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Central Project Evaluation

Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia, Project number 2017.2110.9

Evaluation Report

On behalf of GIZ by Lukas von Petersdorff-Campen, Fabian Schuster, Temir Burzhubaev, Zara Mahmudova and Jasurbek Rustamov (Mainlevel Consulting AG)

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Contents

List of figures 4
List of tables 4
Abbreviations 5
The project at a glance 7
1 Evaluation objectives and questions 8
1.1 Evaluation objectives 8
1.2 Evaluation questions 8
2 Object of the evaluation 9
2.1 Definition of the evaluation object 9
2.2 Results model including hypotheses 10
3 Evaluability and evaluation process 18
3.1 Evaluability: data availability and quality 18
3.2 Evaluation process 19
4 Assessment according to OECD/DAC criteria 23
4.1 Impact and sustainability of predecessor projects 23
4.2 Relevance 25
4.3 Coherence 31
4.4 Effectiveness 34
4.5 Impact 46
4.6 Efficiency 52
4.7 Sustainability 57
4.8 Key results and overall rating 60
5 Conclusions and recommendations 63
5.1 Key findings and factors of success/failure 63
5.2 Recommendations 65
List of references 66
Annexe: Evaluation matrix 68

List of figures

Figure 1: Stakeholder map 12
Figure 2: Updated results model (November 2020), adopted during the evaluation 17
Figure 3: Milestones of the evaluation process 19

List of tables

Table 1: Knowledge interests by main evaluation stakeholder groups 8
Table 2: List of evaluation stakeholders and selected participants 20
Table 3: Methodology for predecessor project 25
Table 4: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: relevance 25
Table 5: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: relevance 30
Table 6: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: coherence 31
Table 7: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: coherence 34
Table 8: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness 35
Table 9: Assessed and adapted objective indicators for specific modules (outcome level) 37
Table 10: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness 38
Table 11: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness 40
Table 12: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness 41
Table 13: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness 45
Table 14: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: impact 46
Table 15: Selected results hypotheses for impact 48
Table 16: Selected results hypotheses for impact 49
Table 17: Selected results hypotheses for impact 50
Table 18: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: impact 51
Table 19: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency 52
Table 20: Overview of costs 53
Table 21: Overview of achievement of outputs 53
Table 22: Overview of costs allocated to outputs 54
Table 23: Distribution of personnel per output 55
Table 24: Module objective indicator achievement rates 56
Table 25: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency 56
Table 26: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability 57
Table 27: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability 60
Table 28: Rating and score scales 61
Table 29: Overall rating of OECD/DAC criteria and assessment dimensions 62

Abbreviations

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CAREC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
IFAS	International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ICSD	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development
ILUMA	Integrated Land Use Management Approaches
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REP4SD	Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia
SAEPF	State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (Kyrgyzstan)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLUCA	Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

The project at a glance

Central Asia: Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia

Project number	2017.2110.9
Creditor reporting system code(s)	41010 – Environmental policy and administrative management
Project objective	Integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches developed with the participation of land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society are implemented in Central Asian countries as an institutionalised part of government policy.
Project term	December 2017 – February 2021
Project value	EUR 7,005,704
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Depending on the thematic focus, the programme cooperated variously with regional organisations the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), as well as other suitable partner organisations.
Implementing organisations (in the partner country)	Depending on the thematic focus, the programme cooperated variously with regional organisations the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), as well as other suitable partner organisations.
Other development organisations involved	N/A
Target group(s)	Direct target group: experts and managers in the partner ministries, regional entities and government authorities in the countries of the region, including experts and managers from non-governmental organisations who take part in national decision-making procedures and receive further training as service providers. Indirect target group: land-users in areas at risk of degradation in Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from the use of renewable natural resources (pastureland, forestland, afforestation, agroforests).

1 Evaluation objectives and questions

This chapter aims to describe the purpose of the evaluation, the standard evaluation criteria, and additional stakeholders' knowledge interests and evaluation questions.

1.1 Evaluation objectives

Central project evaluations of projects commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) fulfil three basic functions: they support evidence-based decisions, promote transparency and accountability, and foster organisational learning within the scope of contributing to effective knowledge management. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH structures the planning, implementation and use of evaluations so that the contribution to the evaluation process and the evaluation findings made to these basic functions are optimised (GIZ, 2018a). This evaluation is a final evaluation of the project Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia (project number 2017.2110.9), henceforth referred to as the project/project under evaluation. The project was selected randomly for evaluation, following the guidelines for GIZ central project evaluations. In light of the restrictions in place because of the global COVID-19 pandemic, a semi-remote evaluation design was followed. Exchanges, interviews and discussions were conducted remotely by an international and a national evaluator, and focus group discussions were conducted physically by national evaluators between 19 April and 19 May 2021.

1.2 Evaluation questions

The project is assessed on the basis of standardised evaluation criteria and questions to ensure comparability by GIZ. This is based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria (updated 2020) for international cooperation and the evaluation criteria for German bilateral cooperation (in German): **relevance, coherence, efficiency**, **effectiveness**, **impact** and **sustainability**.

Specific assessment dimensions and analytical questions have been derived from this framework. These form the basis for all central project evaluations in GIZ and can be found in the **evaluation matrix** (see annex). In addition, contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its principles are taken into account, as are cross-cutting issues such as gender, the environment, conflict sensitivity and human rights. Also, aspects regarding the quality of implementation are included in all OECD/DAC criteria.

Table 1: Knowledge interests by main evaluation stakeholder groups

Evaluation stakeholder group	Knowledge interests in evaluation/additional evaluation questions	Relevant section in this report
BMZ	No additional knowledge interests were expressed by BMZ.	N/A
GIZ project	What should cooperation look like in the future? Which partners should the project cooperate with more intensively? (Note that Kyrgyzstan has not been an active member of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) since 2016.) How could regional cooperation have been further strengthened in the last phase of the project?	Included in sections 4.3 (coherence), 4.6 (efficiency) Included in sections 4.3 (coherence)

GIZ sectoral unit	How involved are the individual partners in the implementation of country projects? To what extent is the cooperation positive? How do the partners in Tajikistan view the achievement of project indicators?	Included in section 4.3 (coherence). Included in section 4.4. (effectiveness – as part of existing evaluation question).
GIZ partner project (Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia, PN 2013.9048.3)	To what extent can the lessons learnt from the *Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4)* be applied to the project 'Integrative and Climate-Sensitive Land Use in Central Asia' (ILUCA) in the future? (GIZ,2020d) GIZ climate methodology: to what extent can the project make use of synergies by implementing this methodology?	Included in section Included in section 4.6 (efficiency).
GIZ partner project (Community-Based Management of Walnut Forests and Pasture in South Kyrgyzstan, PN 2017.2042.4)	How widely has the Integrative Land Use Management Approaches (ILUMA)document been disseminated so far and is the mainstreaming of ILUMA appropriately incorporated into the design of the follow-on measure? Regionality – how is regionality observed? Are there themes that are covered in all countries or are they country-specific?	Included in section 4.5 (impact). Included in section 4.3 (coherence).

2 Object of the evaluation

This chapter aims to define the evaluation object, including the theory of change and results hypotheses.

2.1 Definition of the evaluation object

The object of this evaluation is the selected technical cooperation measure Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia, project number 2017.2110.9, henceforth called the project/project under evaluation.

Project term: the project term ran from 8 December 2017 to 28 February 2021 (extended from the originally planned end date of 30 November 2020).

Project value: the project was financed through funds from BMZ and implemented by GIZ. The total budget of the project was EUR 7,005,703.96. The originally foreseen budget of EUR 5,795,000 was increased by EUR 1,209,936.96 with funds remaining from the predecessor project (project number 2015.20840.0), following a modification offer in June 2019. There was no co-financing for the project.

Geographical delimitation and focus: the project aimed to continue the activities of the predecessor project to consolidate the results achieved in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and to assimilate innovative land-use schemes into sectoral reforms in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

Political and sectoral context and general conditions: much of Central Asia is made up of arid land. Livestock farming is the predominant form of land use and the main source of income for the rapidly growing rural population. For lack of alternatives, livestock is also treated as a major form of financial investment. This has resulted in increasing overuse of forest and pasture resources and the ensuing degradation of soils and depletion of biodiversity. This trend has already been exacerbated by the tangible impacts of climate change. Different forms of land use are generally practised by various groups on the same land. This is giving rise to

increasing conflicts of interest among users or user groups, which are also aggravated by competing government agencies with different remits acting largely in isolation from each other. All the countries in Central Asia are undergoing a transition from centrally planned to market economies. Central planning and state-run production predominate in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and are on the rise again in Tajikistan. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have made the greatest progress towards a market economy, but deep-seated corruption also hampers development there.

Key actors (government organisations, land-users and the private sector) do not coordinate their land-use interests. Nor do they incorporate the various land-use forms into jointly planned management schemes (the core problem).

The causes of the lack of integration of land management initiatives and the resultant progressive degradation of land resources in Central Asia lie in the overall political, socio-economic, socio-normative and institutional conditions: a lack of technical-methodological advice to land users, insufficient promotion of innovative production alternatives, the cultural shift in values, inexperience of decentralised management procedures, competing forms of land use, the incoherent legal framework and poorly organised, underfinanced and corrupt government agencies. Except for Kazakhstan, the countries in the region simply lack the financial resources to be able to halt or reverse the widespread processes of degradation (GIZ, 2017).

2.2 Results model including hypotheses

A results model is a graphical representation of the project's theory of change (ToC). It describes the logical connection and interrelationship of results (assumptions), and how and why they contribute to the overall objective. A results model defines intended positive results within the project, change hypotheses, including multi-dimensional causalities, system boundaries, assumptions and risks of the project. Projects must use the results model, as it forms the basis for the results-based monitoring and the results matrix of every BMZ-funded project. This is reflected in GIZ's processes and rules (P+R), the steering of commissions in line with the GIZ management model Capacity WORKS, including results-based monitoring and, especially, in the *Guidelines on Designing and Using a Results-based Monitoring System* (GIZ, 2014a).

Before the inception mission, the evaluation team reviewed the project's results model. The results model had not been adapted since the first offer in 2017 (GIZ, 2020b) and the project team felt the need to do a full reconstruction of the results model. For this reason, the project's results model was adapted during the inception mission, in collaboration with the project team. The outputs and impacts from the original offer were retained, but several further outcomes and impact results were added, some of which were already represented in the results matrix but not in the results model. Input was sought from all team members and the results model was approved by the project manager and the leaders of the various project components at a debriefing workshop (please see description of the model below).

Changes to the project design: the project submitted two modification offers: a) in June 2019, the project budget was increased by EUR 1,209,936.96 with funds left over from the predecessor project (project number 2015.20840.0), and b) in September 2020, the duration of the project was extended by three months, until 28 February 2021. Neither modification resulted in any changes to the project's content or procedures (GIZ, 2019d; GIZ, 2020b). The first modification offer, including the transfer of residual funds from the predecessor project, was already foreseen in the original offer from 2017. The term of the predecessor project was shortened from the originally scheduled period of May 2016 to April 2019 (three years) to May 2016 to November 2017, because cooperation with core partners was no longer feasible.

Stakeholder structure

There was no regional political sponsor of the project. Based on the experience of regional predecessor projects it was concluded that there were no suitable partner structures at the regional level. Nevertheless, the project cooperated with regional organisations the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC). The political executing agencies of the project were the ministries and authorities responsible for land management, pasture and forest management in the countries of the region:

- **Kyrgyzstan:** Ministry of Economy or State Agency for Environment and Forestry, and Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the Statistics Committee,
- **Kazakhstan:** Ministry of Energy with an environmental department and Ministry of Agriculture,
- **Tajikistan:** State Committee for Environmental Protection and the Forestry Agency,
- **Turkmenistan:** State Committee for Environmental Protection and the Land Resources and Desert Institute,
- **Uzbekistan:** State Committee for Forestry.

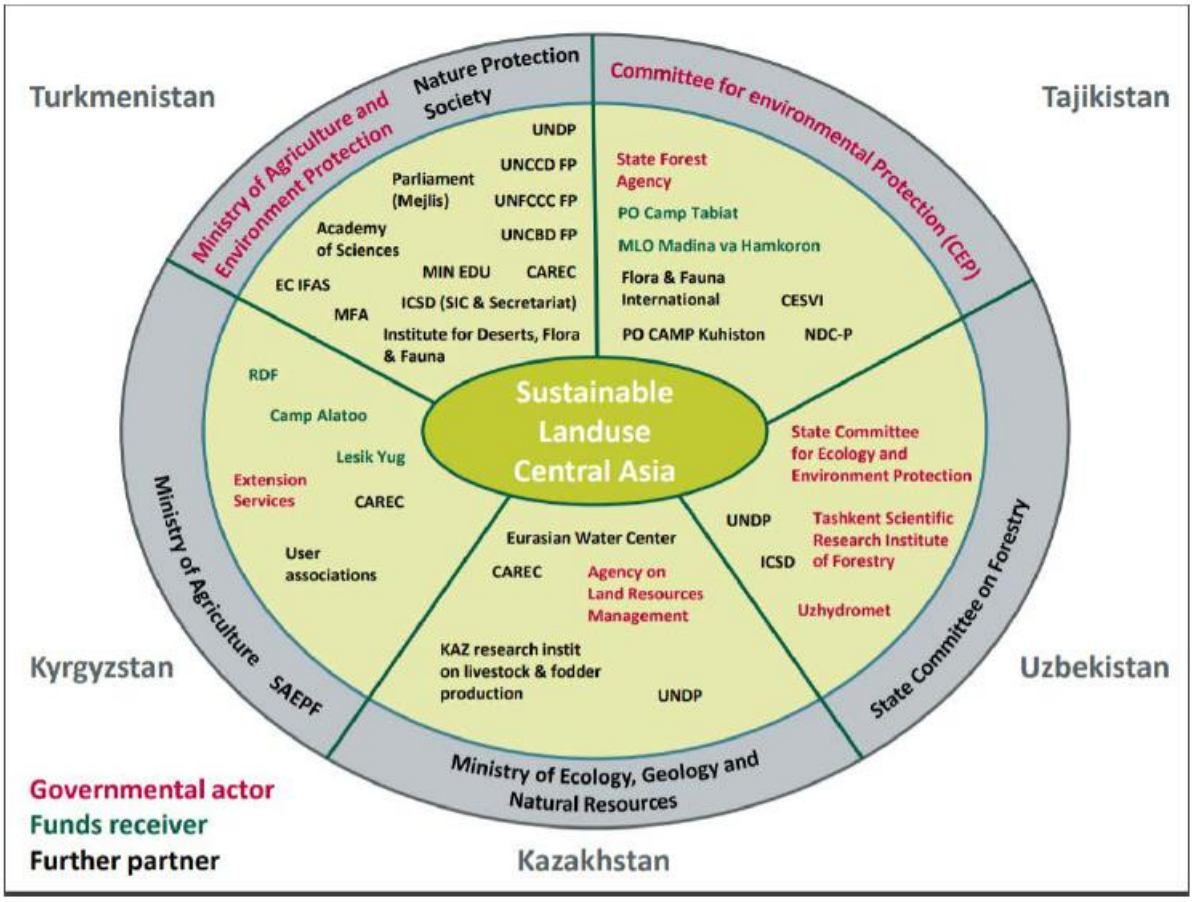
The line ministries and agencies played a central role in the legal and institutional anchoring of tested approaches to sustainable resource management. In addition to the line ministries, the project worked with a large number of implementing partners. These included subordinate government agencies of the responsible ministries (agencies, institutes, forestry administrations, protected area administrations), and private-sector organisations (associations, federations, cooperatives, etc.), national and regional non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other qualified service providers. They were important actors in the development and implementation of sector reforms (GIZ, 2017). The most important implementation partners (GIZ, 2017) were:

- **Kyrgyzstan:** Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), ‘CAMP-Ala-Too’ Public Foundation, World Bank,
- **Kazakhstan:** Agency on Land Resources Management,
- **Tajikistan:** State Forest Enterprise of Penjikent (SPE-Penjikent) and the NGOs CAMP Tabiat, Zanoni Shar, Caritas Switzerland and Azal,
- **Turkmenistan:** United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC),
- **Uzbekistan:** KRASS (an NGO).

