-GEF strategic objectives and programming frameworks</li> <li>▪ Quality of the problem analysis (including gender assessment) and coherence in addressing country priorities and beneficiary needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ E-survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ FAO CPF</li> <li>▪ National policies, strategies and programmes</li> <li>▪ FAO and GEF policies</li> <li>▪ Government departments at the central and provincial level and other relevant stakeholders, FAO-GEF staff (Mozambique and headquarters)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation question 1.2:</b> Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes? Were the project’s strategy and planned actions relevant and adequate to meet the needs of the beneficiaries and all of the involved stakeholders?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of participation and involvement of government stakeholders in the project design</li> <li>▪ Level of adequacy of the project’s strategy and actions to the priorities, needs and capacities of the various stakeholders involved at national, provincial, local and community levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ E-survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Baseline study</li> <li>▪ Government departments at the central and provincial level and other stakeholders, FAO-GEF staff (Mozambique and headquarters)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation question 1.3:</b> Has there been any change in the relevance of the project since its design, such as new national policies, plans or programmes that affect the relevance of the project’s objectives and goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which project implementation was based on proper risk assessment and consistent adjustments to adapt to evolving country needs, political and institutional changes (elections and turnover of government officials), climate crises (droughts, Cyclones Idai and Kenneth), humanitarian crises (evolving conflict situation in the north) and sanitary crises (COVID-19)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ E-survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ National policies, strategies and programmes</li> <li>▪ Government departments at the central and provincial level and other stakeholders, FAO-GEF staff (Mozambique and headquarters)</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
<b>2. Effectiveness</b>			
<p><b>Delivery of outputs</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 2.1:</b> How effectively has the project delivered on its expected outputs in terms of their quality, quantity and timeliness (against milestones)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of the project's success in delivering the planned outputs against initial planning</li> <li>▪ Number of training sessions conducted (with details on the subject and the duration), number of participants (disaggregated by gender) and level of satisfaction regarding the training and materials received</li> <li>▪ Type/number of studies conducted (i.e. assessments, analysis, diagnosis, etc.), their pertinence and quality vis-à-vis the expected outputs and outcomes</li> <li>▪ Number (and quality) of sectoral and intersectoral policies and/or regulatory frameworks revised with project support</li> <li>▪ Stakeholder perceptions regarding the quality of outputs delivered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports)</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system and databases</li> <li>▪ Baseline study</li> <li>▪ Mission and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<p><b>Effectiveness by outcome</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 2.2:</b> How effective was the project in achieving its intended outcomes?</p>	<p><u>Evidence of the project's contribution to Outcome 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which the national RSM and the integrated PES have improved</li> </ul> <p><u>Evidence of the project's contribution to Outcome 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement the improved RSM have been enhanced</li> <li>▪ Assessment of institutional capacity of the Ministry of Land and Environment, which is responsible for the management of natural forests, as well as decentralized government</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports)</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> <li>▪ GEF tracking tool</li> <li>▪ Mission and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Baseline study</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
	<p>agencies, NGOs and local communities to manage the improved RSM, including PES</p> <p><u>Evidence of the project's contribution to Outcome 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which the pilot testing of improved RSM in Zambezia Province has been successful</li> <li>▪ Extent to which the beneficiary communities are better prepared for PES (through livelihoods and SLM practices, CBNRM and governance improvements) in the four districts in Zambezia</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Intended and unintended results</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 2.3:</b> To what extent have project objectives been achieved, and were there any unintended results? What results, intended and unintended, has the project achieved across its components?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Level of intended and unintended results achieved by project component</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Data analysis</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports)</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> <li>▪ GEF tracking tool</li> <li>▪ Mission and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<b>3. Efficiency</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 3.1:</b> To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality and feasibility of the annual work plans</li> <li>▪ Extent to which delays occurred, plus the causes and impact on project results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ Budget revisions</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of budget delivery as planned and the extent to which financial resources have been utilized efficiently</li> <li>▪ Cost categories analysis and evidence assessment of cost evolution