



MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and
Rice Sectors as an Adaptation Strategy project in
Sierra Leone (PCRCR)

February 2026

*Prepared by: Dr. Thierry NIANOGO
Evaluation Consultant for MTR
Contact: t.nianogo@gmail.com*

PREFACE

Sierra Leone, situated in the Upper Guinean Rainforest ecoregion, is among the most climate-vulnerable countries globally. Agriculture, including forestry and livestock, employs two-thirds of the labour force and accounts for over 60% of GDP (World Bank, 2024). Yet, the country faces high climate vulnerability (0.538) and low readiness (0.238) according to the ND-GAIN Index (2023). Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, floods, and dry spells threaten agriculture, water resources, health, and coastal zones—sectors vital to livelihoods and food security. These risks are compounded by poverty, low productivity, soil erosion, unsustainable practices, limited access to inputs, and weak private sector engagement.

The project under review, Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and Rice Sectors (PCRCR), is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and aims to increase productivity, reduce dependence on food imports, and create jobs. It aligns with national development and climate priorities, including the Feed SALONE initiative, the Smallholder Commercialisation Program (SCP), and Sierra Leone’s Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

This Midterm Review (MTR) assesses the project’s progress at mid-implementation; documents lessons learned and provides recommendations for improvement. Its findings are intended to inform project managers, donors, implementing partners, and beneficiaries, and to generate insights applicable to other resilience-building initiatives in Sierra Leone. The present midterm review is conducted at 77% of the project implementation period, with inception on May 06, 2020, and an expected completion date of March 31, 2027 (after an approval extension).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Midterm Review (MTR) of the Adaptation Fund–supported *Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and Rice Sectors (PCRCR)* project, implemented in 10 districts of Sierra Leone, was undertaken to assess progress to date and identify opportunities to strengthen delivery. While the breadth of interventions across multiple districts and the need to determine the Adaptation Fund’s contribution within a multi-donor framework posed challenges, the exercise provided valuable insights for the project and its stakeholders.

The review team acknowledges the support and collaboration of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Country Office, the Project Management Unit (PMU), and its Climate Change Focal Point (Mr Gassimu Bohnapha). Their contributions, including providing documentation, facilitating meetings, and supporting field missions, were essential to the successful completion of the review. Appreciation is also extended to the project’s implementing partners for their constructive engagement and availability during consultations, as well as to the local communities and farmers who participated in interviews and field visits. Their willingness to share experiences and perspectives greatly enriched the findings of this review.

The responsibility for the content, analysis, and recommendations of this report rests solely with the review team.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	0
Acknowledgement	2
Table of contents	3
Acronyms	5
Executive summary	7
Key Findings and Performance Ratings	7
Key Recommendations.....	10
1 Introduction and background	12
1.1 Context	12
1.2 Overview of the project.....	12
1.3 Object of the evaluation	14
1.4 Report introduction	15
2 Evaluation scope and objectives.....	15
2.1 Evaluation scope	15
2.2 Evaluation questions.....	16
2.3 Evaluation Matrix	17
3 Evaluation approach and methods.....	18
3.1 Evaluation principles.....	18
3.2 Evaluation criteria	19
3.3 Evaluation data sources	20
3.4 Evaluation data collection methods	20
3.4.1 The inception phase.....	20
3.4.2 Meetings, Interviews and Field Visits.....	20
3.4.3 Draft MTR report	21
3.4.4 Final MTR report	21
3.5 Evaluation data analysis.....	21
3.6 Evaluation of stakeholder engagement.....	22
3.7 Ethical considerations	22
3.8 Limitations	Error! Bookmark not defined.
4 Evaluation findings	23
4.1 Relevance	23
4.2 Coherence and complementarity	27
4.3 Effectiveness.....	28
4.4 Efficiency	35
4.5 Impact	37
4.6 Sustainability.....	39
4.7 Adaptive management	40
4.8 Cross-cutting related issues.....	41
5 conclusions and recommendations	43

5.1	<i>Conclusion</i>	43
5.2	<i>lessons learned</i>	44
5.3	<i>Recommendation</i>	44
<i>Annexes</i>		46
	<i>Annexe 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference</i>	46
	<i>Annexe 2: Evaluation Matrix</i>	47
	<i>Annexe 3: List of stakeholders' meetings</i>	53
	<i>Annexe 4: List of secondary data sources consulted</i>	54
	<i>Annexe 5: AF core indicator at MTR</i>	55
	<i>Annexe 6: Civil works contract</i>	56
	<i>Annexe 7: AF expenditure at MTR</i>	58

ACRONYMS

ACC	: Adaptation to Climate Change
AF	: Adaptation Fund
AVDP	: Agriculture Value Chain Development Project
AWPB	: Annual Work Plan and Budget
CC	: Climate Change
ENRM	: Environmental and Natural Resource Management
EPA-SL	: Environmental Protection Agency of Sierra Leone
ESIA	: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESMF	: Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	: Environmental and Social Management Plan
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization
FBO	: Farmer Based Organization
FFS	: Farmer Field School
FO	: Farmer Organization
GALS	: Gender Action Learning System
GEF	: Global Environmental Facility
GHG	: Greenhouse Gas
IFAD	: International Fund for Agricultural Development
IVS	: Inland Valley Swamp
KM	: Knowledge Management
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFFS	: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MTR	: Mid-term Review
NDC	: National Determined Contributions
NSC	: National Steering Committee
NRM	: Natural Resource Management
PDR	: Project Design Report
PMA	: Project Management Unit
SECAP	: Social Environmental and Climate Change Procedures
SLMet	: Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet)
SLRA	: Sierra Leone Road Authority
SLARI	: Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Project Components and Financing.....	14
Table 2: Key Questions by Investment Criteria.....	16
Table 3: A summary of the stakeholder analysis conducted for this evaluation	22
Table 4: Delivery of expected outputs under the project components	30

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and Rice Sectors as an Adaptation Strategy in Sierra Leone (PCRCR) was conducted to assess the project's performance, progress toward its objectives, and its contribution to strengthening climate resilience in Sierra Leone's agriculture sector. The evaluation covered relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, cross-cutting issues (gender, youth, environment), adaptive management, and institutional performance.

Project Overview: PCRCR builds upon the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP), cofinanced by IFAD and the OPEC fund. IFAD is the implementing entity of PCRCR and the AVDP project management unit (PMU) is its executing entity. The project aims to enhance the resilience of smallholder farmers in selected districts through climate-smart agriculture (CSA), sustainable land and water management, improved market access, and capacity development for national institutions (EPA, SLMet, SLARI, MAFS). It directly supports Pillars 1 (Mechanization and Irrigation) and 3 (Aggregation, Processing and Marketing) of the Feed Salone Strategy.

The PCRCR project, in line with AVDP, was initially implemented in 16 districts. However, the 2022 midterm review of AVDP concluded, following agreement with the PMU and the Ministry responsible for agriculture, that the project's geographic coverage should be reduced to 10 districts (Bo, Bonthe, Kenema, Kailahun, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kono, Falaba, Koinadugu, Port Loko). Thus, the PCRCR is now being implemented in the same 10 districts.

Key Findings and Performance Ratings

Evaluation criteria	Leading question	Rating	Justification
Relevance	To what extent do the intervention's objectives and design align with the beneficiaries' needs and priorities?	Satisfactory (S)	The project remains relevant to Sierra Leone's national development priorities, the Feed Salone Strategy, and the Adaptation Fund's objectives. It effectively addresses the key climate risks facing the agricultural sector—floods, droughts, and prolonged heatwaves—through targeted interventions in two strategic value chains: rice (contributing to food security) and cocoa (contributing to the balance of payments).
Coherence and complementarity	How well does the intervention fit with national priorities and local needs?	Highly Satisfactory (S)	The project demonstrates strong coherence and complementarity across strategic, policy, and institutional dimensions. Its design and implementation are fully consistent with Sierra Leone's national development and climate adaptation priorities, while also advancing IFAD's environmental and climate objectives. The multi-institutional collaboration—anchored in effective partnerships among MAFS, SLMet, SLARI, EPA, SLRA, and Njala University—has fostered synergies that enhance technical effectiveness and sustainability. By integrating climate-smart agriculture, research, and

			infrastructure components within a coherent national framework, the project ensures that interventions are locally relevant, policy-aligned, and institutionally owned.
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?	Moderately Satisfactory	The project is on track to achieve its expected outputs. CSA practices introduced through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) have improved yields, soil fertility, and farmers' adaptive capacities. The project successfully supported SLMet to produce real-time agroclimatic information and SLARI to develop drought-tolerant hybrid cocoa varieties. However, delays in the finalization of ESIA's and inconsistent collaboration with the EPA have constrained environmental monitoring.
Efficiency	To what extent does, or is the intervention likely to, deliver results in an economic and timely manner?	Moderately Satisfactory	The project demonstrates efficient use of resources, supported by IFAD's fiduciary procedures and transparent financial management systems. The three-tier financial control mechanism and periodic internal and external audits ensure accountability.
Impact	To what extent has the intervention generated, or is it expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?	Satisfactory	Overall, the project has contributed meaningfully to building climate resilience and strengthening institutional capacities in Sierra Leone's agricultural sector. While environmental compliance and partnership coordination require improvement, the project's impacts on community livelihoods, adaptive capacity, and gender empowerment are substantial and promising. With timely corrective actions and continued support, the project is expected to achieve satisfactory impact outcomes by completion.
Sustainability	Are the conditions in place to ensure that the benefits of this PCRCR intervention will continue beyond the project's lifetime?	Satisfactory	Community-based approaches, such as the FFS model, GALS methodology, and land-lease arrangements particularly for women, enhance ownership and sustainability. Continued capacity building for national and local institutions remains critical for long-term resilience. Stronger collaboration between MAFS, EPA, SLMet, and SLARI will be

Adaptative management	Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?	Marginally Satisfactory (MS)	needed to ensure institutional continuity and knowledge transfer post-project. Furthermore, the establishment of FBOs trained to manage and maintain the projects infrastructure and equipment will increase sustainability of the project investments.
Cross-cutting related issues	How effectively have the intervention's strategies and activities addressed cross-cutting issues?	Satisfactory	The AF project applies adaptive management principles, using quarterly reviews with key partners and integrating climate data into field planning. The project management team has demonstrated flexibility in adjusting work plans to respond to climatic and operational realities. However, the shortcomings of the monitoring and evaluation system and the collection of indicators do not allow for the management of an optimized feedback loop. Gender, youth, and environmental safeguards have been effectively mainstreamed. The project achieved 40% participation of women and youth, promoted secure land rights for women, and introduced agroforestry and clean energy solutions to reduce GHG emissions. However, systematic data collection on gender outcomes, workload redistribution, and intra-household dynamics is still limited.

Lessons Learned

- **Community-based approaches enhance ownership and sustainability:** The Farmer Field School (FFS) model and community-driven planning and development mechanisms of the established rice and cocoa farms have proven highly effective in strengthening local ownership and ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, the community-based approach to developing the IVS has involved beneficiaries throughout the process, fostering greater ownership and increasing their capacity to manage and replicate these investments.
- **Institutional coordination is critical for climate-resilient investments:** Effective collaboration among MAFS, EPA, SLMet, and SLARI is essential to deliver integrated adaptation solutions and improve the impact of field interventions. The agroclimatic information provided by SLMet is critical in the farmer's decision process. Also, given the ongoing climate change, which impacts production and productivity, it is essential to rely on research institutions such as SLARI to select planting materials adapted to the national context and to develop new genetic materials that account for the country's specificities.
- **Gender-transformative approaches yield broad social and economic benefits:** Secure land rights, the GALS methodology, and targeted women's training produced measurable improvements in women's autonomy, household income, and food security. As a result of the project, a significant number of women are benefiting from secure access to land, improved

household nutrition, and reduced women's labour burdens, for example, through water harvesting.

- **Climate information systems drive adaptive management:** Real-time weather and climate data have enhanced farmers' adaptive decision-making. Strengthening partnerships with SLMet and SLARI proved to be a key success factor. To provide accurate and valuable information to farmers on key decisions (e.g., land preparation, planting, and harvesting), close collaboration among SLMet, SLARI, and the PMU is essential.
- **Multilevel capacity development increases resilience:** Continuous training at the community and institutional levels is necessary to sustain and replicate climate-smart agricultural practices beyond the project's lifecycle. The project has implemented several training sessions on good agricultural practices, on setting up and organising FBOs, and on gender mainstreaming and nutrition. With the project interventions, the MAFS extended services, and the local communities are better equipped to train farmers and leverage the project's positive impacts.
- **Flexibility and adaptive management mitigate implementation risks:** Adjusting work plans in response to climatic and logistical realities ensured relevance and effectiveness under uncertainty.
- **Development of climate-adapted seedlings enhances long-term resilience:** SLARI's clonal seed gardens have produced high-yield, pest-resistant, and climate-resilient varieties, preserving local genetic diversity—a model worth replication across other value chains. The mission observed that the experiment in the clonal gardens has produced higher-yielding cocoa trees.

Key Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Expected Outcome
1	Establish a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) platform to enhance dissemination of agro-climatic information and promote CSA practices.	SLARI, SLMET, AVDP CC Focal Point	Apr 2026	Improved coordination, information sharing, and climate-resilient practices in targeted value chains.
2	Build capacity of EPA staff and AVDP CC Focal Point on the use of EX-ACT tool to estimate and track GHG emission reductions.	EPA	Apr 2026	Strengthened MRV of GHG contributions and alignment with NDC targets.
3	Pilot bioenergy solutions (e.g., biodigesters) to diversify energy sources and reduce dependence on wood fuel.	EPA	May 2026	Enhanced climate mitigation co-benefits and improved energy security.
4	Systematize Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and ESMPs for all infrastructure works to ensure compliance with SECAP.	EPA	Immediate	Enhanced environmental and social safeguards and compliance.
5	Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) systems to include indicators on gender equality, environmental benefits, and livelihood resilience.	M&E Officer	Immediate	More comprehensive tracking of AF project impacts and evidence-based decision-making.
6	Foster market linkages and private sector engagement through structured FBOs, aggregation, value addition, and PPPs.	Business Consultant	Continuous	Improved market access, sustainability of CSA investments, and income generation.

7	Enhance collaboration with national universities to strengthen research, knowledge management, and dissemination of lessons learned.	PMU, Universities	Jun 2026	Strengthened evidence base for policy and practice, ensuring long-term sustainability.
---	--	-------------------	----------	--

Overall Assessment: The AF project demonstrates strong relevance, solid implementation progress, and promising results in building the adaptive capacity of Sierra Leone’s smallholder farmers. Despite operational challenges and coordination gaps, the project is making meaningful contributions to national objectives for climate resilience and food security. With continued focus on environmental compliance, institutional collaboration, and outcome-based monitoring, the project is well-positioned to achieve its development objectives by completion. Initially set for 06 May 2026, the revised completion date, following an approval extension, is 31 March 2027.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Context

Climate change is expected to exacerbate disruptions in rainfall patterns, increase temperatures, and reduce water availability in Sierra Leone. These risks pose serious threats to agricultural productivity and food security, underscoring the urgent need for adaptation measures to strengthen resilience in the agriculture sector. In response, the Government of Sierra Leone, with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), developed the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP).

The AVDP promotes agroforestry and climate-smart agricultural practices across the following value chains: Rice, Oil Palm, Cocoa and Vegetables. Furthermore, it aims to improve the organization, efficiency, and competitiveness of these value chains, thereby contributing to national food security and rural development.

