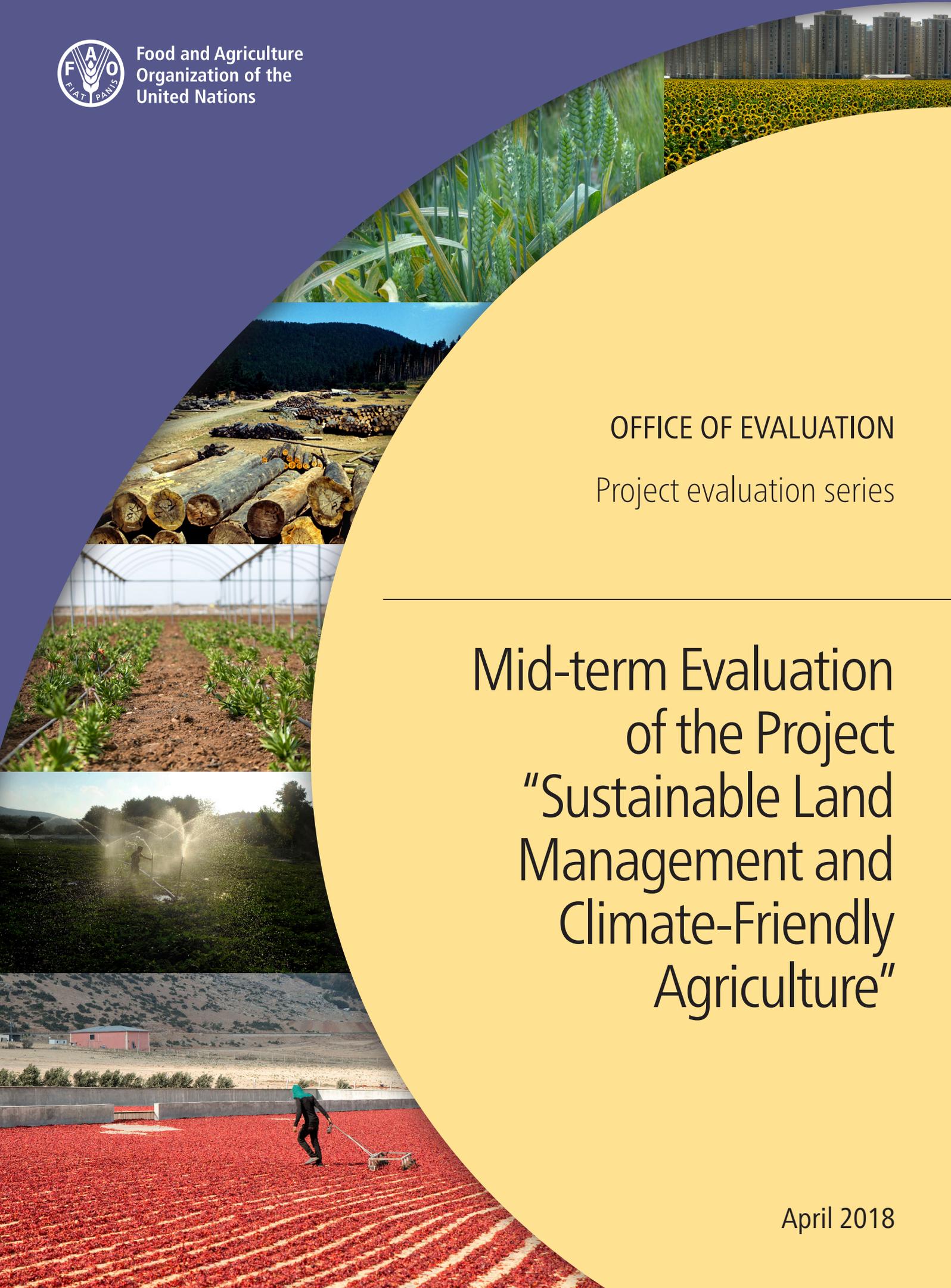




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



OFFICE OF EVALUATION

Project evaluation series

# Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agriculture"

April 2018



**PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES**

**Mid-term Evaluation of the Project  
“Sustainable Land Management and  
Climate-Friendly Agriculture”**

**GCP/TUR/055/GFF**

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF EVALUATION  
April 2018**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Office of Evaluation (OED)

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The Mid-term Evaluation was independently managed by the FAO Office of Evaluation(OED). An external team composed of Dr Beth Osborne Daponte (International Team Leader) and Mr Murat Cevik (National Team Member) collected information that served as bases in composing this report.

The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) acknowledges and appreciates the roles played by these institutions and persons in this Mid-term Evaluation.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPF	Country Programming Framework
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
RDP	Rural Development Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDCS	United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy

## Executive summary

1. The Mid-term Evaluation of the "Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agriculture" Project (GCP/TUR/055/GFF) was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Turkey and was conducted by an external team. With guidance from the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED), the team applied a mixed-methods approach and collected information from various stakeholders.
2. The findings showed that the Project is highly relevant. It is responding to national and provincial environmental needs and priorities, contributing to the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) and the FAO Country Programme in Turkey, and aligned with the priorities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and FAO's Strategic Objectives. It also conforms to relevant and current international treaties and conventions, and contributes to the achievement of FAO's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets. However, the Project does not align very well with aid effectiveness principles, and it is very weak on the dimension of women's empowerment and gender equality. The Project's Theory of Change was also not explicit.
3. On the effectiveness of the Project, the findings indicated that most of the target outputs and outcomes will not likely be achieved by its expected end date (December 2018). Due to a significant delay in starting the Project, the outputs are not being delivered as planned. The target outcomes are also not on track to be achieved by the project end date. Nevertheless, the evaluation found some positive immediate effects from the intervention: through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS), there is willingness by farmers to adopt sustainable land management practices, and the farmers who have already applied these practices reported net economic benefits due to lesser costs. The Farmer Field Schools approach was on the other hand challenged by the lack of a strategy for women's empowerment and gender equality: there was no effort devoted to women-centred knowledge-building and information exchange, and no emphasis on food security and nutrition for the female cohorts.
4. Regarding efficiency, overall project performance at mid-point was found to be unsatisfactory. The Project was significantly delayed, there were challenges on the recruitment and stability of personnel, while the planned governance and management structures have not yet functioned. On the positive side, the evaluation noted the complementary efforts being made by the Government and other partners that are being reported in terms of their co-financing on the Project, and the good technical support being obtained by the Project from FAO headquarters and the Subregional Office.
5. The findings also suggested that at mid-point, the Project is moderately likely to be sustainable. Due to its late start, the Project has not yet focused on its sustainability. The Project's exit strategy and sustainability plan still have to be developed. Still, there are indications that through the Farmer Field Schools, the farming techniques being promoted by the Project will become sustainable.

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. The Project is clearly and coherently responding to actual national/subnational environmental needs and priorities, as well as to the current global agenda for sustainable development.**

**Conclusion 2. The design and implementation of the Project is weak for it to contribute meaningfully to the global agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality.**

**Conclusion 3 . The implementation of the project activities and the delivery of project outputs are significantly delayed, and as such the Project is not on track in achieving its target results. More time will be needed to achieve the project results.**

**Conclusion 4. Due to basic weaknesses in the aspects of planning, governance and management, the Project is not yet able to make best use of most available inputs to achieve its desired results.**

**Conclusion 5. At mid-term stage, it is moderately likely that the project activities and use of the delivered project technologies and outputs will continue even after the end of the project.**

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1. To help all project stakeholders develop a better understanding of the Project, some sections of the Project Document should be updated.**

**Recommendation 2. In view of the delayed status of project implementation, the evaluation team recommends that the Project be extended for twenty months at no cost. The project team should nonetheless prepare and submit an implementation plan that will show how the target results (as updated) will be achieved within the extended period.**

**Recommendation 3. There needs to be a reconsideration as to how the Project will reduce gender inequities.**

**Recommendation 4. The Project should have a monitoring and evaluation professional actively working on measurement and data collection issues. Verified data should be provided to stakeholders on a regular basis for oversight and decision-making purposes.**

**Recommendation 5. The governance and management system for the Project should be strengthened.**

## 1 Introduction

1. The “Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agriculture” Project (GCP/TUR/055/GFF) is a four-year partnership intervention by the Government of Turkey, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the Konya Closed Basin of Turkey. It aims to improve the sustainability of agricultural and forest land use in the area by rehabilitating degraded forests and rangelands, promoting climate-smart agriculture and establishing a favourable enabling environment.
2. The Project started in January 2015 and is expected to end by 31 December 2018. The FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC) which is based in Turkey, in partnership with the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock is implementing the Project. The total project budget over the four-year period is USD 28.05 million, which consists mainly of co-funding from the Government and national counterparts, and a contribution of USD 5.75 million from the Global Environment Facility. A Project Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders and led by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock is intended to govern the project, while a National Project Implementation Unit consisting of project staff and consultants is expected to supervise the operationalization of activities.
3. The project was designed to develop the necessary strategies, plans, tools and mechanisms that will aid stakeholders in sustainably managing forest and land resources. These main outputs are integrated within the three project components: i) Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest and Rangeland; ii) Climate-Smart Agriculture; and iii) Enhanced Enabling Environment for Sustainable Land Management.
4. Three expected outcomes are also associated with each of these components:  
Outcome 1: Improved degraded forest and rangelands rehabilitation and management practices;  
Outcome 2: Climate-smart agriculture techniques will be applied across productive landscapes;  
Outcome 3: An enhanced enabling environment for sustainable land management.

### 1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

5. The Global Environment Facility requires a mid-term evaluation for projects with GEF contributions of USD 2 million or more. Mid-term evaluations typically aim to identify the status of the project in terms of its achievements and challenges, and recommend corrective actions to ensure that the project will be on track in achieving its desired results. Thus, this evaluation sought the involvement of the main project decision makers and implementers. In addition to contributing to organizational learning and informed planning, the mid-term evaluation is also part of the project’s accountability system to stakeholders.