over time, determinant factors affecting costs and possible measures put in place to manage costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Field observation</li> <li>▪ Quantitative analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ M&amp;E system and FPMIS</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes and/or reports</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation question 3.2:</b> To what extent has project management been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of any adjustments in the timeframe or scope of the project duly justified and reported and in accordance with eventualities or changes in context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ M&amp;E system and FPMIS</li> <li>▪ Budget revisions</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation question 3.3:</b> To what extent has the project built on existing agreements, initiatives, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other projects or partnerships and avoided the duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence on the implementation of coordinated actions on the ground with other stakeholders (e.g. civil society organizations, United Nations agencies, the private sector, etc.) and the extent to which the project avoided the duplication of similar activities by other groups and initiatives</li> <li>▪ Degree of synergies and complementarities generated between the project and other REDD+ initiatives (projects/programmes) in place at the national level and in Zambezia Province</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Baseline study</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ LOAs</li> <li>▪ Minutes of meetings/aide memoirs with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Minutes and reports of key events (seminars, workshops, field visits, etc.)</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> </ul>
<b>4. Sustainability</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 4.1a:</b> What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after project closure?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 4.1b:</b> What are the key risks that may affect the sustainability of project benefits in terms of economic, environmental, institutional and social sustainability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which national and local stakeholders needed knowledge to manage and implement project activities and continue with the project's results, particularly: i) legal and regulatory frameworks; and ii) human and institutional capacities</li> <li>▪ Analysis of factors, risks and key conditions (financial, institutional, socioeconomic, environmental) that may affect sustainability</li> <li>▪ Evidence/quality of the project's sustainability strategy, or exit strategy, if any</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Minutes of meetings/aide memoirs with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<b>5. Factors affecting performance</b>			
<p><b>Project design and readiness</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.1a:</b> How clear and coherent was the project design (including its causal logic/TOC) in addressing the needs of target groups and beneficiaries?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.1b:</b> To what extent were the project's objectives and components clear, practical and feasible within the timeframe allowed and context (political, institutional, social, etc.)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strength of the link between the project's strategy and the expected results towards improving the national mechanism for sharing the revenues and the integrated PES</li> <li>▪ Strength of the link between the project's strategy and the expected results towards increasing the human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM</li> <li>▪ Evidence of community/beneficiary consultations to define the project's strategy</li> <li>▪ Evidence that targeting, coverage and project activities were justified and realistic based on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ Inception report</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
	<p>existing mapping, vulnerability assessments and stakeholder capacities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Perception of stakeholders on the appropriateness of project targeting, coverage and selected activities</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Project implementation</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.2a:</b> To what extent did FAO deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval, start up, oversight and supervision?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.2b:</b> How well were risks identified and managed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Extent to which institutional arrangements (including the project steering committee) contributed to a smooth implementation of project activities and the achievement of outputs</li> <li>▪ Quality of oversight, technical guidance and support provided by FAO Mozambique in a timely and effectively manner</li> <li>▪ Level and quality of technical and operational support from the LTO, the Funding Liaison Officer and the Budget Holder</li> <li>▪ Completeness of risk identification and mitigation measures during project implementation and the quality of risk mitigations strategies developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus groups discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Minutes of meetings/aide memoirs with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project execution and management</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.3:</b> To what extent did the execution project partners and FAO effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adequacy of human resources (internal staff and consultants hired) for project execution and management</li> <li>▪ Relevance, adequacy and performance of service providers involved and their contribution to a smooth project execution</li> <li>▪ Level of robustness of project management and administrative systems in place to ensure efficient resource use (e.g. procurement, financial management, coordination, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ Minutes of meetings/aide memoirs with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> </ul>



Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of adaptive management on targeting, coverage or project strategy in response to climate crises and COVID-19</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial management and co-financing</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.4a:</b> To what extent were the financial processes adequate (timeliness and adequacy of resources)?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.4b:</b> To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project expenditure by outcome and expenditure ratios</li> <li>▪ Level of actual disbursements vs those planned each year</li> <li>▪ Evidence on the adequacy of resources to achieve the project's intended results</li> <li>▪ Evidence that the planned co-financing was timely provided by national counterparts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Quantitative data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ Annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ M&amp;E system and FPMIS</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> <li>▪ LOAs and any supporting documents from grants received</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partnerships and stakeholder engagement</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.5a:</b> Were other actors, such as civil society, Indigenous Peoples or the private sector, involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.5b:</b> What were the strengths and challenges of the project's partnerships?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.5c:</b> Have all stakeholders been made aware of the ESS plan and the grievance complaint mechanism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in project preparation and implementation</li> <li>▪ Level of involvement and ownership of government officials and other national stakeholders in project design, preparation and implementation</li> <li>▪ Type/quality of partnership cooperation agreements</li> <li>▪ Assessment of ESS plan soundness and level of understanding/utilization by the different stakeholders involved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document and annual work plans</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Minutes of meetings/aide memoirs with key stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ Project steering committee minutes or reports</li> <li>▪ LOAs</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality of the project's communications system</li> <li>▪ Evidence of sound communications strategy/actions undertaken by the project and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
<p><b>Evaluation question 5.6a:</b> How is the project assessing, documenting and sharing its results, lessons learned and experiences?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.6b:</b> To what extent are communications products and activities likely to support the sustainability and scaling up of project results?</p>	<p>the project's effectiveness in communicating and promoting its key messages and results to partners, stakeholders and general audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ Communications and visibility materials produced</li> <li>▪ Minutes and reports of key events (seminars, workshops, field visits, etc.)</li> <li>▪ FAO Mozambique website</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<p><b>M&amp;E</b></p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.7a:</b> Was the M&amp;E plan practical and sufficient? Did the M&amp;E system operate as per the M&amp;E plan? Was information gathered in a systematic manner using appropriate methodologies?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 5.7b:</b> Was the information from the M&amp;E system appropriately used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality of the M&amp;E system with baseline information and allowing for an efficient tracking of the project's progress</li> <li>▪ Quality and timeliness of RSM reporting (progress reporting, M&amp;E)</li> <li>▪ Evidence that the M&amp;E info was used to support decision-making, improve implementation and foster learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project document</li> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ M&amp;E system and FPMIS</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> </ul>
<b>6. ESS</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 6.1a:</b> To what extent were ESS taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 6.1b:</b> Has the project been implemented in a manner that ensures the ESS mitigation plan (if one exists) has been adhered to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence/quality of environmental and social assessment undertaken during project design and/or at the beginning of project implementation</li> <li>▪ Quality of an ESS mitigation plan and extent to which the project's results framework is environmentally and socially responsive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus groups discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of beneficiary (women) views and perception</li> <li>▪ E-survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Lists of participants in trainings, visits and other activities</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries.</li> <li>▪ LOAs</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
<b>7. Gender</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 7.1a:</b> To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 7.1b:</b> Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence/quality of gender analysis undertaken during project design and/or at the beginning of project implementation</li> <li>▪ Extent to which the project's results framework were gender responsive and addressed beneficiaries from Indigenous Peoples and persons with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Extent to which men and women had equal access to capacity building opportunities (e.g. ratio women/men attending training)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of beneficiary (women) views and perception</li> <li>▪ E-survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Lists of participants in trainings, visits and other activities</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> <li>▪ LOAs</li> </ul>
<b>8. Progress towards impact</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 8.1:</b> How is the likelihood of impact in terms of substantive contribution to broad changes and what can be done to increase the likelihood of positive impact from the project?</p> <p><b>Evaluation question 8.2:</b> Was there any evidence of environmental stress reduction and environmental status change, or any change in the policy/legal/regulatory framework?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Progress on the environmental indicators stated in the results framework</li> <li>▪ Assessment of likelihood of impact in terms of any barriers or risks that may prevent progress towards and the achievement of the project's long-term objectives</li> <li>▪ Extent to which there is an enabling environment to sustain the national mechanism for sharing the revenues and the integrated PES in the long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ E- Survey</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports)</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> <li>▪ GEF tracking tool</li> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<b>9. Lessons learned</b>			
<p><b>Evaluation question 9:</b> What knowledge has been generated from the project results and experiences, which have a wider value and potential for broader application, replication and use?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of knowledge generated from project results and experiences</li> <li>▪ Extent to which the results, lessons or experiences are likely to be replicated (in different geographic areas) or scaled up (in the same geographic area, but on a much larger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document review</li> <li>▪ Key informant interviews</li> <li>▪ Focus group discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ PPRs/PIRs</li> <li>▪ Project documents (e.g. consultancy, research and technical reports)</li> <li>▪ Project M&amp;E system</li> </ul>

