



ADAPTATION FUND



NABARD

Terminal Evaluation of Adaptation Fund Project

Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities,
Livelihoods and Ecological Security in
the Kanha-Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh

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Terminal Evaluation of Adaptation Fund Project

Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological
Security in the Kanha-Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh

Submitted by

Indian Institute of Forest Management

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A photograph of a dry forest landscape. In the foreground, a light brown cow is grazing on dry grass. The background is filled with tall, slender trees with green and brown foliage, suggesting a dry season. The ground is covered with dry leaves and grass.

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Acknowledgments

This terminal evaluation study of the Adaptation Fund-supported project titled “Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha–Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh” was carried out with the objective of assessing the impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the interventions implemented under the project. The project was implemented across 56 villages in the Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni districts of the Kanha–Pench Corridor landscape in Madhya Pradesh. We are extremely grateful to the Department of Climate Action and Sustainability (DCAS), NABARD, for entrusting us with this evaluation and providing the necessary support and resources to undertake the study.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. K. Ravichandran, Director, Indian Institute of Forest Management, for his encouragement in undertaking this evaluation. Throughout the study period, we received excellent cooperation from the implementing and executing agencies of the project. We sincerely acknowledge the valuable guidance and assistance provided by NABARD officials, especially Mr. Avinash P. Sevalkar (Deputy General Manager), Mr. Akhilesh Verma (Assistant General Manager), and Mr. Muhammed Raneef (Project Manager, DCAS). We are equally grateful to Romit Banerjee and Kshitij Pandey from Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR), as well as Pradyumna Acharya from Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), for facilitating the field visits and sharing the project documents and information required for the evaluation.

We are extremely thankful to the community members, farmers, women’s groups, Village Development Committees, Self-Help Groups, and other stakeholders across Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni districts for sharing their valuable experiences and insights during field visits and discussions. Their active participation greatly enriched this evaluation study. We hope that the insights and recommendations emerging from this study will contribute towards strengthening the effectiveness of Adaptation Fund-supported projects in reducing vulnerability and enhancing the adaptive capacity of forest-dependent rural communities to respond to the impacts of climate change.

– IIFM Study Team

List of Abbreviations

AF	Adaptation Fund
AFB	Adaptation Fund Board
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
COP	Conference of the Parties
DPR	Detailed Project Report
EA	Evaluating Agency
EE	Executing Entity
EPCs	Environment Protection Committees
FES	Foundation for Ecological Security
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIS	Geographic Information System
HWC	Human–Wildlife Conflict
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IIFM	Indian Institute of Forest Management
INR	Indian Rupee
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPC	Kanha-Pench Corridor
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MIS	Management Information System
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
MPFD	Madhya Pradesh Forest Department
MP-SAPCC	Madhya Pradesh State Action Plan on Climate Change
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NAPCC	National Action Plan on Climate Change
NDA	National Designated Authority
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NIE	National Implementing Entity
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NRLM	National Rural Livelihoods Mission

NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PPR	Project Performance Report
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PVTG	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group
RBS FI	RBS Foundation India (Royal Bank of Scotland Foundation India)
SHG	Self-Help Group
SML	Satpuda-Maikal Landscape
SRI	System of Rice Intensification
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USD	United States Dollar
VDC	Village Development Committee
WOTR	Watershed Organisation Trust

Executive Summary

The Adaptation Fund-supported project titled “Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha–Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh” was implemented across 56 villages in Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni districts of Madhya Pradesh. The project was implemented through National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for India to the Adaptation Fund, by the Executing Entities, namely RBS Foundation India and Madhya Pradesh Forest Department. Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) and Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) served as executing partners to the Executing Entities. The Kanha–Pench Corridor (KPC) is an ecologically important landscape connecting the Kanha and Pench Tiger Reserves, but the region has been facing increasing challenges due to climate variability, forest degradation, declining agricultural productivity, water scarcity, and livelihood insecurity. Most households in the project area belong to poor and marginalized tribal communities dependent on forests, rain-fed agriculture, livestock, and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) for their livelihoods.

The project adopted an ecosystem-based adaptation approach to strengthen ecological resilience and improve livelihood security through community participation, climate-resilient agriculture, ecological restoration, water conservation, and institutional strengthening. The project was implemented from April 2017 to March 2021 following detailed vulnerability assessments, and community consultations conducted in the intervention villages. The project comprised of four components: a) Component 1 : Integrated socio - economic - ecological planning and assessment, b) Component 2: Community mobilisation for building adaptive capacities, c) Component 3 : Integrated approaches for ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods as a means for adaptation, and d) Component 4: Knowledge management. Major interventions included soil and water conservation measures such as farm bunding, check dams, farm ponds, and desiltation of water bodies. Climate-resilient agricultural practices including organic farming, and preparation of organic inputs such as Jeevamrit and vermicompost, crop diversification, and the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) were promoted to improve

productivity and reduce dependency on chemical inputs. Ecological restoration activities focused on removal of the invasive species *Lantana camara* and regeneration of degraded forest areas and village commons. Livelihood diversification interventions included goat rearing, poultry, kitchen gardening, livestock support, and NTFP-based activities, along with renewable energy interventions such as solar lights and biogas units. The project also emphasised strengthening Village Development Committees (VDCs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and community institutions through training programmes, exposure visits, and awareness activities related to climate adaptation and natural resource management.

The terminal evaluation was undertaken to assess the achievement of project outcomes, identify lessons for sustainability, and provide inputs for strengthening future Adaptation Fund programming. The evaluation examined project achievements, sustainability of outcomes, implementation processes, contribution to Adaptation Fund objectives, and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems. A mixed-method approach was adopted for the evaluation. Extensive desk reviews of project documents, funding proposals, progress reports, audited statements, and the Mid-Term Impact Evaluation Report, were conducted. Field-level verification included household surveys, beneficiary interactions, physical verification of interventions, Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, and case studies. Sampling covered nearly 30 percent of intervention villages, and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to assess the changes in livelihoods, ecological conditions, and community resilience attributable to the project. Special emphasis was placed on inclusion of women and vulnerable groups to ensure balanced evaluation findings.

The evaluation findings indicate that the project generated significant positive impacts on livelihoods, agriculture, ecological restoration, and community participation despite disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Soil and water conservation interventions improved groundwater recharge, enhanced water availability, and enabled many farmers to shift from single cropping to double cropping systems. Farmers diversified cultivation by introducing wheat, pulses,



vegetables, and millets along with traditional paddy cultivation. Promotion of organic farming and local bio-inputs reduced dependence on chemical fertilisers and lowered agricultural input costs. Improved irrigation facilities and diversified livelihood opportunities contributed to increased household income, improved food security, and reduction in seasonal migration. NTFPs such as *mahua* (*Madhuca longifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) leaves also emerged as important supplementary livelihood sources for local communities.

The project also created important ecological and institutional impacts within the Kanha–Pench landscape. Large-scale removal of *Lantana camara* supported regeneration of degraded forest areas, improved biodiversity, and enhanced availability of fodder and forest-based resources. Water conservation structures reduced soil erosion and improved moisture retention in hilly terrains, thereby strengthening ecosystem resilience. Simultaneously, the project strengthened community institutions including SHGs, VDCs and women's groups, leading to improved local participation in village-level planning and resource management. Women actively participated in livelihood activities, kitchen gardening, savings groups, and decision-making processes, contributing to social and economic empowerment. Community contribution and *shramdaan* (voluntary labour) further strengthened local ownership and awareness regarding sustainable natural resource management practices. Project records and documentation systems were also found to be well maintained in most villages visited.

The evaluation also highlighted several positive climate resilience outcomes. Adoption of practices such as organic farming, use of bio-inputs, traditional seed varieties, millet cultivation, and soil and water conservation measures improved resilience to rainfall

variability and reduced input costs in several villages. Revival of traditional farming systems and millet cultivation on restored lands demonstrated the potential for locally adapted climate-resilient agriculture.

The evaluation rated the project as overall Marginally Satisfactory (MS) in terms of effectiveness, sustainability, and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems, while its relevance was rated Satisfactory (S) due to strong alignment with the Adaptation Fund priorities, national and state climate policies and action plans. The project generated positive outcomes in watershed management, ecological restoration, climate-resilient agriculture, women's participation, and institutional strengthening, with interventions improving groundwater recharge, irrigation access, agricultural productivity, and NTFP availability. However, overall effectiveness and sustainability were constrained by weak market linkages, low sustainability of certain livelihood and climate technology interventions, human-wildlife conflict, uneven implementation across villages, continued livelihood vulnerability, and limited climate awareness. Project efficiency was affected by delays in fund disbursement, and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, although community participation and low-cost watershed interventions improved cost-effectiveness. The M&E framework was well designed at the project level, but implementation remained inconsistent due to weak village-level monitoring, inadequate tracking of asset functionality and limited adaptive learning mechanisms. The evaluation found that Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 achieved Satisfactory to Marginally Satisfactory performance, particularly in areas related to participatory planning, institutional strengthening, watershed management, and climate-resilient agriculture. Outcome 4 on knowledge management performed poorly due to limited outreach, weak dissemination activities, and inadequate investment in awareness generation.

While the project achieved significant outcomes in strengthening climate resilience, ecosystem restoration, and livelihood security, its implementation was influenced by several contextual and operational challenges. The Project Completion Report indicated an overall financial achievement of approximately 65%, reflecting lower-than-planned financial utilisation due to delays in fund disbursement, implementation constraints, and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors resulted in low coverage

of certain planned interventions and target areas. Nevertheless, the effective utilisation of available resources, strong community participation, and adaptive implementation strategies enabled the project to deliver meaningful and sustainable benefits across the intervention landscape. The findings highlight the importance of flexible financial planning, timely resource mobilisation, and adaptive management mechanisms to enhance implementation efficiency and long-term impact in future climate adaptation initiatives. Financial analysis also showed that while the majority of expenditure was concentrated under Component 3, stronger outcomes were achieved where planning, institutional support, and participatory processes were emphasised.

The evaluation identified several important challenges affecting the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of project outcomes. Sustainability of physical assets and livelihood interventions varied across villages and between Executing Entities. Villages where continued institutional engagement and post-project support were provided by the EE demonstrated relatively stronger long-term sustainability. Many externally introduced livelihood activities and technologies, including biogas units, improved cookstoves, mushroom cultivation, lac cultivation, and solar lighting systems, showed low levels of continuation after project closure due to inadequate maintenance support, labour constraints, weak market linkages, and lack of institutional follow-up.

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) emerged as one of the most critical challenges across the landscape. Crop damage, livestock losses, and risks to human safety continued to affect livelihoods and reduced the effectiveness of certain interventions. HWC issue represented a broader regional ecological and conservation challenge that extended beyond the direct scope and mandate of the project. While certain project interventions may have indirectly contributed to strengthening community awareness, institutional coordination, and livelihood resilience, dedicated HWC mitigation measures were not envisaged under the project design. Therefore, the persistence of HWC, while not an issue attributable to project performance or effectiveness, remains a major risk factor and driver of low effectiveness and sustainability of the project outcomes. In addition, shift to double cropping and increasing

dependence on irrigation-based agriculture may create future pressure on groundwater resources if not accompanied by sustainable water-use planning.

Key lessons emerging from the evaluation include the importance of equitable community participation, strong village-level institutions, long-term post-project handholding, context-specific interventions, and convergence-based implementation approaches. Interventions aligned with existing local livelihood systems and traditional practices demonstrated greater sustainability compared to externally introduced technologies and enterprises.

Based on the findings, the evaluation recommends strengthening post-project monitoring and institutional support systems; promoting locally relevant and landscape-based interventions; improving interdepartmental convergence and coordination; strengthening market linkages and technical support for livelihood activities; integrating long-term climate resilience planning and advisory systems; and adopting more adaptive and realistic financial planning mechanisms. Future climate resilience projects should place greater emphasis on sustained institutional engagement, and continuous community capacity building to ensure durable adaptation outcomes in forest-dependent landscapes.



01. Project/Programme General Information

Adaptation Fund Project ID	IND/NIE/Forests/2015/1
Project/programme category	Regular Size Project
Country/ies	India
Title of project/programme	Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha-Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh
Type of Implementing Entity	NIE
Implementing Entity	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
Executing Entities	1. RBS Foundation India – promoted by The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), currently NATWEST Foundation 2. Madhya Pradesh Forest Department (MPFD) With FES and WOTR as executing partners to the Executing Entities
Amount of financing requested (In U.S Dollars)	USD 2,556,093

02. Project /Programme Timetable

Project Timetable	Expected date	Actual date
Start of Project/Programme Implementation	January 2017	1/4/2017
Mid-term Review (if planned)	January 2019	January 2020
Project/Programme Closing	December 2021	31/3/ 2021
Final Evaluation	September 2021	January 2026

03. Project Components

Component	Excepted output	Excepted outcomes	Amount (US\$)
Component 1. Integrated socio- economic and ecological assessment and planning	Output 1.1: Socio economic baseline report with village level detailed analysis in the project villages	Improved understanding of prevalent dynamics and changes in area of interventions	32,337
	Output 1.2: Baseline mapping and change assessments of natural resource base in project villages using GIS		3,188
Component 2. Community mobilisation for building adaptive capacities	Output 2.1: Robust community institutions in 56 villages with collective decision making of stakeholders at village / cluster / district / landscape level on issues of conservation, climate change, gender and development	Enhanced capability of the community to take collective action, practice adaptive livelihoods and conservation	2,01,295
	Output 2.2: Participatory impact monitoring		4,357
Component 3. Integrated approach for ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods as a means for adaptation	Output 3.1: Climate resilient agricultural practices are adopted by the identified beneficiaries	Improved adaptive capacity of the community and landscape	8,80,610
	Output 3.2: Adoption of diversified livelihoods for poverty reduction and enhanced climate change resilience by 2,000 households		2,12,546
	Output 3.3: Enhanced vocational skills in 500 individuals		41,411
	Output 3.4: Energy efficient mechanisms to reduce fuel wood dependency are adopted		75,428

Component	Excepted output	Excepted outcomes	Amount (US\$)
Component 4. Knowledge management, awareness, and communication	Output 4.1: Knowledge management plan covering all main KPC-dependent user groups to improve awareness levels and facilitate informed decision making to address threats to KPC	Improved understanding on threats and climate change impacts on the landscape and enhanced involvement of stakeholders	11,061
			60,343
	Output 4.2: Developed pool of products comprising research studies, learning/ case studies from the project, training modules and capacities for its dissemination through relevant tools		12,272
	Output 4.3: Local and national level campaigns/ workshops for dissemination		
Project/ Programme Execution Cost			2,04,410
Total Project/Programme Cost			23,560,93
Project Cycle Management Fee Charged by the Implementing Entity (if applicable)			2,00,000
Total Amount of Financing			2,556,093

04. Project/Programme Components and Financing

This section provides an overview of budget allocation and expenditure patterns of the project from 2017 to 2021, reflecting how financial resources were utilized across different phases of implementation. **All financial values in this section are presented in USD, with a conversion rate of 1 USD = INR 65.**

Table 1: Component-wise Budget and Expenditure Analysis (2017-21)