1.2 Overview of the project

The Adaptation Fund (AF) project under review, Promoting Climate Resilience in the Cocoa and Rice Sectors as an Adaptation Strategy in Sierra Leone (PCRCR), was designed to complement the AVDP, with a stronger focus on climate change adaptation. It addresses climate vulnerabilities in agriculture and water resource management in two critical value chains: rice and cocoa. Additionally, the project enhances institutional capacities to strengthen resilience in these sectors. Its interventions target integrated climate-resilient production, post-harvest, and marketing systems, including, Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) development for rice production, combined with water management, fish farming, and vegetable gardening; Shaded cocoa plantations intercropped with complementary crops to support soil fertility and additional income generation; Drying and storage facilities to reduce post-harvest losses; and Model farms and Farmer Field Schools (FFS) to promote knowledge transfer and uptake of climate-smart practices.

The general objective of this project is to strengthen the GoSL's investments in the development resilience of the cocoa and rice sectors. The aim of the additional climate finance for adaptation is to reduce vulnerability and increase the capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including variability at local and national levels, as well as to reduce these impacts on critical natural resources for sustaining agricultural production and food security and nutrition of vulnerable, poor communities. The project targets smallholder farmers and communities most vulnerable to climate change. The direct beneficiaries of the project are 35,000 smallholder farmers, 10,000 rice producers, and 5,000 cocoa producers (at least 40% of whom will be women and 40% of whom will be young people).

Consistent with the three components of the AVDP, the AF project is structured around the following components:

- **Component 1: Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest systems, combined with livelihood diversification.** This component focuses on household and community-level interventions to promote climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural practices, aiming to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and variability. It also aims to enhance agricultural and rural livelihoods by improving productivity and diversifying income sources. Across the agricultural value chains, particularly cocoa and rice, several key vulnerabilities underscore the need for targeted adaptation measures. These include the low productivity and high climate sensitivity of rain-fed agricultural systems, which remain the primary source of livelihoods for most smallholder farmers; the increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and climate-induced pest and disease outbreaks that adversely affect yields; and the year-to-year variability in climatic conditions, which creates uncertainty in production cycles. In the cocoa sector, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure and equipment for drying and processing continue to constrain product quality and market competitiveness, limiting farmers' capacity to maintain stable and increased incomes under changing climatic conditions.

- **Component 2: Climate-resilient rural infrastructure.** Component 2 aims to enhance the profitability and resilience of value chains by rehabilitating and upgrading critical rural infrastructure to withstand climate extremes. Specifically, the component focuses on improving rural transportation and storage facilities and on expanding access to potable water and sanitation systems, with due consideration for current and projected climate risks. Poor road and transportation networks continue to undermine the quality and market value of agricultural produce, limiting farmers’ capacity to secure stable incomes. To address this, two key interventions are envisaged: (i) the rehabilitation and improvement of rural road infrastructure to ensure year-round accessibility under all-weather conditions; and (ii) the upgrading of existing warehouses to withstand wetter climatic conditions, thereby supporting the efficient storage and marketing of cocoa and rice. Climate change, manifested through recurrent droughts and flooding, has also exacerbated water scarcity and degradation, affecting both agricultural and domestic water systems. To strengthen water management and productivity, the project will address several critical challenges, including the lack of water infrastructure for both agricultural and domestic use, crop and livestock damage, pasture loss, and the spread of waterborne diseases. The component will also address malnutrition associated with reduced agricultural output, rural migration, and unsustainable water-use practices in the targeted areas.
- **Component 3: Institutional capacity building and policy engagement.** Component 3 focuses on strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of key government entities, notably the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet), to implement and monitor climate change adaptation measures effectively. The component also aims to reinforce the project’s monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge management systems to ensure evidence-based decision-making and sustained impacts. Specifically, the project will enhance the EPA’s technical and operational capacities in climate change adaptation through staff training, institutional strengthening, and technology upgrades. Similarly, the SLMet will be supported in improving its climate observation and forecasting systems, thereby enabling the generation and dissemination of reliable agro-climatic information to farmers and decision-makers. Within the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function, the project will contribute to the development of a Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system to track climate response programmes and to the improvement of the project’s overall M&E and knowledge management framework. Furthermore, the component will strengthen project management and coordination mechanisms and promote the effective use of climate information—particularly by integrating cropping calendars with data from rain gauges and automatic weather stations already installed and operational in the project areas.

Table 1 presents the project components and expected outputs.

Table 1: Project Components and Financing

Components	Expected concrete outputs
Component 1: Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood diversification	Output 1.1. Best available technologies and integrated resilient rice and cocoa foster the resilience of cocoa and rice production, and post-harvest are implemented: ▪ Cropping calendar and climate early warning systems, ▪ Vulnerability and crop modelling, ▪ Climate resilient varieties, multiplication and dissemination, ▪ Integrated pest management, soil management, ▪ Energy for production and post-harvest and processing, water pumping, ▪ Reforestation and agro forestry
	Output 1.2. Income-generating activities (fish farming, business model on integrated community garden with solar water pumps, compost systems, processing units, transport system tricycles) are promoted as livelihood diversification measures
Component 2: Climate resilient rural infrastructure	Output 2.1. Rural transportation and storage infrastructures have been rehabilitated and upgraded to withstand weather extremes (climate resilient feeder roads, drainages systems, culverts; climate proofed storage and warehouses, equipment and processing units, post-harvest storage facilities with phytosanitary control and serving as integrated trading and markets points)
	Output 2.2: Water supply increased, and sanitation infrastructure built, accounting for current and future climate risks (watershed rehabilitation, water efficiency and management, training and extension and infrastructure rehabilitation and construction – irrigation systems boreholes, water quality assessment, toilets, sanitation and drainage systems)
Component 3: Institutional capacity building and policy engagement	Output 3.1. Capacity of the government (esp. EPA) in managing climate risk is strengthened
	Output 3.2: Activities are adequately coordinated, monitored and evaluated.

1.3 Object of the evaluation

The primary aim of the MTR (cf. Annexe 1) is to assess progress toward the project's objectives and outcomes, as articulated in the approved project document. The review will evaluate the project's achievements to date, examine the design and implementation arrangements, identify challenges and opportunities, and draw lessons learned to provide actionable recommendations that will strengthen project delivery during the remainder of its lifecycle.

The MTR will focus on the following:

- **Progress towards objectives and outcomes:** assessment of achievements to date against the project's stated goals, expected outcomes, and indicators.
- **Alignment with Adaptation Fund evaluation criteria:** analysis of the extent to which project interventions meet the Fund's core criteria
- **Key lessons learned and innovations:** identification of innovative practices, approaches, or mechanisms introduced through the project, and documentation of lessons learned in design, implementation, and management.
- **Implementation challenges:** review of operational, institutional, and contextual barriers affecting project implementation
- **Performance of implementing partners:** assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency, and coordination of executing entities, implementing partners, and stakeholders.

- **Recommendations for improvement:** Practical and SMART recommendations to enhance implementation effectiveness, efficiency, and adaptive management for the remaining project period, as well as adjustments to project design, delivery mechanisms, and budget allocations to ensure alignment with the MTR findings.

1.4 Report introduction

This report presents the findings of the project's Mid-Term Review (MTR). These findings are based on a comprehensive review of relevant project documentation, consultations with the project team, implementing partners, and beneficiaries, and direct field observations. Following the presentation of the key findings, the report outlines practical recommendations to guide the Project Management Unit (PMU) and development partners in enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of project implementation and in achieving the intended objectives.

This report serves as a reference framework for the remainder of the implementation period. It is, however, anticipated that the findings and recommendations herein will be discussed and validated with the project's implementing partners and beneficiaries before any central management or operational decisions are adopted.

The current report, a formal MTR for the AF, organised in 2025, is being held after the project completion extension. It captures its impacts, including the reorientation decided 3 years ago, and can help improve the project's overall implementation post-midterm. It must be emphasized that this MTR occurs in more than 75% of the project's lifespan. Additionally, it should be noted that the AVDP project conducted an MTR in 2022 in compliance with IFAD procedures (thus covering the AF project). Important decisions were made, including the renewal of the project team and a new focus on 10 districts rather than the 16 initial districts.

2 EVALUATION SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Evaluation scope

The Adaptation Fund Mid-Term Review (MTR) aims to guide the future course of action for AF-funded projects in Sierra Leone by addressing existing gaps and enhancing the projects' relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Unlike an end-of-project evaluation, the MTR is designed as a formative exercise, intended to assess project performance to date, inform adaptive management decisions, and propose concrete actions for the remaining implementation period.

Mandated jointly by the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) under their agreement, the MTR serves both accountability and learning purposes. Specifically, the review seeks to:

- Provide evidence on whether the project is on track to achieve its overall objective and expected outcomes; and
- Strengthen learning by identifying key constraints, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

The MTR focused on assessing the project's progress toward the delivery of its planned outputs and results, and on identifying corrective measures to improve implementation. Based on the findings, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) programmatic recommendations were developed to enhance project performance for the remainder of the period. The primary audience of this MTR includes the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB), IFAD, project implementing partners, beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the MTR are to:

- Assess the project's performance with respect to progress toward the intended objectives, outcomes, and outputs.

- Evaluate the adequacy of project planning, resourcing, management arrangements, and partnerships, and how these influence effectiveness.
- Examine the integration of cross-cutting priorities, including gender equality, youth inclusion, human rights, and environmental and social safeguards.
- Identify areas for improvement, key lessons learned, and propose strategic, programmatic, and management recommendations to strengthen implementation.
- Document best practices and innovations that can inform replication and scaling up.

The MTR covers the project's planning, financing, implementation arrangements, performance, and reporting over the period from 05 June 2020 to 30 June 2025.

2.2 Evaluation questions

The objective of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) is to assess the project's progress toward achieving its stated goals and expected results. Accordingly, a set of evaluation questions has been developed in alignment with the Adaptation Fund (AF) investment criteria (Table 2). These questions are designed to guide the analysis of project performance, identify implementation challenges, and generate actionable lessons and recommendations. In general, the MTR seeks to address the following overarching evaluation questions:

- To what extent is the project achieving its planned outputs, outcomes, and overall objectives?
- To what extent have cross-cutting issues—gender equality, youth inclusion, human rights, environmental, social, and climate safeguards—been effectively integrated into project design and implementation?
- What are the critical gaps and constraints affecting project delivery and achievement of results?
- What are the key lessons learned and recommendations to enhance project performance, effectiveness, and sustainability during the remaining implementation period?

Table 2: Key Questions by Investment Criteria

Criteria	Questions/sub-questions
Coherence and complementarity	How well does the intervention fit with national priorities and local needs? ▪ To what extent is the implementation of the PCRCR aligned and coherent with the relevant development and climate policy actions and priorities? ▪ What are the key factors that have influenced, both positively and negatively, the synergies and interlinkages between the different components of the PCRCR project? ▪ To what extent was the project coherent with or complementary to partners' policies and other donors?
Relevance	To what extent do the intervention's objectives and design align with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries? ▪ Relevance to the requirements and/or needs of the beneficiaries and the government's priorities? ▪ To what extent was IFAD's comparative advantage in this work area compared to other UN entities and key partners? ▪ Relevance of key stakeholders and target groups (including gender analysis and analysis of vulnerable groups) and institutional capacity issues identified?

Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups? ▪ To what extent is the project on track to achieve its targeted output and expected accomplishment results? ▪ Which internal and external factors and processes contribute to achieving or not achieving the expected results? ▪ How appropriate and effective are the institutional relationships with the main target groups engaged in the project operations? ▪ To what extent has local capacity been strengthened so far through the project interventions? ▪ To what extent is monitoring and reporting on the project transparent and satisfy key stakeholders?
Efficiency	To what extent does, or is the intervention likely to, deliver results in an economic and timely manner? ▪ To what extent does the management structure of the project support efficient implementation? ▪ To what extent is the project being implemented efficiently in terms of delivering the expected results according to quality standards, in a timely manner according to budget and ensuring value for money?
Impact	To what extent has the intervention generated, or is it expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? ▪ To what extent did the project attain its objective and anticipated impact on partners and targeted beneficiaries? ▪ What positive and/or transformative changes have occurred because of the project's interventions?
Sustainability	Are the conditions in place to ensure that the benefits of this PCRCR intervention will continue beyond the project's lifetime? ▪ To what extent is capacity being developed to ensure the sustainability of the efforts and benefits? ▪ To what extent is the project engaging the participation of beneficiaries in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes? ▪ To what extent is the project fostering innovative partnerships with local institutions, authorities and other development partners? ▪ To what extent is the project fostering innovative partnerships with local institutions, authorities and other development partners?
Adaptative management	Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?
Cross-cutting related issues	How effectively have the intervention's strategies and activities addressed cross-cutting issues? ▪ To what extent have cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, environmental and social safeguards and youth consideration been integrated into the project design and implementation?

2.3 Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix (cf. Annexe 2) was designed to ensure that multiple stakeholder groups were consulted on similar aspects of project implementation, thereby enabling the **triangulation of information and validation of findings**. This approach facilitated a **comprehensive and balanced assessment** of the project's performance, incorporating diverse perspectives from all key stakeholder categories.

3 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODS

3.1 Evaluation principles

To ensure an effective evaluation process and to produce a report that highlights lessons learned and key recommendations aligned with the **Adaptation Fund Board (AFB)** requirements, the MTR was guided by the **Fund's seven evaluation principles**. These principles reflect the core values, norms, and best practices that underpin a credible, ethical, and practical evaluation process—one that supports **learning, informed decision-making, and accountability** in advancing the Fund's mission, goals, and vision.

These evaluation principles must be **applied consistently across all phases** of the Mid-Term Review—from design and data collection to analysis, validation, and reporting—to ensure the integrity, reliability, and utility of the evaluation findings. The MTR must respond to the interests and decision-making needs of its intended users at all levels, including the Fund, national institutions, the Project Management Unit (PMU), implementing partners, beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders. The findings and recommendations are expected to directly support adaptive management and strategic planning. The MTR referred to the following seven evaluation principles guiding the evaluation functions:

- **Credibility and Robustness:** The evaluation should employ rigorous, transparent, and justifiable methodologies for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It should be conducted by qualified, independent evaluators with relevant technical expertise to ensure the accuracy and reliability of findings.
- **Transparency:** The MTR process should be open and transparent, in line with the Adaptation Fund's (2013) principle of "building and maintaining public dialogue, increasing public awareness, enhancing good governance, accountability, and ensuring programmatic effectiveness." Transparency strengthens confidence in the evaluation's integrity and its findings.
- **Impartiality and Objectivity:** Evaluator selection, conduct, and decision-making should minimize bias and conflict of interest. Any pre-existing relationships or interests related to the Fund, the evaluated intervention, or implementing entities must be avoided or explicitly disclosed to safeguard the independence and impartiality of the evaluation.
- **Equitable and Gender-Sensitive Inclusivity:** Evaluation methods and tools must ensure culturally sensitive and gender-responsive data collection, generating balanced evidence that reflects the perspectives of diverse stakeholder groups. Active stakeholder engagement, particularly with vulnerable and underrepresented groups, enhances the relevance, ownership, and utility of the evaluation results.
- **Complementarity:** Where appropriate, the MTR should contribute to cross-organizational learning within the Fund, across partners, and between the Fund and other climate finance mechanisms. The evaluation should build on, and add value to, existing evidence and ongoing learning initiatives.
- **Complexity-Sensitive and Adaptive:** Recognising that Fund interventions operate in dynamic, complex environments, the evaluation must remain flexible and responsive to emerging challenges, stakeholder needs, and learning opportunities throughout the review process.

In operationalizing these principles, the MTR employed a participatory and evidence-based approach, ensuring inclusiveness, methodological rigor, and transparency throughout the process. Multiple data collection methods, including document reviews, stakeholder consultations, field observations, and validation meetings, were employed to enable triangulation and enhance the credibility of the findings. The evaluation process was also gender-responsive and adaptive, allowing for flexibility in responding to contextual challenges encountered in the field. By adhering to these principles, the MTR ensured the production of reliable, balanced, and actionable insights to guide decision-making and strengthen project performance for the remainder of the implementation period.