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
	scale and funded by other sources) in the near future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thematic sessions with project staff</li> <li>▪ Qualitative analysis of local staff views and perceptions/experiences</li> <li>▪ Field observation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Missions and backstopping reports</li> <li>▪ MTR</li> <li>▪ Key stakeholders from FAO, national counterparts and beneficiaries</li> </ul>

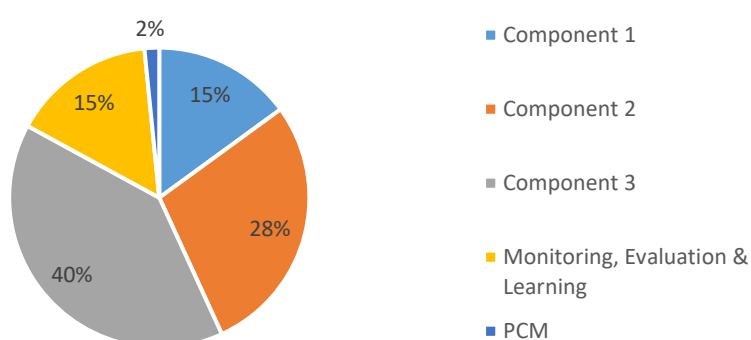
## Appendix 3. Financial data (as of August 2022)

Appendix Table 1. Budget proportion by project budget line

Item	Budget	Proportion (%)
Professional salaries	518 269	14%
Consultants	1 307 102	36%
Contracts	870 115	24%
Locally contracted labour	28 000	1%
Travel	323 155	9%
Training	72 617	2%
Procurement (exp.)	213 075	6%
Procurement (non-exp.)	90 645	2%
General operation expenses	214 770	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 637 748</b>	<b>100%</b>

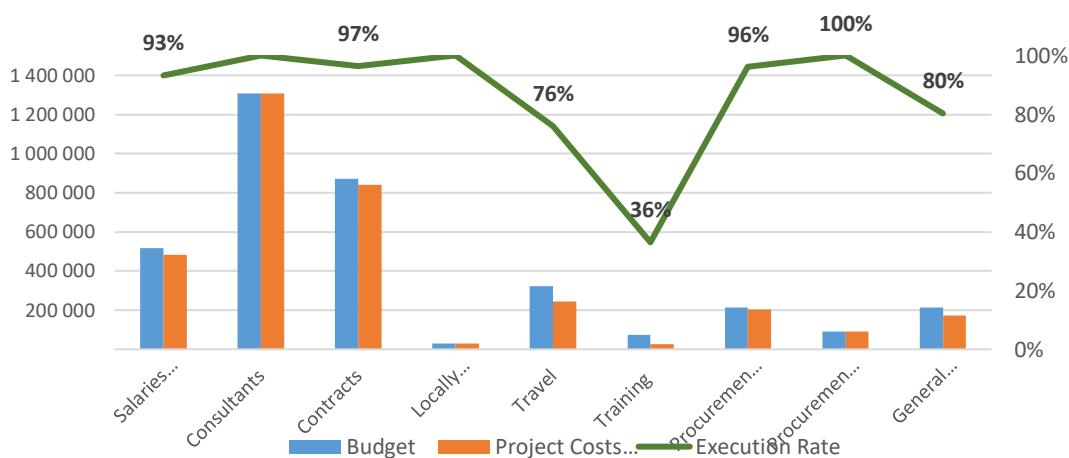
Source: Evaluation team with data provided by project staff.

