Terminal evaluation of the project "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and carbon sink enhancement into Mongolia's productive forest landscapes"

Project code: GCP/MON/008/GFF GEF ID: 4744

Annex 1. Terms of Reference

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS Rome, 2020

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Acronyms and abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FPMIS	Field Project Management Information System
FRDC	Forest Research and Development Centre
FUG	Forest user group
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH)
ISFU	Inter-Soum Forest Unit
OPIM	Operational Partner Implementation Modality
PFM	Participatory forest management
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (initiative)
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

1. Background and context of the project

1. These terms of reference (TOR) framework the terminal evaluation of the Project entitled "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management and carbon sink enhancement into Mongolia's productive forest landscapes" (GCP/MON/008/GFF)", henceforth referred to as "the Project". In addition to briefly describing the Project and its key areas of work, these TOR set out the purpose and scope of the evaluation, outline the methodological approach, and propose a work plan.

2. This document was developed by the Office of Evaluation (OED) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in consultation with the project team, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Coordination Unit at FAO, the Project Lead Technical Officer and the National Project Director at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of the Government of Mongolia.

Box 1: Basic project information

- GEF Project ID Number: 4744
- Recipient country: Mongolia
- Implementing Agency: FAO
- Executing Agency: Government of Mongolia (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, MET)
- GEF Focal Area: Multi-Focal Area Project focusing on: Biodiversity and Land Degradation, with SFM/REDD Incentive Mechanism
- GEF Strategy/operational program: **SO2:** Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner. Organizational Outcomes 1 and 2
- GEF Strategic Objectives: BD2 Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes, seascapes and sectors.
  LD2 Generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services in drylands, including sustaining livelihoods of forest dependent people.
- SFM/REDD 1 Reduce pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services.
- PIF approved: February 16, 2012
- Date of CEO endorsement: 25 February 2014
- Date of PPRC endorsement: 11 March 2014
- Date of project start: 30 October 2014
- Execution Agreement signed: 10 April 2014
- Execution Agreement amended: none
- Initial date of project completion (original NTE): 24 October 2019
- Revised project implementation end date: 31 March 2020
- Date of Mid-Term Evaluation: Oct-Dec 2016

1.1 Context of the project

3. Mongolia has significantly transformed since its transition from socialism to a democratic capitalist country (a process which started in the early 1990s). Steady economic growth

since 2004, drawn from strong mining exports and high mineral prices, has set a favourable stage for poverty reduction in Mongolia. In 2013, Mongolia lied at the threshold of a major economic take-off, based partly on the recent discovery of vast, exploitable mineral resources. The share of mining in gross domestic product (GDP) had already risen to over 20 percent.

4. After a sharp slowdown during 2014-2016 driven by a fall in commodity prices and declining foreign direct investment, the Mongolian economy strongly recovered in 2017 and 2018. The annual GDP in 2018 was of 6,9 percent.

5. This economic growth has led to some benefits for many of the people of Mongolia. According to the World Bank (World Bank), poverty had decreased from 39.2 percent in 2010 to 29.8 percent in 2011 in the country. However, between 2014 and 2016, when the non-mining economy was particularly hit by falling investment and declining private consumption, Mongolia's poverty rate rose again to the level of 2012. As the country resumed the economic growth, decreased poverty estimates followed: from 29.6 percent in 2016 to 28.4 percent in 2018.

6. Nevertheless, Mongolia remains an impoverished country highly dependent upon its natural resource base, in particular the populations living in the forested areas of the North of the country. In fact, poverty rates in the rural areas of the country are 2.4 percentage points higher than the national average.

7. The northern, boreal forests extend over 11.5 million hectares, covering approximately 10 percent of Mongolia. Along with the economic growth, these forests have been suffering enormous pressure:

   i. Loss of biodiversity and wildlife: given that more than 40 percent of Mongolia is desert, a great deal of the globally significant biodiversity lies in the northern forests. However, some studies estimate that between 1992 and 2005 the populations of key species of mammals and birds declined by 50-90 percent, due to underlying causes, including difficult economic conditions, inadequate law enforcement and market opportunities. The hunting of wildlife is believed to have slowed in recent years thanks to government regulation, public awareness and reduction of species.

   ii. Continuous destruction and degradation of the unique forest ecosystems: the 2010 FAO Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) for Mongolia estimates that Mongolia's northern boreal forests are being lost at an annual rate of 0.74 percent per year, or just over 80 000 hectares each year. Boreal forests are affected primarily by legal and illegal logging (timber for construction, private use and fuel wood), forest fires, insect attack and disease, and unsustainable harvesting.

8. As a result, much of Mongolia's productive landscape is now largely wildlife impoverished. Moreover, socio-economic challenges led to vast increases in livestock numbers, which raised the pressures on natural habitats, including forests. At the same time, the total carbon stored in the ecosystems of the northern forests is estimated by FAO to be close to 3 billion tonnes, considering carbon stocked in the biomass (20 percent) and in the soil and litter (80 percent).

9.   Moreover, the current mining boom brings risks associated with a dependency on minerals and a non-diversified economy. These risks range from exposure to commodity price volatility, inflation, unemployment, rising corruption, inequality and social disruptions. These issues, along with rapid economic transition and population growth, are amongst the factors directly and indirectly placing pressure on Mongolia's unique natural resource base.

10.   The predominant livelihoods of population living in such areas are based on livestock herding systems which provide the setting for most social and economic activities. Within this context, forestry has always played a minor but important role. Over the last two decades, a unique form of participatory forest management (PFM) has developed, connecting livestock-herders to forests[1] and integrating livestock raising with forestry. During the same period, government forest policy has changed from a focus on timber production. It first evolved to environmental protection and conservation in the 1990s and 2000s. It is now evolving again towards sustainable utilization. Government institutions responsible for managing forests have also evolved – most importantly in line with the national decentralization process. Accordingly, decision-making has been somewhat decentralized to lower levels of government.

Figure 1: Map showing location of study FUGs
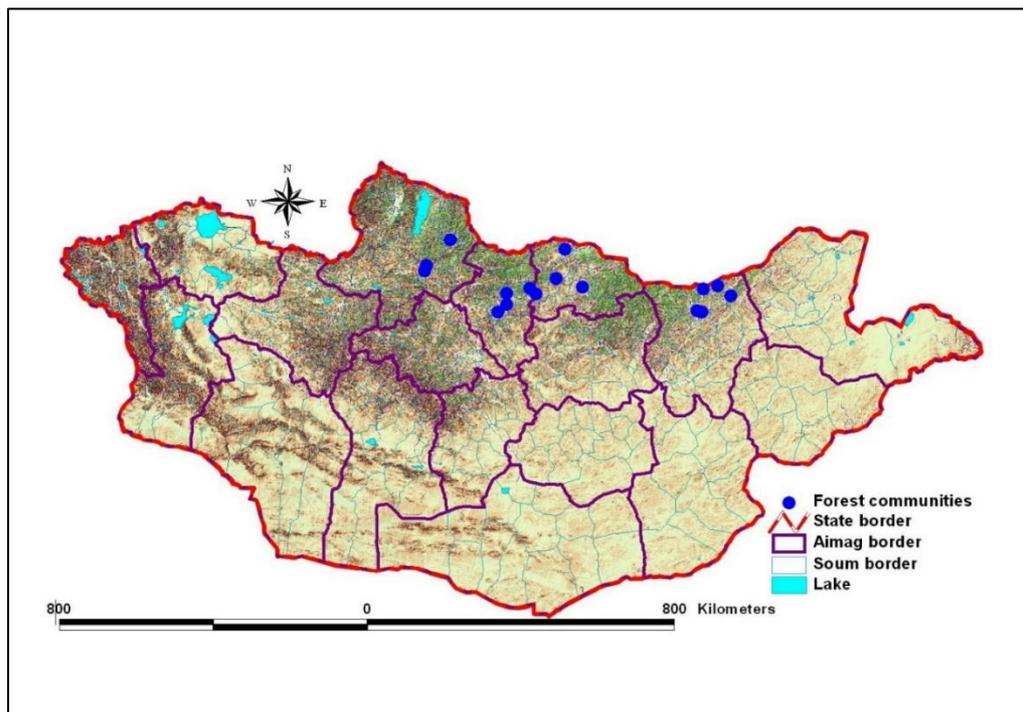
Source: Project Document

11.   National policy now supports the establishment of forest user groups (FUGs). FUGs represent a tool to involve rural communities in forest management, provide income possibilities to rural communities, and provide practical management mechanisms for Mongolia's vast forests. National legislation regulates the permitted activities of an FUG –

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[1] PFM is a wide range of processes and mechanisms that enable local forest stakeholders and resource owners to be a part of decision-making in all aspects of forest management.

and their activities are overseen and officially supported by local government forestry agencies

12. In spite of these progresses, some barriers still impede the full development of PFM in Mongolia, such as:

> #1 Inadequate capacity amongst the forest user groups.
> #2 Inadequate capacity in local governments agencies to provide extension services.
> #3 Absence of a complete, comprehensive model of PFM.
> #4 Poor functioning and incomplete markets for forest products.
> #5 Gaps remaining in the national enabling environment and persistent resistance to PFM.

13. The project was designed to strengthen the PFM process, aiming to overcome these obstacles.

1.2 Description of project, objectives and components

14. To strengthen PFM, particularly towards a more attractive rights/obligations balance in policy and practice, and to build in biodiversity and REDD+[2] elements, the project "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation, sustainable forest management (SFM) and carbon sink enhancement into Mongolia's productive forest landscapes" was developed. It has a Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant of USD 3 586 364 and co-financing (in kind) from the Government of Mongolia (GoM) (USD 12 825 000), the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) (USD 5 400 000), FAO (USD 800 000) and the Government of Finland (USD 960 000) with total budget of USD 23.3 million.

15. The project is overseen by a Project Coordination Committee (PCC), FAO country office and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The project was set-up as a five-year programme to run from January 2014 to December 2018. It was launched on 22 May 2015 with the Inception Workshop; field activities began in July 2015. After obtaining a No-Cost Extension, its activities are planned to end in October 2019.