Target groups

The direct target group of the project were experts and managers in the partner ministries, regional entities and government authorities in the countries of the region, including experts and managers from non-governmental organisations who take part in national decision-making procedures and receive further training as service providers. The indirect target groups were land-users in areas at risk of degradation in Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from the use of renewable natural resources (pastureland, forestland, afforestation, agroforests).

Figure 1: Stakeholder map



Overall project structure

Contribution analyses form a cornerstone of this evaluation. A project's theory of change (ToC) is central to a contribution analysis, to make credible causal statements on interventions and their observable results. The model developed in the inception mission (see Figure 2 below) depicts the outputs (A, B and C) and the module objective.The project results - O1–O19 represent further results of the project that were foreseen or not

foreseen in the project planning documents. I1–I8 represent the impact results of the project. The following paragraphs describe the project results logic and, hence, the results model.

At the output level, the aim of **output A** was the development of a conceptual framework for integrative land management in Central Asia and mutual exchange at the regional level in consultation with all key actors, which serves as orientation for regional and national sector policies. Guidelines of field-tested, innovative approaches to climate-change adaptation and integrated land use were to be taken into account as a conceptual basis for the development of national sector policies (output B). Land users, representatives of state institutions and civil society organisations were to be supported in jointly developing land management approaches (rules, agreements, organisation). This support was also to be provided with regard to innovative approaches to land management that have been tested in practice in the individual countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan), as well as in the context of national sector reforms (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

The regional dialogue and exchange of experiences among the partner experts on sustainable land-use issues are important components for the (further) development of innovative approaches and sector reforms. Therefore, the project sought to support mechanisms to facilitate sector dialogue. Data, especially geodata, are needed as a basis for planning and decision-making for the sustainable use of land resources (O6). The state

authorities responsible for this (e.g. ministries of agriculture, meteorological institutes or statistical authorities) were therefore to be advised on data management. For mostly poor land-users, it is of great importance that they generate income through the management of land resources. For this reason, the project aimed to support measures for economic evaluation (e.g. cost-benefit analyses) or the promotionof integrative land use (O14).

Other activities in the original project plan included the development of a guiding framework that meets the requirements of international environmental conventions and can be implemented in the countries of Central Asia through land-use initiatives and advising state organisations and land-user groups on the development of application-oriented regulations and guidelines on land use (e.g. the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia for 2020–2030 (REP4SD) (O16)). All results of measures that improve data availability and the economic assessment or commercial application of integrative land use as the planning and decision-making basis for innovative land use should have been documented (e.g. in the Compendium on Integrative Land Use Management Approaches (ILUMA)) (O5).

Output B focused on the dissemination of inclusive, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches, taking into account climate finance opportunities. The regional project aimed to prepare aggregated figures, facts and success stories of other bilateral and regional projects closely cooperating with the project (O6), and to communicate these to both national and regional partners. This should have put the latter in a position to make fact-based decisions concerning the sustainable use of renewable land resources. The regional expertise was also expected to be used to enable national and regional partners to access development cooperation funds and climate finance in connection with land use. The project also intended to provide start-up funding for the development of project proposals under the Green Climate Fund (GCF). This should have allowed for the expansion of activities in the field of sustainable, inclusive and climate-sensitive use of land resources in the Central Asia region and significantly increased the impact of the measure. Such activities would include, for example, advising and supporting donor organisations in the development of project proposals related to land-use systems, processing the experiences of German international cooperation projects in Central Asia (e.g. the BMZ Energy and Climate Fund (EKF), International Climate Initiative (IKI) projects) in the form of fact sheets, success stories and policy briefs, or the technical and sector-policy coordination of projects.

Output C aimed to strengthen the core competencies of key actors cooperating at the regional level regarding forms of integrative land use and adaptation to climate change. Based on a strategic competence development plan, experts and managers of governmental and non-governmental organisations should have been trained in sustainable land use (O10). Special attention should have been paid to ensuring young leaders have the qualifications to enable them to initiate change processes in the organisations in which they work. The exchange of knowledge and information among participants in training and qualification measures should have been promoted by including them in three expert networks and supporting them (O9). Exchange of knowledge across borders in the region (O11) should also have been promoted. Examples of activities include: the implementation of competence development measures, e.g. via trainee programmes or cooperation with universities to improve the leadership skills of employees with management responsibility in state sector organisations, and subsequent coaching; raising awareness of problems and innovative environmental education at the national and regional levels; improving the capacities of professional organisations to evaluate environmental services and develop financial instruments for sustainable, integrative land-use practices; and strengthening the role of organisations as multipliers of competences.

At **outcome level**, output A has the closest link to the module objective: integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches developed with the participation of land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society are implemented in Central Asian countries as an institutionalised part of government policy. The conceptual framework for integrative land management in Central Asia through the implementation of land-use schemes (in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and the trialling of innovative land-use initiatives (in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) were expected to lead to the

implementation of actual economically viable land-use approaches. Output A should be directly enabled by output B: the dissemination of inclusive, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches, taking into account climate finance opportunities. Output B should further result in the development of project proposals for international cooperation projects that involve the dissemination of key innovations of the regional programme (O4). The strengthening of capacities of the regional institution CSD (O1) was expected to lead to a) politicians being better informed about the importance of renewable natural resources (O12), b) key actors coordinating their interests in the area of land use (O3) and c) strengthening of the structure of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) (I1). Also linked to output B is the development of innovative financial instruments for the sustainable use of renewable natural resources (O14). It was assumed that the results relevant to output C (O9, O10 and O11) would lead to the learning experiences and conclusions being integrated into five regional processes (O2) and, hence, to the implementation of five country-wide sector strategies by key actors in two countries (O18). The increased capacities through output B should also have led to key actors coordinating their interests in the area of land use (O3) and NGOs extending their knowledge of natural resources (O13). O2, O18 and O3 all directly impact the module objective.

At the **impact level**, implementing the project aimed to contribute to increasing the protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and sustainable management of forests; combating desertification; halting and reversing land degradation and halting biodiversity loss (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15). The main impact objective of the project was: 'relevant actors in Central Asia are taking coordinated measures to improve the protection and sustainable use of natural resources in accordance with the principles of international environmental conventions the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on the Conservation of Other Species (UNCMS) (I9). Furthermore, following the project planning the project contributed to a) increasing the budgets of government organisations in the green sector (I5), b) ensuring that lessons learned and new information on the economic value of renewable natural resources are considered in national development planning processes (I4), c) harmonising sector laws in the area of sustainable land use (I8) and d) land-users benefiting from sustainable land use.

Unintended results and risks: potentially unintended positive and negative results at the outcome/impact level were not systematically monitored by the project. However, during the reconstruction of the results model, the following unintended positive results were identified by the project team:

- Experiences from implemented approaches are translated into new cross-border projects(I3).
- Project proposals for development cooperation projects are implemented (BMZ's Expert and Study Fund (SFF)), Green Belt project/Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia, PN 2013.9048) (I2).
- The will to reform on the part of the governments of Central Asian countries is strengthened through the ICSD (I6).
- Cost-benefit analyses provide economic information on different forms of land use (O15).
- Project proposals for development cooperation projects (World Bank/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) project proposal in Kyrgyzstan) that involve the dissemination of key innovations of the regional programme are submitted to donor organisations or the Green Climate Fund (O4).

. The structure of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) has been strengthened, mostly through the support of the sub-division of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) (in parallel with the Transboundary Water Management Programme).

Risks were frequently monitored and reported in the specific progress reports and outlined in political-economic analyses for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (2019 and 2020). Each of the five countries presents its own political and framework risks:

- **Kyrgyzstan**: changes in the national legal framework (introduction of the Budget Code) considerably impeded the implementation of activities on the agenda to pilot forest sector reform and forced the project to review the planned support in order to adapt to the changed context. The fact that Kyrgyzstan essentially froze its membership of the ICSD posed a further risk to the implementation of the project. Finally, the political crisis in the public administration system, which preceded the coup in October 2020, was marked by frequent changes of management in the forestry administration, which had a negative influence on project implementation.
- **Kazakhstan**: several sequential changes of management in the key partner government organisation posed a risk to efficient and effective decision-making in the project context.
- **Turkmenistan**: the unforeseen governmental changes in Turkmenistan potentially affected implementation, resulting in pasture reform being delayed. The centralised structure of government narrowed the options for incorporating a participatory approach, on which integrative and climate-sensitive land-use management is based.
- **Uzbekistan**: a lack of political will and readiness for cooperation in the partner institutions due to weak personal relationships between heads of governmental institutions posed a general risk to the successful implementation of activities in Uzbekistan.
- **Tajikistan**: the relatively hostile relationship between Germany and Tajikistan (due to, for example, the BMZ exit strategy, late or no answers to official letters by the German embassy, non-inclusion of regional partners in governmental negotiations) posed a substantial risk to the implementation of activities. In general, just as in Turkmenistan, the unstable political situation and autocracy posed a risk to successful project implementation.

There was a general risk that possible changes in the political situation in Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan may have hampered or made German technical cooperation policy advice impossible. This could have led to a situation where the approaches developed and tested on a pilot basis did not find their way into strategies and laws at the national level.

System boundary: the system boundary is defined based on the scope of control of the project, i.e. results outside the system boundary are beyond the exclusive responsibility of the project and are affected by other factors, stakeholders and interventions in the respective country. In general, results that require political will and support lie outside of the model's system boundary, as changes in the commitment of political actors cannot be controlled by the project.

Potential interactions between social, economic and environmental results: the project had a predominantly environmental dimension (contribution to improving the protection and sustainable use of natural resources, SDG 15). The project was particularly oriented towards SDG targets 15.1. (ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements) and 15.2. (promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation). The project should also contribute indirectly to SDG 1 – reduced poverty and SDG 13 – climate action ('take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy') (GIZ, 2020 b).

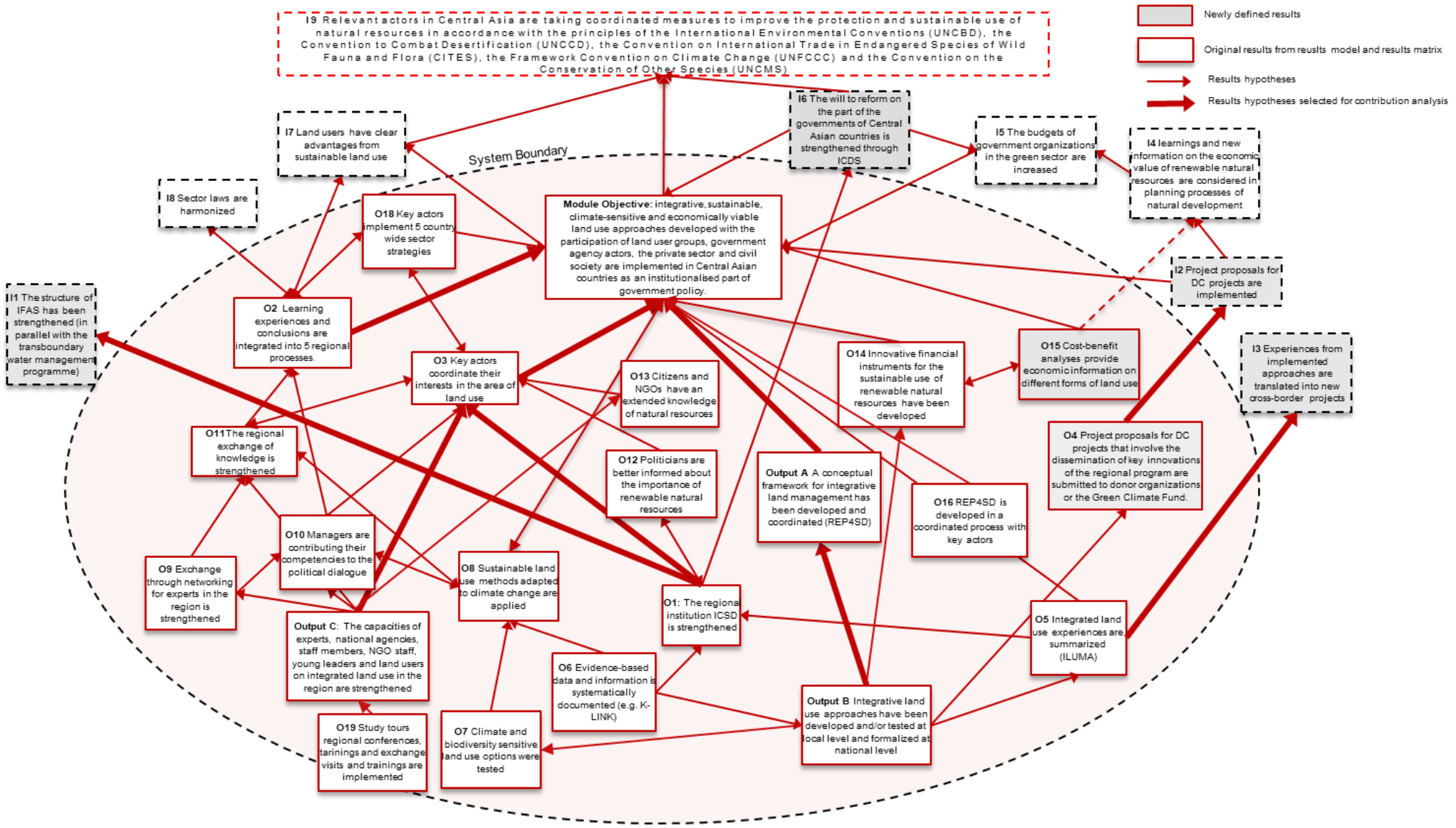
In accordance with this main objective, the project was assigned the DAC marker UR-2 (environmental protection, resource conservation and ecological sustainability are principal objectives). According to the project's rationale, there is an interaction between the environmental, social and economic spheres, as improved sustainable use of agricultural land is intertwined with the social and financial security of land-users in areas of Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from pastureland, forestland, afforestation for

