

Evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)

Terms of reference for the mid-term review of **SUSTAIN Ecosystem stewardship to balance sustainability and growth (SUSTAIN Eco)**

Evaluation Terms of Reference

August 2024

1. Evaluation context

This is the Terms of Reference (ToR) for an International Firm/Consultant, for the IUCN Midterm evaluation (MTE) of the project titled “**SUSTAIN Ecosystem stewardship to balance sustainability and growth (SUSTAIN Eco)**” implemented by IUCN and executed in partnership with the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation). The project started on December 8th 2022, and ending on December 31st, 2025. The project is funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) represented by the Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTE.

SUSTAIN was conceived as a multi-year initiative focused on catalysing climate-resilient development that balances economic growth with ecosystem stewardship and social prosperity. Running from 2014 to 2020, the first phase of SUSTAIN established a solid foundation of partnerships between businesses, government agencies, local communities, farmer groups, and others in the landscape to deliver on this vision. Building on these networks, and the achievements of the initial phase, IUCN initiated a second phase of SUSTAIN through two complementary programmes: SUSTAIN Eco and SUSTAIN Pro -both underpinned by equity and inclusion, and both striving to accelerate a shift from business-as-usual to development paradigms that build resilience in economies, people and nature. Together, SUSTAIN Eco and Pro form the continuation of SUSTAIN-Africa, building on its successes and learning from the challenges that were encountered during the first five years of the programme. The geographical footprint and partnerships established in the first phase of SUSTAIN make up the lion’s share of interventions in these two complementary programmes, ensuring continuity and aiming at long-term sustainability.

While SUSTAIN Pro focuses on how to make agriculture more sustainable, **SUSTAIN Ecosystem stewardship to balance sustainability and growth (SUSTAIN Eco)** targets healthy ecosystems and prosperous communities in the Sumbawanga and Kilombero landscapes in Tanzania through improved governance and rights, sustainable management practices and by catalysing investment in the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

More specifically, the SUSTAIN Eco project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Coordination strengthened amongst governance structures for sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources

Outcome 2: Integrated landscape management improves ecosystem health and generates inclusive business and livelihood opportunities, especially for women, youth and vulnerable groups

Outcome 3: Investment in the protection and restoration of ecosystems and their services strengthens climate resilience for people and ecosystems

2. Rationale and Purpose

This Midterm evaluation fulfils IUCN requirements to conduct an independent evaluation for the purpose of learning and reflection on project management and early results, it is also a contract requirement under the agreement with Sida. It is expected that the findings and recommendations of this Midterm evaluation will help to identify any needed course corrections in the Project's approach and activities and bring valuable external reflections to help strengthen the Project and complement the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system of the Project through by facilitating adaptive management.

3. Audience, key stakeholders and use

The primary intended users of this Mid Term Review are:

- The SUSTAIN Eco implementation team including task manager, national and landscape managers and technical officers in IUCN's global and regional programmes and AWF and SNV project managers for the purpose of managing the Project, and in particular, for making adjustments to improve delivery of outcomes;
- The Head of Water and Wetlands Team, for the purpose of gathering lessons to inform future project design and implementation of other projects under the Water and Wetlands Team;
- The IUCN Monitoring and Learning team, for the purpose of improving the Project monitoring and learning approach;
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through its Embassy of Sweden in Dar es Salaam to provide information to its board of direction and the general public.

4. Objectives and evaluation questions

This Mid Term review will be carried out in conformity with IUCN Evaluation Policy (2023) and use a subset of the widely accepted OECD DAC Evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The Mid Term Review should explore the Project's work and achievements with the aim of assessing progress so far and providing guidance on how to maximize the potential for achieving the intended results and improve learning in its remaining time, as well as for structuring any subsequent phases of work. Through the assessment of the performance and lessons learnt, the Mid Term Review will also contribute to both learning and accountability.