Components	Output	2017-18 (Approved)	2017-18 (Actual)	2018-19 (Approved)	2018-19 (Actual)	2019-20 (Approved)	2019-20 (Actual)	2020-21 (Approved)	2020-21 (Actual)
Component 1: Integrated socio - economic and ecological assessment and planning	Output 1.1: Socio economic baseline report with village level detailed analysis in the project villages	NA	14,502	9,231	17,229	9,464	289,32	7,745	317
	Output 1.2: Baseline mapping and change assessments of natural resource base in project villages using GIS.	NA	4,120	5,231	5,825	8,329	338,41	13,113	3,188
	Output 2.1: Robust community institutions in 56 villages with collective decision making of stakeholders at village / cluster / district / landscape level on issues of conservation, climate change, gender and development.	NA	28,789	1,00,000	59,292	1,14,190	71,670	1,33,023	41,534
Component 2: Community mobilisation for building adaptive capacities	Output 2.2: Participatory impact monitoring	NA	NA	19,385	92	19,292	3,088	35,582	1,176
	Output 3.1: Adoption of climate resilient agricultural practices by 5,000 households	NA	1,07,975	3,84,615	3,90,828	2,87,220	2,40,159	2,89,413	1,41,647
Component 3: Integrated approach for ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods as a means for adaptation									

Components	Output	2017-18 (Approved)	2017-18 (Actual)	2018-19 (Approved)	2018-19 (Actual)	2019-20 (Approved)	2019-20 (Actual)	2020-21 (Approved)	2020-21 (Actual)
	Output 3.2: Adoption of diversified livelihoods for poverty reduction and enhanced climate change resilience by 2,000 households	NA	11,093	76,923	71,439	1,44,561	69,332	1,33,901	60,681
	Output 3.3: Enhanced vocational skills in 500 individuals	NA	48	61,538	7,495	1,47,766	33,344	1,60,921	523
	Output 3.4: Adoption of energy efficient mechanisms by households to reduce fuel wood dependency and drudgery amongst women.	NA	3,425	46,154	31,573	1,02,214	2,012	1,43,338	38,417
	Output 4.1: Knowledge management plan covering all main KPC-dependent user groups to improve awareness levels and facilitate informed decision making to address threats to KPC	NA	5,066	1,077	5,934	220	60.43	0	0
Component 4: Knowledge management, awareness, and communication	Output 4.2: Developed pool of products comprising research studies, learning/ case studies from the project, training modules and capacities for its dissemination through relevant tools.	NA	NA	46,154	6,778	80,525	11,817	2,05,926	41,747

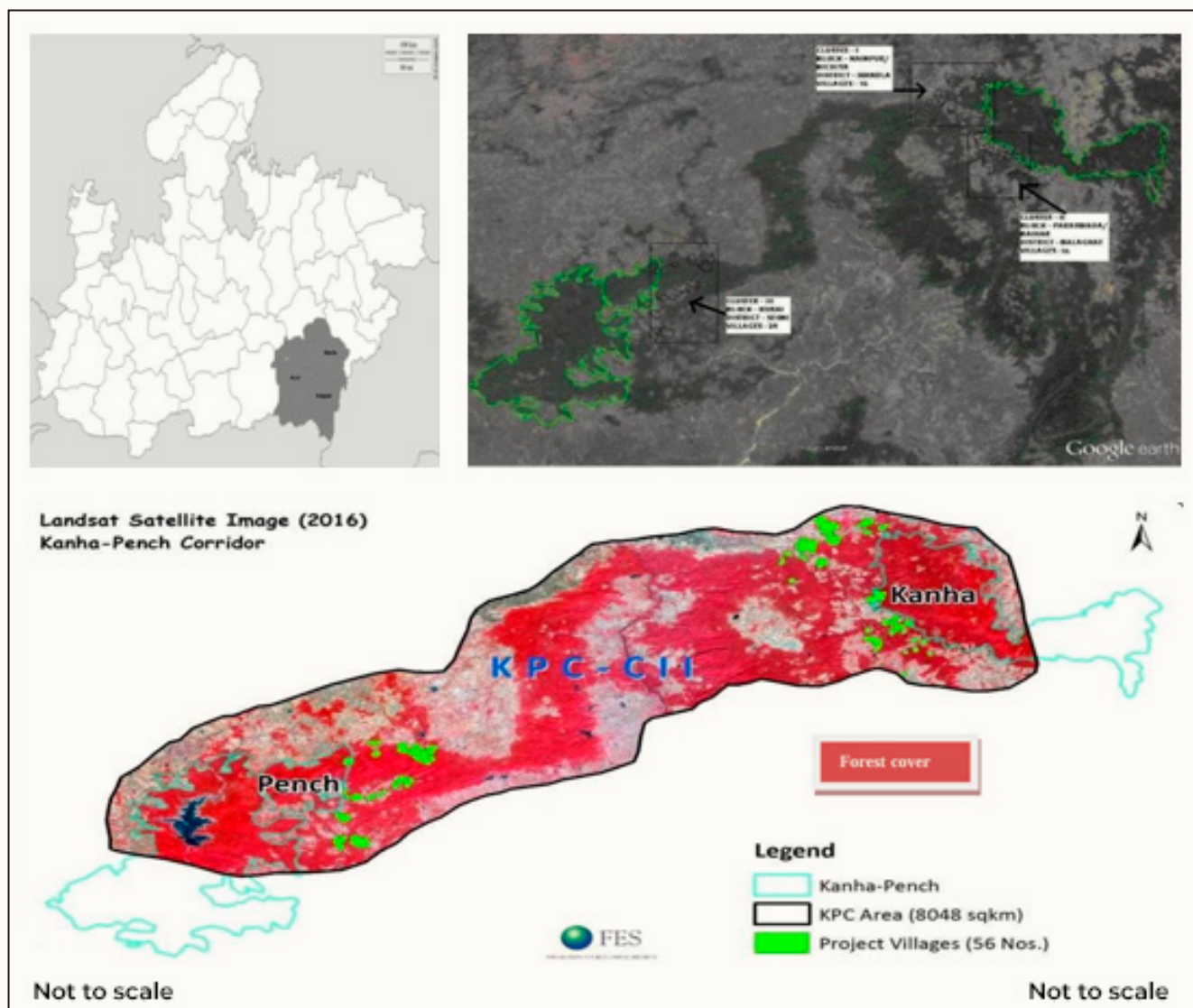
Components	Output	2017-18 (Approved)	2017-18 (Actual)	2018-19 (Approved)	2018-19 (Actual)	2019-20 (Approved)	2019-20 (Actual)	2020-21 (Approved)	2020-21 (Actual)
	Output 4.3: Local and national level campaigns / workshops for dissemination	NA	NA	30,769	10,272	53,882	1,543	36,774	12,272
5. Management costs		NA	33,995	NA	93,142	NA	52,202	NA	12,300
Total		NA	2,09,015	7,66,615	6,99,898	9,68,103	4,85,869	11,59,734	3,53,802

05

Evaluation General Information



The Adaptation Fund-supported project titled “Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha–Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh” was initiated in 2017 and implemented across 56 villages located in the districts of Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni in Madhya Pradesh. The project was implemented in the ecologically significant Kanha-Pench Corridor (KPC) region, which forms a critical wildlife and forest connectivity landscape between the Kanha Tiger Reserve and Pench Tiger Reserve. The corridor is part of the larger Satpuda-Maikal Landscape and is recognised for its rich biodiversity, forest resources, and ecological importance. The project primarily focused on strengthening the adaptive capacities of vulnerable forest-dependent communities while simultaneously improving ecological security and climate resilience across the landscape.



| Locations of Project Districts and Villages in KPC |

The project covered around 7,609 households, primarily poor and marginalised tribal and forest-dependent communities. The dominant tribal groups in the region included the Baiga and Gond tribes, along with other communities such as Korku, Panka, Ahir, Banjara, Pardhi, and Jharia. Among them, the Baiga community is recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group

(PVTG) with a high dependency on forests and natural resources for livelihood and subsistence. Around 60% of the project population belonged to indigenous tribal communities with limited access to livelihood opportunities, infrastructure, and climate-resilient technologies. Most households depended on rainfed agriculture, livestock rearing, wage labor, and collection

of NTFPs, making them highly vulnerable to climate variability and ecological stress. The region was increasingly facing challenges such as erratic rainfall, declining agricultural productivity, water scarcity, soil erosion, forest degradation, biodiversity loss, migration, and rising human-wildlife conflict.

The project was implemented by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as the National Implementing Entity (NIE), while the executing entities included RBS Foundation India (NatWest India Foundation) in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), and Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR). The total approved project cost under the Adaptation Fund was USD 2,556,093. The project implementation period was from April 2017 to March 2021.

The project adopted an integrated ecosystem-based adaptation approach and implemented a wide range of climate adaptation, ecological restoration, and livelihood enhancement activities across the project villages. Major activities included strengthening of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and village institutions for participatory governance and natural resource management. Watershed development and ecosystem restoration activities such as land treatment, soil and water conservation work, desiltation of ponds, construction of check dams, farm ponds, water harvesting structures, and restoration of degraded commons and forest fringes were undertaken to improve water availability, reduce soil erosion, and enhance ecosystem resilience.

The project also promoted climate-resilient agriculture through organic and conservation farming, Farmer Field Schools, millet cultivation, vegetable farming, improved crop varieties, and micro-irrigation

practices. In addition, livelihood diversification activities such as backyard poultry, goatery, piggery, livestock management, skill development, and other income-generating activities were introduced to reduce forest dependency and seasonal migration. Renewable energy interventions including solar appliances, biogas units, and energy-efficient cooking stoves were also promoted to minimise fuelwood extraction pressure on forests. Trainings, awareness programmes, exposure visits, stakeholder consultations, and knowledge management activities were further conducted to strengthen climate awareness, biodiversity conservation, and community participation in ecosystem-based adaptation practices.

A mid-term evaluation of the project was conducted during January 2020, specifically between 16th to 23rd January 2020, to assess the implementation progress, financial management, institutional effectiveness, outputs achieved, stakeholder participation, and challenges faced during execution. The Mid-Term Evaluation report was submitted in May 2020. However, due to disruptions and field-level constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the terminal evaluation process was delayed beyond the original timeline. The terminal evaluation was subsequently undertaken from October 2025 to April 2026, which included e field verification visits across the project villages, stakeholder consultations, assessment of completed interventions, beneficiary interactions, and comprehensive review of project documents, reports, financial records, and implementation progress. The process focused on assessing the overall effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and long-term adaptive outcomes of the project interventions (ToR in Annex 1) implemented in the KPC landscape.

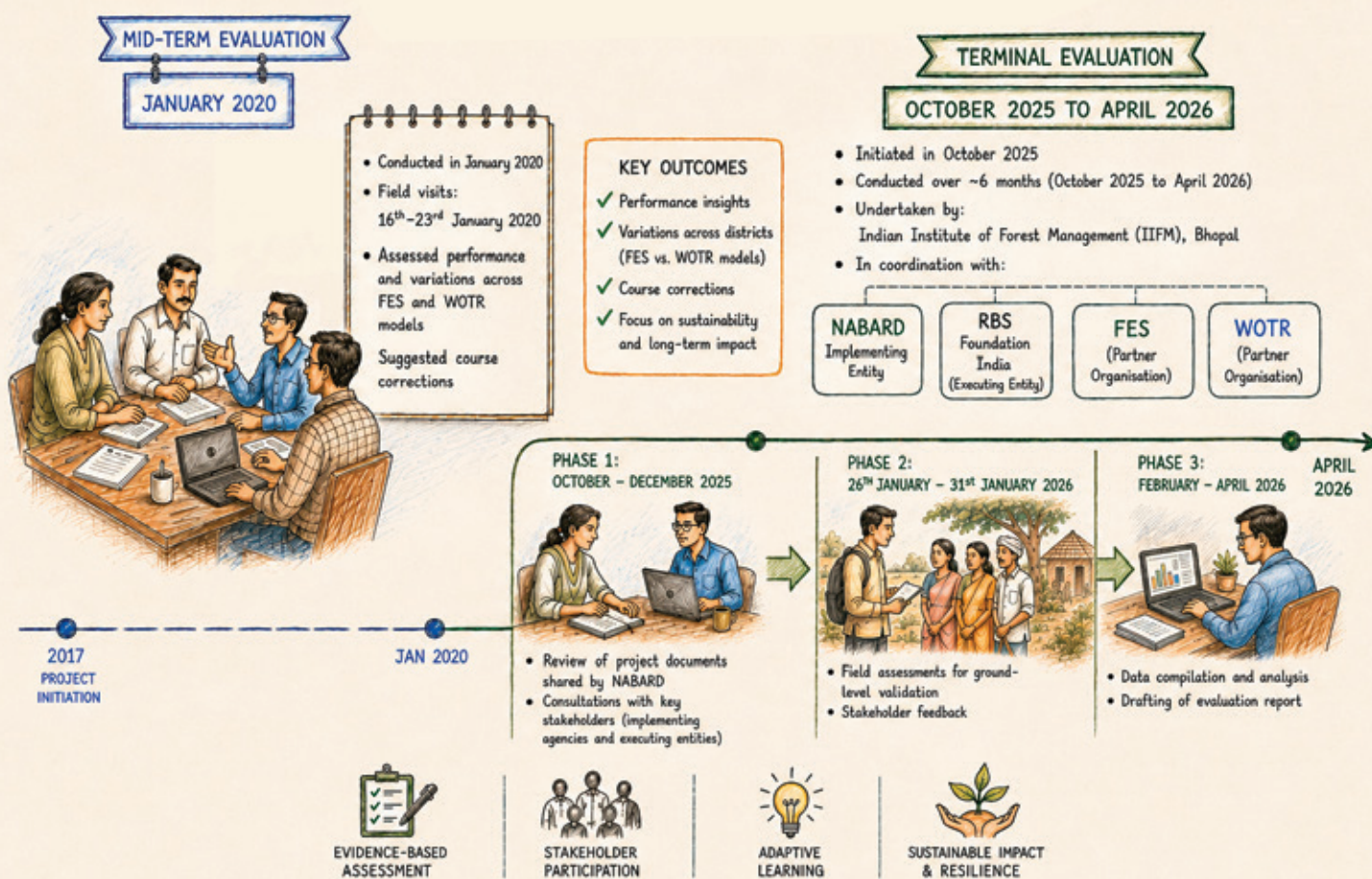
5.1 When, and for how long, the evaluation took place

As part of the evaluation cycle, a mid-term evaluation was conducted during January 2020 (with field visits between 16th–23rd January 2020), approximately three years after project initiation. The mid-term evaluation provided insights into project performance, highlighted variations across districts (particularly between FES and WOTR implementation models), and suggested course corrections to improve sustainability and long-term impact.

Building on this, the terminal evaluation process was initiated in October 2025 and conducted over a period of approximately six months (October 2025 to April 2026). The terminal evaluation was undertaken by the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, in coordination with NABARD (Implementing Entity), RBS Foundation India (Executing Entity), and partner organisations (FES and WOTR).

The initial phase (October–December 2025) involved a comprehensive review of project documents shared by NABARD, along with consultations with key stakeholders including implementing agencies and executing entities. This was followed by field assessments conducted from 26th January to 31st January 2026, enabling ground-level validation of outcomes and stakeholder feedback. Further data compilation, analysis and drafting of report were carried out during February to April 2026.

PROJECT EVALUATION JOURNEY



5.2 Places visited

For field evaluation, 13 villages were visited across the three project districts as outlined in Table 2.



Table 2: Villages visited along with their respective dates of visit

District	Villages	Date of visit
Seoni	Jhalagondi, Khapa Darasi, Atarwani, Darasikalan, Karkoti, Bakrampat, Beesapurmal, Pindrai	27th and 28th January 2026
Mandla	Chichhari Ryt, Malara, Kumharra, Bargi	29th and 30th January 2026
Balaghat	Mohgaon	30th January 2026

5.3 Who was involved in the evaluation

5.3.1 Evaluation Agency

The terminal evaluation was led by the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal, which designed and executed the entire evaluation process. IIFM was responsible for preparing structured data collection formats aligned with the evaluation objectives and Adaptation Fund guidelines. The team conducted consultations with relevant stakeholders to ensure comprehensive data collection and validation. IIFM collected field-level data, undertook detailed analysis, prepared the draft evaluation report, and incorporated feedback from stakeholders to finalize the report. Throughout the process, IIFM ensured that the evaluation remained factual, evidence-based, and unbiased, providing a credible assessment of project performance and outcomes.