Appendix Figure 1. Budget proportion by project component (percentage)



Source: Evaluation team with data provided by project staff.

Appendix Figure 2. Financial execution rate by budget line, until August 2022 (percentage)



Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff.

**Appendix Table 2. Total financial execution by budget line and available budget (USD)**

Item	Project budget	Project costs	Execution rate	Available budget
<b>Professional salaries</b>	518 269	483 713	93%	34 556
<b>Consultants</b>	1 307 102	1 308 130	100%	-1 029
<b>Contracts</b>	870 115	839 751	97%	30 364
<b>Locally contracted labour</b>	28 000	28 000	100%	0
<b>Travel</b>	323 155	245 570	76%	77 584
<b>Training</b>	72 617	26 473	36%	46 144
<b>Procurement (exp.)</b>	213 075	204 909	96%	8 166
<b>Procurement (non-exp.)</b>	90 645	90 642	100%	3
<b>General operation expenses</b>	214 770	172 693	80%	42 077
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 637 748</b>	<b>3 399 882</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>237 866</b>

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff.

**Appendix Table 3. Financial execution and available budget by project component, until August 2022**

Components	Budget	Project costs	%	Available budget
<b>Component 1</b>	595 968	499 953	84%	96 015
<b>Component 2</b>	1 007 470	940 523	93%	66 947
<b>Component 3</b>	1 394 008	1 327 838	95%	66 170
<b>Monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) learning</b>	587 295	516 473	88%	70 822
<b>Project cycle management</b>	53 003	53 005	100%	-2
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 637 748</b>	<b>3 399 882</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>237 866</b>

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff.

**Appendix Table 4. Total financial execution by year (USD)**

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	Available
<b>Budget</b>	81 107	231 586	793 987	743 715	770 331	1 017 023	3 637 748	
<b>Expenses</b>	81 107	231 586	793 987	743 715	770 331	779 157	3 399 882	<b>237 866</b>
<b>Execution Rate (%)</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	77%	93%	7%

Source: Evaluation team with data provided by the project staff.

## Appendix 4. The GEF evaluation criteria rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating <sup>i</sup>	Summary comments
<b>A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE</b>		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	HS	Section 3.1
A1.1. Alignment with the GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 1
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	HS	Section 3.1 / Findings 2, 3
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	HS	Section 3.1 / Finding 4 Section 3.3 / Finding 18
<b>B. EFFECTIVENESS</b>		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	MS	Section 3.2
B1.1. Delivery of project outputs	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 6, 7, 8
B1.2. Progress towards outcomes and project objectives		
- Outcome 1	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 8, 9, 10
- Outcome 2	MU	Section 3.2 / Findings 11, 12
- Outcome 3	S	Section 3.2 / Findings 13, 14, 15
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes	MS	Section 3.2
B1.3. Likelihood of impact	MS	Section 3.2 / Findings 10, 12, 14
<b>C. EFFICIENCY</b>		
C1. Efficiency	MS	Section 3.3 / Findings 17, 18
<b>D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES</b>		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Section 3.4
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 20
D1.2. Sociopolitical risks	ML	Section 3.4 / Finding 21
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	Section 3.4/ Finding 21
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	Section 3.4 / Finding 19
D2. Catalysis and replication	ML	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
<b>E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE</b>		
E1. Project design and readiness	MS	Section 3.5.1 / Finding 23
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.1. Quality of project implementation by FAO (Budget Holder, Lead Technical Officer, Project Task Force, etc.)	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E2.2. Project oversight (project steering committee, project working group, etc.)	S	Section 3.5.3
E3. Quality of project execution For decentralized projects: PMU/Budget Holder	MS	Section 3.5.3 / Finding 26
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	Section 3.5.4 / Findings 27, 28
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	HS	Section 3.5.5 / Findings 29, 30
E6. Communications, knowledge management and knowledge products	HS	Section 3.5.6 / Finding 31
E7. Overall quality of M&E	HS	Section 3.5.2
E7.1. M&E design	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 24

