



**AFB/EFC.27/8**  
October 2021  
Ethics and Finance Committee

# Synthesis of Adaptation Fund Final Evaluations



**Technical Evaluation  
Reference Group**  
ADAPTATION FUND



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Reference Group**  
**ADAPTATION FUND**

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The Adaptation Fund was established through decisions by the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol to finance concrete adaptation projects and programs in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. At the Katowice Climate Conference in December 2018, the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided that the Adaptation Fund shall also serve the Paris Agreement. The Fund supports country-driven projects and programmes, innovation and global learning for effective adaptation. All of the Fund's activities are designed to build national and local adaptive capacities while reaching and engaging the most vulnerable groups, and to integrate gender consideration to provide equal opportunity to access and benefit from the Fund's resources. They are also aimed at enhancing synergies with other sources of climate finance, while creating models that can be replicated or scaled up.  
[www.adaptation-fund.org](http://www.adaptation-fund.org)

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) is an independent evaluation advisory group accountable to the Adaptation Fund Board, established in 2018 to ensure the independent implementation of the Fund's evaluation framework. The AF-TERG, which is headed by a chair, provides an evaluative advisory role through performing evaluative, advisory and oversight functions. The group is comprised of independent experts in evaluation, called the AF-TERG members. A small secretariat provides support for the implementation of evaluative and advisory activities as part of the work programme.

While independent of the operations of the Adaptation Fund, the aim of the AF-TERG is to add value to the Fund's work through independent monitoring, evaluation and learning.  
[www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/](http://www.adaptation-fund.org/about/evaluation/)

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This report was presented to the Adaptation Fund Board at its 36th meeting



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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AF-TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
EE	Executing Entity
EFC	Ethics and Finance Committee
FE	Final Evaluation
Fund	Adaptation Fund
FY	Fiscal Year
IE	Implementing Entity
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIE	Multilateral Implementing Entity
MTR	Mid-Term Evaluation Report
NIE	National Implementing Entity
PPR	Project Performance Report
RBM	Results-Based Management
ToC	Theory of Change



## Executive summary

### Background

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) prepared its first evaluation synthesis as part of its initial work progress in fiscal year 2020 (FY20) and in accordance with the group's objectives. Evaluation syntheses intend to inform the work of the Adaptation Fund (the Fund) and partners by synthesizing evaluative evidence, lessons learned, and conclusions from evaluations of projects funded by the Fund and other relevant institutions.

Initially, the Fund Board tasked the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) and Board secretariat to assess the overall quality of final evaluation reports according to criteria in the Fund guidelines for project/programme evaluation. These included ratings for achievement of relevant outcomes and project objectives, and the report consistency and evidence-based conclusions. Ultimately, the work was reassigned to the AF-TERG, which presents here the first quality review of final evaluation reports and synthesis of performance ratings of completed projects/programmes supported by the Fund.

The main objectives of the work were:

- a) To report to the Board on the quality of final evaluations reports based on (i) compliance with the criteria as laid out in the Fund guidelines for final evaluation; and (ii) substantiation of claims with proper evidence.
- b) To report on the quality of the lessons identified by the evaluation reports.
- c) To summarize, at the aggregate level, on the overall ratings of performance and effectiveness of completed projects/programmes.

### Methodology

The synthesis covered all 17 final evaluations of projects/programmes received from 2015 to June 2020. It was based on the first cohort of completed projects in the Fund portfolio. Of the 15 projects/programmes by Multilateral Implementing Entities (MIEs), 12 were implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In addition to a desk review, data were extracted through a compliance check against Fund guidelines for final evaluations. The overall quality of the report, including of performance ratings for completed projects, was also assessed.

### Findings

The main findings of the review and synthesis were:

- a) Compliance with the Fund guidelines for final evaluations was high (with an average compliance level of 70 per cent with the criteria).
- b) Most reports (>70 per cent) were found to be easy to understand, comprehensive, and concise, yet about 50 per cent did not have a clear presentation of results.

The synthesis covered all 17 final evaluations of projects/programmes received from 2015 to June 2020. It was based on the first cohort of completed projects in the Fund portfolio.

- c) Reports were based on evidence (82 per cent), described applied methodologies (65 per cent) and made use of evidence or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data (82 per cent). However, evaluations seldom assessed the quality of data (29 per cent).
- d) Performance ratings were well substantiated, apart from M&E ratings.
- e) No significant difference was found between the evaluation and the review ratings at the portfolio level, but the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis.

### Quality of reporting per evaluation criteria

**Outcomes:** Evaluations mostly reported on output-level results because of (i) the quality of indicators i.e. output-focused indicators; (ii) the unavailability of targets in some reports, especially at outcome level; (iii) a focus on activity completion rather than on outcome achievement; and (iv) the difficulty to assess impacts and higher-level results.

**Sustainability:** Reports strongly focused on the description of risks for sustainability assessments. The likelihood of risk materialization, the impact of risk materialization, and the quality of baseline and vulnerability assessments were seldom assessed (these dimensions were included in two, eight, and eight reports, respectively).

**Processes:** Reports were strong on reporting aspects of preparation and readiness, and country ownership. Assessments of performance and capacities of Implementing Entities (IEs) and Executing Entities (EEs) were often descriptive.

**Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes:** Both relevance of project outcomes and project results were seldom linked to the Fund strategic framework. This could be explained: while core outcomes existed at the time of project approval, core indicators had not yet been approved. Six of 17 reports mentioned core indicators following the approval of a reporting methodology by the Fund, despite being these projects having been approved prior to approval of the core indicators. All reports, however, kept a strong focus on evaluating projects in the light of climate change adaptation, with references to resilience and adaptive capacities.

**M&E:** M&E was generally the weakest component of evaluation reports. Many assessments were incomplete and did not address all required M&E criteria. This was often the case for the M&E budget (no assessment of the M&E budget in 12 reports) and the quality of the baseline (no assessment of the baseline in 10 reports), which were at best only described.

### Quality of lessons and recommendations

Lessons were evidence-based, contextualized, but often somewhat generic.

Recommendations were not detailed enough to indicate how they should be carried forward. There was little information about responsibilities (three reports) and timeframe (two reports) for implementing the recommendations.

Recommendations seldom covered project scale-up/replicability (four reports) or sustainability assessment (five reports).



## Aggregate performance ratings of completed projects

As substantiated by information available in final evaluations reports:

- a) The review rated the relevance of all 17 projects in the satisfactory range.
- b) The review rated the effectiveness of 13 of 17 projects in the satisfactory range.
- c) The review rated the efficiency of 11 of 17 projects in the satisfactory range.
- d) The review rated the sustainability of 10 of 17 projects in the satisfactory range.
- e) The review rated the M&E of eight of 17 projects in the satisfactory range.
- f) Contribution to impacts were found in the establishment of concrete infrastructure, increased awareness, increased income, behavioural change, capacity building, ecosystem conservation, and policy development.
- g) IE supervision was satisfactory, with important aspects such as support on reporting, M&E, procurement, financial monitoring, etc.
- h) The quality of implementation and execution was satisfactory despite several instances of limited capacity and delays.

## Recommendations

The synthesis identified a series of recommendations based on findings. Given the size and characteristics of this cohort of 17 final evaluations, i.e. first projects of the Fund, and the fact that the Fund has since then adopted policies and strengthened processes, these recommendations only remain valid for the 17 evaluation reports included in this synthesis. They should be applied with caution to the rest of the Fund portfolio.

### Recommendation 1: Link results back to a robust results framework

Evaluation reports should strive to identify and emphasize outcome results, instead of focusing exclusively on activity completion. The nature of some projects and their relatively short duration can make it difficult to assess the attainment of outcomes. However, a robust results framework that goes beyond output-level results can help uncover contributions to impact.

Evaluations should clearly identify impacts and outcomes. This also demands a stronger presentation of the project logic in reports. Evaluations should also clearly link results to the Fund strategic framework since this will also provide guidance on what type of impacts could be assessed.

Over the past few years, the Fund secretariat has tried to clarify the results framework, as well as reporting guidelines and Project Performance Report templates. These developments might have an impact on (the evaluation of) more recent projects. Next syntheses should thus focus on assessing whether the clarification of the reporting tools and requirements has had an impact on the quality of outcome assessment of final evaluations.

**Evaluation reports should strive to identify and emphasize outcome results, instead of focusing exclusively on activity completion.**

### Recommendation 2: Make quality of data a centrepiece to understand the validity of results

While reports clearly made use of evidence and monitoring data, evaluators rarely analysed the quality of this evidence. This mostly relates to the descriptive character of the M&E systems of projects/programmes in some reports.

Evaluation reports should strive to analyse the quality of M&E systems and processes, but also of the data that come out of those systems. This means the quality of baseline data should be clearly analysed since this will help with understanding the validity of results and assessing impact.

Similarly, evaluations should have a bigger focus on learning, and should be sufficiently evidenced to identify any adaptive management actions undertaken during the project lifetime.

### Recommendation 3: Enhance guidelines to help improve evaluation reports

The reviewing exercise, including a review of ratings, showed that compliance with guidelines does not guarantee quality. Having a set of guidelines, however, helps establish the foundations for quality. The overwhelming compliance with the guidelines for final evaluations of Fund projects/programmes should be an incentive to clarify them further, especially in light of previous recommendations noted below:

- a) Revise assessment guidelines for the quality of the project/programme M&E systems to encourage a greater focus on learning.
- b) Add requirement for reports to lay out or analyse a Theory of Change to encourage a stronger presentation of the project logic.

### Recommendation 4: Improve consideration of gender in guidelines

The analysis revealed the need to clarify several important aspects for evaluations and the guidelines. As one key example, gender considerations, now a core policy and requirement for the Fund, are almost overlooked in the guidelines.

### Recommendation 5: Review guidelines regularly

As Fund policies change, guidelines should be reviewed regularly to keep abreast of progress and enable a better assessment of project/programme impacts.

**Evaluation reports should strive to analyse the quality of M&E systems and processes, but also of the data that come out of those systems.**



## Board decision after recommendation of the EFC.

Having considered the comments and recommendation of the Ethics and Finance Committee, the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) decided:

- (a) To take note of the executive summary of the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations and five recommendations for the cohort of 17 evaluation reports analysed, as presented in document AFB/EFC.27/8;
- (b) To request the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat and the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) to consider the five recommendations when updating relevant frameworks/policies, templates and guidance and when planning and implementing evaluations;
- (c) To request the secretariat, in communication with the AF-TERG as necessary, to prepare a management response to the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations, for the consideration of the Board during the intersessional period between its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh meetings.

**(Decision B.36/33)**



## Introduction

Evaluation syntheses intend to inform the work of the Fund and partners by synthesizing evaluative evidence, lessons, and conclusions from evaluations of projects funded by the Fund and other relevant institutions.

In its indicative work programme for FY21 – FY23, the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) seeks to generate evaluative insights and knowledge by articulating and using evaluation results and learning within the Adaptation Fund (the Fund). The evaluation synthesis of 2020 – the first of a series planned each year – is part of the initial work progress of the AF-TERG in FY20 and produced in accordance with its objectives.

Evaluation syntheses intend to inform the work of the Fund and partners by synthesizing evaluative evidence, lessons, and conclusions from evaluations of projects funded by the Fund and other relevant institutions. The synthesis 2020 is an information document for the Fund Board and will be presented at the 36th Board meeting in March 2021.

In addition to a presentation of the background and context, the report includes the following:

### *Section A. General findings of reviews*

- **Chapter 1: Compliance with guidelines.** The chapter presents an overview of compliance of final evaluation reports with the Fund guidelines for project/programme final evaluations.
- **Chapter 2: Quality of reports.** The chapter analyses the quality of final evaluation reports, based on an assessment of the level of evidence supporting report conclusions.
- **Chapter 3: Use of methods and evidence.** The chapter presents an overview of compliance and quality regarding the use of methods and evidence in the final evaluation reports.
- **Chapter 4: Substantiation of ratings.** The chapter presents an account of the substantiation of performance ratings provided by the evaluation reports, including outcomes, sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) ratings. The data presented are based on a review of the evidence used in the reports.

### *Section B. Key findings per evaluation criteria*

This section presents an overview of findings for both exercises with respect to the guidelines' evaluation criteria:

- **Project/programme outcomes (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency)**
- **Sustainability**
- **Processes influencing achievement of results**
- **Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes**
- **Monitoring and evaluation**

### **Section C. Quality of lessons and recommendations**

This section analyses whether lessons and recommendations are evidence-based and contextualized. A summary of main recommendations is also available.

### **Section D. Aggregate performance ratings**

This section synthesizes performance ratings for completed projects as rated by the review.

## **1.1 Background and context**

Project-level final evaluations became required after the Board approved a results-based management (RBM) framework in 2010 for all regular projects/programmes that complete implementation (AF, 2010). The Board agreed that an independent evaluator selected by the Implementing Entity (IE) should carry out these final evaluations. Furthermore, reports should be submitted to the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) through the Fund's secretariat within nine months of project completion.<sup>1</sup> Such evaluations should assess project performance against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework and a set of ratings deriving from criteria laid out in evaluation guidelines (AF, 2011), as approved by the Board in decision B.13/19 (**Annex A**).

The objectives of final evaluations are (AF, 2011):

- a) To promote accountability and transparency within the Fund, and to systematically assess and disclose levels of project or programme accomplishments i.e. are programmes and projects achieving what they were intended to achieve?
- b) To organize and synthesize experiences and lessons that may help improve the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of future Fund-supported interventions i.e. what worked or what did not work and why?
- c) To provide evidence of the effectiveness of Fund operations in achieving its goal and of how project achievements contribute to the Fund's mandate.
- d) To provide feedback into the decision-making process to improve ongoing and future projects, programmes, and policies.
- e) To assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of project design, objectives, and performance.

The first final evaluation for a completed Fund project/programme was published in August 2015.<sup>2</sup> As of July 2020, the Fund received 17 final evaluations for the 19 completed projects of its portfolio.<sup>3</sup> One evaluation was not received, and one was expected in 2020.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Project completion refers to the date at which implementation is completed; project closure refers to financial closure.

2. Final Evaluation Report for the Adaptation Fund project: "Adaptation to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas in Senegal", by Lucille Palazy (Consultant), August 2015.

3. As of July 2020, the Fund portfolio counts 107 projects in total, including the 19 completed projects.

4. Due to the global outbreak of Covid-19, this evaluation might be delayed.

## 1.2 Purpose and objectives of the final evaluation synthesis

The 2020 synthesis of final evaluations is the first produced by the AF-TERG. It focuses on the review of quality and compliance of evaluation reports against Fund guidelines for project/programme evaluation, and the synthesis of performance ratings provided by the assessment. It does not attempt to summarize lessons and experiences drawn from the project/programme design, implementation, or achievement. Rather, it responds to the Board's requirement to regularly review performance reports and evaluations on implementation, ensure independent evaluation of projects/programmes supported by the Fund, and keep the project cycle under review (AF, 2012).

The key **purpose** of the synthesis is to inform the Fund and the Board on the quality of final evaluations and how they have complied with Fund guidelines. Through this exercise, the AF TERG also intended to accumulate experiences and lessons to inform revision of these guidelines. In this way, the effectiveness and efficiency of evaluations on implementation and their use could be improved.

The main **objectives** of the synthesis were:

- a) To report to the Board on the quality of final evaluations reports based on (i) compliance with the criteria as laid out in the Fund guidelines for final evaluation and (ii) substantiation of claims with proper evidence.
- b) To report on the quality of the lessons identified by the evaluation reports.
- c) To summarize, at the aggregate level, on the ratings of performance and effectiveness of completed Fund projects and programmes.

## 1.3 Methodology and evaluation questions

The synthesis, which was entirely desk-based, included final evaluations as the only documents for assessment. Data were extracted through various exercises such as a compliance check against evaluation guidelines and an overall quality review, including of performance ratings for completed projects. Both exercises were based on the criteria of the Fund's evaluation guidelines. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis was performed on the portfolio.

### Evaluation guidelines criteria

The reports were assessed using criteria in the evaluation guidelines approved at the 13th meeting of the Board. The guidelines specify that final evaluations should assess, at a minimum, the following five criteria (AF, 2011):

- achievements of project/programme outcomes
- evaluation of risks to sustainability
- processes influencing achievement of results, including financial management
- how the project/programme has contributed to the achievement of the Fund's objectives
- an evaluation of the M&E systems.

*Methodology for compliance check. Evaluation question:*

*To what extent do final evaluation reports meet the criteria used to assess quality?*

The guidelines describe how final evaluations should be conducted, at a minimum, to ensure sufficient accountability and learning for the purposes of the Fund. The synthesis assessed compliance of the final evaluation reports based on the requirements specified by the evaluation guidelines. These include requirements such as adequate reporting of project outcome and sustainability, implementation processes, reporting on Fund standard and core indicators, M&E systems, and lessons learned and recommendations. A checklist was developed to assess whether reports discussed all required criteria in the guidelines and applied to develop a compliance score for final evaluation reports. The tool is available in **Annex B**.

*Methodology for overall quality review. Evaluation question:*

*Are evaluation reports substantiated with appropriate evidence and methodologies?*

The guidelines describe how each criterion of the final evaluation should be assessed and/or rated. The synthesis assessed how well project ratings and conclusions in final evaluations are substantiated and address the objectives and outcomes in the project design documents approved by the Board. The assessments were based largely on the information presented in the final evaluation reports. They included a review of the quality and appropriateness of the evidence and methodologies used in the reports. The following ratings were verified against review guidelines: outcomes; relevance; effectiveness; sustainability; and project M&E. Based on this assessment, the synthesis provided another rating to assess the Quality of Final Evaluation Reports. **Annex C** presents the final evaluation report review guidelines and provides a detailed account on the assessment approach for rating scales.

*Methodology for quality of lessons learned. Evaluation question:*

*What is the quality of the lessons identified in the final evaluations?*

The synthesis assessed the quality of lessons learned both in terms of substantiation – based on evidence provided in the report – and in terms of effectiveness for learning and knowledge transfer. It adapted the framework developed by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (2009) to assess whether lessons were adequately addressing the perspectives of context and content i.e. the “what”, “how”, and “why” aspects of lessons. Recommendations were classified by frequencies.

*Methodology for aggregate performance ratings. Evaluation question:*

*What is the performance of the completed portfolio so far?*

The synthesis reported on the performance ratings of the portfolio of completed projects for the different evaluation criteria defined in the Fund guidelines. In line with these criteria, specific evaluation questions were explored to report on the review ratings (after quality assessment) at an aggregate level:

- a) **Achievements of project/programme outcomes:** To what extent do the portfolio of completed projects and programmes achieve their expected outcomes in an efficient manner?
- b) **Evaluation of risks to sustainability:** What is the likelihood that the achieved and expected outcomes would be sustained in the portfolio of completed projects?
- c) **Processes influencing achievement of results:** What is the quality of supporting processes for effective implementation and execution of activities in the portfolio of completed projects?
- d) **Contribution to the Fund's objectives:** To what extent do achievements in the portfolio of completed projects contribute to the mandate of the Fund?
- e) **M&E systems:** What is the quality of project M&E implementation in the portfolio of completed projects?

## 1.4 Scope of analysis

The synthesis covered all 17 final evaluations received between August 2015 to June 2020. It was based on the first cohort of completed projects in the Fund portfolio. A detailed list of reports included in the synthesis is provided in the **references** and in **Annex D**.

## 1.5 Challenges and limitations

This first synthesis of final evaluations reflected findings for the 17 evaluation reports reviewed. It did not represent the quality of the completed projects or give a full picture of the Fund's total portfolio of projects. The work was entirely desk-based and no triangulation of findings was undertaken.

Contrary to many evaluation syntheses, this study did not extract lessons from completed projects to inform future project implementation. Instead, it assessed the quality of evaluation reports, including the quality of the lessons. Given the purpose and objectives of the synthesis, the review was based on the current guidelines for final evaluations. It mainly considered concepts of quality within the boundaries of these evaluation guidelines.

This approach was in keeping with the need for the AF-TERG to comply with the requirement, originally tasked to the EFC and Board secretariat, to assess overall quality of final evaluation reports against the guidelines. The definition of quality could certainly have been broadened.<sup>5</sup> However, for this assessment, quality was restricted to both the ability to comply with guidelines and the ability to substantiate claims with proper evidence. As such, the exercise intended to inform on the reporting processes<sup>6</sup> and not on the projects themselves.

5. This meant that some aspects of evaluation practice, notably newer aspects of good practice that postdate the guidelines, were left out of the assessment.

6. The compliance check intended to provide a rapid overview of the aspects of the guidelines discussed (or forgotten) by the evaluation report. The quality review intended to provide a more in-depth assessment of these aspects – i.e. how were they discussed, were conclusions evidence-based?



Basing this first synthesis on the Fund guidelines for project/programme evaluations gives it a unique methodology. However, these guidelines will be revised to reflect ongoing revision of the evaluation framework, from which the guidelines for final evaluations stem. The AF TERG will also change its approach to final evaluation syntheses, using final evaluations as key and essential inputs to future evaluations. In so doing, it will extract relevant lessons and experiences from projects/programmes.

The synthesis was based on a small portfolio of evaluation reports, since only a limited number of projects had reached completion at the time of review.<sup>7</sup> Multilateral Implementing Entities (MIEs) implemented most of the 17 projects/programmes evaluated. Moreover, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) implemented 12 of the 17. This made any disaggregation of findings – such as disaggregation by IE type, project sector, or publication date, more difficult.

Finally, the report and conclusions were dependent on the availability, validity, and reliability of data in the final evaluations.