### 1.2 Intended users

6. The main users of this Mid-term Evaluation report are the project decision makers and implementers, specifically the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the FAO Subregional Office for Central Asia (SEC) and other members of the Project Steering Committee, the National Project Implementation Unit and other co-implementing partners. This report will also be beneficial to FAO and GEF in terms of tracking the status of the project and deriving lessons that could be useful for future programming.

### **1.3 Scope of the evaluation**

7. This report focused on project achievements and challenges in the first 30 months of its implementation (January 2015 through June 2017). It examined the achieved results with reference to outputs and outcomes, and compared those to planned targets. The evaluation examined the potential for attaining the target outcomes within the remaining time frame and also examined the efficacy of project structures and procedures.
8. This Mid-term Evaluation, conducted from September 2017 until February 2018, examined project achievements and progress at the community and institutional levels. It examined results achieved so far at the four project sites at the Konya Closed Basin.

### **1.4 Methodology**

9. The evaluation team consisted of two evaluators: Beth Osborne Daponte, Ph.D., team leader and international evaluator; and Murat Cevik, MSc., national evaluator. A preliminary review of available documents (see Appendix 2) was first conducted by the team. Between 25 September and 6 October 2017 the team carried out a data collection mission in Ankara, Turkey, and at the following areas at the Konya Closed Basin:
  - Bulcuk Village in Ilgin, Konya
  - Walnut and almond planting sites in Ilgin, Konya
  - Ambar Village in Karaman
  - Kucukoras Pasture Rehabilitation Area and Kayaonu-Kucukoras Village Rehabilitation Project Site
10. To develop the project's Theory of Change (ToC), the team met with project stakeholders and staff in Ankara for a workshop where the team facilitated a brainstorming session on the ToC. The team followed up by drafting the ToC and subsequently shared the draft with staff and stakeholders for further comments. The ToC was revised accordingly.
11. During the mission, the team conducted interviews and focus groups with persons who are working on the project, partners, key government officials, project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The team carried out focus group discussions both with farmers who did and did not yet benefit from project intervention. The team also followed up remotely with persons who were unavailable or unaccessible during the mission.
12. The team analysed the notes it took during interviews and focus groups, and examined themes that emerged about the project in those interactions. The team also quantified results from the interviews.
13. The evaluation followed a question-based structure and approach. It primarily addressed the main questions shown in Box 1. Based on these main questions, sub-questions were formulated to frame the inquiry. Interview and research questions were thereafter referenced on the sub-questions.

**Box 2:** Main evaluation questions

**1. Relevance of the intervention**

To what extent is the intervention coherently responding to actual national/subnational environmental needs and priorities, as well as to the current global agenda for sustainable development?

**2. Effectiveness of the Project**

To what extent is the Project on track in achieving its target results?

**3. Efficiency of the Project**

To what extent is the Project making best use of available human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results?

**4. Potential for sustainability**

How likely is it for the project activities and use of the delivered project technologies and outputs to continue even after the end of the Project?

**1.5 Limitations**

14. The Project was challenged by an unusual amount of human resource turnover both at the implementing agency and the government partner. The high turnover affected project memory among project personnel in providing a historical accounting of the project to the evaluation team. Given the overall project delay (the project was not functional until Fall 2016), the Mid-term Evaluation essentially covered less than one year of project implementation. The Project did not have a monitoring professional since January 2017. Thus, data provided by the project team as used in this report have not been verified by a monitoring expert.

**1.6 Structure of the report**

15. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 presents the background and context of the Project; Chapter 3 presents the main findings of each evaluation question; conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 4, followed by lessons learned in Chapter 5.

## 2 Background and context of the Project

16. The Konya Closed Basin, located in Turkey's Central Anatolian Plateau, covers approximately 53 000 km<sup>2</sup> with elevations that vary between 900 and 1 050 m. 41 percent of the Konya Closed Basin is classified as agricultural lands and 34 percent as pastures/rangelands. The rest is mostly covered by forest, wetland and dunes. The Konya Closed Basin is semi-arid with an average annual precipitation of 378 mm. While three provinces (Konya, Karaman and Aksaray) share Konya Closed Basin territory, most of it is contained within the Konya Province.
17. In addition to substantial agricultural activity, the three provinces also have substantial milk and meat production. Livestock numbers have surged in recent years, particularly for dairy and feeder cattle. The total number of cattle in the Konya Closed Basin now exceeds 600 000 with over 500 000 maintained in either dairies or feedlots. Sheep and goat numbers have also increased.
18. Increasing animal production puts pressure on the land. The area has 1.9 million hectares of pastureland, including mountain and steppe grasslands. The state owns the rangelands. Animals widely graze on steppe and forested lands through a mostly-open-access grazing system. The area has approximately 734 000 hectares of forested land, 100 000 hectares of which are productive or commercial forest area, and the remaining are rangelands and/or degraded forests.
19. The area was selected as the project site because land degradation and climate change both acutely threaten its ecosystems' integrity. Deforestation and desertification reduce both ecological resilience and the area's globally significant biodiversity. Land degradation is widespread - experts estimate that nearly half of the remaining coppice forests, 92 percent of pasturelands and 40 percent of arable lands, and nearly two-thirds of the area's wetlands are either degraded or completely destroyed.<sup>1</sup> Soil erosion adversely impacts 350 000 hectares.
20. Several activities contribute to land degradation in the area. Overgrazing and fuel-wood collection lead to forest degradation. Increases in the number of livestock, particularly sheep and goats, result in overgrazing of the steppe which destroys natural vegetation, decreases rangeland efficiency and causes erosion. The common practice of converting rangelands to temporary dry arable land degrades land - and the low yield potential makes this practice economically inefficient. Between 2004 and 2014, over 250 000 hectares were converted from steppe or wetland to crop cultivation. Current agricultural practices (e.g., stubble burning, inappropriate cropping patterns and rotations, using fertilizers and pesticides) also cause land degradation and biodiversity loss.
21. Because of the arid climate in the area, its agriculture depends upon irrigation. Approximately 20 percent of 2.2 million hectares of the total arable land is officially irrigated. Irrigated land has approximately thrice the value of non-irrigated land. Dependency on irrigation and increased production demands rapidly deplete available surface and ground water sources. Since 2002, the number of wells in the area increased from 45 000 to over 100 000. Ground water table is dropping at an estimated 3 m annually.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Lake Tuz, which was a globally significant breeding ground for the Greater Flamingo, completely disappeared in 2007 partly due to hydrological changes related to land degradation.

22. The project thus aims to improve agricultural sustainability and forest land use management through the diffusion and adoption of low-carbon technologies in the area and promote practices that will reduce wind erosion. These are planned to be implemented at the following sites: a) Ayrancı-Karaman, which covers an area of 264 700 hectares. The population (approximately 7 000 people) lives in villages and agriculture (livestock and cultivation) is the main source of income for 70 percent of the population; b) Green Belt, an area of 101 000 hectares with a population of approximately 15 000 that primarily works as temporary forestry labour and in animal husbandry (though the region has no pastures). While this was to be a pilot site, so far no project activities have occurred here; c) Karapınar, Ereğli, Emirgazi, which covers an area of 292 600 hectares. The income of the population of 78 500 mainly derives from agriculture, animal production and agro-industries. Sheep and goat husbandry is one of the main activities in the project site, with about 530 000 animals kept in the area. The majority of the region's forests are degraded due to overgrazing by goats; and d) Sarayönü-Cihanbeyli, an area of 232 750 hectares including 15 000 hectares of forests, 139 000 hectares of arable lands and 57 000 hectares of pasture. The primary incomes sources of the population of 21 293 are crops (70 percent) and livestock (30 percent). Most farmers had switched their farming practices from dryland to irrigated farming, incentivized by government price supports. Intensive agriculture production techniques and non-proper mechanization techniques (e.g. intensive soil tillage) further degraded the land, triggering wind erosion and decreased organic content.
23. Project activities are designed around three inter-linked components. Under the component on the rehabilitation of degraded forests and rangelands, there are planned interventions for: the production of soil organic carbon maps for pilot sites; preparation of integrated sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation land use plan; certification of forest and rangeland landscapes; establishment of biodiversity monitoring system; and quantification of ecosystem services values.
24. Within the component on climate-smart agriculture, there are plans for: the development of models for conservation agriculture demonstrations on private farms; pilot-scale investments in biodigesters to recuperate methane from agricultural waste and produce electricity; and adoption of different management practices such as reduced tillage, mulching, organic and inorganic fertilizer and suitable irrigation to increase soil carbon pool and storage in plant tissue and soil body.
25. The third component on enabling environment includes building a strong constituency on sound agricultural practices. To create such a constituency, the project adopted the Farmer Field School (FFS) model which is designed to empower farmers and ranchers on improved production, maintenance of ecosystem integrity and reduction of the long-term economic risks associated with degradation.

## 3 Main findings

### 3.1 Relevance of the intervention

**To what extent is the intervention coherently responding to actual national/subnational environmental needs and priorities, as well as to the current global agenda for sustainable development?**

#### Sub-Questions

**How is the project responding to the actual national/subnational environmental needs, programmes and priorities set by the Government of Turkey?**

**How is the project contributing to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the FAO Country Programme in Turkey?**

**To what extent is the project aligned with GEF priorities and FAO Strategic Objectives while meeting actual national environmental demands?**

**Key findings:** The project is responding to national and provincial environmental needs and priorities set by the Government of Turkey as indicated in government planning documents; the project is contributing to the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy and FAO's Country Programme in Turkey; and the project is aligned very well with GEF priorities and FAO Strategic Objectives while meeting actual national environmental demands.