3.2 Evaluation criteria

The Adaptation Fund uses a set of standard evaluation criteria to assess the performance, effectiveness, and sustainability of its funded projects and programmes. These criteria ensure that evaluations are systematic, transparent, and aligned with the Fund's results-based management framework. The MTR of the Sierra Leone AF project has therefore been structured around these core criteria:

1. **Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?** It evaluates the extent to which the project's objectives, design, and implementation align with the country's adaptation needs and priorities, national policies and strategies (e.g., NDC, NAP, sectoral plans), and the Adaptation Fund's strategic results framework. It also examines whether the project remains responsive to emerging climate risks and stakeholder priorities.
2. **Coherence & complementarity: How well does the intervention fit?** It assesses the extent of national leadership, institutional engagement, and stakeholder participation in project design, decision-making, and implementation. It also assesses the extent to which the project develops local capacities and promotes coordination among government agencies, civil society, and beneficiaries.
3. **Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?** It involves evaluating the extent to which the project is achieving—or is likely to achieve—its intended outcomes and goals. This includes progress toward building adaptive capacity, reducing climate vulnerability, and strengthening the resilience of target communities and ecosystems.
4. **Efficiency: How well are resources being used?** It examines how economic resources (funds, expertise, time, and materials) are being converted into results. The criterion assesses project management efficiency, cost-effectiveness, timeliness of implementation, and coordination among implementing partners.
5. **Impact: What difference does the intervention make?** It measures the broader, long-term, positive and negative, direct and indirect changes resulting from the project. This includes contributions to strengthened resilience, improved livelihoods, ecosystem restoration, and reduced vulnerability to climate change.
6. **Equity: Are the benefits of the intervention shared fairly between groups and geographies?** It evaluates the extent to which the project integrates gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches, ensuring equitable participation, benefits, and empowerment of women, youth, and vulnerable groups throughout its implementation.
7. **Adaptive management: Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?** It assesses the extent to which the project management demonstrates flexibility, responsiveness, and learning capacity in adapting to changing circumstances, risks, and lessons emerging during implementation. The evaluation also considers whether governance and coordination mechanisms facilitate timely communication, informed decision-making, and continuous improvement.
8. **Scalability: Can the intervention be replicated at a greater scale?** It assesses the extent to which the project introduces innovative approaches, technologies, or practices to address climate challenges and the potential for these innovations to be replicated or scaled up in other regions or sectors.

9. Cross-cutting related issues: Does the intervention affect the ability of human and natural systems to support the equitable life of all species on the planet? Is the intervention sensitive to conflict and fragility?

In the context of this Mid-Term Review, these criteria were operationalised through the evaluation matrix (see Annex 2), which structured data collection and analysis for each criterion. Information was gathered from multiple sources, including project documents, stakeholder consultations, and field observations, to ensure triangulation and validation of the findings. The application of these criteria allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the project's performance, highlighting achievements, identifying implementation challenges, and formulating SMART recommendations to enhance the project's effectiveness, sustainability, and alignment with the Adaptation Fund's strategic objectives.

3.3 Evaluation data sources

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) adopted a qualitative assessment methodology to capture stakeholder perceptions and insights, structured around the Adaptation Fund's evaluation criteria. The assessment adopted a participatory and gender-responsive approach, ensuring inclusivity and representativeness in the determination and reporting of evaluation findings.

The MTR was based on both secondary and primary data sources. A comprehensive document review was undertaken to establish a clear understanding of the project's objectives, implementation progress, and contextual dynamics. This was followed by a field assessment phase, during which qualitative data were collected through a combination of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The stakeholders were engaged: the Project Management Unit (PMU), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet), Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), the IFAD Country Team, sub-national authorities, local communities, implementing partners, and direct beneficiaries actively involved in project implementation across the intervention sites.

3.4 Evaluation data collection methods

The following step-by-step methodology was applied in conducting the Mid-Term Review (MTR), consistent with the scope, objectives, and overarching evaluation policy of the Adaptation Fund (AF).

3.4.1 The inception phase

It consisted of a preliminary review of the project documentation and an initial meeting with the Project Management Unit (PMU) to discuss the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Mid-Term Review (MTR). During this stage, the evaluation approach, work plan, and deliverable schedule were agreed upon. A detailed calendar of meetings and field visits was also developed (cf. Annexe 3). Key project documents were collected and reviewed, including the Project Document, Project Progress Reports (PPRs), implementing partners' reports, and AVDP supervision reports.

Based on this initial review and the ToR, an Evaluation Matrix was developed to address the overarching evaluation questions and criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, cross-cutting themes, sustainability, and impact outlook (cf. Annexe 2). For each evaluation question, specific indicators, data sources, and data collection methods were identified and detailed in the matrix.

3.4.2 Meetings, Interviews and Field Visits

Following the inception phase, the Consultant undertook a series of meetings, interviews, and field visits to gather first-hand information, perspectives, evidence, and direct observations on the key project interventions. These engagements were designed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of project implementation and on-the-ground results.

Throughout this phase, the data collection activities were guided by the evaluation questions and aligned with the Adaptation Fund’s evaluation criteria. The field missions provided an opportunity to interact with project beneficiaries, implementing partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders, thereby enriching the analysis with diverse insights and contextual understanding.

3.4.3 Draft MTR report

The evidence and information obtained from the field visits, interviews, and meetings were systematically analyzed to address the evaluation questions and fulfil the objectives of the MTR within the defined scope. The findings were synthesized into a draft Mid-Term Review report, developed in line with the Adaptation Fund Evaluation Policy and the Fund’s Mid-Term Review Guidelines.

The report presents consolidated findings, conclusions, and recommendations structured according to the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound). Furthermore, it includes a section (#4) assessing the project’s performance ratings and associated results. In evaluating the project, the MTR applied the standard Adaptation Fund evaluation criteria—relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, cross-cutting themes, sustainability, coherence, and impact—using the following six-level rating scale:

- **HS: Highly Satisfactory** – The project had no shortcomings.
- **S: Satisfactory** – Minor shortcomings.
- **MS: Moderately Satisfactory** – Moderate shortcomings.
- **MU: Moderately Unsatisfactory** – Significant shortcomings.
- **U: Unsatisfactory** – Major shortcomings.
- **HU: Highly Unsatisfactory** – Severe shortcomings.

3.4.4 Final MTR report

The draft Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) report will be shared with the Project Management Unit (PMU) for initial review and feedback. Subsequently, the PMU will circulate the draft report among relevant stakeholders and project partners to solicit their comments and observations. Feedback received from all parties will be carefully reviewed, validated, and incorporated into the final report. The Final MTE Report will then be formally submitted to the Adaptation Fund Board (AFB) by the implementing entity upon receipt from the PMU.

3.5 Evaluation data analysis

Following data collection, the evaluation process commenced with daily data cleaning conducted during and immediately after fieldwork to ensure accuracy and completeness. For the qualitative data, detailed notes and observations were recorded for each interview and focus group discussion, capturing the perspectives of both individual and group respondents. These records provided a comprehensive basis for analyzing the data.

Qualitative data were systematically analyzed to identify thematic patterns, relationships, and connections across project components and outcomes, enabling the evaluation consultant to assess project performance and extract lessons aligned with the learning objectives outlined in the project document. A mixed-methods triangulation approach was employed to integrate findings from the document review, fieldwork, and direct observations, thereby providing a holistic understanding of the project’s implementation and results. This triangulation enhanced the validity, reliability, and utility of the evaluation findings, ensuring that conclusions and recommendations were grounded in robust evidence.

3.6 Evaluation of stakeholder engagement

A stakeholder analysis, including the development of an evaluation matrix (see Table 3), was conducted during the inception phase of the Mid-Term Review. The study aimed to identify and gather information from a broad spectrum of national, sub-national, and local stakeholders engaged in the project. For each stakeholder, the role in the intervention and the evaluation process was clearly defined, along with the appropriate consultation stage and the stakeholder's relative importance. This approach ensured that a diverse range of perspectives and interests was captured from the outset, thereby enhancing the evaluation's accountability, inclusivity, and relevance to the target populations.

Table 3: A summary of the stakeholder analysis conducted for this evaluation

Category	Stakeholders	Interest and Importance of involvement level in the evaluation	Level of importance
Duty-bearers	IFAD	As the implementing entity, IFAD is an important stakeholder for the project. It oversees the planning and implementation of the project's interventions at the country level. It is accountable for the project performance and results to the beneficiaries, implementing partners, and donors, including the AF. The findings of the MTR will guide the remainder of the project implementation, the lessons learned will inform future similar initiatives and the recommendation will strengthen the project's ability to reach its objectives. IFAD country team, with the PMU, will be actively involved in all the stages of the MTR.	High
Right-holders	Beneficiaries	The main recipient of the project are the vulnerable smallholder farmers in the targeted districts. The perspectives of these beneficiaries (direct and indirect) on the effectiveness of the project in delivering its outputs are essential for the MTR.	High
Duty-bearers	MAFS and other public entities	The MAFS is the executing entity for this project, having appointed a Project Management Unit to ensure day-to-day management. The MAFS is also responsible for the chairing of the National Steering Committee (NSC) which provides strategic direction, oversight, and guidance. The project is collaborating with other public sector agencies, including SLMet, SLARI, SLARA in its implementation.	High
Duty-bearers	AF Board	The findings from this MTR will enable the AF to assess the alignment of the project's interventions with the AF strategy, results framework. AF will assess if its funds have efficiently been spent toward the project objectives and outputs. It will inform also on the capacities of the executing entity (MAFS) and IFAD to effectively implement the project components and contribute to Sierra Leone's development and climate strategies.	Medium

3.7 Ethical considerations

The following professionalism and ethical standards were applied:

- **Professionalism:** Throughout the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the consultant adhered to the highest standards of ethical conduct, including compliance with the Adaptation Fund's (AF) data management and safeguarding policies. The consultant maintained timely, clear, and effective communication with IFAD, the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), project stakeholders, beneficiaries, and other relevant entities.

- **Cultural Competency:** The evaluator demonstrated a strong understanding of the local context, culture, and language, facilitating effective and respectful engagement with project stakeholders and beneficiaries during data collection and consultations.
- **Overall Ethical Conduct:** The consultant was entirely responsible for upholding safeguarding and ethical standards throughout the evaluation cycle. This included, but was not limited to:
 - *Ensuring informed consent of all participants,*
 - *Protecting privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity,*
 - *Observing cultural sensitivity in all interactions,*
 - *Respecting the autonomy of participants,*
 - *Ensuring equitable recruitment, including women and socially excluded groups; and*
 - *Guaranteeing that the evaluation caused no harm to participants or their communities.*

In fulfilling these responsibilities, the evaluation consultant complied fully with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (2020), ensuring that the MTR was conducted with integrity, fairness, and professionalism. By adhering to these professional and ethical standards, the evaluation consultant ensured that the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes were conducted with integrity, transparency, and respect for all participants. This rigorous approach strengthened the credibility, reliability, and validity of the MTR findings, providing a sound basis for the conclusions and recommendations presented in the subsequent sections of the report.

4 EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are structured to address the overarching evaluation questions and are organised according to the Adaptation Fund evaluation criteria.

4.1 Relevance

Rating: Satisfactory (S)

To what extent do the intervention's objectives and design align with the beneficiaries' needs and priorities?

Relevance to the requirements and/or needs of the beneficiaries and the government's priorities?

A Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) conducted in 2022 at AVDP implementation sites found that more than 80% of the rural population sampled were aware of climate change impacts and had experienced significant weather variability affecting the cocoa and rice value chains. In this context, the objectives of the Adaptation Fund (AF) project are highly relevant to both beneficiaries' needs and the Government of Sierra Leone's climate adaptation priorities. Climate change adaptation is well integrated across all project components, enhancing the resilience of vulnerable populations and production systems in the targeted areas.

During field visits and beneficiary consultations, participants highlighted the severe effects of heat waves, floods, and erratic rainfall on agricultural productivity and household income. In the absence of the project, low adaptive capacity, driven by unsustainable agricultural practices and widespread poverty, would further exacerbate these vulnerabilities.

Under Output 1.1 (Adaptation measures to foster the resilience of cocoa and rice production and postharvest are implemented), the project has promoted a range of innovative climate-smart technologies, including FFS, agroforestry (shade-grown cocoa), crop associations improved water management through Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) development and boreholes for market gardening, mulching, compost use for soil fertility, and dissemination of improved seed varieties.

Specifically, in the Cocoa value Chain, the project contributed to the establishment and the maintenance of the cocoa clonal garden to enable the introduction of drought- and temperature-

resistant cocoa seedlings, promoted good reforestation and agroforestry techniques and resilient practices for the development of cocoa farms, and facilitated the use of modern technologies such as solar pumping systems, solar-based post-harvest and processing and equipment. For the rice value chain, the project interventions revolve primarily around the selection of pest-resistant varieties and implementation of resilient cultural practices (distance between plants, irrigation management, and weeding), providing support to the MAF to run Farmer Field School to facilitate the introduction and uptake of resilient practices for farmers, the development of new Inland Valley Swamps for rice production to increase the production of smallholder farmers and diversify and expand their revenue sources, the rehabilitation watershed, water efficiency and management, training on infrastructure rehabilitation and construction including drainage systems, and the development/rehabilitation of bore holes irrigation schemes, to cope with the consequences of drought and heat extreme events. Additionally, the project has strengthened access to agro-meteorological services to support climate-informed agricultural decision-making.

In alignment with Output 2.1 (Rural transportation and storage infrastructures have been rehabilitated and upgraded to withstand weather extremes), the project is rehabilitating and upgrading rural feeder roads, farm tracks, and storage infrastructure to enhance market access and product quality. Partial progress has been made in warehouse rehabilitation, and further work is planned on climate-resilient water supply and sanitation infrastructure, including community capacity building for sustainable water management.

Beneficiary feedback confirmed that AF project interventions have catalysed behavioural change, promoting the adoption of adaptive agricultural practices. A survey conducted for AVDP, which included beneficiaries of the PCRCR project, indicated a 50% adoption rate of the improved technologies, inputs, and practices. Furthermore, 80% of beneficiaries reported having planted improved seeds/seedlings. Through collaboration with key institutions—EPA, SLMet, and SLARI—the project has strengthened national and local capacities for climate change adaptation. Notably, through SLARI, a 15-hectare cocoa clonal seed garden was established in Pendembu and Kpuwabu, comprising 36 clones, now producing high-yielding pods (Figure 1) that will be used to develop new local hybrid varieties adapted to the local context. Farmers interviewed attested to the quality of planting materials received with the project's support, underscoring the importance of selecting varieties adapted to the agroecological context. They also highlighted the positive impact of training received through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) on productivity and resilience. Training manuals have been developed that cover climate-smart practices for rice and cocoa production.

About the alignment with the government's priorities, during the project's design phase, a thorough review and consultation process was undertaken with national and subnational policies across different sectors and donor frameworks. During the MTR, various documents were analyzed (the National Medium-Term Development Plan (2024–2030), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP-II *"Agenda for Change"*, 2007–2012; and PRSP-III *"Agenda for Prosperity"*, 2013–2018), the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP), the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCS&AP), the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC – updated in 2025) and the National Adaptation Plan (2022). We can confirm that the project's objectives and interventions are still very well aligned with national development and climate priorities.