5.3.2 Implementing Entity

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) served as the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for the Adaptation Fund-supported project and played a central role in overall project coordination, financial management, project monitoring and evaluation, and institutional supervision throughout the implementation period. NABARD was responsible for channelising Adaptation Fund resources, ensuring compliance with project objectives, monitoring progress, reviewing implementation performance, and facilitating coordination among Executing Entities and government departments. The institution also supported project planning, evaluation, reporting, and knowledge management processes to ensure effective implementation of climate adaptation interventions across the KPC landscape.

5.3.3 Executing Entities

The Executing Entities (EE)- RBS Foundation India (now NATWEST Foundation), along with FES and WOTR—were responsible for on-ground implementation of project activities. The EE's supported the evaluation process by sharing relevant documents and facilitating field visits in project areas.

a. RBS Foundation India – promoted by The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)

RBS foundation worked to systemically identify and subsequently consult stakeholders to develop a strong project design ensuring its effective implementation.

b. Foundation for Ecological Security

FES served as the executing NGO in 32 villages of Mandla and Balaghat, where it focused on ecosystem restoration and community-based livelihood improvements. Its work included removal of invasive species *Lantana camara*, assisted natural regeneration of native species, soil and water conservation, and promotion of organic

farming, implemented in close coordination with Environment Protection Committees (EPCs) and local communities.

c. Watershed Organisation Trust

WOTR worked for implementing project activities in 24 villages of Seoni district with a focus on watershed development, climate-resilient agriculture, and sustainable livelihoods. Working closely with Village Development Committees (VDCs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and local communities, WOTR facilitated interventions such as water conservation structures, organic farming, livestock management, and livelihood diversification. A notable aspect of its approach was the co-ownership and cost-sharing model, where beneficiaries contributed to the interventions, which strengthened their sense of responsibility and ensured better upkeep of assets.

d. The Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

MPPD supported ecological interventions under the project, particularly in activities such as lantana removal, plantation, and enabling access to forest areas. Its involvement helped ensure that project actions aligned with existing policies and regulatory frameworks, while also facilitating necessary permissions for field-level work.



| Discussions with Executing Partners |

5.3.4 Field-Level Stakeholders

At the ground level, the evaluation actively engaged local stakeholders including village community members, VDC and EPC members, SHGs, and Gram Panchayat representatives. These stakeholders contributed through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), providing valuable insights into project implementation, outcomes, and sustainability. Their participation ensured that the evaluation captured grassroots perspectives and reflected the real impacts of the project at the community level. The evaluation process was facilitated by field coordinators from WOTR and FES, who supported field visits and data collection and coordination with local communities.



5.4 Methodology

5.4.1 Desk Review

The evaluation began with a detailed desk review of all available project documentation and secondary data sources. The following documents shared by NABARD were reviewed in detail:

- Request for project funding from the EE to AF
- Project sanction letter to the EE
- Agreement between AF and NABARD, Madhya Pradesh
- Project Completion Summary
- Audited Statements
- Project Performance Reports (for 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21) containing project overview, financial data, project indicators (with units), rating, and results tracker for the reporting year
- Mid-Term Impact Evaluation Report

5.4.2 Stakeholder Mapping

Key stakeholders included NABARD (as the National Implementing Entity), along with executing partners—RBS Foundation India, FES, and WOTR who played a major role in project implementation and community mobilisation. During the project implementation, several village-level institutions and committees such as VDCs, EPCs, SHGs, Mahila Sabhas etc were formed and strengthened with the support of executing entities and government departments, particularly the Forest Department. These institutions played an important role in natural resource management, watershed activities, women empowerment, livelihood promotion, and participatory village-level planning across the project landscape. Other important actors included NGOs, academic and research institutions etc, who had contributed to project design, delivery, or knowledge dissemination.

5.4.3 Data Collection

Data were collected on the indicators for outputs under each project outcome specified in the results frameworks for the project. Change in the indicator on completion of the project was compared with the baseline values. The data sources for verification included various project documents, development plans, minutes of meetings etc along with field visits and interactions with the stakeholders.

Sampling was based on a purposive sampling approach, covering at least 30 percent of intervention locations. It was decided to study the same villages covered in the midterm review to the extent possible, to track the progression and sustainability of outcomes. Accordingly, the following villages were finalised for the field study from each district in consultation with the EEs and NIE.

Table 3: Villages selected for field visit

District	Number of implementation villages	Villages selected for field visit
Seoni	24	Jhalagondi, Khapa Darasi, Atarwani, Darasikalan, Karkoti, Bakrampat, Beesapurmal, Pindrai (8)
Mandla	15	Kumharra, Chichhari Ryt, Bargi, Malara (4)
Balaghat	17	Bamhani, Mohgaon, and Malkhedhi (3)

Out of the 15 shortlisted villages, 13 villages were finally visited for data collection. In Bamhani and Malkhedi villages of Balaghat, as per the information provided by the executing partner—FES, their field presence and activities could not be continued due to security threats. Hence only Mohgaon village was covered in the final field study from Balaghat.

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods approach to data collection, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative methods included household and beneficiary surveys, site observations, and physical verification of interventions and documents. Qualitative methods employed participatory tools such as FGDs, KIIs, and case studies to capture lived experiences. The data collection in each village was initiated with an FGD. Each FGD involved 15-30 project beneficiaries and were convened at common places such as Village Panchayat premises. Members of VDCs, EPCs and SHGs participated in the group discussions in each village. Care was taken to ensure adequate representation of gender and vulnerable groups in the FGD process, thereby strengthening

the inclusivity and validity of findings. Project-related documents and registers (agenda, minutes of meetings etc) maintained by the VDCs were examined to cross-check the activities carried out.

Key informants and individual beneficiaries were identified for further interviews during the FGD. The interviews were focused on individual perceptions on the benefits and impacts of the project and the challenges faced in accessing the benefits. Further the important physical assets created in the project as mentioned during the group discussions (farm bunds and ponds, check dams, agromet stations, biogas and vermi-compost units, *Lantana* removal and restoration of common lands etc.) were visited to verify the effectiveness of the activities.

Key informants also included representatives of the FES and WOTR who were interviewed to understand the factors behind success/ failure of project activities and challenges and constraints faced while implementation.



| FGDs with different VDC members, SHGs, project beneficiaries and farmers |



| Discussion with project beneficiaries |



| Document verification |



| Physical verification of project interventions |

5.4.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and comparative statistics to assess progress between baseline and endline indicators. Qualitative data were examined through thematic coding to draw out key patterns and lessons. Triangulation of findings across data sources and methods was used to enhance the robustness and reliability of conclusions.

5.5 Evaluation key questions

The evaluation addressed a set of key questions designed to assess relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and efficiency. Specifically, it examined:

1. To what extent have project objectives and intended outcomes been achieved;
2. The effectiveness of interventions in enhancing the resilience of communities and ecosystems;
3. The sustainability of project benefits beyond the Adaptation Fund financing period;
4. The inclusiveness and participatory nature of project processes, particularly for women and vulnerable groups; and
5. The lessons that can inform the design and implementation of future AF-supported and national adaptation programmes.

The interview schedules are enclosed as Appendix 1

5.6 Limitations of the terminal evaluation study

The terminal evaluation also faced several constraints as detailed below:

- The evaluation was conducted five years after the completion of the project, making it difficult to assess the current functionality of certain interventions. The time gap also reduced the effectiveness of recall-based data collection, as beneficiaries were often unable to provide accurate information. In several cases, beneficiaries also tended to confuse project interventions with those of other projects implemented by the same EE, making it difficult to isolate project-specific benefits and impacts.
- As EEs had withdrawn from many villages following project completion, it was challenging to mobilise community stakeholders for consultations due to the absence of an active local institutional presence.
- In a few villages, lack of records and limited availability of baseline and endline data created challenges in accurately comparing project outcomes and assessing changes over time. Weak functioning of some community institutions after project closure limited the availability of project documentation in certain locations.
- Dependence on recall during interviews may have resulted in minor inconsistencies in information related to project coverage, and perceived impacts.

06

Evaluation Results



The evaluation is based on a review of all relevant documents provided by NABARD, WOTR & FES complemented by insights gathered during field visits, which were used to verify the findings. For each component, the rating was first done at village level based on the field data collected and was then extrapolated to the component level on the basis of the frequency of rating. Consistency between documented evidence and field-level observations were also considered while assigning the rating.

The criteria for the rating scale are presented in Table 4 and the evaluation results are described in following sections.

Table 4: Description of rating scale

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project actions/activities planned were completed on track or exceeded expectations in achieving all major outcomes/outputs, without major shortcomings. The project could be presented as a “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project actions/activities planned were completed on track and achieved most major outcomes/outputs, with only minor shortcomings.
Marginally Satisfactory (MS)	Project actions/activities planned were completed on track and achieved most major relevant outcomes/outputs, but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance.
Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project actions/activities planned were not completed on track to achieve major outcomes/outputs, owing to major shortcomings, and only some major outcomes/outputs were achieved.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project actions/activities planned were not completed on track to achieve most major outcomes/outputs.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	Project actions/activities planned were not on track and failed to achieve, and were not expected to achieve, any of the intended outcomes/outputs.

6.1 Evaluation of project/programme outcomes

Table 5: Ratings for project/programme outcomes

S.No.	Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
1	Relevance	Alignment with AF goals & national priorities	- The project demonstrates strong alignment with AF strategic priorities, particularly in enhancing adaptive capacity, ecosystem resilience, and climate-resilient livelihoods. - Strong alignment with India's climate framework, including National Action Plan on Climate Change and its component missions such as Green India Mission and National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture - Consistent with the State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) of Madhya Pradesh, addressing vulnerabilities in Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni districts that have high climate vulnerability as per SAPCC via water conservation and livelihood diversification.	S

S.No.	Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
			- Aligns with National Forest Policy (1988), and Joint Forest Management promoting community- based forest management, National Biodiversity Act (2002) promoting biodiversity conservation, and National Rural Livelihood Mission supporting SHGs, livelihood and women empowerment - Field outcomes show improved irrigation, ground-water recharge, crop productivity, restoration of common lands, stronger women-centric institutions, strong community participation starting from project planning through village mapping and wealth ranking exercises to implementation through voluntary labour contribution. - Key gaps include limited focus on human-wildlife conflict, a major livelihood concern and low climate awareness at the community level.	
2	Effectiveness	Actual outcomes vs. objectives	- The project achieved notable outcomes in natural resource management, with soil and water conservation measures (bundling, trenches, farm ponds, check dams) improving groundwater recharge, soil moisture, and irrigation availability, benefitting around 900 ha of land. - These interventions enabled a shift from single to double cropping, along with crop diversification, leading to increased agricultural productivity and improved household incomes. - Ecological restoration efforts, particularly <i>Lantana</i> removal (over 2096 ha) supported natural regeneration and increased availability of NTFPs, enhancing ecosystem resilience and livelihoods particularly for women. - The project resulted in local skilling in organic farming practices (Jeevamrit preparation, azolla cultivation), veterinary treatment and vaccination etc. which is being widely practiced in the project villages. - However, several livelihood diversification activities (e.g., apiculture, lac cultivation, organic biochar making) were not adopted to scale due to lack of market linkages. - Plantation activities had only 10-15% success in most villages due to low survival on account of water scarcity and lack of proper care.	MS

S.No.	Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
			Persistent HWC restricted the continued adoption of biogas plants, organic farming etc. due to reducing cattle dung availability owing to declining livestock numbers on account of wildlife attacks.	
3	Efficiency	Timeliness, resource use, cost-effectiveness	- The project was designed with a milestone-based implementation approach aligned with seasonal agricultural cycles. However, in practice, delays in fund disbursement and (only 65% financial achievement as per the Project Completion Report) affected the implementation efficiency. The project implementation also faced the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 pandemic leading to gaps in financial utilisation. Despite this, available resources were prioritised towards key interventions, ensuring focused utilisation. - The project design focused on low-cost interventions, and in practice, soil and water conservation activities delivered high benefits at relatively low cost, such as increased cropping intensity, improved water availability, and higher incomes. - Field observations show that interventions like bunding, farm ponds, and check dams were effective, improving irrigation and agricultural output. However, some assets such as biogas units, solar lights, and agromet systems were not properly utilized, leading to uneven efficiency across components. - Community participation was strong, with around 50–60% contribution through labour (shramdaan) in many activities. This reduced implementation costs and increased local ownership, is a key strength of the project. Similarly, convergence with other schemes (veterinary training under Department of Animal Husbandry scheme) also reduced costs of the interventions.	MS
Overall Rating				MS

6.2 Risks to sustainability and progress towards impacts

Table 6: Ratings for sustainability aspects

S.No.	Key criteria	Discussion	Rating
1	Financial and Economic	- The project has contributed to improving rural livelihoods primarily through strengthening agriculture and related activities. Interventions such as farm bunding, farm ponds, irrigation support (pipes, motors), and promotion of organic farming have led to better soil moisture retention, increased water availability, and enhanced crop productivity. - In many villages, farmers have shifted from single rain-fed cropping to double cropping systems, cultivating crops such as wheat, gram, and vegetables in addition to paddy. An increase in 800 hectares of double cropping area enhancing the agricultural productivity of the target area by 75% is reported in the PCR. Income from agriculture has increased 1.5-2 times in the sampled villages. - Income from NTFPs, especially <i>mahua</i> and <i>tendu</i> leaves, has also increased, primarily owing to ecological restoration efforts. - However, these economic gains are not uniform across all villages and households. In addition, delays in fund disbursement limited the scale and coverage of activities, with only partial implementation in some areas. - A large proportion of households still depend heavily on agriculture and forest resources, and 80% of sampled villages report continued seasonal migration, making them vulnerable to climate variability and external shocks. Therefore, while the project has improved income levels, long-term financial sustainability remains moderate.	MS
2	Socio-Political	- As reported by FES, security risks in Balaghat region posed a significant socio-political risk to the sustainability of project interventions. Due to security concerns, access to several villages was restricted, and post project monitoring was discontinued. - In addition, land rights-related issues and restrictions on forest access continue to create uncertainty for local communities. For instance, in one village in Mandla, communities cited Eucalyptus plantations raised by the State Forest Development Corporation as a contributing factor to groundwater decline and increasing human-wildlife conflict, due to reduced availability of food resources for wildlife within forest areas. Ensuring the sustainability of project impacts would therefore require a landscape-level approach with stronger intersectoral and multi-departmental coordination.	S