26. Turkey's Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013) was the first development plan that included as a top priority for the country's overall economic development the "Sustainable Management of Natural Resources." The team found that the Project's promotion of integrated sustainable land management of the country's lands and other natural resources, including forests, rangelands and agricultural production landscapes, significantly supports this priority of the Development Plan. The Project was also intended to contribute to the "Management of the Soil and Water Resources" of the following Tenth Development Plan (2014-2018). In addition to those two aspects of relevance, the project is also intended to contribute to the Rural Development Plan (RDP), which underscores the relationship between rural poverty and natural resource degradation. The RDP recognizes that improper farming techniques and increased climate variability has contributed in recent years to erosion and degradation of land and water resources. To mitigate erosion and degradation, the RDP prioritizes strategies, measures and activities that address desertification and promote proper management of land and water land resources. The agricultural and natural resources management practices that the project aims to improve directly contribute to the RDP's objectives.
27. The project also reaffirms other efforts by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs. For example, the Combating with Erosion Action Plan (2012), which covers the 2013-2017 period, was prepared with Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs coordination. This plan aims to restore ecological balance by targeting soil loss, increasing coordination of public agencies that combat erosion, efficiently using public resources and increasing the effectiveness of erosion-combating activities. In the scope of this action plan, afforestation, rehabilitation, erosion control and rangeland rehabilitation works will be realized on 1.4 million hectares in five years.
28. Additionally, the national strategies and action plans developed in line with the relevant international conventions, National Forestry Programme 2004-2023, the National Action

Programme to Combat Desertification 2006, and the National Climate Change Strategy (2010-2020), are also part of these national priorities.

29. During discussions and interviews the team found that in its design, the Project aligned with national priorities and reaffirms and buttresses the above-mentioned national plans and sustainable resource management approaches. From the project's conception, which was led by senior staff from the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, the Project was designed to support the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs' strategy for linking sustainable land management and climate change to national and local agendas and practices. To improve implementation, the Project Document should be revisited and updated with links to these national priorities and plans, which have mostly been updated (or upgraded) with other efforts (such as the National Strategy to Combat Desertification, Tenth Development Plan's updated "sustainable development" and "climate change" focus).
30. The Project also aims to improve communications and collaboration between governmental ministries. This was to be done by establishing a National Project Implementation Unit. As of the date of this evaluation however, the National Project Implementation Unit has not yet been established.
31. Activities missing from the Project Document but in demand and related to the nationwide and basin-wide needs are: i) an integrated water/basin management approach; and ii) a strategic environmental impact assessment that relates policy and programmes. As the Results Matrix is reconsidered after this evaluation, water management should be considered as part of a future project implementation strategy. This would allow the project to have even greater relevance to the priorities of the country.
32. In 2011, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework concept in Turkey was transformed to United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) which is the strategic framework for cooperation between the United Nations and Republic of Turkey to achieve the goals defined in national development plans. FAO is a signatory to Turkey's UNDCS. The UNDCS for 2011-2015 was implemented in line with the Ninth National Development Plan and the UNDCS for 2016-2020 is aligned with the Tenth National Development Plan.<sup>2</sup>
33. Three strategic areas of cooperation and seven concrete results identified in the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy are clearly aligned to five strategic objectives of the Ninth Development Plan. The Project supports Result 3 of the Democratic and Environmental Governance Strategic Cooperation Area, "Strengthened policy formulation and implementation capacity for the protection of the environment and cultural heritage in line with sustainable development principles, taking into consideration climate change, including disaster management, with a special focus on gender perspective."
34. The current (2016-2020) United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy has four strategic areas of cooperation and eight concrete results (outcomes) which are strongly aligned to the four strategic pillars of the Tenth Development Plan, namely: Qualified People, Strong Society; Innovative Production, High and Stable Growth; Liveable Places, Sustainable Environment; and International Cooperation for Development. The Project supports the Strategic Area of Sustainable, Inclusive Growth and Development, and Result 1 (Outcome 1.1): "By 2020, relevant government institutions operate in an improved legal and policy framework, and institutional

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<sup>2</sup> The initial period of Project approval and launch occurred under the first United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) while the Project's current implementation period, which started in 2016, is under the second UNDCS.

capacity and accountability mechanisms assure a more enabling (competitive, inclusive and innovative) environment for sustainable, job-rich growth and development for all women and men." It also supports Outcome 1.3 "By 2020, improved implementation of more effective policies and practices for all men and women on sustainable environment, climate change, biodiversity by national, local authorities and stakeholders, including resilience of the system/communities to disasters." Based on UNDCS, FAO is responsible for being actively involved with the achievement of these results. For example, FAO was assigned Chair of Environmental Sustainability Results Group by the United Nations Country Team for the 2016-2020 period.

35. The Project is aligned with Global Strategic Objective 2 of FAO (Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner). The Project should also contribute specifically to Outcome 1 (Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve the provision of goods and services in agricultural sector production systems in a sustainable manner) and Outcome 2 (Stakeholders in member countries strengthen governance – the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers - in the transition to sustainable agricultural sector production systems). The Project is also supporting the FAO Regional Priorities for Europe and Central Asia with respect to the areas of: a) strengthening food security and nutrition; and b) natural resource management, including climate change mitigation and adaptation.
36. The Project is in line with country level priorities defined under FAO' Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Turkey (2012-2015). FAO uses the CPF to define medium-term responses to assistance needs in accordance with FAO principles and in pursuit of national development objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other internationally-agreed development goals within FAO's Strategic Framework and Regional Priorities. The CPF has four Priority Areas of assistance for Turkey that are linked to the project: i) natural resource management including climate change mitigation and adaptation; ii) food security and nutrition; iii) policy support to small farmers; and iv) policy and institutional support for European Union accession and integration.
37. With the Global Environment Facility, the Project is linked to the GEF land degradation, climate change mitigation and biodiversity focal area strategies. The Project addresses land degradation through the Farmer Field Schools and its rehabilitation of degraded land (both pastureland and forests). The Project is also to improve the enabling environment, which should have an impact on climate change mitigation and biodiversity.

### **Sub-Questions**

**How does the project conform to relevant and current international treaties and conventions on climate change and sustainable land use/forest management?**

**How is the project clearly contributing to the achievement of FAO's commitments to the Sustainable Development Goal targets?**

**To what extent is the project design aligned with the aid effectiveness principles?**

**Key findings:** The Project conforms to relevant and current international treaties and conventions on climate change and sustainable land use/forest management by promoting low-carbon technologies; the Project is contributing to the achievement of FAO's commitments to the

Sustainable Development Goals targets by focusing on sustainable agriculture, biodiversity and rehabilitating degraded land; however, the Project design does not align very well with aid effectiveness principles.

38. The Project is supporting the Government of Turkey to meet its obligations under several international conventions, including the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At the national level, the project is supporting the National Action Programme to Combating Desertification, the National Climate Change Strategy and the Government's Climate Change Action Plan for 2011-2023, among other programmes, plans and strategies.
39. FAO is the custodian responsible for 21 Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and contributes to six other indicators. The Project is directly contributing to the SDG indicators as shown in Table 1 and it is aligned with FAO's commitments in achieving the SDGs.

**Table 1:** Summary of project contribution to the SDGs

Indicator number	Indicator	Direct or indirect impact?	Custodian or contributing agency?
2.4.1	Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture	Direct	Custodian
15.1.1	Forest area as a percentage of total land area	Direct	Custodian
15.2.1	Progress towards sustainable forest management	Direct	Custodian
15.3.1	Percentage of land that is degraded over total land area	Direct	Contributing
2.3.1	Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size	Indirect	Custodian
2.3.2	Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status	Indirect	Custodian
2.5.1	Number of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture secured in medium- or long-term conservation facilities	Indirect	Custodian
2.5.2	Proportion of local breeds, classified as being at risk, not-at-risk or unknown level of risk of extinction	Indirect	Custodian
6.4.2	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources	Indirect	Custodian
15.4.2	Mountain Green Cover Index	Indirect	Custodian

40. The four principles of aid effectiveness are: i) focus on results; ii) country ownership of development priorities; iii) inclusive partnerships for development; and iv) transparency and mutual accountability. Reviewing the Project against these four principles, the evaluation team found challenges. Perhaps because there has not yet been buy-in by stakeholders as to the expected measurable project outcomes, the Project has not focused on results. Several stakeholders who were interviewed during the evaluation said that they have not read the project document. With respect to country ownership and inclusive partnerships, there is some evidence, particularly with respect to the forestry side of the project, that there has been country ownership. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations in some aspects of the Project

(e.g., biodiversity audit) suggest that the Project developed partnerships that will allow others to share its overall goals.

41. On transparency and mutual accountability, the Project also faced challenges. It has not used its communication budget effectively and thus has not communicated its activities and goals effectively with potential beneficiaries and stakeholders. It does not have a website or portal through which it shares information, not only externally but internally among project stakeholders. Due to the challenges faced in holding regular meetings of the Project Steering Committee as planned for in the project document, joint project governance by both the implementing agency and the government partners was affected, together with its accountability system. Project Steering Committee meetings are not held as planned - the last one was approximately one year ago instead of the minimum of twice a year, as indicated in the Project Document.

### **Sub-Questions**

**To what extent is the Project designed to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of United Nations/FAO/GEF commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality?**

**To what extent does the project design adhere to a human rights-based approach in United Nations programming?**

**Key findings** The project design and implementation are very weak in its ability to meaningfully contribute to the achievement of United Nations/FAO/GEF commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality; the project's design process and implementation face challenges with respect to adhering to a human rights-based approach which is integral to United Nations programming.