For example, PCRCR actively contributes to priorities of the updated NDC (2025) in terms of adaptation : (i) Climate-Smart Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture (CSA) and Extension Scale-Up (in Cocoa and Rice production, PCRCR promotes CSA technics as part as Farmer Field Schools); (ii) Irrigation and Water Harvesting (PCRCR develops Inland Valley Swamps, including small dams, making water available for rice production); (iii) Transformation, Post-Harvest and Storage Systems, PCRCR provides equipment and facilities to farmers' groups; (iv) Climate Resilient Water Supply and Sanitation (PCRCR provide water supply and sanitation to some villages supported for cocoa and/or rice)

PCRCR is also perfectly aligned with the last National Adaptation Plan (2022) where the "Agriculture and food" is highlighted as an essential sector. The NAP of Sierra Leone focuses on (i) climate-smart

agriculture and climate-resilient food security practices and; (ii) improved research and knowledge management capacities to support adaptation. In this second area, PCRCR is also active, helping SLARI in developing a cocoa selection garden.

Furthermore, the project under review is considered a flagship project for the Feed Salone Strategy (the Sierra Leone's food sovereignty strategy). Specifically, it contributes to Pillar One (irrigation and mechanization efforts by focusing on enhancing practical skills in developing water management structures) and Pillar Two (introduction and promotion of the use of advanced technologies).

Figure 1: High-yielding cocoa trees in the SLARI clonal garden



Source: SLARI clonal farm garden in Pendembu

The midterm evaluation concludes that the project remains highly relevant, though greater emphasis is needed to accelerate the implementation of Output 3.1 (Governmental capacities are strengthened for climate change adaptation).

The project should also fast-track income-generating activities (Output 1.2: Income-generating activities (fish farming) are promoted as alternative adaptation measures)—notably the development of earth dams and fish farming—to enhance livelihood diversification, nutrition, and water and soil management in the face of climate stressors.

To what extent was IFAD's comparative advantage in this work area compared to other UN entities and key partners?

Within the United Nations system, IFAD is the only specialized agency and international financial institution exclusively mandated to reduce rural poverty and food insecurity. IFAD possesses decades of experience in managing degraded land, restoring ecosystems, and promoting sustainable rural

development while addressing the impacts of climate change. In Sierra Leone, IFAD currently supports 3 projects with a total financing of USD 153.74 million.

Its supported projects foster prosperity, food security, and climate resilience by linking rural poor populations to access to finance, markets, technologies, and knowledge—critical enablers of livelihood transformation and the addressing of systemic challenges. IFAD also works in close partnership with other UN development system agencies, notably the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), to advance sustainable agriculture, end hunger, and contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IFAD's financial resources are catalytic, leveraging public- and private-sector investments to scale up impactful innovations, empower rural institutions, and foster long-term systemic change. In this regard, IFAD mobilizes resources from multilateral climate and environment funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the Adaptation Fund (AF)—often as co-financing—to mainstream climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem restoration across its portfolio. For instance, the PCRCR, under review, is strengthening the AVDP project, which focuses on several value chains, including rice and cocoa. Specifically, the mobilised additional funding from the AF aims to improve the resilience of the two key AVDP value chains (rice and cocoa).

As an Accredited Implementing Entity of the Adaptation Fund, IFAD plays a key role in designing and implementing climate adaptation projects that enhance the resilience of small-scale producers, reduce poverty, improve food security, and expand access to sustainable technologies and knowledge systems. Furthermore, the IFAD project's implementation through social engineering for public and private organisations, investment, improved market access, and expanded access to finance for local MSMEs will complete the AF activities, which primarily focus on adaptation.

At the national level, IFAD's long-standing collaboration with public institutions, farmer organisations, and the private sector has produced tangible and sustainable results, strengthened national capacities, and generated positive outcomes. In addition to these ongoing partnerships, the mobilised additional funding from the Adaptation Fund strengthens partnerships with national public agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet), and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI). Consultations with the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture confirmed that IFAD-supported initiatives are well aligned with the Government of Sierra Leone's strategic priorities and development frameworks, demonstrating coherence with national policies and contributing to the country's climate adaptation and rural transformation agenda.

Relevance of key stakeholders and target groups (including gender analysis and analysis of vulnerable groups), as well as institutional capacity issues identified?

The project under review is being implemented across 10 districts in four regions, targeting vulnerable smallholder farmers, including women and youth, as key beneficiaries. Building on the structures of its parent project—the Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (AVDP)—

At mid-term, the project has reached 11,625 households, representing approximately 69,750 direct beneficiaries, with 40% participation by women and youth. Field observations confirmed that women beneficiaries have acquired land ownership rights for cocoa cultivation and have received labour compensation through project activities, resulting in increased productivity in both the cocoa and rice value chains. The project's youth-sensitive design ensures that young people—both male and female—benefit from land allocation (at least 1 hectare each) for cultivating inland valley swamps (IVS), tree crops, and tuber production. Additionally, youth are actively engaged as contractors, task force managers, and laborers in the construction and maintenance of feeder roads, thereby further strengthening their income opportunities and technical skills. While the project has made significant progress in targeting smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations, challenges persist in monitoring and reporting disaggregated indicators specific to the Adaptation Fund (AF) project (see section 4.7 on Adaptive management).

4.2 Coherence and complementarity

Rating: Highly Satisfactory (S)

[How well does the intervention fit with existing programs and projects?](#)

To what extent is the implementation of the PCRCR aligned and coherent with the relevant development and climate policy actions and priorities?

Institutionally, the project has established effective partnerships with key national entities, thereby enhancing institutional coherence and climate adaptation capacity. The collaboration model ensures complementarity of roles and technical synergies across implementing and supporting agencies:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ensures environmental compliance and monitoring in line with national environmental regulations and the national climate commitment. In its 2021 NDC, Sierra Leone aims to reduce its emissions by 5% by 2025, 10% by 2030, and 25% by 2050. In addition to mitigation actions for energy, industrial process and product use, waste, agriculture, forestry and other land use, blue economy, key adaptation measures for agriculture and food security, water resources, energy, coast zone management, ecosystem management, disaster management, gender and social inclusion, and infrastructure are identified.
- The Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet) provides climate and agro-meteorological information and advice to farmers, improving adaptive decision-making.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), through its extension services, oversees activities including irrigation rehabilitation and Farmer Field Schools (FFS).
- The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) leads the establishment of cocoa clonal seed gardens to promote resilient crop varieties and conducts training on the use of improved varieties.
- The Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) oversees road-related surveys, design, and supervision to ensure climate-proofed rural infrastructure.

=

This multi-institutional coordination strengthens the country's capacity to implement and sustain climate adaptation interventions and reinforces the coherence between national priorities, IFAD's strategic orientation, and the Adaptation Fund's mandate.

What are the key factors that have influenced, both positively and negatively, the synergies and interlinkages between the different components of the PCRCR project?

The AF project is structured around three interrelated components aimed at achieving complementary outcomes: (i) promoting climate-resilient agricultural practices and technologies in two value chains, (ii) strengthening climate-resilient infrastructure, and (iii) enhancing institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation, and knowledge management. The overall theory of change assumed that coordinated implementation of these components would reinforce one another to deliver sustainable adaptation benefits and resilience outcomes.

Several factors have contributed positively to the synergies and interlinkages between the different components:

- Complementarity in design and implementation: The alignment of Component 1 (climate-resilient agricultural practices) and Component 2 (infrastructure and value chain development) has created strong operational linkages, both contributing to the reduction of vulnerability to climate change. The adoption of improved climate-smart agricultural practices under Component 1 is directly supported by infrastructure investments, such as rehabilitated feeder roads and farm tracks, that enhance access to markets and inputs.
- Effective institutional coordination: The collaboration between the PMU, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), SLMet, SLARI, and the Ministry of Agriculture has fostered functional integration across technical and institutional levels. These partnerships have enhanced the generation, dissemination, and use of agro-meteorological and research data for decision-making and planning in the agriculture sector.

- Capacity development and knowledge management: Training delivered through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and the use of climate information produced by SLMet have linked on-farm practices with broader adaptation planning under Component 3. This has enhanced knowledge flow and improved beneficiaries' adaptive capacity.

Despite these achievements, certain constraints have limited the full operationalization of synergies across components.

- Delays in infrastructure and procurement processes have slowed the implementation of complementary activities between Components 1 and 2, particularly those related to feeder road rehabilitation and the earth dam construction.
- Fragmented data collection and reporting between the AF component and the broader AVDP framework have constrained the integration of monitoring results across components, thereby limiting evidence-based decision-making.
- Limited budget absorption has also delayed critical activities related to M&E, coordination, and adaptive management, reducing opportunities to consolidate learning across components.
- The collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was also insufficient during the planning and implementation of infrastructure-related activities. Environmental and social impact assessments (ESIAs) were not systematically conducted before the development of feeder roads and processing facilities launched in 2025, posing risks to environmental compliance and sustainability. Nevertheless, contractors have developed ESMP for the construction phase of this infrastructure. Furthermore, the project has not yet established a Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) system for climate response programmes.

To what extent was the project coherent with or complementary to partners' policies and other donors?

During the project's design phase, a thorough review and consultation process was undertaken with national and subnational policies across different sectors and donor frameworks. These included the National Medium-Term Development Plan (2024–2030), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP-II *"Agenda for Change"*, 2007–2012; and PRSP-III *"Agenda for Prosperity"*, 2013–2018), the National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan (NSADP), the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (NCCS&AP), and the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The project under review is designated a flagship initiative of the Feed Salone Strategy. Specifically, it contributes to Pillar One (irrigation and mechanization efforts by focusing on enhancing practical skills in developing water management structures) and Pillar Two (introduction and promotion of the use of advanced technologies).

The project design also builds on the achievements and lessons learned from previous IFAD- and GEF-financed initiatives in Sierra Leone, notably the Rehabilitation and Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP). Furthermore, the rice Farmer Field Schools (FFS) are grounded in the Technical Package on Rice Production (TP-R), developed by JICA and disseminated through the Japanese CARD Initiative, ensuring continuity of proven technical approaches. To promote strategic partnerships and value chain linkages, the project collaborates with the World Food Programme (WFP) to advance rice commercialisation. Through contractual arrangements with Timvamyia Limited and Evergreen, a total of 100 metric tons of rice have been supplied to WFP, demonstrating tangible progress toward enhancing market access for smallholder farmers and strengthening the rice value chain.

Overall, the project demonstrates strong coherence and complementarity with national policies, donor initiatives, and prior investments, thereby ensuring efficient resource use, synergy among development partners, and the sustainability of project results.

4.3 Effectiveness

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?

To what extent is the project on track to achieve its targeted output and expected accomplishment results?

The AF project under review is set to produce six outputs through the implementation of 3 three interlinked components.

Under component 1, Output 1.1 seeks to develop and apply the best available technologies and to integrate resilient rice and cocoa to enhance the resilience of cocoa and rice production and post-harvest systems. At the MTR, 6000 (target of 12 000) farmers through the FFS were trained on the best agricultural practices for cocoa production, 9000 of members of FBOs (100% of the target) trained on agrochemical best practices, 2 clonal gardens (15ha) were established by SLARI for grafting of seedlings to produce higher yielding seedlings, 240 ha (100% of target) of IVS were established. Under Output 1.2, the project aims to promote income-generating activities (fish farming) as alternative adaptation measures. At the MTR, the project established 100 community business model vegetable gardens with solar-powered water pumping, processing units, transport, and MIS systems during the dry season.

Under Component 2, Output 2.1 focuses on the rehabilitation and upgrading of rural transportation and storage infrastructure to withstand weather conditions. Output 2.1 focuses on the rehabilitation and upgrading of rural transportation and storage infrastructure to withstand weather extremes.

Under component 3, objectives 3.1 and 3.2 are to strengthen governmental capacities for climate change adaptation and for monitoring & evaluation and Coordination of adaptation activities.

Table 4: Delivery of expected outputs under the project components

OUTPUT	TARGET	ACHIEVEMENT AT MTR	COMMENT
Component 1: Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood diversification.			
Outcome 1.1. Adaptation measures to foster the resilience of cocoa and rice production and postharvest are implemented	2 SLARI staff will be trained in Ghana and develop a climate change best practices guide for cocoa farmers.	1 SLARI staff member has completed his PHD awaiting result (graduation) and 1 master's student currently on thesis writing	Not Achieved
	Training of 12,000 farmers through the FFS on climate change best practices guide for cocoa	6,000 cocoa farmers	Not achieved
	Training of 9000 FBO members on agrochemical best practices.	Completed through IVS farmer field school platform	Achieved
	Community focal points for each of the 300 FBOs will also be trained to monitor post-training.	Plan to be implemented in 2026	Not achieved yet
	The project will work with the EPA to raise environmental and climate change awareness through the value chain platforms targeting input suppliers, producers, transporters, buyers, processors, ABCs and cooperatives.	Plan to be implemented in 2026	Not achieved yet
	MAFFS extension workers will be trained who in turn will train around 6,140 in climate-resilient agriculture.	Plan to be implemented in 2026	Not achieved yet
	1 clonal seed garden and grafting of seedlings with capacity to produce 1 million seedlings.	15 ha of cocoa clonal seed gardens at Pendembu and Kpuwabu	Not achieved
	6MT of Nerica rice will be procured and multiplied to 144MT and applied to 240 ha of IVS.	6MT of Nerica rice procured and have been applied to 240ha of IVS	Achieved
Output 1.2. Income generating activities (fish farming) are promoted as alternative adaptation measures	The 5,000 beneficiaries benefitting from the earth dams will also receive training for fish farming and postproduction support.	Plan to be implemented in 2026	Not Achieved
	Establishment of 100 community business model vegetable gardens with solar systems to produce with water solar pumping, processing unit, transport, MIS systems) during the dry season	20 Greenhouses constructed 25ha of model climate smart farms with farm facilities.	Completed
	The 40 earth dams will be stocked with high yielding fingerlings for additional income and food security.	30 earth dams under construction (contract signed)	25 % funded by AF
Component 2: Climate resilient rural infrastructure			
	120 km of rural feeder roads and farm tracks are climate proofed		

Output 2.1. Rural transportation and storage infrastructures have been rehabilitated and upgraded to withstand weather extremes	100 warehouses will be rehabilitated to withstand extreme weather conditions and increasing air humidity content. 10,000 farmers will benefit from the improved storage conditions.	2 Warehouses constructed or rehabilitated 23 Grain Houses with ancillaries constructed, 10 in progress	In progress
Output 2.2: Water supply increased and sanitation infrastructure-built accounting for current and future climate risks	10000 households will have access to potable water, latrines and sanitations facilities	35 VIP latrines (13 Latrine Bo, Bonthe and Moyamba, 12 in n Kailahun and Kono and 10 in Kenema and Pujehun Districts)	Construction work completed
	Rehabilitation and extension of 50 drinking water supply facilities and protection of catchment areas	25 boreholes for water points and sanitation were constructed 20 Hand dug wells in South and Eastern Regions were constructed	Construction work completed
Component 3: Institutional capacity development and policy engagement			
Output 3.1: Governmental capacities are strengthened for climate change adaptation	The EPA and the Meteorological Department's staff and equipment will be strengthened	3 out of 5 equipment procured and 10 SLMet staff trained in Agromet information generation, analysis and dissemination.	70% achieved
	The project will train 2 staff from EPA at postgraduate level, 2 technicians from MD to repair the AWS, and 24 MAFFS.	In progress	
Output 3.2: Monitoring & Evaluation and Coordination of the Adaptation Activities	EPA staff member and newly recruited adaptation expert at EPA are trained for CC adaptation	3 EPA staff and 47 AVDP staff including Adaptation expert trained in climate change adaptation	Achieved

Which internal and external factors and processes contribute to achieving or not achieving the expected results?

The project remains on track to deliver its expected outputs within the remaining implementation period. The project has been extended (after a request to AF for a no-cost extension of 18 months, the maximum) up to 31 March 2027. Several internal design and implementation factors have contributed positively to this progress.