<b>GEF criteria/sub-criteria</b>	<b>Rating<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Summary comments</b>
E7.2. M&E implementation plan (including financial and human resources)	HS	Section 3.5.2 / Finding 25
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	S	Section 3.5
<b>F. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES</b>		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	HS	Section 3.6.1 / Finding 32
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	HS	Section 3.6.2 / Finding 33
F3. ESS	HS	Section 3.6.1 / Finding 34
<b>Overall project rating</b>	<b>S</b>	

Note: <sup>i</sup> See the rating scheme in Appendix 5.



## Appendix 5. Rating scheme

### PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

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

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

<b>Rating</b>	<b>Description</b>
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	<i>There were no shortcomings and the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b> exceeded expectations.</i>
Satisfactory (S)	<i>There were no or minor shortcomings and the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b> meets expectations.</i>
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	<i>There were some shortcomings and the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b> more or less meets expectations.</i>
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	<i>There were significant shortcomings and the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b> is somewhat lower than expected.</i>
Unsatisfactory (U)	<i>There were major shortcomings and the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b> was substantially lower than expected.</i>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	<i>There were severe shortcomings in the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b>.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>The available information does not allow for an assessment of the quality of <b>implementation</b> or <b>execution</b>.</i>

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of design and implementation

### SUSTAINABILITY

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

## Appendix 6. The GEF co-financing table

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type <sup>i</sup>	Type of co-financing <sup>ii</sup>	Co-financing at project start (amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)				Materialized co-financing as of 30 June 2022 (in USD)			
			Grant	In-kind	Cash	Total	Grant	In-kind	Cash	Total
Ministry of Land and Environment	National government	Cash			4 800 000	4 800 000			4 800 000	4 800 000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	Multi-lateral agency (establishment of REDD+ measuring, reporting and verification platform)	Grant	5 000 000			5 000 000	5 000 000			5 000 000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility	Multi-lateral agency (REDD+ Readiness Preparation Grant)	Grant	3 600 000			3 600 000	3 800 000			3 800 000
World Bank	Multi-lateral agency (Mozambique Forest Investment Project)	Grant	24 000 000			24 000 000	12 900 000			12 900 000
FAO	Multilateral	In-kind	200 000			200 000		200 000		200 000
Forest Carbon Partnership Facility <sup>iii</sup>	Multilateral (emission reduction payment agreement)	Grant	6 400 000				6 400 000			6 400 000
<b>Grand total (in USD)</b>			39 200 000		4 800 000	44 800 000	28 100 000	200 000	4 800 000	33 100 000

Notes: <sup>i</sup> Examples of categories include: the local, provincial or national government; semi-government autonomous institutions; the private sector; multilateral or bilateral organizations; educational and research institutions; non-profit organizations; civil society organizations; foundations; beneficiaries; GEF agencies; and others.

<sup>ii</sup> Grants, loans, equity participation by beneficiaries (individuals) in form of cash, guarantees, in-kind or material contributions, and others.

<sup>iii</sup> New projects part of the Zambezia Integrated Landscape Management Programme.