42. The implementing agency's Policy on Gender Equality is taken within the overall framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The said policy states that "Progressive achievement of CEDAW's principle of substantive equality requires actions to achieve equality of opportunity for men and women, and actions to correct the inequalities of power between men and women. Given that masculine and feminine roles are socially constructed and maintained through patriarchal culture, CEDAW obligates State Parties to take all appropriate measures to modify socio-cultural patterns and stereotypes, and to eliminate prejudices and cultural practices based on sexist ideas".<sup>3</sup> According to this policy, the implementing agency will achieve its gender goals and objectives using means including capacity development, communications, partnerships and culture change.
43. The evaluation team found the project to be very weak on the gender dimension. First, the project was designed with unrealistic goals to counter the patriarchal power structure that exists in rural Turkey. Second, given that in general women are not the decision makers regarding farming techniques, it is unclear how the female beneficiaries will benefit from the Farmer Field Schools. The Project was designed to address the issue of topsoil retention through changing farming techniques and reforestation. Third, the role of women in the reforestation component was not defined and the gender of persons involved in the reforestation activities are not being tracked. It is generally believed however, that in Turkey, females have a significant role in terms of overall forest production and maintenance.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3205e/i3205e.pdf>, p. 1. Accessed on 18 October 2017.

44. The Project Document does not address gender equality and it was developed without reference to a gender assessment or sex-disaggregated socio-economic data. The only aspect in the Project Document where gender was discussed was on the Farmer Field Schools. According to the document, "The project will facilitate the establishment of 5 FFS. Each FFS will include approximately 500 households. To address gender specific issues and challenges, each FFS will have a women cohort. The model curriculum and approach will integrate best international and national principles and practices. This curriculum will include practical guidelines for rotational grazing, range restoration, improved conjunctive water management" (page 49). Further, according to the Project Document:

*The FFS women cohorts will benefit from a specific curriculum and approach targeting the needs of women. By project close, the FFS women cohort-training module will be fully integrated as a section within the FFS curriculum. Project technical staff will generate and support the piloting of women specific FFS curriculum and learning. Each FFS' women cohort will provide a foundation for organizing knowledge building. The cohort approach will offer rural women opportunities to benefit from women-centered knowledge building and information exchange. FFS will enhance the agricultural skills of established FFS women cohorts. Gender specific FFS modules for women cohorts will be guided by opportunities for woman-to-woman learning both within and between pilot sites.*

45. To determine the Project's effectiveness with respect to gender, the evaluation team conducted focus group discussions with females involved in farming who attended the Farmer Field Schools and interviewed staff that implemented the FFS. The team also conducted focus group discussions with male farmers. The team found that the FFS curriculum for the male and female cohorts did not differ - there was no effort devoted to women-centred knowledge building and information exchange, and no emphasis on food security and nutrition for the female cohorts. The female FFS did not emphasize food security and nutrition, contrary to the project's intent. Because there was no difference between the training curricula for women and men, it was perceived that the trainings could have just combined both sexes, instead of having separate sessions for the female cohorts.
46. The focus group discussions showed that the Farmer Field School trainings have not yet changed gender roles and perspectives on farming. Female participants simply thought that their exposure to sustainable land management (SLM) farming techniques was nice to have, while male farmers thought that the exposure by females to the SLM techniques "made the women better helpers" on the farm. The male farmers also reported that men exclusively make the decisions on the agricultural techniques being used on the farms. The female farmers confirmed this information.
47. Further, the Project Document indicated a plan to establish one demonstration site for women at each Farmer Field School. This has not yet occurred and it does not seem to be a project priority.
48. The Project was also supposed to have a gender consultant engaged throughout. According to project reports, a consultant was engaged with the Project from April 2016 through December 2016. Throughout 2017 however, the Project has not had a gender consultant devoted to it. While there is a separate gender specialist assigned for the whole subregional office, her expertise has not yet been accessed by the Project.

49. In terms of capacity development, women have not benefitted significantly from the past training activities and it is unclear how women will benefit from the future training courses. According to the Progress Report of December 2016, out of 33 persons trained from government and partner institutions in November 2016, only 6 were female. For the Farmer Field Schools, the goal of 500 females trained (out of 1 250) seemed unrealistic, given that the FFS have not communicated the training with women and the FFS curricula have not been tailored to women's needs.
50. The Project applied some, but not all, known practices of a human rights-based approach to programming.<sup>4</sup> Due to weak institutional memory and absence of reference documents, the Project could not establish that there were consultations with the target communities during the design phase. National leadership over the Project was also weak due to the inability of the governance structures (Project Steering Committee and National Project Implementation Unit) to convene as planned. On the other hand, the Project is encouraging the development and sustenance of strategic partnerships within the Government and with non-government actors. The Project has also adopted empowering strategies, specifically the Farmer Field Schools and the reforestation strategies.

### **Sub-Question**

#### **How robust, elaborate and realistic is the Project's Theory of Change?**

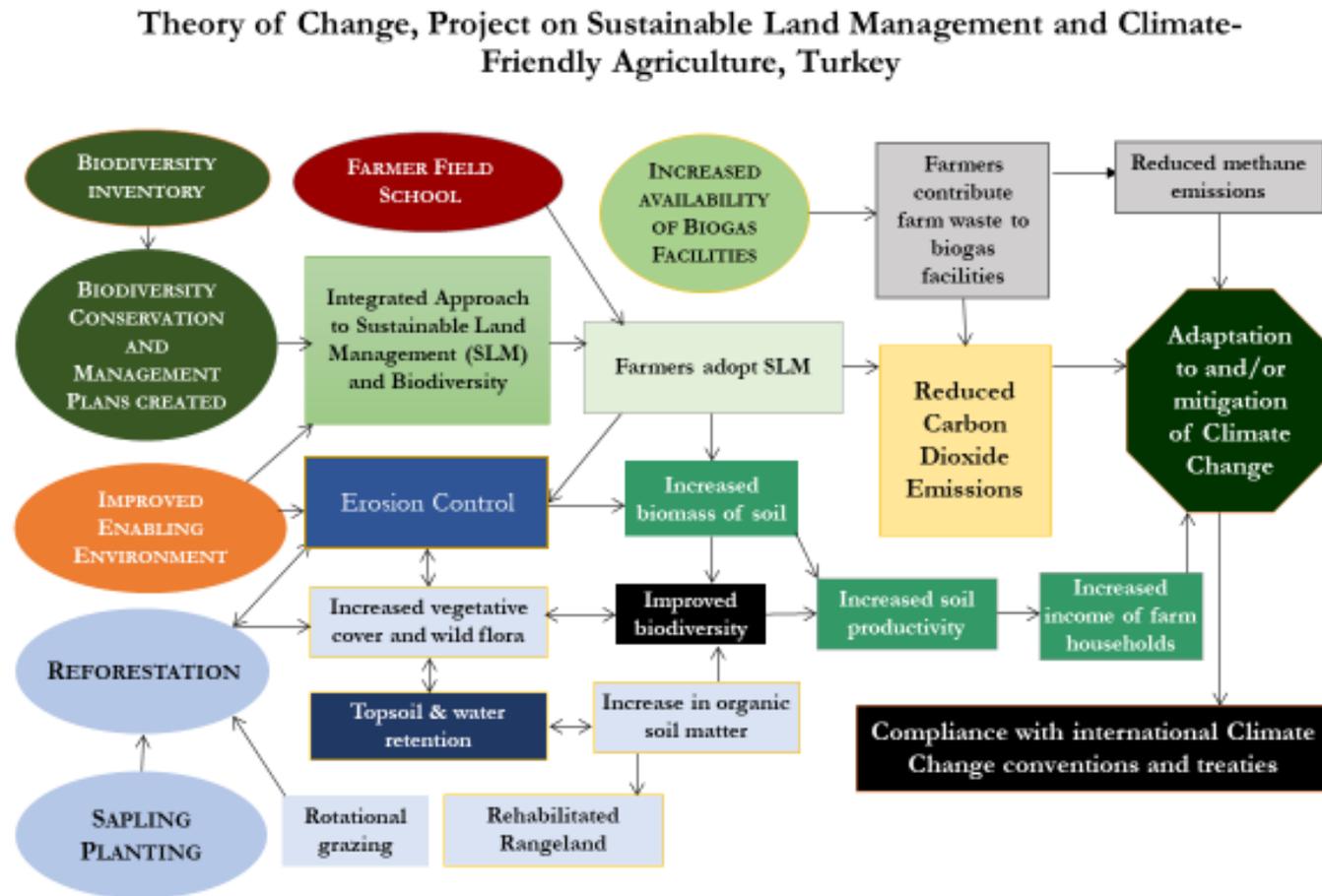
**Key finding:** There was no explicit Theory of Change created for the Project

51. The Project Document was finalized and approved under the previous funding cycle that did not require a Theory of Change. As such, there was no explicit ToC created for the Project. The evaluation team facilitated the formulation of the ToC with the participation of the project team. As shown in Figure 1, it reflects how the project developers, staff and stakeholders believe the Project will attain its end goal of climate change mitigation and adaptation.
52. In the diagram, the project activities are displayed using circles/ovals. The project's ultimate goals are to improve adaptation to and/or mitigation of climate change, which will allow Turkey to have greater compliance with international climate change conventions and treaties. The Project will achieve this goal by supporting activities in different realms.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://hrbportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies>