First, the project demonstrates strong alignment with national priorities, thereby fostering the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAFS) 's ownership and active involvement in implementation. The Adaptation Fund (AF) project design is consistent with national agricultural and climate resilience strategies.

Second, the project has developed adequate institutional arrangements and technical capacity. The Project Management Unit (PMU), supported by specialized technical staff (Adaptation focal point, gender, M&E, agribusiness), and the decentralized engagement of line ministries, have strengthened coordination and operational efficiency. The experience of extension services and their local presence in the districts where the project is implemented enables more efficient implementation. Furthermore, the close collaboration between these key stakeholders minimizes the risk of duplication. The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach and partnerships with MAFS extensionists have further enhanced capacity building, technology transfer, and community ownership. Through the FFS, local capacities for climate-resilient practices are strengthened. As a result, the mission observed the implementation of these practices by the farmers during the field visits: climate-smart agricultural practice (shading, under-brushing, diversified cropping, composting, etc.), greater water management through the IVS system for rice cultivation, use of improved rice varieties such as the Nerica, and the adoption of high-quality seeds for the cocoa farmers.

Third, the project team has demonstrated adaptability and flexibility, by adjusting work plans in response to evolving field realities, including climatic shocks and implementation delays. The community-based approaches—particularly the FFS, inland valley swamp (IVS) development, and the Gender Action Learning System (GALS)—have improved community engagement, gender inclusion, and adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. Finally, while the project has an operational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that tracks outputs, limited outcome-level monitoring and learning mechanisms constrain the generation of evidence on behavioural change, gender outcomes, and environmental impacts.

On the other hand, several external factors have hindered the project's effectiveness and sustainability. Frequent floods and prolonged dry spells have directly affected productivity in target areas, causing up to dieback in some cocoa-farming communities. Although climate-smart practices have mitigated part of these losses, extreme climate events continue to threaten yield stability and long-term resilience. In addition, the project relies on the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet) and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) to ensure the timely dissemination of agro-climatic information to farmers. Therefore, it is crucial to strengthen the collaboration with these two entities to achieve the expected results. In the longer term, socioeconomic vulnerability, persistent poverty, and limited access to financial services continue to restrict farmers' ability to invest in improved technologies and inputs, thereby limiting the scalability of project innovations. Market-related constraints, including fluctuating commodity prices, poor rural infrastructure, and weak private sector engagement, also reduce opportunities for commercialization. In complement to the development of production in the two value chains, AVDP, complementing PCRCR, addresses these limitations by supporting the structuring of Farmer Based Organizations and facilitating market access.

While the rehabilitation of feeder roads and the establishment of processing facilities are improving market conditions, these broader systemic challenges remain largely beyond the project's control.

How appropriate and effective are the institutional relationships with the main target groups engaged in the project operations?

The institutional relationships established under the project are broadly appropriate and effective, reflecting a well-structured approach to engaging key target groups — smallholder farmers, women, youth, and local institutions — through community-based and participatory mechanisms. The project's design builds on established partnerships with national and subnational institutions, ensuring coherence with existing agricultural and rural development frameworks. At the community level, the project has effectively used Farmer Field Schools (FFS), Youth Contractor schemes, and a community-based approach to implement project activities. The FFS, IVS model, and our cocoa planting are key entry points for community engagement and contribute to the establishment of the FFS. These structures have strengthened local ownership and facilitated direct interaction between the Project Management Unit (PMU), extension services, and beneficiaries. The FFS approach, implemented through the MAFS with support from the project, has proven particularly effective in disseminating climate-smart agricultural practices, promoting peer-to-peer learning, and supporting long-term behavioural change among smallholder farmers.

Furthermore, the inclusion of women and youth on these platforms has enhanced their access to productive resources (including land), decision-making spaces, and technical knowledge. At the institutional level, the collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAFS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), and the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet) has created a solid framework for technical support and policy alignment in the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone. The MTR found that these partnerships have strengthened adaptive management, research–extension linkages, and the integration of agro-climate information into agricultural planning.

Coordination with the EPA should be strengthened, particularly in environmental compliance and monitoring, the timely preparation of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and the implementation of mitigation measures. To track the project's progress, the PMU and IFAD provide an annual PPR that highlights key achievements and assesses risks and compliance with gender, environmental, and social procedures. Institutional relationships with other key actors of the agricultural sector (international organisations, private actors, etc.)—including WFP, Goldtree, PEE CEE & Sons, and local agribusinesses—are emerging and demonstrate potential for market linkages and value chain development. Nonetheless, the absence of formal agreements with some key buyers limits the stability and predictability of market access for producer groups. Strengthening these relationships through formalised contracts and continued capacity-building for Farmer-Based Organisations (FBOs) to evolve into functional cooperatives, as targeted by the IFAD project, is critical for sustainability. These formalization of the FBOs and establishment of business relationships with the private sector are yet to be fully implemented.

To what extent has local capacity been strengthened to date through the project's interventions?

The AF project focuses on enhancing local capacity to adapt to climate change and increasing the sustainability of interventions. Henceforth, the project has allocated resources across the three components to strengthen local capacity. The project has made significant progress in strengthening local capacities at the institutional, community, and individual levels. Through its integrated approach—

combining Farmer Field Schools (FFS), institutional partnerships, and targeted training—the project has enhanced both the technical and organisational capabilities of farmers, extension services, and implementing partners. At the community level, more than 11,600 farmers (5,625 rice and 6,000 cocoa) have been trained in climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, including improved water and soil management, agroforestry, intercropping, and the use of drought-tolerant crop varieties. The FFS approach, complemented by peer-to-peer learning and youth contractor schemes, has fostered strong community ownership and collective problem-solving. During field visits and interviews with project beneficiaries, it was noted that they have a greater understanding of how climate change affects their production and yield, and they understand and have adopted the CSA practices (out-planting of seedlings, farm management, land preparation-under brushing, pegging, digging of holes and transplanting of seedling-, production and use of bio-fertilizers, crop rotation, etc.) promoted by the project. At the institutional level, capacity-building initiatives have targeted staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), SLMet, SLARI, and the EPA. A total of 147 AVDP, PCRCR and MAFS staff were trained in climate adaptation, risk management, and financial management systems. SLMet's capacity to generate and disseminate agro-meteorological information has improved through technical assistance and the establishment of Standard Operating Procedures for the Agrometeorological Advisory System. SLARI has enhanced its research and breeding capacity by establishing 15 hectares of cocoa clonal seed gardens and by supporting postgraduate training (one MSc and one PhD). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been involved in environmental audits and monitoring. However, its operational capacity for compliance and tracking still requires reinforcement, especially in integrating ESIA's and ESMPs into the implementation process.

Overall, the project has substantially strengthened local capacities to plan, implement, and monitor climate-resilient agricultural interventions. However, continued support is needed to institutionalize these capacities within national systems, particularly in environmental compliance, gender mainstreaming, and outcome-level monitoring to ensure sustainability beyond the project's life cycle.

To what extent is monitoring and reporting on the project transparent and satisfying key stakeholders?

The Project Management Unit (PMU), with the AVDP M&E officer and the AF focal person, are responsible for preparing progress reports and conducting joint field missions (supervision and support missions) alongside the project partners and steering committee members, in line with IFAD's requirements. These field missions are designed to be participatory, ensuring representation of beneficiaries, implementing partners, and local authorities to validate the collected data against project indicators. In practice, the project's monitoring and reporting framework is functional. The PMU has established a robust mechanism for tracking physical and financial progress, supported by the AVDP's central M&E system, which captures disaggregated beneficiary data (including gender and youth). Regular quarterly review meetings and joint missions with MAFS, SLMet, SLARI, and EPA provide platforms for reviewing progress, identifying challenges, and agreeing on corrective measures. This system, implemented by the IFAD project, also benefited the AF project.

Given the scope of the project, the main challenges with the monitoring and reporting system are related to its capacity to capture (monitor and report) data specific to the AF and in line with the AF M&E guideline. The M&E unit should be strengthened to enable the tracking and comprehensive reporting of output-level indicators for the AF project. The focus has primarily been on consolidated AVDP data, limiting visibility of the AF project's specific performance. Additionally, dissemination of monitoring findings to local stakeholders and beneficiaries is limited, reducing opportunities for feedback and joint learning.

4.4 Efficiency

Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

To what extent does, or is the intervention likely to deliver results in an economic and timely manner?

To what extent does the management structure of the project support efficient implementation?

Overall, the project's management structure is appropriate and primarily supports efficient implementation. IFAD, as the supervising entity, provides strategic oversight and technical backstopping consistent with its mandate as the only specialized UN agency and international financial institution exclusively dedicated to reducing rural poverty and food insecurity. Its extensive experience in managing degraded land, promoting sustainable agricultural systems, and supporting climate adaptation initiatives ensures that project implementation benefits from well-established operational standards and fiduciary controls. IFAD's catalytic financing model—leveraging resources from multilateral climate funds such as the Adaptation Fund (AF), GCF, and GEF—has also facilitated the mainstreaming of climate adaptation and ecosystem restoration across project activities. The PCRCR project, in complement to AVDP, was developed to provide funding to strengthen the resilience of rice and cocoa farmers.

At the national level, institutional roles are clearly defined. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) serves as the national designated authority for the Adaptation Fund, responsible for endorsing project proposals and ensuring compliance with environmental and social safeguard standards. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS) acts as the executing entity and chairs the National Steering Committee (NSC), which provides strategic direction, oversight, and guidance for implementation. For implementation, the project has partnered with other public-sector agencies, including SLMet, SLARI, SLARA, and the MAFS, to deliver the FFS.

The Project Management Unit (PMU), embedded within the AVDP structure, manages day-to-day operations, procurement, financial management, and M&E functions. The presence of specialized staff (Adaptation Focal Point, Gender and Targeting Officer, M&E Officer, Agribusiness Specialist) enhances technical quality. It ensures that cross-cutting issues such as gender, climate change, and inclusion are systematically integrated. The decentralization of activities through district-level focal points and collaboration with MAFS extension services further strengthens outreach and responsiveness to local needs.

At the local level, the project relies on MAFS extension services and youth contractors to establish FFS. The FFS includes modules on improved farming techniques, group dynamics, management and good governance, enterprise planning and management, financial and business management, participatory M&E, and functional literacy. They focus on the cocoa and rice value chains and aim to increase yields and profits through the adoption of improved farming techniques. The training sessions, held at the farm level, are facilitated by the MAFS and extension workers. Based on discussions with beneficiaries, FFS training has enhanced their knowledge of good agricultural practices and agroforestry, leading to improved yields and production.

In summary, the project management structure is mainly practical and conducive to efficient implementation, owing to strong institutional linkages, well-defined roles, and competent staff. However, more consistent coordination among implementing partners, timely resource allocation, and closer integration of the AF-specific monitoring and reporting within the AVDP system would further enhance management efficiency.

To what extent is the project being implemented efficiently in terms of delivering the expected results in accordance with quality standards, being delivered promptly, remaining within budget, and ensuring value for money?

The community-based approach to IVS development, with greater beneficiary involvement, enabled the project to develop numerous IVS at a lower cost. To ensure that the quality standards are met, the project is supported by infrastructure specialists to guide the communities. A similar approach is to be adopted for the construction of earth dams.

The PCRCR is implemented by the PMU under the AVDP fund and supervised by IFAD. This, in turn, reduces the PCRCR's Project Implementation Costs while meeting the Fund's quality standards.

The expenditure rates across the project outputs (see Table 5) enable the assessment of the project efficiency.

Table 5. Budget delivery by component

Component	Sub compo	Activities	Budget	Total executed	%
Component 1: Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood diversification.	Outcome 1.1. Adaptation measures to foster the resilience of cocoa and rice production and postharvest are implemented	1.1.1. Support to MAF to run Farmer Field School (FFS)	1,530,902.00	531111.84	34.69%
		1.1.2. Establishment of Cocoa Clonal Garden at SLARI	481,950.00	139786.13	29.00%
		1.1.3. Support to Cocoa Clonal Garden Operation	160,650.00	56929.07	35.44%
		1.1.4. Development of Cocoa farms	979,072.00	1517486.95	154.99%
		1.1.5. Bore holes irrigation scheme	309,162.00	107607.08	34.81%
		1.1.6. Development of new IVS (rice)	2,505,443.00	1541737.95	61.54%
	Output 1.2. Income generating activities (fish farming) are promoted as alternative adaptation measures	1.2.1. Construction of the Earth Dams and community integrated vegetable gardens with solar systems	304,342.00	107083.45	35.19%
		1.2.2. Establishment of fish farms	110,419.00	0	0.00%
	Sub total		6,381,940.00	4001742.47	62.70%
Component 2: Climate resilient rural infrastructure	Output 2.1. Rural transportation and storage infrastructures have been rehabilitated and upgraded to withstand weather extremes	2.1.1. Warehouse rehabilitation to withstand weather extremes	57,124.00	36142.6	63.27%
		2.1.2.a Climate proofing of 120 feeder roads: Studies and surveys for rehabilitation	19,619.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.2.b Climate proofing of 120 feeder roads: Rehabilitation works	446,503.00	13883.68	3.11%
		2.1.2.c Climate proofing of 120 feeder road: Construction of bridges (for rehabilitation)	45,226.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.2.d Climate proofing of 120 feeder roads: Routine maintenance	11,579.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.2.e Climate proofing of 120 feeder roads: Periodic maintenance	70,119.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.3. Climate proofing of farm tracks: Studies and surveys for construction	31,596.00	36491.76	115.49%
		2.1.4. Support to districts for development of Feeder Road Maintenance Plans	30,466.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.5.a Support to FBOs: Road gangs formation (distribution of maintenance tools)	30,848.00	0	0.00%
		2.1.5.b Support to FBOs: Development of Farm Tracks Maintenance Plans	14,934.00	0	0.00%
	Output 2.2: Water supply increased and sanitation infrastructure-built accounting for current and future climate risks	2.2.1. Climate proofing of water supply and sanitation infrastructure	726,026.00	513936.99	70.79%
		2.2.2. Capacity building for potable water management	115,242.00	0	0.00%
	Sub total		1,599,282.00	600455.03	37.55%
Component 3: Institutional capacity development and policy engagement	Output 3.1: Governmental capacities are strengthened for climate change adaptation	3.1.1.a Strengthening of EPA: Capacity building through technology enhancement	232,227.00	101711.1	43.80%
		3.1.1.b Strengthening of EPA: Training to enhance institutional capacity	89,335.00	0	0.00%
		3.1.1.c Strengthening of EPA: Exchange visits for EPA staff	84,514.00	0	0.00%
		3.1.2. Development MRV system of climate response programmes	89,318.00	0	0.00%
		3.1.3.a Strengthening of SLMet: Capacity building through technology enhancement	44,659.00	84369.23	188.92%
		3.1.3.b Strengthening of SLMet: Training to enhance institutional capacity	31,261.00	48634.76	155.58%
		3.1.4. Technical Assistance for improved policy frameworks: mainstream climate risk into sectorial strategies	54,655.00	0	0.00%
	3.2.1.a M&E: Baseline survey costs (related to CC adaptation)		10,508.00	20083.46	191.13%

	Output 3.2: Monitoring & Evaluation and Coordination of the Adaptation Activities	3.2.1.b M&E: Terminal survey costs (related to CC adaptation)	10,508.00	0	0.00%
		3.2.1.c M&E: Case studies and Knowledge management	42,800.00	2348.88	5.49%
		3.2.2.a Personnel: Adaptation Specialist (transversal)/ Gender Specialist	182,233.00	0	0.00%
		3.2.2.b Personnel: Staff training - adaptation issues	104,583.00	0	0.00%
	Sub total		976,601.00	257147.43	26.33%
PEC	PEC	Project execution costs (2%) - Recruitment of local staff	182,200.00	169414.918	92.98%
			9,140,023.00	5028759.85	55.02%

According to the data, out of a total planned expenditure of US\$9,140,023.00, the project had expended US\$5,028,759.85 (approximately 55,02%) by the 28th of August of 2025. There is, however, significant variation across different project components, ranging from 62.7% for Component 1 (Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood diversification), to 37.55% for Component 2 (Climate resilient rural infrastructure) and 26.33% for Component 3 (Institutional capacity development and policy engagement).