wood-based business models[1] and agroforests. The aim of coordinating different forms of land use was to increase the income of the local population, especially smallholder farmers. Through better coordination of the interests of land-user groups (e.g. small and large farmers, forest users, concessionaires) their resilience to economic and natural changes is strengthened. Hence, the project was assigned the BMZ marker AO-1 (poverty orientation). Owing to the focus on rural development, sustainable use of natural resources, improvement of value creation in the use of these resources, as well as production alternatives, the project was also assigned the BMZ marker LE-1 (rural development).

At the local and national levels in the partner countries, appropriate participation of key actors in decision-making processes was promoted. This was incorporated into sector reform processes to actively shape them. Hence, the project was assigned the DAC marker PD/GG-1 (participatory development/good governance). Furthermore, the project worked in rural areas where both women and men manage land resources. The roles of the genders and their specific access to and use of these resources are different. The different needs of women and men are taken into account in political and strategic operational decision-making processes (at national and local levels). The gender perspective is incorporated into the development of legal foundations. Women are actively involved in land-user organisations. Development parameters and data are collected via gender-specific monitoring. Therefore, the project was assigned the DAC marker GG-1 (gender equality). The project included measures for adaptation to climate change. Intact soils and land-use systems are more resilient to negative impacts of climate change, such as extreme droughts. Mitigating economic and social impacts of land degradation increase the resilience of the population to the impacts of climate change. Hence, the project was assigned the DAC marker KLA-1 (adaptation to climate change).

[1] In Central Asian countries, private afforestation is increasingly being promoted to provide a sustainable source of income for private land-users and communities. As, often, more than 90% of the land comprises steppe, desert and semi-desert, afforestation is the only way to provide a sustainable base for wood-based industries (World Bank, 2018; ILUCA, n.d.; UN & FAO, 2019).

Figure 2: Updated results model (November 2020), adopted during the evaluation



3 Evaluability and evaluation process

This chapter aims to clarify the availability and quality of data and the process of the evaluation.

3.1 Evaluability: data availability and quality

This section covers the following aspects:

- availability of essential documents,
- monitoring and baseline data, including partner data, and
- secondary data.

Availability of essential documents

The project provided the evaluation team with a series of documents that formed an important data source for this evaluation. These documents included the project offer and modification offer, including: the project's results matrix; map of actors; project progress reports; context, political and gender analyses; and the project's capacity development strategy. The project's results model was adapted by the evaluation team during the inception mission. All relevant project documents were made available and could be used during the evaluation mission. A complete list of documents and sources can be found in the list of references at the end of this report.

Monitoring and baseline data, including partner data

A results-based monitoring system (RBM) at the project level was in place and well maintained. Each indicator is explained in an overall results matrix. Within the matrix, indicators are described and results are documented. The fact that everything is in one (MS Word) document made it a little difficult to get an overview. The sources of verification, challenges and risks, as well as required current and future activities, are described. The RBM system was updated and analysed by the programme team every six months for steering, internal learning and as a basis for the progress reports. Since most indicators refer to direct project outputs, they did not require baseline data and the baseline was assumed to be zero. KOMPASS (a qualitative survey method) was used as an observation tool during the project. The project was constantly in touch with its stakeholders, reflecting on activities and using self-assessment formats.

Interviews and focus group discussions: interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with the project staff, consultants and resource persons, local government authorities, national government agencies and participants in the pilot measures. Interview partners were identified in consultation with the GIZ project team, before the evaluation mission, in October and November 2020. They were chosen based on their role in responding to conflict-induced displacement and their involvement in project activities.

Survey: a survey was conducted with participants in the Green CA Expert Network. Two participants from each country were randomly selected. Unfortunately, the return rate was very low, with only three of the ten selected people responding.

Baseline information: baseline information and end-line data for outcome and output indicators were provided by the project itself through the results-based monitoring system. The quality of the reporting was assessed by

the evaluation team as good. However, the indicators were often output-focused (see section 4.4 on effectiveness for more information).

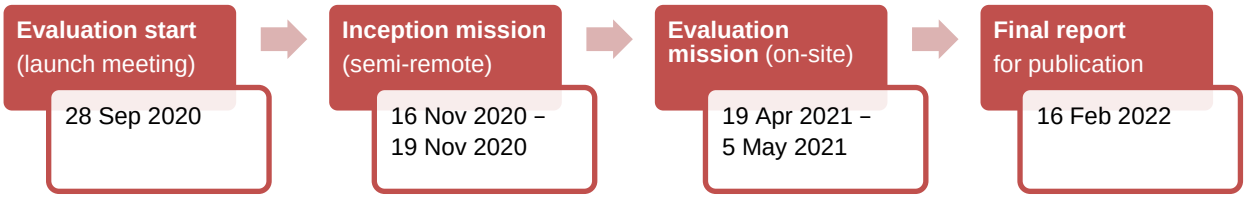
Quality of data: overall, the evaluation team considers the data on which this evaluation is based to be of good quality, in the sense that ample documentation on processes supported by the project was available. The evaluation team also found this information to be reliable, as it was in line with information provided by partners and external stakeholders in the interviews conducted during the evaluation mission. However, partly due to the low response rate to the survey and non-availability of a few stakeholders, the representativeness of some of the data collected is limited.

3.2 Evaluation process

This section covers the following aspects:

- milestones of the evaluation process,
- involvement of stakeholders,
- selection of interviewees,
- data analysis process,
- roles of international and local evaluators,
- semi-remote evaluation, and
- context and conflict sensitivity within the evaluation process.

Figure 3: Milestones of the evaluation process



Involvement of stakeholders

The involvement of various stakeholders in the evaluation is key to central project evaluations. It strongly determines the success of the evaluation and acceptance of the evaluation findings and recommendations. During the inception mission, the international evaluator identified the main stakeholders to be most involved in the evaluation process, following three approaches:

- A mapping activity with key project-team members (including all country team leads) to identify the crucial stakeholders of the project and discuss their involvement in the evaluation.
- Remote interviews conducted with further representatives from BMZ and GIZ's sectoral unit, as well as GIZ partner projects in Central Asia, to identify evaluation stakeholders.
- A review of critical documents to identify further stakeholders that had not yet been identified yet (e.g. from the stakeholder map, progress reports and the monitoring system).

The decision on who to involve in the evaluation was taken by the evaluation team based on a) the importance of the stakeholder, b) the value of (additional) information provided, e.g. relevance to key results, and c) the feasibility of including them within the time frame/evaluation mission schedule, e.g. final target groups.

Selection of interviewees

Table 2: List of evaluation stakeholders and selected participants

Organisation/company/ target group	The overall number of persons involved in evaluation (including gender disaggregation)	No. of interview participants	No. of focus group participants	No. of workshop participants	No. of survey participants
Donors	1	1			
BMZ					
GIZ	12	12			
GIZ project team, GIZ sectoral unit, GIZ country offices					
Public partner organisations (direct target group)	15	15			
Department of International Relations and Eco-tourism Development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Forest Agency, Tajikistan (2); State Committee for Environmental Protection, Tajikistan; State Forest Enterprise of Penjikent (SPE-Penjikent), Tajikistan; Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD) and Forest and Hunting Inventory Institution in the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Kyrgyzstan (3); Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Kyrgyzstan; Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection, Turkmenistan (2); Department of Forestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife in the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, Republic of Kazakhstan (2); Department for International Cooperation–ICSD representative in the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, Kazakhstan.					
Other stakeholders (e.g. public actors, other development projects)	10		77		3
Agency on Land Resource Management, Kazakhstan; Scientific Information Centre of the ICSD, ICSD Secretariat, Turkmenistan; Pico team consulting, Tajikistan; World Bank/GEF Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project (for Kyrgyzstan); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) (focal point for Turkmenistan); United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) (focal point for Turkmenistan); KfW Development Bank, Tajikistan; participants in the GREEN CA leadership programme; trainees from the Forest Agency and forest enterprises in Tajikistan; Members of the Green CA expert network.					
Civil society and private-sector actors	6	6			
CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation, Kyrgyzstan; NGO CAMP Tabiat, Tajikistan; NGO Zanoni Shar, Tajikistan; Caritas Switzerland, Tajikistan; NGO Azal, Tajikistan; KRASS NGO, Uzbekistan.					
Final beneficiaries/indirect target groups (sum)	11				
Beneficiaries of forest management measures in	6	11	11		

Organisation/company/ target group	The overall number of persons involved in evaluation (including gender disaggregation)	No. of interview participants	No. of focus group participants	No. of workshop participants	No. of survey participants
Bobotog und Gissar Leskhoz in Surkhandarya, Tajikistan					
Beneficiaries of the irrigation system in Penjikent (with CAFT project)	5	11	11		

Data analysis process

For efficient data management and analysis, the evaluation team compiled all qualitative findings from the documents and interviews. As the first step, field notes were taken during the actual interviews. The evaluation team used the on-site paper-and-pencil technique to identify initial insights and recommendations as the interviews progressed, then added to these notes once the interview was over, i.e. at the end of each day while impressions were still fresh. To analyse different data sources, a category system of the evaluation questions, as per the evaluation matrix, was developed. By doing so, information from several data sources regarding a particular evaluation dimension was retrieved and compared, and the findings summarised. Quantitative monitoring data were analysed mainly descriptively.

Roles of international and local evaluators

Mainlevel's evaluation team consisted of two international evaluators Lukas von Petersdorff-Campen and Fabian Schuster aswell as three local experts. In general, tasks were divided as follows:

- international evaluator: Lukas von Petersdorff-Campen an d Fabian Schuster
    - evaluation design and instruments,
    - focal point for GIZ and the project team,
    - responsible for successful implementation of inception and evaluation missions; conduct of virtual interviews with project team and stakeholders,
    - data collection and analysis,
    - presentations and reporting;

- local evaluators: Temir Burzhubaev (Kyrgyzstan), Zara Makhmudova (Tajikistan) and Jasurbek Rustamov (Uzbekistan):
    - technical experts in sustainable land use,
    - regional expert in Central Asia on national legislation, policies, frameworks and international conventions or standards relating to sustainable land use and climate change,
    - support with regard to data collection,
    - participation in local briefings and events, whenever appropriate,
    - desk studies, whenever local checks were appropriate,
    - recruitment of interview partners,
    - interpretation and triangulation of results.

Semi-remote evaluation

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the way we would routinely work and often required (field) work to be conducted (semi-) remotely. International travel was restricted (e.g. by quarantine obligations). Therefore, the data were collected by the local evaluators or virtually. In this 'semi-remote' evaluation design, the local evaluators bore a higher responsibility to successfully conduct interviews, discussions and surveys. The international evaluators reassigned days intended for data collection on-site to coordinate with the local consultant remotely and ensure data quality control and triangulation. A quality infrastructure designed for the evaluation mission strengthened cooperation and quality assurance. This was based on a close exchange between the appointed experts: the international and national evaluators constantly reflected on findings gained and share learning experiences. In addition, a second, methodical, quality control of all written products, such as interview notes and analysis results, was performed by the lead international consultants. The team leader (Lukas von Petersdorff-Campen) checked the quality of the data and final reports, and signed off and released the evaluation products. For virtual data collection, the evaluation team were able to make the most of Mainlevel's digital profile and use a variety of collaboration and communication software, such as Microsoft Teams. In the end, three of the five project countries were visited (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan). The evaluation team did also consider the project measures in the other two countries (Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan) as part of the evaluation, however. High-level stakeholders from the direct target group were interviewed remotely via online tools. Local consultants from the other countries assisted with translation into Russian for Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Context and conflict sensitivity within the evaluation process

Since the project was not implemented in a typically fragile environment, and no peace and conflict analysis was implemented, the project is not categorised in accordance with the GIZ peace and conflict analysis. However, in some of the Central Asian countries, notable characteristics of fragility are evident. In Tajikistan, in the face of continued state repression, the possibilities for fair, peaceful conflict resolution are considered limited (GIZ, 2020b). Furthermore, the situation in neighbouring Afghanistan continues to be marked by latent destabilisation. At the same time, the conflict with Kyrgyzstan over the border in the Ferghana Valley continues. The situations described did not have any direct impact on the conduct of the evaluation.

4 Assessment according to OECD/DAC criteria

4.1 Impact and sustainability of predecessor projects

This section analyses and assesses the impact and sustainability of the predecessor project: Regional Programme for Sustainable and Climate-Sensitive Land Use for Economic Development in Central Asia (project number 2015.20840.0).