**Figure 1:** Theory of change diagram



53. The Project aims to develop a biodiversity inventory and on the basis of the inventory, create a biodiversity conservation and management plan. The plan will allow for a more integrated approach for achieving sustainable land management and greater biodiversity at the project site. The integrated approach to SLM will contribute to farmers adopting its practices. Another activity that will contribute to farmers adopting SLM is the Farmer Field Schools, which will directly teach about and demonstrate to farmers how to adopt SLM techniques. Improvements in the enabling environment, reforestation and the prevention of deforestation and land degradation is intended to control erosion and result in an integrated approach to SLM and biodiversity, both at the central level and between the central and local levels.
54. The Project's direct activities in the planting of tree saplings and the promotion of rotational grazing will lead to reforestation which will result in increased vegetative cover and wild flora; this will result in topsoil and water retention and improved biodiversity. The retention of topsoil and water retention and increased biodiversity will reinforce the vegetative cover and spread of wild flora, which contributes to erosion control. The retention of water and topsoil also increases organic soil matter, which results in rehabilitated rangeland.
55. The control of erosion will increase the biomass of soil, which is also increased by farmers adopting sustainable land management techniques. The increased soil biomass will not only improve biodiversity, but it will increase the productivity of the soil, which will increase farmers' incomes.
56. The Project is intended to reduce carbon dioxide emissions not only by the propagation of the use of sustainable land management practices, but also by increasing the use of biogas facilities. The Project will purchase biogas facilities to be used by farmers at the project sites to reduce carbon and methane emissions. The combination of reduced carbon dioxide emissions, methane emissions and increased income of farmers means that the project area would have adapted to and mitigated climate change, and thus enable the Government to better comply with international climate change and environmental conventions and treaties.
57. On the overall relevance of the project, the evaluation team gave the highest rating: Highly Relevant. It works in a geographic area in need of climate change mitigation and remediation and aims at developing governmental capacity so the Government can better work in an integrated fashion in addressing the area's substantial land rehabilitation challenges. The Project takes a multi-pronged approach which is appropriate considering the area's physical environment. The Project's approach and goal concur with the corporate frameworks of institutional stakeholders.

### 3.2 Effectiveness of the Project

#### To what extent is the Project on track in achieving its target results?

##### Sub-Questions

**At mid-point, to what extent are the Project outputs being delivered as planned?**

**How will actual output delivery affect the achievement of the target outcomes?**

**Based on the indicators set in the Project's Results Matrix, to what extent are the outcomes being achieved?**

**Key Findings:** At mid-point, with the exception of forest rehabilitation efforts, the Project outputs are generally not being delivered as planned; overall, while the target outcomes regarding forest rehabilitation will likely be achieved, the other target outcomes are not on track to be achieved by project-end.

58. Table 2 shows the degree to which Project outcomes and outputs have been delivered. For nearly all targets, delivery is below expectations.
59. The evaluation team received data indicating that the number of hectares of degraded forest that has been rehabilitated was 14 620 as of 30 June 2017. At that point, the Project Document had anticipated 10 000 hectares rehabilitated. Because of the discussion on the wrong unit of measurement in the Project Document being used, combined with non-response by the project team on the exact location of the rehabilitated forestland, the team is unable to verify the figure provided. If indeed 14 620 hectares of forest has been rehabilitated, then this aspect of the Project is being delivered faster than anticipated.
60. In total, the Project's Farmer Field Schools are to train 1 250 farmers, 500 of whom are female. As of 30 June 2017, the project reports (Progress Report covering period from 1 January 2017 through 30 June 2017) that 180 persons benefitted from the FFS - 60 females and 120 males. However, this information could not be verified and seems somewhat inconsistent with information gleaned from interviews. As of 22 December 2016, the Project reported that 114 persons had been trained in six FFS. During the data collection, there was no indication that the numbers of farmers trained recently was at a pace that would allow it to reach the numbers that were reported in the June 2017 Progress Report. In one site, it was reported that an FFS had not been held for a year. But even if the information is indeed valid, with respect to the reach of the FFS the Project would be falling short and unlikely to achieve its goal of 1 250 persons trained. Requests to provide detailed data were not fulfilled.

**Table 2:** Summary of Project status per output/outcome

OUTCOME OR OUTPUT	START	MID-TERM	END OF PROJECT
<b>COMPONENT 1: CAPACITIES BUILT TO REHABILITATE CURRENTLY DEGRADED FOREST AND RANGELAND</b>			
Outcome 1.1: Hectares of land in target area with vegetative cover	16 650	Goal: 30 000 No monitoring data available	60 000
Outcome 1.1: Of the 20 000 of degraded forest targeted, number of Ha rehabilitated	0	10 000 As of 21/12/16: 5 465 As of 30/6/17: 14 620	20 000
Outcome 1.1: Tree Density (trees per ha)	30	Goal: 40 No monitoring data available	50
Outcome 1.1: Amount (ha) of degraded rangeland and pastures under improved management due to project	0	15 000 As of 30/10/16: 1 788 As of 30/6/17: 13 588	30 000
Outcome 1.1: Hectares of protected habitat under ecological restoration plan	0	Ecological restoration plan developed for 6 680 ha of protected habitat Plan has not been developed	6 680 ha of protected habitat managed under ecological management plan
Output 1.2: Integrated Management Plan	0	Plan has not been developed	Fully developed and tested plan
<b>COMPONENT 2: CAPACITIES BUILT TO APPLY CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES ACROSS PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES</b>			
Outcome 2.1: Amount (Ha) of arable land under conservation agriculture practices due to project	0	Goal: 20 000-25 000 As of 22/12/16: 5 357 As of 30/6/17: 11 000	40 000-50 000
Outcome 2.1: Number of livestock/poultry producers contributing to biodigesters	0	Goal: 50 As of 10/17: 0	50
Biomass (Kg C/ha/year)	1,200	Goal: 1 450 No monitoring data available; facilities not yet operational	1 600
Amount of CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> -eq) avoided because of project's methane capture sites	0	Goal: 8 000-10 000 As of 30/6/17: 0	8 000-10 000

COMPONENT 3: STRENGTHENING ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR MULTIPLE BENEFITS FROM SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT			
Outcome 3.1: Number of farm or ranch households adopting improved practices	0	Goal: 150 No monitoring data available	500
Outcome 3.1: Number of FFS members	0	Goal: 500 males, 250 females As of 22/12/16: 114 (not tracked by gender), six FFS established. As of 30/6/17: 120 males, 60 females reported by project	750 males, 500 females
Outcome 3.1: The existence of pilot site level and/or national level policy frameworks operationalized to integrate SLM, BD, and CC-based land use planning and monitoring across productive landscapes	0	No monitoring data available	At least one pilot site framework and one national framework
Amount (ha) of arable land by type with biodiversity mainstreamed in management practices resulting from project	0 ha forest 0 ha pasture 0 ha arable land	10 000 ha forest 10 000 ha pasture 10 000 ha arable land No monitoring data available	20 000 ha forest 30 000 ha pasture 30 000 ha arable land
Spatial coverage of integrated natural resource management practices in wider landscapes (as reported in GEF LD tracking tool)	0 million ha agricultural lands 0 million ha pasture lands 0 ha forests	0 million ha agricultural lands 0 million ha pasture lands 0 ha forests No monitoring data available	2.2 million ha agricultural lands 1.8 million ha pasture lands 700 000 ha forests
Institutional integrated management capacity building programme established for national and local level decision makers-- number of decision makers trained in SLM	0	11	50

61. The monitoring data that the Project is tracking regarding the number of people trained is not clear.

**Table 3:** Number of farmers and facilitators participating in the trainings and capacity development activities in project sites

District	Ayranci		Sarayonu		Karapinar		Eregli
Cohort	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Women
1st training	43	5	-	13	11	5	11
2nd training	46	11	25	22	7		
3rd training	26	16	25	25			

62. One cannot determine from this table (or the text that accompanying it) how many unique individual farmers were trained. The figure of 114 that was reported in the month is similar to the figure of 115 that one obtains if summing the total number of people by site by the last training (i.e. 26+16+25+25+7+5+11). However, the table's label does not suggest that all of the people involved were trainees, versus being facilitators.

63. With respect to agricultural land under the conservation agriculture component, two sets of figures were provided to the evaluation team – 11 000 hectares and 50 hectares. The discrepancy may derive from different criteria being applied. One project expert said that for arable land to be considered under conservation agriculture, three criteria must be fulfilled: no till, the surface covered by mulch and diversified crop rotation. The expert reported that little arable land meet all three criteria.

64. The team requested further verification of the 11 000 hectares figure, such as the location of the land, the date and the criteria being used. No further specifications were provided, thus it could not be verified.

65. There were challenges in the area of the biogas facilities where no concrete output has been achieved yet. Since these facilities have not yet been procured by the Project, they are not operational. Thus, all data associated with them do not differ from the baseline.

66. At the time of the evaluation, procurement for the facilities was underway. The tender for the facilities has been relaunched (there were not many submissions received in the first round, which delayed the procurement). However, the biogas realm suffered from a lack of clarity in the Project Document. The Project Document does not make it clear where the facilities would be located, how they will be used and the degree to which the Project will be uniquely providing the facilities.

67. On the biodiversity component, the Nature Conservation Centre, a non-governmental organization contracted to create the biodiversity plan, has completed the field surveys. The plan is anticipated to be completed by December 2017.

68. Of the indicators being monitored, nearly all fall short of their goal at the Project's mid-point. As noted above, this is due in part to targets being set in the Project Document that have no justification. Many interviewees felt that the goals were arbitrary and unobtainable.

69. Based on the status presented in Table 2, the evaluation team concludes that all the target outputs and outcomes, with the exception of the amount of forest land rehabilitated, are not

likely to be achieved by 31 December 2018. Further, a number of indicators are not being monitored. There are two primary contributors to the poor rating. First, the Project became operational approximately 20 months later than anticipated. Second, generally the project targets do not have justification and may be unrealistic.

### **Sub-Questions**

**What are the immediate effects of the intervention to the target farmers and their communities?**

**To what extent are the Project activities and outputs affecting women, small farmers and marginalized groups?**

**Key Findings:** There are indications that the Farmer Field Schools increased the willingness of farmers to adopt sustainable land management practices; some farmers reported immediate benefits from using sustainable land management techniques, though many remained skeptical; there was no effort devoted to women-centered knowledge building and information exchange, and no emphasis on food security and nutrition for the female cohorts.