Delays have been observed in the project's implementation. Administrative and operational challenges have affected the EPA's capacity to deliver environmental monitoring findings in a timely manner. To diversify livelihoods and promote income-generating activities, earth dam reservoirs are to be constructed to develop fish farming as an alternative adaptation measure. Unfortunately, the procurement process has affected adherence to the established timelines.

Under Outcome 1.1. (Adaptation measures to foster the resilience of cocoa and rice production and postharvest are implemented), The project has adopted a community-based approach for IVS development and management, with support from IVS technicians, MAFS engineers and extension officers. This approach has, on the one hand, increased the community ownership and scalability of these investments. On the other hand, this approach is more cost-effective. Under Output 1.2, based on experience from the IVS development, the mission recommended to the project that it adopt a community-based approach for the establishment of the remaining Earth dams (47). This approach appears to be more efficient, cost-effective, and better suited to local conditions than the service-provider (contractor-based) approach. Additionally, the design of the earth dams for fish farming will be scaled down to increase functionality and manageability for the beneficiaries.

With a financial execution rate of around 37.55% for Component 2 (Climate-resilient rural infrastructure), the project lags in climate-proofing 120 feeder roads and in building capacities for potable water management.

Significant gaps are observed in Output 3.1 (the Governmental capacities are strengthened for climate change adaptation). Indeed, the project has yet to complete activities related to the strengthening of the EPA and the MRV system. Conversely, the project is over the intended budget on Strengthening of SLMet through Capacity building through technology enhancement (188,92%) and Training to enhance institutional capacity (155,58%).

4.5 Impact

Rating: Satisfactory

To what extent has the intervention generated, or is expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?

To what extent did the project attain its objective and anticipated impact on partners and targeted beneficiaries?

The Adaptation Fund (AF) project pursues three complementary objectives: (i) the application of concrete adaptation options specific to the targeted value chains (rice and cocoa); (ii) the rehabilitation and upgrading of critical infrastructures (feeder roads, farm tracks, storage and processing facilities) to withstand climate extremes and enhance profitability; and (iii) the strengthening of national capacities

and institutions to implement measures that increase the resilience of the cocoa and rice value chains in vulnerable areas to climate change. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) found that the project has achieved significant progress toward these objectives and generated tangible positive impacts among targeted beneficiaries and partner institutions.

During field missions to model farms, inland valley swamps (IVS), and cocoa farms, beneficiaries consistently emphasized the positive changes the project has brought to their communities. Through the Farmer Field Schools (FFS), 11,625 farmers (5,625 rice farmers and 6,000 cocoa farmers) were trained and have adopted climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, including improved water, soil, and crop management; intercropping; use of improved varieties; agroforestry practices (shade and windbreak trees); pruning; and minimum tillage. Manuals on CSA practices were developed and distributed to facilitators, enhancing knowledge transfer. Farmers expect higher yields and incomes as a result of the adoption of improved varieties and CSA practices. To improve productivity and market access, the project has invested in resilient rural infrastructure, including:

- Rehabilitation of 2 warehouses and construction of 23 grain houses with ancillaries.
- 20 solar-powered boreholes and 35 solar-powered water points.
- 20 greenhouses, 35 VIP latrines, and 25 ha of model CSA farms with facilities.

Field evidence from communities indicates that these interventions have improved community sanitation and reduced women's labor burden. With solar-powered water points, women no longer must walk long distances to fetch water for their households. Furthermore, the available water is cleaner.

The project has also fostered greater collaboration among key implementing partners—EPA, SLMet, SLARI, IFAD, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS)—strengthening institutional capacities for climate-resilient development. In total, 147 staff from AVDP and MAFS were trained on climate risk management, and four staff members from EPA, SLMet, SLARI, and MAFS enhanced their capacities for rapid response to extreme weather events. Collaboration with SLARI has led to the establishment of 15 ha of cocoa clonal seed gardens at Pendembu and Kpuwabu, featuring 39 varieties (29 imported, 4 from Nigeria, and 6 superior local types). The new planting materials have shorter maturation periods, higher yields, and better resistance to pod rot. These improved varieties are expected to be tested on 180 ha of AVDP-supported farms by 2025.

Despite these achievements, the MTR identified gaps in environmental compliance. Although the project is guided by the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) developed at inception, field supervision revealed that construction of 2 crossings/bridges and 120 km of feeder roads was ongoing without preliminary Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) or updated ESMPs. This poses potential environmental and social risks and signals the need for stronger coordination with the EPA to ensure compliance with the project's environmental safeguards. Henceforth, the PMU should involve the EPA in conducting the required Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) before the construction of any infrastructure, to ensure compliance with national and donor environmental and social safeguards. The mission notes, however, that despite the absence of preliminary ESIAs, the contractors developed ESMPs to guide their work.

Finally, delays in renewing partnership agreements with SLARI and SLMet have affected fund flows and the timely implementation of several planned activities in 2025.

What positive and/or transformative changes have occurred because of the project's interventions?

Despite persistent challenges related to climate change impacts (heatwaves, droughts, and flooding), high poverty levels, and suboptimal agricultural practices, the AF project has fostered notable transformative shifts in awareness, behavior, and livelihoods among the targeted communities.

Through the project's interventions, particularly the Farmer Field Schools (FFS), communities have become more aware and better informed about the impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity and ecosystem health. Farmers interviewed during field visits consistently reported that the climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices learned and applied—such as improved water

management, intercropping, soil conservation, and the use of improved crop varieties—have resulted in significant increases in crop yields and production stability, even under changing climatic conditions. During the field visits, we’ve noted that farmers have shifted from slash-and-burn cultivation to rice cultivation in inland swamps. A study conducted for the IFAD-supported Smallholder Commercialization Programme found that with the wetland cultivation approach, there were on average 2.8 fewer fires a year within 10 km of the rice paddies developed by the programme¹.

Empowerment activities have also yielded positive results and have emerged as a primary transformative outcome. Women now have greater access to productive resources, including land ownership for cocoa cultivation, and as a result have become more economically independent through increased participation in income-generating activities. The installation of solar-powered boreholes has improved community access to safe water, reducing the incidence of waterborne diseases and significantly reducing women’s water-harvesting workload.

These positive changes demonstrate a clear improvement in adaptive capacity, gender inclusion, and community resilience, laying a strong foundation for long-term sustainability and local ownership of climate adaptation practices.

4.6 Sustainability

Rating: satisfactory

Are the conditions in place to ensure that the benefits of this PCRCR intervention will continue beyond the project's lifetime?

To what extent is capacity being developed to ensure the sustainability of the efforts and benefits?

The project demonstrates a high degree of community participation in its implementation, particularly through community-based approaches to developing the Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) model and the Farmer Field Schools (FFS). These approaches have enabled broad community engagement, including women and youth, improved access to extension services, and fostered collective decision-making and overall ownership. Evidence gathered during the MTR confirms that women and youth are increasingly represented among executive committee members in local decision-making structures. However, the project does not yet systematically track the number of women and youth in leadership roles. Integrating this information into the M&E system and ensuring the consistent application of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) would strengthen gender-responsive monitoring and promote intra-household dialogue and shared decision-making. The project’s ongoing training on climate-smart agriculture by community-based facilitators, IVS technicians, and youth contractors has strengthened both individual and organisational capacities. These efforts have increased participants’ ability to control productive resources and influence local institutions.

Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge-sharing exchanges among cocoa farmers have enhanced the dissemination of climate-smart agricultural practices.

To sustain project investments, Farmer-Based Organisations were established. A number of these FBOs are trained and tasked with managing project assets.

On monitoring and reporting, the project’s M&E system—anchored in AVDP/MAFS structures—provides robust oversight through regular technical review meetings and monthly monitoring with District M&E Officers. As of the MTR, 9 of the 13 thematic studies planned under the 2025 AWPB are ongoing, including the 2024 Annual Outcome Survey. It is recommended that findings from the 2023 and 2024 surveys be systematically integrated into management decisions and that the AF project’s indicators be tracked systematically.

Environmental monitoring, however, remains weak. Since project inception, the EPA has produced only one monitoring report.

¹ <https://www.ifad.org/en/w/opinions/fighting-fires-with-rice-paddies-in-sierra-leone>

To what extent is the project fostering innovative partnerships with local institutions, authorities and other development partners?

Innovative partnerships with local institutions, authorities, and other development partners directly contribute to Outcome 2: “Enhanced profitability and market access for smallholder farmers.” To complement the AF projects, AVDP has strengthened partnerships, improved market linkages, and is establishing functional Multi-Stakeholder Platforms to create an enabling environment for smallholder farmers to transition from subsistence production to market-oriented farming.

The AVDP, through its collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other private-sector partners, continues to strengthen business development and facilitate market access for smallholder farmers, including AF project beneficiaries. Through contractual arrangements with Timvamyia Limited and Evergreen, a total of 100 metric tons of rice have been supplied to WFP. Discussions are ongoing to establish contracts with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to procure processed rice for the Government’s school feeding programme.

Multi-Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs) have been established to bring together producers, input dealers, processors, and marketers to share information and enhance coordination across value chains. In 2025, three new MSPs were created in Kailahun, Koinadugu, and Port Loko districts. In addition, quarterly Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings were organised with Producer Organisations, Wholesalers/Retailers, Transporters, SMEs, Public- and Private-Sector actors, and Rural Financial Institutions across the targeted value chains. These initiatives have improved dialogue and market opportunities, promoting stronger linkages between production and commercialization.

The project facilitated business partnerships with several private-sector organisations, including FT Saad, WFP, Tivamyia Limited, Evergreen, Gold Tree, PEE CEE & Sons, and Koinadugu Albitayas Farmers’ Cooperatives. However, many Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs) still face challenges in securing stable and sustainable market access. To enhance their long-term viability, FBOs require sustained capacity-building to transition into well-functioning cooperatives capable of providing post-harvest services and engaging effectively with markets and private-sector actors. Discussions are ongoing with Capitol Trading regarding the purchase of cocoa beans for export and the support of out-grower schemes for cocoa farms.

4.7 Adaptative management

Rating: Marginally Satisfactory

Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?

Since the recruitment of AVDP staff three years ago, MAF and IFAD have made significant efforts to strengthen the capacities of staff and partners in adaptive and evidence-based management. Capacity-building initiatives have addressed key operational and thematic areas, including financial management (Tompro, NOTUS), procurement (IFAD requirements and platforms), climate change adaptation and mitigation, gender-sensitive approaches (GALS), and technical fields such as inland valley swamp rehabilitation, tree-crop nursery establishment, and water management.

The project has progressively integrated evidence into its decision-making processes. SLMet provides real-time meteorological data, which the project uses to guide planting calendars, crop selection, and climate-resilient agronomic practices. The project also supported SLARI in developing drought-resistant hybrid cocoa varieties by establishing a 15-hectare cocoa clonal seed garden. Additionally, two complete Farmer Field School (FFS) cycles on rice and cocoa have been conducted, supporting farmers in testing, adapting, and adopting improved technologies tailored to their specific regional contexts. During the mission, discussions with SLARI and SLMet concluded that a tripartite coordination platform involving the project, SLMet, and SLARI is needed to foster closer collaboration and ensure that farmers receive timely, location-specific agroclimatic information.

The collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on environmental compliance and monitoring, in line with national environmental regulations, needs to be strengthened to ensure that Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) are developed promptly and that potential risks are effectively mitigated.

In terms of implementation and financial management, AVDP's systems comply with IFAD's fiduciary requirements; however, further improvements are needed to enhance transparency and accountability. Financial control is based on a three-tier security structure:

1. Segregation of duties in the Finance Department (data entry, posting, and approval handled by separate staff).
2. Hierarchical review of requests (Component Managers initiate, Finance Controller reviews, Project Manager approves).
3. Dual audit mechanism, comprising internal audits conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), external audits by Audit Service Sierra Leone, and IFAD supervision and implementation support missions, coordinated by the Country Office and overseen by the Country Manager.

While these mechanisms are functional, they require more rigorous enforcement, particularly for the AF project, to ensure real-time expenditure tracking, adequate documentation, and systematic follow-up on audit recommendations. In the absence of a dedicated financial and M&E officer for the PCRCR project, it is essential to reinforce the AVDP teams' capacity to comply with AF fiduciary requirements and the M&E system.

The project also demonstrates a culture of learning and reflection through quarterly review meetings with key stakeholders, including the EPA, SLMet, SLARI, service providers, and relevant line ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and MAF. These meetings provide an essential platform for reviewing progress, discussing emerging challenges, and formulating adaptive recommendations for improved project performance and sustainability.

Adaptive management also requires a robust M&E system. This is not the case with PCRCR. The AVDP M&E Unit, in collaboration with the Targeting Officer, has primarily focused on consolidated project-level reporting. Consequently, data and indicators specific to the AF have received limited attention, thereby constraining the project's ability to demonstrate its achievements in gender and youth inclusion fully.

To address this, it is recommended that the project strengthen the AF-specific M&E framework by (i) defining clear disaggregated indicators, (ii) improving data collection tools, and (iii) ensuring periodic reporting on gender and youth outcomes.

4.8 Cross-cutting related issues

Rating: Satisfactory

[How effectively have the intervention's strategies and activities addressed cross-cutting issues?](#)

To what extent have cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, environmental and social safeguards and youth consideration been integrated into the project design and implementation?

In compliance with the Adaptation Fund Environmental and Social Policy, the project has provided an annual Project Performance Report to highlight key milestones, document progress, and assess key risks. The main risks likely to impact the project are related to land tenure, social exclusion of women and youth (low), resettlement due to road and infrastructure construction, wetland (especially mangrove) degradation and removal, biodiversity loss (in IVS) caused by bush fires and slash and burn agriculture, GHG emissions from rice paddies, water pollution and waste proliferation due to the use of inorganic fertilizer and agrochemicals, risk of unsafe and non-healthy working conditions, waterborne diseases and dust, deterioration of soil quality due to deforestation and upland crop production. The mission observed that few measures were put in place to mitigate these risks. (i) To secure land access and increase the participation of women and youth, the project engages with communities and ensures that farmers hold lease agreements. (ii) With its primary focus on inland valley swamps and on training farmers in good agricultural practices, the project ensured the protection of the mangrove and reduced slash-and-burn practices. (iii) It promoted the production and use of bio fertilizers, reducing the risk of water pollution. (iv) To reduce GHG emissions from the rice paddies, the project interventions excluded

new virgin forest and wetlands. The mission noted that soil and water management still requires strengthening to reduce GHG emissions. Many other mitigations measures / activities described below contribute to AF's ESP and Gender policy.

The project is designed to be gender transformative. It has developed a Gender Strategy with a dedicated Gender, Youth, and Targeting Unit. Gender mainstreaming interventions are fully integrated into the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB). The project targets 40% of female-headed households and 40% of youth, and field evidence confirms that it successfully engaged with that share of women and youth. Women's participation has improved, giving them equal access to productive resources, including decision-making at the household and community levels, and providing them with labour-saving tools for production and water harvesting (e.g., solar-powered boreholes). Promoting intercropping (i.e., introduction of vegetable gardens) and including women as key actors in climate change adaptation have enhanced gender inclusivity and productivity. Women beneficiaries have secured land rights: 4,428 women cocoa and oil palm farmers now hold lease agreements (under the AVDP project). Female rice growers report increased production and incomes, with many reinvesting in children's education and household nutrition, owing to AVDP training in the GALS methodology and nutrition. The beneficiaries met during the MTR asserted that these changes have contributed to a reduction in gender-based violence and greater intra-household equity. Lastly, the introduction of the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) methodology marks an essential step toward fostering women's empowerment and equitable decision-making. However, GALS has not been systematically implemented, and quantitative data on actual outcomes (e.g., workload redistribution, decision-making dynamics, time use) are still limited.