Summarising assessment of predecessor project

Some results of the predecessor project can still be observed. Many of the approaches that were converted into new by-laws and policies during the project under evaluation were tested and developed in the predecessor project. However, some of the challenges identified during the predecessor project, such as government agencies neglecting to look at land use holistically, persisted throughout the project under evaluation.

Evaluation design: as indicated in the evaluation matrix (see annex), the long-term results of the predecessor project were mainly assessed through analyses of the project evaluation report (PEV) on the predecessor project and that project's progress reports, which underwent qualitative content analysis. Interviews with the donor and GIZ management provided complementary information, which was triangulated.

Analysis and assessment of predecessor project

The term of the predecessor project was shortened from the originally scheduled period of May 2016 to April 2019 (three years) to May 2016 to November 2017, because cooperation with core partners was no longer feasible. The main results of the project before it was cancelled were as follows:

- Land-use schemes to reduce land degradation were developed and implemented in pilot regions of selected countries, e.g. pasture management in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, sustainable forest management in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, afforestation in Kazakhstan and forest resource management in Uzbekistan. The results and lessons learned from the implementation of land-use schemes were integrated into national policies and therefore sustainable. In Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, the pilot sites of the predecessor project were taken over and extended by the project under evaluation (Int_UZ01, Int_KG02, Int_KAZ01).
- In Tajikistan, the following sectoral use schemes were incorporated into the national legal framework: the new Forest Code (2011), the Law on Pastures (2013) and the draft Forestry Sector Strategy (2015). In Kyrgyzstan, the Law on Pastures (2009) was amended and forest sector reform (2014) was piloted. In Turkmenistan, the Forest Code (2015) and the Law on Pastures (2015) were amended, and the development of by-laws (2020) to the latter was supported. In Kazakhstan, guidelines on promoting private afforestation were revised (since 2016). The project under evaluation followed up many of these frameworks and continued consultations on adaptations and amendments. For example, in Tajikistan, the project consulted the Forest Agency on integrating the joint forest management approach into the statistical forms within the forest reporting system, and offered legal support for efforts to harmonise land and forest codes (Int_01TJ; GIZ, 2020c).
- The predecessor project worked on incorporating lessons learned and conclusions concerning mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and integrative land use into national and regional procedures. As a regional programme, it fulfilled a coordination function for all Central Asian countries on these issues, both with bilateral and other regional programmes of German international cooperation in the region. The project under evaluation continued these efforts by, for example, compiling lessons learned on integrated land-use management in one central document (ILUMA) and disseminating this (GIZ, 2020c).

- The predecessor project's tried-and-tested land-use initiatives have been in greater demand from international donor and partner organisations (e.g. International Fund for Agricultural Development, World Bank) and have been included in national sectoral reform processes (e.g. piloting of forest sector reform in Kyrgyzstan). This learning process was made possible by cross-border mechanisms for knowledge exchange that were developed and coordinated by the regional programme (GIZ, 2017). These efforts were later consolidated by the project under evaluation and built upon in the work with the ICSD (GIZ, 2020c).

Based on the final evaluation of the predecessor project, as well as the results from interviews with project staff and partners, the evaluators identified some core lessons from the predecessor project that were addressed in the project under evaluation with varying success:

- The different types of land use were mainly addressed separately in the predecessor project. This limited the policy advice regarding integrating different land uses in comprehensive approaches and was one of the main lessons learned for the current project. While integrative approaches were disseminated and tested in the current project, interview partners still felt that different types of land use were often looked at separately (Int_UZ01, Int_KG02).
- In the predecessor project, one of the issues was that there were no national partners interested in collaborating on the integration of land uses. This was due to competition in terms of competence and for funding within government organisations. While the project did work on this issue intensively, there is still further need to encourage cooperation between government agencies, the private sector, civil society organisations and land-user groups.
- In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the regional programme was still in the early stages of working on sustainable land management. This was noticeable in the project, as activities in these countries mostly started from scratch (GIZ, 2020c).
- In Turkmenistan, there were no activities under the predecessor project. However, some lessons had been learned from earlier GIZ sustainable land-use projects from as far back as 2008. These lessons were also reflected in the experiences documented in ILUMA for Turkmenistan.
- The predecessor project provided substantial support to help progress the World Bank project on forestry in Kyrgyzstan and took on a crucial role feeding lessons learned at the local and national levels into policy-reform processes at the national level. Thanks to the predecessor project, the World Bank project on forestry in Kyrgyzstan was able to be implemented. With a budget of USD 16.1 million, it was the biggest project in the sector and consisted of three components: a) Forest Sector Institutional Reform, b) Strategic Investments and Piloting of Sustainable Management Approaches and c) Information and Monitoring and Evaluation. The predecessor project provided the cornerstones that were later built on by the World Bank (Int_KG07).

Overall, the majority of the results of the predecessor project were successfully transferred to the project under evaluation. Some of the issues of the predecessor remained, however – notably, the challenge posed by a strong regional partner and the cooperation structure. However, the relaunch of the project with national cooperation partners and the ICSD as the main forum for cooperation helped strengthen the regional approach.

Methodology for assessing predecessor project

Table 3: Methodology for predecessor project

Predecessor project: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Impact of the predecessor project	• Impact results documented in the final progress report, the current project offers and the project evaluation of the predecessor project. • Assessment by project team and partners that remained from the previous project.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis followed the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	• Staff rotation might result in limited first-hand reports from the predecessor project at beginning of the successor project. • The project evaluation of the predecessor project was only available in a short version (PowerPoint presentation).
Sustainability of the predecessor project	• Outcome results documented in the final progress report and the project evaluation of the predecessor project. • Assessment by project team and partners that remained from the previous project.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis followed the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	See above

4.2 Relevance

This section analyses and assesses the relevance of the project.

Summarising assessment and rating of relevance

Table 4: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: relevance

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Relevance	Alignment with policies and priorities	28 out of 30 points
	Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	28 out of 30 points
	Appropriateness of the design	15 out of 20 points
	Adaptability – response to change	17 out of 20 points
Relevance total score and rating		Score: **88 out of 100 points** Rating: Level 2: successful

The evaluation team concludes that the design of the project was in line with the interests and strategies of national governments, and with the regional interests of Central Asian countries. The design was strongly adapted to past and ongoing GIZ initiatives. The relevance to the needs of the target groups was high. However, the target groups were diverse and differed from country to country, making central management of the project very complex. The project was very reliant on the political processes within the individual countries and several delays in implementation occurred due to shifting political priorities, restructuring of government bodies and unforeseen changes in legislation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions on domestic travel resulted in further delays in implementation and the cancellation of some capacity-building activities. According to the evaluators, the project objective was realistic.

In total, the relevance of the project is rated as Level 2: successful, with 88 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of relevance

This section analyses and assesses the relevance of the project. The relevance criterion covers the following dimensions: a) the alignment of the project design with relevant policies, priorities and strategic frameworks; b) the extent to which the project design matched the needs of the target groups; c) the appropriateness of the design; and d) the adaptability of the project's design and activities to changes in the environment. The relevance criterion was mainly assessed through analyses of secondary project data. Additional strategic documents and data from interviews with stakeholders were also considered. The analysis followed the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex).

Evaluation basis: for the first assessment dimension of the relevance criterion, the evaluation team aimed to analyse whether the desired results at outcome and impact level of the project were in line with relevant strategic reference frameworks, such as the priorities of the governments in the pilot-measure countries regarding migration and reintegration issues. The analysis followed the questions from the evaluation matrix. To analyse the needs and potential benefits of the project's target group, the project's focus areas and activities were contrasted with strategic reference documents, as well as the target groups' perceptions and expectations (assessment dimension 2). To assess the adequateness of the project design (assessment dimension 3), the project's results model was used. To understand changes during the implementation (assessment dimension 4), progress reports and other supporting documents were analysed and reflected upon with the project team and stakeholders. The project's target groups were: a) experts and managers in the partner ministries, regional entities and government authorities in the countries of the region (direct target groups); and b) land-users in areas at risk of degradation in Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from the use of renewable natural resources (indirect target group).

Evaluation design and methods: as indicated in the evaluation matrix (see annex), following the evaluation questions, the relevance criterion was mainly assessed through analyses of secondary project data, which underwent qualitative content analysis. Additional strategic documents and primary data from stakeholders were also considered and triangulated. Interviews with the donor and GIZ management provided complementary information. The results model formed a solid base on which to understand the adequateness of the project design, and was discussed and verified during interviews and discussions with key stakeholders. The evidence was found to be strong for the dimensions of the relevance criterion. In contrast to more quantitative approaches relying on primary data, this approach was able to incorporate a more historical view, assessing the needs at the time of the project design.

Relevance dimension 1: Alignment with policies and priorities

The first dimension of the relevance criterion aims to analyse whether the desired results of the project (according to the defined results model) were in line with relevant strategic reference frameworks – at both national and international levels and with relevant strategies of German International cooperation published by BMZ.

The project's objective was that integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches developed with the participation of land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society are implemented in Central Asian countries as an institutionalised part of government policy (GIZ, 2017). Building on more than a decade of GIZ initiatives supporting the development of sustainable land-use management approaches in the Central Asian region, the project's objectives were strongly aligned with the objectives of national governments in all five partner countries to support the development of sustainable land-use management approaches in the Central Asia region.

In **Kyrgyzstan,** the following all outlined objectives in line with the goals of the project: National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Period 2013 to 2017 (Kyrgyz Republic, 2012), in its section on sustainable land and pasture use, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development for the Period 2018–2040 (Kyrgyz Republic, 2017), in its section on sustainable land use, the Concept of Development of the Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic up to 2025 (SAEPF, 2014), in its section on sustainable use of forest

resources, including pastures, and the Concept of Development of the Forestry of the Kyrgyz Republic up to 2040 (Kyrgyz Republic, 2019), in its section on sustainable use of forest resources, including pastures.

The guiding national vision in **Tajikistan** was the National Development Strategy up to 2030 (Republic of Tajikistan, 2016), which was aligned with the SDGs. The project activities aimed to contribute to the achievements of the green economy-related points reflected in this strategy (Int_TJ05). The predecessor GIZ regional programme and associated GIZ projects had already supported the reform of the Tajik forestry sector for many years when the project under evaluation started in 2017. The introduction of Joint Forest Management in 2007 led to the reform of the national Forest Code (Republic of Tajikistan, 2011). The project activities were a continuation of these efforts, aiming at a more integrative approach to forest management. With support from international donors, Tajikistan was also heavily involved in climate finance readiness. In 2017, it was by far the most successful Central Asian country in terms of obtaining funds from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Kazakhstan has declared greening the economy as a strategic objective of the government. A green economy concept was adopted as the vision for future development in 2013, since when it has been transformed into a national law on green economy transition (Republic of Kazakhstan, 2013). Kazakhstan's nationally determined contribution towards the Paris Agreement contained an unconditional target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels, including emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry (Climate Action Tracker, 2020). The project addressed these objectives through activities geared towards the green economy and climate change. In **Turkmenistan**, all sectors committed to biodiversity protection measures during the development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan, 2002). Turkmenistan also adopted its National Socio-economic Development Programme for 2011–2030 in 2010, followed by, in 2019, a shorter-term document for the period 2019–2025. These documents, like Turkmenistan's National Climate Change Strategy, were in line with the project's objectives (GIZ, 2020a). In Turkmenistan, GIZ had already provided support for both pasture and forestry sector reforms before the project started. Among other things, GIZ had already supported, before the start of the project in 2017, the development of the pasture law and some of its amendments, the forest code, its 2015 amendments and draft by-laws.

In **Uzbekistan**, the Strategy of Actions on Five Priority Directions of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021 was approved by a decree of the president of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017. Issues related to combating desertification, land degradation and drought are reflected in priority area 3: 'Development and liberalisation of the economy', subsection 3.3: 'Modernisation and intensive development of agriculture'. In 2019, the strategy for the transition of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a green economy 2019–2030 was approved. The priority areas in this strategy include 'increasing the efficiency of natural resources and preservation of natural ecosystems' (; GIZ, 2017). The objectives outlined here were reflected in the objectives of the project in Uzbekistan.

The project addressed the policies and priorities of the individual countries in Central Asia well. However, the project's aim to strengthen regional collaboration is not consistently reflected in the national strategies, regional strategies or regional cooperation structures.

Relevance dimension 1 – Alignment with policies and priorities – scores **28 out of 30 points.**

Relevance dimension 2: Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders

For the analysis of the needs of and potential benefits for the project's target groups, the latter are differentiated as follows:

- **Regional public bodies:** experts and managers within the national divisions of the IFAS and its sub-body, the ICSD (direct target group).
- National government bodies: experts and managers in relevant ministries and government authorities in the countries of the region (direct target group).

- **Non-governmental organisations**: experts and managers from non-governmental organisations who take part in national decision-making procedures and receive further training as service providers (direct target group).
- **Land-users**: land-users in areas at risk of degradation in Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from the use of renewable natural resources (pastureland, forestland, afforestation, agroforests). Land-users are directly and indirectly addressed by the project.

The stakeholders from the ICSD that benefited from the project activities in four of the five partner countries confirmed the relevance and importance of the project approach. Kyrgyzstan was the only country that was not a member of the IFAS and therefore did not benefit from these activities. The capacities of the ICSD were described as the main issue by many of the interview partners (Int_UZ02, Int_TU03). Issues reported included a lack of office technology, such as video-conferencing equipment, and a lack of technical expertise caused partly by the relatively low salary for expert roles within the ICSD. External technical expertise was therefore key in developing action plans and programmes such as the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REP4SD) 2020–2030 (Int_UZ02, Int_TU03).

Non -governmental organisations such as Krass NGO in Uzbekistan and CAMP Alatoo Kyrgyzstan required financial support and capacity-building to acquire skills in land management and participatory land-use practices to pass on to rural communities (Int_UZ03, Int_KG06). The causes of the lack of integration of land management initiatives and the resultant progressive degradation of land resources in Central Asia lay in the overall political, socio-economic, socio-normative and institutional conditions: a lack of technical-methodological advice to land-users, insufficient promotion of innovative production alternatives, the cultural shift in values, lack of experience of decentralised management procedures, competing forms of land use, the incoherent legal framework and poorly organised, underfinanced and corrupt government agencies. Except for Kazakhstan, the countries in the region simply lack the financial resources to be able to halt or reverse the widespread processes of degradation. National government bodies, such as forestry and pasture departments of the national ministries of ecology or agriculture in the five Central Asian countries, lacked experience and capacities (Int_KAZ01). The needs of these organisations mostly revolved around building the capacities of the staff and support with the testing of new land and forestry management approaches or converting them into national policies and by-laws (Int_TJ02, Int_TJ07, Int_KAZ02). For example, in Tajikistan, the supported forest agency is quite a new agency, having only existed since 2014. Overall capacities were low, and forest agency staff were among the lowest-paid of public workers in the country (Int_TJ07). The situation was similar in Uzbekistan (Int_UZ01). Capacity-building played a large part in all country projects.