16. The Project Objective is "Sustainable forest management in Mongolia's forest landscape secures the flow of multiple ecosystem services and benefits, including biological diversity, reduced degradation, and carbon storage, while enhancing resilience to climate change".

17. The project is structured in three key components, which respond to the above-mentioned challenges:

i.   **Component 1:** Strengthened institutional, policy and regulatory framework
ii. **Component 2:** Models for participatory SFM that improve livelihoods, conserve biodiversity and reduce emissions/increase carbon stocks.
iii. **Component 3: Expanding** biodiversity friendly, climate friendly participatory SFM.

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[2] REDD+, an acronym for Reduced Emissions from avoided Deforestation and Degradation, is a mechanism developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It creates a financial value for the carbon stored in forests by offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development. (source: https://www.unredd.net/about/what-is-redd-plus.html)

18. In correspondence with the components, three Outcomes and associated Outputs were designed to achieve the Project Objective.

    i. **Outcome 1: Enabling institutional, policy and regulatory framework for Sustainable PFM.** Key Outputs include a Ministerial level resolution to allow FUGs to be involved in and to benefit from timber harvesting; and a Unit in the Forest Development and Research Centre that is capable of integrating biodiversity conservation and carbon storage into all participatory forestry in Mongolia.

    ii. **Outcome 2: Sustainable PFM is demonstrated that leads to improved livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and reduced carbon emissions/increased stocks.** Key Outputs include the demonstration of a simple REDD+-type incentives mechanism; the **demonstration** of biodiversity conservation practices in 10 priority FUGs, and; increased revenue from timber and non-timber forest products at 16 FUGs.

    iii. **Outcome 3: Sustainable PFM that conserves biodiversity, reduces degradation and reduces carbon emissions/increases carbon stocks expanded across significant areas of northern forests.** Key Outputs include 8 PFM Extension Offices in the local government structure; and 84 FUGs going through the PFM process: i.e.: developing simple 3-year PFM plans, having FUG Certificates approved, and developing 10-year **SFM** Plans.

19. An additional outcome was included to focus on the monitoring and evaluation of progress and results:

    i. **Outcome 4: Monitoring and Evaluation and Information Dissemination.** Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of progress and results will be undertaken based on the targets and indicators established in the project Results Framework. A comprehensive M&E system responding to the needs of the Mongolian government, FAO, GEF and the project office has been developed, providing full details of roles, responsibilities outputs and reporting.

20. A mid-term review (MTR) was carried out by FAO-GEF Coordination Unit from October to December 2016 to assess project's progress and performance towards attaining the expected outputs and outcomes

21. The MTR considered the project premise and design as extremely relevant to the problems faced by FUG forestry. Likewise, it confirmed that the Project logic, linking of the government reform (Outcome 1) with pilots on the ground (Outcome 2) and the scaling up (Outcome 3) was also relevant in terms of strategy to address the challenge.

22. The overall performance according to the GEF rating scheme is demonstrated in the table below:

Table 1: GEF rating table

Item	Rating
Relevance of the project to the Government, FAO and GEF priorities	Highly Satisfactory
Project design	Highly Satisfactory
Implementation approach (institutional set-up, management arrangements, work plans, operations)	Satisfactory
Cost-efficacy relation	Satisfactory
Progress towards achieving project objectives	Satisfactory
Results and activities achievement	Moderately Satisfactory
Stakeholders engagement	Satisfactory
Ownership & Appropriation	Moderately Satisfactory
Sustainability	Moderately Likely
Financial planning, and management, including co-financing	Satisfactory
Monitoring and Evaluation System	Unsatisfactory
Administrative and technical support	Highly Satisfactory
Visibility, communication and knowledge sharing	Satisfactory
Risks (validity of assumptions) and risk management	Satisfactory
Possible Impact	Satisfactory
Replicability	Satisfactory

23.   The MTR offered 24 recommendations, which are summarized below:

i.   An overall recommendation was to concentrate efforts on Outcomes 1 and 2, to further consolidate and build from previous efforts; the 3rd outcome of scaling up should become a third priority in the second half of the project. Among others, the rational for this recommendation was that the emphasis on Outcomes 1 and 2 could in itself produce a 'scale up', if the project achieves transformational change in the governance environment for FUG forestry concerning improved use rights.

ii.   Regarding the effectiveness of Outcome 1, the inclusion of exploration of standing deadwood in the regulation, to focus on communication and policy advocacy strategies and to explore collaborations with other forestry projects (including FAO's) was recommended.

iii.   Regarding the Effectiveness of Outcome 2, the recommendations were divided in themes : Forest based livelihoods development: i) to strengthen the business case analysis of forest enterprise options, including types of forest products, location, viability and of applicability to FUGs, competition and context, FUGs inputs and FAO's guidelines; ii) to analyse/explore partnerships between FUGs and private enterprises/professional forestry organizations, link FUGs to service providers for support, and to investigate FUG boundary disputes and propose solutions.

iv.   FUG forestry and biodiversity: i) to strengthen biodiversity monitoring by, e.g., introducing control sites; and ii) assure its voluntary character for the FUG members.

v.   For FUG forestry and REDD+: i) to joint plan studies to provide evidence on REDD+ pluses and minuses for FUG forestry; ii) avoid raising expectations regarding the

carbon finance; and iii) to justify changes in the project document to enable REDD+ carbon finance to FUGs

vi. On the effectiveness of Outcome 3, to i) focus on elements that contribute most to the transformative change in policy and practice; ii) discuss the most appropriate 'institutional house' for FUG forestry at a national level; and iii) seek for funding for an extension.

vii. On the effectiveness of Outcome 4, i) a deeper review of the log frame and indicators to determining appropriate and realistic indicators; and ii) to systematize and institutionalize a bottom up planning.

viii. The MET also recommended i) the proactively exploration of formal partnerships and joint action plans; ii) a stakeholder comprehensive mapping and development of a subsequent strategy to stakeholder engagement (e.g. parliamentary committees); iii) the design and implementation of a dialogue strategy to gather FUG members and decision/policy makers into national level, multi-stakeholder policy working group/fora; and iv) the review of the communication and legal strategy to better reach FUG members and key-decision makers.

24. The recommendations from the mid-term review and responses from CTA to it were discussed at the Project Coordination Committee meeting on 24 March 2017. Please refer to Appendix 5 for the 24 recommendations and further details on the management response and action plan.

1.3 Project's alignment with FAO, GEF Strategies, and Mongolia's priorities and plans

25. The Project is aligned with FAO's Global Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner. The Project's focus to help local forest user groups improve their forest management practices while benefiting their own livelihoods contributes in particular to Organizational Outcome 1 (OO1) under SO2: Producers and Natural Resource Managers Adopt Practices that Increase and Improve the Provision of Goods and Services in the Agricultural Sector Production Systems in a Sustainable Manner. In addition, the Project's work to strengthen the relevant policy framework in Mongolia contributes to SO2, OO2: 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 system.

26. The project is consistent with the GEF biodiversity and land degradation focal areas and also accords with the objectives of the sustainable forest management area of work. The project is aligned with BD-2, "mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors" as it strengthens policy and regulatory frameworks that devolve responsibilities for production forest and wildlife management to local communities and create incentives for sustainable use.

27. The Project is also aligned with Mongolia's priorities, as expressed in the FAO/Government of Mongolia CPF (CPF 2012-2016) 2012-2016 for Cooperation and Partnership. It contributes to CPF Priority Area 3 (Promotion of sustainable natural resource management

as techniques for adaptation, mitigation, and management for the impacts of climate change), in particular to Outcome 3.2, *Enhanced participatory natural resources management of forested area*s, and to Outcome 3.3, *Enhanced capacity to restore and conserve natural forests.*

1.4   Project stakeholders and their role

FAO stakeholders

28.   **Executing responsibilities (Budget Holder).** Under FAO's Direct Execution modality, the FAO Representative (FAOR) in Mongolia has been designated as the Budget Holder (BH) of this project. The BH, working in close consultation with the FAO Lead Technical Officer (LTO), was responsible for the timely operational, as well as administrative and financial, management of the project.

29.   **FAO Project Task Force (FAO-PTF).** The FAO-PTF is led by the Budget Holder and include the LTU, LTO, TCI Asia Service and GEF Coordination Unit, and other technical units supporting the project's work. The main role of the task force is to provide technical guidance to the LTO and the PMU for the implementation of the project, contribute to specific project activities as required, and troubleshoot should implementation issues arise.

30.   **FAO Lead Technical Officer (LTO).** Forestry Officer, Forest Management of FOA was the LTO for the Project and had primary accountability for the timeliness and quality of the technical services provided throughout project execution. In collaboration with the LTU, the LTO provided technical guidance to the project team to ensure the delivery of quality technical outputs.

31.   **The FAO GEF Coordination Unit in Investment Centre Division (GCU).** Reviewed and approved progress reports, annual project implementation reviews, financial reports and budget revisions. It also provided project oversight, undertaking supervision missions if necessary, and participated in the mid-term and final evaluations.

Donors and international partners

32.   **UN-REDD Programme.** This initiative collaborated with the project by supporting trainings of FUGs on forest stand enhancement, forest fire management and pest identification and monitoring. Moreover, since 2017 the project is supporting actual forest thinning executed by the FUGs under supervision of Forest Units.

33.   **GIZ.** The German Agency for International Cooperation was one of the donors and also cooperated with technical support for capacity building/training for the beneficiaries. Joint MoU was developed with GIZ in organizing joint trainings. As result trainings on chainsaw maintenance, birch charcoal making were organized during 2016 and 2017, in partnership with the Professional Vocational Training Centres.

34.   **Government of Finland** was also a donor of the MON 008 Project.

National institutions

35. The Department of Forest Policy and Coordination (DFPC) within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) is the responsible organization for the project implementation.