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7. Since 2010, the Fund has committed USD 740.6 million, including supporting 107 concrete adaptation projects with about 8.7 million direct beneficiaries ([adaptation-fund.org/about](http://adaptation-fund.org/about)).



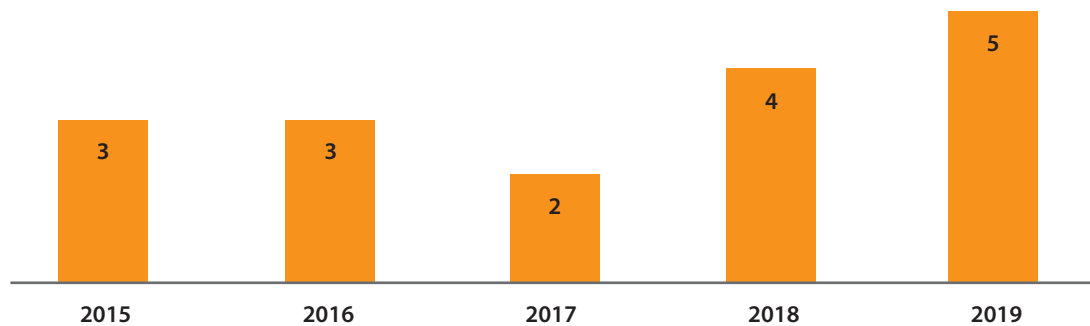
## 2. Portfolio overview

### 2.1 Final evaluations

As of July 2020, the secretariat had received 17 final evaluations. On average, three to four final evaluation reports were published per year. In 2019, five reports were published as more projects were completed. Most completed projects requested an extension (only two projects were either finished on time or earlier than the anticipated date). Consequently, most final evaluations were submitted during the extension period. While evaluations were required within nine months after project completion, six were carried out and published before the project was completed (on average two months before completion). When evaluations were published after completion, they were on average published four months after project completion. See Figure 1.

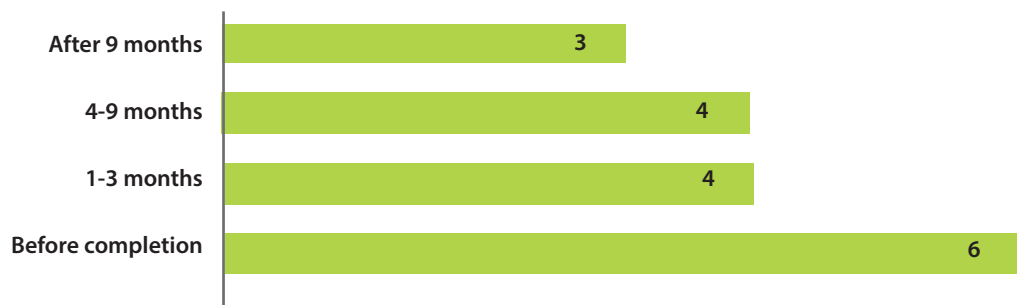
**Figure 1. Portfolio of Fund final evaluations**

Distribution of final evaluations by year (N=17)



*More projects were completed in 2018 and 2019.*

Publication date with regards to project completion (N=17)



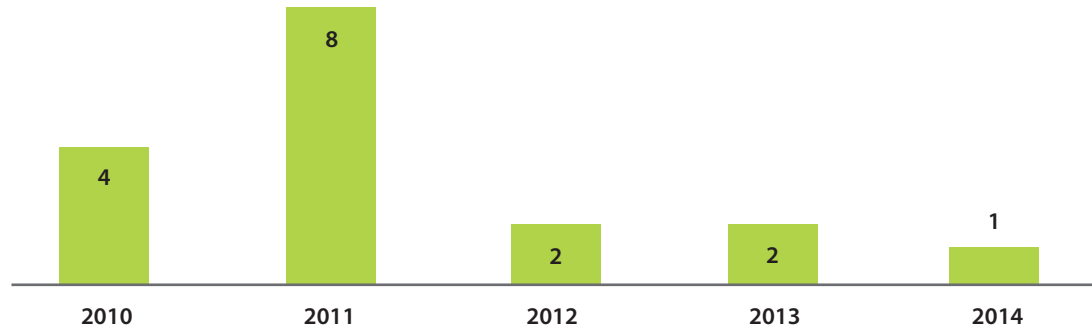
*On average, final evaluation reports were published three months after project completion.*

## 2.2 Completed projects

The synthesis focused on the 17 projects for which evaluation reports were submitted – total grant value of USD 104,423,145 (USD 740,606,601 for the entire portfolio), with the following characteristics (Figure 2):

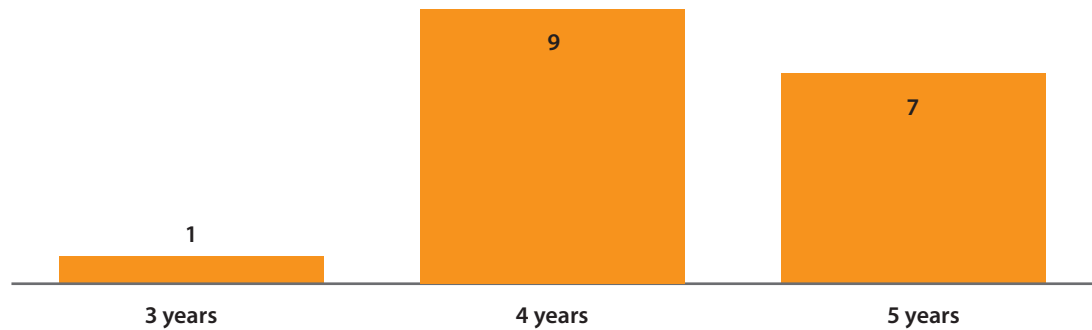
**Figure 2. Portfolio of Fund-completed project**

Year of approval (N=17)



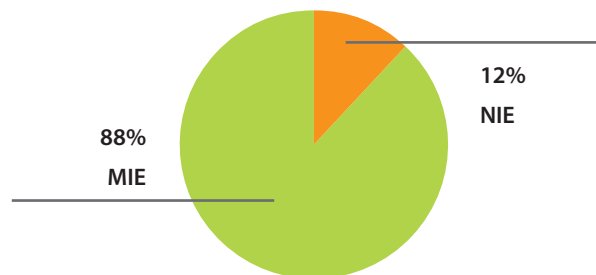
*2011 was the second year the Fund was fully operational.*

Duration of projects (N=17)



*Projects took on average nine months longer than what was originally approved.*

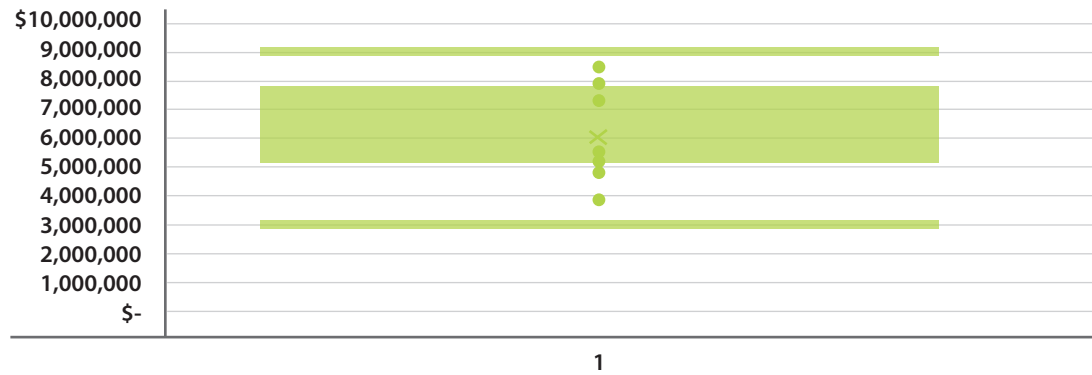
Implementing entity type (N=17)



*12 of 17 projects were from UNDP (71%).*



### Average value of grants (N=17)



Grants were on average \$6,142,538.

### Geographic distribution of projects (N=17)



The distribution of completed projects reflected the portfolio.

### Project sector (N=17)<sup>8</sup>



Most completed projects were labelled as water projects.

8. The Fund only categorizes projects against one sector; this study uses a more granular analysis of sectors.



## 3. Key findings of reviews

### 3.1 General findings

This section presents the general findings in terms of (i) compliance; (ii) quality of reports; (iii) use of methods and evidence; and (iv) substantiation of project performance ratings.

#### Compliance with guidelines

The guidelines for project/programme evaluations describe how final evaluations should, as a minimum, ensure sufficient accountability and learning for the purposes of the Fund. Compliance was assessed by determining the extent to which reports meet requirements in the Fund guidelines. Requirements are described in the scope of evaluations and in the final evaluation report template provided in annexes of the guidelines.

The level of compliance with the final evaluation guidelines was assessed at both an individual criterion level, and at a reporting dimension level into which these criteria are organized. Only required criteria and reporting dimensions were assessed, including the following:

- a) evaluation Information
- b) project Information
- c) methodology (general information – desk reviews – interviews – field visits)
- d) evaluation of project/programme outcomes (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency)
- e) sustainability
- f) processes influencing achievement of project/programme results
- g) preparation and readiness
- h) country ownership
- i) stakeholder involvement
- j) financial management
- k) Implementing Entity supervision and backstopping
- l) delays in project/programme start-up and implementation
- m) contribution of project/programme achievements to the Fund strategic outcomes
- n) monitoring & evaluation
- o) lessons learned
- p) recommendations.

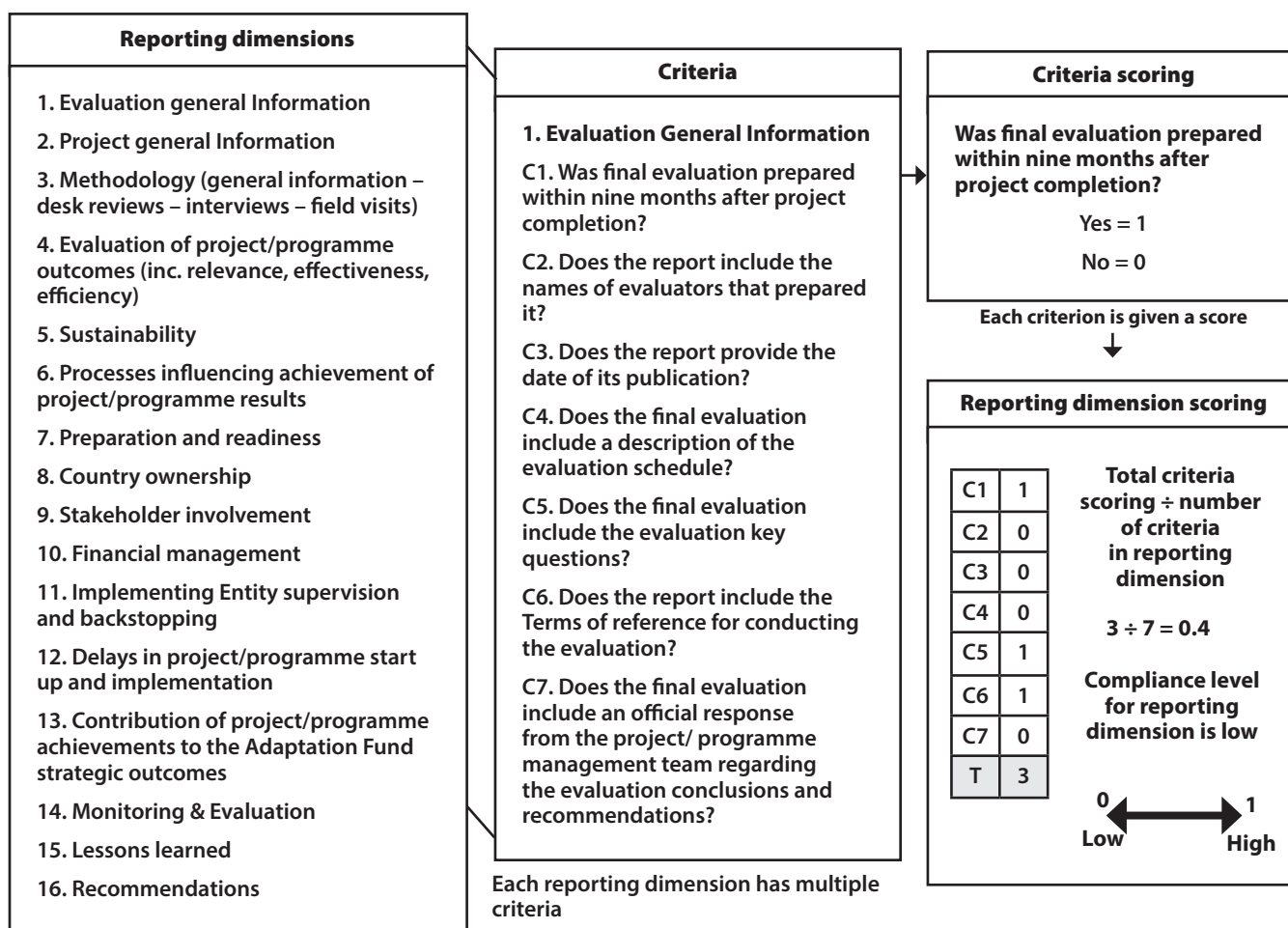
The complete list of compliance criteria and reporting dimensions is available in **Annex B**.

First, the study assessed compliance with each individual criterion. Second, it added the number of criteria for which a final evaluation was in compliance within a reporting



dimension and then divided by the total number of criteria assessed for a given cluster. This gave a compliance score for each individual reporting dimension. The closer the compliance score was to 1, the more the report complied with evaluation guidelines for that specific reporting dimension i.e. all criteria of that reporting dimension were discussed.<sup>9</sup> Overall compliance score for the final evaluation was captured qualitatively in the rating for quality of final evaluation in the synthesis. The study also described the number/percentage of reports in compliance with criteria guidelines,<sup>10</sup> as well as the compliance score for MIE<sup>11</sup> projects/programmes' reports. See Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Methodology of compliance assessment**



9. As specified in the methodology and limitations paragraphs, the compliance exercise intends to provide a rapid overview of which reporting dimensions (required by the guidelines) were included or forgotten in the evaluation reports. It is not meant to provide an in-depth assessment of how these reporting dimensions were discussed; this is done by the quality assessment.

10. For criteria where partial compliance is possible, percentages are less sensitive than scores.

11. Due to the high number of MIEs represented in the portfolio, a separate score was provided for them to see if results had been skewed. Bearing in mind there were only two projects not implemented by MIEs, differences with the average score cannot be seen as significant or conclusive.

**General findings.** Reports generally complied with the guidelines, but some reporting dimensions were overlooked. Reports for MIE projects did not see a significant difference in terms of compliance compared to the rest of the portfolio. Table 1 presents the percentage of reports in compliance and the average compliance score for each reporting dimension.

**Table 1. Average portfolio compliance percentages and scores per reporting dimension<sup>12</sup>**

	Reports in full compliance (percentage)	Score (average)	Score MIE (average)
Methodology – general information	94	0.9	0.9
Country ownership	94	0.9	0.9
IE supervision and backstopping	88	0.9	0.9
Methodology – desk review	85	0.9	0.8
Financial management	85	0.9	0.8
Stakeholder involvement	82	0.8	0.8
Delays in project/programme start-up and implementation	82	0.8	0.8
Project information	71	0.8	0.8
Processes influencing achievement of results	65	0.8	0.8
Project/programme outcomes (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness)	72	0.7	0.7
Preparation and readiness	71	0.7	0.7
Lessons learned	67	0.7	0.7
Evaluation information	66	0.7	0.6
Methodology – interviews	63	0.6	0.6
Sustainability	61	0.6	0.6
Recommendations	57	0.6	0.6
Methodology – field visits	45	0.5	0.4
Contribution of achievements to Fund strategic outcomes	60	0.4	0.4
Monitoring and evaluation	47	0.4	0.4

A high percentage of final evaluations reported on general information (66 per cent for evaluation and 71 per cent for project) and methodological aspects (94 per cent). Regarding the latter, evaluations did it particularly well with the desk reviews (85 per cent) but less so with interviews (63 per cent) or field visits (45 per cent). Reporting dimensions that showed the highest levels of compliance were country ownership (94 per cent), IE supervision (88 per cent), financial management (85 per cent) and delays in start-up and implementation (82 per cent).

12. Reporting dimensions are ordered by average score. Methodology is broken down by type of methodology.

Conversely, project M&E (47 per cent) and contribution to Fund outcomes (60 per cent) were the dimensions with the smallest compliance percentages and scores. This is due to two reasons. First, with respect to project M&E, reports overlooked some aspects such as baselines, budgets, and the alignment of M&E with national frameworks (criteria scores of 0.4, 0.2, and 0.2). Second, with respect to contribution to Fund outcomes, reports seldom discussed results against Fund core/standard indicators (criteria score of 0.4). The latter could be explained by lack of methodologies to report against core indicators.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the score of the rating criteria heavily influenced these two dimensions. A more detailed account of such dimensions is provided in the following sections.

The analysis of both scores and percentages did not reveal any significant differences between the average compliance scores/percentages per publication year, project sector, or project region. Similarly, no significant difference was found in terms of compliance between the evaluations of MIE projects/programmes and the rest of the portfolio.

### **Example of compliance with guidelines**

#### **Argentina (ARG/NIE/Agri/2011/1) – Unidad para el Cambio Rural Argentina (NIE)**

##### **Final evaluation by Penelope Vaca Avila (2019)**

The report for the Argentina project is comprehensive and covers all aspects required by the evaluation guidelines. It presents a detailed information sheet about the project characteristics and main dates, and a clear description of components and costs by components. It even includes an official response from the management in annexes. It briefly describes its methodology and makes a comprehensive evaluation matrix available in annexes. The report presents two strengths. First, it clearly assesses the contribution of project outcomes to Fund objectives. Second, it assesses many reporting dimensions in detail (e.g. it assesses likelihood and sustainability risks per component and per type of risk). Conversely, assessment of project achievement is sometimes unclear with regards to the level of results i.e. unclear identification of output/outcomes. This weakness might be due to the quality of the results framework, but it is difficult to say since this was not assessed. The report discusses all M&E criteria required by the guidelines, including alignment with national frameworks.

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13. Standard/core indicators and outcomes were already available at the time the guidelines were published (2011). However, the Board only approved current core indicators and the methodologies to report against them in 2014 (decision B.23/19), after all completed projects were approved (with the exception of Myanmar, approved in 2014). This could explain why evaluation reports made so few links between the core indicators and the project results.



### **Example of non-compliance with guidelines**

#### **Cook Islands (COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD) – UNDP (MIE)**

##### **Final evaluation by Melina Tuiravakai (2018)**

The report for the Cook Islands is limited. It does not present any methodology and focuses solely on progress of activities. It does not present any evaluative aspects i.e. Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria are not considered, and as such overlook most of the requirements of the guidelines. It does not assess sustainability, M&E, and processes influencing the achievement of project results. Other aspects such as relevance or efficiency are covered but not accurately assessed.

##### **Key observations:**

Reports generally complied with the guidelines and the study found relatively good compliance scores throughout the portfolio. The scores on country ownership indicate potential material with which to discuss important aspects for the Fund such as country ownership. However, the scores on M&E and contribution to Fund strategic outcomes, could also indicate possible difficulties to determine impact and attribution for completed projects.

### **Overall quality of reports**

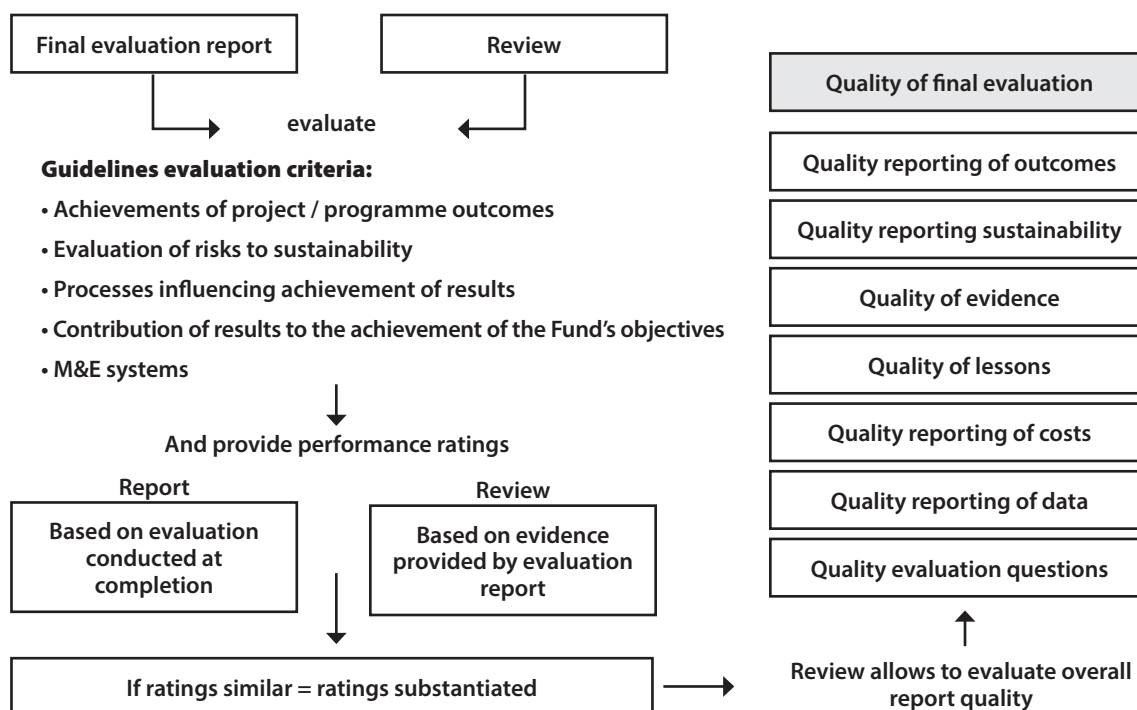
The quality review exercise is different from the compliance assessment. In the previous assessment, the review was limited to verify whether a subject was discussed or assessed within the report. It did not report on the quality of the discussion/assessment. Conversely, the quality review assessed whether the report was complete and evidenced, and whether the conclusions of the report, including the ratings, were substantiated.