S.No.	Key criteria	Discussion	Rating
		Awareness regarding climate change and long-term environmental risks is still limited in many villages, and participation levels are not equally strong across all villages (for instance women in some village felt they were left out in the village mapping and planning process). Similarly, there was no special attention for youth skilling and capacity building. These factors may affect the sustained adoption of project interventions and overall community ownership in the long run.	
3	Institutional Framework and Governance	- The project emphasised the development of community-based institutions as a key strategy for sustainability. VDCs and EPCs have been formed and are involved in planning and implementation processes. Creation of SHGs contributed to socioeconomic empowerment and these groups were later linked to Livelihood Mission, contributing to institutional sustainability. - Participatory approaches, including community labour contribution have strengthened local ownership in several villages. There is also evidence of convergence with government schemes, which supported long-term institutional sustainability. - The sustainability of these institutions varied across locations. In some villages, monitoring and follow-up mechanisms were found to be weak, and project documentation and institutional activities are not consistently maintained. - There is also a continued dependence on external agencies for technical guidance and coordination. While the institutional framework is in place and functioning in many areas, it requires strengthening to ensure consistent and long-term governance outcomes.	MS
4	Environmental	Ecological restoration is one of the strongest achievements of the project. Around 2100 ha of land was restored in Mandla and Balaghat districts through large-scale removal of invasive species <i>Lantana camara</i>. These efforts have led to natural regeneration of native species, increased biodiversity, and improved availability of forest-based resources. Removed <i>Lantana</i> biomass was also used to make biochar that was used in kitchen gardens to improve soil fertility, thus promoting circular resource use. In several areas—including Kumhara and parts of Bargi and Mohgaon—<i>Lantana</i> has re-emerged after initial clearance, indicating challenges in long-term maintenance and management of restored sites. Additionally, the risk of HWC persists in these regions, as regenerating vegetation continues to provide shelter for wild animals	S

S.No.	Key criteria	Discussion	Rating
		- Lack of designated grazing areas in villages continue to put stress on both agricultural land and forests. - Increasing cropping area and intensity may place additional pressure on scarce water resources unless appropriate water-use planning is implemented, including the promotion of less water-intensive crops such as millets and improved water management practices. - Environmentally beneficial practices such as organic farming could not be scaled up as desired due to labour constraints and limited availability of cattle dung following the increasing HWC and declining livestock populations.	
5	Uncertainties on Climate Change Impacts (Base-lines)	- The project area is highly vulnerable to climate variability, with observed changes in rainfall patterns, temperature fluctuations, and increasing uncertainty in seasonal cycles. Farmers reported issues such as irregular rainfall, delayed sowing and harvesting, water scarcity, and crop losses, which directly affect agricultural productivity and livelihood stability. Although agromet information systems were initially introduced to improve awareness, most of these are currently non-functional, resulting in a decline in timely climate-related information available to farmers. - The project has introduced several climate-resilient practices, including organic farming, SRI, crop diversification, and water conservation measures. These interventions have helped improve resilience in some villages. However, the adoption of such practices is not uniform, and many households still rely on traditional methods. Awareness of climate change remains limited, and access to agro-advisory services and timely climate information is inadequate. As a result, communities are only partially equipped to deal with climate-related risks, making this a continuing area of concern.	MS
	Overall rating		MS

6.3 Evaluation of processes influencing achievement of Project/Programme results

6.3.1 Preparation and readiness

The project displayed a strong level of preparation and readiness, grounded in a comprehensive baseline assessment of the environmental, social, and economic contexts. The project document clearly outlined climate change challenges affecting forest ecosystems and forest-dependent communities, including declining forest quality, increasing pressure on natural resources, and rising vulnerability of rural populations dependent on agriculture, livestock, and non-timber forest products. The proposal was supported by an analytical foundation, incorporating historical climate data and future projections of temperature and rainfall changes. Village-level vulnerability assessments using wealth ranking of households based on landholding size and multiple capitals (financial, human, natural, physical, and social) strengthened the design. This analysis identified small, marginal, and landless households as highly vulnerable and dependent on forests, enabling accurate targeting and need-based interventions. Village level participatory mapping exercises involved communities to create baseline resource maps.

Training programmes on a range of livelihood activities (organic farming practices, honey, lac and mushroom cultivation, veterinary treatment etc) under the project enhanced community readiness to undertake project activities.

6.3.2 Country ownership

The project reflected a strong degree of country ownership, as it is deeply embedded within national institutional frameworks, policy priorities, and state-level strategies. The involvement of key national and state institutions, along with alignment to India's climate

and development agenda, ensured that the project is not an isolated intervention but part of a broader national effort toward sustainable development and climate resilience.

a. Institutional ownership and leadership

A key indicator of strong country ownership is the role of national institutions in project implementation. In this case, the project is implemented through NABARD, which serves as the National Implementing Entity. Being a well-established national financial institution with extensive experience in rural development and climate-related projects, NABARD ensured that

the project is grounded in national systems and governance structures. In addition, the project is executed in collaboration with the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and RBS Foundation India. The involvement of the Forest Department was particularly important, as it brought regulatory authority and technical expertise to forest conservation and management.

b. Alignment with national policies

At the core, the project aligns with the NAPCC, particularly contributing to the goals of the Green India Mission and National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture under NAPCC. The project is also consistent with India's international climate commitments under its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), where increasing carbon sinks through forests and promoting climate-resilient livelihoods are key priorities.

From a legal and regulatory perspective, the project aligns with the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, National Forest Policy, 1988 and National Biodiversity Act, 2002 that aim to conserve forest ecosystems and biodiversity through participatory approaches. The project complements these laws by reducing anthropogenic pressure on forests through alternative livelihood options and community-based conservation approaches.

The project also aligns with rural development and livelihood-oriented programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and NRLM which aims to enhance livelihood security while supporting natural resource management. Overall, the project demonstrates strong coherence with India's policy framework by linking climate adaptation, forest conservation, and livelihood development. This alignment not only strengthens its relevance but also enhances the potential for institutional support, convergence with existing schemes, and long-term sustainability.

c. Integration with state-level strategies

The project is well aligned with the Madhya Pradesh State Action Plan on Climate Change (MP-SAPCC), which provides a roadmap for addressing climate risks at the state level. The MP-SAPCC focuses on key areas such as climate resilient agriculture, forest conservation, sustainable livelihoods, water resource management, and building resilience of vulnerable communities. In this context, the project directly supported these priorities by working in highly climate vulnerable districts like Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni, where changes in temperature and rainfall patterns have already been observed. The project used state-specific climate information to design interventions that are practical and locally relevant. It supported strengthening forest ecosystems, climate-resilient agriculture and livelihood diversification, which are also key focus areas of the SAPCC.

d. Convergence with ongoing government programmes

The project builds upon and complements existing government programmes and initiatives related to forestry, rural employment, and ecosystem conservation. Ongoing afforestation programmes, forest management initiatives, and livelihood support schemes, provide a supportive institutional environment for the project. Convergence is important because it enhances resource efficiency, avoid duplication, and creates synergies between different interventions. It also ensures that the project benefits from existing infrastructure, institutional mechanisms, and community networks already established by government programmes.



6.3.3 Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement played a central role in shaping the planning, implementation, monitoring, and outcomes of the project. The project adopted a multi-stakeholder participatory approach, ensuring that institutions at different levels—national, state, implementing agencies, NGOs, and local communities—were actively engaged throughout the project cycle. This collaborative framework helped in aligning project interventions with local needs, improving ownership, and enhancing the effectiveness of outcomes.

NABARD acted as the Implementing Entity and played a critical role in overall project governance, financial management, and monitoring. NABARD ensured that the project followed Adaptation Fund guidelines, maintained accountability, and facilitated coordination among executing agencies and other stakeholders. It also supported evaluation processes, stakeholder consultations, and provided logistical and institutional backing for implementation. This strong institutional

leadership ensured structured execution and timely monitoring of activities.

The executing entities—RBS Foundation India and partner organisations FES and WOTR—played a crucial role in the project implementation, monitoring and evaluation process. The local communities remained central to the project, participating through CBOs, VDCs, and SHGs in planning, selection of beneficiaries, and day-to-day implementation, which helped ensure that interventions were locally relevant and accepted. Farmers, women and NTFP collectors were the primary beneficiaries who actively adopted practices such as organic farming, water conservation, and diversified livelihoods, and their feedback helped refine project activities over time. Together, this collective engagement strengthened ownership, improved effectiveness on the ground, and supported the overall achievement of project results.

6.3.4 Financial management

An analysis of the financial statements (refer Table 1) shows that for financial years 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21, the total actual expenditure has been lower than the budgeted (approved) expenditure. The gap between the actual and budgeted expenditure has been increasing over years and was USD 66,717, USD 482,234, and USD 805,932 respectively. Cumulatively, USD 13,54,883 was the amount that was budgeted and was not spent for these three years.

The disbursed amount was USD 170,763 at the beginning of FY2017-18, USD 651,012 at the beginning of FY2018-19, USD 11,42,280 at the beginning of FY2019-20, and USD 11,49,224 at the beginning of FY2020-21, and a final disbursement in September 2020 which brought the cumulative disbursement to USD 15,34,238. The cumulative expenditure utilised

all of the disbursed amount and has slightly exceeded the disbursed amount by USD 4821.

The Project Completion Report indicated 65% financial achievement. The financial analysis (Table 1) shows that the actual expenditure as percentage of budgeted expenditure over 2018-21 was around 53% and only 47% of the budgeted expenditure was disbursed over these years. The actual cumulative expenditure was higher than the disbursed amount.

As per the Project Completion Report, for the duration 2017-21, actual expenditure as percentage of sanctioned budget was 65.3% whereas disbursed amount as percentage of sanctioned budget is 60.02%, and actual expenditure as percentage of disbursed amount was 108.8%.

Yearwise Analysis

2018-19: Highest gap between budgeted and actual was found for project components 2, 3 and 4. Actual spending was higher than budgeted for Component 1 (Integrated socio-economic and ecological assessment and planning). Non budgeted management costs were also a part of expenditure for each of these years.

Higher actual spending was noted on activities 3.1 (Adoption of climate resilient agricultural practices by 5000 households) and 4.1 (Knowledge management plan).

2019-20: Actual spending was lower than the budgeted amount for each of the expenditure heads.

2020-21: Actual spending was lower than the budgeted amount for each of the expenditure heads.

The highest gaps between budgeted and actual expenditure was for Components 2 and 3 for 2018-19 and 2019-20, as well as for Component 4 in the last year of project (2020-21).

The actual expenditure over the three years was highest for components 2 and 3. Components 1 and 4 have relatively lower amounts spent on them. Almost 70% of the total expenditure was on Component 3 (Integrated approach for ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods as a means of adoption). This is followed by 11.5% of the amount being expended on Component 2 (Community mobilisation for building adoptive practices).

It was also noted that expenditure on Components 2 and 3 has largely increased over years. It has largely decreased for Components 1 and 4, except component

4.2 (Developed pool of products comprising research studies, learning / case studies from the project) which has increased in the final year (2020-21) of the project. The management costs, as a percentage of total expenditure showed a declining trend, from approximately 16% of the total expenditure in 2017-18 to approximately 3% of the total expenditure in 2020-21.

The consistent gap between budgeted and disbursed amounts and actual expenditure across the project period indicated challenges in financial planning and implementation pacing. The widening gap over successive years suggests that project activities did not progress at the pace originally anticipated, particularly under Components 2, 3, and 4. The project implementation was also affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that could explain the wider gap between expenditure and budgeted amounts during 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Although cumulative expenditure eventually utilised almost the entire disbursed amount, the year-wise underutilisation points to delays in fund deployment. The concentration of nearly 70% of total expenditure under Component 3 demonstrates the project's strong implementation focus on ecosystem resilience and livelihood interventions. However, relatively lower expenditure on Components 1 and 4 may indicate low or insufficient investment in planning, monitoring, documentation, knowledge management, and learning processes.

The recurring shortfall in expenditure under Components 2 during certain years reflects implementation bottlenecks such as delays in community mobilisation, procurement staffing, or field execution, potentially due to COVID-19 impacts. The increase in expenditure on knowledge products and documentation activities during the final year suggests that reporting and documentation efforts were concentrated toward project closure rather than being integrated throughout the implementation period. The declining proportion of management costs over the years shows improving administrative efficiency and greater allocation of resources toward programme activities. However, very low management expenditure in later years may also risk limiting adequate monitoring, supervision, technical support, and institutional coordination. A balanced allocation between programme implementation and management support is therefore important.



6.3.4 Implementing Entity supervision and backstopping

The supervision and backstopping provided by NABARD ensured systematic implementation and achievement of project outcomes. The Implementing Entity established a structured monitoring and evaluation framework that included regular review of progress reports, financial tracking, and documentation of activities. Continuous technical guidance and coordination with executing partners FES and WOTR enabled effective implementation across project villages.

For the terminal evaluation, NABARD selected IIFM to carry out the assessment. All important project documents, such as reports, monitoring records, and village-level data, were properly shared with the

evaluation team so that they could understand the project clearly and assess it in detail. To make coordination easier, a WhatsApp group was created where field coordinators, executing agencies, and evaluators could stay connected and share updates quickly.

The team also stayed in touch with District Development Managers (DDMs) and other key stakeholders to ensure that field observations were accurate and based on real ground conditions. Overall, this approach made the evaluation more participatory and practical, and it helped in getting reliable and well-verified findings from the field.

6.3.5 Delays in project/programme start-up and implementation

Some delays were observed in the start-up and overall implementation of the project. In the initial phase, time was taken for finalizing implementation arrangements, selection of villages, and setting up coordination with executing partners, which slightly delayed the start of field activities. As seen from the PPR, implementation was gradual, with some activities picking up pace only after the first year. There were also delays in fund disbursement in a few phases, which affected the timely execution of certain interventions on the ground. In addition, variations in implementation approaches between partners (FES and WOTR), local geographical challenges, and dependency on community

participation also influenced the pace of progress.

By the end of the sanctioned project implementation period, the project had achieved 65% financial utilisation of the sanctioned grant. In view of the field-level implementation challenges and other operational constraints, the Executing Entity requested closure of the project at the achieved level of implementation. Overall, while the project achieved several intended outcomes, these delays highlight the importance of timely fund flow, stronger coordination, and advance planning for evaluations to ensure smoother implementation and assessment processes.

6.4 Evaluation of contribution of Project/Programme achievements to the Adaptation Fund targets, objectives, impact, and goal: Elements and ratings

The objective of AF is to reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change, including variability at local and national levels. The Adaptation Fund Results Framework includes an overall Goal (Assist developing-country Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of concrete adaptation projects and programmes in order to implement climate-resilient measures), one Impact statement (Increased resiliency at the community, national, and regional levels to climate variability and change), seven major Outcomes, and seven corresponding outputs, supported by a set of core indicators for monitoring project performance. These indicators assess progress related to institutional strengthening, climate risk reduction, ecosystem resilience, livelihood diversification, infrastructure improvement, community awareness, and integration of climate adaptation into development planning.

The KPC project interventions directly contributed toward enhancing climate resilience, strengthening ecosystem services, promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, and improving institutional and community adaptive capacities. The assessment of the project demonstrates strong alignment with several key outcomes of the Adaptation Fund Results Framework, particularly Outcome 2 (Strengthened Institutional Capacity to Reduce Climate Risks), Outcome 3 (Strengthened Awareness and Ownership of Adaptation Processes), Outcome 5 (Increased Ecosystem Resilience), and Outcome 6 (Diversified and Strengthened Livelihoods).

The communities in the KPC landscape had faced major challenges such as water scarcity, poor irrigation facilities, and high dependence on forests and rainfed agriculture, severe spread of invasive species *Lantana camara* and consequent biodiversity degradation, accentuated by weak local institutional systems and low awareness regarding climate adaptation. During the project implementation period, considerable progress was achieved through the formation of SHGs, VDCs, Mahila Sabhas, participatory planning activities, exposure visits, and various capacity-building programmes.



Interventions related to organic farming, agro-advisory support, watershed management, and ecosystem restoration helped strengthen local adaptive capacities and improve awareness regarding sustainable natural resource management.