Youth participation has been prioritized in project targeting and implementation. Young men and women work as Youth Contractors, Taskforce Managers, and members of Farmer Field Schools. Youth have gained access to at least one hectare of farmland for rice and cocoa cultivation and are also engaged in infrastructure-related work (e.g., road construction, swamp rehabilitation). These efforts promote employment and the development of practical skills among rural youth.

The project has developed a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Manual, which builds on traditional conflict-resolution systems. Baseline surveys identified key community conflict drivers before the project, including land access and ownership (45%), domestic/gender-based violence (34%), and farmer–herder disputes (31%). In response, the project has engaged landowners, chiefs, and community leaders to ensure secure land access for women and youth as a precondition for participation in cocoa and rice value chains. The requirement for signed lease agreements has improved transparency in land use and reduced land-related disputes. Women and youth are now represented on community dispute-resolution committees, thereby enhancing accountability and inclusivity.

Environmental sustainability and biodiversity protection are central to the project design. The AF component focuses on inland valley swamps (IVS) and cocoa farming. It explicitly discourages the conversion of mangroves or forests for rice paddies and cocoa cultivation. To prevent biodiversity loss, the project has implemented several mitigation and conservation measures, including:

- Restricting rice cultivation in mangrove ecosystems.
- Training farmers on sustainable land preparation (zero or minimum tillage, contour ploughing, erosion control).
- Discouraging slash-and-burn practices and the opening of virgin forests.
- Encouraging crop intensification, mixed cropping, and cover cropping.
- Promoting agroforestry practices, including the intercropping of cocoa with nitrogen-fixing and timber trees, reducing CO₂ and other GHG emissions.
- Introducing clean energy options in processing to reduce carbon footprints.

Based on our discussions with farmers, we conclude that they have a better understanding of the need to implement conservation measures. Consequently, we've observed reduced slash-and-burn practices, the adoption of agroforestry, and improved land preparation.

Furthermore, farmers have been trained on CH₄ mitigation in rice paddies through mid-season drainage and improved nutrient management, while buffer zones are maintained along riverbanks to prevent

erosion. The mission noted that EIA/ESMP preparation remains inconsistent, especially for feeder roads and infrastructure. This gap needs to be urgently corrected to align with the Adaptation Fund's environmental and social safeguard requirements and the IFAD Social, Environmental and Climate Assessment Procedures (SECAP).

Cross-cutting issues have been well integrated into both the project's design and implementation. The project demonstrates strong responsiveness to gender and youth, effective conflict resolution, and growing awareness of environmental safeguards. However, systematic data collection, monitoring of gender outcomes, and full compliance with ESIA/ESMP procedures remain areas for improvement.

Despite these achievements, the MTR identified gaps in environmental compliance. Although the project is guided by the Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) developed at inception, field supervision revealed that construction of 12 crossings/bridges, 75 km of farm tracks, and 401 km of feeder roads was ongoing without preliminary Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) or updated ESMPs. This poses potential environmental and social risks and signals the need for stronger coordination with the EPA to ensure compliance and monitoring of the project's environmental safeguards.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The project under evaluation is one of Sierra Leone's flagship initiatives, directly contributing to the Feed Salone Strategy by enhancing local communities' resilience to floods, droughts, and prolonged heat waves.

Through its focus on the cocoa and rice value chains, the project has significantly strengthened beneficiaries' capacities to cope with and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. Training and support have been provided on climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, including the use of cropping calendars; vulnerability and crop modelling; climate-resilient varieties; seed multiplication and dissemination; integrated pest management; soil fertility management; energy-efficient production and post-harvest processing; water pumping systems; and reforestation and agroforestry techniques. The project's community-based approach has proven particularly effective, fostering sustainability, cost-effectiveness, and long-term replicability. Moreover, the project has sought to ensure the participation of women and youth across all components and to address social and environmental risks during design and implementation. By constructing latrines and solar-powered water points, the project has also improved sanitation in the target communities and reduced the time women spend collecting water. These measures have not only promoted social equity but also contributed to environmental conservation and protection.

Beyond improving production and yields, the project has also addressed key post-harvest challenges by facilitating market access through the construction of climate-resilient feeder roads and farm tracks, as well as climate-proof storage infrastructure, thereby strengthening the overall value chain. Particular attention should be given to the AVDP's ongoing structuring of FBOs and to establishing linkages with potential buyers of rice and cocoa. Complementarity between these two projects will also benefit the PCRCR beneficiaries.

Institutional capacity has also been enhanced among key national entities. With project support, the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMet) improved its ability to generate and disseminate agroclimatic information—such as seasonal forecasts, planting calendars, and climate risk alerts—to farmers. The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), through the establishment of a 15-hectare cocoa clonal seed garden and the funding of PhD and Master's research, is developing high-yielding and climate-resilient cocoa seedlings adapted to Sierra Leone's agroecological conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), responsible for ensuring environmental compliance of project activities, has also benefited from project collaboration. However, the Mid-Term Review (MTR)

identified the need to strengthen coordination with the EPA further to ensure the timely preparation of Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and related environmental reports, in accordance with the signed Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

Overall, the project's rationale and objectives remain highly relevant and coherent, well aligned with national priorities, IFAD's strategic focus, and global climate adaptation frameworks. The project demonstrates satisfactory effectiveness and efficiency, with solid progress achieved despite a few operational and contextual challenges.

5.2 lessons learned

The MTR identified several key lessons learned from the project implementation. These lessons apply to the broader climate change adaptation community:

- **Community-based approaches enhance ownership and sustainability:** The Farmer Field School (FFS) model and community-driven planning and implementation mechanisms proved effective in strengthening local ownership and ensuring the sustainability of project benefits. Empowering communities to lead implementation and develop local solutions enhances resilience, particularly when supported by consistent government extension services.
- **Institutional coordination is critical for climate-resilient investments:** effective collaboration among national entities—MAFS, EPA, SLMet, and SLARI—is essential to deliver integrated adaptation solutions. The project demonstrated that technical synergies among climate data providers, research institutions, and implementers significantly enhance the relevance and impact of field interventions.
- **Gender-transformative approaches lead to broad social benefits:** Integrating gender equity from project design to implementation (e.g., through increased land rights, GALS, and targeted women's training) produced tangible improvements in women's autonomy, food security, household income, and reduced gender-based violence. Gender-transformative tools are vital not only for equity but also for productivity and resilience outcomes.
- **Climate information systems drive adaptive management:** Real-time weather and climate data, when effectively communicated to farmers, significantly enhance adaptive decision-making. Strengthening partnerships with public entities, such as SLMet and SLARI, proved to be an effective adaptation strategy.
- **Multilevel capacity development increases resilience:** Capacity building at individual, community, and institutional levels is vital for sustainability and long-term replicability. Continuous refresher trainings and the institutionalization of climate-smart agricultural practices are necessary to sustain impacts beyond the project lifecycle.
- **Flexibility and adaptive management mitigate implementation risks:** The project's ability to adapt workplans to evolving field realities—such as climatic shocks, logistical delays, or data limitations—was a significant success factor. Embedding adaptive management mechanisms from the design stage ensures projects remain responsive and effective under uncertainty.
- **The development of adapted seedlings is essential for adapting to climate change.** The Clonal seed gardens established by SLARI have proven beneficial in many ways. The newly developed planting materials appeared to have shorter maturation periods, higher yields, and better resistance. Furthermore, it helps preserve the endemic genetic material. A similar approach could be adopted for other value chains.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the Midterm Review, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen project delivery, improve effectiveness, and ensure the sustainability of results for the remainder of the implementation period.

Recommendation 1: Establish a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) platform. This platform will bring together the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), the Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency (SLMET), and the AVDP Climate Change Focal Point. Using the FFS as an entry point, this platform will promote CSA practices, enhance the dissemination of agro-climatic information tailored to project-supported value chains, and contribute to building resilience and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the agricultural sector *(AVDP, April 2026)*

Recommendation 2: Assess and track the project's contribution to GHG reduction and the NDC through capacity building of EPA staff and the AVDP Climate Change Focal Point on the application of the EX-ACT tool. This will enable the project to estimate, monitor, and report on its contribution to GHG emission reductions or avoidance. *(EPA, April 2026)*

Recommendation 3: Pilot bioenergy solutions by introducing the use of biodigesters for biogas production and the production of green coal from rice husk, thereby diversifying energy sources, reducing dependence on wood fuel, and generating climate mitigation co-benefits *(EPA, May 2026)*

Recommendation 4: Systematize the development of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMP) for all infrastructure-related interventions, ensuring full compliance with SECAP procedural requirements and enhancing environmental and social safeguards *(EPA, Immediate)*

Recommendation 5: Improve monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems: Expand the current M&E system beyond AVDP output-level reporting to include key indicators relevant to AF investments in gender equality, environmental benefits, and livelihood resilience. Specifically, the project should (i) develop standardized data collection tools for the key stakeholders to capture AF-project specific indicators (trainings, infrastructure built, adoption rate of CSA, income and livelihood change, production yields, gender and youth mainstreaming, etc.), (ii) introduce mobile-based tools (i.e., Kobo, ODK, etc.) to enable GPS tracking of infrastructures and photo evidence, reducing relays and increasing the tractability of the data collected, (iii) updating the outcome surveys to include PCRCR specific indicators on and restoration practices, water management, safeguards compliance **(M&E officer, immediate)**

Recommendation 6: Foster market linkages and private sector engagement by structuring FBOs, aggregating, adding value, and connecting producer organisations with private sector actors and financial institutions. Facilitate public-private partnerships to sustain climate-smart investments and market access beyond the project's lifespan **(Business consultant, continuous)**

Recommendation 7: Enhance collaboration with national universities by allocating resources to research on production systems, market dynamics, CSA practices, and the impacts of climate change on the project's value chains. This will strengthen knowledge management, facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned, and reinforce the sustainability of interventions *(Universities, June 2026)*.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference



Annex V Terms of Reference for Consultants and other persons hired by IFAD under a non-staff contract

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES, EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND REQUIRED COMPLETION DATES	
Full Name:	THIERRY WENDPOUIRE NIANOGO
Contract Category:	Consultant
Contract Type:	Consultant
Contract Sub Type:	Retainer
Specialization:	Climate Change
Expected Start Date of Assignment:	Sunday August 31 2025
Expected End Date of Assignment:	Wednesday October 15 2025
Total number of days of service:	25
Division/Department:	West & Central Africa Div.
Reports to:	PASCALINE BARANKEBA, Country Director
GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TASK(S) AND OBJECTIVE(S) TO BE ACHIEVED	
Expected Activities: The consultant will work closely with the IFAD Project Delivery Team (PDT), which will conduct a supervision mission from September 2 to 12, 2025, in which the consultant is invited to participate. The Project Management Unit (PMU), considered as the Executing Entity of PCRCR) will provide key project documentation prior to field work and assist the consultant in developing a detailed mission programme to facilitate consultations with key stakeholders and beneficiaries. Tasks and responsibilities - Collect and verify primary and secondary data in order to assess project progress, performance and quality of implementation in line with the defined objectives, and legal and financial agreement; - Identify barriers, challenges and bottlenecks during implementation of the project; - Identify potential solutions, strategies and action plans to address challenges and speed up project implementation; - Review and suggest revisions as necessary to the current implementation plans, logframe, AWPBs and procurement plans; - Undertake interviews, surveys, community consultations, transect walks, and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders, beneficiaries, Executing Entity, possibly national and/or local Governments, and where relevant other development partners in order to capture varying perspectives and to evaluate the project's relevance, efficiency and effectiveness; - Collect data as needed (government data/records, field observation visits, public expenditure reporting, GIS data, etc.) to validate evidence of results and assessments (including but not limited to: assessment of TOC, activities delivery, and results/changes occurred); - Liaise with key implementing partners and stakeholders, which include IFAD (as IE), AF NDA, etc; - Liaise with and coordinate inputs from other mission members who will participate in the MTR mission. - Lead the discussions on the MTR report and mission findings with PDT and AF NDA to validate the findings of the evaluation, and address any comments received, as well as lead a validation meeting for the MTR final report.	
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	
Expected Outputs (please include any travel if applicable):	Required Completion Date:
Participation to the field mission and drafting its aide-mémoire From Sept. 2 to Sept. 12 2025 The independent consultant will produce the following outputs: 1. Inception report (in English) on proposed MTR methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement list, and proposed structure of the MTR report 2. MTR mission findings, to be presented and discussed (in English) at mission wrap-up meeting with IFAD (PDT) 3. Draft MTR report (in English) to be submitted for PDT's, PMU and AF NDA review 4. Lead a validation meeting of the MTR report, once comments received have been addressed 5. Final MTR report (in English) to be submitted, including a 2-3-page executive summary, a set of limited and strategic recommendations (not to exceed 10 recommendations total), and response addressing issues raised during presentation of draft. The suggested template for the report will be provided. Timeline: Inception report on the MTR Sept. 4 2025	Wednesday October 15 2025

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

Questions	Indicators	Main source	Data analysis methods
Coherence and complementarity			
<i>How well does the intervention fit with national priorities and local needs?</i>			
To what extent is the implementation of the PCRCR is aligned and coherent with the relevant development and climate policy actions and priorities?	Degree of coherence between the project objectives and the national development and climate policy and priorities	MAFS PMU Project documents	Literature review Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
What are the key factors that have influenced, both positively and negatively, the synergies and interlinkages between the different components of the PCRCR project?	The project communication and knowledge sharing mechanisms Existing synergies between the project component Capacity of the PMU to ensure synergies in the implementation of the project	PMU AVDP Climate Change Specialist Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries	Literature review Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
To what extent was the project coherent with or complementary to partners' policies and other donors'	Partners (EPA, SLARI, SLMet) policies Donors' policies	Project documents Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries IFAD policies AF policies Other donors' actions in SL (JICA, WFP, etc.)	Project document PMU assessment Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
Relevance			
<i>To what extent do the intervention's objectives and design align with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?</i>			
Relevance to the requirements and/or needs of the beneficiaries and the government's priorities?	Beneficiaries, implementing partners, PMU's assessment of the	MAFS EPA, SLARI, SLMet	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials

	relevance of the project interventions	AVDP Climate Change Specialist	
	Alignment of the project interventions with the beneficiaries needs	Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries	
To what extent was IFAD's comparative advantage in this work area compared to other UN entities and key partners?	IFAD's Sierra Leone COSOP IFAD project portfolio in SL	MAFS AVDP Climate Change Specialist Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
Relevance of key stakeholders and target groups (including gender analysis and analysis of vulnerable groups) and institutional capacity issues identified?	Assessment of the MAFS on the value added of IFAD as an implementing entity for AF Beneficiaries' assessment of the project selection criteria, of the role of the vulnerable group in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project The project guidelines on gender and youth	PMU AVDP gender and outreach officer M&E officer Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries PMU	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials

Effectiveness

To what extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?