The quality of final evaluations was based on the following eight criteria:

- a) quality of reporting on outcomes
- b) consistency of reporting, completeness of evidence, and substantiation of ratings
- c) quality of reporting on sustainability
- d) quality of lessons and recommendations
- e) reporting on actual project costs
- f) quality of reporting on project M&E
- g) quality of data used in reporting
- h) quality of evaluation questions.

The study rated the quality of final evaluations on each of these criteria using a six-point scale that ranged from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory. These ratings were then used in an index to determine the overall quality of the report, again on a six-point scale. See Figure 4.

**Figure 4. Methodology of quality assessment**



**General Findings.** The overall quality of reports was satisfactory, with 88 per cent of final evaluations rated “Moderately satisfactory” (three reports), “Satisfactory” (eight reports) or “Highly satisfactory” (four reports) for their quality (Table 2). No difference was found between the quality of reports for projects implemented by National Implementing Entities or MIEs. Both unsatisfactory reports were from MIEs (UNDP and World Food Programme).

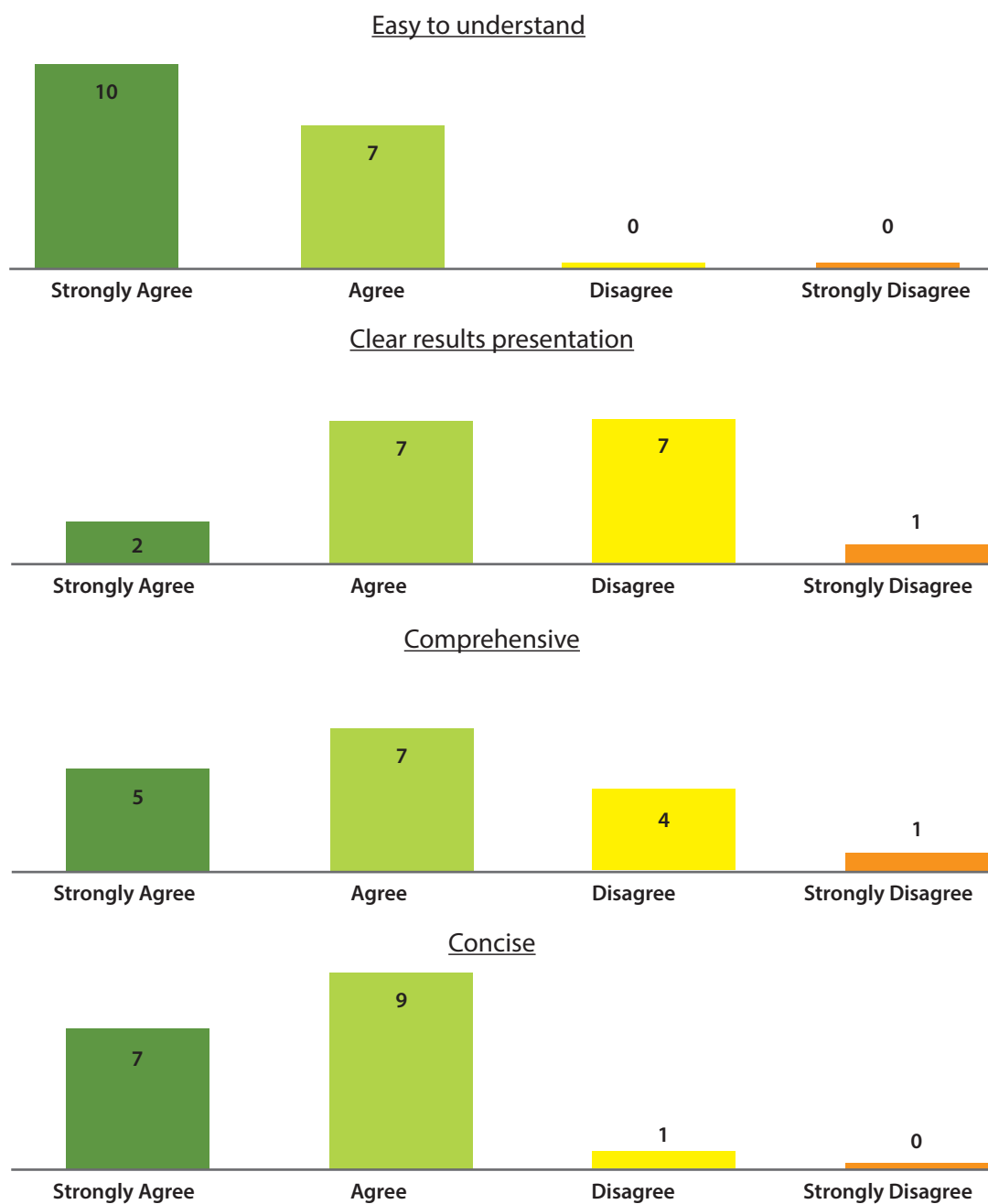
Most reports were easy to understand, comprehensive, and concise. Results were more contrasted regarding the presentation of results: about half of the reports presented a negative assessment on that criterion. Figure 5 gives an overview of the quality of reports, as rated by the reviewer.

On a positive note, 11 reports made use of elements of good practices (such as discussions about gender results, learning, project beneficiaries, or reconstruction of Theory of Change [ToC], etc.); six reports provided particularly detailed analyses; and three reports were candid about the limitations of project M&E. This was the case for the Tanzania (TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1), Samoa (SAM/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD) and Turkmenistan (TKM/MIE/Water/2011/1) reports.

**Table 2. Overall quality ratings (N=17)**

Highly satisfactory	4
Satisfactory	8
Moderately satisfactory	3
Moderately unsatisfactory	1
Unsatisfactory	1
Highly unsatisfactory	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

**Figure 5. Characteristics of portfolio in terms of quality (N=17)**



Gaps in quality often revolved around the presentation of results or the description of the project logic. Nine reports did not clearly describe the project logic and eight did not clearly assess progress towards results. This was often the result of the following shortcomings: six reports did not clearly identify results levels; six did not include targets, baseline, or indicators; and five were overly focused on outputs. Two reports did not mention the project impact/objective at all. Only six results were analysed in the context of the Fund strategic framework despite being required to do so by the evaluation guidelines.<sup>14</sup>

As one critical aspect in terms of quality, M&E was the criterion with the highest number of unsatisfactory quality reporting ratings. This owed to important gaps both in terms of compliance and quality of the analysis (i.e. many reports were more descriptive than analytical). Most reports (nine) did not assess the quality of data generated by monitoring systems.

More details about the quality of reporting can be found in the chapter “Key findings per reporting criteria”.

### **Example of good overall quality**

#### **Tanzania (TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1) – UNEP (MIE)**

#### **Final evaluation by Hugo Navajas and Fikirini Mkali (2019)**

The report checks almost all the boxes in terms of compliance and sometimes go beyond, demonstrating some examples of good practices. It is concise, clearly based on evidence and gives a strong overview of the programme’s results. Achievements are described at all levels. When needed, the report is candid about the difficulty to assess impacts, and instead reports on the likelihood of impacts. The report would have gained in quality if the targets, baseline, and indicators were also clearly mentioned. Good practice elements are the thorough assessment and reconstruction of a ToC, and the mention of long-term monitoring, evaluation, and learning to assess impacts. The report highlights the consequences of the M&E system shortcomings on the quality of data and understanding of results. It clearly explains the benefits of having defined target areas/beneficiaries; good outcome indicators; and enough budget/dispositions for long-term monitoring.

#### **Key observations:**

The quality review showed that presentation of results is an important quality issue. While this can be considered as an important gap, it also links back to M&E. Such issues seem to stem more from the difficulty to assess impacts and from formulation of results frameworks rather than from an innate quality issue in the reports. Final evaluations, however, rarely underline these shortcomings, nor do they assess the quality of data on which their conclusions are based.

14. cf. Section B: contribution to Fund strategic objective.

## Use of methods and evidence

According to Fund evaluation guidelines, all final evaluation reports should include evaluation general information, as well as a description of the methodology and evaluation key questions. Reports should be consistent, with complete and convincing evidence and data, explicitly considering alternative explanations of findings, as well as substantiated ratings.

**Evaluation and project information.** Evaluation and project information assessed whether the report provided the minimum information required by the guidelines about both the project and the evaluation.

### Criteria for “Evaluation information”

- Completed on time
- Names of evaluators
- Date of publication
- Evaluation schedule
- Evaluation questions
- Terms of Reference
- Management response

### Criteria for “Project Information”

- AF Project ID and name
- Project/ programme category
- Implementing Entity (name and type)
- Executing Entity
- Amount of financing requested
- Project start /effectiveness date
- Mid-Term Review
- Project completion date
- Description of project components
- Financing per project components

Reports did well in reporting on their date of publication and including the names of evaluators (15 of 17). Six final evaluation reports were submitted before project completion date and eight reports were submitted on time *cf. portfolio overview*. Only half of the portfolio of final evaluations included the evaluation terms of reference in their annexes. Only two reports included an official management response, and only one proceeded to a quality assessment of the report according to the IE requirements.

Project information was missing with respect to the Fund project ID (nine of 17), project sector (12 of 17), type of IE (nine of 17), and clarity about the Mid-Term Evaluation Report (MTR, six of 17). This showed that often reports for multilateral agencies made a clearer link with the agencies rather than with the Fund. Not all reports included a comprehensive project information sheet.

**Methodology and evaluation questions.** This section assessed whether the report made use of, and provided the minimum information about, methodologies for the evaluation.

Eleven reports provided a clear methodology, while in six reports methodology was not detailed or absent. Where it was described, evaluations followed a mixed-methods approach combining desk review, interviews, and on-site visits.

Eleven reports included evaluation questions — either in the body of the report (three) or in the annexes (eight), and an evaluation matrix in their annexes. Six reports mentioned following the MIE evaluation protocol and eight explicitly mentioned using evaluation criteria from the OECD/DAC.

**For quality of evidence, the exercise found all but two reports had some level of satisfactory rating**

The main gaps in terms of methodology were lack of justification for interviews and selection of field visits. Reports described interviewees and location of field visits. However, this occurred mostly through the evaluation mission schedule rather than through a clear explanation within the methodology paragraph. Moreover, most failed to report the rationale behind selections for interviews (13 reports) and field visits (12 reports). Four reports did not provide a list of consulted documents.

**Use of evidence.** The quality of evidence section assessed whether the report was consistent, the evidence presented was complete and convincing, and ratings were well-substantiated.

For quality of evidence, the exercise found all but two reports had some level of satisfactory rating (Table 3). Three were highly satisfactory, four were satisfactory, and seven were moderately satisfactory. In all, 82 per cent of reports were clearly based on evidence and made use of this evidence or M&E data. The Myanmar report (MMR/MIE/Rural/2011/1) is a good example of an evaluation that made clear references to M&E data (figures, quotes, etc.). The report also specified when data were not available to back conclusions, or when data quality were not verifiable.

For the reports not rated as satisfactory or highly satisfactory, the issue often lay with the substantiation of ratings, with differences between the report performance ratings, and reviewer ratings. This aspect is discussed in the following paragraph in more depth.

**Table 3. Evidence-based reporting (N=17)**

Highly satisfactory	3
Satisfactory	4
Moderately satisfactory	7
Moderately unsatisfactory	1
Unsatisfactory	1
Highly unsatisfactory	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

### Key observations:

A third of reports were published before project completion. The use of evidence and references to methodologies is an important aspect of quality for evaluation reports: this was satisfactory, with generally clear information about the evaluation and the project. Without clear mentions to the MTR in a third of reports, it is difficult to have a sense of adaptive management in projects and understand the extent to which evaluations followed recommendations. Aspects of quality that went beyond guideline requirements (e.g. use of good evaluation practices) highlight possible shortcomings of guidelines.

### Substantiation of project ratings

According to the guidelines, all final evaluations should assess the performance of completed projects and provide ratings on selected evaluation criteria. Project outcomes, including effectiveness and efficiency, and M&E implementation are rated on a six-point scale.

This ranges from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, with the top three ratings constituting the satisfactory range and the bottom three the unsatisfactory range. The sustainability of project outcomes is measured on a four-point scale, ranging from likely to unlikely. The synthesis reviewed and assessed the substantiation of evaluation ratings by providing a performance rating based on the evidence available in the reports. It noted and characterized any difference between the report and the review rating. If a final evaluation report presented insufficient information to assess a specific issue, the synthesis marked the criterion as “unable to assess”.<sup>15</sup> **Annex C** details the methodology used in rating project performance for the review.

In general, relevance, effectiveness, overall outcome, and sustainability performance ratings were well-substantiated, with little difference between the report and the review’s ratings. Results were more contrasted at the category level than at the range level,<sup>16</sup> and for the criteria of M&E implementation and efficiency. Only two evaluations rated a project’s contribution to strategic objectives of the Fund. See Figure 6.

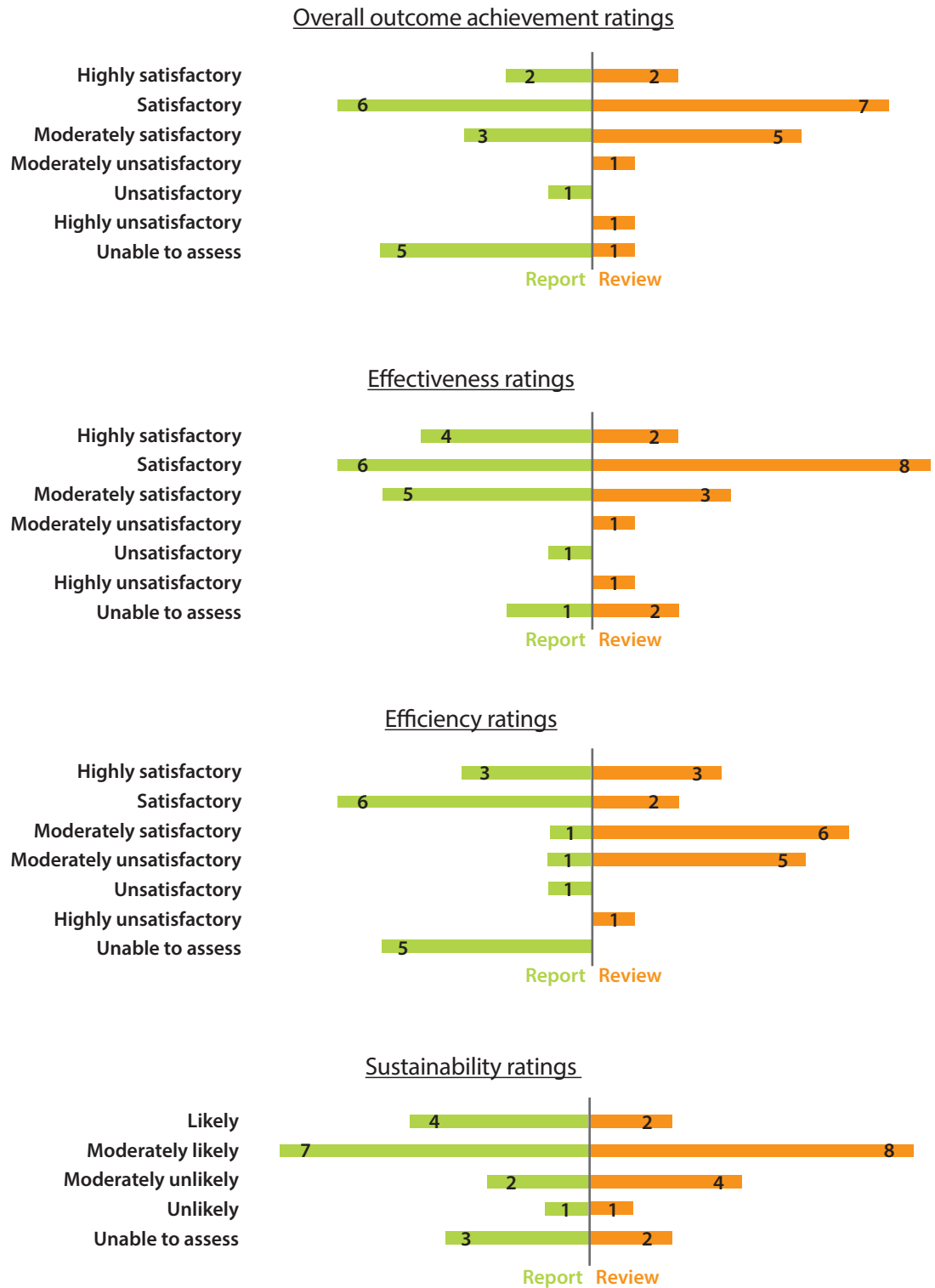
No significant difference was found between the evaluation and review ratings at the portfolio level. However, the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis.

In general, relevance, effectiveness, overall outcome, and sustainability performance ratings were well-substantiated, with little difference between the report and the review’s ratings.

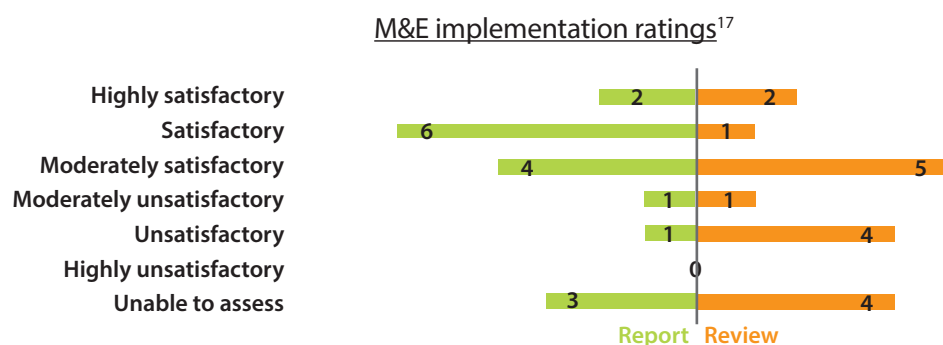
15. In the case of reports (green bars) in the graphs, “Unable to assess” means the evaluation report did not provide a rating.

16. A satisfactory range includes “highly satisfactory” “satisfactory” and “moderately satisfactory” ratings. A satisfactory category is the “satisfactory” rating.

**Figure 6.** Difference in performance ratings between evaluation reports and review (N=17)







### Key observations:

The review of project ratings revealed more contrast at the category level rather than at the range level between the evaluation reports and the review. Findings indicated that (i) generally speaking, the performance of projects as assessed by both the final reports and the review was mostly satisfactory; and (ii) the differences at category level highlight issues of quality in the initial reporting of criteria by reports.

## 3.2 Key findings per evaluation criteria

This section presents results for the following criteria: (i) project/programme outcomes; (ii) sustainability; (iii) processes influencing achievement of results; (iv) contribution to Fund strategic outcomes; and (v) M&E.

### *Project/programme outcomes (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency)*

According to guidelines, final evaluations should assess the project/programme performance, and focus on achievements in terms of outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The quality of reporting on outcomes criteria assesses whether the report assessed all relevant outcomes and achievements of project objectives in the context of Fund strategic priorities, sector, and project/programme indicators.

**Relevance.** The relevance criterion assesses whether the project's outcomes were consistent with the Fund goal, objectives, strategic priorities, and country/region priorities.

Reports were strong on reporting about the relevance of projects for both country (16 reports) and Fund priorities (14 reports). Often reports were exhaustive about the relevance for the country and provided a list of country plans and policies of relevance with the project/programme. However, the discourse was more cursory for alignment

17. The M&E criterion assesses the quality of the project/programme M&E systems according to the following four dimensions: (1) M&E plans; (2) indicators, (3) baselines; and (4) alignment with national M&E frameworks. The evaluations, however, only rate M&E implementation by verifying that (a) an M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of progress; (b) annual PPRs were complete and accurate; (c) the M&E system was used for adaptive management; and (d) sufficient resources were in place to ensure proper implementation of M&E. While there was no significant difference between the evaluation and review ratings, M&E ratings were often more contrasted than other criteria because of how the identified shortcomings were rated. This was particularly visible for the satisfactory and unsatisfactory ratings.

with Fund priorities. Most of the time, alignment was mentioned but not detailed (i.e. not directly linked to Fund impact, goals and strategic priorities). Only four reports assessed the relevance of projects from a community or more localized perspective i.e. relevant targets and needs.

**Effectiveness.** The effectiveness criterion assesses whether the actual project outcomes were commensurate with the original or modified project objectives.

The description of results and progress depended a lot on the quality of the project’s results framework. Nevertheless, several gaps were found in terms of compliance. All evaluations discussed the overall level of outcome achievement and most discussed the extent to which output targets were met (94 per cent). However, the reports analysed and presented outputs and outcomes performance differently (Table 4).