By the completion stage, ecosystem restoration and livelihood interventions produced significant positive impacts across many project villages. Large-scale *Lantana* removal, soil and moisture conservation, and biodiversity restoration activities improved ecosystem services, water retention, and NTFP availability contributing to Outcome 5. Interventions such as kitchen gardens, goat rearing, poultry, fishery, climate-resilient agriculture, and alternative livelihood activities, contributed to increased household income, reduced migration, and improved livelihood security as targeted under Outcome 6 of AF. Institutional strengthening, community participation, women's leadership, and local governance mechanisms enhanced achievement of Outcome 2 while awareness activities promoted behavioral changes toward sustainable agriculture, forest conservation, and reduced fuelwood dependency contributing to Outcome 3. Table 7 shows the alignment of project achievements with AF objective, goal and impact.

Table 7: Alignment with AF Objective, Goal and Impact

Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
Contribution to AF Goal	Alignment with AF RBM framework and core indicators	The project substantially contributed to the Adaptation Fund Goal by strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacities of vulnerable tribal and forest-dependent communities in the KPC. The interventions strongly align with Outcome 2 of AF (Institutional Capacity Strengthening) through SHGs, VDCs, Mahila Sabhas, and participatory governance systems; Outcome 5 (Increased Ecosystem Resilience) through <i>Lantana</i> removal, afforestation, biodiversity restoration, and watershed management; and Outcome 6 (Diversified and Strengthened Livelihoods) through climate-resilient agriculture, livestock support, kitchen gardens, and alternative livelihood opportunities. These interventions addressed key vulnerabilities such as water scarcity, declining agricultural productivity, biodiversity degradation, and HWC. The project outcomes can be mapped to AF outcomes as follows: • Outcome 1: Improved understanding of prevalent dynamics and changes in the intervention areas was aligned with AF Outcome 3: “Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level.” The project enhanced community understanding of climate vulnerabilities and environmental changes through awareness programmes, participatory planning, and capacity-building activities. Increased stakeholder engagement strengthened local ownership and participation in climate adaptation and risk reduction processes. • Outcome 2: Enhanced capability of the community to take collective action, practice adaptive livelihoods, and promote conservation measures was aligned with AF Outcome 2: “Strengthened institutional capacity to reduce risks associated with climate-induced socioeconomic and environmental losses.” The project strengthened local institutions and community participation through collective planning, sustainable livelihood practices, and conservation initiatives. These interventions improved community resilience,	S

Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
		institutional coordination, and adaptive capacity to address climate-related socioeconomic and environmental risks. • Outcome 3: Improved adaptive capacity of the community and landscape was aligned with AF Outcome 5: “Increased ecosystem resilience in response to climate change and variability-induced stress,” and AF Outcome 6: “Diversified and strengthened livelihoods and sources of income for vulnerable people in targeted areas.” The project strengthened ecosystem resilience through restoration and sustainable resource management while enhancing livelihood security through climate-resilient and income-generating activities for vulnerable communities. • Outcome 4: Improved understanding of climate change threats and impacts on the landscape along with enhanced stakeholder involvement was aligned with AF Outcome 3: “Strengthened awareness and ownership of adaptation and climate risk reduction processes at local level.” The project strengthened stakeholder participation, awareness, and local ownership through consultations, training programmes, and participatory adaptation planning, thereby enhancing collective understanding of climate risks and conservation needs. Field Evidence: • Farmers shifted from single cropping to double cropping after irrigation and watershed interventions. • Improved water availability and agricultural productivity reduced migration in several villages. • <i>Lantana</i> removal restored degraded lands and reduced HWC. • Women’s participation increased through SHGs and livelihood activities	

Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
Contribution to AF Impact	Increased resiliency at the community, national, and regional levels to climate variability and change	The project generated significant impacts on ecosystem restoration, water conservation, climate-resilient agriculture, and livelihood diversification. The interventions strongly align with Outcome 4 (Increased Adaptive Capacity within Development Sectors) through check dams, farm bunds and ponds, and irrigation support; Outcome 5 (Ecosystem Resilience) through restoration of degraded commons and biodiversity conservation; and Outcome 6 (Diversified Livelihoods) through improved livelihood opportunities and reduced economic vulnerability. Institutional strengthening under Outcome 2 also enhanced participation of women and tribal communities in local decision-making processes. Field Evidence: • More than 900 hectares of watershed and land treatment activities improved groundwater recharge and soil moisture. • Villagers reported improved irrigation and increased agricultural production after check dam and bunding interventions. • Communities observed reduced forest fire incidents and improved regeneration of native species. • Women reported improved financial independence through SHGs and village-level enterprises.	S
Contribution to AF Objective	Reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change, including variability at local and national levels	The project effectively aligned with the AF Objective through integrated adaptation interventions targeting agriculture, forests, water resources, livelihoods, and local institutions. The interventions strongly align with Outcome 2 (Institutional Capacity Strengthening), Outcome 3 (Strengthened Awareness and Ownership), Outcome 5 (Ecosystem Resilience), and Outcome 6 (Diversified Livelihoods). Awareness generation, participatory planning, climate-resilient agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and livelihood diversification enhanced adaptive capacity and reduced climate vulnerability among local communities.	S

Key criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
		Field Evidence: • Organic farming, Jeevamrit preparation, millet cultivation, and conservation agriculture practices were adopted in several villages. • Livelihood activities such as goatery, poultry, vermi-composting, fish farming, and kitchen gardening improved household income opportunities. • Farmers received pipes, motors, sprinklers, and agricultural training to improve climate resilience. • SHGs, VDCs, Mahila Sabhas etc. strengthened participatory adaptation planning and local governance.	



Table 8 rates the project outputs based on the field observations. An overall rating is provided for the achievements at project outcome level also, based on the ratings received for the outputs for each outcome.

Table 8: Rating of project achievements

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
Component 1 : Integrated socio - economic - ecological planning and assessment					
Outcome 1: Improved understanding of prevalent dynamics and changes in area of interventions - Overall Rating S					
Output 1.1: Socio economic baseline report with village level detailed analysis in the project villages	Number of village level meetings conducted	56 village development plan and socio economic information about 56 villages	56	HS	Strong participation and improved local planning through VDCs, especially women engagement. Meetings conducted regularly across villages visited
	% of village households represented in meetings		50%		Participation is high in all villages visited
	Number of men and women participants		9687		High participation; women in Pindrai, Malara, Chichyari actively engaged in meetings and decision-making, improving inclusiveness.
Output 1.2: Baseline mapping and change assessments of natural resource base in project villages using GIS.	Area/villages covered with Satellite imagery	Comprehensive set of maps that outline the natural resources in the 56 project villages at baseline.	56	S	All villages covered; mapping done in Jhalakondi, Bargi, but limited practical use in planning and updating.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of villages with mapping of natural resources	Annual change assessments to measure changes to the village woodlots/ surrounding forests.	56		Mapping completed but limited participation of women (e.g., Bargi) and weak integration into village planning.
Component 2 : Community mobilisation for building adaptive capacities					
Outcome 2: Enhanced capability of the community to take collective action, practice adaptive livelihoods and conservation - Overall Rating MS					
Output 2.1: Robust community institutions in 56 villages with collective decision making of stakeholders at village / cluster / district / landscape level on issues of conservation, climate change, gender and development.	Number of meetings / trainings conducted for formation and strengthening of CBOs	Monthly meetings of village CBOs conducted for 56 villages for 4 years 112 training and 56 exposure visits on capacity building are provided to selected members of 56 village level CBOs.	2424	S	Regular meetings in villages like Darasi, Karkoti, Malara; strong institutional base but effectiveness and sustainability varies across locations.
	Number of men and women participants in the workshops/ training sessions		2680		Good participation in training sessions as per FGD feedback, but coverage still limited compared to total population
	% of participants with respect to total village population	At least 50% of the village households actively participate in	8.00%		Low (~8%); villages like Bakrampath, Atarwani show limited outreach and inclusion.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
		planning and implementing village development plans. At least 30% women participants in village CBOs			
	Area brought under community management/ protection	At least 3,000 hectares of forest area is brought under sustainable management	Restoration of 2096 ha of degraded land through removal of <i>Lantana</i>		66% target achieved, strong efforts visible in villages visited
	Number of self-help groups active with average savings and active inter-lending	At least 150 SHGs are revived/ created and 4 trainings per year are provided to women SHG members	81		SHGs active in most villages improving savings and women empowerment; some inactive (e.g., Karkoti) due to COVID related disruptions and lack of income.
	Number of women covered through gender based trainings/ exposure visits.	56 exposure visits are provided to selected women SHGs members, At least 1,500 women are mobilised into active SHGs	1651		Strong women participation in Pindrai, Malara, Chichyari; increased financial independence and decision-making.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
Output 2.2: Participatory Impact monitoring	Number of village level CBOs undertaking participatory impact monitoring	112 (Midterm and end term) participatory impact monitoring exercises conducted by members of the village level CBOs for all the 56 villages	10	U	Very limited participation; monitoring weak in villages like Atarwani and Bargi.
	Number of participants		138		
	% of participants with respect to total village population		2%		Extremely low (~2%); community ownership missing across villages.
Component 3: Integrated approaches for ecosystem resilience and sustainable livelihoods as a means for adaptation					
Outcome 3: Improved adaptive capacity of the community and landscape - Overall Rating MS					
Output 3.1: Climate resilient agricultural practices are adopted by the identified beneficiaries	Number of agricultural demonstrations conducted for par workers and farmers.	64 demonstrations are conducted for the farmers (16 per year) ,8 trainings are conducted for 28 para-workers (16 training days for 4 years) Each farmer receives 4 mobilisation training days each year	231	MS	Strong implementation in all villages, where farmers adopted improved practices like SRI, organic farming (Jeevamrit), and better crop management.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of households practicing SRI, other improved package of practices.	At least 5,000 households receive inputs, technical assistance and linkage support for improved and climate resilient agricultural livelihoods.	4582		High adoption in Pindrai, Atarwani, Malara etc where farmers shifted from single cropping to double cropping (wheat, gram, rice). Crop yield and income increased significantly (1.5–2 times).
	Area treated through watershed activities	Atleast 1,800 ha is covered by watershed development activity	1823		Strong impact in Daras Khapa and Kalai, Jhalakondi, Chichyari, where farmbunds and ponds, check dams improved water availability, groundwater recharge, and reduced soil erosion.
	Number of households with access to micro irrigation mechanism	At least 560 households support on installing Micro irrigation mechanism.	305		Limited access in Atarwani, Karkoti, Bakram-path, where farmers demanded more pipes, sprinklers, and wells. Unequal distribution affected full benefits.
	Number of households with access to weather information	At least 5 agromet stations are installed covering the 56 villages	2360		Agro-met stations were non-functional or discontinued, reducing effectiveness.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
Output 3.2: Adoption of diversified livelihoods for poverty reduction and enhanced climate change resilience by 2,000 households	Number of households adopting alternative livelihoods	At least 2,000 households have access and means to practice alternative livelihoods and diversify their income sources. Each beneficiary receives 4 mobilisation training days each year on alternative livelihood adopted	1913	MS	Good adoption in Chichyari, Malara, Jhalakondi (goatery, fishery, NTFPs). However, activities discontinued in Pindrai, Beesapur, showing low sustainability and limited scaling.
	Number of linkages created to complement alternative livelihoods	At least 2 robust market linkages are created for alternative livelihoods	1		Weak market linkage across villages like Pindrai, Jhalakondi. Livelihoods remain small-scale with limited access to formal markets, affecting sustainability.
Output 3.3: Enhanced vocational skills in 500 individuals	Number of youth that have undergone skill training.	At least 500 youth are skill trained for employability	110	MU	Limited training reach in villages like Jhalakondi, Karkoti etc. Some trainings (eg. livestock vaccination) provided but not scaled effectively
Output 3.4: Energy efficient mechanisms to reduce fuel wood dependency are adopted	Number of households having access to bio-gas plants	At least 400 household have access to bio-gas	175	MU	Low effectiveness and sustainability, most biogas units are non-functional due to low dung availability, LPG usage, and seasonal issues

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of households and establishments having access to efficient cooking stoves	At least 600 households have access to energy efficient cooking stoves At least 100 efficient cooking stoves are provided to small establishments	70		Cookstoves are rarely used due to user preference and lack of awareness, resulting in minimal impact on fuelwood reduction.
	Number of households have access to solar lanterns	At least 600 households are provided with solar lanterns	673		Positive adoption in Malara, Jhalakondi, but many units are non-functional, indicating maintenance and sustainability issues.

Component 4: Knowledge management

Outcome 4: Improved understanding on threats and climate change impacts on the landscape and enhanced involvement of stakeholders - Overall Rating U

Output 4.1: Knowledge management plan covering all main KPC dependent user groups to improve awareness levels and facilitate informed decision making to address threats to KPC	Number of workshops conducted	A knowledge management plan created which is used as a strategy document for creating, developing, designing and communicating knowledge covering various stakeholders of KPC.	4	MS	Limited workshops conducted; community awareness on climate change and project learnings remains low. Knowledge plan exists but weak ground-level outreach.
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Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of participants from each homogeneous group contributing to the knowledge management plan		NA		Limited participation from different groups; weak engagement of community members (especially women and youth) in knowledge planning and dissemination.
Output 4.2: Developed pool of products comprising research studies, learning/ case studies from the project, training modules and capacities for its dissemination through relevant tools.	Number of audio visual content designed and developed for dissemination	At least 5 number of audio visual content developed (short movies/documentaries)	1	U	Very low output (1 vs target 5); villagers reported minimal exposure to such materials, limiting awareness and learning.
	Number of Newsletters, Pamphlets, stickers, modules and posters designed and developed for dissemination	At least 16 newsletters developed, At least 3 modules for school children prepared, At least 12 posters and pamphlets developed	0		Not achieved; absence of IEC materials as observed in villages like Atarwani and Jhalakondi reduced communication and awareness on project interventions.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of research studies commissioned	At least 4 research studies are commissioned to be published in peer reviewed journals	5		Strong documentation, but findings not effectively shared at village level.
	Number of success stories developed for dissemination	At least 20 success stories/case studies are developed and designed for dissemination	36		Exceeded target; good examples from Chichyari, Malara show positive impacts, but dissemination at community level is limited.
	IT platform created for dissemination	1 website developed	0		Not achieved; no digital platform available for wider dissemination and knowledge sharing.
Output 4.3: Local and National Level Campaigns/ Workshops for dissemination	Number of village/school level dissemination workshops held for the community	At least 12 village level awareness workshops per village are conducted in 56 project villages	4	U	Low achievement; villages like Pindrai reported no exposure visits or awareness activities, resulting in low climate awareness.
	Number of intercommunity awareness/ cross learning workshops	At least 8 inter – community awareness and cross learning campaigns/ fairs/ workshops are conducted	4		Partially achieved; limited cross-learning between villages, reducing knowledge exchange.

Output	Indicator	Target	Final achievements	Rating (by evaluator)	Remarks based on field observations
	Number of project level awareness workshops	At least 4 project level awareness workshops are conducted	1		Low achievement; minimal engagement at higher level dissemination.
	Number of national level awareness workshops	At least 2 national level awareness workshops are conducted	1		Partially achieved; limited broader impact and outreach.
	Number of participants from homogeneous groups / % of households participating		185		Low participation; limited outreach across villages like Beesapur, Atarwani, affecting overall awareness.
	Number / % of attendees in awareness workshops		NA		No activity; absence of digital platform indicates weak knowledge dissemination.
	Number of website hits		0		No activity
	Number of media trips organised	Atleast 6 media field exposure visits are conducted.	0		Not conducted; no wider visibility and outreach of project learnings.