36. The **Forestry Research and Development Centre (FRDC)** is the host organisation for the project, the **Project Management Office (PMO)**. FRDC has provided technical inputs regarding the implementation of PFM. A letter of agreement between the project and the FRDC has been developed, with two junior-level FRDC staff closely working with the project and improving their skills for working with FUGs.

37. **The Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MFoA)** is also a key agency involved in project activities.

38. **A Project Coordination Committee (PCC)** was established at the national level and is chaired by the MET. The PCC membership is comprised of representatives of DFPC, FDRC, MFoA, Ministry of Industry, FAO, ADB, NGOs and Darkhan Uul Aimag Department Environment and Tourism Department (DET).

39. **The Project Management Team** consisted of Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) (International consultant) (until late 2017), the National Programme Officer, Finance and Administration Officer, Operations Officer, Project Assistant/Translator and Driver.

40. Four full-time **Field Facilitators** based in field offices in Darkhan-Uul, Bulgan, Khuvsgul and Khentii North (Balakchy) were responsible for the coordination and planning of all FUG level activities.

41. Additionally, several **national experts** (biodiversity, legal, communication, gender, etc.) and **international consultants** have also been employed by the project on an output-based arrangement.

Beneficiaries

42. The project directly benefits Forest User Groups, FUG Associations, the Government of Mongolia (in different levels) and other stakeholders.

2. Terminal evaluation purpose

43. This terminal evaluation is a requirement of the GEF and also demanded by FAO for project monitoring and reporting purposes. It is being conducted for both accountability and learning purposes of GEF, FAO and other participating institutions.

44. The evaluation will document important lessons to guide future actions and will serve as an input to improve formulation and implementation of projects that may use similar approaches. Likewise, it will present strategic recommendations in order to maximize the institutionalization and appropriation of the project's results by stakeholders and disseminate information to authorities that could benefit from it.

45. The primary intended users of the evaluation are:

    i. FAO Mongolia Country Office, Project Management Team, members of Project Task Force in the FAO Headquarters and Regional Offices who will use the findings and lessons identified in the evaluation to finalize project activities; plan for sustainability of results achieved; improve formulation and implementation of similar projects;

    ii. GEF, GiZ, and the Government of Finland, who will use the findings to inform strategic investment decisions in the future; and

    iii. Mongolian institutions involved in the project implementation, who can use the evaluation findings and conclusions for future planning.

    iv. UN-REDD Programme, who can use the results of the piloting of REDD+ activities (linking PFM, national forestry management and the implementation of global conventions and international financial mechanisms) at the subnational level and the collection of data and lessons for future national implementation.

46. The audience of the evaluation includes the Project beneficiaries and other donors, organizations and institutions interested in supporting and/or implementing similar projects could equally benefit from the evaluation report

3. Terminal evaluation scope

47. The terminal evaluation will cover the entire project implementation period, i.e. from May 2015 to October 2019 but with particular focus on the period following the mid-term evaluation, i.e. from October 2016 to October 2019. Likewise, it will cover the five aimags where the project has been implemented, as well as the implementation in the national level.

48. The evaluation will look at progress towards impact, sustainability of project results and the degree of achievement of long-term results (progress to impact). This evaluation would also have the purpose of indicating future actions needed to expand on the existing project in subsequent phases, mainstream and up-scale its products and practices, and disseminate information to management authorities responsible for related issues to ensure replication and continuity of the processes initiated by the project. "

49. The evaluation will assess whether the project's efforts, consisted of (among others) trainings, studies, development of tools and materials, meetings, negotiations, support to design and piloting of PFM plans, financial support and exchange visits, were efficient to achieve planned outputs and the three main outcomes of strengthened institutional, policy and regulatory framework for PFM (outcome 1), demonstration of sustainable PFM (outcome 2), and expanded sustainable PFM which includes biodiversity conservation, reduction of forest degradation and carbon stock conservation (outcome).

50. Finally, the evaluation will assess the development and implementation of an M&E system, and of the knowledge management and dissemination activities (outcome 4).

4.   Evaluation objectives and questions

51.   The objectives of the terminal evaluation are

i.   To examine the extent and magnitude of Project outcomes to date and determine the likelihood of future impacts, especially relating to sustainable forest management,: increase and improvement provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner, mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors, promotion of sustainable natural resource management as techniques for adaptation, mitigation, and management for the impacts of climate change.

ii.   To provide an assessment of the Project performance and the implementation of planned Project activities and planned outputs against actual results;

iii.   To synthesize lessons learned that may help in the design and implementation of future FAO and FAO-GEF related initiatives in SFM and PFM, indicating future actions needed to i) expand on the existing project in subsequent phases; ii) mainstream and up-scale its products and practices; and iii) to disseminate information to management authorities responsible for related issues to ensure replication and continuity of the processes initiated by the project.

52.   The terminal evaluation will collect knowledge products and, whenever possible, assess their relevance, quality and outreach in advancing the Project Objectives.

53.   The GEF Terminal Evaluation guidelines (GEF, 2017) indicate that the terminal evaluations should assess at a minimum, and provide a rating, for the following areas: i) relevance; ii) achievement of project results (effectiveness); iii) efficiency, project implementation and execution; iv) monitoring and evaluation; v) sustainability; and vi) stakeholder engagement.[3]

54.   In addition, the terminal evaluation should assess (no rating required): i) environmental and social safeguards; ii) gender; iii) co-financing; iv) progress to impact; v) knowledge management; and vi) capacity development (Please refer to Appendix 3 for further details on the GEF criteria and rating scheme).[4] In particular, the capacity development assessment should refer to the FAO OED Capacity Development Evaluation Framework.

55.   The evaluation will answer the following main evaluation questions presented in Box 2. The evaluation matrix, which will be developed by the evaluation team and presented in the Inception Report, will further elaborate the sub-questions that will be addressed by the evaluation. If specific dimensions to be evaluated are part of the project design (e.g. capacity development, gender), the answer to corresponding questions may be integrated in the evaluation of achievement of Project results.

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[3] The terminal evaluation report should also provide the following information in separate paragraphs, in order to update the GEF Portal: Information on Progress, challenges and outcomes on stakeholder engagement; Information on Progress on gender-responsive measures; and Knowledge activities/products.

Table 2: Key guiding evaluation questions

Relevance (rating required)	1. Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes? 2. Was the project design congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities and FAO Mongolia Country Programming Framework? 3. Is the project still relevant? Were there any contextual changes which may have affected its relevance?

Achievement of project results (general) (rating required)	4. To what extent has the project objective of "Sustainable forest management in Mongolia's forest landscape secures the flow of multiple ecosystem services and benefits, including biological diversity, reduced degradation, and carbon storage, while enhancing resilience to climate change" been achieved, and how effective was the project in achieving it?
	
	   4.1 Which factors and actors have contributed for the results achieved? (applicable also to each of the outcomes)
	
	   4.2 To what extent can the achievement of such results be attributed to GEF and to FAO? (applicable also to each of the outcomes)
	
	5. Did the project produce any unintended/ unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative? (applicable also to each of the outcomes)
	
	   5.1. If so, to what extent has the project contributed to these outcomes? Which were other contributing factors/ actors, and how did they contribute? (applicable also to each of the outcomes)
	
	6. Which are key-lessons learned about what works and what does not work which could inform future developments of the Project or similar initiatives? (applicable also to each of the outcomes)

Achievement of project results Outcome 1 (rating required)	7. To what extent has the Project enabled an institutional, policy and regulatory framework for Sustainable PFM in the national, soum and aimag levels and how effective was the project in achieving this outcome?
Achievement of project results Outcome 2 (rating required)	8. To what extent has the Project been able to demonstrate a Sustainable PFM, leading to improved livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and reduced carbon emissions/increased stocks, and how effective was the project in achieving this outcome?
Achievement of project results Outcome 3 (rating required)	9. To what extent has the Project enabled Sustainable PFM that conserves biodiversity, reduces degradation and reduces carbon emissions/increases carbon stocks expanded across significant areas of northern forests, and how effective was the project in achieving this outcome?
Efficiency, project implementation and execution (rating required)	10. To what extent did FAO deliver on project identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation, approval and start-up, oversight and supervision? How well risks were identified and managed?

	11. To what extent did the MET effectively discharge its role and responsibilities related to the management and administration of the project?
	12. To what extent has the project been implemented efficiently and cost-effectively?
	13. To what extent has the management been able to adapt to changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?
Monitoring and Evaluation **(Outcome 4)** (rating required)	14. Did the project count on a structured and sufficient M&E system?
	14.1. Was the information systematically gathered and used to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?
	14.2 Were the recommendations provided by the MTR implemented and what were the repercussions of the implementation (or lack of it) in the project implementation?
Sustainability (rating required)	15. What is the likelihood that the project results will continue to be useful or will remain even after the end of the project?
	15.1 Will the FUGs and other beneficiaries of the project be able to fully implement the participatory forest management plans (including its elements of biodiversity conservation and carbon storage)?
	15.2 Will the FUGs be able to sustainably improve their livelihoods as a consequence of the implementation of the PFM?
	16. Has the institutional, policy and regulatory framework changed and is it able to support the FUGs in the implementation of Sustainable PFM?
	17. What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project benefits?
Stakeholder engagement (rating required)	18. Which stakeholders were involved in project design and/or implementation? What was the effect of this involvement on the project results?
Environmental and social safeguards	19. To what extent where environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?
Gender	20. To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project? Was the project implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits, in particular for FUG members? Were the recommendations of the gender expert and the MTR regarding gender implemented?
Co-financing	21. To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize, and how short fall in co-financing, or materialization of greater than expected co-financing affected project results?

Progress to Impact	22. To what extent is the project likely to contribute to the flow of multiple ecosystem services and benefits, including biological diversity, reduced degradation, and carbon storage, and to resilience to climate change? 22.1 Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term impact?
Knowledge management (Outcome 4) (rating required)	23. Were the best practice and lessons learned documents produced by the Project and disseminated as planned?
Capacity development	24. To what extent has the project responded to identified capacity needs of the FUG groups, SFU and ISFU units, soum and aimag governments, on the individual, organizational and enabling environment dimension, and how have they capitalized on existing capacities? 24.1. Were/are the beneficiaries of the capacity development activities able to put in practice the developed capacities in the three dimensions?