To what extent is the project on track to achieve its targeted output and expected accomplishment results?	Assessment of the beneficiaries on the project accomplishments and challenges PMU opinion of their capacity to attain the targeted outputs by the end of the project	PMU AVDP Climate Change Specialist MAFS Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries PMU	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
--	---	--	--

Which internal and external factors and processes contribute to achieving or not achieving the expected results?	List of contributing factors (internal and external) that impact the project intended results. beneficiaries, implementing partners, PMU assessment	PMU AVDP Climate Change Specialist MAFS Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries PMU	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
How appropriate and effective are the institutional relationships with the main target groups engaged in the project operations?	Analysis of the institutional relationships at the national and local levels	MAFS EPA, SLARI, SLMet PMU AVDP Climate Change Specialist Beneficiaries	Literature review Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
To what extent has local capacity been strengthened so far through the project interventions?	Capacity enhanced by the project, on CSA practices in the targeted communities, on access to market, and on mainstreaming CC into the implementing partners actions	Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries PMU MAFS EPA, SLARI, SLMet PMU	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
To what extent is monitoring and reporting on the project transparent and satisfy key stakeholders?	M&E reports and surveys	M&E officer AVDP Climate Change Specialist Beneficiaries	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials

Efficiency

To what extent does, or is the intervention likely to, deliver results in an economic and timely manner?

To what extent does the management structure of the project support efficient implementation?	The project stakeholders assessment of the role of the PMU in the implementation of the project	Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
---	---	--	--

To what extent is the project being implemented efficiently in terms of delivering the expected results according to quality standards, in a timely manner according to budget and ensuring value for money?	Benefices to the targeted communities AF Disbursement	Implementing partners Finance officer AVDP Climate Change Specialist Beneficiaries Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
--	--	--	--

Impact
To what extent has the intervention generated, or is it expected to generate, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?

To what extent did the project attain its objective and anticipated impact on partners and targeted beneficiaries?	Partners and beneficiaries' assessment of the positive and negative impact of the project Observations on increased resilience in the targeted communities resulting from the project	Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners Desk-review	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
What positive and/or transformative changes have occurred because of the project's interventions?	Factors fostering transformative changes	Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners Desk-review Document review	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials

Sustainability
Are the conditions in place to ensure that the benefits of this PCRCR intervention will continue beyond the project's lifetime?

To what extent is capacity being developed to ensure the sustainability of the efforts and benefits?	Capacity building plans Degree of ownership of the project perceived by the different stakeholders Success or failure factor of ownership of the project by the beneficiaries and the government	PMU Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners Desk-review	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
To what extent is the project engaging the participation of beneficiaries in the implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes?	Success stories Assessment of the role of each of the project stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of the project progress	PMU Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
To what extent is the project fostering innovative partnerships with local institutions, authorities and other development partners?	List of innovations brought about by the project PMU, implementing partners, beneficiaries' opinions	PMU Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
Adaptative management			
Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?			
Does the intervention make evidence-based decisions?	Assessment of the decision process used by the project	PMU Implementing partner	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials

Field visits and
interviews with the
beneficiaries
Implementing
partners

Cross-cutting related issues

How effectively have the intervention's strategies and activities addressed cross-cutting issues?

To what extent have cross-cutting issues of gender equality, human rights, environmental and social safeguards and youth consideration been integrated into the project design and implementation?	Stakeholder assessment of how cross-cutting related issues (gender, environmental, social and climate safeguards) have been mainstreamed and implemented in the project.	PMU Implementing partner Field visits and interviews with the beneficiaries Implementing partners	Triangulation of qualitative assessment from interviews and findings from analysis of relevant project documents and related materials
--	--	--	--

Annex 3: List of stakeholders' meetings

Date	Activity	Location	
31 st August 2025	Arrival of mission team members		ICO
1 September 2025	Courtesy calls to Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, EPA, Sierra Leone Meteorological Agency and SLARI	Freetown	ICO/AVDP
2 September 2025	Travel to Bo and officially launch the mission, with technical presentation by the team on the progress made so far		AVDP
3 September 2025	SLMet		Gabriel Kpaka (DDG, Head of operation) Ibrahim S. Camara (DG) MTR mission team
4 September 2025	Cocoa FFS demonstration Plot	Djakama Community (Pujehun district)	Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
	Oil palm climate-smart demonstration plot	Helebu Community (Pujehun district)	Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
	IVS rehabilitation/ development site	Kambawama community (Bo district)	Tivamyia Limited Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
	Clonal seed garden	Kailahun	SLARI agents Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
5 September 2025	F.T SAAD cocoa and coffee exporting company	(Kenema district)	Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
	Water point (borehole for water, sanitation and hygiene)	Potehun (Kenema district)	Beneficiaries, MTR mission team
6 September 2025	AVDP Climate Adaptation focal point (Gassimu Bohnapha)	Kenema	MTR mission team
7 September 2025	Supervision and MTR mission team meeting	Kenema	Supervision and MTR mission team
8 September 2025	EPA	Kenema	MTR mission team
9 September 2025	Earth damn		Supervision and MTR mission team
10 September 2025	Drafting of report and share draft AM with the AVDP		Mission team
11 September 2025	Technical wrap-up with AVDP and travel to Freetown		Mission team
12 September 2025	Wrap-up session with the Government and mission departs		Mission team

Ref: MTR mission team (Gassimu Bohnapha, Thierry Nianogo)

Annex 4: List of secondary data sources consulted

Documents

- AF's Evaluation Policy
- AF's Guidance in Support of the Operationalization of the Evaluation Policy: Inception Report
- AF's Guidance in Support of the Operationalization of the Evaluation Policy: Mid-Term Review
- AF's Guidance in Support of the Operationalization of the Evaluation Policy: Evaluation principles
- Signed Project Agreement between AF Board and UN-Habitat
- AVDP project documents
- AVDP grievance redress mechanism manual
- AVDP supervision missions and mid-term reports
- AF project PDR
- MoA with EPA, SLARI, SLMet
- Project Performance Report (PPR)
- SL's NDC (2021)
- SL's third national communication on climate change (2017)
- SL's National Adaptation Plan (2021)

Websites

- Adaptation Fund (<https://www.adaptation-fund.org/>)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (<https://unfccc.int>)
- IFAD (<https://www.ifad.org/en/w/countries/sierra-leone>)
- Minister of Agriculture for Sierra Leone (<https://maf.gov.sl>)
- Feeds Salone strategy (<https://feedsalone.gov.sl>)

Annex 5: AF core indicator at MTR

Component		AF indicator	baseline	Mid-term
Component 1	1.2.1. Percentage of target population covered by adequate risk-reduction systems	Output 1.2 Targeted population groups covered by adequate risk reduction systems	0	11,625 HHs (direct beneficiaries 69,750 with 40% women and youth participation)
	6.2. Percentage of targeted population with sustained climate-resilient alternative livelihoods	Indicator 6.2: Increase in targeted population's sustained climate-resilient alternative livelihoods	0	40% of the total target population (10,500 HHs)
	5. Ecosystem services and natural resource assets maintained or improved under climate change and variability-induced stress	Indicator 5: Ecosystem services and natural resource assets maintained or improved under climate change and variability-induced stress	0	11,625 farmers (5,625 rice farmers and 6,000 cocoa farmers) have adopted climate resilient farming practices
Component 2	4.2. Physical infrastructure improved to withstand climate change and variability-induced stress	Indicator 4.1.1: Vulnerable development sector services and infrastructure assets strengthened in response to climate change impacts, including variability	2	2 Warehouses rehabilitated.
	4.1.2. No. of physical assets strengthened or constructed to withstand conditions resulting from climate variability and change (by sector and scale)	Core Indicator 4.2: Assets produced, developed, improved or strengthened	0	23 Grain Houses with ancillaries constructed, 20 Solar powered Boreholes, 35 Solar powered Water points, 20 Greenhouses constructed, 35 VIP latrines and 25ha of model climate smart farms with farm facilities.
Component 3	2.1.1. No. of staff trained to respond to, and mitigate impacts of, climate-related events (by gender)	Indicator 2: Capacity of staff to respond to, and mitigate impacts of, climate-related events from targeted institutions increased	0	147 staff trained including AVDP and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS).
	2.1.2 No. of targeted institutions with increased capacity to minimize exposure to climate variability risks (by type, sector and scale)	Output 2.1 Strengthened capacity of national and sub-national centers and networks to respond rapidly to extreme weather event	0	4 staff of EPA, SLMet, SLARi and MAFS

Annex 6: Civil works contract

COMPONENT	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION OF CONTRACT	AF CONTRIBUTION	STATUS
FARM FACILITIES	5	Construction of farm facility and 3 solar dryers in Madina, Dama Chiefdom, Kenema District	100%	Completed and Handed Over
		Construction of farm facility and 3 solar dryers in Jakama, Barri Chiefdom, Pujehun District	100%	Completed and Handed Over
		Construction of farm facility and 3 solar dryers in Tikonko, Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District	100%	Completed and Handed Over
		Construction of farm facility and 3 solar dryers in Saso Badjia Chiefdom, Bo District	100%	Completed and Handed Over
		Construction of farm facility and 3 solar dryers in Bendu, Soa Chiefdom, Kono District	100%	Completed and Handed Over
BOREHOLE FOR IRRIGATION SCHEME	4	Construction of 4 Boreholes for Irrigation Scheme in Bo, Moyamba, Koinadugu and Falaba Districts	17.32%	Completed and Handed Over
BOREHOLE FOR WATER POINTS AND SANITATION	10	Construction of 5 Boreholes for water points and Sanitation in Bo and Kenema Districts	100%	Completed and Handed Over
		Construction of 5 Boreholes for water points and Sanitation in Kailahun and Kono Districts	100%	Completed and Handed Over
CROSSINGS	2	Construction of 2 crossings (Bridge and Culvert) at Tangabu and Nyandehun Mambabu communities in Kailahun District	100%	Completed
2nd SET BOREHOLE FOR IRRIGATION SCHEME	20	Construction of 7 Boreholes for Irrigation Scheme in Port Loko District	17.32%	Completed
		Construction of 7 Boreholes for Irrigation Scheme in Koinadugu and Falaba Districts	17.32%	Completed
		Construction of 6 Boreholes for Irrigation Scheme in Koinadugu District	17.32%	Completed
2nd SET BOREHOLE FOR WATER POINTS AND SANITATION	15	Construction of 6 Boreholes for water points and Sanitation in Bo, Kenema and Kono Districts	100%	Completed
		Construction of 5 Boreholes for water points and Sanitation in Bo, Moyamba and Pujehun Districts	100%	Construction of towers in progress, overall work at 80%
		Construction of 4 Boreholes for water points and Sanitation in Koinadugu and Falaba Districts	100%	Construction of towers in progress,

				overall work at 80%
HAND DUG WELL WATER POINTS	20	Construction of 20 Hand dug wells in South and Eastern Regions	100%	Construction of towers in progress, overall work at 70%
VIP LATRINE	35	Construction of thirteen (13) VIP Latrine in Bo, Bonthe and Moyamba Districts	100%	Completed
		Construction of thirteen (12) VIP Latrine in Kailahun and Kono Districts	100%	Completed
		Construction of ten (10) VIP Latrine in Kenema and Pujehun Districts	100%	Completed
CONSTRUCTION / REHABILITATION OF WAREHOUSES	2	Construction of 1 Warehouses in Bo and Rehabilitation of 1 Warehouse in Kono District	92%	Construction work in progress, overall work at 75%
FEEDER ROADS MAINTENANCE	420 Km	Establishment of road CBOs, Equipment for road CBOs and Sensitization	100%	Construction in progress
FARM TRACKS SUPERVISION	150 Km		\$ 30,000	Construction in progress
EARTH DAMS	30	Construction of earth dams	25%	Contract signed

Annex 7: AF expenditure at MTR

Components	Allocations	Expenditure	%
Component 1: Climate-proofed agricultural production and post-harvest combined with livelihood diversification			
Sub-component 1.1: Climate-proofing agricultural production and post-harvest			
1. Support to MAF to run Farmer Field School (FFS)	1,530,902.00	625,663.08	40,87
2. Establishment of Cocoa Clonal Garden at SLARI	481,950.00	132,442.07	27,48
3. Support to Cocoa Clonal Garden Operation	160,650.00	56,760.89	35,332
4. Development of Cocoa farms	979,072.00	1,574,965.10	160,86
5. Bore holes irrigation scheme	309,162.00	107,607.08	34,81
6. Development of new IVS (rice)	2,505,443.00	1,512,958.08	60,39
Sub-total (1.1)	5,967,179.00	4,010,396.30	67,20
Sub-component 1.2 : Promotion of income-generating activities as livelihood diversification measures			
1. Construction of the Earth Dams and community integrated vegetable gardens with solar systems	304,342.00	134,788.62	44,29
2. Establishment of fish farms	110,419.00		
Sub-total (1.2)	414,761.00	134,788.62	32,50
Cost for Component 1	6,381,940.00	4,145,184.92	64,95
Component 2: Climate resilient rural transportation, storage and water infrastructure			
Sub-component 2,1: Climate resilient rural transportation and storage infrastructure			
1. Warehouse rehabilitation to withstand weather extremes	57,124.00	36,142.60	63,27
2. Climate proofing of 120 feeder roads	593,046.00		
· Studies and surveys for rehabilitation	19,619.00		
· Rehabilitation works	446,503.00		
· Construction of bridges (for rehabilitation)	45,226.00		
· Routine maintenance	11,579.00		
· Periodic maintenance	70,119.00		
3. Climate proofing of farm tracks: Studies and surveys for construction	31,596.00		
4. Support to districts for development of Feeder Road Maintenance Plans	30,466.00		
5. Support to FBOs	45,782.00		
· Road gangs' formation (distribution of maintenance tools)	30,848.00		
· Development of Farm Tracks Maintenance Plans	14,934.00		
Sub-total (2.1)	758,014.00	36,142.60	4,77
Sub-component 2.2: Climate-resilient water supply & sanitation infrastructure			
· Climate proofing of water supply and sanitation infrastructure	726,026.00	640,368.37	88,20
· Capacity building for potable water management	115,242.00		
Sub-total (2.2)	841,268.00	640,368.37	76,12
Cost for Component 2	1,599,282.00	676,510.97	42,30
Component 3: Institutional capacity development and policy engagement			
Sub-component 3.1: Strengthening of governmental capacities for climate change adaptation			

1. Strengthening of EPA	406,076.00	116,353.09	28,65
· Capacity building through technology enhancement	232,227.00	28,974.92	12,48
· Training to enhance institutional capacity	89,335.00	87,378.17	97,81
· Exchange visits for EPA staff	84,514.00		
2. Development MRV system of climate response programmes	89,318.00		
3. Strengthening of Meteorological Department	75,920.00	74,600.74	98,26
· Capacity building through technology enhancement	44,659.00	48,490.48	108,58
· Training to enhance institutional capacity	31,261.00	26,110.26	83,52
4. Technical Assistance for improved policy frameworks	54,655.00	-	
· TA to mainstream climate risk into sectorial strategies	54,655.00		
Sub-total (3.1)	625,969.00	190,953.83	30,50
Sub-component 3.2: Monitoring and evaluation and coordination of the adaptation activities			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge management	63,816.00	78,009.46	122,24
· Baseline survey costs (related to CC adaptation)	10,508.00	20,083.46	191,12
· Terminal survey costs (related to CC adaptation)	10,508.00		
· Case studies and Knowledge management	42,800.00	57,926.00	135,34
2. Personnel	287,016.00	128,000.38	44,60
· Adaptation Specialist (transversal)/ Gender Specialist	182,233.00	128,000.38	70,24
· Staff training - adaptation issues	104,783.00		
Sub-total (3.2)	350,832.00	206,009.84	58,72
Cost for Component 3	976,801.00	396,963.67	40,64
Project execution costs (2%)			
Recruitment of local staff	182,000.00		
Total project execution costs	182,000.00		
Total project cost	9,140,023.00	5,218,659.56	57,10
Project cycle management fee (8,5%)			
Total project cycle management fee	776,902.00		
Amount of Financing requested	9,916,925.00	5,218,659.56	52,62