The specific objectives of the Mid Term Review are:

- To assess the **relevance** of the Project in terms of aligning and responding to the objectives of the current IUCN Programme and other IUCN needs and priorities in relation to water and land management;
- To assess its **coherence** with the situational analysis and how well the Project fits in its context and its compatibility with other interventions led by IUCN;
- To assess the **effectiveness** of the Project in achieving its objectives and provide clear insights about what has and has not worked and why. It will also analyse key underlying risks, assumptions and constraints which have affected intended results, highlighting how external factors might have affected the Project and how the project adapted to this situation.
- To assess the **efficiency** in terms of use of resources and value for money through the delivery of the Project;
- To assess whether measures put in place by the project ensure **sustainability** of results in the longer term, including how synergies with SUSTAIN Pro for delivering on the broader vision of SUSTAIN-Africa;

- To identify **lessons** and provide set of **actionable recommendations** on how the Project and the project coordination/management could be adjusted for further improvement and to strengthen delivery of results.

Three additional lines of inquiry should be addressed: contribution to the **IUCN One Programme Approach; Gender and youth and Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS)**

An initial set of questions that should guide the Mid Term Review in assessing the Project against each given criterion have been developed as follows:

Relevance

1. How appropriate and relevant is the project approach and intervention logic in terms of its objectives and anticipated outcomes, and within the broader context of the SUSTAIN initiative?
2. Is the project Theory of Change (ToC) and logic for interventions realistic?
3. To what extent is the project aligned to national/subnational strategies and priorities?
 - Has there been any change (i.e policy changes) that affected the relevance of the Project since it has started?
- If so, how well did the project adapt to the changing environment and how well has the design adjusted to emerging circumstances?

Coherence

- To what extent were the capabilities of different implementing partners and other stakeholders considered in the design of the Project? How strategic are the partnerships established under the project considering their ability to influence and their current level of commitment and capacity to deliver?
- To what extent does the Project align to or contribute to other interventions carried by IUCN, AWF and SNV?
- To what extent did SUSTAIN Eco harmonize its interventions with government priorities and other stakeholders?
- To what extent have synergies between SUSTAIN Eco and Pro been realised during implementation? What can be improved to maximise synergies?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the Project delivered on its outputs and outcomes?

Outcome 1

- How successful has the project been in strengthening governance structures for sustainable and inclusive management of natural resources? And why? What needs to be improved or done differently?
- To what extent did the multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) and dialogues facilitate or hinder the improvement of coordination across the various levels of land and water governance (local, district, and national), and why?
- In which ways did MSPs contribute to or detract from the adoption and implementation of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) approaches in the landscapes, and why?
- In which ways did the project's gender-focused approaches influence the empowerment of women and youth? How has the project impacted gender imbalances, positively or negatively, and why?
- Furthermore, how did such empowerment contribute to or detract from achieving enhanced, sustainable, and inclusive governance and management of natural resources, and why?

Outcome 2

- How effective has the project been in building capacities of Village Land Use Management Committees, VNRCs, AA/VGS and WUAs?

- To what extent did training on biodiversity data collection, awareness-raising, and related activities enhance ecosystem stewardship within farmers and local communities, and why?
- How effective has the project been in helping businesses and their associations to adopt environmental and social management standards and practices?

Outcome 3

- How effective has the project been in building capacity of relevant stakeholders, including Village Game Scout, Farmers and local institutions?
 - To what extent did the implementation of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and Nature-based Solutions (NbS) contribute to the restoration and enhancement of land health, and why?
 - How successful has the project been in promoting the development of innovative financing streams for conservation and restoration of ecosystems and their services?
- What has been the contribution of partners and other organizations to the results, and how effective have the project's partnerships been in contributing to achieving the planned results?
 - Are there any unintended consequences as a result of the actions of the Project?