5.   Methodology

56.   The evaluation will adhere to the UNEG Norms and Standards (UNEG) and be in line with the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) Manual and methodological guidelines and practices. The evaluation will adopt a consultative and transparent approach with internal and external stakeholders throughout the evaluation process.

57.   These TOR suggest an overall methodological approach that could be adopted to address the main evaluation questions. The evaluation matrix, which will be developed by the evaluation team in consultation with the Evaluation Manager (EM), will present the sub-questions to be addressed by the evaluation and refine the methodology as well as the methods and tools selected to collect data/evidence to answer them.[5] Triangulation of evidence and information gathered will underpin its validation and analysis and will support conclusions and recommendations.

58.   The main evaluation tools and methods may include the following:

    i.   A **desk-review** of existing project documents and reports (e.g. annual work plans, project implementation review, mid-term evaluation report, progress reports, backstopping missions, etc.). An extensive review of documents produced by - or related to - the project will be key to answer to **all the evaluation questions**. The desk-review will also be a key source of information to the inception phase.

    ii.   **Semi-structured interviews (SSI)** with key stakeholders and other informants that were involved in - or affected by - the project design and/or implementation will serve to collect primary data to develop the inception report and to answer to **all the evaluation questions**. Interviews will be supported by checklists and/or interview protocols to be developed by the evaluation team at the beginning of the evaluation.

59.   At minimum, representatives of the following stakeholders should be interviewed:

Partners	Forest Research and Development Centre
	UN-REDD Programme
	GIZ
	Sustainable Forest Management Project, ADB
	Project Coordination Committee (PCC) members
FAO / GEF	LTO, FAO FOA, FAO MON Representative
	FAO-GEF Coordination Unit
	GEF Focal Point for Mongolia

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[5] The inception report, which will include the evaluation matrix, will be the first product to be delivered by the evaluation team.

Project management team	the National Programme Officer, experts/advisors (including law, gender, biodiversity and communication and knowledge management experts)
Government	The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MFoA)
CSOs	National FUG association

iii. **Field visits** to technically assess and analyse project implementation and results in the field, the views and opinions as well as capacities of the local stakeholders (e.g. FUGs members) on the project, using data-collection techniques such as **Focus – Group discussions (FGDs)** and **SSI**.

iv. Purposeful sampling strategies will be applied to identify and select project locations to be visited among the five aimags and over 100 FUGs involved, to answer the evaluation questions related **to relevance, results, efficiency, impact, sustainability, gender and capacity development.**

v. Representatives of the following stakeholders should be interviewed in the field visits:

   a. Soum and aimag government representatives

   b. Forest User Groups members (including women)

   c. FUG Associations

   d. Field Facilitators based in selected field offices in Darkhan-Uul (Darkhan city), Bulgan (Bulgan city), Khuvsgul (Murun city) and Khentii (Chingiss city)

   e. Inter soum forestry unit (ISFU)

   f. Soum forest unit (SFU)

   g. Department of Nature, Environment and Tourism (ADNET)

vi. If possible, men, women and young people from the FUGs should be interviewed or engaged in separate FGDs, to ensure equal opportunity to speak. The MTR noted that during these gender-disaggregated meetings, men also have benefitted.

vii. In particular, secondary sources/ proxy indicators, if necessary, may also be used to assess the progress in biodiversity conservation (e.g. increases in population of indicator species).

viii. The evaluation should also investigate the achievement of unplanned / unexpected outcomes influenced by the initiative in direct or indirect beneficiaries and partners, by including open questions in the interviews and FGDs. In particular, it should look into the development of observable, sustainable changes in behaviours, practices,

plans, regulations and policies. Negative outcomes which may have been influenced by the project should also be included in the assessment, for learning purposes.

ix. As part of assessing the effectiveness of the project, the evaluation team should compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool (TT) at the baseline with the one completed by the project management unit just before the evaluation.

x. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will develop the project's Theory of Change (TOC) and validate with informants. The TOC will outline the multiple linkages between the project objectives, outputs and outcomes to the national goals, and will support the evaluation process.

xi. A debrief session will be held at the end of the field mission to share preliminary findings and conclusions with the Project Coordination Unit.

6.   Roles and responsibilities

60.   This section describes the different roles that key stakeholders play in the design and implementation of the evaluation.

61.   The **Office of Evaluation (OED)**, in particular the Evaluation Manager (EM), develops the first draft TOR in consultation with and with inputs from the PTF (including the BH and LTO), the FLO and the GCU[6] as well as from the National Project Director from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of the Mongolia Government. The EM is responsible for the finalization of the TOR and for the selection of the evaluation team members.[7] The FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) has the responsibility of following up with the BH for the timely preparation of the Management Response (MR) and the Follow-up report to the MR.

62.   The **Budget Holder** and project **Lead Technical Officer** assist the EM in drafting the TOR, in the identification of potential consultants and in the organization of the missions. The BH will provide the evaluation team with all project documents (see Annex 2) needed for the terminal evaluation. The BH is also responsible for sharing the terminal evaluation report with the GEF Operational Focal Point, the Execution Partner, the project team and national partners and for leading and coordinating the preparation of the FAO Management Response and the Follow-up Report, fully supported in this task by the LTO and others members of the PTF. OED guidelines for the Management Response and the Follow-up Report provide necessary details on this process. Involvement of different members of the PTF will depend on respective roles and participation in the project.

63.   The **GEF Coordination Unit (in particular the FLO)** is responsible for initiating the evaluation process, providing inputs to the first version of the Terms of Reference, especially the description of the background and context chapter, and supporting the evaluation team during its work. They are required to meet with the evaluation team, make available information and documentation as necessary (see *Annex 2*), and comment on the terms of reference and draft reports.

64.   The **Evaluation Manager** shall brief the evaluation team on the evaluation methodology and process and will review the final draft report for quality assurance purposes in terms of presentation, compliance with the TORs and timely delivery, quality, clarity and soundness of evidence provided and of the analysis supporting conclusions and recommendations in the evaluation report.

65.   The **evaluation team (ET)** is responsible for further developing and applying the evaluation methodology, for conducting the evaluation, and for producing the evaluation report. All team members, including the Evaluation Team Leader (ETL), will participate in briefing and debriefing meetings, discussions, field visits, and will contribute to the evaluation with written inputs for the final draft and final report. The evaluation team will agree on the outline of the report early in the evaluation process, based on the reporting outline provided in Annex 1 of this TOR. The ET will also be free to expand the scope, criteria, questions and issues listed above, as well as develop its own evaluation tools and framework, within time and resources available and based on discussions with the EM, and

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[6] And the OPIM team at headquarters if the project is executed under the OPIM modality (OPIM-MS701@fao.org).
[7] The responsibility for the administrative procedures for recruitment of the team, will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

consultations with the BH and PTF where necessary. The evaluation team is fully responsible for its report which may not reflect the views of the Government or of FAO. An evaluation report is not subject to technical clearance by FAO although OED is responsible for quality assurance of all evaluation reports.

66. The **Evaluation Team Leader (ETL)** guides and coordinates the evaluation team members in their specific work, discusses their findings, conclusions and recommendations and prepares the final draft and the final report, consolidating the inputs from the team members with his/her own.

67. For further details related to the tasks of the ETL and ET members, please refer to their specific job descriptions prepared at the time of their recruitment.

7. Evaluation team composition and profile

68. The evaluation will be carried out by a team composed of two consultants who jointly will have an appropriate balance of relevant technical expertise and evaluation skills. Furthermore, the evaluation team members must be independent from both the formulation and implementation of the project

Evaluation Team Leader (ETL):
    i.   Advanced University Degree in agriculture, biodiversity, environmental studies, forestry engineering, public policies or similar.
    ii.   A minimum of ten years of relevant professional experience in agro-economics, forest engineering, biology/conservation, policy analysis, development studies, and/or related fields.
    iii.   Experience in evaluating projects' performances and management processes, with technical understanding of forestry and biodiversity.
    iv.   Experience in assessing political processes which impact on forest governance and management.
    v.   Knowledge on gender and equity issues will be an asset.
    vi.   Excellent command of English, written and spoken. English is the language through which all the evaluation communication, documents and reports are expected (check additional information section below for mandatory certification requirements).

Evaluation Team Member (ETM):
    i.   Advanced University Degree in agriculture, biodiversity, environmental studies, forestry, public policies or similar.
    ii.   A minimum of 8 years of relevant professional experience in agro-economics, forestry, biology/conservation, policy analysis, development studies, and/or related fields.
    iii.   Experience with quanti-qualitative data-collection methods and data analysis.
    iv.   Work experience in the Mongolian forest environment.
    v.   Institutional knowledge of Mongolia's political structure and processes which impact on forest governance and management.
    vi.   Knowledge on gender and equity issues will be an asset.
    vii.   Fluency in Mongolian.
    viii.   Working knowledge of English.

8. Evaluation products (deliverables)

69. This section describes the key evaluation products the evaluation team will be accountable for producing. At the minimum, these products should include:

70. **Inception Report.**[8] The inception report should be prepared right before going into the fully-fledged data collection exercise. It should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of: proposed methods, proposed sources of data and data collection procedures. The inception report should include a proposed schedule of tasks, activities and deliverables, a stakeholder analysis and the final evaluation matrix.

71. **Draft evaluation report.** The report will be submitted by the evaluation team to the Office of Evaluation (OED) for comments, peer review and clearance. It will be prepared in English with numbered paragraphs, following the OED template for GEF project evaluation report writing.[9] The evaluation report will provide clear evidence to back up the findings and responses to the evaluation issues, questions and criteria listed in the TOR. After review by OED, the Evaluation Manager will circulate it for comments to internal and external stakeholders (BH, FLO, LTO, GCU, project team, executing partner, PSC members, key project partners).The evaluation team is responsible for consolidating and reporting the received comments in a matrix and responding to all comments received from project's stakeholders to the Draft evaluation report. OED will support the evaluation team in collecting and collating the received feedback.