Much of Central Asia is made up of arid land, with only 20% of the territory available for various land uses (farmland, forestland, pastureland). Owing to considerable user pressure, the limited natural resources (forests, pastures, biodiversity and soil) are increasingly being overexploited (clearing and deforestation, livestock ranges). Livestock farming is the predominant form of land use in the region and constitutes the prime source of income for the rapidly growing rural population (up by 1.3% in Turkmenistan and by up to 2.5% in Tajikistan). Livestock numbers also continue to rise in all countries in the region (by more than 60% in Tajikistan since the fall of the Soviet Union, for example) (GIZ, 2017). For lack of alternatives and owing to the fragile economies of the Central Asian countries, livestock is also used as a major form of capital investment. This has resulted in increasing overuse of forest and pasture resources, and the ensuing degradation of soils and depletion of biodiversity. The project addressed the issues of land-users and landowners directly by implementing pilot approaches in different regions in three of five central Asian countries, to provide policy-makers with knowledge of how to scale up these approaches (Int_KAZ02, Int_UZB04).

Relevance dimension 2 – Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders – scores **28 out of 30 points.**

Relevance dimension 3: Appropriateness of the design

An assessment of the project's results model prior to the evaluation showed that there was scope for revision, as the existing model was rather one-dimensional and only showed the defined four outputs, and not further expected outputs and outcomes. Thus, during a participatory exercise, the results model was reconstructed to represent the project's logic more realistically. The project objective was specified further and considered to be – to a great extent – achievable, given the multi-dimensional approach of the project to increase the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches in Central Asian countries.

Output A – conceptual guidelines for tried-and-tested innovative initiatives for adaptation to climate change and integrative land use have been developed and exchanged at the regional level – was the only output that was directly linked to the module objective in the revised results model. **Output B** – integrative land-use schemes have been disseminated in the Central Asian region, taking into consideration climate-financing facilities – was defined as a direct contribution to to Output A in the revised model. The main mode of dissemination is via the joint document ILUMA. **Output B** – the core competencies of key actors cooperating at the regional level have been strengthened concerning forms of integrative land use and their adaptation to climate change – led to the module objective by contributing to key actors coordinating their interests in land use. Therefore, all three outputs seem to have contributed to the module objective, albeit not always directly. The indicators are all very focused on outputs, even at the level of the module objective, where they focus solely on the implementation of sectoral strategies and documentation of lessons learned. Regarding the project design, both the evaluation team and the project team consider it to be highly complex. The fact that the large project team was spread across all five Central Asian countries, together with the high number of international staff, made management difficult and resulted in disproportionate overhead administrative and staff costs (Int_KG07).

Overall, the design was appropriate but challenged by the complex approach across five countries and the large administrative overhead at the beginning of project implementation.

Relevance dimension 3 – Appropriateness of the design – scores **15 out of 20 points.**

Relevance dimension 4: Adaptability – response to change

The project had to adapt to some external changes but also some internal ones. Externally, the COVID-19 pandemic had some effect on the finalisation of activities in 2020, but the project was rather lucky in that about 80% of activities had already been accomplished by the time the pandemic hit. Nevertheless, a small number of activities, such as training sessions at the pilot sites and field visits, had to be cancelled. Some training sessions were postponed and carried out later than originally planned (Int_UZ04, Int_KG07, Int_KAZ02, Int_TJ05, Int_TJ08). As discussed in section 2.1 above, the project received a cost-neutral extension of three months to compensate for some of the COVID-19-induced delays (GIZ, 2020). Other external changes that influenced the implementation included the following:

- In 2017, the Department of Forestry under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources in **Uzbekistan** became the state committee on forestry through a reshuffling of government structures. This resulted in more focus on the forestry department and increased requests for support at the national level. This made project implementation more flexible and less bureaucratic (Int_UZ04).
- The pilot measures in **Uzbekistan** were partly slow due to low interest from local people in the beginning. The survival rates of the grafted trees were not as high as expected, because of weather conditions and testing different approaches, resulting in the pilot measure being continued into the following year (Int_UZ04).
- In **Kyrgyzstan**, when the new budget code was enacted in 2017, the income of forest enterprises drastically decreased. Since the forest sector reform piloting exercise had initially relied on the use of forestry incomes as a type of merit-based incentive for forest employees, the budget code enactment resulted in some delays in project implementation, as it adapted to the new code. Thereafter, the project

had to adapt its activities to these delays, but it still managed to fully implement all planned activities. (Int_KG01).

- In **Turkmenistan**, the government policy changes affected project implementation, resulting in pasture reform in the country not being implemented as anticipated, at the programme development stage, thereby forcing the project to adapt its activities and objectives in Turkmenistan. The peculiar political set-up must also be viewed as a risk, as it is at odds with participatory involvement in decision-making processes, on which the integrative, climate-sensitive land-use approaches are based (Int_01TU; GIZ, 2020a).

In addition to these external factors, the project had to adapt because of internal changes. In 2019, a new project director came to the project and made changes to how the project was managed, decreasing the number of international staff and relying on a larger number of national staff. One positive aspect of the project management that should be highlighted was the central quality management system: one harmonised document outlining all activities, results, project design changes and risks.

Overall, the project had to constantly adapt to a changing political situation and changing political priorities in all five countries, which made the project very complex and difficult to manage centrally, resulting in a loss of efficiency and delays in the implementation of the operational plan.

Relevance dimension 4 – Adaptability – response to change – scores **17 out of 20 points.**

Methodology for assessing relevance

Table 5: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: relevance

Relevance assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Alignment with policies and priorities	BMZ Eckpunkte Papier, 2016; SDG 15; Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development (REP4SD); EU Central Asia Strategy; BMZ Reform 2030; BMZ sector strategies 2019 Klimaschutz – die Überlebensfrage der Menschheit | BMZ-Positionspapier Klimaschutz – die Überlebensfrage der Menschheit | BMZ-Positionspapier 2013, https://www.desertifikation.de/ (GIZ/BMZ); Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** document review and criteria-led analysis.	No limitations.
Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	• Direct target group: experts and managers in ministries and government authorities in the countries of the region. • Indirect target group: land-users in areas at risk of degradation in Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from the use of pastureland, forestland, afforestation, agroforests.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** document analysis, interviews and focus group discussions.	• Representatives of indirect stakeholders need to be identified. • Data triangulation between primary and secondary data.

Relevance assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Appropriateness of the design*	• Results model (including results hypotheses). • Capacity development strategy.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** document analysis, interviews.	No limitations.
Adaptability – response to change	Two modification offers from 2019 and 2020.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** document analysis, interviews.	No limitations.

* The project design encompasses the project's objective and ToC (GIZ results model, graphic illustration and narrative results hypotheses) with outputs, activities, instruments and results hypotheses, as well as the implementation strategy (e.g. methodological approach, capacity development strategy, results from hypotheses).

4.3 Coherence

This section analyses and assesses the coherence of the project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see annex).

Summarising assessment and rating of coherence

Table 6: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: coherence

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Coherence	Internal coherence	47 out of 50 points
	External coherence	45 out of 50 points
Overall score and rating		Score: **92 out of 100 points** Rating: **Level 1: highly successful**

Regarding internal coherence, the project, by design, aimed to improve the enabling environment on a national level by supporting the reform efforts of governments in the region, which also indirectly benefited other Germaninternational cooperation projects around sustainable use of natural resources and environment. Direct efforts to coordinate within German development cooperation resulted in shared activities with KfW Development Bank and institutionalised coordination of efforts to strengthen sustainable land use on a regional level through the ICSD. Regarding external coherence, the project was able to exploit synergies and support the projects of several international donors through regular exchange driven mainly by the project, thanks especially to the expertise gained through extensive piloting of integrative land management methodologies in all target countries. In Kyrgyzstan, these efforts culminated in heavy reliance by a World Bank project on the methodologies, and national and local institutions, established by the project, which, consequently, had an ongoing advisory role to the World Bank project. Nevertheless, a lack of communication with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Uzbekistan, as well as the absence of ICSD leadership, led to a duplication of effort in terms of support to the ICSD, which was resolved when the latter resumed a lead role in

coordination. As this concerned only the regional activities of the project, the effect on the overall score was minimal.

In total, the coherence of the project is rated as Level 1: highly successful, with 92 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of coherence

This section analyses and assesses the coherence of the project. The coherence criterion comprises two dimensions, namely a) the internal coherence, i.e. the extent to which the design and implementation of the project fit with the instruments and other initiatives of German development cooperation, and relevant (inter)national norms and standards, and b) the external coherence, i.e. the complementarity and coordination of the project with other donors and the joint use of structures and common systems. The coherence criterion was mainly assessed through interviews with relevant stakeholders and the project team, and through reviews of relevant documents.

Coherence dimension 1: Internal coherence

Regarding internal coherence, the project coordinated its activities well with other GIZ and German Federal Office of Foreign Affairs projects in terms of both planned synergies between the projects additional collaboration initiatives.

Specifically, the project's success in strengthening national policies in sustainable land use benefited the soil protection, desertification, sustainable land ,management projects in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (GIZ); the community-based management of walnut forests and pasture project in the south of Kyrgyzstan (GIZ); the ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the high mountain regions of Central Asia (GIZ); and the Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia project (GIZ). Regarding that last project, the project under evaulation coordinated its inputs to ICSD/IFAS and the development structures (GIZ,2020).

Interviewees generally confirmed that the project took coordinating measures with the other GIZ projects and with KfW Development Bank through regular exchanges, resulting in joint knowledge management, in particular in Tajikistan (Int_TJ05, Int_TJ03, Int_TJ01). Based on these exchanges, further collaboration was possible, such as building capacities in afforestation with KfW Development Bank in Tajikistan and transferring the integrated land-use methodology to other projects, e.g. the ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the high mountain regions (Int_TJ03). The project also supported the ICSD in assuming a larger role in donor coordination through the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding covering three GIZ projects: the project under evaluation, Ecological and Economic Development of the Aral Sea Region and Green Central Asia. The aim of the MoU was to coordinate the support provided to the ICSD by the three projects (Int_UZ02).

Based on these successful examples of coordination and synergy with other GIZ and German Federal Office of Foreign Affairs projects and the activities of KfW Development Bank, in terms of both design and implementation, internal coherence is assessed as very successful.

Coherence dimension 1 – Internal coherence – scores **47 out of 50 points**.

Coherence dimension 2: External coherence

Regarding external coherence, overall, the project successfully coordinated with other donor agencies, with most stakeholders from each country sharing mostly positive experiences regarding the coordination efforts of the project.

In **Kazakhstan**, one of the main contributions of the pilot projects was the development of a new method to calculate the cost of the afforestation of 1 ha of land. This method has since been adopted by projects implemented by FAO and the World Bank in the country (Int_KAZ01, Int_KAZ02).

In **Turkmenistan**, stakeholders from the UN described regular exchange with the GIZ project, and government stakeholders appreciated the coordination of the project with the GCF on project proposals. Nevertheless, it

was also mentioned that regular exchange is yet to be institutionalised in Turkmenistan and communication relies on good personal contacts with the country coordinator of the project (Int_TU01, Int_TU02).

In **Tajikistan**, government stakeholders similarly noted that the joint forest management approach developed and promoted by the project is to be integrated into a project implemented by the World Food Programme and funded by the GCF (Int_TJ01, Int_TJ05). Although the latter project used the project under evaluation's approach as part of an online knowledge collection, its objective to contribute to the coordination of sustainable land-use approaches in Central Asia somewhat overlaps with that of the project under evaluation (Int_TJ05). Nevertheless, the project participated in donor coordination meetings in the country in which the tested approaches of the project were presented (Int_TJ05).

In **Uzbekistan**, the project, in the absence of institutionalised government-run coordination in the forestry sector, played a coordinating role between several donors (Int_UZ01, Int_UZ04). This coordinating role developed out of efforts to connect the ICSD office in Uzbekistan to relevant donor organisations (Int_UZ04). As a concrete result, the project was able to collaborate with FAO on and share the costs of study trips to Turkey for both the Turkish and Uzbek state forestry commissions. The project supported national capacity-building events in Uzbekistan in pilot sites, with the involvement of experts from Turkey. Moreover, the project was involved in the design of a new World Bank project in Uzbekistan and provided input to the World Bank's proposal together with FAO (Int_UZ01, Int_UZ04). Although the support to the ICSD provided the grounds for regular engagement with donors, donor coordination around support for the organisation itself proved difficult. GIZ signed an MoU, outlining all planned activities, with the ICSD in 2016 and extended it in 2018 to 2020. In 2019, the ICSD signed another MoU with UNEP. While there was no overlap of activities covered by the MoUs, there was an overlap regarding the activities planned for implementation with UNEP and GIZ post-2019. This misunderstanding can be partly explained by a lack of capacity. ICSD Uzbekistan as well as limited communication between the project and other donor initiatives. It was only in August 2020, when the vacant leadership position in the ICSD was filled, that coordination between the two partners resumed and separate activities were planned (Int_UZ02, Int_UZ04).

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the project successfully connected the financial and technical cooperation provided by the World Bank project Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management with its own piloting and reform measures. All interviewed stakeholders confirmed the significant contribution of the project to the organisation of component on forestry of the World Bank project, with an overall budget of USD 16 million (Int_KG01, Int_KG04, Int_KG05, Int_KG06, Int_KG07, Int_KG08). The World Bank project made direct use of the results of the GIZ intervention – for example, as follows:

- The World Bank project used the participatory land-use approach developed by the Swiss Development Cooperation and GIZ and piloted it in six forest enterprises, with some changes, to account for regional differences at the design stage and, later, for implementation (Int_KG05, Int_KG07, Int_KG08).
- The Coordination and Consultative Council within SAEPF established by the project to coordinate policy reforms became the steering committee of the World Bank project (Int_KG05, Int_KG08).
- Similarly, the joint forest management councils formalised by the GIZ project at the community level were used by the World Bank project to plan and mobilise beneficiaries, and to implement investment components (Int_KG05, Int_KG08).