Efficiency

- To what extent is the Project governance system conducive to results achievement?
- Has the management approach promoted by the Project led to the most effective use of the resources, costs savings and to efficiencies of scale in the provision of coordination and technical support? More specifically:
 - Are accounting and financial systems adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information?
 - Have progress reports been produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements?
 - In terms of periodic update meetings, what worked and what didn't in ensuring effective communication and project alignment, and why?
 - In terms of building synergies with SUSTAIN PRO, to what extent the project has leveraged on activities implemented by SUSTAIN PRO to maximise its impact.
- To what extent has the Project been able to adapt to any changing conditions to improve the efficiency of project implementation?
- To what extent are the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategy and tools adequate and effective? In particular:
 - To what extent are the selected indicators and targets appropriate to determine whether SUSTAIN has achieves its objectives?
 - To what extent did the MEL strategy detect any needed course corrections in the Project's approach and activities for better progress towards results?
 - To what extent did supervision missions aid or delay the project's progress, and why?

Sustainability

- Is there evidence of 'country ownership' of the project initiatives? What evidence exists that shows that the enabling condition are in place to continue what was initiated by the project and what are the role Tanzanian government play in the development of a pipeline of similar projects?
- To what extent have the mitigation measures identified to address the risks been implemented? Were these measures effective?
- Are there new risks that have arisen that can impact the permanence of the results achieved that were not foreseen?
- How does SUSTAIN Eco project design ensure the sustainability of gender-responsive interventions beyond the implementation phase?

In addition to the above criteria and questions, the evaluator(s) will also ensure that the following topics are addressed in the evaluation:

One Programme Approach:

- To what extent did the project engage relevant constituents of the Union in its design or implementation so far (Government of Tanzania, IUCN Members in Tanzania, Commission Members with experience in Tanzania)?

Gender and youth:

- To what extent do the project's objectives and design promote and advance gender equality and/or gender responsive strategies? Also, to what extent has the project monitored its progress with gender responsive and sex-disaggregated monitoring data?
- To what extent do the project's objectives and design respond to youth needs and priorities, or promote youth participation and/or leadership or intergenerational exchange? Also, to what extent has the project monitored its progress with age-disaggregated monitoring data?

Science/policy/action interface:

- To what extent is the knowledge or science produced or disseminated by the Project likely to influence policy or actions in the future?

5. Methods and sources

This evaluation will be carried out in conformity with the IUCN Evaluation Policy (2023)¹, which sets out IUCN's institutional commitment to evaluation, and the criteria and standards for the evaluation and evaluation of its projects, programmes and organizational units.

I. Scoping Phase - Framing the boundaries of the evaluations

The evaluator(s) will review key project documents and engage with IUCN to finalise the evaluation objectives, questions, criteria and methodology. Against the above, the evaluator(s) will identify appropriate evidence that needs to be gathered and synthesized to fully inform the evaluation process – as well as sources of information including key individuals to be interviewed. The output of this phase will be an **inception report** which will include a **methodological note** and an **evaluation matrix** presenting how each evaluation questions will be addressed, data sources and data collection methods that will be used to gather additional information needed and a set of criteria to rate the strength of the evidence collected. The evaluation matrix will be reviewed and should be approved by IUCN. Adequately addressing the key evaluation questions will be the basis for IUCN to sign off on the completeness of the inception report.

II. Further data collection and analysis; development of draft evaluation report

In this phase, the evaluator(s) will work with IUCN, AWF, SNV and other key stakeholders to gather and consolidate the necessary information to address the evaluation questions. It will also include a field visit for onsite observations and meetings with key partners and beneficiaries. The Evaluator(s) will present their preliminary findings during a short webinar in order to collect feedback from key target audience. The link between the evaluation questions, data collection, analysis, findings and conclusions must be clearly made and set out in a transparent manner during the presentation. Following the webinar, the evaluator(s) will submit a **draft evaluation report** for further review by the target audience.

III. Finalising the evaluation reports and presenting findings to key stakeholders

Once the draft reports have been circulated, IUCN, AWF and SNV will undertake a final review of the reports and provide their comments in written to the evaluator(s). The comments will be integrated by the evaluator(s) in the **final version of the report** and serve to finalise recommendations and to develop lessons

¹ https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/iucn_evaluation_policy_june-2023.pdf

learned. The evaluator will submit a final evaluation report in word and PDF and will include a separate document highlighting where/how comments were incorporated. The final report should clearly and transparently demonstrate links between review questions, data collection, analysis, findings and conclusions. The conclusion and recommendations presented in the final report should be underpinned by a strong set of evidence and will be further explained during the final webinar.