**Table 4. Compliance with outcomes reporting dimension (N=17)**

Report discusses/describes/explains	n	Percentage
Presents the output targets that were expected at project start	11	65
Discusses the extent to which the output targets were met	16	94
Explains why outputs were not met/activities were not carried out	12	71
Describes the outcomes expected at project start	10	59
Describes the extent to which expected outcomes were achieved at completion	12	71
Describes the extent to which targeted performance was achieved for outcome indicators	8	47
Discusses the overall level of outcome achievement	17	100

In the portfolio, reports mostly described the targeted performance of results at output level (65 per cent) rather than outcome level (63 per cent of reports did not provide targets). This was mostly the case because there was a strong focus on output-level results and on the assessment of activity completion, rather than on outcomes achievement. In all, 41 per cent of reports did not clearly describe the outcomes expected at project start at all.

**Efficiency.** The efficiency criterion assesses whether the process of preparation and implementation was cost-effective, especially compared to other projects.

All reports fully complied with efficiency requirements. They provided information on timeliness of execution of project activities, the use of resources (all but one), and factors that affected efficiency.

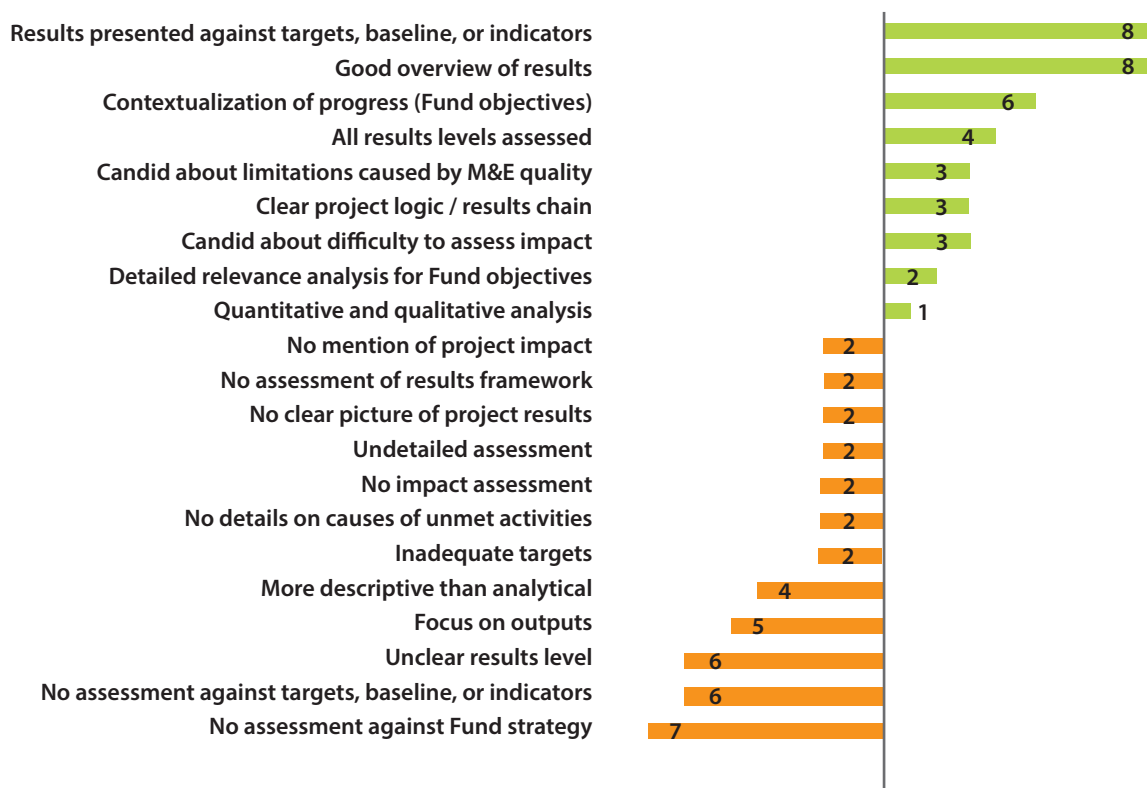
**Quality.** Most reports (eight) ranged into the category of “Moderately satisfactory” quality for the reporting on outcome progress (Table 5).

**Table 5. Quality of reporting on outcomes (N=17)**

		Example
Highly satisfactory	2	Myanmar
Satisfactory	3	Georgia
Moderately satisfactory	8	Samoa
Moderately unsatisfactory	4	Mauritania
Unsatisfactory	0	
Highly unsatisfactory	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

Quality analysis showed that six reports had important gaps regarding presentation or assessment of results (no targets, indicators, or baseline; unclear results level, etc.). Reports briefly mentioned relevance with Fund objectives. However, results were seldom thoroughly analysed in the context of the Fund’s strategic framework, even though it was a requirement of the evaluation guidelines. Figure 7<sup>18</sup> summarizes the most frequent positive and negative quality aspects of outcomes reporting.

**Figure 7. Quality assessment: Characteristics of reporting on outcomes (N=17)**



18. The graph presents both positive and negative characteristics of reporting on outcomes in terms of quality. Characteristics are not exclusive of each other i.e. some reports may be rated positive in one aspect and negative in another one.

### **Key observations:**

The clarity of project results impacted on the quality of reporting on outcomes and links back to the quality of the results framework. The Board's amendments of the strategic results framework in March 2019 (AF, 2019) should clarify how IEs can implement the framework and have an impact on more recent projects. Similarly, the amendments introduced methodology for evaluating core indicators long after most Fund projects had been approved. Consequently, the ability to contextualize project results with the Fund strategic framework depended on the evaluator's readiness to include core indicators voluntarily.<sup>19</sup>

### **Sustainability**

According to guidelines, a Fund final evaluation should assess the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes and progress towards impact at project/programme completion. The quality of reporting on sustainability assesses whether the report presented a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes.

**Compliance.** The sustainability criterion includes evaluating at least four dimensions of risks to sustainability (i.e. financial and economic, sociopolitical, institutional framework and governance, and environmental), and how these risks comprise linkages from outcomes to impacts. Sustainability is understood as the likelihood of the achieved outcomes continuing after financing from the Fund ends.

All except one report described the risks that may affect project sustainability, and 71 per cent of reports (12) evaluated at least four dimensions of risks to sustainability (Table 6). The assessment of sustainability rarely went beyond describing risks, however. Moreover, the likelihood of the materialization of these risks and/or the impact – if such materialization was occurring – was overlooked. Only two reports were explicit about the probability and likelihood of materialization of major risks. The Tanzania report (TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1) is a good example of integrating the likelihood of risks into the sustainability assessment. The impact of risk materialization was assessed in just under half (47 per cent) of cases. Questions of scale-up and replicability were mentioned in about half of the reports (53 per cent), either through the lens of sustainability (five reports) or through final recommendations (four reports). However, they were often not part of a fully developed assessment.<sup>20</sup>

**Quality.** Most reports fared well in terms of quality of sustainability reporting; the detailed assessment of sustainability revealed good practices (Table 7). The Argentina report (ARG/NIE/Agri/2011/1) provided an additional risk analysis per component. Conversely, the Mauritania report (MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD) did not clearly assess the sustainability of outcomes (i.e. no likelihood or comprehensive description of risks).

19. cf. Section B: Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes.

20. Scale-up and replicability are not criteria for project development nor Fund objectives. They are not evaluation criteria, but the Fund guidelines for project / programme final evaluations encourage evaluators to assess actions taken to achieve sustainability and replicability, have a look at the likelihood of replication effects and give special attention to analyzing lessons and proposing recommendations on aspects related to replication.

**Table 6. Compliance with sustainability reporting dimension (N=17)**

<b>Report discusses/describes/explains</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Describes the risks that may affect project sustainability	16	94
Discusses probability/likelihood of materialization of the major risks	2	12
Discusses the likely impact of a major risk's materialization	8	47
Provides an overall assessment of the likelihood of project sustainability	15	88
Evaluates at least four dimensions of risks to sustainability	12	71
Discusses questions of scale-up and replicability	9	53

**Table 7. Quality of reporting on sustainability (N=17)**

		<b>Example</b>
Highly satisfactory	7	Argentina
Satisfactory	7	Djibouti
Moderately satisfactory	1	Solomon Islands
Moderately unsatisfactory	1	Mauritania
Unsatisfactory	0	
Highly unsatisfactory	1	Cook Islands
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

Quality analysis found that evaluation reports clearly described risks to the sustainability of outcomes. In general, reports presented a convincing analysis of financial and economic risks and institutional/governance risks. In a small number of reports (three), the assessment for either environmental or sociopolitical risks was either missing or not very comprehensive. Half of the reports (eight of 17) did not assess the quality of vulnerability assessments or baseline studies for project design.

**Key observations:**

The clear description of risks in final evaluations could potentially contribute towards the sustainability of impacts. However, questions of scale-up, when addressed in evaluation reports, do not always translate into concrete recommendations for sustainability with a description of likelihood and of factors hindering replications. Similarly, guidelines do not address questions of learning, and how learning will be shared for sustainability. Both are important aspects for the Fund. Findings about the quality of baseline studies are in line with the lack of analysis for the quality of data in evaluation reports.

## Processes influencing achievement of results

According to guidelines, evaluations should consider the following aspects influencing project/programme implementation and achievement of results: preparation of project design, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, financial management, IE supervision, and delays in project implementation (Table 8).

**Table 8. Compliance with processes reporting dimension (N=17)**

Report discusses/describes/explains	n	Percentage
Discusses the factors that affected achievement of outcomes	16	94
Assesses whether the project design/logic is relevant to achievement of the project objectives	15	88
Discusses the extent to which capacities of EEs were consulted in design phase	9	53
Describes involvement of local stakeholders (when appropriate local communities, ownership)	16	94
Provides information on the involvement of relevant vulnerable groups in the project	14	82
Provides information on financial controls and management of funds	16	94
Financial audits were used as a source of information if available at the time of the evaluation	13	76
Discusses the performance and capacities of the IE in supervising project implementation	15	88
If applicable, discusses reasons and impact of delays on project results	14	82

All reports but one discussed the factors that affected achievement of outcomes, with only five having a cursory discourse about processes.

**Preparation and readiness.** Most reports (15 of 17) described the project design and assessed its relevance to achievement of outcomes. This was done mostly through analysis of project relevance, stakeholder consultation, and inclusion of lessons into the design. However, a results chain or ToC rarely analysed project logic since this was not required by the guidelines. As such, the project logic was not always clear in reports. Only about half of the reports (nine of 17) mentioned assessment of capacities of EEs at project design.

**Country ownership and stakeholder involvement.** Country ownership (16 reports) and stakeholder involvement (14 reports) were both well-addressed. In general, reports gave more details about the former than the latter. Reports frequently mentioned that projects addressed local needs and emphasized community consultations at project design. However, the assessment tended to be less specific about the involvement of vulnerable groups during the rest of the project cycle.

proposals, but what I am saying here is that the evaluation did not give many details about the involvement beyond involvement at design phase, not that there was none beyond that phase.

**Financial management and delays.** All reports but one discussed a project financial execution (Table 9). However, the quality of this assessment varied greatly. The quality of reporting on project costs assessed whether the report included the actual project costs (totals, per activity, and per source) and provided a detailed analysis of financial execution.

**Table 9. Quality of reporting on costs (N=17)**

		Example
Highly satisfactory	5	Tanzania
Satisfactory	5	Senegal
Moderately satisfactory	3	Honduras
Moderately unsatisfactory	2	Myanmar
Unsatisfactory	2	Mauritania
Highly unsatisfactory	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

Most evaluations reported the actual project costs. As such, they fell into the Satisfactory range (58 per cent) for the quality of reporting on costs. Ten reports reported the project costs per component and six did it per activity. One report did not mention any costs at all (Mauritania, MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD). The description of costs did not necessarily translate into a quality financial analysis in the evaluations. Six reports had weak financial management assessment (e.g. no discussion on aspects of control and transparency), while two others did not assess financial management at all. Thirteen reports clearly used audits (either referencing them in the report body or in the consulted list of documents) as a reference.

**Delays.** Delays were often analysed conjointly with financial execution, or with the assessments of efficiency or effectiveness. In general, reports (14 of 17) were candid about why projects experienced delays.

**IE supervision.** Most reports (15 of 17) discussed the performance and capacities of the IE in supervising project implementation. However, the discourse was mostly cursory and often more descriptive than analytical.

**Key observations:**

Compliance scores on preparation and readiness indicate potential material to discuss important initial aspects about project efficiency. In their current state, final evaluations probably do not allow to have a comprehensive picture of vulnerable stakeholders' involvement beyond project design. Findings also highlight that project final evaluation guidelines do not require ToCs and that gender requirements are not necessarily a strong focus of the guidelines.

**Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes**

According to the guidelines, evaluations should assess how project outcomes have aligned with, and contributed to, Fund goals, impacts, and outcomes (Table 10).

**Table 10. Compliance with contribution to Fund strategy reporting dimension (N=17)**

Report discusses/describes/explains	n	Percentage
Discusses the achievement of concrete adaptation measures and resilience aspects in all levels	16	94
Discusses the contribution of project to adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change	17	100
Discusses results against Fund core/ standard indicators	6	35
Provides an overall rating in the contribution of achievements to Fund targets and objectives	2	12

All reports could clearly discuss the contribution of the project to adaptive capacities and link it to resilience against the impact of climate change. Similarly, all but one could discuss the achievement of concrete adaptation measures in line with stronger resilience capacity and the Fund's strategic goals and objectives.

However, the link between these findings and the explicit contribution to the Fund's strategic goal, notably through the presentation of results against Fund core/standard indicators,<sup>21</sup> was rarely done (six reports). This could be explained by the approval gap between projects, core outcomes, and core indicators and methodology.

Specifically, core outcomes were in place by the time all 17 projects of this study were approved. However, current core indicators and the methodology to report on them were only approved in 2014. The development and strengthening of project reporting

21. See Annex A for list of Fund standard/core outcomes; and footnote 13 for more context about core indicators.



requirements, also reflected in the enhancement of the PPR template,<sup>22</sup> may thus have influenced reporting on core indicators in the six reports where they are included. Conversely, the absence of such guidance prior to 2014 could explain why most reports made few links with the framework. No trend or correlation was, however, detected between the inclusion of core indicators in final evaluation reports and the publication date of the final evaluation reports.<sup>23</sup>

Some reports highlighted the links between their results and the strategic objectives of the multilateral entity in charge of implementation. This, once again, highlighted that some projects were mostly linked to their IE. No difference was found between the oldest reports (2015) and the newest reports (2019) of the portfolio.

### **Key observations:**

Findings show that final evaluations keep a strong focus on evaluating projects in light of climate change adaptation, with references to resilience and adaptive capacities. However, these links do not translate into clear references to the Fund framework and core indicators for most reports. As such, final evaluations seldom allow for complete understanding of the project's contribution to the Fund's strategy. Contribution is more often understood as relevance of the project (i.e. in terms of adaptation) rather than as outcome-level results. Yet in both aspects, most reports do not provide a thorough analysis of contribution (i.e. they do not go beyond a simple mention of alignment with Fund priorities or objectives).

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

According to guidelines, reports should assess the strengths and weaknesses of project M&E based on multiple criteria. These criteria are: both entry and implementation; the budget and funding for M&E; the project baseline; the indicators; and the alignment of the project M&E with national monitoring frameworks. The quality of reporting on project M&E assesses whether the report included an assessment of the quality (and not only a discussion) of all these aspects.

**Compliance.** Compliance regarding M&E requirements depended on the criteria (Table 11). Most projects (13 at entry, 15 during implementation) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of M&E. However, the quality of these assessments varied widely and often lacked comprehensiveness. Conversely, the M&E assessment often overlooked discussion about baselines (10 reports of 17) and seldom assessed baseline quality. Only five reports

21. See Annex A for list of Fund standard/core outcomes; and footnote 13 for more context about core indicators.

22. To this end, the results tracker section of the PPR was included in 2014, following Board Decision B.23/19. It was revised in 2015 following Board Decision B.25-26/14. The results tracker allows/requires IEs to report on those core indicators to which their project is aligned in three stages: i) project lifetime or set targets at project design stage; ii) project mid-term; and iii) actual performance at project completion.

23. Core indicators were included in reports dating from 2015 (1/3), 2016 (2/3), 2018 (1/4), and 2019 (2/5).

discussed the quality of M&E budget and only four discussed alignment with the national monitoring framework. One report did not assess M&E at all (Maldives, MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6).

**Table 11. Compliance with M&E reporting dimension (N=17)**

Report discusses/describes/explains	n	Percentage
Describes the strengths and weaknesses of project M&E design	13	76
Describes strengths and weaknesses of the M&E implementation	15	88
Describes strengths and weaknesses of budgeting and funding for M&E activities	5	29
Project baseline: discusses the extent to which baseline was used for M&E	7	41
Discusses the alignment of M&E to National M&E Frameworks	4	24
Provides an M&E rating consistent with evidence	4	24

**Quality.** In general, the quality of M&E reporting varied across the portfolio of final evaluations (Table 12). Most reports (76 per cent) had a satisfactory or moderately satisfactory quality rating, but this did not eliminate important gaps in terms of M&E reporting. The M&E category had the highest level of unsatisfactory quality ratings (29 per cent either highly unsatisfactory or unsatisfactory).

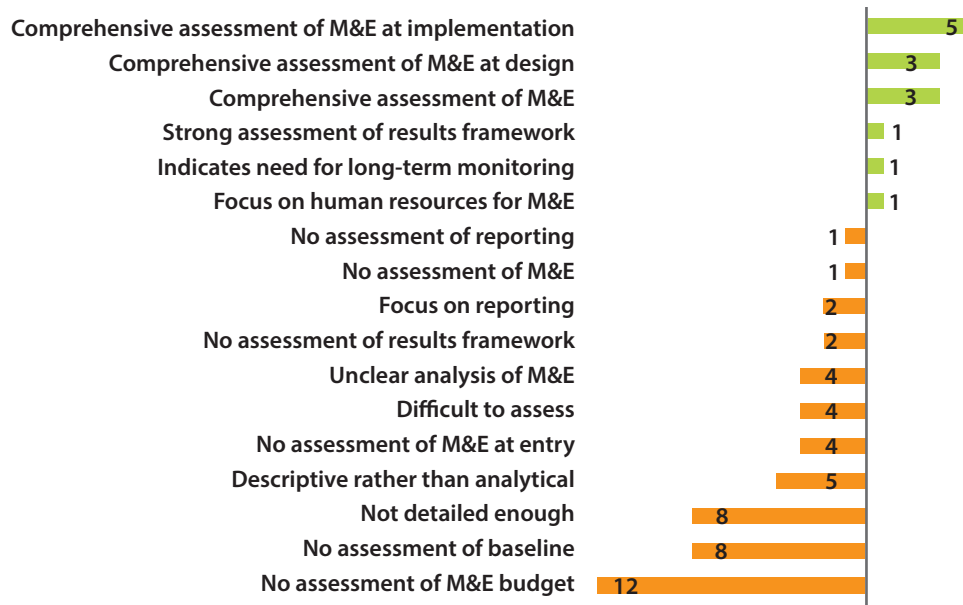
**Table 12. Quality of M&E reporting (N=17)**

		Example
Highly satisfactory	0	
Satisfactory	7	Tanzania
Moderately satisfactory	5	Solomon Islands
Moderately unsatisfactory	0	
Unsatisfactory	1	Guatemala
Highly unsatisfactory	4	Honduras
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

Quality analysis showed that most reports provided a detailed assessment of M&E at implementation level, with five reports providing a particularly detailed assessment of M&E at that specific stage. Although 13 reports discussed M&E at entry, they did it less comprehensively than at implementation level. Five reports did not provide enough information to assess that criterion properly.

Many assessments were incomplete and did not address all the required criteria (i.e. baseline, budget, alignment with national frameworks). The study found a few gaps in a minority of reports, illustrating the problems of quality encountered in unsatisfactory reports: eight were not detailed enough, five did not assess the quality of indicators, five were descriptive rather than analytical, and four did not provide enough information to assess M&E or provided an unclear analysis. Figure 8 summarizes the positive and negative quality aspects of reporting on M&E.

**Figure 8. Quality assessment: Characteristics of reporting on M&E (N=17)**



**Example of report with substantiated M&E assessment:**

The Pakistan report (PAK/MIE/DRR/2010/1) provided a comprehensive assessment of M&E at both design and implementation. It provided extensive information on the M&E system, including a quick assessment of the M&E budget and baseline data. The assessment would have been sounder if the Results Framework were available. However, the report is detailed enough to give an idea of M&E processes.

**Example of report with unsubstantiated M&E assessment:**

The Senegal report (SEN/NIE/Coastal/2015/x) provided an extensive analysis of the M&E system and highlighted the weaknesses of M&E in all aspects. The project M&E had shortcomings, including in terms of regularity of monitoring and reporting. However, the evaluation report gave the project a moderately satisfactory rating.

**Example of report with incomplete M&E assessment:**

The Honduras report (HND/MIE/Water/2010/4) did not provide a true assessment of M&E systems. Instead, it briefly described what is in place. The report was descriptive at best, and too little information was available to assess the quality of M&E and substantiate any rating.

**Reporting on data.** The synthesis assessed whether the report clearly stated the quality of data used in the design and implementation of the evaluation, and generated by the M&E system (Table 13). Most reports (nine) did not assess the quality of data generated by monitoring systems.

**Table 13. Quality of data for reporting (N=17)**

Highly satisfactory	0
Satisfactory	3
Moderately satisfactory	4
Moderately unsatisfactory	1
Unsatisfactory	0
Highly unsatisfactory	0
Unable to assess	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>

Quality analysis showed that some reports (five) hinted of the impacts of M&E processes on data quality. However, only three reports managed to assess the quality of data in a satisfactory way. In general, the assessment of data was brief and localized. Only two reports made several mentions of data quality (Solomon Islands, SLB/MIE/Food/2010/1, and Ecuador, ECU/MIE/Food/2010/1).