72. **Final evaluation report.**[10] The final report will include an executive summary. The recommendations will be addressed to the different stakeholders and prioritized. They will be evidence-based, relevant, focused, clearly formulated, and actionable (SMART recommendations), and with realistic and feasible proposals explained in detail for each suggested point. Sources of secondary data/information used in the report should be cited in the footnotes and included in the list of documents reviewed which is appended in the evaluation report. As the main author of the report, OED will have the final decision as to how the report should be composed. The final report will be submitted by OED to all the stakeholders, and will be revised by an editor and graphic designer, before publication on OED website.

73. **Annexes to the evaluation report.** Supporting data and analysis should be annexed to the report, including the final TOR, the evaluation matrix, the list of the main documents reviewed, the list of organizations and people met, a list of knowledge products produced by the project, the itinerary of the missions, and the evaluation instruments (e.g. copies of questionnaires and surveys).

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[8] See specific OED Guidelines (Annex 17) on inception report.
[9] This document will be shared by OED with the evaluation team.
[10] See Annex 3 of the Project Evaluation Manual for the outline evaluation report.

9. Evaluation time frame

74. The evaluation is expected to take place between October 2019 and February 2020. The table below contains the preliminary timetable. It will be finalized upon the recruitment of the Evaluation Team. If adjustments will be required, these will be discussed and agreed among the Evaluation Team, OED, FAO Mongolia and the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

Task	Period	Responsibility
Team identification and recruitment	September/October 2019	EM
TOR preparation	September/October 2019	EM, LTO, FLO and GCU
TOR finalization	October 2019	EM
Travel arrangements and organization of the agenda/travel itinerary in the country for the field mission	October 2019	EM, project team/CO and ET
Reading background documentation	October 2019	ET
Briefing of ET	October 2019	EM, GCU, LTO, FLO, Project team[11]
Inception report	Late October 2019	ET
Data collection	Early–mid November 2019	ET with support of PMU/CO
Production of first draft for OED review	Early–mid December 2019	ET
Circulation of first draft for comments (BH, LTO, FLO, project team, GCU, key national partners, PSC members, EP)	December 2019/ January 2020	EM
Integration of comments and production of the final report	January 2020	ET
Circulation of final report and publication	February 2020	EM
Management Response (MR)	1 month after the final report is issued	BH
Follow-up report on TE	6 months after the MR is issued	BH

BH: Budget holder
EM: Evaluation manager
ET: Evaluation team
PMU: Project Management Unit

CO: Country office
LTO: Lead Technical Officer
FLO: Funding Liaison Officer

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[11] When relevant.

References

FAO and Government of Mongolia. *Country Programming Framework CPF 2012-2016 for Cooperation and Partnership between FAO and the Government of Mongolia.* (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/a-bl362e.pdf).

World Bank. 2018. *Mongolia Economic Update: Fiscal Space for Growth the Role of Public Investment Spending Efficiency.* (also available at: http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/582841530843734119/pdf/Report-ENG-2.pdf)

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GEF. 2017. *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluation for Full-sized Projects.* (also available at https://www.gefieo.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/gef-guidelines-te-fsp-2017.pdf).

UNEG. 2005. *2005 Norms for Evaluation in the UN System* (updated 2016 Norms and Standards are available). (also available at: http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/21).

Appendix 1. Progress towards achieving project objectives and outcomes (cumulative) (as of June 2019)[12]

Project objective and Outcomes	Description of indicator(s)	Baseline level	Mid-term target	End-of-project target	Level on 30 June 2019	Progress rating
Objective(s): *Sustainable forest management in Mongolia's forest landscape secures the flow of multiple ecosystem services and benefits, including biological diversity, reduced degradation, and carbon storage, while enhancing resilience to climate change*						
Outcome 1: Enabling institutional, policy and regulatory framework for Sustainable PFM (including increased revenue to local communities; reduced carbon emissions/increased carbon stocks, and; biodiversity conservation).	Issuance of legal or regulatory instruments on participatory management	Do not exist for co-management/PFM.		Ministry level order/resolution was issuance as solved below mentioned points. Hereof: 1. Revenue generation possibilities from management operations been enabled for FUGs 2. FUG forest management plans have biodiversity conservation activities Guidelines, instruction been issuance dedicating for province, *soum* authorities aimed to implement above mentioned new instruments Guidebook, recommendation been developed on carbon stocking and how to make the carbon stock calculation and been circulated.	1. All five target aimags have applied the Forest User group **Classification criteria** developed by the project to classify all FUGs. The result of the assessment was discussed at the PCC meeting and received positive feedback. The project is aiming to get an official endorsement from the Ministry on FUG classification and provide more rights for those FUGs who been classified at high level. 2. A draft outline of the Forest Management Plan has been developed and discussed at the stakeholders' level. Further it will be submitted to the Ministry for final discussion and approval.	MS

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[12] Information extracted from the FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2019, covering the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019..

	MS	New Unit established (probably in FRDC) responsible for both biodiversity and carbon in PFM	FRDC was recently established – it has a broad mandate for PFM, nothing for biodiversity (Currently only 1 MET (not FRDC) staff is in charge for PFM in national level)		Number of officer in charge for PFM been increased in project forest provinces Charging PFM specialist been enabled in project implementing provinces respectively	The project is closely collaborating with FRDC staff on refining policy/regulatory of PFM.. Under the existing LoA, FRDC is supporting with implementation of PFM (Management plan development, advocacy, policy issues). Task force team (with three staff) is working As result of the project support and assistance, a Staff responsible for PFM is operating in all five aimags.	MS
Outcome 2: Sustainable PFM is demonstrated that leads to improved livelihood, biodiversity conserved and reduced carbon emissions/increased stocks.	S	Extended enabled environment area (range) for and increases in population of indicator species (musk deer, saker falcon) at prioritized 10 FUGs	Result of 2010 national census of forest ungulates and saker falcon from National Biology Institute and information, result of Birds Red List (2011) shall be considered the rationale		Saker falcon population to increase by 30%. Habitat area and population of Musk deer has increased by 10% (If FUG forest area where the habitat area of musk deer is small, then spread in area/range size re roe deer, red deer, black grouse, nests of ants and increased coverage of indicator vegetable species shall also be considered a rationale as those species are considered the indicator species which define the conservation measures in the present forest area)	14 FUG members wildlife conducting monitoring and incorporating their data into national biodiversity database (BioSan) through the Institute of General and Experimental Biology and local department for Environment and Tourism. According to the monitoring data and report from the Institute of General and Experimental Biology, number of some species, including musk deer (Khuvsgul aimag), wild boar (Khentii aimag) have been increased. More comprehensive research needs to be undertaken by professional entity. With regard, to the Sacker Falcon, only 5% of the project target area is overlapping with the habitat area of sacker falcon (Biodiversity expert's report). Therefore, as per recommendation form the Institute of General and Experimental Biology, FUGs are conducting bird monitoring in open area.	S
		Level of biodiversity conservation in 80000 ha around (area of model 16 FUGs)	According to the project assessment made in the beginning period of project implementation, model 16 FUGs have 3-year Forest		Adhered clear planning of certain target, objectives, activities and implementation of biodiversity conservation when 10-year FMPs are developed by FUGs.	The Institute of General and Experimental Biology under the Academy of Sciences assisting all targeted FUGs to do monitoring and incorporate biodiversity conservation enhancement activities in	S

		Management Plans (FMPS) but biodiversity conservation measures included/mentioned			FMPs. All 10-year Forest Management Plans developed with support of the project have included biodiversity conservation objectives and activities.	
		Carbon stock amount of Model 16 FUGs forest area	**Baseline C emissions/ removals from the 16 FUGs** / Emissions from deforestation / Emissions from forest degradation / Removals from forests / **Total baseline emissions/ removals**	**Emissions Removals (tCO$_2$e/yr)** / 77,370 / 1,617,934 / -264,937 / **1,430,366**		Carbon stocks been enhanced compared to baseline indications when the stock calculation is made using calculations from modelling based on forest changes derived by forest thinning, forest cleaning etc by FUGs	Carbon stock enhancing activities (forest pest control, fire prevention, forest stand enhancement in 500ha) are successfully implemented during the reporting period. National expert is working on carbon stock calculation.	S
		Average Income of FUGs' member household from forest management activities	Average income of FUG per household is less than 300'000 tugrug by 2014 (result of project evaluation made in 2015)		Average income has been increased by 100% as compared to baseline year	As result of series trainings on financial management and business plan development, in total 34 small grant proposals are successfully implemented, which resulted increased income generation of households. Wood processing unit has been established in Khentii aimag and supporting FUGs located nearby with income generation through selling wooden products. For example, in 2018 "Jargalant" FUG made an income of 17 million from producing wooden products which means one million per household. The data collection of	

					economic activities of FUGs is under implementation by the project field facilitators.	
Outcome 3: Sustainable PFM that conserves biodiversity, reduces degradation and reduces carbon emissions/increases carbon stocks expanded across significant areas of northern forests.	Number of FUGs which implementing FMP in project target provinces	Model 16 FUGs in project target provinces implementing simplified 1-3 years FMP		Enabled condition for 10 years FMP implementation of 101 FUGs and some FMP implementations been initiated already. Awareness, knowledge understanding been emerged on greenhouse gas/carbon management	All target FUGs have developed and implementing Forest management plans with duration of 10, 3 and one year. Moreover, Forest Units have started to develop FMP for FUGs using the project approach.	S
	Area size for implementing of PFM which biodiversity conservation is mainstreamed	No mainstreaming of biodiversity in FUG FMPs		Initiated implementation of PFM, which reflected biodiversity conservation in not less than 454000 ha area belonging to 101 FUGs in total.	More awareness raising on biodiversity conservation delivered to all stakeholders during the project supported activities and information leaflets. All Forest management plans which covers more than 460 thousand ha of forest developed with support from the Project included biodiversity conservation activities.	S
	Capacity evaluation of every individual ISFU that selected in project collaboration	Capacity evaluation of ISFU and Soum Forest Unit selected in project collaboration 	Forest Unit	Score
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Mandal, Kharaa	18
Erchimt-Ider	14
Delgermurun	15
Nars shinesen tugul	17
Khentiin shines	16
Batshireet	16
Khongor soum	11
Bulgan soum	12
Khutag-Undor	12			Capacity evaluation of ISFU and Soum Forest Unit in project collaboration been increased by 20% minimum at the end of project implementation	Capacity building trainings (both professional and self-development) and experience-exchange activities were conducted during reporting period. Special training on thinning delivered for all forest engineers. Additionally, provided technical assistance (GPS, Camera and advocacy materials) to all Forest units.	S