Interviewees further stressed the active role of the project in engaging donors and collecting information that would eventually also benefit the World Bank project and reduce the risk of loss of knowledge generated by technical assistance (Int_KG05, Int_KG08). For instance, the project provided advice on an ongoing basis on cost calculations for afforestation (Int_KG08).

The project took an active role in the coordination of donor agencies in all target countries, with some significant successes in Kyrgyzstan. However, the limited coordination of support for the ICSD also illustrates some lost potential for donor coordination. Nevertheless, owing to the mostly positive coordination results, the project's external coherence is assessed as successful.

Coherence dimension 2 – External coherence – scores **45 out of 50 points.**

Methodology for assessing coherence

Table 7: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: coherence

Coherence: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Internal coherence	• BMZ Eckpunktepapier 2016; SDG 15; Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development (REP4SD); (EU Central Asia Strategy). • The GIZ- and BMZ-financed projects: Soil Protection, Desertification, Sustainable Land Management (PN 2017.2010.1); Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia (PN 2013.9048.3); Community-based Management of Walnut Forests and Pasture in the South of Kyrgyzstan (PN 2017.2042.4).	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews.	None
External coherence	• Regional initiatives: the Regional Pasture Network, the Regional Environmental Action Plan, ICSD and International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). • Regional projects: World Bank[2], GEF[3], CAREC[4]. • National: Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature and Nuclear Safety (BMU)/ Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative (IKI) [5], EU[6], International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)[7] (GIZ, 2020b: 62).	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews and document review (project documents and strategies).	Not all relevant stakeholders could be interviewed.

4.4 Effectiveness

This section analyses and assesses the effectiveness of the project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see annex).

[2] Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB).
[3] CACILM II: Integrated Natural Resources Management in Drought-prone and Salt-affected Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and Turkey.
[4] Environmental Dialogue.
[5] Support for the Green Economy in Kazakhstan and Central Asia, World Bank Project on Integrated Management of Forest Ecosystems in Kyrgyzstan.
[6] Enhancing Water and Natural Resources Management and Protection in Upper Catchments of Zarafshon Watershed.
[7] Project to improve the quality of livestock farming and market development in Kyrgyzstan.

Summarising assessment and rating of effectiveness

Table 8: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Effectiveness	Achievement of the (intended) objectives	25 out of 30 points
	Contribution to the achievement of objectives	20 out of 30 points
	Quality of implementation	14 out of 20 points
	Unintended results	15 out of 20 points
Overall score and rating		Score: **74 out of 100 points** Rating: Level 3: moderately successful

The evaluation team found that the project indicators were achieved by the end of the project. However, the way in which the indicators were achieved varied slightly from the original intention. Contribution analyses allowed for a more detailed examination of the effectiveness of selected activities and corresponding pathways of change. Regarding the strengthened capacities of key stakeholders to increase the use of sustainable land-use approaches, the evaluation of pilot sites found that most tenants are applying the approaches introduced but with mixed degrees of satisfaction regarding their user-friendliness. Strengthening the capacities of key stakeholders through the Lead the Change programme was successful, while the usefulness of the ensuing network remains to be seen (contribution analysis 1). Regarding the capacities of the ICSD in coordinating regional processes, the commission's capacity issues largely persist from the period during which there was no leadership or regional commitment, despite some recent efforts to increase support (contribution analysis 2). Regarding the implementation of the REP4SD process, the analysis showed that the project supported strategic processes in every country. REP4SD was developed with these experiences in mind, but because of the capacity issues at the ICSD, this had not yet produced tangible results at the time of this evaluation (contribution analysis 3). Two positive results that, technically, had not been planned beforehand were identified during the evaluation, while no negative unintended results were identified. Additional positive results emerged thanks to additional efforts by partner governments to further scale up the activities supported by the project.

In total, the effectiveness of the project is rated Level 3: moderately successful, with 74 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of the effectiveness

To assess the effectiveness of the project, the evaluation team aimed to analyse the extent to which the project achieved its desired objectives, measured by the module objective indicators (assessment dimension 1) and the degree to which all its activities and instruments contributed to those objectives (assessment dimension 2). The latter is mostly based on a contribution analysis, for which three key causal relations were selected for in-depth scrutiny. Ultimately, the evaluation of the project's effectiveness also covered unintended results (assessment dimension 3). Regarding the evaluation's theoretical framework on training effectiveness, the second and third levels of the Kirkpatrick model ('Learning' and 'Behaviour Change') are considered under the effectiveness criteria. For the overall assessment of effectiveness, both qualitative and quantitative data were drawn upon.

Effectiveness dimension 1: Achievement of the (intended) objectives

The information presented below provides an overview of the achievement of the project objective, as measured by the indicators in the results matrix. This required a comparison to be made between the status and the targets of the outcome indicators. To set the basis for the later assessment, during the inception

mission indicators were examined for the degree to which they were SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound). Module objective-level indicators were found to be formulated mostly in a SMART way (see table 9 below for more details). Considering the nature of the indicators and the focus of the contribution analysis, effectiveness dimensions 1 and 2 should be considered jointly. The evaluation basis for this dimension was the project's internal monitoring data, as well as data collected by the evaluation team. Qualitative data gathered through interviews and discussions with the key target groups complemented and enhanced the findings.

Module objective indicator (MOI) 1: in two Central Asian countries, key actors have implemented five nationwide sectoral strategies, including guiding principles on integrative, gender-sensitive land use.

The first module objective indicator measures the number of sectoral strategies – defined as guiding principles, resolutions and management directives – implemented nationwide that promote integrative land use. According to the project's final progress report, national stakeholders implemented the following five out of five targeted strategies:

- The grazing index methodology in Kyrgyzstan was implemented and approved in December 2018 by SAEPF.
- A new statistical form for the integration of a system of environmental-economic accounting was approved in November 2018 by governmental decree (MA SLU-CA).
- The adoption in Tajikistan of a climate adaptation strategy in October 2012, which includes principles of climate-sensitive land use from GIZ advisory approaches (ILUMA).
- The projects supported the implementation of the Paris Agreement resulting in the actualisation of Tajikistan's climate contributions in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use sector.
- The Joint Forest Management (JFM) approach is integrated into the statistical reporting mechanism of the forest sector in Tajikistan.

MOI1 is therefore assessed as achieved.

Module objective indicator 2: lessons learned and conclusions from German development cooperation projects/programmes in the fields of mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and integrative land use have been incorporated into five regional processes.

The second module objective indicator measures whether lessons learned from German development cooperation, beyond the project, in the areas of climate change and land use are informing regional processes, namely: the Regional Pasture Network; the Regional Environmental Action Plan and ICSD and IFAS; the World Bank's Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB); the FAO programme Integrated Natural Resources Management in Drought-prone and Salt-affected Agricultural Production Systems in Central Asia and Turkey (CACILM II); EU-Central Asia Dialogue; and CAREC Environmental Dialogue. According to the project monitoring system, the project integrated ecosystem-based adaptation and economics of land degradation approaches into the REP4SD process led by the ICSD (MAt SLU-CA). The final progress report of the project also lists the following as having been incorporated into regional processes:

- The REP4SD and ILUMA elaboration were presented, discussed and approved at the Central Asian Climate Change Conference in Tashkent in April 2019.
- The regional knowledge network has been handed over to two regional executing agencies and is active.
- The K-Link network has been handed over to the regional organisation CAREC for further use.
- The ILUMA approach will be anchored in Central Asia through the follow-up project and has already been shared with key partners (e.g. World Bank, IFAD) to feed into their project designs.

While the regional processes differed from those that were originally foreseen in the project planning, module objective indicator 2 is nevertheless assessed as fully achieved.

Module objective indicator 3: in 14 cases, managers in sectoral organisations at the national or regional level have implemented strategic change processes towards integrative land use and climate protection.

According to the results matrix provided by the project on 18 February 2021,14 out of 14 targeted strategic change processes had been achieved. In the monitoring documents from a few months earlier, November 2020, only two strategic change processes had been marked as achieved: the documentation of private afforestation approaches in Kazakhstan and the by-laws to the pasture law in Turkmenistan (MAt SLU-CA). These two processes were confirmed by interviewees in the respective countries (Int_TU01, Int_KAZ01). Besides these two processes, six more strategic change processes were marked as 'on track', while one was marked as 'delayed'. Considering the analysis of contribution hypothesis three below, the project played a significant role in the development of strategic change processes in the different countries, although not all interviewees were able to point to concrete results. Module objective indicator 3 is thus assessed as achieved.

Table 9: Assessed and adapted objective indicators for specific modules (outcome level)

Project's objective indicator according to the (last modification) offer	**Assessment according to SMART* criteria**	**Specified objective indicator** (only if necessary for measurement or understanding)
In two Central Asian countries, key actors have implemented five nationwide sectoral strategies, including guiding principles on integrative, gender-sensitive land use. Base value (2017): 0 Target value (2021): 5 Current value (2020): 5 Achievement in % (2020): 100% Source: results-based management document.	The indicator mostly fulfils the SMART criteria, since details such as the sectoral strategies are defined in the results matrix: strategies detailing land use, biodiversity and climate change; guiding principles on integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land use in Central Asia; documents, decrees and resolutions on sectoral reforms; management directives that take account of the roles and functions of both genders.	No adaptation was necessary, but key actors are understood to be the national implementation/cooperation partners of the project.
Lessons learned and conclusions from German development cooperation projects/programmes in the fields of mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, and integrative land use have been incorporated into five regional processes. Base value (2017): 0 Target value (2021): 5 Current value (2020): 5 Achievement in % (2020): 100% Source: results-based management document.	The indicator fulfils all SMART criteria, also because the processes are defined in detail in the Wirkungsmatrix: thematic description of regional processes (examples: the Regional Pasture Network; the Regional Environmental Action Plan and ICSD and IFAS; the World Bank's Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB); the FAO CACILM II Programme; EU-Central Asia Dialogue; CAREC Environmental Dialogue; etc.); evidence that the lessons learned and conclusions of German development cooperation have been incorporated into these processes (e.g. advisory inputs by process facilitators, active participation by personnel from German	No adaptation was necessary.
In 14 cases, managers in sectoral organisations at the national or regional level have implemented strategic change processes towards integrative land use and climate protection. Base value (2017): 0 Target value (2021): 14 Current value (2020): 14 Achievement in % (2020): 100%	The indicator fulfils all SMART criteria.	No adaptation is necessary.

Project's objective indicator according to the (last modification) offer	Assessment according to SMART* criteria	Specified objective indicator (only if necessary for measurement or understanding)
Source: results-based management document.		
* SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound		

The evaluation team concludes that all three project objective indicators were fully achieved by the end of the project.

Effectiveness dimension 1 – Achievement of the (intended) objectives – scores **25 out of 30 points.**

Effectiveness dimension 2: Contribution to the achievement of objectives

In this section, chosen results hypotheses for the contribution analysis are scrutinised to illustrate how outputs contributed to project outcomes. When examining hypotheses within the effectiveness criterion, **Level 1 (Reaction) and Level 2 (Learning) of the Kirkpatrick training effectiveness model** were examined. Following Mayne (2011), the validated results model, including risks and assumptions, guided the analysis. The evaluation team, together with the project management, identified three causal links, from objective to output, during the inception mission. Evidence for the underlying hypotheses was then collected through interviews, focus group discussions with project stakeholders and a survey among the target group. In the following, findings have been compiled into a contribution story to find plausible explanations for either confirming or rejecting the chosen hypotheses.

Table 10: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness

Hypothesis 1 (activity – output – outcome)	**Output C to O3 to module objective:** coordination of the interests of key actors (land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society), enabled through strengthened capacities in the area of land use, leads to the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches.
Main assumptions	• Key actors participating in capacity development activities include key decision-makers. • Training participants can apply what they learned to the development of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches.
Risks/unintended results	• Content of capacity development does not fit the core needs of the institutions. • The political situation in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and/or Kazakhstan does not allow German development cooperation to provide advice in the context of sector-reform processes.
Alternative explanation	Actors receive training from other donors.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Partly confirmed.

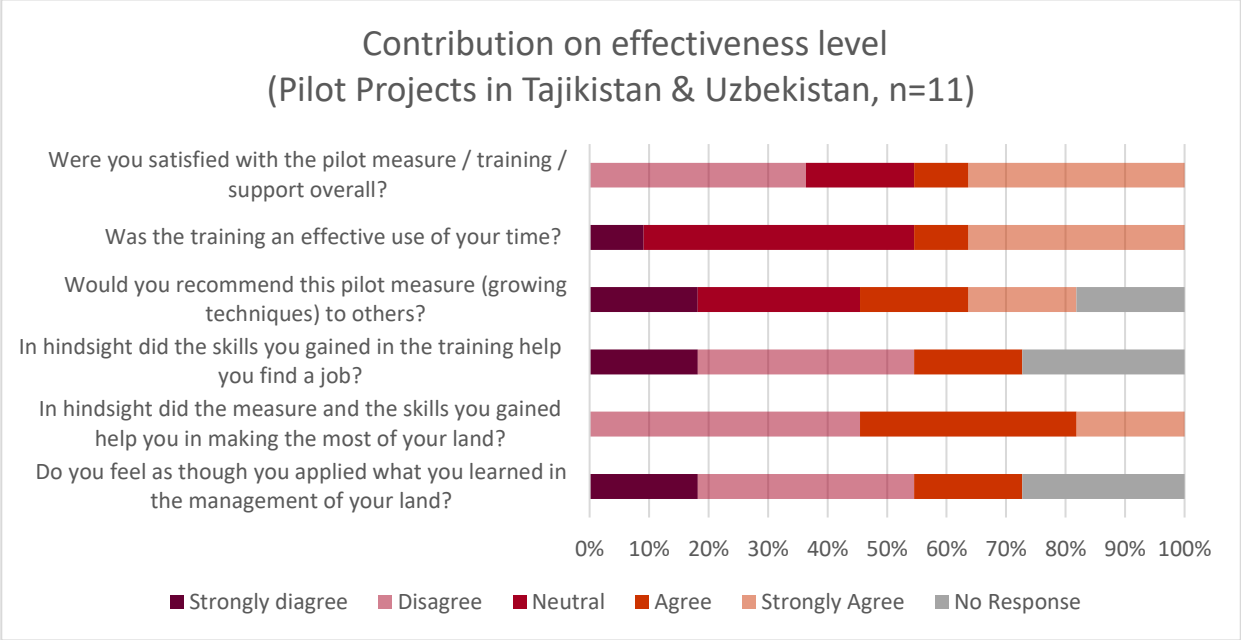
The first hypothesis of the contribution analysis examined the pathway of change for activities under output C to improve capacities in land use of key actors and the coordination of their interests, ultimately leading to the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches. The progress on targets for the three output indicators varied: indicator C2 was achieved, indicator C3 was not

achieved and indicator C1 could not be assessed owing to a lack of data[8]. Key underlying activities to achieve the formulated results included pilot forestry projects paired with capacity-building for land-users, as well as the leadership programme for a range of stakeholders.