#### **Key observations:**

The assessment of M&E is often not comprehensive or analytical enough, which makes it difficult to understand the validity of outcomes. The inability to characterise baselines – either through the quality of scenario or in the results framework – is an important shortcoming for the assessment of results. In general, results show a need to assess the quality of results frameworks and the potential for long-term/post-project M&E to ensure both sustainability of results and understanding of impacts.

### **3.3 Quality of lessons and recommendations in final evaluations**

This section presents the results in terms of compliance and quality of the lessons and recommendations in evaluation reports.

**Guidelines and framework.** According to guidelines, final evaluation reports should include a section synthesizing findings, final conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations. The synthesis assessed whether lessons and recommendations are (i) supported by the evidence presented and relevant to the Fund portfolio and future projects; and (ii) contextualized and effective in terms of learning and transferring knowledge. The framework developed by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University<sup>24</sup> (2009) was adapted to assess whether lessons were adequately addressing the perspectives of context and content i.e. the “what”, “how”, and the “why” aspects of lessons.

**General findings.** All but one report identified lessons and all produced recommendations. About 75 per cent did not indicate situations where lessons will be applicable (13 of 17) or by whom (14 of 17), and when (15 of 17) recommendations should be carried forward.

**Quality.** Most final evaluations had a satisfactory quality for lessons and recommendations (Table 14).

Quality analysis showed that while most reports (14) presented evidence-based lessons,<sup>25</sup> these lessons were also often somewhat generic in most cases (10). Some good practices could be found, such as the classification of lessons by theme and a strong contextualization of lessons (five reports). Two reports explicitly made use of surveys to capture lessons learned (Guatemala, GTM/MIE/Rural/2010/1 and Pakistan, PAK/MIE/DRR/2010/1). Only

24. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University describes the quality dimensions of lessons learned with respect to two main approaches: context and content. Lessons should address the following questions: what “what is the lesson about?”, who “who will learn?”, how “how is the lesson comprehensible?”, and why “why is the lesson valid?”. These questions adopt a “cause-action-result” perspective and allow to focus on causes and justification for lessons drawn to decide at first sight if the lessons are effective in terms of learning.

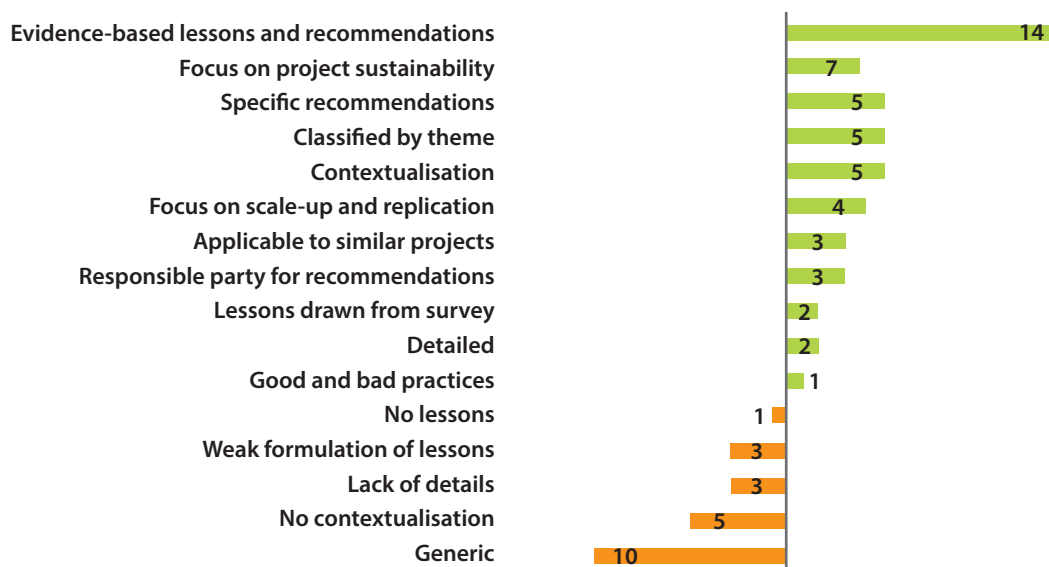
25. i.e. lessons were based on evidence presented in the report.

seven reports had specific recommendations focused on project sustainability and four had recommendations specifically focused on project scale-up and replicability. Figure 9 summarizes the most frequent positive and negative quality aspects of lessons and recommendations.

**Table 14. Quality of lessons (N=17)**

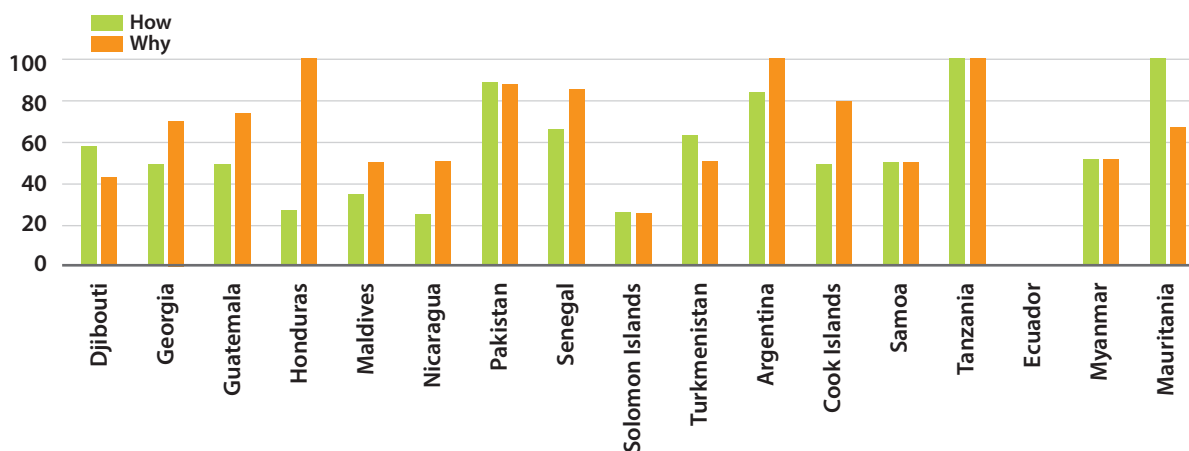
		Example
Highly satisfactory	1	Samoa
Satisfactory	6	Maldives
Moderately satisfactory	6	Nicaragua
Moderately unsatisfactory	4	Ecuador
Unsatisfactory	0	
Highly unsatisfactory	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	

**Figure 9. Quality assessment: Characteristics of lessons and recommendations (N=17)**



**Lessons.** In general, lessons were contextualized, with 59 per cent clearly articulating the “how” aspect and 67 per cent clearly addressing the “why” aspect. They were found to be coherent and relevant. Figure 10 shows the percentage of lessons contextualized by evaluation report.

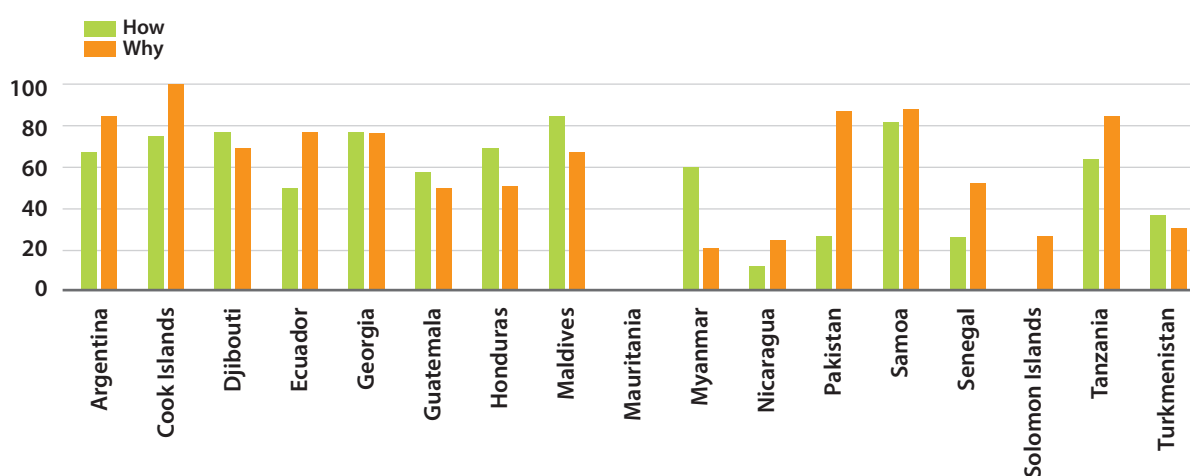
**Figure 10. Contextualization of lessons learned**



The Tanzania report (TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1) identified six lessons that were thoughtfully addressed, showing a high level of conceptualization for learning and transferring of knowledge. Conversely, the Solomon Islands report (SLB/MIE/Food/2010/1) did not manage to fully illustrate the “how” and “why” of the four lessons identified. One report (Ecuador, ECU/MIE/Food/2010/1) did not include lessons at all. Finally, 25 per cent of the lessons were more likely to be recommendations rather than lessons learned.

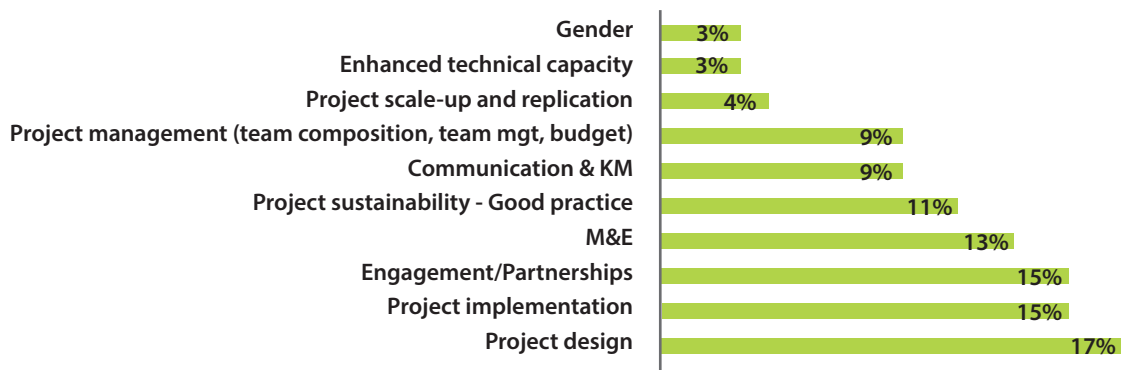
**Recommendations.** In general, recommendations were evidence-based but were clearer on the causes (why they should be implemented, 58 per cent) than on the means (how they should be implemented, 50 per cent) of implementation. Figure 11 shows the percentage of recommendations contextualized by evaluation report.

**Figure 11. Contextualization of recommendations**



Most recommendations were programmatic and focused on project design and implementation. Important recurrent themes were the following: engagement of stakeholders, M&E, project sustainability, knowledge management, and project management (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Main themes of recommendations**



Note: KM = Knowledge Management; M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation.

The most frequent recommendations at the institutional and programmatic levels were found to be the following:

#### Top 10 institutional recommendations

1. Ensure broad knowledge dissemination (n=6)
2. Ensure availability of resources for project implementation (n=4)
3. Ensure detailed M&E budget (n=4)
4. Ensure long-term monitoring (n=4)
5. Organize sharing of knowledge (n=4)
6. Develop an exit/sustainability strategy (n=4)
7. Develop coherent and comprehensive M&E system (n=3)
8. Strengthen M&E capacity and resources (n=3)
9. Focus on indicators and monitoring of change (n=3)
10. Link project results to national context (n=2).



### **Top 10 programmatic recommendations**

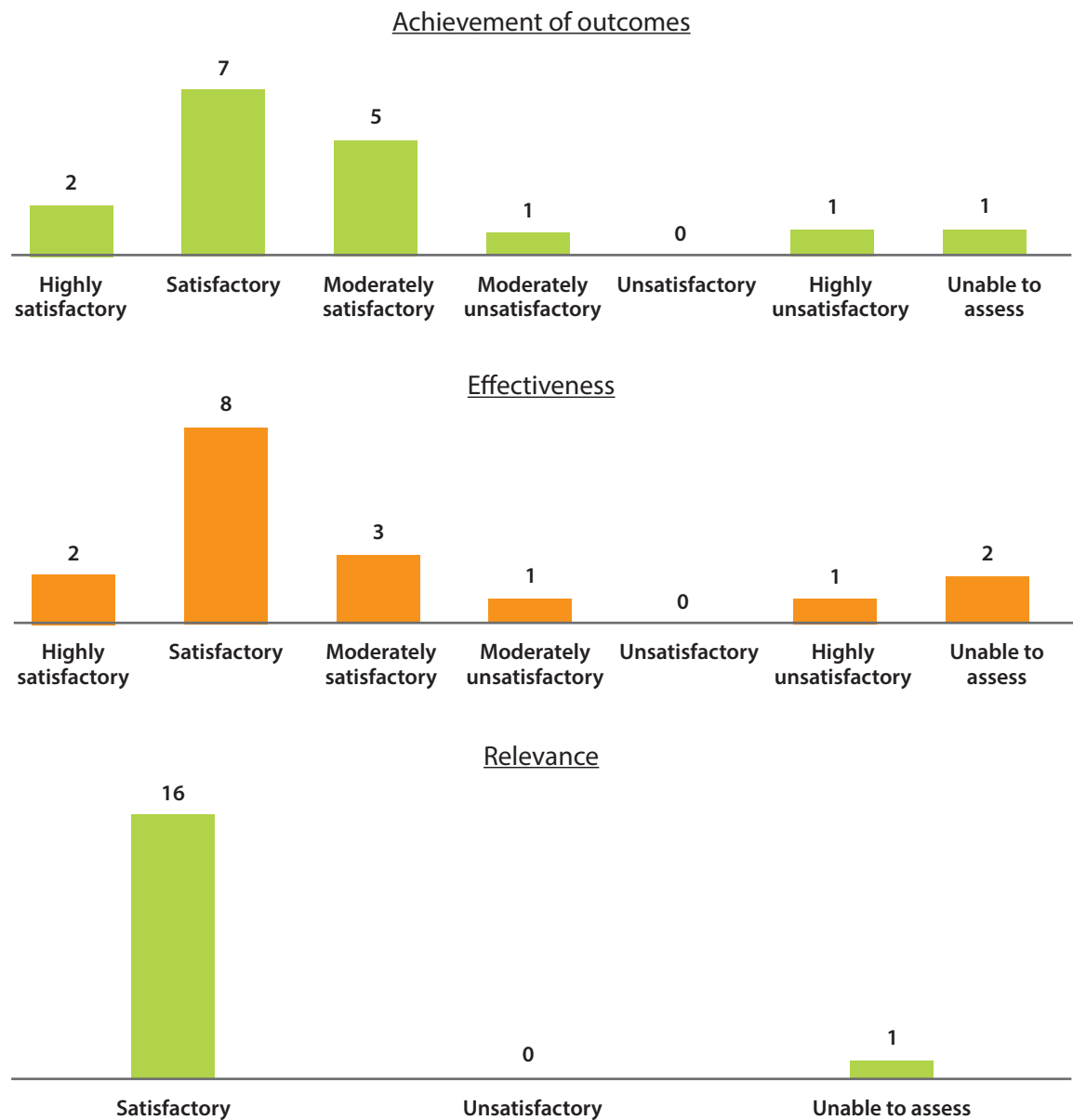
1. Ensure local engagement (n=8)
2. Promote partnerships (n=7)
3. Ensure government's commitment (n=5)
4. Integrate adaptation with other complementary measures (n=5)
5. Define implementation roles better (n=5)
6. Ensure baseline studies or vulnerability assessment (n=4)
7. Enhance women's participation/empowerment (n=4)
8. Clearly select project site/beneficiaries with regards to objectives (n=3)
9. Ensure regular data collection (n=3)
10. Involve key stakeholders in project design (n=3).



## 4. Aggregate performance ratings of completed projects

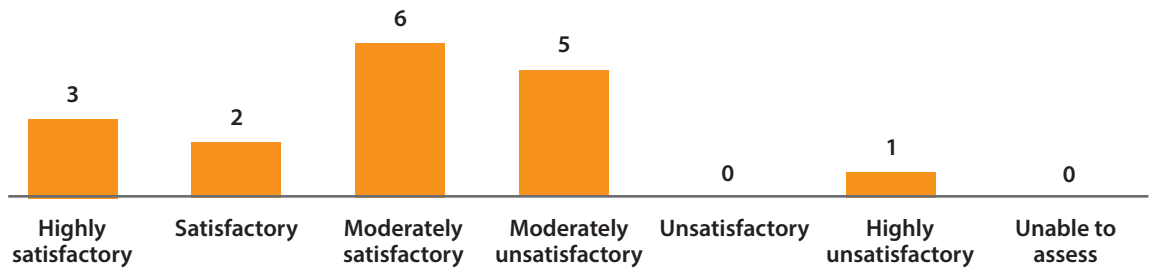
The synthesis provides an overview of the performance ratings of the portfolio of completed projects, based on the ratings of the review exercise and on the information presented by evaluation reports (Figure 13).<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 13.** Aggregate performance ratings of completed projects, as rated by review

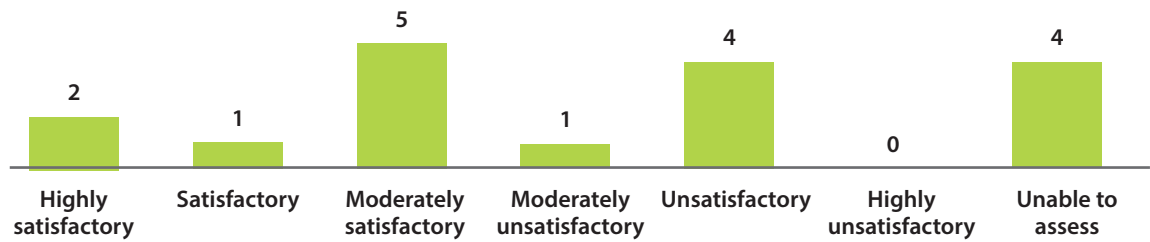


26. The review found that results were more contrasted at the category level than at the range level but did not find any significant difference between reports ratings and review ratings. This result might be skewed by the small size of the cohort of final evaluation reports, relative to the entire Fund portfolio (i.e. small sample sizes decrease statistical power and the ability to detect an effect or differences). Therefore, the synthesis presented overview of the performance ratings of the portfolio of these 17 completed projects, based on the ratings of the review exercise.

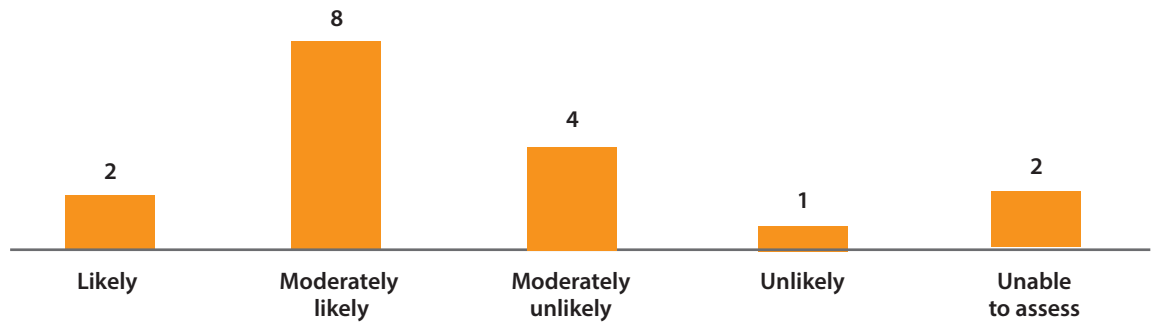
### Efficiency



### M&E



### Sustainability



#### Key findings (as substantiated by information available in final evaluations):

- Achievement of outcomes was rated satisfactory for 14 of 17 projects.
- Project relevance was rated satisfactory for the entire portfolio.
- Project effectiveness was rated in the satisfactory range for 13 of 17 projects.
- Project efficiency was rated in the satisfactory range for 11 of 17 projects.
- Project sustainability was rated in the likely range for 10 of 17 projects, of which eight were in the moderately likely rating category.

(continued)

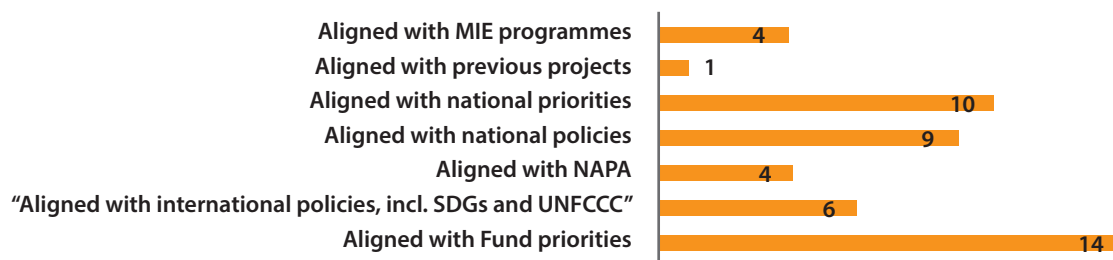
- Project M&E was rated in the satisfactory range for eight of 17 projects. Four evaluations did not provide enough evidence to enable a sound assessment of M&E.
- Contributions to impacts and changes were found in the establishment of concrete infrastructure, increased awareness, increased income, behavioural change, capacity building, ecosystem conservation, and policy development.
- IE supervision assessment was mostly descriptive, but IE supervision was generally deemed satisfactory with important aspects being mentioned such as support on reporting, M&E, procurement, financial monitoring, etc.
- Quality of implementation was satisfactory in 14 of 17 final evaluations.
- Quality of execution was seldom detailed; however, it was similarly found satisfactory despite delays and several instances of limited capacities.