			Khyalganat	10			
		(in 84 FUGs forest area) Amount of carbon is absorbed direct or indirect way	Project short term expert makes the calculation based on indications of forest area existed currently (tree species, age etc)		Carbon stocks enhanced compared to baseline indications when the stock calculation is made using calculations from modelling based on forest changes derived by forest thinning, forest cleaning etc by 84 FUGs	REDD+ PAMs, e.g. re FUG thinning, forest pest and fire prevention activities being implemented. Project FUGs' carbon stocks calculation is on-going.	
Outcome 4: M&E and information dissemination	MS	Number of information access regarding PFM in FRDC webpage	None or zero		Not less than 1000	The project website has been launched in under FRDC website. Data on FUGs, Intersoum forest units, as well as Forest Community Associations have been included. As of June 2019, totally 430 people have visited the project website. Additionally project supported Facebook Group pages (8 groups) are operational with more than 400 active members.	MS
		Midterm and Final evaluations is made on time and adhered implementation of recommendations	None		Midterm review is made by end of third year of project implementation. Final evaluation is made by end year of project implementation	MTR successfully conducted in November 2016 and suggested implementation of recommendations supported by PCC et al	
	MS	Number of "lessons learned"/" Best practice" documents published and disseminated	None or zero		At least 4	Collaboration with "Forest of Mongolia" national journal on forestry is continued. Each quarter article on sustainable forest management has been included. Additionally project activities are broadcasted through local press media.	MS

Appendix 2. Progress in generating project outputs[13]

Outputs[14]	Expected completion date [15]	Achievements at each PIR[16]				Implement. status (cumulative)	Comments. Describe any variance[17] or any challenge in delivering outputs
		1st PIR	2nd PIR	3rd PIR	4th PIR		
Output 1.1 National policy and decision-makers recognise importance of increased carbon storage and improved biodiversity conservation in PFM/FUG forestry	Q1 Y3	2 FUG-level biodiversity conservation & biomass/carbon monitoring plots established	Less national and local level political resistance, and more understanding after a series of Open Days at aimag level and International Day of Forests etc at national level	More support and committed from local stakeholders in implementation of forestry activities in target area	All local authorities are fully supporting importance of biodiversity conservation and carbon stock enhancement, by approving FMPs which includes wildlife conservation objectives and forest stand enhancement activities.	80%	

[13] Information extracted from the FAO-GEF Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2019, covering the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

[14] Outputs as described in the project logframe or in any updated project revision. In case of project revision resulted from a mid-term review please modify the output accordingly or leave the cells in blank and add the new outputs in the table explaining the variance in the comments section.

[15] As per latest work plan (latest project revision); for example: Quarter 1, Year 3 (Q1 y3)

[16] Please use the same unity of measures of the project indicators, as much as possible. Please be extremely synthetic (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

[17] Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

Output 1.2 Strengthened national policy, legal environment on PFM/FUG forestry	Q4 Y4	Trials/pilots established to generate evidence for policy changes. Regulatory holidays granted in principle	Ministerial Order signed to authorize FUG 1st and 2nd thinning. Draft regulations for FUG thinning procedures Field tests of draft FUG classification system	MET and FRDC orders authorizing to do 1st and 2nd thinning in collaboration with FUG. FUG classification system has been adopted for all project implementing aimags and classification of all FUGs are on-going	Local authorities and Ministry officials are fully supporting forest thinning by FUGs. FUG Classification have been finalized in all aimags and submitted to the Ministry.	50%	Ministry officials (NPD) and the project is working on finding optimal/possible solution on legalizing issuance of more rights for highly classified FUGs
Output 1.3 Approved Forestry Planning Guidelines to Soum and Aimag governments (that promote sustainable PFM).	Q3 Y3	Trials/pilots established to generate evidence for new planning guidelines	Ministerial Order signed to authorize FUG 1st and 2nd thinning being 'translated' into aimag and soum level quotas/contracts for 97 Project FUGs	Compendium for laws for soum Governors has been developed and distributed. FRDC is working on preparing a guideline for developing FMP	First draft of FMP have been developed and discussed among local stakeholders. Further it will be submitted to the Ministry for final discussion and approval.	50%	More discussions are foreseen at the national level and ministerial level in September and October 2019.
Output 1.4 A Unit in FDRC empowered to integrate biodiversity conservation and carbon storage into all participatory forestry in Mongolia	Q4 Y4	FRDC specialists working regularly with and being trained by Project	Increased ad hoc collaboration between Project/FUGs and FRDC officials re FMPs, pest control and thinning training. LOA operational. English language classes provided	Continues collaboration between FRDC and project. Increased capacity at local level- Participatory forest management officer recruited/working in four aimags (Darkhan Uul, Khentii, Khuvsgul and Bulgan)	Collaboration with FTDC is continues. Three junior and two senior staff are involved in the project activities.	80%	

Output 2.1 Continually improving forest planning and management in 16 advanced FUGs.	Q2 Y4	16 Advanced FUGs being mentored by FRDC, FFs, ISFUs	25 advanced FUGs given mentoring and training re FMPs, biodiversity, thinning and income generation	12 FUGs have received 10-year Forest management plan and started its implementation.	Additionally 39 10-year forest management plans have been developed and stated the implementation.	100%	
Output 2.2 Simple REDD+-related incentives demonstrated in 16 advanced FUGs.	Q3 Y3	Simple incentive system being trialled n 2 advanced FUGs	Thinning and thinning training implemented in all project aimags	All project aimags received trainings on forest thinning, pest control and fire preventions	All project aimags received trainings on forest thinning, pest management and forest fire prevention.	100%	
Output 2.3 Biodiversity conservation practices demonstrated in 10 priority, advanced FUGs.	Q2 Y4	Biodiversity conservation demonstrated on plots established in 2 advanced FUGs	Biodiversity training given to advanced FUG members and plan to demonstrate practices in Khentii	14 FUGs from Khentii, Selenge, Khuvsgul and Bulgan conducting wildlife monitoring under the assistance from the Institute of General and Experimental Biology. Some conservations activities have been included in the management plan	Wildlife monitoring is continuing in 14 FUGs. Additionally, the project is supporting wildlife inventory/management in two FUGs in Khentii and Khuvsgul	60%	
Output 2.4 Increased revenue from timber and non-timber forest products at the 16 advanced FUGs.	Q3 Y4	Adding-value/processing trials on-going in 2 advanced FUGs	The equipment procurement is finalized.	Conducting study on possible "final" products from wood processing equipment. Trainings on market, business proposal developments are given and 32 small scale proposals supported.	Wood processing unit has been established in Khentii aimag.	50%	More activities have been planned in during remaining period including market assessment, business plan devolvement.

Output 3.1 Eight PFM Extension Offices (established in inter-soum Forestry Units);	Q2 Y4	Initial training and equipment given to 8 ISFUs	Two more ISFUs were added as per recommendation from PCC and the equipment procurement is completed	Advanced trainings and meetings have been provided for the ISFU staff. Additional tools and advocacy materials have been provided to selected ISFUs.	Advanced trainings and meetings have been provided for the ISFU staff. Additional tools and advocacy materials have been provided to selected ISFUs.	100%	
Output 3.2 FUG Associations at Soum, Aimag and National Level;	Q4 Y4	Negotiations started in all Project aimags, existing associations attending Project events/training	International and national experience exchange visits facilitated for FUG members.	Totally six aimag and soum level Associations have been established in project aimags and established close cooperation with the project. More capacity building activities are foreseen in coming year.	The project has financially supported four aimag based forest user groups associations though LoA. More training on institutional development are foreseen in August 2019	80%	
Output 3.3 Result of plans implemented by FUGs (resulting in: revenues increase, forest ecosystems conserved, biodiversity conserved & carbon stocks enhanced);	Q2 Y4	2 series of FUG level plots established to provide evidence to enhance PFM methodology	Thinning for Project FUGs expanded, training given in all Project aimags, value-adding machine procurement underway	Thinning has been expanded in the FUG managed area, equipment and tools for value added products are given to FUGs	Totally 1000 ha forest have been managed (forest thinning) by FUGs in 2018. Number of wildlife have been increased in some regions	100%	
Output 3.4 84 10-year SFM Plans prepared and approved.	Q4 Y4	Process to quickly and inclusively develop and approve simple three-year FMPs being tested in 20 'new' FUGs	Process to design facilitate a more participatory and transparent process utilizing FRDC & GIZ data to produce ten-year FMPs with FUGs underway	12 10-year SFM Plans have been approved, 54 is under development	Totally 53 10-year management plans have been developed and approved.	100%	

Output 4.1 Project M&E system developed and implemented	Q4 Y2	Results Framework amendments drafted/proposed	Amended Results Framework approved by PCC & uploaded onto FPMIS	Internal monitoring and evaluation system has been placed at the project level	Internal monitoring and evaluation system has been placed at the project level	60%	
Output 4.2 Project Midterm and final evaluations	Q4 Y2 Q4 Y4	Planning initiated for MTR	MTR successfully organized and conducted on schedule			50%	Final evaluation will be fielded in Q3-Q4 2019.
Output 4.3 Information dissemination	Q4 Y4	Ad hoc publications, magazines, books and articles	Books, leaflets, notebook, magazine articles, videos	Books, notebook, magazine and newspaper articles, videos	Books (2), notebook (1), magazine and newspaper articles, videos	60%	More public awareness activities have been planned during remaining period. Recruitment of Communication & Visibility Expert is on-going

Appendix 3. GEF criteria and rating scheme

The table below should be completed by the Evaluation Team, as part of the Terminal Evaluation process. See Appendix 2 for guidance on the rating schemes under each area of analysis.