70. The overall project delay affected the determination of immediate effects on beneficiaries. For example, the saplings planted are still saplings that have no effect yet on farmers' livelihoods. The biogas facilities expected from the Project do not exist yet.
71. The discussions with the farmers indicated that the Farmer Field Schools increased their willingness to implement sustainable land management practices. There were also indications that the farmers understood the objective of this approach, as well as personal interest to learn new technologies and techniques related to sustainable land management.
72. Regarding the benefits from using sustainable land management techniques, there was mixed feedback from the farmers. Some reported benefits and limited success from using sustainable land management techniques, though many remained skeptical. With respect to direct planting and no till, farmers seemed willing to try the approach. Those farmers who did try it were pleased and reported that the land had at least the same productivity if not more, and the costs of planting were reduced, thus yielding increased profits. Among farmers who were not using direct planting, they reported that if they had known more about the technique, they would have tried it.
73. Nearly all farmers worried about the propagation of both rodents and weeds if the soil is not tilled. They believed that without tilling, rodents would make nests and weeds would propagate. So, while farmers were willing to try direct planting for one season, it was believed that direct planting every other year would be better, because if direct planting were done every year, both weeds and rodents would infest the land. The farmers were also willing to not burn their fields and leave stubble, and were open to adopt more sustainable crop rotation approaches learned at the Farmer Field Schools.
74. With reference to the biogas facilities, informants reported that Turkey had already introduced incentives to promote biogas technology for about ten years, which were provided under a European Union-funded project. In Konya, it was reported that there already is one biogas facility for farmers to use and there are many that exist at the commercial level. The Government also has biogas experts among its staff.

75. A biogas expert reported that having a biogas facility at the farm level for less than 100 animals will not be efficient and will not have a positive return on investment. As of mid-term, the investment plan for the facilities envisioned by the Project had not yet been developed. The investment strategy should address some issues such as whether the biogas facility will be an on-grid facility or otherwise, since there were differences among stakeholders on the form that the facilities would take and how farmers would ultimately benefit from the facilities. Since it was reported that facilities at the farm level are not cost-efficient, any facility that uses waste from many farms would need to have that waste transported. How and whether farmers would transport waste without reaping any direct benefit (other than reduced emissions) remained unclear. The investment strategy should also examine experiences from other rural communities to determine the probable success of such a model. Nonetheless, procurement for the facilities is going forward before completion of this investment study.
  
76. In the reporting on workshops and capacity building exercises conducted by the project, sex-disaggregated data were not provided (e.g. Workshop on Soil Degradation and Sustainable Management in December 2016 attended by 70 persons, training on the Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool held in November 2016 attended by 32 experts). There did not appear to be gender targeting for these activities. As such, there was no focus on women-cantered knowledge building. Food security and nutrition among female cohorts at the Farmer Field Schools was also not emphasized.

**Table 4:** Summary table of outputs/outcomes

OUTCOME OR OUTPUT	BASELINE	LEVEL IN PIR	MID-TERM TARGET	END OF PROJECT TARGET	MID-TERM LEVEL AND ASSESSMENT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING	JUSTIFICATION FOR ASSESSMENT
<b>COMPONENT 1: CAPACITIES BUILT TO REHABILITATE CURRENTLY DEGRADED FOREST AND RANGELAND</b>							
Outcome 1.1: Hectares of land in target area with vegetative cover	16 650		30 000	60 000	No monitoring data available	Moderately Satisfactory	The Project is making very good progress in rehabilitating forest areas and pasture land. However, it has not made good progress in the development of an ecological restoration plan or an integrated management plan.
Outcome 1.1: Of the 20 000 of degraded forest targeted, number of Ha rehabilitated	0		10 000	20 000	14 620		
Outcome 1.1: Tree Density (trees per ha)	30		40	50	No monitoring data available		
Outcome 1.1: Amount (ha) of degraded rangeland and pastures under improved management due to Project	0		15 000	30 000	13 588		
Outcome 1.1: Hectares of protected habitat under ecological restoration plan	0		6 680	6 680 ha of protected habitat managed under ecological management plan	0		
Output 1.2: Integrated Management Plan	0		1	Fully developed and tested plan	0		
<b>COMPONENT 2: CAPACITIES BUILT TO APPLY CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES ACROSS PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPES</b>							
Outcome 2.1: Amount (Ha) of arable land under conservation agriculture practices	0		20 000-25 000	40 000-50 000	11 000	Unsatisfactory	The Project has not yet procured biodigesters and has not even contracted

Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agriculture"

OUTCOME OR OUTPUT	BASELINE	LEVEL IN PIR	MID-TERM TARGET	END OF PROJECT TARGET	MID-TERM LEVEL AND ASSESSMENT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING	JUSTIFICATION FOR ASSESSMENT
due to project							
Outcome 2.1: Number of livestock/poultry producers contributing to biodigesters	0		50	50	0		for the investment research on biodigesters. The amount of land under conservation agricultural practices is considerably less than anticipated.
Biomass (Kg C/ha/year)	1 200		1 450	1 600	No monitoring data available		
Amount of CO <sub>2</sub> emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> -eq) avoided because of project's methane capture sites	0		8 000-10 000	8 000-10 000	0		
<b>COMPONENT 3: STRENGTHENING ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR MULTIPLE BENEFITS FROM SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT</b>							
Outcome 3.1: Number of farm or ranch households adopting improved practices	0		150	500	No monitoring data available	Unsatisfactory	Progress on the FFS has been slow. The monitoring system for this component is very weak.
Outcome 3.1: Number of FFS members	0		500 males, 250 females	750 males, 500 females	114 (Gender-disaggregated data not available)		
Outcome 3.1: The existence of pilot site level and/or national level policy frameworks operationalized to integrate SLM, BD, and CC-based land use planning and monitoring across productive landscapes	0		0	At least one pilot site framework and one national framework	No monitoring data available		
Amount (ha) of arable	0 ha forest		10 000 ha forest	20 000 ha forest	No monitoring data		

Mid-term Evaluation of the Project "Sustainable Land Management and Climate-Friendly Agriculture"

OUTCOME OR OUTPUT	BASELINE	LEVEL IN PIR	MID-TERM TARGET	END OF PROJECT TARGET	MID-TERM LEVEL AND ASSESSMENT	ACHIEVEMENT RATING	JUSTIFICATION FOR ASSESSMENT
land by type with biodiversity mainstreamed in management practices resulting from project	0 ha pasture 0 ha arable land		10 000 ha pasture 10 000 ha arable land	30 000 ha pasture 30 000 ha arable land	available		
Spatial coverage of integrated natural resource management practices in wider landscapes (as reported in GEF LD tracking tool)	0 million ha agricultural lands 0 million ha pasture lands 0 ha forests		0 million ha agricultural lands 0 million ha pasture lands 0 ha forests	2.2 million ha agricultural lands 1.8 million ha pasture lands 700 000 ha forests	No monitoring data available		
Institutional integrated management capacity building programme established for national and local level decision makers - - number of decision makers trained in SLM	0			50	11		

### 3.3 Efficiency of the Project

**To what extent is the Project making best use of available human, technical, technological, financial and knowledge inputs to achieve its desired results?**

#### **Sub-Questions**

**To what extent has project management been efficient in terms of timely execution of activities and delivery of outputs?**

**How did the quality of the Project work plans affect the timely execution of activities and delivery of outputs?**

**How did personnel recruitment and mobilization affect the timely execution of activities and delivery of outputs?**

**To what extent is the Project governance system able to make informed and timely decisions on the Project?**

**To what extent is the monitoring and evaluation system able to provide relevant and timely information for decision-making on the Project?**

**Key Findings:** The execution of project activities and delivery of expected outputs are delayed, partly due to vagueness in the Project Document and inability of the inception phase to move the Project forward; there are complementary efforts being done by the Government and other agencies, which are being reported in terms of their co-financing on the Project; human resource recruitment challenges affected the Project's ability to achieve results turnovers within the Government partner affected the pace of project implementation; the lack of a project office at the target area decreases project efficiency; Project governance and management structures have not functioned as planned; the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system does not allow the provision of timely information for decision-making on the project; technical support to the Project from FAO headquarters and the subregional office was perceived to be good and reliable.

77. It was reported that the Project was designed by two sequential teams. The first team hired to design the Project did not produce a clear Project Document so another consultant was hired to complete it. In order to complete it in a timely manner, the Project Document did not include details such as the specific sites where the project would operate or a detailed work plan with roles and responsibilities. The lack of these specifications on the Project Document contributed to the delay in project start-up.
78. Interviewed local officials and experts were not privy on the project design. It was assumed that support for the Project and involvement in the formulation at the national government level already included intra-government consultations at the subnational levels. However, local officials and experts felt that they had not been consulted sufficiently and had little influence on the design of the project, if any. The lack of local contribution to the project design, particularly among the pilot sites, contributed to a lack of local ownership and clarity at the project's start.
79. Despite a lack of specific activities, the Project Document has quantitative outcomes that the Project is expected to produce. The evaluation team asked various stakeholders how the outcomes in the Project Document were reached, and no one could provide an explanation or roadmap as to how any of the quantitative outcomes were derived. Thus, from the start, there

was no buy-in to the outcomes. Without knowing the specific activities that would yield the outcomes from the start of the Project, project staff and stakeholders were unclear on how to start the Project.