### Outcomes performance (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency)

The review rated the overall outcomes performance of most projects (14 of 17) in the satisfactory range, as substantiated by information available in the final evaluations. In all, 52 per cent of rated projects had satisfactory or highly satisfactory outcomes, and 29 per cent had moderately satisfactory outcomes. Five reports did not provide an overall outcome rating (Senegal, Argentina, Cook Islands, Ecuador, and Mauritania). One evaluation did not provide enough evidence to enable a sound assessment of relevance (Cook Islands, COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD).

**Relevance.** Fund projects were all considered to be relevant, especially because of their alignment with national and international priorities regarding climate change adaptation. Reports frequently mentioned how projects aligned with specific policies, including national and international development plans (Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Most frequently mentioned alignments (N=17)**

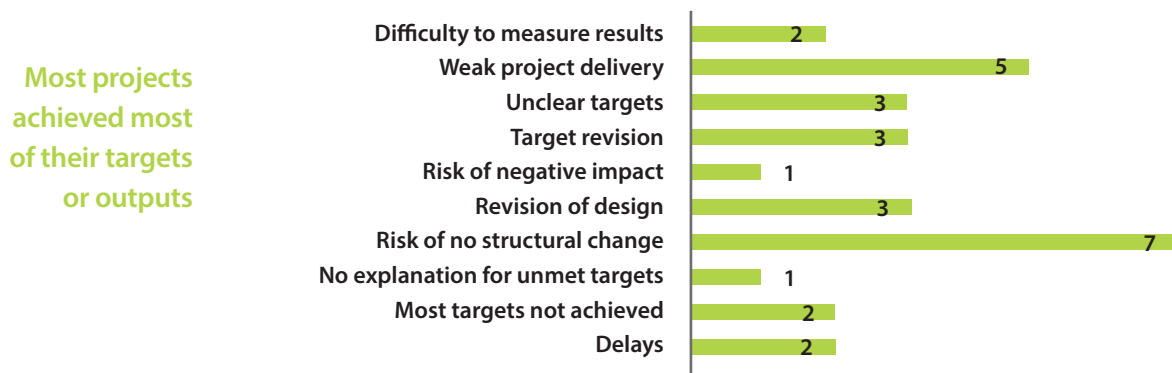


Note: MIE = Multilateral Implementing Entity; NAPA = National Adaptation Programme of Action; SDGs = Sustainable Development Goals; UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**Effectiveness.** The review rated the effectiveness of most projects (13 of 17) in the satisfactory range, as substantiated by information available in the final evaluations. Nearly half (47 per cent) of rated projects had satisfactory effectiveness, 12 per cent were highly satisfactory, and 18 per cent were moderately satisfactory. The Maldives (MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6) and the Solomon Islands (SLB/MIE/Food/2010/1) projects were the only ones rated in the unsatisfactory range for effectiveness. One report did not provide an effectiveness rating (Cook Islands, COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD). Two evaluations did not provide enough evidence to enable a sound assessment of effectiveness (Samoa, SAM/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD and Mauritania MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD).

Most projects achieved most of their targets or outputs (70 per cent), with 41 per cent exceeding their targets. Effectiveness was backed by high levels of satisfaction in surveys for three projects. The main factors hindering effectiveness were the risk of no materialization of results into structural change (41 per cent). This highlighted the difficulty to measure progress beyond the output level, given the long-term nature of climate change adaptation impacts (Figure 15). This probably partly explains such a strong focus on output-level indicators and targets. Weak project delivery (29 per cent) was also often raised as an obstacle to achievement of results and was also linked to aspects of efficiency.

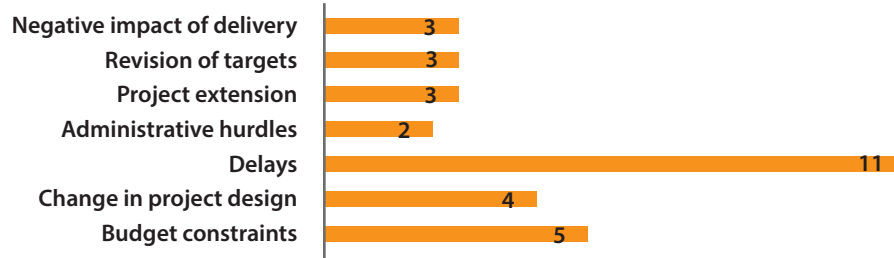
**Figure 15. Main factors hindering effectiveness (N=17)**



**Efficiency.** The review rated the efficiency of most projects (11 of 17) in the satisfactory range, as substantiated by information available in the final evaluations.

About 30 per cent of reports described the projects as cost-efficient; reports with good budget execution had an equivalent rating. The Guatemala project (GTM/MIE/Rural/2010/1) was described as highly efficient in the accomplishment of results ahead of planning and the Georgia project (GEO/MIE/DRR/2010/1) showed excellent value for money. However, there were many gaps in terms of efficiency. Most projects suffered from delays in implementation either in their first years or throughout the process (Figure 16). Some projects were too ambitious, too costly, or required a change in project design or revision of targets. Administrative aspects also played an important role in the delivery of project outcomes.

**Figure 16. Main factors hindering efficiency (N=17)**

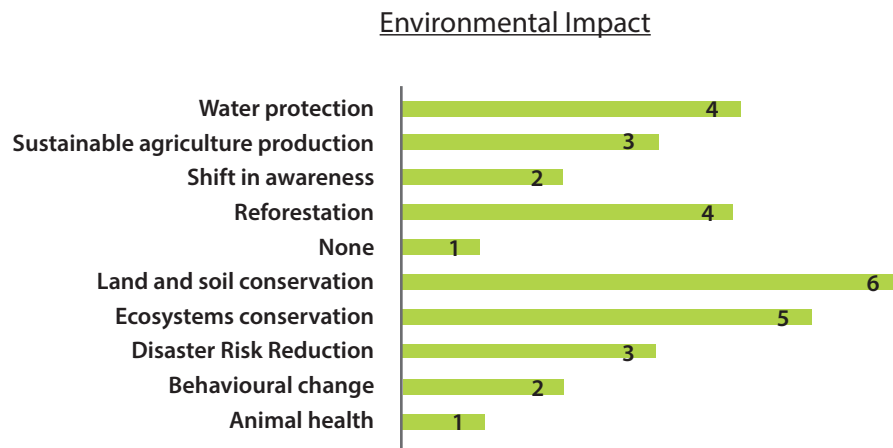


### Impact

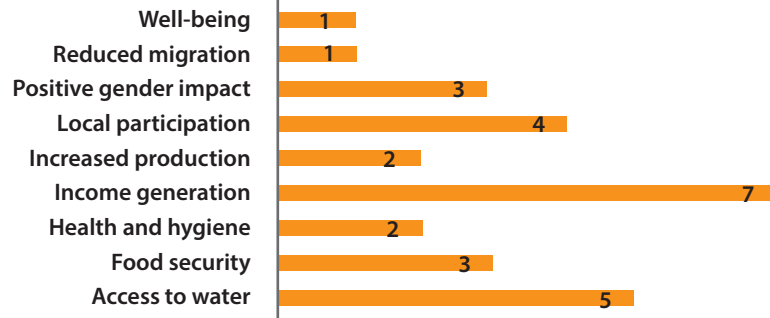
Project objective(s) should be aligned with the Fund strategic framework to ensure integration of its strategic outcomes into the project or programmed level M&E system and their contribution to RBM. Final evaluations should assess how project outcomes and possible impacts have aligned with, and how they have contributed to, Fund goals, impacts, and outcomes. To do that, impacts should be assessed first.

Contributions to impacts were found in the establishment of concrete infrastructure, increased awareness, behavioural change, and policy development (Figure 17).

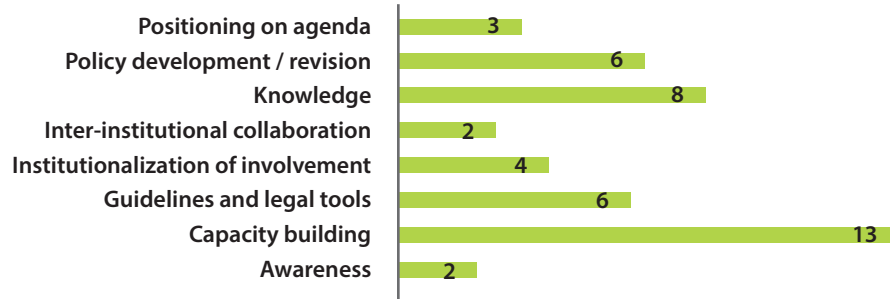
**Figure 17. Main contributions to impact (N=17)**



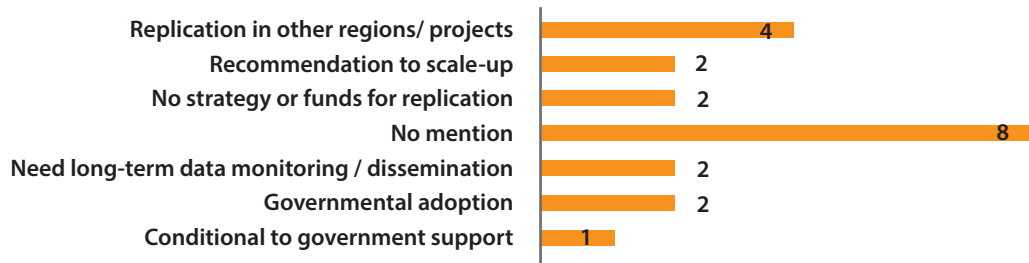
### Socioeconomic impact



### Capacity and governance



### Replication / scale-up



Note: Replication in other regions/ projects; LT = Long-term for “Need long-term data monitoring and/or dissemination”

While all project impacts were conditional to sustainability and many impacts were not yet detected, evaluation reports noted some changes or enabling outcomes in the following categories:

**Environment.** The main elements that will contribute to environmental impacts were land and soil conservation (35 per cent of projects), ecosystems conservation (29 per cent), reforestation (24 per cent), and water protection (24 per cent). Environmental impact was one of the impacts most conditional to sustainability and other external factors.

In the Tanzania project (TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1), pilot adaptation measures (rehabilitation of 40 hectares of mangrove area and coral reef, and distribution of cooking stoves) reduced degradation of vulnerable ecosystems. The project is also expected to reduce charcoal demand. However, all activities need to be consolidated to see real and lasting impacts.

**Socioeconomic.** Income generation contributed most to socioeconomic changes (41 per cent of projects). This is probably because, out of all socioeconomic impacts, income generation is the most direct and most visible. Yet income generation still had to be verified in the long term for three projects. Another important contribution was the improvement of access to water in 29 per cent of projects, which could have many positive repercussions in communities.

The Cook Islands project (COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD) developed food security by improving climate-friendly farming practices and opportunities for unemployed youth and elderly. It also helped establish nurseries to produce tree saplings for plantation along the coastlines; native plants for traditional crafts, oils, and medicines; and vegetable seedlings for farmers. These have contributed to the economic development of women and built leadership. The project supported rainwater harvesting activities at household and community level, which was said to have a possible impact on waterborne diseases and mosquito eradication.

**Capacity and governance.** Most reports (77 per cent) mentioned clear capacity building elements. While it is not known if capacity building translated into actual knowledge increase, knowledge generation was frequently cited as an impact (47 per cent). More tangible elements were the production of guidelines and/or legal tools for adaptation measures (35 per cent) and the revision or development of policies (35 per cent).

The Nicaragua project (NCA/MIE/Water/2010/1) successfully promoted and established collaboration agreements and alliances for prosperity. This enabled the creation and legalization of eight micro-basin management committees, one sub-basin committee and two irrigation committees. Municipal plans of environmental protection were also developed. The project developed capacities through trainings, including for data monitoring. It also collected, analysed, and made available relevant geo-bio-physical and meteorological data for the Rio Villanueva sub-basin.

**Unintended impacts.** In general, unintended impacts were either not mentioned or not clearly assessed. The exception was made for the Ecuador report (ECU/MIE/Food/2010/1), which had the following unexpected impacts:



- a) decrease in migration (although incipiently)
- b) change in dietary patterns of the general population of the beneficiary communities
- c) acknowledgement of the importance of parish governments as a fundamental articulating element in achieving the project's objectives
- d) appearance of associative forms for economic empowerment and incidence in matters of productive development, especially in women
- e) creation of collaborative and articulation spaces between local decentralized autonomous government (GADs) and the community to enhance and complement results of implemented measures
- f) appropriation of neighbouring communities to beneficiaries of some measures as in the case of aspersion irrigation, family gardens, and organic fertiliser
- g) generation of collaborative community practices not present in the traditional culture.

**Negative impacts.** Reports seldom mentioned or uncovered negative impacts.<sup>27</sup> The Maldives report (MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6) clearly described how the project had negatively affected community relations on all three islands. There were also issues of water quality because of weak infrastructure.

**Adoption of Fund initiatives at scale.** Nearly half (47 per cent) of projects did not clearly assess or mention replication and scale-up. When they did, such replication depended on the commitment of governments or the availability of funds. Replication in other regions of the country or adoption of results by other projects were found in four projects (Mauritania, Argentina, Cook Islands, Senegal).

**Contribution to Fund objectives.** Reports more frequently analysed the contribution of projects to resilience (58 per cent) than the actual contribution towards Fund objectives/framework. Three reports clearly illustrated the contribution towards Fund objectives (Argentina, Ecuador, Mauritania). Such information should, however, be found in the PPRs.

## Sustainability

The review rated the sustainability of most projects (10 of 17) in the satisfactory range, of which eight were rated "moderately likely", as substantiated by information available in the final evaluations. Only the Maldives project (MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6) was rated unlikely to be sustainable. Two evaluations did not provide enough evidence to enable a sound assessment of sustainability (Mauritania, MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD and Cook Islands, COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD).

**Financial and economic risks.** Financial and economic risks were often thoroughly described. The main risks are that no additional funding would be available if needed, including for replication. On the other hand, government commitment was not assured in

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27. The absence of negative impacts does not necessarily equate to a lack of assessment of such risks, since the Fund has a comprehensive set of Environmental, Social, and Governance policies that are monitored as part of the annual PPR. If no negative impacts were mentioned in the evaluation reports, it could mean the final evaluation did not uncover any.



at least four projects at completion, and no exit plans were available in the same number of projects. Some projects mitigated these risks through local sustainability initiatives.

**Sociopolitical risks.** Sociopolitical risks were analysed through the level of stakeholder ownership. Ownership mostly occurred through the materialization (or lack of) increased awareness in communities, behavioural change, willingness to replicate activities or maintain results, or the institutionalization of involvement at local level. Five reports found important sociopolitical risks for the sustainability of project outcomes. The Argentina report (ARG/NIE/Agri/2011/1) also illustrated the impact of the socioeconomic climate on sustainability.

**Institutional framework and governance risks.** Institutional and governance risks occur when the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits. Institutional sustainability would be ensured by commitment from the government, strengthening and application of capacities, retention and dissemination of knowledge, policy and legal support, multiplication of partnership, and inclusion of adaptation in the political agenda. Six reports found important institutional risks for the sustainability of project outcomes.

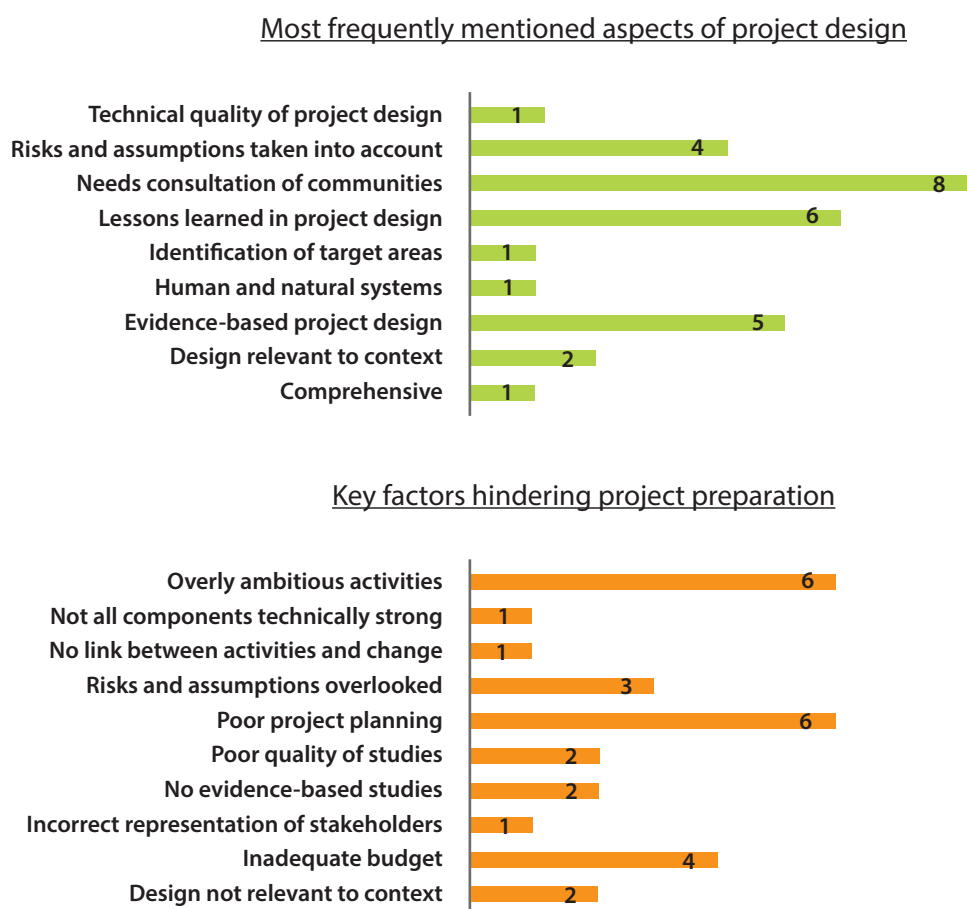
**Environmental risks.** Environmental risks can occur because of climate change intensity or if certain activities in the project area pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. In the latter case, the application of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) can mitigate these risks. Two projects (Djibouti and Senegal, DJI/MIE/Agri/2011/1-X // SEN/NIE/Coastal/2015/x) made use of an EIA. Two reports also state the importance of monitoring as a mitigation measure for environmental threats (Samoa and Tanzania, SAM/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD // TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1). In general, environmental risks were not identified, or none were found in the evaluations.

### Processes influencing achievement of results

**Preparation and readiness.** Fund projects often had a clear and evidence-based design, incorporating lessons learned and needs of communities (Figure 18). However, project planning was also often poor, which occasioned many delays at inception. Six projects were deemed too ambitious in their targets, coverage, and activities. A few projects had designs not relevant to the context (Maldives and Solomon Islands).

**Stakeholder involvement.** The involvement of stakeholders was particularly visible through the consultations of communities (eight reports). While these consultations were generally praised for their impact on sustainability, they were sometimes unequal and failed to integrate some groups into four projects. Projects in Honduras (HND/MIE/Water/2010/4), Nicaragua (NCA/MIE/Water/2010/1), Argentina (ARG/NIE/Agri/2011/1) and Mauritania (MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD) managed to involve stakeholders in M&E. The involvement of stakeholders in implementation was varied and widespread through the portfolio. Involvement occurred through integration of beneficiaries into formal committees, and the use of local inputs in adaptation planning, pilot activities, etc.

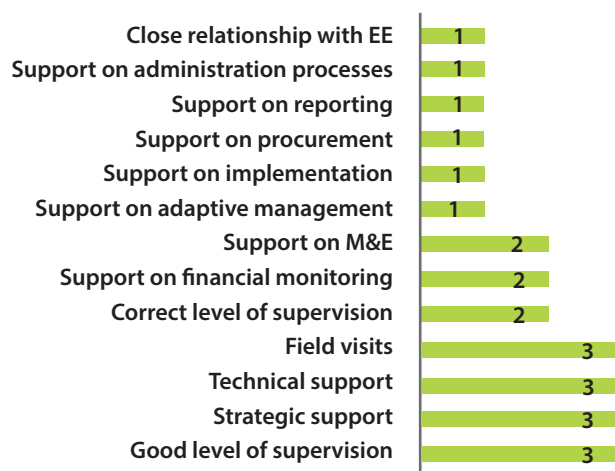
**Figure 18.** Main characteristics of project design (N=17)



**Financial management.** The assessment of financial management was not detailed. Only three reports mentioned if this management was transparent, and little information was provided about controls.

**IE supervision.** The assessment of IE supervision was mostly descriptive. IE supervision was generally good for Fund-completed projects, with important aspects such as support on reporting, M&E, procurement, and financial monitoring all reported (Figure 19). No specific aspect was common across the whole portfolio and each IE seemed to have different roles or was at least praised for a different type of support. In general, reports found the quality of implementation satisfactory (14 of 17), either through direct or indirect assessment. They identified criteria such as quality of project design, as well as the quality of supervision and assistance provided by IEs to EEs throughout project implementation, including good communication with and satisfaction from such entities. The quality of execution was seldom detailed; however, it similarly fell into the satisfactory range despite delays and several instances of limited capacities.