## Appendix 7. Results matrix

Project objective and outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Level as of 30 June 2022	Evaluation assessment	Progress rating <sup>i</sup>	Justification for rating
<b>Objective(s):</b> Promote biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation in Miombo forest ecosystems through the improvement of the existing RSM that supports the sustainable use and conservation of forests and wildlife, and improves local livelihoods								
<b>Outcome 1:</b> National RSM improved	Forestry Law includes improved forest RSM	0	0	1	0		MS [S]	Technical assistance provided to the National Directorate of Forest was important in terms of improving the broader legal and technical environment of the project. A legal study and iterative proposals to revise the “20% Decree” were completed and submitted to the National Directorate of Forest. However, the approval of the Forestry Law and its regulation has not been completed and payments to communities remain incipient.
	Joint intersector document to guide the sectors on PES produced	0	0	1	0		MS [S]	Progress has been made in the technical and policy discussions towards the revision of the RSM legal framework and inclusion of the PES concept since these discussions now include seven different ministries. A draft document to guide the sectors on the PES “rules of the game” has been delivered to the National Directorate of Forest and was expected to be discussed and concluded in the next interministerial working group

Project objective and outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Level as of 30 June 2022	Evaluation assessment	Progress rating <sup>i</sup>	Justification for rating
								planned for the second semester of 2022.
	Gender rules included in the joint intersector document on PES	0	0	1	0		U [U]	Gender rules have not been delivered as planned, even though the project is expected to conclude this in the second semester of 2022, together with the draft document to guide the sectors on PES.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Enhanced human and institutional capacity to oversee and implement improved RSM	Number of government and NGO staff whose capacity to implement RSM has improved as a result of the training received	0	Government staff: 5 NGO staff: 5	Government staff: 15 NGO staff: 15	21		MS [HS]	A training of trainer's session on community governance for natural resource management was carried out in October 2021, targeting a total of 21 individuals (six from government institutions and 15 from civil society organizations) out of the 30 planned for this indicator.
	National plan for the improvement RSM designed and implemented	0	N/A	1	0		MU [S]	A specific discussion session on PES was also delivered in 2021, targeting a total of 12 government staff from different institutions (Ministry of State Administration and Public Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Finance, National Directorate for Environment, Ministry of Mineral Resources and Energy, Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries). An agreement was signed with the National Directorate of Forest to implement an action plan to

Project objective and outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Level as of 30 June 2022	Evaluation assessment	Progress rating <sup>i</sup>	Justification for rating
								improve the existing RSM, but documents to guide the sectors on the PES “rules of the game” was not yet approved.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Improved environmental performance -based version of existing government forestry tax RSM operational in seven districts of Zambezia Province	Percentage of households that report revenue-based sustainable alternative income generation activities, disaggregated by male- and female-headed households	12% (6% male-headed households and 6% female-headed households) <sup>ii</sup>	N/A	14% (7% male-headed households and 7% female-headed households)	N/A		S [S]	The results of the endline survey have not been released and therefore it is not possible to assess the actual percentage of households that are reporting revenue-based sustainable alternative income-generating activities. However, the project managed to introduce sustainable natural resource management practices that allows them to access different types of strategies to improve their livelihoods, such as income generation, credit access and food consumption. On beekeeping, beneficiaries were unanimous in considering it profitable. The savings and credit groups have started to show a good level of organization as the volume of savings and small credits granted have been increasing. However, agroforestry practices still require years before their real benefits in the ecosystem and production systems can be observed. In the case of pisciculture, there is no evidence of great success since communities reported that they have had difficulties in providing the

Project objective and outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Midterm target	End-of-project target	Level as of 30 June 2022	Evaluation assessment	Progress rating <sup>i</sup>	Justification for rating
								required amount of feed for the fish ponds as recommended by the project, and no significant amount of fish was found in the fish ponds visited.
	Number of NRMC with capacity to implement improved RSM and/or PES mechanisms	0	N/A	16	18		MS [MS]	The project contributed to strengthening the community governance systems for natural resources management. In total, the project managed to create eight new NRMCs and revitalized ten existing NRMCs in the four target districts. However, only three cases of beneficiary communities able to access existing REDD+ funds related to PES were identified by the evaluation.
	Percentage of women represented in the social bodies of the NRMC	N/A	N/A	40%	N/A		HS [HS]	The results of the endline survey have not been released and therefore it is not possible to assess the actual percentage of women represented in the social bodies of the NRMC. However, 51% percent of project beneficiaries reached under Component 3 are women.