Among the project outcomes, Outcome 1 on socio-economic and ecological planning was rated Satisfactory (S) overall, due to successful baseline assessments, village-level consultations, and GIS-based mapping activities across all 56 villages, which supported local planning and improved participation, especially among women. Outcome 2 on community mobilisation received a Marginally Satisfactory (MS) rating as the

project strengthened SHGs, village institutions, and women's participation through trainings and exposure visits. However, low community participation, weak participatory monitoring systems, and unachieved forest management targets reduced its effectiveness. Outcome 3: Improved adaptive capacity of the community and landscape received an overall Marginally Satisfactory rating. The project achieved significant

progress in climate-resilient agriculture, watershed development, SRI adoption, organic farming, and water conservation interventions. Activities such as farm ponds, check dams, farm bunding, and improved cropping practices enhanced water availability, crop productivity, and livelihood security across several villages. However, limitations such as weak market linkages, low vocational placement support, and sustainability issues in alternative livelihoods and energy-efficient technologies prevented the outcome from achieving a fully satisfactory rating.

In contrast, Outcome 4: Knowledge management and awareness dissemination was the weakest-performing outcome and received an Unsatisfactory (U) rating due to limited workshops, weak outreach activities, lack of IEC materials, poor awareness generation, and absence of digital dissemination platforms, which

reduced stakeholder engagement and long-term learning impacts.

Comparing the outcome/ component level rating with the financial performance, it was observed that the actual expenditure over the project period was the highest for components 2 and 3 that have received MS ratings. Almost 70% of the total expenditure was on Component 3, which saw the largest number of field interventions, however the scale and sustainability of many of these interventions remained limited. Components 1 and 4 had relatively lower amounts spent on them, yet component 1 received an S rating due to strong baseline creation through vulnerability assessments and mapping exercises. The lower achievement and rating (U) for component 4 is commensurate with the low financial expenditure under this component.

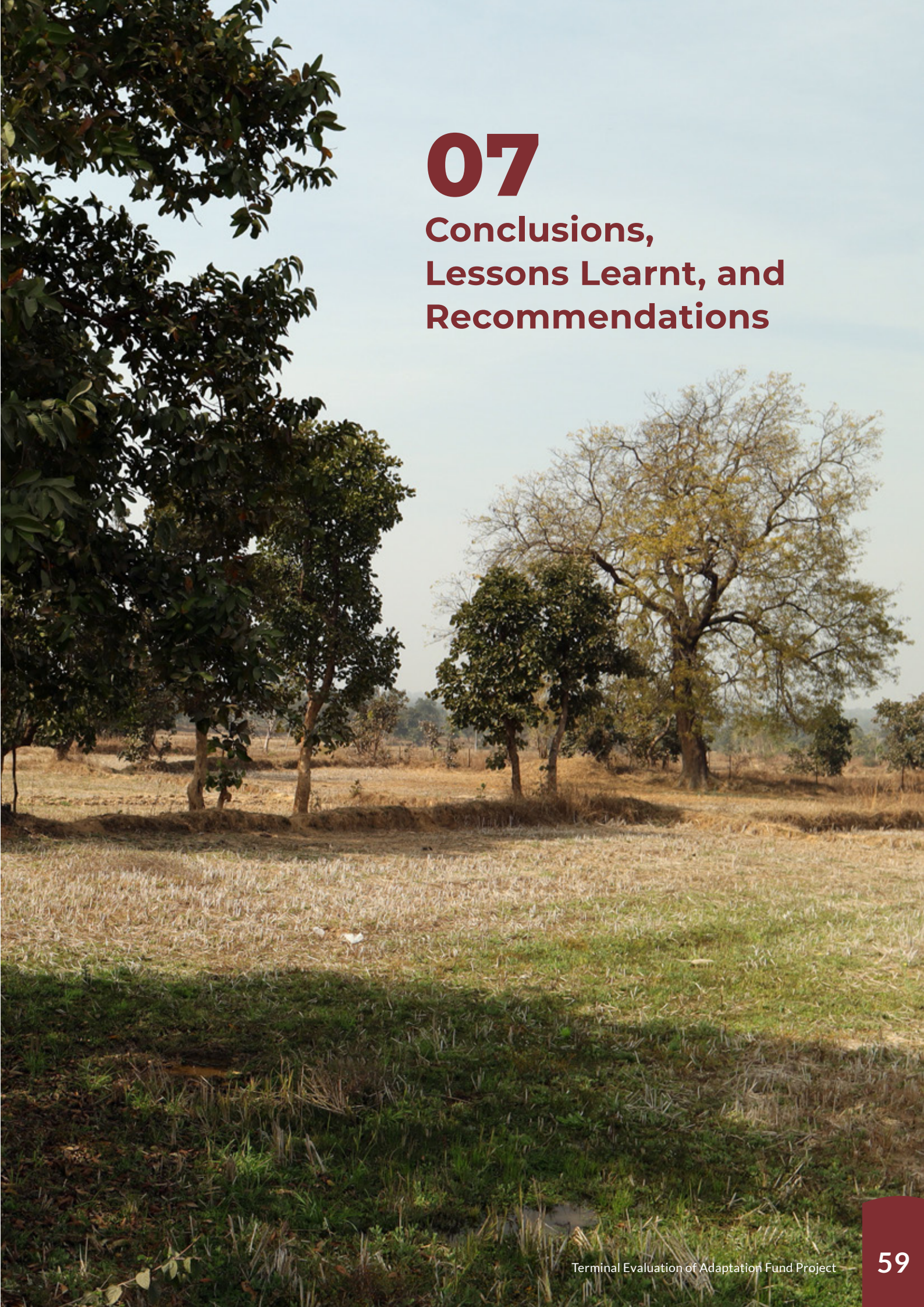
6.5 Evaluation of M&E systems: Dimensions and ratings

Table 9: Evaluation of M&E Systems

S. No	Key Criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
1	M&E Plan	- Quality and use for adaptive management - Contribution to long-term tracking systems	The project had a well-defined M&E plan at the design stage, including a results framework, indicators, targets, and periodic reporting mechanisms (PPRs, result trackers etc.). The funding proposal clearly outlined monitoring arrangements and alignment with AF requirements.	S
1.1	M&E Plan-Design		The design of the M&E system was structured and aligned with project objectives, integrating ecological, livelihood, and institutional components. Baseline assessments and vulnerability analysis were conducted to inform interventions. But imbalance between ecological and livelihood indicators and limited integration of risk dimensions (e.g., HWC, climate variability awareness) reduced its analytical strength. The design was strong at framework level but lacked depth in adaptive and context-specific indicators.	MS

S. No	Key Criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
1.2	M&E Plan – Implementation		The M&E system was partially implemented with mixed effectiveness. Tools such as FGDs, field visits, and result trackers were used, indicating an operational system. Field evidence shows weak and irregular monitoring at village level, poor tracking of asset utilization (e.g., non-functional biogas units, solar lights), and limited feedback integration into decision-making. Monitoring was also affected by access constraints (e.g., areas with security risks) and varying institutional capacities. Overall, implementation remained inconsistent and not sufficiently adaptive.	MU
1.3	M&E – Budgeting & Funding		Although M&E provisions were included in the budget, delays in fund disbursement and partial release (only around 65%) constrained monitoring activities. Limited financial flow reduced field visits, monitoring coverage, and timely data collection. These financial constraints directly weakened the effectiveness of the M&E system.	U
2	Indicators	- Balance between outputs and outcomes - Inclusion of sustainability and climate-related indicators	The project had clearly defined indicators in the results framework, covering livelihood, ecological restoration, and institutional development. Strengths: - Indicators linked with project objectives (e.g., agriculture productivity, forest restoration, livelihood support) - Regular tracking through PPRs and result trackers Gaps observed: - Limited indicators on quality of outcomes (e.g., sustainability of assets like biogas, solar lights) - Weak tracking of behavioral change and climate awareness - Some indicators were more output-focused rather than outcome-focused	

S. No	Key Criteria	Assessment dimension	Discussion	Rating
3	Project/ programme baselines	• Adequacy of baseline assessment • Use of participatory approaches • Usefulness for long-term impact tracking	The project conducted baseline and vulnerability assessments at the beginning, including livelihood conditions, natural resource status, and climate risks. Strengths: • Baseline used to identify village-level interventions • Included participatory approaches (FGDs, community inputs) Gaps observed: • Baseline data was not consistently updated or compared over time • Some field observations show lack of clear tracking of changes (e.g., asset performance, income sustainability)	MS
4	Alignment of Project/ Programme M&E Frameworks to National M&E Frameworks	• Alignment with national priorities • Convergence with government schemes • Integration with government monitoring systems	The project was generally aligned with national priorities and schemes, especially in areas like climate adaptation, forest conservation and livelihood improvement. Evidence of alignment: • Linkages with government schemes (e.g., SHGs linked to livelihood programmes, watershed activities, NRM practices) • Focus on climate resilience, forest conservation, and rural livelihoods, which align with national policies • Institutional involvement of NABARD ensured policy-level alignment Gaps observed: No strong evidence of formal integration with national M&E systems (e.g., data sharing or unified tracking system)	MS
Overall Rating				MS



07

Conclusions, Lessons Learnt, and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The evaluation of the Adaptation Fund-supported project “Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha–Pench Corridor” highlighted its significant contribution to improving livelihood security, strengthening community institutions, and enhancing ecological conditions across villages in Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni districts. The project has addressed key vulnerabilities of forest-dependent communities through its integrated approach, combining institutional development, ecosystem conservation, and climate-resilient

livelihoods. A remarkable achievement is that the project could result in visible impacts despite the setbacks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and that many of the outcomes have been sustained beyond the project intervention period. While the interventions have generated positive outcomes across livelihoods, natural resource management, and local governance, variations in implementation and local contexts have led to uneven impacts across villages. The following section presents a synthesis of key findings and recommendations, drawing on village-level insights.

7.1.1 Livelihood enhancement and alternative livelihood activities

The project has led to noticeable improvements in livelihood security across intervention villages by strengthening agriculture, diversifying income sources, and reducing seasonal vulnerability. Interventions like farm bunding (*med bandhan*), check dams (*bori bandhan*), and access to irrigation (pipes, sprinklers, farm ponds) enabled farmers to shift from single cropping to double cropping systems, resulting in increased agricultural productivity and income. Check dams and other water conservation structures could bring additional area under farming, for instance in Jhalkhonda village in

Seoni, construction of three farm ponds benefitted 40 acres of land. Distribution of harvesters, bullock cart wheels, construction of cattle sheds also supported farming and allied activities. Farmers reported diversification into crops such as pulses and oilseeds, soybean and maize, along with increased adoption of improved practices like System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and organic inputs.



| Agricultural Support Structures Observed in the Field (Pipe, Motor, and Bunding) |

In Chichyari Ryt, one of the most significant livelihood transformations was observed, where removing invasive species *Lantana* from 14 hectares of community land through *shramdaan* led to the natural regeneration of native NTFP species such as *mahua* and *tendu* and reduced wild animal hiding spots. Large-scale *Lantana* removal (around 2,096 ha) from village commons (442 ha) and private lands (1654 ha) across the region significantly reduced human-wildlife conflicts while reclaiming land for cultivation, fodder production (3144 tonnes as per PCR) and NTFP harvest. Ecological restoration combined with agriculture and NTFP-based income led to a substantial increase in household income (up to ₹1.6 lakh additional income

reported) and a reduction in migration. Across multiple villages, the collection and sale of NTFPs such as *mahua* and *tendu* leaves increased significantly (3–4 times in some cases), providing an important supplementary income source.

The project introduced alternative livelihood activities such as goatery, small enterprises, kitchen gardening, and NTFP-based income generation. In villages such as Pindrai and Beesapur Maal (Seoni), kitchen gardening and NTFP collection contributed to improved income and nutrition, and some households benefited from small enterprise support.

7.1.2 Natural resource management and ecological restoration

Ecological restoration is one of the strongest and most visible outcomes of the project. Large-scale removal of invasive species, particularly *Lantana camara*, played a transformative role in restoring degraded forest landscapes. In Chichyari (Balaghat), community-led *lantana* removal resulted in natural regeneration of indigenous species such as *mahua* and *tendu*, improved soil fertility, and enhanced biodiversity. The restored land was further utilized for grazing, agriculture, and collection of wild vegetables, medicinal plants, and forest-based resources demonstrating a strong link between ecological health and livelihoods. People were also trained to make biochar from *Lantana* removed from land, which is being used in homestead gardens to improve soil quality.



| *Lantana* removal sites |



| Biochar production from *Lantana* |

Water conservation interventions such as check dams, farm ponds, and contour bunding improved soil moisture, groundwater recharge, and irrigation availability. In villages like Kumhara and Beesapur Maal, these interventions contributed directly to improved agricultural outcomes and resilience against rainfall variability.

7.1.3 Institutional strengthening

The project demonstrated strong performance in building and strengthening community-based institutions such as SHGs, VDCs and EPCs who were actively involved in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes. SHGs played a significant role in enhancing financial inclusion, reducing indebtedness, and promoting collective action. The participatory approach, supported by community contributions of labour for project activities such as construction of bunds and dams, enhanced ownership and sustainability of interventions.

Women's participation emerged as a key strength of the project. Interviews with EE representatives also highlighted women-centric planning process as a crucial factor for success of interventions. In Mandla and Balaghat, women are now directly involved in NTFP collection and marketing, with *tendu* leaves cards

issued in women's name and systems ensuring that payments were transferred to their bank accounts, thereby strengthening their financial independence. Women actively participated in organic farming, kitchen gardening, and use of biogas units, reducing dependence on fuelwood.

During the evaluation, a number of project-related documents prepared over the project duration were thoroughly verified. These included bill books, attendance records, training records, and material distribution registers. In addition, resource maps developed by the village communities for their respective villages were also reviewed. Overall, it was observed that the project records have been well maintained, even several years after project completion, showing a strong documentation and record-keeping system in most villages visited.



Field Implementation of Biogas Units and Kitchen Gardens



Agromet station

7.1.4 Enhancing climate resilience

The project contributed to building climate resilience primarily through improved water management, and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. In several villages, farmers adopted organic farming, zero-tillage farming, use of bio-inputs (e.g., Jeevamrit and vermi-compost), and traditional crop varieties, which reduced input costs and increased resilience to climatic variability. Improved irrigation and soil moisture conservation enabled farmers to cope better with erratic rainfall. In villages in Mandla and Balaghat, seed festivals were organised by FES, where farmers exchanged indigenous seeds among themselves to promote crop diversity. It was also noted that millet cultivation is widely practiced in the region, in restored lands, contributing to climate resilient agriculture.

7.1.5 Overall project performance

The evaluation found that the project made a positive contribution to improving climate resilience, livelihoods, and ecological restoration in the KPC landscape. Overall, the project was rated Marginally Satisfactory (MS) for effectiveness, sustainability, and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), while its relevance was rated Satisfactory (S) due to strong alignment with the AF priorities and national and state climate policies. Interventions related to watershed management,

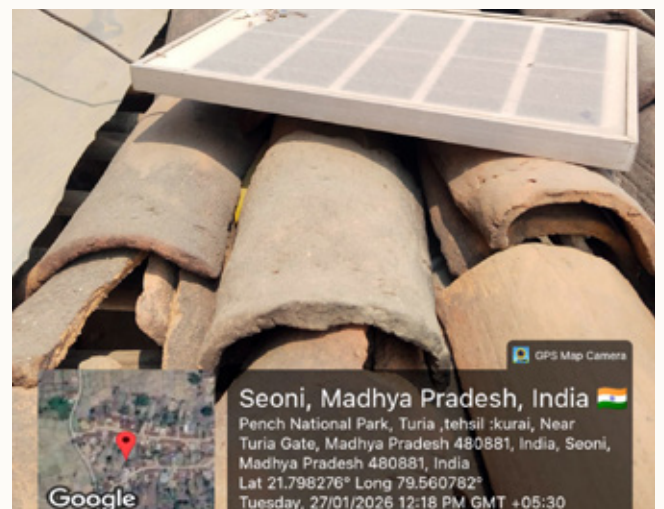
climate-resilient agriculture, *Lantana* removal, and community institution strengthening improved water availability, agricultural productivity, NTFP access, and community participation, particularly among women.