**Figure 19.** Main characteristics of IE supervision (N=17)



Note: EE = Executing Entity; IE = Implementing Entity; M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation

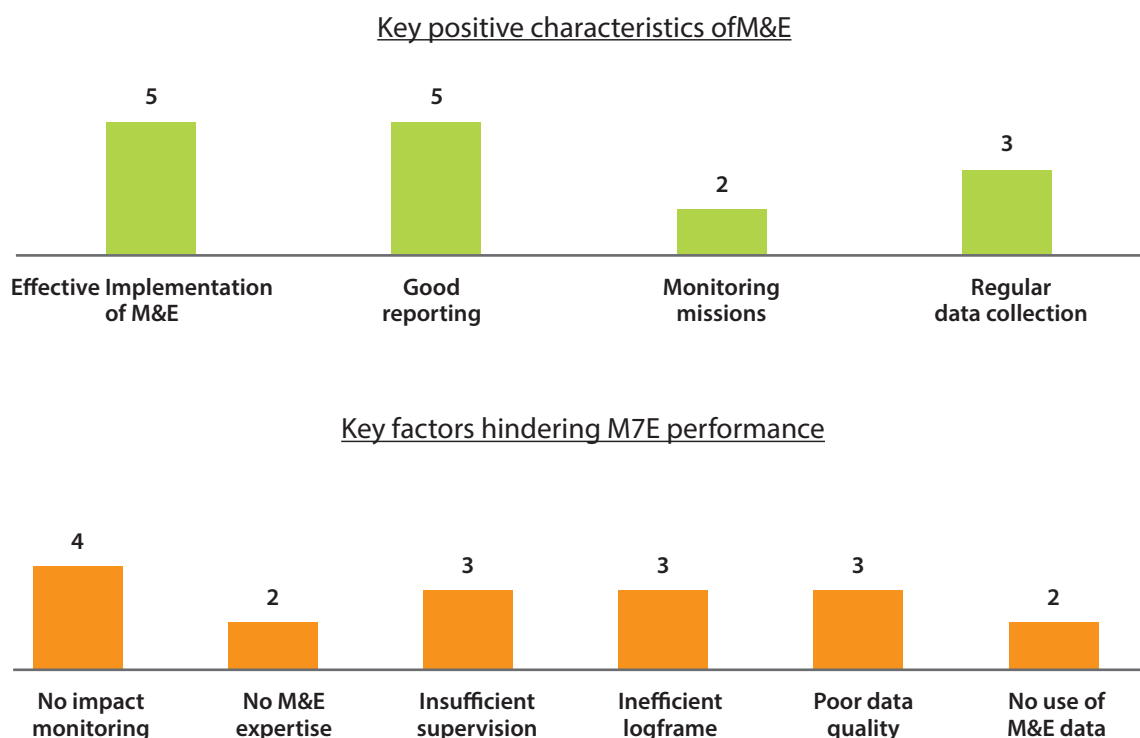
## Monitoring and evaluation

The review rated the M&E of most projects (eight of 17) in the satisfactory range, as substantiated by information available in the final evaluations (Figure 20). Four evaluations did not provide enough evidence to enable a sound assessment of M&E (Honduras HND/MIE/Water/2010/4, Maldives MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6, Mauritania MTN/MIE/Food/2011/1/PD and Cook Islands COK/MIE/Multi/2011/1/PD).

**M&E at design.** The assessment of M&E at design should determine whether the M&E plan allowed to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. When evaluations assessed M&E at design, they mostly reported gaps: the quality of the logframe and indicators (six projects) and the availability of the M&E plan were the main issue (six M&E projects with unclear or no M&E plan at entry).

**M&E implementation.** The assessment of M&E operation during implementation showed projects with effective implementation of M&E (30 per cent). However, several gaps were also found. The most frequent gap was lack of impact monitoring, which once again illustrated that monitoring systems are mostly focused on activity achievement/output measurements. Other aspects included technical capacities and resources (i.e. no M&E expertise, no supervision or quality assurance, poor data quality, etc.)

**Figure 20. Main characteristics of project M&E (N=17)**



**M&E budgeting, indicators, baselines, and national frameworks.** Most reports did not assess M&E budgeting.<sup>28</sup> Of the five reports that assessed budget, three described that projects had realistic M&E budgets. The assessment of indicators showed that six results frameworks had Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound indicators. Seven of 17 reports did not include disaggregation of data by gender. With respect to indicators, reports identified the main gaps as output-focused or inappropriate. Most reports did not assess baselines (10 reports) or national frameworks (13 reports). Four projects did not have any baseline.

28. Note that the Fund does not prescribe any budget standard for M&E, though the Fund guidelines for project / programme final evaluations encourage evaluators to assess the M&E plan design for providing an overview of an appropriate budget, and to assess whether M&E was funded adequately and in a timely manner during implementation.



## 5. Recommendations

The review and synthesis of final evaluation reports found that, generally, reports for the first series of completed projects/programmes were satisfactory. They mostly complied with the guidelines for evaluations of Fund projects/programmes. Some shortcomings were nevertheless found:<sup>29</sup>

### Recommendation 1: Link results back to a robust Results Framework

Evaluation reports should strive to identify and emphasize outcome-level results, instead of focusing exclusively on activity completion. The nature of some projects and their relatively short duration can make it difficult to assess the attainment of outcomes. However, a robust results framework that goes beyond output-level results can help uncover contributions to impact.

Evaluations should clearly identify impacts and outcomes. This also demands a stronger presentation of the project logic in reports. Evaluations should also clearly link results to the Fund strategic framework since this will also provide guidance on what type of impacts could be assessed.

Over the past few years, the Fund secretariat has tried to clarify the results framework, as well as reporting guidelines and PPR templates. These developments might have an impact on (the evaluation of) more recent projects. Next syntheses should thus focus on assessing whether the clarification of the reporting tools and requirements has had an impact on the quality of outcome assessment of final evaluations.

### Recommendation 2: Make quality of data a centrepiece to understand the validity of results

While reports clearly made use of evidence and monitoring data, evaluators rarely analysed the quality of this evidence. This mostly relates to the descriptive character of the M&E systems of projects/programmes in some reports.

Evaluation reports should strive to analyse the quality of M&E systems and processes, but also of the data that comes out of those systems. This means the quality of baseline data should be clearly analysed since this will help with understanding the validity of results and assessing impact.

Similarly, evaluations should have a bigger focus on learning, and should be sufficiently evidenced to identify if any adaptive management took place.

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29. Such recommendations are based on (i) a relatively small sub-set of the portfolio; and (ii) the oldest cohort of the portfolio, which does not represent the entire Fund portfolio. Given the Fund has adopted policies and strengthened processes that might have had an impact on the rest of the portfolio, these recommendations only remain valid for the 17 evaluation reports included in this synthesis. They should be applied with caution to the rest of the Fund portfolio.

### Recommendation 3: Enhance guidelines to help improve evaluation reports

The reviewing exercise, including review of ratings, showed that compliance with guidelines does not guarantee quality. Having a set of guidelines, however, helps establish the foundations for quality. The overwhelming compliance with the guidelines for final evaluations of Fund projects/programmes should be an incentive to clarify them further, especially in light of previous recommendations noted below:

- a) Revise assessment guidelines for the quality of the project/programme M&E systems to encourage a greater focus on learning.
- b) Add requirements for reports to lay out or analyse a Theory of Change to encourage a stronger presentation of the project logic.

### Recommendation 4: Improve consideration of gender in guidelines

The analysis revealed the need to clarify several important aspects for evaluations and the guidelines. As one key example, gender considerations, now a core policy and requirement for the Fund, are almost overlooked in the guidelines.

### Recommendation 5: Review guidelines regularly

As Fund policies change, guidelines should be reviewed regularly to keep abreast of progress and enable a better assessment of project/programme impacts.



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## Annex A. Adaptation Fund Guidelines for Final Evaluations (excerpt)

Final evaluations of the Adaptation Fund (the Fund) aim to provide a comprehensive and systematic description of the performance of a completed project or programme by evaluating its project design (including conceptualization) and implementation. They specifically assess progress towards achievement of increased resilience/reduced vulnerability, and actions taken to achieve sustainability and replicability.

All final evaluations assess the following dimensions:

- achievement of project/programme outcomes, including ratings and with particular consideration of achievements related to the proposed concrete adaptation measures, if applicable
- evaluation of risks to sustainability of project/programme outcomes at project completion and progress towards impacts, including ratings
- evaluation of processes influencing achievement of project/programme results, including an assessment of the preparation and readiness, country ownership, stakeholder involvement, financial management, supervision and backstopping of Implementing Entities; and project/programme start up and implementation delays
- evaluation of contribution of project/programme achievements to the Fund targets, objectives, impact and goal, including report on Fund standard/core indicators
- evaluation of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems.

Each of these dimensions has specific criteria and assessment guidelines, which are described in detail in document AFB/EFC.5/5:

- **Achievement of outcomes:** this dimension is evaluated based on a rating of different criteria – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency – for all or some of the Fund standard/core outcomes.
- **Risks to sustainability of outcomes:** this dimension is evaluated based on the likelihood and magnitude of different types of risks to sustainability and how these risks comprise linkages from outcomes to impact.
- **Processes for programme results:** this dimension is evaluated based on a checklist for each aspect influencing project/programme implementation and achievement of project/programme results.
- **Contribution to Fund objectives:** this dimension is evaluated based on general assessment questions and ratings of contribution to the Fund goals, impacts, and outcomes.
- **M&E systems:** this dimension is evaluated based on quality assessment questions and ratings for different dimensions of M&E: (1) M&E plans; (2) indicators, (3) baselines; (4) alignment with national M&E framework.

## Adaptation Fund standard/core outcomes

**Goal:** Assist developing country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of concrete adaptation projects and programmes in order to implement climate-resilient measures.

**Impact:** Increased resiliency at the community, national, and regional levels to climate variability and change.

1. reduced exposure at national level to climate-related hazards and threats
2. strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced economic losses
3. strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level
4. increased adaptive capacity within relevant development and natural resource sectors
5. increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress
6. diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas
7. improved policies and regulations that promote and enforce resilience measures
8. support the development and diffusion of innovative adaptation practices, tools, and technologies (03/2019).

In addition, all final evaluation reports should include the following:

- conclusions, lessons, and recommendations
- terms of reference for conducting the evaluation
- an official response from the project/programme management team regarding the evaluation conclusions and recommendations
- other information such as timing and duration of the evaluation, places visited, people involved, key questions, methodology, and references used.

The Ethics and Finance Committee and Board secretariat (should) assess the quality of each final evaluation and attribute a rating on the overall quality of the report.<sup>30</sup>

30. In practice this is not done. The secretariat reviews the consistency of ratings between project performance reports and evaluation reports, but not the quality of the latter based on review guidelines. The AF-TERG will be undertaking that quality assessment through the evaluation synthesis of 2020.



## Annex B. Final Evaluation Compliance Review Tool

The assessments of compliance with guidelines will be based on the information presented in the final evaluation report. It is a simple checklist that covers recommendations in the guidelines and evaluation good practices. The reviewer should not consider other documents or additional information. During the assessment and in the report, the reviewer should clearly distinguish what are considered as requirements and what falls into the category of evaluation good practices.

### Quality and compliance assessment instrument

#### *B.1 Project information*

1. Project ID
2. Project Country
3. Implementing Entity
4. Type of Implementing Entity

#### *B.2 Evaluation General Information*

5. Was final evaluation prepared within nine months after project completion?  
Yes / No / Unable to assess
6. Does the report include the names of evaluators that prepared it?  
Yes / No
7. Does the report provide the date of its publication?  
Yes / No
8. Does the final evaluation include a description of the evaluation schedule?  
Yes / No
9. Does the final evaluation include the evaluation key questions?  
Yes / No
10. Does the report include the Terms of Reference for conducting the evaluation?  
Yes / No
11. Does the final evaluation include an official response from the project/programme management team regarding the evaluation conclusions and recommendations?  
Yes / No

*B.3 This set of questions assesses the extent to which the final evaluation report provides basic information on the covered project.*

12. The report provides information on the following:

(Yes / No / Unable to assess)

- AF Project ID
- Project Name
- Project/programme category
- Type of Implementing Entity
- Implementing Entity
- Executing Entity
- Amount of financing requested
- Project start/effectiveness date
- Mid-Term Review
- Project completion date (actual or expected)
- Description of project components/ activities
- Description of project components/ activities and financing

*B.4 Methodology - General information*

13. Final evaluation describes the sources of information used:

Yes / No

14. Final evaluation uses information gathered through the project monitoring system:

Yes / No / Unable to assess

*B.5 Methodology – Desk Review*

15. Desk review was used for data gathering and analysis: Yes / No / Unable to assess

16. Report provides information on the documents that were reviewed for information collection: Yes / No

*B.6 Methodology – Interviews*

17. Interviews were a source of information for the final evaluation?

Yes / No / Unable to assess

18. Report discusses who were covered through the interviews. Yes / No

19. Report discusses how those that were interviewed were chosen. Yes / No

20. Report provides a list of those that were interviewed. Yes / No

*B.7 Methodology – Field verification/visit/observation*

21. Report provides information on who conducted the field verifications/visits/ observations. Yes / No

22. Report provides information on where these field verifications/visits/observations were conducted (what was covered through these verifications). Yes / No



23. Report provides information on the basis for site selection for field verification/visits/ observations. Yes / No

#### *B.8 Evaluation of project/programme outcomes*

24. Final evaluation assesses project outcome's relevance to following

- Fund Priorities: Yes / No
- Country Priorities: Yes / No

25. Outcome relevance rating provided by the final evaluation is consistent with the evidence (including evidence provided in the report and – where applicable – available through other independent sources)  
Yes / No / NA, rating not provided

26. Report presents the output targets that were expected at project-start. Yes / No

27. The report discusses the extent to which the output targets were met. Yes / No

28. The report explains why outputs were not met/activities were not carried out.  
Yes, for most outputs / Yes, for some outputs / No / NA / Unable to assess

29. The report describes the outcomes expected at project start.  
Yes / No / Other (please specify)

30. The report describes the extent to which expected outcomes were achieved at implementation completion. Yes / No / Other (please specify)

31. The report clearly describes the extent to which targeted performance was achieved for each of the outcome indicators.  
Yes, for all indicators / Yes, for most indicators / Yes, for some indicators / No, does not clearly describe target achievement for any indicator / Other (please specify)

32. Report discusses the overall level of outcome achievement.  
Yes / No

33. Outcome effectiveness rating is consistent with the evidence (including evidence provided in the report and – where applicable – that available through other independent sources) Yes / No / NA, rating not provided

34. Outcome efficiency: Report provides information on timeliness of execution of project activities.  
Yes / No

35. Outcome efficiency: Report discusses the extent to which project's use of resources – funds, staff, processes – was efficient.  
Yes / No

36. Outcome efficiency: The report discusses the factors that affected efficiency.  
Yes / No

37. Outcome efficiency rating provided by the final evaluation is consistent with the evidence in the report. Yes / No / NA, rating not provided
38. Overall outcome rating provided by the final evaluation is consistent with the evidence in the report. Yes / No / NA, rating not provided

#### *B.9 Sustainability*

39. Report describes the risks that may affect project sustainability. (Sustainability is understood as the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue. [OECD, 2020]).  
Yes / No
40. Report discusses probability/likelihood of materialization of the major risks that may affect sustainability.  
Yes / No
41. Report discusses the likely impact of a major risk's materialization on sustainability.  
Yes / No
42. Report provides an overall assessment of the likelihood of project sustainability.  
Yes / No
43. Report evaluates at least four dimensions of risks to sustainability.  
Yes / No
44. Report discusses questions of scale-up and replicability.  
Yes / No
45. Sustainability rating is consistent with the evidence provided in the report.  
Yes / No / NA, rating not provided

#### *B.10 Processes influencing achievement of project/programme results*

46. Report discusses the factors that affected achievement of outcomes.  
Yes, a detailed discussion / Yes, but only a cursory discussion / No

#### *B.11 Preparation and readiness*

47. Report assesses whether the project design / logic is relevant to achievement of the project objectives.  
Yes / No
48. Report discusses the extent to which capacities of executing entities were consulted in the design phase.  
Yes / No

*B.12 Country ownership*

49. Report describes involvement of local stakeholders (when appropriate local communities) in the project/programme.  
Yes / No

*B.13 Stakeholder involvement*

50. Report provides information on the involvement of relevant vulnerable groups in the project/programme.  
Yes / No

*B.14 Financial management*

51. Report provides information on financial controls and management of funds. Yes / No
52. Financial audits were used as a source of information if available at the time of the evaluation.  
Yes / No

*B.15 Implementing Entity supervision and backstopping*

53. Report discusses the performance and capacities of the Implementing Entity in supervising project implementation. Yes / No

*B.16 Delays in project/programme start up and implementation*

54. If there were delays in project/programme implementation and completion, the report discusses reasons and impact on project results. Yes / No

*B.17 Contribution of project/programme achievements to the Fund strategic outcomes*

55. Report discusses the achievement of concrete adaptation measures and resilience aspects in all levels. Yes / No
56. Report discusses the contribution of the project to adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change. Yes / No
57. Report discusses results against Fund core/standard indicators. Yes / No
58. Contribution rating is consistent with the evidence provided in the final evaluation.  
Yes / No / NA, rating not provided



#### *B.18 Project M&E*

- 59. Describes the strengths and weaknesses of project M&E design.  
Yes / No
- 60. Describes strengths and weaknesses of the M&E implementation.  
Yes / No
- 61. Describes strengths and weaknesses of budgeting and funding for M&E activities.  
Yes / No
- 62. Project baseline: discusses the baseline quality. Yes/ No
- 63. Project baseline: discusses the extent to which baseline was used for M&E.  
Yes / No
- 64. Report discusses the alignment of Project/Programme M&E Frameworks to National M&E Frameworks.  
Yes / No
- 65. M&E rating is consistent with the evidence provided in the final evaluation.  
Yes / No / NA, rating not provided

#### *B.19 Lessons learned*

- 66. The report presents lessons learned.  
Yes / No
- 67. The lessons are based on the evidence presented in the report.  
Yes / Some of the lessons are based on the evidence whereas others are not / No
- 68. The report indicates situations where the lessons will be applicable.  
Yes, explicitly / Yes, implicitly / No

#### *B.20 Recommendations*

- 69. Final evaluation presents recommendations.  
Yes / No
- 70. The recommendations (including supporting text) state what needs to be done.  
Yes / No
- 71. Recommendations (including supporting text) make it clear who needs to take the recommended action.  
Yes, explicitly / Yes, implicitly / No
- 72. Recommendations (including supporting text) make the time frame for recommended actions clear.  
Yes / No



### B.21 Overall assessment of the report

73. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the final evaluation report: (Strongly Agree / Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree)

- The report is easy to understand (lucid).
- The data on project outputs and outcomes are presented in a manner that facilitates comparison of achievement with targeted performance.
- The report is comprehensive (covers all of the important aspects).
- The report is concise (to the point/not repetitive).
- The conclusions are consistent with the evidence.
- The performance ratings are consistent with the evidence.

74. Is this final evaluation a good practice?

Yes, overall a good practice / Yes, some sections are a good practice / No, but not an example of poor practice / No. Final evaluation is an example of poor practice.  
Following are the areas where it is very weak: ...

75. If project is a good practice, explain why this final evaluation or sections of this final evaluation are a good practice: ...

76. If project is a good practice, would you recommend that this final evaluation is used as an example of good practice for final evaluation preparation?

Yes / No



## Annex C. Final Evaluation Report Review Guidelines

The assessments in the final evaluation reviews will be based largely on the information presented in the final evaluation report. If insufficient information is presented in a final evaluation report to assess a specific issue such as, for example, quality of the project's M&E system or a specific aspect of sustainability, then the preparer of the final evaluation reviews will briefly indicate so in that section and elaborate more if appropriate in the section of the review that addresses quality of report. The preparer of the final evaluation review will take into account all the independent relevant information when verifying ratings.

### C.1 Criteria for Outcome Ratings

Based on the information provided in the final evaluation report, the final evaluation review will make an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved,<sup>31</sup> relevance of the project results, and the project's cost-effectiveness. The ratings on the outcomes of the project will be based on performance on the following criteria:<sup>32</sup>

- (a) **Relevance.** Were the project's outcomes consistent with the Fund goal, objectives, strategic priorities, and country/region priorities? Explain.
- (b) **Effectiveness.** Are the actual project outcomes commensurate with the original or modified project objectives (as a result of adaptive management)?
- (c) **Efficiency.** Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project's cost/time versus outcomes equation compare to that of similar projects? Were alternatives considered? How was the process of preparation and implementation compared with other projects?

An overall rating will be provided according to the achievement and shortcomings in the three criteria ranging from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory, and unable to assess.

The reviewer of the final evaluation will provide a rating under each of the three criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency). Relevance of outcomes will be rated on a binary scale: a "satisfactory" or an "unsatisfactory" rating will be provided. If an "unsatisfactory" rating has been provided on this criterion, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be

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31. Objectives are the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or programme is expected to contribute (OECD DAC, 2002).

32. Outcomes are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention; these may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD DAC, 2002).

higher than “unsatisfactory”. Effectiveness and efficiency will be rated as following:

- **Highly satisfactory.** The project had no shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory.** The project had minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** The project had moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** The project had noticeable shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The project had major shortcomings.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** The project had severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

The calculation of the overall outcomes score of projects will consider all three criteria, of which relevance criterion will be applied first – the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than “unsatisfactory”. As the second constraint, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the “effectiveness” rating. As the third constraint, the overall rating may not be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria calculated using the following formula:  $\text{Outcomes} = (b + c) \div 2$

In case the average score is lower than the score obtained after application of the first two constraints, then the average score will be the overall score. The score will then be converted into an overall rating with mid values being rounded upwards.