Notes: <sup>i</sup> In [ ] has been left the rating provided in the 2022 FAO-GEF PIR report for the period July 2021-June 2022 for reference.

<sup>ii</sup> This was estimated based on the HH survey conduct in the beginning of project implementation (625 people were interviewed and 124 reported revenue based on sustainable alternative income-generating activities, 50 female)

## Appendix 8. Communications and visibility materials

**Appendix Table 5. Examples of communications and visibility materials developed**

Type	Material	Reference/link
News	Lançado novo projecto florestal na província da Zambézia para beneficiar comunidades locais	<a href="https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1183864/">https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1183864/</a>
News	FAO promove o conceito de Pagamentos por Serviços Ambientais (PSA) aos funcionários do Governo	<a href="https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1475450/">https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1475450/</a>
News	FAO Promotes Payments for Ecosystem Services Concept to Government Staff	<a href="https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail-events/ar/c/1475447/">https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail-events/ar/c/1475447/</a>
Video	Didactic video on "PES Approach"	Shared folder
Video	"PES Concept" – Video for Steering Committee	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GcCn0yPpYyxnMtOMGhhHproAlloJ4TyJ/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GcCn0yPpYyxnMtOMGhhHproAlloJ4TyJ/view</a>
Success story	MULEVALA: Grupo de poupança contribui para a melhoria das condições de vida	<a href="https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1473009/">https://www.fao.org/mozambique/news/detail/pt/c/1473009/</a>
Knowledge product	Gender assessment	FAO. 2019. Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Forest Conservation and Sustainable Livelihoods: Gender Assessment. Maputo, May 2019
Knowledge product	Benchmark study	FAO, 2020. Payment for Ecosystem Services to Support Sustainable and Integrated Rural Development in Mozambique: Learning experiences from the forestry sector - Available at shared folder
Knowledge product	National study	CHICUE, Jorge 2019. Melhoria do mecanismo de distribuição dos benefícios ambientais pelo acesso e utilização sustentável dos recursos naturais. – Available at shared folder
Knowledge product	National assessment	Porras and Nhantumbo, 2019. PES in Mozambique: Supporting the 20% Decree revision – Available at shared folder
Success story	Revolução agrícola de pequena escala transforma vidas na Zambézia	Shared folder
Knowledge product	Fact Sheet: Integração de Género	Shared folder
Campaign	Promoção da Mulher	Shared folder
Newsletter	Project newsletter	<a href="https://us5.campaign-archive.com/?u=0d80eeb67ceb3cc89b0c6b6f6&amp;id=cddb68a61">https://us5.campaign-archive.com/?u=0d80eeb67ceb3cc89b0c6b6f6&amp;id=cddb68a61</a>
News	Projecto MUTACUANE - Pagamento por Serviços de Ecossistemas para Apoiar a Conservação Florestal e Meios de Subsistência Sustentáveis	<a href="http://www.dinaf.gov.mz/mutacuane/">http://www.dinaf.gov.mz/mutacuane/</a>

## **Annexes**

Annex 1. Terms of reference

[https://www.fao.org/3/cc7817en/GCP\\_MOZ\\_117\\_GFF\\_Annex\\_1.pdf](https://www.fao.org/3/cc7817en/GCP_MOZ_117_GFF_Annex_1.pdf)

Annex 2. E-survey

[https://www.fao.org/3/cc7817en/GCP\\_MOZ\\_117\\_GFF\\_Annex\\_2.pdf](https://www.fao.org/3/cc7817en/GCP_MOZ_117_GFF_Annex_2.pdf)



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