Outcome 1 on socio-economic and ecological planning received a Satisfactory (S) rating due to strong baseline assessments and participatory planning processes. Outcomes 2 and 3 were rated Moderately Satisfactory (MS), reflecting positive impacts in community mobilisation, watershed development, and

livelihood support, but with limitations related to sustainability, market linkages, and uneven implementation. Outcome 4 on knowledge management was rated Unsatisfactory (U) due to weak awareness generation and dissemination activities. Financial analysis showed that although most expenditure was concentrated under components/ outcomes 2 and 3 which achieved MS ratings, stronger outcomes were achieved with lower financial investment in Component 1 where planning, institutional strengthening, and participatory processes were robust.



| Vermi composting and Jeevamrit production |



| Solar lantern and solar light plate |

In conclusion, the project demonstrated that a community-driven, ecosystem-based adaptation approach can effectively enhance both livelihood security and ecological resilience in forest-dependent landscapes like the Kanha–Pench Corridor.

7.2 Lessons learnt

Discussion with project beneficiaries, visits to intervention sites and physical verification of assets created under the project provided important lessons for future interventions, which are described below:

7.2.1 Equitable participation of households in VDCs and other village level institutions contributed to positive outcomes

The project ensured inclusive representation by actively involving all socio-economic groups within VDCs. The selection of villages and beneficiaries was carried out through a participatory approach involving all key stakeholders. At the village level, the VDCs, in collaboration with the implementing NGOs, were responsible for identifying beneficiary households. This process was guided by a wealth index, which categorised

households based on land ownership into very poor, poor, middle, and relatively better-off groups. Priority was consciously given to households falling under the poor and very poor categories, ensuring that the project interventions primarily benefited the most vulnerable sections of the community. The EEs also highlighted community participation and women centric planning as key to success of the project activities.

7.2.2 Different approaches followed by the Executing Entities resulted in varied sustainability outcomes

The two executing partners WOTR and FES, are well-known organisations with strong expertise in their respective domains. WOTR primarily focused on watershed management interventions such as farm bunding, ponds, and other soil and water conservation activities, while FES concentrated on ecological restoration through removal of *Lantana camara* and restoration of common and private lands.

Both sets of interventions generated positive impacts in terms of livelihood improvement and natural resource conservation. However, the sustainability of outcomes varied across intervention areas. Villages supported by FES demonstrated comparatively stronger long-term sustainability due to sustained investments in village-level institutional strengthening and continued post-project engagement through other programmes and institutional support mechanisms. In several FES villages, monitoring and maintenance activities—such as tracking the success of ecological restoration efforts—were still ongoing at the time of evaluation.

In contrast, post-project maintenance of assets created under WOTR interventions was found to be relatively weak in several villages visited. The mid-term evaluation report of the project observed that WOTR adopted a co-investment model where households contribute around 50% of the intervention cost, the co-investment promoting greater community ownership, inclusivity, and accountability in the maintenance of project assets. Poor households often share this cost among 2–3 families, reducing their burden. For common assets like farm ponds, contribution levels vary based on economic status, ensuring inclusivity. Although this approach was found to result in better maintenance, higher ownership, and wider coverage during the project implementation phase, the same outcomes could not be observed in the terminal evaluation, conducted almost 5 years after the project closure. This suggests that sustainability of project outcomes was stronger in locations where institutional strengthening and long-term handholding received greater emphasis alongside physical infrastructure creation.

7.2.3 Relevance of project interventions to local contexts influenced long-term sustainability

The project introduced a range of climate resilience interventions, including watershed management measures, organic farming practices, the System of Rice Intensification, improved seed varieties, and kitchen gardening. While several interventions demonstrated positive outcomes during implementation, the long-term continuation and scaling of many practices remained limited.

For example, organic farming practices such as Jeevamrit preparation were being continued only by a small number of beneficiaries, largely within kitchen gardens. Respondents cited higher labour requirements and limited follow-up support as key barriers to wider adoption. Although the interventions were effective where adopted, scaling remained constrained due to uneven awareness, limited technical support, and weak post-project extension mechanisms. Energy-related interventions such as improved

cookstoves, biogas plants and solar lighting systems in particular, demonstrated mixed results across districts, with many assets becoming non-functional after project-period. Similarly, interventions such as mushroom, honey and lac cultivation and agarbatti making, showed low levels of sustainability after project completion. Beneficiaries reported several reasons for discontinuation, including the availability of easier alternatives such as LPG, low availability of raw materials (particularly cattle dung for biogas units), inadequate technical maintenance support, absence of institutional follow-up and limited market linkages for income-generating activities.

Overall, interventions that built upon existing local practices and livelihood systems demonstrated better continuity, whereas externally introduced technologies and livelihood activities showed lower sustainability in the absence of long-term support systems.

7.2.4 Limited focus on critical livelihood risks affected community perceptions of the project

HWC continues to be a major challenge across the project landscape, with most villages reporting frequent crop damage and threats to human safety from wildlife such as wild boar, monkeys, and tigers. Although ecological restoration activities, particularly removal of *Lantana camara*, helped reduce conflict in some locations by improving habitat conditions around common lands, the project did not adequately address HWC through targeted interventions such as fencing, early warning systems, or crop protection measures.

The increasing incidence of HWC has also contributed to a decline in livestock rearing in several villages. This, in turn, affected the sustainability of interventions such as biogas units and organic farming, which depended on the availability of cattle dung. While FES interventions demonstrated some localized success in reducing HWC around restored commons, challenges persisted within forest areas, where fear of wildlife

also restricted the collection of NTFPs and fuelwood.

HWC issue represented a broader regional ecological and conservation challenge that extended beyond the direct scope and mandate of the project. While certain project interventions may have indirectly contributed to strengthening community awareness, institutional coordination, and livelihood resilience, dedicated HWC mitigation measures were not envisaged under the project design. The persistence of HWC, while not an issue attributable to project performance or effectiveness, remains a major risk factor and driver of low effectiveness and sustainability of the project outcomes. Insufficient attention to a major livelihood vulnerability in the project design thus affected both the effectiveness of certain interventions and broader community perceptions regarding the relevance of the project.

7.2.5 Convergence/ conflicts with various government department schemes influenced effectiveness and efficiency of project outcomes

Institutional strengthening and convergence with existing government schemes emerged as important enabling factors for project effectiveness. One notable example was the veterinary training provided in convergence with the Department of Animal Husbandry and in collaboration with BAIF Foundation. Training related to livestock treatment and vaccination was reported to be functional and beneficial in most of the villages visited, demonstrating the value of convergence-based approaches.

Several instances of lack of co-ordination and convergence of project interventions with other government schemes could also be noticed. In one village visited, community members attributed declining groundwater levels and increasing human-wildlife conflict to nearby Eucalyptus plantations established by the Forest Development Corporation. This is an example of inadequate convergence and coordination between project interventions and parallel land-use activities undertaken by other departments. Such lack of

alignment affected the overall effectiveness of project interventions.

It was also found that interventions such as distribution of biogas units and solar lanterns overlapped with similar schemes implemented by the Forest Department under Eco-Development Programmes. In some cases, this resulted in duplication of efforts and reduced implementation efficiency, highlighting the need for better coordination and convergence to optimise resource use and avoid parallel interventions. Interactions with the Executing Entities also highlighted similar challenges in watershed management activities. Effective watershed treatment requires a ridge-to-valley approach; however, several ridge areas fell under Forest Department jurisdiction, limiting the scope for integrated intervention planning and implementation. These gaps underscore the importance of stronger coordination and convergence with relevant agencies for achieving sustainable landscape-level outcomes.

7.2.6 Livelihood improvements do not automatically translate into sustained climate resilience outcomes

While the project contributed positively to livelihood improvement through interventions related to natural resource management, agriculture, and ecological restoration, its long-term impact on climate resilience was mixed across intervention areas. Watershed management activities helped increase cropping area and cropping intensity, improving agricultural productivity and income opportunities in the short term. However, these changes may also increase pressure on groundwater resources if not accompanied by sustainable water-use planning and regulation. Across villages, the beneficiaries expressed further need for irrigation facilities including demands for private wells, in addition to check dams and ponds for community use, indicating a growing dependence on irrigated agriculture.

Greater emphasis on the revival of climate-resilient traditional crop varieties, such as millets (e.g., kodo and kutki), along with market support mechanisms, could have strengthened long-term climate resilience. In villages supported by FES in Mandla and Balaghat,

some revival of traditional agricultural practices was observed, including zero-tillage farming and cultivation of traditional millet varieties on restored lands, contributing to improved use of restored landscapes while also supporting locally adapted and potentially more climate-resilient farming systems. However, this aspect did not receive adequate focus during implementation across all villages, potentially increasing the risk of maladaptive agricultural practices over time.

In addition, agrometeorological stations established under the project were found to be largely non-functional and were not effectively supporting climate advisory services for farmers. Community awareness regarding climate change and adaptive practices also remained uneven across intervention villages. These findings suggest that while the project successfully supported livelihoods in several areas, its contribution to sustained climate resilience was uneven due to gaps in long-term planning, advisory support and maintenance systems.

7.2.7 Realistic financial planning is crucial for project success

Both EEs highlighted the delays in fund disbursement and limited financial flow, which affected implementation scale and coverage. According to the Project Completion Report, the project achieved 65.3% of the sanctioned budget, with 60.02% of the sanctioned funds disbursed.

The widening gap between budgeted and actual expenditure across years suggested that implementation timelines and field-level absorption capacity could have been overestimated during project design, in addition to the impact of COVID-19 and the security concerns that had resulted in partial coverage of target area according to the EEs. While most of the disbursed funds were eventually utilized, expenditure remained concentrated in Components 2 and 3,

with comparatively lower investments in planning, monitoring, and knowledge management. The evaluation highlights that strong baseline assessments, participatory planning, and institutional engagement can generate meaningful project outcomes even with relatively lower financial expenditure, as seen under Outcome 1. In contrast, high expenditure on field-level interventions alone does not guarantee sustainability or effectiveness without adequate market linkages, follow-up support, and community ownership. The poor performance of Outcome 4 demonstrates that insufficient investment in knowledge management, outreach, and awareness dissemination can significantly limit long-term learning, stakeholder engagement, and scaling potential.



7.3 Case studies

Transformative journeys of rural livelihoods: success story 1

In Kumharra village of Mandla, organic farming training had a significant impact on the local community. One of the women beneficiaries, Ms. Sarupama Rani, belonging to a vulnerable tribal community, received training in the preparation of Jeevamrit, an organic fertiliser. After the training, she started preparing and using her own organic fertiliser, that is benefitting nearly 50 acres of agricultural land in the village as well as her kitchen garden. She was also awarded a certificate from ATMA (Agricultural Technology Management Association) in recognition of her contributions to organic farming.

According to Ms. Rani she adopted this practice because the village has been facing serious challenges such declining soil fertility, and the high cost of chemical fertilisers. Through the project interventions, villagers were encouraged to adopt sustainable and organic agricultural practices. The project also provided spray pumps, training on organic manure preparation, and vegetable seeds to support kitchen gardening and improve livelihoods.

However, the community also faced several challenges. Water scarcity remains a major issue affecting agriculture and crop diversification. Villagers reported that eucalyptus plantations in nearby forest areas were depleting groundwater resources, leaving insufficient water for farming. Human–wildlife conflict, the spread of invasive *Lantana camara* and weak project monitoring were also highlighted as key concerns. Despite these difficulties, women like Ms. Sarupama Rani continued practicing organic farming and actively contributed to improved natural resource management in the village.



| Ms. Sarupama Rani with evaluation team |

Transformative journeys of rural livelihoods: success story 2

In Karkoti village of Seoni district, one of the most inspiring examples is a woman beneficiary Ms. Rupa Rani who now manages a small village shop established under the project support. The project provided financial assistance of around ₹12,000 to help her start the shop nearly 5 years ago. Today, the shop has become a stable source of income, and she earns approximately ₹4,000–5,000 per month from it.

Karkoti village mainly depends on agriculture, but farming is seasonal and lasts only for about four months in a year. Due to limited livelihood opportunities, many people used to migrate in search of work. Women had fewer economic opportunities and were mostly dependent on forest dependent activities. To improve livelihoods and women's empowerment, the project introduced several interventions such as sewing training, organic farming, vermicomposting and kitchen gardening. Women's groups were also formed where members regularly contributed savings, helping build confidence and financial inclusion.

Mrs. Rupa Rani started the shop after receiving support through the project. Initially, there were several challenges, including limited financial resources, low business experience, and irregular village income patterns due to seasonal agriculture and migration. However, with continuous community support and increased awareness through VDC meetings, she was able to sustain and gradually improve the business.

At present, the shop is providing regular monthly income and has strengthened her economic independence. It has also increased her confidence and social participation within the community. Along with other livelihood interventions, the project has reduced forest dependency and created more local employment opportunities for women in the village.



| Ms. Rupa Rani managing her village retail shop |

7.4 Recommendations

The evaluation findings indicate that while the project has generated meaningful improvements in livelihoods, natural resource management, community participation and institutional strengthening, several gaps remain in sustainability, infrastructure, and long-term support. Communities have clearly expressed the need for strengthening existing interventions and addressing challenges such as water scarcity and HWC.

There is also a strong aspiration among villagers for the continuation and expansion of development initiatives through future projects and involvement of additional organisations. The following recommendations are put forth, based on community needs and field observations for strengthening climate resilience project interventions under Adaptation Fund.

7.4.1 Strengthen monitoring systems, and post-project support

Weak monitoring and follow-up observed in several villages highlight the need for regular tracking of interventions and clearer maintenance responsibilities. Future interventions should place stronger emphasis on long-term institutional strengthening, community ownership, and post-project handholding to improve sustainability of outcomes. VDCs and other community

institutions should be supported through regular capacity-building, monitoring support, and linkages with government programmes. Greater attention should also be given to developing local systems for operation and maintenance of project assets, particularly water conservation structures, energy-related infrastructure, and climate advisory systems.

7.4.2 Prioritise locally relevant, demand-driven, and landscape-based interventions

Project interventions should be designed based on local livelihood systems, labour availability, resource access, and cultural acceptability to ensure sustained adoption. Interventions that build upon existing practices and community knowledge systems are more likely to continue beyond the project period. Future projects should therefore prioritize context-specific technologies and practices, while avoiding introduction of externally driven livelihood activities without adequate market assessment and technical support, and activities that replicate their schemes

demand for improved irrigation infrastructure, including check dams, farm pond deepening, wells, pipelines, sprinklers, pumps, and other agricultural support systems. A more balanced and landscape-based approach integrating watershed management, forest restoration, and agriculture is required to ensure both ecological sustainability and livelihood security. Given the significant impact of HWC on livelihoods, agriculture, livestock rearing, and access to forest resources, future projects in forest-fringe landscapes should incorporate dedicated HWC mitigation measures to improve community acceptance of conservation-oriented interventions.

Communities across villages also expressed strong

7.4.3 Improve convergence and coordination across departments and schemes

Stronger coordination mechanisms should be established for the project activities with departments such as Forest, Agriculture, Rural Development, Animal Husbandry, and Watershed Development to avoid duplication of efforts and conflicting interventions. Successful examples of convergence, such as

community-level veterinary training and livestock vaccination support, should be scaled up in future programmes. Similar convergence-based models may be explored for agriculture extension, climate advisory services, renewable energy maintenance, and natural resource management activities.