Land users: the evaluation team assessed the effectiveness of pilot measures for land-users based on the aforementioned Kirkpatrick method. In total, 11 (nine male, two female) training participants, each with an average landholding of 7 ha, were interviewed in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. **Kirkpatrick's Level 1**: the land-users' reaction to the training and pilot measure was moderate. Just under half – five out of 11 – of the participants in the pilot measures agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the training and support of the programme, and that the training sessions were an effective use of their time. Only four participants stated that they would recommend the pilot measure and growing techniques to their peers.

Kirkpatrick's Level 2: in line with the results of the first Kirkpatrick's level, evidence suggests that the results regarding improvement in the capacities of land-users were mixed. Just over half – six out of 11 – agreed or strongly agreed that these techniques improved the management of their land. With regard to paid work, only two participants found a job based on the skills gained through the training.

Figure 4: Contribution analysis effectiveness level (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan)



Upon diving deeper into the participants' reasoning for their rating, the following two aspects could be identified:

- The production methods demonstrated on the demonstration plots were mostly already known to land-users, especially in Tajikistan, although training on erosion-control measures was regarded as helpful (FGD_UZ02*).* In Uzbekistan, training on production seemed to address issues for which land-users did not already have solutions, e.g. management of older trees (FGD_UZ01).
- It seemed that although pilot sites had received materials for fencing off the plots, not all tenants had placed it properly and in good time. On plots without fencing, participants were more critical about the training and questioned the effectiveness of training on protection measures (FGD_UZ01).

In the other target countries, the results regarding the effectiveness of measures at the level of the land-user were also mixed. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, a political stakeholder mentioned that it is difficult for land tenants

[8] C.1: Six months after completing further training and qualification measures on specialist topics and leadership, half the participants (alumni) explain, using a concrete example, that they are applying the content they were taught in their everyday professional life.
C.2: Participants (alumni) of training and qualification measures use expert networks for learning, applying and coaching each other in professional topics.
C.3: In Central Asia, key actors manage and use innovative sector-dialogue mechanisms for learning about and sharing experiences of inclusive land-use practices.

to do everything according to this methodology, e.g. ‘save the springs, the second level of trees. Even forest workers have to be trained in this methodology. It is therefore not perfect’ (Int_KG03).

Participation in the leadership academy and Green Central Asia Network: all three participants in the leadership programme who were interviewed spoke highly of the training and its effectiveness. In particular, those from civil society noted the diversity of participants in terms of their professional background. The leadership programme enabled the participants’ organisations to a) receive and exchange new ideas on land use with government and private-sector representatives, b) build lasting personal networks within this wide range of participants and c) find a common language with government representatives, who were often described as hard to reach outside of such programmes (Int_KG06, Int_UZ03; survey_1). As an example of a specific output from these training sessions, one NGO reported having applied ecosystem-based adaptation measures, which it learned about during the training (Int_UZ03). The Green Central Asia network, which emerged out of the leadership programme, received mixed reviews from interviewees: on the one hand, the network remains active and driven by the consulting company that originally established it, and the shared information is appreciated by members as relevant and insightful (Int_UZ03). On the other hand, implementation challenges, such as uncertainties around the registration of the network, hampered the provision of more technical expertise through an institutionalised channel, and members assessed the further collaboration through this network as minimal (Int_KG06, Int_UZ03).

In summary, the project produced mixed results regarding capacity-building during pilot measures in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in terms of the usefulness and implementation of the sustainable land-use measures. Although the capacity-building in terms of leadership was quite successful, subsequent coordination through an expert network has remained on an ad hoc basis. The land-users trained in the pilot measures were only partly able to apply the methodologies and technologies on which they were trained. Hypothesis 1 is therefore assessed as partially confirmed.

Table 11: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness

Hypothesis 2 (activity – output – outcome)	**Outcome 1 to outcome 3 to module objective:** strengthened capacities within the ICSD contribute to the coordination of the interests of key actors (land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society), resulting in the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches.
Main assumptions	National actors have a political interest in regional cooperation.
Risks/unintended results	Political agendas at the national level hinder fruitful cooperation within the ICSD.
Alternative explanation	Key actors coordinate outside of the ICSD.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Partly confirmed.

The second hypothesis of the contribution analysis examined the pathway of change for activities aimed at strengthening the ICSD as an organisation and thus improving coordination of stakeholders. Given the intergovernmental nature of the ICSD, the evaluation team’s analysis focused mainly on government actors and donors at the regional level. The pathway does not rely on a specific output indicator but is connected to the outcome of improved regional dialogue on land-use issues. Key underlying activities to achieve the formulated results included support to the REP4SD framework and the hiring of an integrated expert to support the ICSD.

The two main achievements during the project’s implementation period were a) the approval, on 24 October 2019, of the REP4SD by representatives of the regional governments in the ICSD and related accumulation of lessons learned (see also the following hypothesis) and b) the initiation of a process to coordinate the three regional GIZ projects through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) led by the ICSD (GIZ, 2020c). The REP4SD is the key work programme governing the ICSD’s activities in the coming years. Since its approval in

2019, however, no concrete activities have been implemented. REP4SD has yet to be fully ratified. Nevertheless, its approval within the ICSD is an important first step and creates further potential in l for intergovernmental collaboration in the coming years. The process to coordinate the three regional GIZ projects (the project under evaluation, Ecological and Economic Development of the Aral Sea Region (PN 2019.2203.8) and the high-level government initiative Green Central Asia) via an MoU started in March 2021. Feedback from other GIZ stakeholders had not been provided by the time of the evaluation mission in May 2021 (Int_UZ02, Int_UZ04, Int_TJ05, Int_TJ03, Int_TU01).

Despite the initial positive signs of an increased role on the part of the ICSD thanks to the appointment of someone to the new role of ICSD chairperson, several issues that limit the organisation's capacities to take on more responsibility in regional coordination in land use remain:

- **Human resources**: the organisation continues to be understaffed. Before the appointment of the new ICSD chair in August 2020, the organisation had remained without leadership personnel since December 2019, resulting in limited commitment to continuing the organisation's work by supporting governments. At the time of writing, the head of the ICSD was supported by three appointed staff members per member country. The ICSD has also since applied for a full-time, in-house expert to support the organisation, on which, at the time of writing, a decision by GIZ was pending. During the COVID-19 pandemic, training provision for the ICSD was reduced, with two further training courses delivered at the end of 2020 and 2021 (Int_UZ02, Int_TU04).
- **Financial support**: the issue around human resources is further amplified by insufficient resources for salary payments. As a key issue for the further development of the organisation's role in the region, ICSD staff specifically mentioned support with salary payments in order to be able to attract more qualified staff to prepare proposals for regional projects (Int_UZ02).
- **Donor coordination**: GIZ signed an MoU with the ICSD in 2016, outlining all planned activities, and extended it in 2018 to 2020. In 2019, the ICSD signed another MoU with UNEP. While there was no overlap of activities covered by the MoUs, misunderstandings later resulted in an overlap of activities planned for implementation with UNEP and GIZ. This overlap was addressed when the ICSD's leadership issues were resolved by the appointment of a new chair (Int_UZ02, Int_UZ04).

Although the ICSD's recent trajectory and committed leadership indicate promise, the substantial capacity issues that remain and the organisation's eight-month period of inactivity limit its potential to contribute to the dissemination and implementation of sustainable land-use projects in the region. The hypothesis can therefore only be partly confirmed.

Table 12: Selected results hypotheses for effectiveness

Hypothesis 3 (activity – output – outcome)	**Output B to output A to module objective:** tested integrated land-use approaches at the national level are incorporated in a conceptual framework for integrated land management (REP4SD), leading to the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches.
Main assumptions	The Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development (REP4SD) is widely accepted and appreciated as an overarching framework.
Risks/unintended results	• Limited capacities of the ICSD to incorporate and finalise the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development (REP4SD). • The willingness of the countries involved to cooperate could dissipate and mutual isolation could increase. • The political situation in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and/or Kazakhstan does not allow German development cooperation to provide advice in the context of sector-reform processes.
Alternative explanation	Sustainable land-use approaches are implemented without regard to REP4SD.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Partly confirmed.

The third hypothesis of the contribution analysis examined the pathway of change for activities under outputs A and B, including the testing of integrated land-use approaches at the national level and their incorporation into a conceptual framework for integrated land management (REP4SD). The progress on targets for the four output indicators under output A was as follows: A1 and A4 have been over-achieved by the project, while both A2 and A3 were not fully achieved. Under output B, neither output indicator was achieved[9]. Key underlying activities to achieve the formulated results included the development of a complete integrative land-use scheme, as well as its incorporation into a conceptual framework and the recording of lessons learned.

The evaluation found that, at the national level, the project made some respectable achievements in terms of testing integrative land-use approaches and anchoring them in national policy frameworks across target countries in Central Asia.

In **Kazakhstan**, the project's main contribution to the Department of Forestry and protected areas was the provision of support to establish an economic cost analysis for a 1 ha forest plantation in six pilot areas. In turn, the department was able to use the data gathered at these pilot sites to apply for government funding for further forest plantations. These measures were set against the background of forestry law reform in Kazakhstan, which improved the conditions for private ownership of land and increased afforestation (Int_KAZ01). Although these contributions were significant and integrated into national systems, interviewees also pointed out that these measures came with monetary incentives for landowners to participate. The end of this financial incentive may limit the scaling-up of these activities to the national level (Int_KAZ02).

In **Tajikistan**, the project provided support to the forestry department in amending the forestry and land codes, which had to be adjusted to reflect changes since 2011. In line with these changes, the project also developed joint forestry management guidelines for pilot areas, including instructions on how to scale the approach up to the national level (Int_TJ02, Int_TJ03). Nevertheless, interviewees were not able to provide evidence of an eventual scale-up of the measures or their firm embedment in government programmes at the national level (Int_TJ02, Int_TJ03, Int_TJ05). Local authorities did increase their support for activities over time, however, and the project's input informed the development of forestry development plans (Int_TJ08). In terms of the effective implementation of the approaches, stakeholders seemed generally satisfied with the results of the pilot measures. In particular, the involvement of local communities in controlling the afforestation efforts eased the burden on forest scouts of overseeing the use of forest lands, and the involvement of women in the forestry business increased (Int_TJ02, Int_TJ07*).*

In **Kyrgyzstan**, the project supported several regulatory changes by the SAEPF. These changes aimed to promote participatory forest management, intersectoral (forest and agriculture) cooperation, separating the economic activities of forestry enterprises from the 'control-and-oversight' functions, stimulating competitive forest land lease and establishing a legal right to use forest lands for tenants (Int_KG01, Int_KG02). Based on these regulatory changes, the government was able to develop plans on the forecasting of revenue of forest enterprises and adjust subsidies for these, making the financing processes clearer for all stakeholders (Int_KG01). The implementation of these new regulations was first tested with 20 pilot forest enterprises. However, there is insufficient staff in the government (forestry department) to fully implement the regulations (Int_KG06, Int_KG07).

In **Turkmenistan**, the project was heavily involved in providing technical support for a new pasture law and development of the related by-laws. The plan was to pilot the by-laws but, owing to particularities of the political set-up in Turkmenistan, piloting was only possible after the by-laws had been officially adopted. As it was not possible to predict how long it would take for the by-laws to get approved, the project decided against piloting the by-laws. Finally, at the end of the project, in late 2020/early 2021, three of the new by-laws to the pasture

[9] A.1 In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, an integrative land-use approach is fully developed at the national level in each country.
A.2 In Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, a total of four innovative land-use approaches has been tested in practice.
A.3 Fourteen action outcomes are documented that improve data availability and economic valuation of integrative land use as a basis for planning and decision-making for innovative land use.

law of Turkmenistan were adopted through the legislative process. The project's efforts regarding the development of the by-laws were accompanied by tree-planting activities addressing land degradation in Turkmenabad, implemented through another GIZ project, Ecosystem-based Land Use and Ecosystems Conservation Along the Lower Reaches of Amu Darya (Int_TU01). This support was appreciated by the government stakeholders interviewed and no limitations in its implementation were mentioned (Int_TU01).

In **Uzbekistan**, several pilots around business models on herb and pistachio planting were set up with the support of the project. The goal was to draw on lessons from these pilots for inclusion in the new by-laws, following changes to the regulatory environment in 2018 (Int_UZ04, Int_UZ01). A significant success of the project was that, upon implementation of the pilots, the land tenure period was increased from 10 to 50 years, effective from 2021. Government stakeholders described a significant increase in awareness of these land-use issues in forestry thanks to the project, which triggered further demand. In particular, regulations on private-sector development and monitoring of forestry activities need further effort in terms of national reform (Int_UZ04, Int_UZ01, Int_UZ03).