## C.2 Impacts

Has the project achieved impacts, or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? Impacts will be understood to include positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention. They could be produced directly or indirectly and could be intended or unintended. The final evaluation review’s preparer will take note of any mention of impacts, especially global environmental benefits, in the final evaluation report, including the likelihood that the project outcomes will contribute to their achievement. Negative impacts mentioned in the final evaluation report should be noted as “Issues that require follow-up”. More specifically, the reviewer will assess how project outcomes and possible impacts have aligned with, and how they have contributed to, Fund goals, impacts, and outcomes. This includes discussing resilience aspects at all levels, and the contribution of the project/programme to reduced vulnerability and increased adaptive capacity. Although project impacts will be described, they will not be rated.

## C.3 Criteria for Sustainability Ratings

Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of the achieved outcomes continuing after funding from the Fund ends (Fund, 2011). To assess sustainability, the final evaluation reviewer will identify and assess the key risks that could undermine continuation of benefits at the time of the evaluation. Some of these risks might include the absence

of, or inadequate, financial resources; an enabling legal framework; commitment from key stakeholders; and an enabling economy. The following four types of risk factors will be assessed by the final evaluation reviewer to rate the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes: financial, sociopolitical, institutional frameworks and governance, and environmental.

The following questions provide guidance to assess if the factors are met:

- **Financial and economic.** What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources being available once the Fund grant ends? Are there any financial or economic risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project/programme outcomes?
- **Sociopolitical.** Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership is insufficient to allow for project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- **Institutional framework and governance.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency, and the required technical know-how, are in place.
- **Environmental.** Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project/programme outcomes? The final evaluation should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, construction of a dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project.
- **Uncertainties on climate change impacts/baselines (including reference and adaptation scenarios).** What is the risk that vulnerability assessments, existing adaptive capacity assessments, reference and scenario development, and other assessments would be insufficient to allow interventions to be sustained or linkages to impacts analysed? Was the vulnerability assessment conducted at the beginning of the project appropriate and scientifically based?

The reviewer will provide a rating as follows:

- **Likely.** There are no risks affecting the criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately likely.** There are moderate risks that affect the criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately unlikely.** There are significant risks that affect the criterion of sustainability.
- **Unlikely.** There are severe risks affecting the criterion of sustainability.
- **Unable to assess.** Unable to assess risk on this dimension.
- **Not applicable.** This dimension is not applicable to the project.



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

#### C.4 Criteria for assessment of quality of Project M&E Systems

Fund projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work programme inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations. Final evaluation reviews will include an assessment of the achievements and shortcomings of M&E systems according to the following four dimensions: (1) M&E plans; (2) indicators, (3) baselines; and (4) alignment with national M&E frameworks.

- (a) **M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. Questions to guide this assessment include: What is the assessment of the M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? Was the plan based on the project/ programme results-based management framework? Did the plan provide a timetable for various M&E activities, such as specific evaluations, reviews, and supervisions, as well as an appropriate budget? In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient?
- (b) **M&E plan implementation.** The M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress towards project objectives by collecting information on chosen indicators (which include selected Fund standard/core indicators) continually throughout the project implementation period. Project Performance Reports (PPRs) were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings. The information provided by the M&E system was used to improve performance and adapt to changing needs. An M&E system should be in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project completion. Questions to guide this assessment include: Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards project objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project completion?
- (c) **Budgeting and funding for M&E activities.** Questions to guide this assessment include: Was sufficient funding provided for M&E – in the budget included in the project document? Was sufficient and timely funding provided – for M&E during project implementation?
- (d) **Indicators.** A mix of quantitative, qualitative, and narrative tools is suggested, so that results can be triangulated to give the most accurate picture possible

of progress towards adaptation and the factors involved. Questions to guide this assessment include: What was the quality of indicators? Were Fund standard/core indicators incorporated and used in the M&E system?

(e) **Project/programme baselines.** In adaptation projects, baselines have two primary uses: to measure change and to represent future conditions through reference scenarios. Questions to guide this assessment include: Have baselines been designed through a participatory approach, using cost-effective and accessible information? Were reference and adaptation scenarios considered by the project/programme? Have vulnerability baselines, climate-risk baselines, and adaptive capacity baselines been described and assessed? Have baselines (specifically vulnerability, climate risks, and reference and adaptation scenarios) been reviewed during project/programme implementation?

(f) **Alignment of Project/Programme M&E Frameworks to National M&E Frameworks.** The M&E of long-term changes should be incorporated into Fund-supported projects/programmes. The review will address the following questions: Did the M&E system make the best use of existing (local, sectoral, national) M&E systems, including existing indicators? Did this project/programme contribute to the establishment of a long-term monitoring system? Did the project include plans for feedback and to disseminate results from monitoring and reporting implementation as to allow for lessons learned and good practices identified to be shared with the wider community of adaptation planners and practitioners at all levels and other existing M&E systems?

(g) **Other questions.** Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?

A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating. The reviewer of the final evaluation will provide a rating under each of the four dimensions (M&E plans, indicators, baselines, alignment with national M&E frameworks) as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There was no project M&E system.

The rating for M&E during implementation will be the overall rating of the M&E system:  
Rating on the quality of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System = b

## C.5 Criteria for assessment of quality of final evaluation reports

The ratings on quality of final evaluation reports will be assessed using the following criteria:

- a. The report presents an assessment of all relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of Fund strategic priorities, sector, and project/ programme indicators, if applicable.
- b. The report was consistent, the evidence presented was complete and convincing, and ratings were well substantiated.
- c. The report presented a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes.
- d. The lessons and recommendations are supported by the evidence presented and relevant to the Fund portfolio and future projects.
- e. The report included the actual project costs (totals, per activity, and per source).
- f. The report included an assessment of the quality of the M&E plan at entry, the operation of the M&E system used during implementation, and the extent M&E was sufficiently budgeted for during preparation and properly funded during implementation.
- g. The final evaluation report clearly states the quality of data used in the design and implementation of the evaluation.
- h. The final evaluation report covers defined evaluation questions.
- i. A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating.

Each criterion to assess the quality of the final evaluation will be rated as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There were severe shortcomings in the final evaluation on this criterion.

The first two criteria (of all relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives and report consistency and substantiation of claims with proper evidence) are more important and have therefore been assigned a greater weight. The quality of the final evaluation reports will be calculated by the following formula:

Quality of the Final Evaluation Report =  $0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f + g + h)$

The total number will be rounded and converted to the scale of highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

## C.6 Assessment of processes affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability

This section of the final evaluation review will summarize the factors or processes related to implementation delays and co-financing that may have affected attainment of project results. This section will summarize the description in the final evaluation on key causal linkages of these factors:

- Preparation and readiness and project outcomes and sustainability. Assess the extent to which preparation and project readiness affected outcomes and sustainability. Describe the way it affected performance when the project/programme was designed, with a focus on objectives clarity, integration of lessons learned and evidence, capacities of Executing Entities, and responsibilities of partners.
- Country ownership. Assess the extent to which country ownership has affected project outcomes and sustainability. Describe the ways in which it affected outcomes and sustainability, highlighting the causal links.
- Stakeholder involvement. Assess the extent to which the project involved the relevant stakeholders in project/programme design, implementation, and M&E, including the most relevant vulnerable groups.
- Financial management. Did the project/programme have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds? Was there due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits? Financial audits of the project, if available at the time of the evaluation, should be used as a source of information.
- Implementing Entity supervision and backstopping. Assess whether Implementing Entities provided quality support and advice for the project/programme.
- Delays and project outcomes and sustainability. If there were delays, what were the reasons for them? To what extent did the delay affect project outcomes and/or sustainability? What were the causal linkages of these effects?



## Annex D. List of completed projects with final evaluations to date

AF-ID	Title	IE	IE type	Country	Start	End	Sector	Report publication	Author of evaluation report
DJI/MIE/Agri/2011/1-X	Developing Agro-Pastoral Shade Gardens as an Adaptation Strategy for Poor Rural Communities	UNDP	MIE	Djibouti	3/13/2013	3/13/2018	Agriculture	Jun-19	Directorate of Environment and Sustainable Development
GEO/MIE/DRR/2010/1	Developing Climate Resilient Flood and Flash Flood Management Practices to Protect Vulnerable Communities of Georgia	UNDP	MIE	Georgia	7/4/2012	7/4/2016	Water Management	Feb-17	Christian Bugnion de Moreta, Ketevan Skhireli
GTM/MIE/Rural/2010/1	Climate Change Resilient Production Landscapes and Socioeconomic Networks Advanced in Guatemala	UNDP	MIE	Guatemala	2/7/2015	2/7/2019	Rural Development	Nov-18	Marietta Fonseca F
HND/MIE/Water/2010/4	Addressing Climate Change Risks on Water Resources in Honduras: Increased Systemic Resilience and Reduced Vulnerability of the Urban Poor	UNDP	MIE	Honduras	6/27/2011	6/27/2016	Water Management	Dec-16	Javier Jahnsen
MDV/MIE/Water/2010/6	Increasing Climate Resilience through an Integrated Water Resource Management Programme in HA. Ihavandhoo, ADh. Mahibadhoo and GDh. Gadhdhoo Island	UNDP	MIE	Maldives	6/20/2012	6/20/2016	Water Management	Feb-16	Jessica Troni, Mariyam Hana Saeed
NCA/MIE/Water/2010/1	Reduction of Risks and Vulnerability Based on Flooding and Droughts in the Estero Real Watershed	UNDP	MIE	Nicaragua	6/23/2011	5/29/2015	Water Management	Dec-15	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources
PAK/MIE/DRR/2010/1	Reducing Risks and Vulnerabilities from Glacier Lake Outburst Floods in Northern Pakistan	UNDP	MIE	Pakistan	11/15/2011	11/30/2015	Disaster Risk Reduction	Nov-15	Arun Rijal, Jawad Ali
SEN/NIE/Coastal/2015/x	Adaptation to Coastal Erosion in Vulnerable Areas	Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE)	NIE	Senegal	1/21/2011	11/1/2014	Coastal Management	Aug-15	Lucille Palazy

(continued)

AF-ID	Title	IE	IE type	Country	Start	End	Sector	Report publication	Author of evaluation report
SLB/MIE/ Food/ 2010/1	Enhancing Resilience of Communities in Solomon Islands to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change in Agriculture and Food Security	UNDP	MIE	Solomon Islands	6/28/2011	6/28/2015	Urban Development	Jul-16	Jose Antonio Cabo Bujan, Titus Sura
TKM/MIE/ Water/ 2011/1	Addressing Climate Change Risks to Farming Systems in Turkmenistan at National and Community level	UNDP	MIE	Turkmenistan	5/22/2012	5/22/2017	Water Management	Jul-17	Lilit V. Melikyan
ARG/ NIE/Agri/ 2011/1	Enhancing the Adaptive Capacity and Increasing Resilience of Small-size Agriculture Producers of the Northeast of Argentina	Unidad Para Cambio Rural Argentina	NIE	Argentina	10/24/2013	12/31/2018	Agriculture	May-19	Penelope Vaca Avila
COK/MIE/ Multi/ 2011/1/ PD	Akamatutuanga i te iti tangata no te tuatau manakokore ia e te tauiaanga reva; Strengthening the Resilience of our Islands and our Communities to Climate Change	UNDP	MIE	Cook Islands	7/4/2012	7/4/2017	Disaster Risk Reduction	Aug-18	Melina Tuiravakai
SAM/ MIE/ Multi/ 2011/1/ PD	Enhancing Resilience of Samoa Coastal Communities to Climate Change	UNDP	MIE	Samoa	1/28/2013	1/28/2017	Multisector Projects	Sep-18	Vincent Lefebvre
ECU/MIE/ Food/ 2010/1	Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security, in Pichincha Province and the Jubones River basin	WFP	MIE	Ecuador	11/29/2011	6/15/2018	Multisector Projects	Sep-18	Luis Fernández
MTN/MIE/ Food/ 2011/1/ PD	Enhancing Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security in Mauritania	WFP	MIE	Mauritania	8/14/2014	8/13/2019	Food Security	Sep-19	Youssef Saadani, Mohamed Lemine Selmane
MMR/MIE/ Rural/ 2011/1	Addressing Climate Change Risks on Water Resources and Food Security in the Dry Zone of Myanmar	UNDP	MIE	Myanmar	9/25/2015	6/30/2019	Rural Development	Apr-19	Richard Sobey, May Nwe Soe

(continued)

AF-ID	Title	IE	IE type	Country	Start	End	Sector	Report publication	Author of evaluation report
TZA/MIE/Coastal/2010/1	Implementation of Concrete Adaptation Measures to Reduce Vulnerability of Livelihood and Economy of Coastal Communities in Tanzania	UNEP	MIE	Tanzania	10/29/2012	3/30/2019	Coastal Management	Dec-19	Hugo Navajas, Fikirini Mkali



## Annex E. Management Response to synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG)

### Background

At its thirty sixth meeting the Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) considered and approved the synthesis of the Adaptation Fund final evaluations and five recommendations for the cohort of 17 evaluation reports analyzed, as presented by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) in document AFB/EFC.27/8.

In its decision B.36/32, the Board decided :

- (a) To take note of the executive summary of the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations and five recommendations for the cohort of 17 evaluation reports analysed, as presented in document AFB/EFC.27/8;*
- (b) To request the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat and the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) to consider the five recommendations when updating relevant frameworks/policies, templates and guidance and when planning and implementing evaluations;*
- (c) To request the secretariat, in communication with the AF-TERG as necessary, to prepare a management response to the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations, for the consideration of the Board during the intersessional period between its thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh meetings.*

**(Decision B.36/33)**

As mandated by the Board decision B.36/33, the secretariat prepared this comprehensive management response which provides detailed response to each finding and recommendation of the AF-TERG contained in document AFB/EFC.27/8.

This report provides an overall management response, identifies areas in which the secretariat disagrees with the report, provides an update on actions already being done to address some of the recommendations, and includes a detailed annex with specific responses to each finding.



## Overall management response and reflections on recommendations

Overall, the secretariat welcomes the key findings and recommendations of the synthesis report and notes the overall positive findings in the report including, among others, (i) the overall satisfactory rating<sup>33</sup> of the first series of completed projects/programmes, (ii) the high compliance rate (70%) with the Fund guidelines for final evaluations and (iii) that most reports (82%) were based on evidence and used of evidence or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data.

The secretariat also notes that many of the recommendations contained in document AFB/EFC.27/8 align with actions already taken by the Fund through its results-based management work and ones currently being discussed for further implementation including, among others, (i) the Fund's recent effort to consistently and regularly update its results-based management guidelines and reporting templates as part of its objective to ensure effective and comprehensive reporting of project results by implementing entities, (ii) the ongoing development of the Fund's evaluation policy by AF-TERG in collaboration with the secretariat and (iii) the recent update of many of the Fund's policies including the gender policy and action plan, environmental and social policy as well as the ongoing capacity building towards national implementing entities through the Fund's readiness programme.

The secretariat is committed to explore areas for improvement and learning from the report's findings and proposed recommendations. However, it is important to convey the following points for consideration by the Board:

- a. Replicability and scaling up: Several sections of the report raise the low emphasis on scaling up and replicability in implementing entity (IE) project final evaluation reports. While the secretariat recognizes that scale-up and replicability are positive outcomes and important elements for projects funded by the Adaptation Fund as stated in the Operational Policies and Guideline (OPG) and its Annex 5 "Project/ Programme Proposal Template", it is important to note that in accordance with the Fund's mandate, these are not included in project eligibility or review criteria or required otherwise, and hence should not be presented by the report as a compliance evaluation element as currently structured in the methodology and reported in the findings. This aspect of replicability and scaling up could be considered as a recommendation that the Board may want to consider as part of strategic discussion for the Fund.
- b. Contribution to Fund strategic outcomes: Although the report recognizes that the Fund's core indicators were not established when the projects highlighted in this report were approved, it goes on to state that "both relevance of project outcomes and project results were seldom linked to the Fund strategic framework". The secretariat disagrees with this finding and would like to clarify that these projects were fully aligned with the Fund's results framework in place at the time of their approval and included in project reporting documents (PPR).

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33. AFB/EFC.27/8 paragraph 15, Aggregate performance ratings of completed projects.

- c. Policies and guidelines: While the secretariat welcomes the recommendations (4 and 5) calling for regular update of policies and guidelines, it would like to recall that the Fund has consistently and regularly updated its policies and guidelines as part of its effort to ensure efficiency and better access by countries and entities. For example, the Fund has updated, on multiple occasions, its results framework, recently approved the updated gender policy and action plan, regularly updated its project-related templates, including reporting and review sheets, etc.
- d. Terminal evaluation guidelines and related documents: Many of the findings and recommendations raised are related to terminal evaluation guidelines and results presentation. The secretariat is in agreement that there is room for improvement, but it believes this recommendation should be jointly implemented by the secretariat and TERG whose expertise and support, under its advisory function, is sincerely welcome to help improve the Fund’s evaluation guidelines; including the ongoing work related to the Fund’s new evaluation policy. The secretariat remains available to work with TERG under the Board guidance to address the related findings and recommendations.

### Conclusion and next steps

The management response to the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations and proposed recommendations as approved by the Board will be implemented by the secretariat in accordance with the proposed timeline indicated in table E1. The secretariat will report regularly to the Board on the management response’s implementation, with the next update to be expected in October 2021 as part of the report on the activities of the secretariat.

The secretariat will continue its collaboration with AF-TERG to integrate lessons learnt described in the synthesis report as well as further elements of next evaluations report to be conducted on the Fund’s portfolio.

**Table E1: Detailed response to each finding of the synthesis of Adaptation Fund final evaluations**

	Overall finding	Secretariat position	Management response
A	Compliance with the Fund guidelines for final evaluations was high (with an average compliance level of 70 per cent with the criteria)	Agreed	The secretariat welcomes this finding and remains committed to provide further guidance needed for IEs to conduct a final evaluation in compliance with the Fund’s policies and guidelines.
B	Most reports (>70 per cent) were found to be easy to understand, comprehensive, and concise, yet about 50 per cent did not have a clear presentation of results.	Agreed	The finding is well noted and will help to improve the terminal evaluation guidelines. The secretariat remains available to work jointly with TERG to improve the evaluation guidelines (TE and MTR guidelines to be developed) to address this issue.

(continued)

	Overall finding	Secretariat position	Management response
C	Reports were based on evidence (82 per cent), described applied methodologies (65 per cent) and made use of evidence or monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data (82 per cent). However, evaluations seldom assessed the quality of data (29 per cent).	Agreed	The finding is well noted. The secretariat is committed to improve and enhance the quality of data collected and reported by IEs. The secretariat remains available to engage with TERG as part of the ongoing development of the Fund's evaluation policy and through other collaboration work to address issues related to the quality of data in the future.
D	Performance ratings were well substantiated, apart from M&E ratings	Partially agreed	The overall finding is well noted. A further clarification is needed to understand the issue raised on M&E ratings. The report is unclear about these ratings as highlighted in footnote 17 which states that "M&E ratings were often more contrasted than other criteria because of how the identified shortcomings were rated". The secretariat remains available to work with AF-TERG to better understand the issue raised and identify options to address similar issues related to rating in the future
E	No significant difference was found between the evaluation and the review ratings at the portfolio level, but the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis	Partially agreed	The finding is well noted. However, it is important to note that the very limited size of portfolio analysed does not allow a full analysis of Fund's portfolio, as highlighted by the report that "the small size of the portfolio (n=17) prevented any meaningful comparative analysis". The secretariat looks forward for a more robust analysis in future synthesis reports as the portfolio matures further.
	Proposed recommendations	Action by the secretariat	Timeline
1	Link results back to a robust results framework	As recognized by the synthesis report, "Over the past few years, the Fund secretariat has tried to clarify the results framework, as well as reporting guidelines and Project Performance Report templates. These developments might have an impact on (the evaluation of) more recent projects". The secretariat will continue its effort to clarify its reporting guidelines and update regularly its template to ensure projects reporting and evaluation meet the Fund's requirements. The new evaluation policy currently being developed by AF-TERG in collaboration with the secretariat provides an opportunity to address this recommendation.	Ongoing

(continued)

	Proposed recommendations	Action by the secretariat	Timeline
2	Make quality of data a centerpiece to understand the validity of results	Quality of data, including the use of qualitative data at baseline to support validity of results, is mainly addressed by IEs. The secretariat is committed to explore ways to address the data quality issues as part of its guidance to IEs and review of projects. New projects will be reviewed to make sure baseline data are strong enough to support adaptation impacts during final evaluations. In addition, KM components of new projects will be scrutinized to ensure learning and adaptive management are integrated in each project.	Ongoing and starting from next review cycle
3	Enhance guidelines to help improve evaluation reports	Although not mandated by the Fund's operational policies and guidelines (OPG), the secretariat will encourage implementing entities to integrate a theory of change in newly submitted projects in addition to logical framework as currently mandated by the Fund's strategic results framework.	Ongoing
4	Improve consideration of gender in guidelines	The secretariat is actively working on the development of guidelines for implementation of the new gender policy.	Ongoing. Development of guidelines for implementation of the updated Gender Policy started in late July 2021 with the tailored survey targeting the IEs, Designated Authorities, and AF NGO Network. The survey results will be considered in developing the gender guidelines which is expected to start in September 2021