FAO - GEF Rating Scheme	Rating	Summary Comments[18]
1) RELEVANCE		
Overall relevance of the project	HS→HU	
2) ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT RESULTS (EFFECTIVENESS)		
Overall assessment of project results	HS→HU	
Outcome 1	HS→HU	
Outcome 2	HS→HU	
Outcome 3	HS→HU	
3) EFFICIENCY, PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION & EXECUTION		
Overall quality of project implementation & adaptive management (implementing agency)	HS→HU	
Quality of execution (executing agencies)	HS→HU	
Efficiency (incl. cost effectiveness and timeliness)	HS→HU	
4) MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
Overall quality of M&E	HS→HU	
M&E design at project start up	HS→HU	
M&E plan implementation	HS→HU	
5) SUSTAINABILITY		
Overall sustainability	L→HU	
6) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT		
Overall quality of stakeholder engagement	HS→HU	

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*"Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings."*
Satisfactory (S)	*"Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings."*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*"Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings."*

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[18] Include hyperlink to relevant sections in the report

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	*"Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings."*
Unsatisfactory (U)	*"Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings."*
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	*"Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings."*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.*

During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

Quality of implementation and of execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF Agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of Execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF Agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale:

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

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:
• Design
• Implementation

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	*There were no shortcomings and quality of **M&E design** or **M&E implementation** exceeded expectations.*
Satisfactory (S)	*There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of **M&E design** or **M&E implementation** meets expectations.*
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	*There were some shortcomings and quality of **M&E design** or **M&E implementation** more or less meets expectations.*
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	*There were significant shortcomings and quality of **M&E design** or **M&E implementation** somewhat lower than expected.*

Unsatisfactory (U)	*There were major shortcomings and quality of **M&E design** or **M&E implementation** substantially lower than expected.*
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	*There were severe shortcomings in **M&E design** or **M&E implementation**.*
Unable to Assess (UA)	*The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of **M&E design or M&E implementation***

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to financial, socio-political, institutional, and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale:

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

Appendix 4. FAO-GEF terminal evaluation reporting outline

Appendix 5. Recommendations from the MTR report and management response

MTR Recommendation	*CTA Response*	*Actions to be taken, and/or comments about partial acceptance or rejection*	*FAO Responsible unit*	*Time frame*
Recommendation 1: To further consolidate and build from the efforts regarding the closely linked work in Outcome 1 and 2, and because of the continued problematic enabling policy and practice of FUG forestry, the MTR team supports the further concentration of efforts on both outcome 1 and 2 in the second half of the project. The 3rd outcome of scaling up (with most activities planned for the second half of the project) should become a third priority in the second half of the project with the exception of activities explicitly linked to outcome 1 and 2. Without this redirection of resources and effort within the project design there is a danger that the project will spread itself too thin, as well as some risks associated with scaling up a currently unattractive model. This reallocation of resources should help the project build from and strengthen and broaden the work they are already doing within Outcome 1 and 2. This emphasis can in itself produce a 'scale up', if the project achieves transformational change in the governance environment for FUG forestry concerning improved use rights, this can be to the benefit of potentially all FUGs in Mongolia not only the 101 targeted in the project. Action by Project Management Office (PMO) and project team (including Field Facilitators) in reviewing/revising log frame, annual workplan and budget by December 2016 in accordance with this re-prioritization, with consultation and approval by Project Steering Committee (PCC), FAO/GEF.	Accepted			
Recommendation 2: Although easier said than done, it is recommended to build on this regulatory holiday – pilot – sub-decree strategy to broaden the focus to include exploration of standing deadwood (a request from numerous FUG members who assumed higher potential immediate benefits than with pre-commercial thinning).	Partially Accepted	*Will take soundings from Ministry and private companies before proceeding with standing deadwood issue.*		
Recommendation 3: Building from the good work so far under Objective 1 and 2, and with the reallocation of resources and effort in the second half of the project, develop a much more systematic, and focused set of communication and policy advocacy strategies to reorient mind-sets whilst considering interests of key decision makers, building political will for	Accepted			

further FUG rights. Project team members, especially the CTA have a strong track record in the political economy of forestry so can build sophisticated strategies to analyse and deal effectively with the complex political economy of forestry in Mongolia. The half-way point of the project would be a good time to develop a more strategic and tactical written 'toolbox' of actions and processes, both subtle and overt to maximise chances of transformative change.				
Recommendation 4: Exploring more formal collaboration with other forestry projects (see recommendation 21 for more details) to pull resources to effect change in the enabling environment is strongly recommended. The FAO initiative on Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) provides many opportunities for synergy as it covers Forest Tenure and close collaboration is recommended.	Partially Accepted	*Planning to collaborate more formally with REDD (pilot PAMs) and VGGT process, but less formally with GIZ.*		
Recommendation 5: The current enterprise options largely designed to incentivize pre-commercial thinning, were a good start in a 'learning by doing' way, but now would be a good time to start to strengthen the business case analysis of both viability and of applicability to FUGs. With regards to wood pellets, the question is two-fold, whether it is a viable business model and if it is, whether the communities are best placed to take advantage of it.	Accepted	Yes, but need to generate data first, procuring machinery to trial/test/pilot in all five aimags.		
Recommendation 6: A broadening of forest enterprise options is required, trying to identify any 'lower hanging fruit' from the pre-commercial thinning (e.g. some have already been sold for fence posts), or from a progression into commercial thinning, or linked to a 'regulatory holiday' on standing deadwood. Firewood might seem like a possible 'low hanging fruit' but like all enterprises ideas needs analysis, for example this brings FUGs into direct competition with private suppliers. There may also be other products from standing deadwood, carvings, furniture, wood chips etc. The reviewers aren't advocating these products per se, but the enterprise analysis processes that may throw up different viable options in different places depending on the context. Products from standing deadwood in a similar way to the ideas around linking thinning with enterprises could possibly tick both the forest based livelihood and transformative change intentions of the project – working along with the thinning strategy in a two pronged (both also related) incremental way to eventually lead to full harvesting rights for standing mature live trees with SFM. More importantly, at least for FUGs, having 'all the eggs in many baskets' in terms of enterprises would	Partially Accepted	Will investigate other markets/products, but in year three will mainly focus on testing chips and pellets produced from pre-commercial thinning		

strengthen the chances of meaningful forest-based livelihood improvement of FUGs. In this regard, it is suggested to revisit enterprise work and outputs from previous FAO project, cherry pick from FAO Market Analysis and Development MA&D work and IIED/FAO Forest Connect and Forest and Farm Facility work on enterprises. When discussions were held with FUG members on potential enterprises during the review, the suggestions were often around setting up collective marketing points for FUG forest products, collective harvesting, processing and transport systems to increase returns. Firewood enterprises were the most common raised during the review.				
Recommendation 7: Analyse/explore partnerships between FUGs and private enterprises/professional forestry organizations as an 'entry point' to provide FUGs an opportunity to engage in forest use/enterprises more. This is possibly one way to enable FUGs to get more benefits from the forest within the existing legal framework, whilst also working towards reform in the legal framework to provide more rights.	Partially Accepted	Will investigate/explore partnerships, but not where PFOs are doing primary production/harvesting work 'on behalf' of FUGs, only further down supply/value chain		
Recommendation 8: Although the project does not promote 'business as usual' forest products, like Non-Timber Forest Products(NTFPs), because they are not helping promote transformative change with regards to forest rights, the project should be more effective in linking FUGs to service providers who can help support them to develop NTFPs and other 'business as usual' forest based enterprises, as complements to the main focus of the project on forest products linked to new use rights.	Accepted,			
Recommendation 9: Further explore collaboration/consultant sharing with the enterprise development consultant working for the ADB forestry project (it is understood by the reviewers that informal contact was previously made), even more so because the consultant is working in the project FUG sites.	Partially Accepted	Will continue to explore but ADB expert's suggestions need to more practical and realistic and not dependent on large-scale expensive machinery/technology		
Recommendation 10: To make FUG forestry workable, there a need to investigate FUG boundary disputes and propose ways the project can help without getting bogged down in them e.g. training of government staff in boundary re-negotiation and rapid mapping. The MTR team only touched on this issue, did not do a thorough analysis of the disputes.	Accepted	(High priority for FRDC and ISFUs to sort this out and give FUGs documentation/paper trail re all boundaries)		