80. A Project Inception Workshop was held in August 2015. The Workshop aimed to provide recommendations on activities and responsibilities of project stakeholders, and to produce a work plan and time frame of activities, among other objectives. However, the activity did not result in the adoption of implementation plans or to identify a process to develop such plans.
81. The Project Document indicated a number of related initiatives on sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture in Turkey that are being reported in terms of co-financing by project stakeholders (see Appendix 3). For example, there was significant co-financing from the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Nature Conservation Centre and Konya Sugar Factory in terms of their related activities on sustainable land management. In this sense, it can be stated that the Project is coordinating related activities to achieve the target outcomes.
82. At the policy level, the Project has not yet linked with the Department of Climate Change of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization which is tasked with creating a policy environment conducive to climate change mitigation and adaptation. In this arena, the Project should rely on this office and its existing structures to create favourable policy changes.
83. The project faced a number of human resource challenges. It did not become relatively fully staffed until Fall of 2016. Figure 2 shows when it hired positions.



88. Since July 2016, the country has been in a state of emergency and human resource turnover in the Government has been active with over 100 000 civil servant positions having turned over. The turnover of a position has a cascading effect on the Government because it is often filled by persons working in other government positions. At the time of the evaluation, it was believed that there was still very high turnover. Increasing capacity and creating synergies within the Government is challenging when the positions the Project relates to suffer from high turnover.
89. The Project Office has to conform to the standards set by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS). The Government willingly supported the Project by providing it with an office where the Konya Provincial Government has its offices. However, a review by DSS showed that the office did not meet United Nations safety criteria in a number of ways, including but not limited to the building not being earthquake-proof, a criterion that is challenging for older buildings to meet.
90. The lack of an office closer to the field resulted in the Project being based in Ankara, and field activities are conducted by staff commuting from Ankara to Konya, which is about a two and one-half hour train ride. To get to more remote locations than the city of Konya, more time is needed (up to two hours by vehicle). Government staff and partners lamented that the Project did not have an ongoing presence at the project area, and that consultants come in and out rather than having a continuous presence. This issue was raised in Project Task Force meetings as early as November 2015.
91. The governance and management structures envisioned for the Project are the Project Steering Committee and the National Project Implementation Unit. As of June 2017, the Project Steering Committee met only twice - December 2015 and June 2016. At the time of the evaluation, the Project Steering Committee had not met in over a year. Notes from its meetings indicated that it has operated more as a group that received reports on the project's progress rather than a decision-making body. The National Project Implementation Unit was also never established.
92. Rather than relying on the formal structures for project implementation, what instead occurred were ad hoc arrangements that relied on particular individuals. Strong professionals from the implementing agency consequently took more active management roles than were envisioned.
93. It was perceived that the absence of governance and management structures resulted in the following difficulties: a) communications between project personnel became ad hoc; b) there were no strong work plans created and there was a lack of back planning. This contributed to frustration with the length of time it takes to procure items and experts; c) a key project goal, developing the capacity of the two main ministries to work together around shared interests, suffered because of a lack of structure for doing so; d) the post of National Project Coordinator became stronger than envisioned. The Project turned to the individuals filling that post for project direction; and e) the Project did not have an actionable work plan until January 2017.
94. The Project also faced difficulties in establishing a functional monitoring and evaluation system. At the time of the evaluation, there was no monitoring and evaluation professional associated with the Project. While progress reports were submitted, these did not have a firm structure and the items reported between reports differed.

95. A positive aspect of project efficiency was the use of available technical support on sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture from the implementing agency. According to informants, the Project received good and reliable support from technical units and persons at headquarters and the subregional office of the implementing agency.
96. In general, the evaluation team rates the project's efficiency up until 30 June 2017 as Unsatisfactory - implementation of most of the components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.

### 3.4 Potential for sustainability

#### **How likely is it for the project activities and use of the delivered project technologies and outputs to continue even after the end of the Project?**

##### **Sub-Questions**

##### **To what extent has the Project developed a sustainability strategy and exit plan?**

##### **To what extent are there indications that the project activities and outputs will be sustainable?**

**Key Findings:** To date, the Project has not focused on sustainability, in part due to its delayed start; however, there are indications that project activities and outputs will be sustainable.

97. Thus far, the Project has neither a formal sustainability strategy nor an exit plan; however, there are indications that some project activities and outputs will be sustainable. The capacity-building activities on sustainable land management appeared to have a positive effect on the actual practices of farmers.
98. As of June 2017, the Project had not focused on the sustainability of its activities, in part due to its delayed start. However, it has laid the building blocks for sustainability at the Farmer Field Schools. By creating the FFS and training local government staff and partners on sustainable land management techniques, it is possible for the trainings to continue in the future, even after the Project has ceased.
99. With regard to reforestation and rehabilitating degraded forestlands, the effects of reforesting land will be realized in the future, beyond the end date of the project. For the planting of nut trees, the project is providing a supplemental source of income for households near the new orchards. Regarding the planting of other tree species that grow quickly and are intended to decrease wind erosion, again, the impact of those plantings in terms of decreased erosion will be realized in the future.
100. Work needs to be done to assure that a sustainability approach is incorporated into the distribution of the direct planting/no till machines, some of which have been procured but not distributed at the time of writing. Interviewees reflected that a specific plan for distributing the machines that will assure their use, fair sharing and maintenance had not been solidified. The evaluation team inquired about farmers renting them for a nominal fee, which would assure that farmers would return the machines promptly and also provide resources for the maintenance of the machines. If the rent was high enough, it might also provide resources to purchase more machines. This issue should be explored further.

101. The evaluation team found moderate risks to the Project being sustainable, but expected that at least some outcomes will be sustained. With regard to the forestry aspect of the Project, the team believes that the work being done will have long-term impacts and become sustainable. The work on agriculture, though, needs to have an exit plan developed.
102. The evaluation team found some government structures that could be better integrated into the Project to increase its sustainability. For example, the Project needs to engage the Department of Climate Change. Threats to sustainability include turnover of staff in the central government. On the basis of these findings, the team believes that the Project is Moderately Likely to be sustained.

## 4 Conclusions and recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1. The Project is clearly and coherently responding to actual national/subnational environmental needs and priorities, as well as to the current global agenda for sustainable development.**

103. It is supporting the Government of Turkey in meeting its obligations to related international conventions to which it is committed. It is also supporting the Government's national strategies, most importantly the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and the National Climate Change Strategy. In addition, the Project fits in well with the obligations of FAO to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Conclusion 2. The design and implementation of the Project is weak for it to contribute meaningfully to the global agenda for women's empowerment and gender equality.**

104. The project was designed without an in-depth study that would identify and address the basic issues on women's empowerment and gender equality prevailing in the country. While there were gender-related targets and activities in the project component on the Farmer Field Schools, these were not planned for thoroughly and implemented fully.

**Conclusion 3. The implementation of the project activities and the delivery of project outputs are significantly delayed, and as such the Project is not on track in achieving its target results. More time will be needed to achieve the project results.**

105. Because of the Project's late operational start, except for the work done on rehabilitating forests and rangelands, it has not met the mid-point targets envisioned in the Project Document. Some of the targets were created without clear justification and may be unrealistic. The Project has started the Farmer Field Schools and is working on the biogas component. There are positive immediate effects among some farmers in terms of their adoption of sustainable land management practices. There is nonetheless a challenge in disaggregating similar effects among women. With regard to creating an enhanced enabling environment for sustainable land management, the Project needs to work with structures already in place at the national government.

**Conclusion 4. Due to basic weaknesses in the aspects of planning, governance and management, the Project is not yet able to make best use of most available inputs to achieve its desired results.**

106. Project efficiency faced challenges. Contributing to this were an unclear Project Document, an ineffective inception process, human resource challenges both within the implementing agency and the government partner, and project institutional arrangements and management structures that did not function as expected. The Project was not able to establish a monitoring and evaluation system. On the other hand, there were efficiencies in terms of making use of co-financed resources and activities, and in getting available technical expertise from the implementing agency.

**Conclusion 5. At mid-term stage, it is moderately likely that the project activities and use of the delivered project technologies and outputs will continue even after the end of the project.**

107. Due to its delayed start, the Project had not yet focused on its sustainability. However, the foundations for sustaining sound agricultural practices being promoted by the Project have been

established through the Farmer Field Schools. Related initiatives on sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture also increase the probability of continuing the intervention in the long-run. In terms of policy, the Project needs to work with existing structures within the Government to create policy changes that will support the sustainability of the interventions.

**Table 5:** Summary ratings

Measure	Rating	Achievement Description
<b>Project Strategy</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	The Project is being implemented in partnership with the two key ministries on sustainable land management and climate-friendly agriculture. However, the governance and management system is not yet fully functional.
<b>Progress Towards Results</b>	Outcome 1: Degraded forest and rangelands rehabilitated and management practices improved. Achievement Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>	Progress in rehabilitating forest land is at a pace higher than anticipated.
	Outcome 2: Climate-Smart Agricultural Techniques applied across productive landscaped Achievement Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>	The approach of the Project is sound. However, the pace and intensity of implementation was not as envisioned. Further, credible monitoring does not seem to be occurring.
	Outcome 3: Enhanced Enabling Environment for Sustainable Land Management Achievement Rating: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>	The Project has produced insufficient results in this area. Further, because of the delay in the project’s implementation, there will not be time to pilot strategies and revise. The Project should be working closely with pre-existing governmental offices to achieve this outcome.
<b>Project Implementation and Adaptive Management</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Management of the Project has not been fully functional. Combined with internal organizational issues that add to staff turnover, the lack of a functional management structure has implications on the project’s ability to build capacity.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Moderately Likely</b>	Components of the Project differ in their likelihood to be sustainable.

## 4.2 Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. To help all project stakeholders develop a better understanding of the Project, some sections of the Project Document should be updated.**

108. These could include: a) the Theory of Change; b) a detailed organizational chart for the Project that shows reporting lines and the timing of future hires; c) a detailed budget, spending plan and procurement schedule; d) realistic targets, and e) an approach to assure that women, ethnic minorities and the poor are project beneficiaries.