Finally, evaluator(s) will produce a short but concise summaries that can be disseminated to the wider public for general information on the project's results and performance

A. Methods, sources and analysis

The evaluator(s) is expected to use mixed methods to allow a degree of triangulation and synthesis, including:

- Desk review of relevant documentation from the project;
- Interviews (individual or in Focus group) of key stakeholders across the two landscape;
- Survey of additional stakeholders;
- Field visit. Visits should be made in priority to Kilombero landscape but if time and resources allow it extended to Sumbawanga landscape;
- Other methods may be proposed as needed and as project resources allow.

B. Stakeholders to be consulted

The evaluation will adopt a consultative approach, seeking and sharing opinions with stakeholders at different stages throughout the evaluation process. Stakeholder categories include, but are not limited to: IUCN project staff, project executing partners and external stakeholders involved in the delivery of the project activities. External stakeholders may include national and local government representatives, private sector representatives and community members, including youth and women.

The list of stakeholders that will be consulted will be presented and validated through the inception report. The total number of stakeholders to be consulted in the different landscape where the project is implemented is however estimated to approximately 40 individuals. IUCN will provide a suggested list of stakeholders in different categories during inception. The evaluation team may propose changes or additions.

6. Evaluation deliverables

The evaluator(s) will be accountable for producing the following products for this Mid Term Review:

- ✓ **Draft inception report and Inception report** on proposed evaluation methodology, work plan and structure of the report including a detailed evaluation matrix;
- ✓ **A Draft Preliminary Mid-Term Review report and presentation**, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with SUSTAIN ECO partners
- ✓ **Final Mid-Term Review report**, including key findings, a set of limited and strategic recommendations (not to exceed 10 recommendations total), and response addressing issues raised during presentation of draft.
- ✓ **A Final presentation** targeted to evaluation key audiences in which the key finding and recommendations from the Mid Term Review will be presented.
- ✓ **A two-page executive summary** of key findings, lessons, recommendations and messages from the Mid Term Review report.

The Inception Report should be in English and include the following structure:

- A. Identification of the subject of the review, and relevant context
- B. Purpose and scope of the evaluation: why is the evaluation being conducted at this time, who needs the information and why? What aspects of the project will be covered, and not covered, by the evaluation
- C. Theory of change and results. A one-page diagram and explain it with a narrative, including a discussion of assumptions and drivers. This section should also confirm the formulation of planned results so that the evaluand can be assessed against its intended results
- D. An evaluation matrix presenting how each evaluation criteria and questions will be addressed, the indicators, the data sources and the data collection methods and tools that will be used to gather the information needed for the Mid Term Review and a set of criteria to rate the strength of the evidence collected.
- E. Methodology including approach for data collection and analysis, and stakeholder engagement, a rationale for selection of the methods, and selection of data sources (i.e. any sites to be visited, stakeholders to be interviewed)
- F. The evaluation workplan and schedule, as well as a description of roles and responsibilities for the management of the evaluation
- G. Potential limitations of the evaluation
- H. If any, a short summary of key improvements/modifications suggested from the original ToR.

The **final Mid-Term Review report** should be in English and include the following structure:

- A. Title page including project identification details
- B. Executive Summary (including at a minimum the methodology, findings and recommendations)
- C. Table of Contents
- D. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms
- E. A short introduction to project/programme – context and description
- F. Purpose of the Evaluation
- G. Evaluation Issues and Questions
- H. Methodology (including approach to data analysis)
- I. Findings - organized according to the key evaluation questions
- J. Conclusions and lessons learned
- K. Recommendations – actionable recommendations clearly linked to findings and lessons
- L. Annexes

7. Travel requirements

For this MTR, it is expected that the evaluator(s) visit at least one of the two landscapes in Tanzania with a priority on Kilombero landscape. Travel will have to be organised in accordance with IUCN Travel Policy and Procedures for Non-Staff². All the cost related to travel need to be clearly and transparently reflected in the financial proposal.