7.4.4 Strengthen livelihood support systems and market linkages

Several livelihood interventions introduced under the project, including goat rearing, poultry, vermicomposting, mushroom cultivation, lac cultivation etc

require continued technical support and institutional follow-up for long-term sustainability. Future interventions should incorporate stronger market linkages

for such interventions along with business development assistance. Revival and scaling of traditional climate-resilient livelihood systems, including millet cultivation and forest-based livelihoods, should be

supported through value addition, and market access initiatives to strengthen both incomes and climate resilience.

7.4.5 Enhance long-term climate resilience planning, infrastructure, and advisory support

Future interventions should move beyond short-term livelihood enhancement and place greater focus on strengthening long-term climate resilience. Sustainable water-use planning should accompany watershed and irrigation interventions to avoid long-term pressure on groundwater resources. Agrometeorological stations and climate advisory systems established under projects should have clear maintenance responsibilities, technical support

arrangements, and institutional ownership to ensure continued functionality. Sustained awareness generation and community training on climate change adaptation practices should be integrated into project design, along with trainings, youth engagement programmes, and skill-building initiatives.

7.4.6 Strengthen adaptive financial planning

Future projects should adopt more realistic and adaptive financial planning aligned with implementation capacity, field-level readiness, and phased activity timelines to minimise gaps between budgeted and actual expenditure. Regular financial review and monitoring mechanisms should be strengthened to enable timely course correction, improve expenditure pacing, and address delays in fund deployment. Greater balance in resource allocation across project components is also necessary to ensure adequate investment not only in field implementation, but also in planning, monitoring, documentation, knowledge management, and learning processes. In addition, continuous documentation and learning should be integrated throughout the project cycle rather than concentrated toward project closure. Project design should also include clearer categorization of management expenses, and contingency provisions to improve budget accuracy, transparency,

and overall implementation efficiency. Ensuring continuity of support over longer periods, through convergence with other government schemes would improve both ecological and livelihood outcomes. Investments in communication, awareness generation, and digital knowledge dissemination platforms should also be strengthened to improve stakeholder engagement and long-term impact.

The strong demand expressed by communities for continuation and expansion of similar interventions demonstrates both the relevance of the project and the trust built through participatory implementation approaches. Future programmes in KPC landscape should build on this foundation while addressing identified gaps related to sustainability, convergence, and long-term institutional support.

A close-up photograph of a tomato plant. The plant has green, serrated leaves and several small yellow flowers. Some green, unripe tomatoes are visible at the bottom of the frame. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the plant and a hint of a building.

08

References

Material shared by NABARD

- Project Proposal / Detailed Project Report (DPR)
- Project Agreement between Adaptation Fund Board and NABARD (2016)
- Sanction Letter and Project Approval Documents (2017)
- Project Completion Summary Report
- Annual Project Performance Reports (PPRs) including (2017-18), (2018-19), (2019-20), & (2020-21)
- Terms of Reference (ToR)

Documents shared by WOTR

- AF-KPC MIS I & II April 2017- March 2021: Presents the district-wise and year-wise financial progress and physical achievements of the project implemented in districts such as Mandla, Balaghat, and Seoni.
- Project Completion Report

List of available project documents maintained by WOTR and FES

S. No.	Document Name	WOTR	FES
1.	Attendance Register	Yes	Yes
2.	Bill Book	Yes	Yes
3.	Measurement Book	Yes	Yes
4.	Shramdan Register	Yes	Yes
5.	Meeting Records	Yes	Yes
6.	Orientation / Exposure / Capacity Building / Meetings Record	No	No
7.	Impact Monitoring Record	No	No
8.	Bank Passbook (Updated)	No	No
9.	Receipt of Equipment	Yes	No
10.	Resource Map (Village)	Yes	No
11.	Beneficiary Record	Yes	No
12.	Muster Payment Sheet	No	Yes
13.	Women Meeting Register	No	Yes
14.	Documents Related to Physical Work (Planning Sheet, Estimate Copy, Purchase Proposal, Muster Roll, Payment Register, etc.)	No	Yes
15.	Distribution Register	No	Yes
16.	Village Level Training Register	No	Yes

List of stakeholders/persons consulted

S. No.	Name	ORGANIZATION
1.	Mr. Avinash P. Sevalkar (DDM)	NABARD
2.	Akhilesh Verma (ADM)	NABARD
3.	Mohammad Raneef (Project Manager)	NABARD
4.	Mr. Romit Banerjee	WOTR
5.	Mr. Kshitij Pandey	WOTR
6.	Mr. Pradyumna Acharya	FES
7.	Community members in 13 villages (15-20) in each village	VDC, EPC and Mahila Sabha Members, Panchayat Members, selected respondents for case studies

Appendix- 1

Interview schedule

Section A: Basic Information	
Name of Respondent	
Village Name	
Block / District	
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
Age	
Education Level	☐ Illiterate ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Higher Secondary ☐ Graduate and above
Primary Occupation	☐ Agriculture ☐ Livestock ☐ Forest-based ☐ Wage labour ☐ Other (specify)
Household Size	
Landholding (acres)	
Membership in any SHG / CBO	☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, specify name)

Section B: Integrated Socio-Economic–Ecological Planning and Assessment			
Question	Before Project	After Project	Rating/ remarks
Did your village have a development plan addressing social, economic, and environmental needs?			
Are you aware of your village's socio-economic profile or resource map?			
Did you or your household participate in village planning meetings?			
How many meetings were you invited to attend in the last year?			
Approximate % of households participating in village-level discussions			
Do you think women and marginal groups were equally represented?			

Section C: Community Mobilization and Institutional Strengthening			
Question	Before Project	After Project	Rating/ remarks
Were you part of any community-based organisation (CBO) or SHG?			
How active were community institutions in managing forests or natural resources?			
Were women represented in CBO or SHG decisions?			
Approximate number of community meetings attended per year			
Have new SHGs or community institutions been formed in your village?			
Has forest management improved (e.g., reduced tree felling, better protection)?			

Section D: Ecosystem Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods			
Question	Before Project	After Project	Rating/ remarks
Monthly household income (₹)			
% of household income from agriculture			
% of household income from forest-based activities			
Have you adopted any adaptive agricultural practices (e.g., improved seeds, irrigation, contour bunding)?			
Are you aware of or using agrometeorological information for farming?			
Area of land under improved water management (irrigation, watershed)			
Has your household adopted any alternative livelihood (e.g., NTFP processing, microenterprise, ecotourism)?			
Have you or your family members received any skill training?			
If yes, were you able to get employment or start a new enterprise after training?			
Do you use biogas, improved cookstoves, or solar lanterns?			
Estimated fuelwood use per week (kg)			

Section E : Knowledge Management, Awareness, and Communication

Question	Before Project	After Project	Rating/ remarks
Were you aware of climate change and its impacts on your livelihood?			
Have you attended any awareness or capacity-building workshops on climate or forest management?			
Have you seen or used any information materials (videos, newsletters, posters) developed by the project?			
Do you discuss climate change or adaptation strategies in community meetings?			
Do you feel better prepared to deal with climate-related risks (e.g., drought, crop failure)?			

Section F: Reflections

- How has participatory planning changed the way development activities are planned or implemented in your village?
- What changes have you observed in women's participation and leadership in community activities?
- What livelihood improvements or challenges have you experienced since the project started?
- What challenges remain in improving livelihoods and ecosystem resilience?
- How has the project helped reduce your dependence on forests?
- What new knowledge or skills have you gained from project activities?
- What suggestions do you have for improving communication and awareness activities in your village?
- What do you consider the most significant change brought about by the project in your village?
- What are the risks to sustainability of these changes ?
- What further support do you think is needed to sustain these changes?

Appendix- 2

Physical verification of project interventions

District	Village Name	Interventions Verified
Seoni	Pindrai	Kitchen garden, Solar light, Pipe, Motor
	Beesapur Maal	Agromet station, Check dam
	Darasi Khapa & Darasi Kala	Kitchen garden, Biogas unit, Bullock cart wheels, Street solar light, Check dam, Farm bunds
	Atarwani	Resource map, Check dam structures, Goat farming units
	Bakrampath	Agromet station, Pipes, Sprinkler
	Jhalakondi	Reaper machine, Goats, Pipe, Motor, Goat shelter, Bullock cart wheels
	Karkoti	Vermicomposting unit, Street solar light, Shop (women-led), Motors
Mandla	Kumharra	Biogas units, Organic fertiliser preparation, Apiculture, Kitchen gardens
	Chichyari Ryt	Biochar unit, Farm Pond with bamboo on bunds, Fish farming, Native species regeneration in restored commons
	Malara	Solar lantern, <i>Lantana</i> removal site
	Bargi	Vermicomposting site, <i>Lantana</i> removal registers, Animal grazing areas
Balaghat	Mohgaon	Animal shed, Kitchen garden, Vermicomposting unit (non-functional), farm pond

Annexure- 1

Official response from the Project /Programme Management Team Regarding the Evaluation Finding and Conclusions.

S.No	Comments from FES & WOTR	Response from Evaluation Agency
1.	Delayed implementation: Both FES and WOTR clarified that project activities were completed on time and requested revision of the statement on delayed implementation.	The necessary revisions have been made based on the comments received.
2.	Evaluation Rating (MS): Both organisations requested reconsideration of the “MS” ratings, citing sustained community engagement, continued project benefits, and functioning community institutions.	The evaluation ratings are based on field observations, sustainability assessment, and project documentation, following the approved evaluation framework. They are also consistent with the PPR; therefore, no changes have been made to the ratings.
3.	FES clarified that all planned activities in Balaghat were completed, and the inability to visit villages during evaluation was due to the absence of field presence, not implementation issues.	The necessary revisions have been made based on the comments received.
4.	Financial analysis (first paragraph): FES found the paragraph unclear.	The financial analysis presented in this section is based on the Project Performance Reports (2017–2021) & Project Completion Report shared by NABARD, no changes have been made to this analysis.
5.	WOTR noted that the social outcomes, particularly in Seoni, were not adequately reflected in the report.	The conclusions section incorporates the key field evidence and interventions observed in Seoni, including relevant social dimensions. The terminal evaluation report provides an overall assessment of the project, while highlighting Seoni-specific findings where they were particularly significant.

Annexure- 2

Terminal Evaluation of Two Adaptation Fund Projects in Madhya Pradesh Terms of Reference (ToR)

1. Introduction

The Adaptation Fund (AF) was established under the Kyoto Protocol of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It was established in 2001 at the 7th Conference of the Parties (COP 7) to the UNFCCC in Marrakech, Morocco and was officially launched in 2007. Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed US\$ 878 million to projects and programmes to date, including 127 concrete projects.

NABARD was accredited as National Implementing Entity (NIE) in July, 2012 for accessing resources under Adaptation Fund for India. It is entrusted with overall project screening, implementation, monitoring and fund distribution of the AFB projects in India. NABARD is deploying AF resources to address the needs of building adaptation capacity and enhancing resilience of the vulnerable communities and ecosystems in India. So far, 6 concrete projects under AF are being implemented by NABARD. In accordance with policies and guidelines of AF, the projects supported by AF are required to undergo a Terminal Evaluation (TE) at the end of the project period.

This Terms of Reference (ToR) sets out the expectations for the Terminal Evaluation of the following AF projects in Madhya Pradesh implemented through NABARD:

1. Project 1: Building Adaptive Capacities of Small Inland Fishermen Community for Climate Resilience and Livelihood Security, Madhya Pradesh
2. Project 2: Building Adaptive Capacities of Communities, Livelihoods and Ecological Security in the Kanha-Pench Corridor of Madhya Pradesh

The backgrounds of the projects are given in Annex A.

2. Purpose of Terminal Evaluation:

The Terminal Evaluation will assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved, and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and help in the overall enhancement of AF programming. The Terminal Evaluation report will promote accountability and transparency, and assesses the extent of project accomplishments.

The general Objectives of Terminal Evaluation are:

- To promote accountability and transparency within the AF, and to systematically assess and disclose levels of project or programme accomplishments.
- To organise and synthesize experiences and lessons that may help improve the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of future AF-funded interventions.
- To understand how project achievements contribute to the mandate of the AF.
- To provide feedback into the decision-making process to improve ongoing and future projects, programmes, and policies.
- To assess the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of project design, objectives, and performance.

3. Detailed Scope of the Terminal Evaluation:

The Terminal Evaluation will assess project performance against expectations set out in the project's Logical Framework/Results Framework (Annex B). The Terminal Evaluation will assess results according to the criteria outlined in the "Guidance for Final Evaluation of AF Financed Projects ('Evaluation Guidance')"¹.

The Findings section of the Terminal Evaluation report will cover the topics listed in the Evaluation Guidance. An indicative outline of the Terminal Evaluation report is provided in Annex C.

4. Approach & Methodology:

The Terminal Evaluation report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The Terminal Evaluation team will review all relevant sources of information including the Project Concept, Project Document, Project Inception Report, PPRs, Monitoring Reports, Progress Reports, Meeting Minutes, MIS, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence-based evaluation. The Terminal Evaluation team will review the baseline information and indicators submitted to the AF as part of the project document.

The Terminal Evaluation team is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the National Designated Authority (NDA)- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), National Implementing Entity (NIE) – NABARD, Executing Entities, State Government Department and Institutions, direct beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful Terminal Evaluation. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with the relevant stakeholders.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule and data to be used in the evaluation must be clearly outlined in the Terminal Evaluation Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between NABARD and the Terminal Evaluation team.

The final report must describe the full Terminal Evaluation approach used and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the evaluation.

5. Timeline and Deliverables

The total duration of the Terminal Evaluation will be approximately 45 days. Tentative Terminal Evaluation time-frame and deliverables are as follows:

S.No	Deliverable	Timelines
1.	Inception Report of the Terminal Evaluation	Within 10 days from the date of acceptance of the terms of conditions of the Sanction Letter
2.	Draft Terminal Evaluation Reports (separate project specific reports)	Within 30 days after the submission of Inception Report
3.	Final Terminal Evaluation Reports (separate project specific reports)	Within 20 days after the receipt of comments from NABARD.

6. TE Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing the Terminal Evaluation resides with the Department of Climate Action & Sustainability (DCAS), NABARD. The DCAS will contract the evaluator. The Regional Office in Madhya Pradesh will be responsible for liaising with the Terminal Evaluation team to provide all relevant documents and facilitating stakeholder interviews.

7. Team Composition

The members of the evaluation team cannot have participated in the project preparation, formulation and/or implementation (including the writing of the project document), and should not have a conflict of interest with the project's related activities.

The Team Leader should meet the following criteria.

Education

- Master's degree in climate science (adaptation), environment protection, natural resources management or other closely related field.

Experience

- Relevant experience with results-based management methodologies
- Experience applying indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to climate change adaptation
- Experience in evaluating projects
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years
- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and climate change adaptation; experience in gender responsive evaluation and analysis
- Excellent communication skills
- Demonstrable analytical skills

In order to interact with the project beneficiaries at ground level, team members may consist of qualified professionals versatile in local languages.

8. Payment Schedule

Payment schedule for the Terminal Evaluation is given below:

S.No	Milestones	% of Total Budget
1.	Submission of Inception Report to NABARD	20%
2.	Submission of Draft Evaluation Reports and Acceptance by NABARD	40%
3.	Submission of Final Evaluation Report and Acceptance by NABARD	30%
4.	Acceptance of Terminal Evaluation by AF – after incorporation of observations from AF, if any.	10%
TOTAL		100%







प्रगते: मूलं प्रकृतिः

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