**Recommendation 2. In view of the delayed status of project implementation, the evaluation team recommends that the Project be extended for twenty months at no cost. The project team should nonetheless prepare and submit an implementation plan that will show how the target results (as updated) will be achieved within the extended period.**

**Recommendation 3. There needs to be a reconsideration as to how the Project will reduce gender inequities.**

109. The activities planned and implemented to date will not promote women participating equally with men as decision makers; allow women equal access to and control over decent employment and income, land and other productive resources; reduce women's work burden; reduce gender inequities; or give women equal access to goods and services for agricultural development. As envisioned, the Farmer Field Schools were to have curricula that differed between men and women, though that has not occurred. The Project must have a gender consultant actively engaged with it and should do consultations with women in the target areas to determine how the Project might improve women's livelihoods and status.

**Recommendation 4. The Project should have a monitoring and evaluation professional actively working on measurement and data collection issues. Verified data should be provided to stakeholders on a regular basis for oversight and decision-making purposes.**

**Recommendation 5. The governance and management system for the Project should be strengthened.**

110. This should be done by: a) establishing the National Project Implementation Unit with staff from both the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock; b) setting quarterly Project Steering Committee Meetings where project decisions are made; and c) holding senior management meetings at a bi-weekly basis.

## **5 Lessons learned**

**Lesson 1. The Project Document should be well-written and accessible to all stakeholders. Lack of clarity in the document adversely affects project implementation.**

**Lesson 2. The project inception phase is an important process that should also be guided technically by relevant units, such as the Project Task Force, or by the planning unit of the implementing agency.**

**Lesson 3. Projects that involve both national and subnational government units should ensure that parallel and complementary consultative processes are undertaken at both levels.**

## 6 Appendices

### Appendix 1. List of people interviewed

Institution/Context	Name-Surname
MFWA – Undersecretariat (GEF Op. Focal Point)	Akif ÖZKALDI, Undersecretary
	Ahmet DURAN, Advisor
MFWA – GD of Combatting Desertification	Hanifi AVCI, (GD)
	Mustafa GÖZÜKARA (GD)
	Cafer ORHAN (Deputy GD)
	Kürşat YILDIRIM
	Ahmet ŞENDAĞLI
	Sibel Nihal TEKİN
	Onur BEYAZOĞLU
	Ömer Faruk ÖZTÜRK
MFWA-GD of Nature Conservation and National Parks	Ergül TERZİOĞLU
	Fatih KÖYLÜOĞLU
	Elif GEZEN
	Hilmi ÇATAL
	Ercan YENİ, Ph.D.
	Serhat ORAL
	Şükran ÇELİKKAYA
MFWA-GD of Forestry	Havva KAPTAN, PhD.
	Ahmet YALVAÇ
	Mehmet DEMİR
	Nuran KARAÇORLU
MFAL – GD of Agricultural Reform	Metin TÜRKER (Deputy DG)
	Kemal PEKDOĞAN
	Abdulsamet AYDIN
	Burçin DİLER
MFAL – Konya Provincial Directorate	Seyfettin BAYDAR
	Mehmet TUĞAY
	Bilal KALE
	Ülkü GÜNHAN
	Mevlüt VANOĞLU
	Haydar KURT
	Güngör ÇİĞDEM (Sarayönü)
	Kamil KÜÇÜK
	Hanifi KEÇECİ
	Ayşe Özkan SEVİMLİ
	Orhan ÖZÇALIK, Director
MFAL- Karaman Provincial Directorate	İbrahim SAYALAN
	Abdullah KAYA
	İbrahim ERKOL
	Rıza KODER (Ayrancı)
	M.Tuğrul ŞAHİN
MFWA – Regional Directorate (Konya-Karaman)	M.Tuğrul ŞAHİN

	Rıza GÜLEÇ
	Vedat DİKİCİ
	Hasan KİLİVAR
	Bırol DÜNDAR
	İlyas ÖZDEMİR
	Perihan ÜNSAL
	Yasin ÖZAY
	Forestry Officers (3)
MoENR - TEİAŞ	Murat HARDALAÇ (Deputy DG)
	Kamil GÜNDÜZ (HoDrp.)
	Expert ??
	Expert ??
MoEnU – GD of Environmental Management (DoCC)	Mehrali Ecer (HoDep.)
Konya Sugar Co. (Project Partner)	M.Gökhan YAZGAN
Nature Conservation Center (DKM)(Project Partner)	Yıldıray LİSE
	İrem TÜFEKÇİOĞLU
Sarayonu Chamber of Agriculture	Ömer Fatih KANÇA (Chair)
	Mahpeyker Feryal KARÇA
<b>FAO</b>	Yuriko SHOJI
	Salim ZAHOUEH
	Peter PECHACEK
	Fatma GÜNGÖR
	Gamze ERGÜR İŞÇİ
	Güher SUNGUR
	Yasemen Aslı YILMAZGİL
	Mehmet DEMİR
	Fatih BOZDEMİR
	Bayram HOPUR
	Dr.Çağlar BAŞSÜLLÜ
	Alper KOÇAK
	Özge DOĞAN
	Natavan IMAMOVA
	Hafiz MUMINJANOV
	Hernan GONZALES
	Nora BERRAHMOUNI
	Genevieve BRAUN
UN-Gender Team	Zeliha ÜNALDI
<b>FARMERS/VILLAGERS</b>	
Konya- Ilgın- Bulcuk	8 Men
Konya-Sarayönü	5 women, 9 men
Konya – Ereğli – Karaören	11 men
Karaman-Ayrancı District	2 women, 6 men

**Appendix 2. List of documents consulted**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Document</b>
1	Project Document
2	FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review for 1 July 2015-30 June 2016
3	1 <sup>st</sup> Progress Report (1 January – 30 June 2015)
4	2 <sup>nd</sup> Progress Report (1 July– 31 December 2015)
5	3 <sup>rd</sup> Progress Report (1 January – 30 June 2016)
6	4 <sup>th</sup> Progress Report (1 July – 31 December 2016)
7	5 <sup>th</sup> Progress Report (1 January – 30 June 2017)
8	Project Inception Report (November 2015)
9	Task Force Meeting Minutes, 18 September 2015
10	1st Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, 08 December 2015
11	Project Task Force Meeting Minutes, 13 January 2016
12	2nd Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting Minutes, 07 June 2016
13	Meeting Minutes on NPC Konya Trip on January 26-29, 2016
14	Minutes of Review Meeting, 5 May 2016
15	Project Task Force Meeting Minutes, 19 April 2016
16	Task force Meeting Minutes, 9 November 2015
17	Minutes of Technical meeting at MFWA, 20 April 2016
18	Minutes of Meeting at MFWA, 11 August 2016
19	Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, 27 October 2016
20	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, 6 December 2016
21	Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule (MS Excel)
22	Project M&E Framework (LFM Status) for project GCP/TUR/055/GFF as at: 30-11-2016 (MS Excel)
23	Concept for the Ecosystem Based Rehabilitation of the Dryland Forests and Aforestation Areas, Ilari Sohlo, Dryland Forests and Rangelands International Consultant
24	Brief/Info note on the project
25	GCP/TUR/055 Feasibility Report for 100 Cattle Biogas Facility, July 2017
26	GCP/TUR/055 Biodiversity Inventory and Biodiversity Management Plan Brief
27	Ereğli Integrated Forest Management Plan Service - Apiculture Expert Mid-Term Report
28	Report on Ereğli Forest Management Works
29	Presentation on Ereğli Forest Management Works (Uyum forestry Co.)
30	Report on Ereğli Forest Management Unit Works in Rangelands
31	Non-Timber Forest Products Field Survey Notes
32	Tech Specs for Solar Powered Submersible Pump System
33	Forestry Demonstration Sites ToR/Technical Specifications (5 site)
34	Revised Selected Demo Sites Weekly Implementation Plan by Mehmet_Demir
35	List of Steering Committee Members and Local Contacts
36	DKM LoA First Progress Report and Annexes
37	Workplans (18.02.2016)(18.10.2016 Rev.) (MS Excel)
38	Final Implementation Strategy Jan ?
39	Technical Specifications of Model Land Management Plan
40	Operational Documents (Partner Communications, Letters, Budget Docs, etc.)
41	Technical specifications and procurement documents of biogas facility
42	Technical specifications and procurement documents of no-till hand planters
43	Organisation documents for Farmer Field Schools
44	LOA Documents (DKM, Sarayönü, TAGM, Uyum Forestry Co., etc.)

45	Technical specifications and procurement documents of seedlings and saplings
46	Mission Reports of Consultants (various)
47	United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy, Turkey, 2011-2015
48	FAO Policy on Gender Equality: Attaining Food Security Goals in Agriculture and Rural Development (2013)
49	Gender, Key to Sustainability and Food Security Plan of Action, Gender and Development, 2003

### Appendix 3. Co-financing table

Name of the co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized co-financing at project mid-term (in USD)		
			In kind	Cash	Total	In kind	Cash	Total
MFWA	Government		1 000 000		1 000 000	575 560.25		575 560.25
MFWA	Government			9 100 000	9 100 000		12 296 066.18	12 296 066.18
MFAL	Government		1 000 000		1 000 000			
MFAL	Government			7 700 000	7 700 000			25 381 925.88
FAO	GEF Agency		500 000		500 000	125 540		125 540
FAO	GEF Agency			200 000	200 000		413 000	413 000
Konya Sugar	Non-Profit			1 000 000	1 000 000		670 000	670 000
Nature Conservation Centre	Non-Profit			1 600 000	1 600 000		1 600 000	1 600 000
Nature Conservation Centre	Non-Profit		200 000		200 000	200 000		200 000
<b>Grand Total (in USD)</b>			2 700 000	19 600 000	22 300 000			41 262 092.31

## **7 List of Annexes**

Annex available at <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/en/>

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