8. Schedule

It is expected that evaluator(s) will submit their deliverables according to the following schedule in Table 1. The starting date for the Mid-Term Review is 1st October 2024. Expected end date is 28th February 2025.

² https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/iucn_travel_policy_for_non-staff_v1.2_july2019.pdf

Outputs and deliverables	Proposed schedule and deadlines	Roles and responsibilities
Introductory call	Within 1 week of signing the service agreement	Evaluator(s), IUCN
Draft inception report submitted	Within 2 weeks of the introductory call	Evaluator(s)
Comments on inception report	Within 1 week after the submission of the inception report	IUCN
Final inception report and approval	Within 1 week after the submission of comments	Evaluator(s) and IUCN
Data collection and analysis phase completed	Within 8 weeks after the approval of the inception report	Evaluator(s)
Preliminary findings presentation	Within 1 week after the completion of the data collection	Evaluator(s)
Draft report delivery	Within 2 weeks after presentation of preliminary findings	Evaluator(s)
Comment on draft report	Within 2 weeks after the submission of the draft final report	IUCN, AWF and SNV
Final report delivery and approval	Within 2 week after the submission of comments	Evaluator(s), IUCN
Final presentation	Within 1 week after the approval of the final report	Evaluator(s)
Two pagers summary document	Within 1 week after the approval of the final report	Evaluator(s)

9. Roles and responsibilities

This Mid Term Review is commissioned by IUCN and Day-to-day management and coordination will be done by its Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning unit. This evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation team, selected through IUCN's procurement process.

10. Qualifications of the Evaluators

IUCN requires a person or a team of evaluators with experience in assessing change in complex systems and with extensive expertise and knowledge in at least one of the following fields: Governance, Organisation capacity building, Nature-based Solutions, Agriculture, Biodiversity, Innovative finance, Natural resources management and climate change or a combination thereof, applied to policy instruments and practice.

In addition, the Lead team member will meet the following technical requirements:

- At least 10 years of relevant experience in supporting, designing, planning and/or conducting development evaluations; with demonstrated quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis skills, with proven record of conducting formative, process and impact evaluation;
- Proven experience in evaluating similar projects; Prior experience in conducting evaluation in areas where the Project is implemented would be an asset;
- English language fluency in both speaking and writing; additional fluency in Kiswahili would be considered as an asset.

Women are strongly encouraged to apply. The successful candidate will be selected based on merit. The evaluation team members should be completely independent from any organisation that have been involved in designing, implementing, executing or advising any aspect the project

11. Cost

The maximum available budget for this review, including travel, is 477,626 SEK (~EUR 40K³) The evaluator(s) shall be paid upon completion of the following milestones:

- ✓ 30% upon signing of the contract
- ✓ 30% after presentation of the draft report (noting that acceptance of the inception report is a required milestone)
- ✓ 40% after the approval of the final report

12. Appendices

- Evaluation Matrix

³ This is subject to currency fluctuation

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

1. Relevance:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[These are the overall general questions that will facilitate analysis of the evaluation issues (as identified in part 5 of the ToR).</i>	<i>[List the specific questions that are needed to answer the key questions. s as required]</i>	<i>[An indicator is a measuring device that clarifies and measures a concept: in this case, the sub-questions. Indicators make these sub-questions more tangible and give something concrete to measure. They may be qualitative or quantitative signals that help to decide whether something has changed. There can be multiple indicators for one sub-question.]</i>	<i>[In this column, identify possible sources of data needed to answer the sub-questions. These sources may include people, different kinds of documents such as situation analyses, trends analyses, other research, observation, or other types of information. Be as specific as possible when citing these.]</i>	<i>[What data collection tools will be used?]</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
2. Coherence				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
3. Effectiveness:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
4. Efficiency:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>

<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
5. Sustainability:				
<i>Key evaluation questions</i>	<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>Data Collection Tools</i>
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				
6. Other:				
<i>[Add rows as required]</i>				