Recommendation 11: Although more trainings on biodiversity may be useful to increase awareness, it is recommended to make participatory biodiversity monitoring strictly voluntary and where possible combined with normal everyday activities of FUG members rather than long additional wildlife survey transect walks as is suggested. It is also recommended not to force more biodiversity monitoring into the already cumbersome forest management plans, rather the focus in the management plans should be an attractive incentives balance that will lead FUG members to maintain and manage the forest, which as a result may have positive benefits on biodiversity. Getting the incentives balance wrong will have a negative impact on biodiversity, so it is important that biodiversity monitoring itself, doesn't add to the problem.	Accepted			
Recommendation 12: It is recommended to supplement biodiversity monitoring in the project by contracting suitably qualified researchers to strengthen it, this should include photographic evidence, video testimony as well as plots and introducing control sites outside FUG forests, for example in protection area forests to enable a comparing and contrasting of approaches (useful lobbying for FUG forest management if it shows it has a more positive impact on biodiversity compared to strictly protected areas). This would better link Biodiversity monitoring within the project to the overall aim of advancing Participatory Forest Management. (As part of the action (as above) with biodiversity impact assessors contracted by first quarter of 2017 to begin work with a baseline in Spring, the project already has an excellent biodiversity expert employed on a contractual basis who could be considered.)	Accepted			
Recommendation 13: It will be necessary to articulate in writing with justifications, deviations from the original intention in the project document to enable direct REDD+ carbon finance to FUGs.	Accepted			
Recommendation 14: If there is awareness raising on carbon finance for forestry or REDD+ in the project as some project team members are advocating for during this review, this must be handled in a very sensitive way, with no promises made or expectations raised, unless there is certainty they can be delivered on. One of the reviewers has substantive experience in REDD+ pilots where high expectations, that were subsequently not met, had seriously undermined motivation of communities to engage in forest	Accepted			

management activities. The primary incentive in FUG forest, should be forest rights and use based.				
Recommendation 15. The key recommendation from the MTR reviewers is to turn the extensive speculative discussions on REDD+ pluses and minuses for FUG forestry into evidence-based findings through studies. To do this, the project should, along with the UN-REDD Programme, develop a joint workplan as soon as possible for mutually beneficial corporation that accommodates any concerns, a starting point should be a review of internal and national literature of relevance to REDD+ and Community Forestry. Ideas have been put forward for consideration from the UN-REDD+ team during the review and these should be discussed by the project team. One proposed joint action could include a study on the impact of active forest management and use within FUG forestry on avoided deforestation and degradation and as a result carbon benefits, including factoring carbon trapped within harvested wood products as well as substitution for fossil fuels(e.g. sustainable fuel wood is very 'green' compared to any fossil fuel), any increases in increment brought about through thinning and active forest management and how that increases carbon capture etc. This could help contribute to the further evolution of REDD+ towards a more nuanced understanding of the drivers of deforestation and the potential role community forestry could play as a socially acceptable and resilient strategy to address the underlying drivers. *Action by PMO and UN-REDD by January 2016 to develop joint action plan, responsibilities and associated budget.*	Partially Accepted	Agreed on the need for some carbon-cycle explanations re pre-commercial thinning related PAMs, but Project not doing primary research, will utilise secondary data plus findings from NFI and whatever international examples UNREDD can provide.		
Recommendation 16. As mentioned under relevance, the project must consolidate focus of its resources in the second half on outcomes 1 and 2 as a priority as well as elements in outcome 3 that contribute most to the transformative change in policy and practice required for FUG forestry. One activity under outcome 3 that should be emphasized more as it is directly linked to outcome 1. is the facilitated propagation and strengthening of FUG initiated (must be community driven – not project driven) associations. To identify an appropriate role, a niche for the project to play it is important to first analyse experiences with the organically growing FUG associations at field level, identifying needs and aspirations, as well as the already formed	Accepted			

(in 2015) national FUG association to avoid overlap and enhance complementarity.				
Recommendation 17. With the MET, need to frankly review and discuss the most appropriate 'institutional house' for FUG forestry at a national level, acknowledging however that the efforts of FRDC to fill these 'shoes' has been admirable, particularly the junior staff from FRDC who have wholeheartedly engaged in FUG forestry support through the project. But for sustainability of FUG forestry a strong supportive government organisation with sufficient capacity, that is accountable to FUG members is required.	Accepted			
Recommendation 18. With only 2 years left of the project and a long way to go before FUG forestry potential is fully released and institutionalised, it its recommended that new sources of funding for an extension of activities are sought, as early as possible. For example, the Green Climate Fund might be a possible source of funds. The gap between the previous FAO project and this current GEF/FAO project did seem to cause some problems, so a more seamless transition to a new project would be desirable. Action by PMO and project team to develop analysis and action plan in consultation with field level FUG associations and national association starting December 2016 and finishing by February 2017. Need to also start discussions on the best institutional 'house' for FUG forestry support with the PCC from December 2016, so that plans for appropriate capacity development as required can be incorporated into the 2017 action plan.	Accepted			
Recommendation 19. Building from the need to revise and strengthen the M&E system expressed by the project team, it is suggested that the review and revision of the log frame and indicators must go much deeper than the December 2015 review and revision (although building from where it left off) with more clearly defined and appropriate 'goal posts' for all of the mayor project outcomes. Recommendations for revisions are contained within the specific recommendations for each project outcome in the report. It is recommended that the project team are fully engaged in determining appropriate and realistic indicators to measure, some were not fully aware of changes suggested in the revised results framework developed in December 2015.	Accepted			

Recommendation 20. The project team have a culture of frank exchanges between them, this is an asset to be built upon. It is suggested to systematize and institutionalize a more bottom up planning process (of course within the framework of the project outcomes), starting in December 2016 with the development of the annual workplan for 2017. Action by PMO and project team (Approval in writing by PCC, FAO and GEF) in reviewing/revising log frame and annual 2017 workplan and budget by December 2016/January 2017.	Partially Accepted	An appropriate balance will be struck between bottom-up planning processes and PMO decision making. If things go well/improve, bottom-up planning will be given more weight in year 4/2018.		
Recommendation 21. Needs more pro-active work in exploring formal partnerships (from all projects) and where possible developing joint action plans around issues common ground. Of course, there shouldn't be partnerships for partnership sake, and the reviewers recognise the practical difficulties of complex different projects with separate workplans and aims working together. Transformative change in the governance and practice of FUG forestry requires a collaborative approach, not a 'lone wolf' approach, together the projects will achieve more than the sum of all parts. The onus is on all the projects to come together, downplay any differences, and focus on and find ways to pull in the same direction for the greater good of transformative change in FUG forestry. **Action by PMO and FAO Mongolia office to try to organize a forestry project joint coordination and planning exercise sometime around December 2016 /January 2017.**	Partially Accepted	The project will seek to find project and non-project (private companies/SMEs) partners re pre-commercial thinning and chip and pellet production and marketing – and also re-creating/supporting FUG Associations (e.g.. Green-Gold Project) but not in general blah-blah 'community NRM' partnerships		
Recommendation 22. With field-work well under way, now would be a good time to develop a more comprehensive mapping and analysis of particularly influential stakeholders with a resultant strategy to engage them more effectively, for example parliamentary committees. This more comprehensive stakeholder analysis should include examination of potential interests (not only knowledge) and the communication and legal strategy should be tailored to the findings, i.e. messages and communication strategies should be tailored to knowledge and interests of influential decision makers.	Partially Accepted	As above, mapping of stakeholders should be done only with regard to re pre-commercial thinning and chip and pellet production and marketing – and also re-creating/supporting FUG Associations – not re general blah-blah 'community NRM'		
Recommendation 23. Within suitable 'level playing field' communication processes, face to face and joint analysis sessions between FUG members and decision/policy makers, eventually leading to something like a national level, multi-stakeholder policy working group/fora at national level. This will of course become easier as the associations are strengthened.	Accepted	Year 4		

Action by PMO and project team to elaborate this analysis and resultant tactics with a revised communication strategy (see below) by the first quarter of 2017.				
Recommendation 24. As mentioned above, the existing communication and legal strategy needs to be reviewed, refined and a 're-purposing exercise' is needed fit communication more within the purpose of transformative change in the enabling environment for FUG forestry. A more focussed communication strategy that better informs and engages FUG members, whilst delivering targeted messages in appropriate form to key decision makers on the need to strengthen FUG rights. Communication needs to be more embedded within and for the aims of particularly outcome 1. For example, the book to be published in December 2016 by the project,' 'Improvement of public understanding and perception of Mongolian forests'' being developed by a team led by the very experienced, Mr Ikhanbai could be used more tactically as an advocacy tool than is currently planned, with a book launch bringing in key decision makers (possibly also showing the video from the MTR field work if appropriate). As another example when a project website is developed, it should not be a website for the sake of a website, but used for a specific purpose related to project outcomes, for example a place to share the views and analysis of FUG members to decision makers. How this website can then be used by and maintained by project stakeholders after the project ends should be considered throughout its development.	Accepted			
Recommendation 25. Following on from the recommendations from the gender consultant, though the project team does appear to have a good understanding of gender dynamics and strategies and gender inequity is not a major issue in Mongolia, or within FUG forestry, there is always room for improvement. For example, the project could do better in helping FUGs articulate gender Short narrative disaggregated visions for FUG forest management, use and enterprises. There are differences between men and women tentatively identified during the review, men focused more on heavy timber related work, women more on NTFPs, processing and marketing. How to reconcile this difference with the project's priority focus on wood product development needs to be further considered.	Accepted			

Recommendation 26. Several female FUG members requested the review team to ask the project to try to be more responsive in terms of times and location of meetings and trainings to better accommodate women's household duties. Notably milking of livestock, a traditional role for women is causing a problem for mobility of women away from the household. The MTR reviewers acknowledge the project has already been responsive on this matter, but could continue to explore ways to innovate to overcome these challenges, for example training female FUG members as trainers and providing appropriate incentives, who could then go house to house to deliver 'echo' trainings to female FUG members in their household setting. Action by PMO and project team within the 2017 annual workplan developed in December 2016 to plan for theses gender related actions as an explicit part of the plans (building on and from previous gender work of the project).	Accepted			
Recommendation 27. There should be a budget review and revision exercise conducted after the log frame has been revised. Based on the recommendations above (see relevance section) this will undoubtedly require reallocations across outcomes, which will require higher level written FAO and GEF approval as well as approval from the PCC.	Accepted			
Recommendation 28. It is recommended that a better paper trail in general be kept regarding budget and project staffing issues, particularly by the PCC and higher level FAO and GEF to provide formal written, rather than only tacit support for project management decisions that are acceptable. After the log frame revision, the needs for budget re-allocations will become clearer. The reviewers would suspect that within existing project funds, a carefully planned phasing down to a part time CTA, combined with a strong National Coordinator, might be a necessity to avoid too many sacrifices in essential programmatic spending. Other funds should of course also be sought to enable a continued full time CTA. PMO, PCC, GEF and FAO by December 2017.	Accepted			