The evaluation found that, on an **international level**, REP4SD, as a regional environmental programme running to 2030 and addressing eight SDGs, was indeed approved in November 2019. The experiences described above in policy development were collected and systematised for the development of this programme in various stakeholder sessions in the run-up to the approval and across countries (Int_UZ02). Visits between delegations from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan further supported regional exchange, resulting in some new input for regulatory changes (Int_UZ01, Int_KG01). As formalised as this regional exchange was and although interviewees generally described the regional intergovernmental coordination as highly important (Int_TU01, Int_UZ03), at the time of the evaluation, the REP4SD framework had not yet contributed to the implementation of sustainable land-use practices, because the development of a roadmap, including targets, remained outstanding and significantly delayed. In addition, the roadmap was still awaiting approval from UNEP after coordination had started in November 2020. Had the roadmap been finalised, the project would have contributed specific target indicators for its implementation. Furthermore, it is yet to be seen whether the ICSD can motivate regional governments to participate effectively; a role in the coordination of regional donor projects seems more likely at the moment (Int_UZ02).

In summary, the project was able to pilot, for the respective country contexts, innovative approaches in land use in each of the target countries, which either prompted further regulatory changes or supported governments in gaining more knowledge and experience in the implementation of already completed regulatory adjustments. These experiences did, indeed, inform the REP4SD programme. However, owing to the delay in its implementation, no concrete results can be observed yet. This hypothesis is therefore assessed as partly confirmed.

Effectiveness dimension 2 – Contribution to the achievement of objectives – scores **20 out of 30 points.**

Effectiveness dimension 3: Quality of implementation

Under this dimension, the quality of implementation in the sense of team set-up, leadership, collaboration in the team and collaboration with partners was assessed. The collaboration with partners also includes the collaboration with the World Bank in Kyrgyzstan, as this was central to the implementation of integrative land-use approaches.

GIZ team set-up: the project team was split between offices in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (headquarters), Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The size of the team was sufficient to cover this geographical area and thus had sufficient capacity to share and implement activities within the team (Int_KG07, Int_TJ05). At the same time, the size of the team meant a high administration budget and a limited budget for implementation. This was addressed internally and resolved by decreasing the size of the team (see also section 4.6 on efficiency) (Int_KG07, Int_UZ04). Furthermore, the evaluation team observed that there was a difference in the coordination of national and regional tasks: while national tasks saw the full involvement of all team members

in their respective countries (Int_TJ05), the coordination of regional tasks regarding the ICSD was less participatory at the beginning of the project, leading to some inefficiencies in the communication of ICSD-related tasks (Int_UZ04). A contributing factor in this regard was that leadership of the project was only in the interim until 2018, although regular team meetings continued to be held (Int_UZ04). Moreover, responsibility for regional tasks changed when the location of the ICSD moved to Uzbekistan and tasks were re-assigned at the national level, which strengthened implementation (Int_UZ04).

Collaboration with partners: all political partners interviewed across the Central Asian countries concerned expressed overall satisfaction with the service delivery of the project and/or did not mention specific suggestions for improvements (Int_KAZ01, Int_KG01, Int_KG02, Int_UZ02). Indeed, the project achieved some respectable results in terms of the level of regulations on sustainable land use and established some institutionalised ways of collaborating and coordinating (see the assessment of effectiveness dimension 2 and section 4.3 on coherence, above). Nevertheless, the GIZ team did cite some difficulties in the collaboration:

Changing government personnel at the national and/or sub-national level: in Kyrgyzstan, the regime change of 2020 resulted in the reshuffling of government personnel and therefore a need to re-establish and incorporate the project's priorities in the new government's development plan. The GIZ team further observed that this resulted in a halt to work on sub-laws on incentive schemes for forest enterprises (Int_KG07). Changes of personnel also occurred among sub-national stakeholders, affecting the piloting of integrative land-use approaches. For instance, directors of forest enterprises were replaced, despite an agreement to ensure continuity in pilot sites, so efforts had to be made to re-engage people with the project. The evaluation team observed that such replacements were more problematic in Kyrgyzstan than in Uzbekistan (Int_KG07, Int_UZ04).

Political will: the political will to scale up the approaches tested at pilot sites depended, to some extent, on the provision of further financial incentives for the political partners. For instance, in Kyrgyzstan, the project worked predominantly with and through the SAEPF's World Bank-supported project to scale up approaches which provided USD 16 million to the government and resulted in further political will to scale up. Nevertheless, this approach to connect financial with technical cooperation instruments was largely complemented by GIZ and the World Bank as a model for future collaboration (Int_KG07, Int_KG05, Int_KG08). World Bank personnel expressed satisfaction with the contribution of the GIZ project to the design and implementation of their own project, describing it as 'partnership' (Int_KG05, Int_KG08). However, the evaluation team also noted that this approach limited the influence the GIZ team was able to exert over the implementation of the approaches developed (Int_KG07).

In summary, the project improved the GIZ team set-up over time, following an initial transition period. The collaboration with partners was largely positive, within the limits of the respective political contexts. The quality of implementation is thus assessed as moderately successful.

Effectiveness dimension 3 – Quality of implementation – scores **14 out of 20 points.**

Effectiveness dimension 4: Unintended results

Although unintended results were not systematically monitored and documented, the evaluation team found that throughout its implementation, the project yielded two positive unintended results:

- In Kazakhstan, the calculations of economic profitability for forest plantations of 1 ha introduced by the project enabled government stakeholders to apply for further subsidies from the central government (Int_KAZ01).
- In Uzbekistan, government stakeholders tested the participatory approach to land use piloted by the project beyond the originally designated pilot sites. This extra piloting resulted in the signing of further tenant agreements by beneficiaries, which surpassed the pilot sites implemented by GIZ (Int_UZ04).

No negative unintended results could be identified by the evaluation team. Given these two positive results, the unintended results are assessed as successful.

Effectiveness dimension 4 – Unintended results – scores **15 out of 20 points.**

Methodology for assessing effectiveness

Table 13: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness

Effectiveness: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Achievement of the (intended) objectives	• Indicator progress update sheets and results-based monitoring system. • Perception of key partners, perception of project team members. SMART* criteria have been met.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, review of monitoring data, analysis of progress and end-line reports.	Limitations: none found. Data quality: good.
Contribution to the achievement of objectives	• Results hypothesis 1 • Results hypothesis 2 Results hypothesis 3	**Evaluation design:** contribution analysis. **Empirical methods:** interviews, a validation workshop.	Anecdotal evidence expected.
Quality of implementation	• Capacity WORKS considerations (e.g. steering structure, stakeholder map, capacity development matrix). • Results-based monitoring system. • Capacity development strategy. • Plan of operations. Involvement of all relevant stakeholders.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods**: document analysis, interviews.	Limitations: none found. Data quality: good.
Unintended results	• Reconstructed results model, unintended results: O15, O4. • New initiatives in regional cooperation. COVID-19 adaptation measures.	**Evaluation design:** most significant change. **Empirical methods:** interviews, review of project documents.	Limitations: none found. Data quality: good.

* SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

4.5 Impact

This section analyses and assesses the impact of the project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see annex).

Summarising assessment and rating of impact

Table 14: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: impact

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Impact	Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	24 out of 30 points
	Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	20 out of 40 points
	Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	25 out of 30 points
Impact score and rating		Score: **69 out of 100 points** Rating: Level 3: moderately successful

The Kirkpatrick analysis of pilot sites in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan showed that in locations where farmers changed their behaviour, the promoted approaches in sustainable land use can contribute to SDG 15: protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss. Participants also observed improvements in their prospects for future income (SDG 1) and indicated potential positive environmental effects (SDG 13). The contribution analysis allowed a more detailed assessment of three pathways of change. Regarding the strengthening of capacities of the IFAS, the project followed the logic that this could be achieved by strengthening the ICSD. The ICSD's capacities remain unchanged, however, owing to a temporary lack of leadership, and both organisations are still reliant on further donor support to coordinate regional change processes (contribution analysis 1). Regarding the development and implementation of new development cooperation projects, the first projects have been approved and implementation has begun. No concrete results were able to be measured at the time of this evaluation, however (contribution analysis 2). Regarding the implementation of cross-border projects based on ILUMA, the evaluation found that ILUMA were mostly driven by the national need for sustainable land-use models, without a direct connection to more regionally focused projects (contribution analysis 3). Lastly, the evaluation revealed one unintended positive result at the impact level with regard to incentives for private actors to invest in pilot sites where long-term tenure was secured.

In total, the impact of the project is rated Level 3: moderately successful with 69 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of impact

Potential contributions of the project were identified during the evaluation, despite several limitations. The evaluation team followed a similar methodological basis as for the effectiveness criterion and conducted a contribution analysis. As part of the impact criterion, **Levels 3 and 4 of the Kirkpatrick model (Behaviour Change and Results)** were examined. As a basis, the situation before GIZ became involved in the project's niche was established through recall questions during interviews and discussions, and through a comparison with the actual situation and expected impacts.

Impact dimension 1: Higher-level (intended) development changes/results

During the reconstruction of the results model depicting overarching development results, the project intended to contribute to impact results that were identified (following the project proposal), which are shown in the results model. At a higher outcome/impact level, the results identified were as follows: contributions to an increase in protection, restoration and promotion of sustainable land use and management of forests (SDG 15); a decrease in poverty and an increase in income opportunities (SDG1); and the mitigation of climate change (SDG 13). The effects that could be observed during the evaluation (evidence-based contributions) – derived mainly from Levels 3 and 4 of the Kirkpatrick model – and the potential observed for future contributions at impact level based on the given findings (plausible contributions) – derived mainly from anecdotal evidence – are examined in the following paragraphs.

Analysing the answers to **Kirkpatrick's Level 3** on behavioural changes among forest tenants, just over half – six out of 11 respondents – indicated that they had changed some of their forest management practices based on the pilots in their respective areas. Those that indicated changes specifically cited techniques in pruning and grafting, as well as protective measures, such as fencing to prevent the livestock of farmers on adjacent land from grazing on their plantations, as the main practices applied based on the intervention (FGD_UZ01, FGD_TJ01, FGD_TJ02). Nevertheless, tenants who did not apply any new practices, and those who applied some practices, also indicated limitations to the usefulness of the training in effectively changing their behaviour:

- Tenants stated that the promoted farming techniques were already in use (FGD_TJ01).
- The water scarcity in Tajikistan made the application of some techniques less feasible (FGD_TJ01, FGD_UZ02).
- The drip irrigation technique promoted as part of forest management would be too expensive to implement and no subsidies for this technique would have been received (FGD_TJ01, FGD_TJ02).
- Further financing mechanisms, e.g. credit lines, are not available in rural areas, further limiting the ability to invest in fencing or irrigation systems (FGD_TJ01, FGD_TJ02).
- Those respondents who did not receive fencing maintained that grazing livestock herds still cause problems and that the commitment of farmers to installing protection measures varies considerably (FGD_TJ01, FGD_TJ02, FGD_ UZ01).
- In Tajikistan, in particular, tenants did not have sufficiently long tenure agreements to make investments, which indicated the need for effective policy implementation (FGD_TJ01).

The statements regarding the financial feasibility of the promoted approaches and duration of land tenure, in particular, resonate with a statement in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan that certain financial incentives will be necessary in the long run and that investments are only feasible if the duration of land tenure is sufficiently increased to affect behavioural change (Int_KAZ02, Int_UZ04).

Further examining **Kirkpatrick's Level 4 (Results)**, we can conclude that, despite the limitations and overall critical view of tenants regarding the feasibility and usability of practices promoted at the pilot sites, there was a positive impact at the selected sites for about half of the six respondents who said they had changed some of their practices. The positive results included the following:

- The size of the area of cultivated land increased, providing more optimistic prospects for an increase in income (FGD_TJ01, FGD_TJ02, FGD_ UZ01).
- Tenants diversified the varieties or types of crops they planted, also resulting in an optimistic outlook in terms of future income opportunities (FGD_TJ01, FGD_ UZ01).
- Overall, the interest of adjacent and targeted communities in sustainable forest management increased slowly and tenants observed greater awareness of environmental issues affecting their land (FGD_TJ01, FGD_ UZ01).

This rather positive evidence is further strengthened by the interviewees' perspectives on impact. In Tajikistan, an implementing agency described improvements in the execution of oversight activities by state agencies to stop illegal logging and observed a better understanding among beneficiaries of the economic potential of their

land, improved production planning and increased biodiversity at pilot sites after two years of implementation (Int_TJ01). In Kyrgyzstan, interviewees referred to a decrease in conflicts around pricing for land use and around types of livestock between pasture users and forest enterprises (Int_KG02), an increase in agricultural productivity (Int_KG04) and greater interest within communities in the land-use approaches promoted by the project (Int_KG05). Nevertheless, because of the small area of land involved in the pilots and overall short implementation period, interviewees also indicated that these results are mostly preliminary and scaling them up depends to a large degree on the political will of the national governments (Int_KG04, Int_UZ04, Int_UZ03, Int_KAZ02).

To conclude: despite some challenges in implementing the promoted forest management approaches at pilot sites, the project contributed to **SDG 15** on sustainable land use in cases where farmer uptake was ensured. The positive results produced by the approaches included higher expected incomes from greater diversification and an increased surface area of arable land, indicating the potential to contribute to **SDG 1** on poverty reduction if scaled up by national governments. Similarly, biodiversity has increased, representing a contribution to **SDG 13** on climate change, although no conclusive evidence could be gathered in this regard. Based on these indicative and actual results, the impact regarding intended objectives is assessed as successful.

Impact dimension 1 – Higher-level (intended) development changes/results – scores **24 out of 30 points.**

Impact dimension 2: Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes

To understand perceptions of (potential) contributions to overarching results, similar to the effectiveness criterion a contribution analysis was conducted. Key data sources were GIZ management and team, KfW Development Bank, World Bank and the perspectives of implementing partners. Three hypotheses from the results model were examined in more detail to explain causal relationships between project outcomes and impacts.

Table 15: Selected results hypotheses for impact

Results hypothesis 1 (outcome – impact)	**O2 to I1:** the strengthened capacities within the ICSD contribute to strengthening the structure of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS).
Main assumption	National actors have a political interest in regional cooperation.
Risks	Political agendas at the national level hinder fruitful cooperation within the ICSD and, hence, the IFAS.
Alternative explanation	The IFAS receives support from other stakeholders/donors to develop capacities.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Not confirmed.

Hypothesis 1 at the impact level describes the contribution of the project to strengthening the capacities of the ICSD, which, in turn, was intended to contribute to strengthened capacities of the IFAS. Note that the ICSD forms part of the IFAS structure, so the project followed the logic that strengthened capacities of the ICSD would inherently mean strengthened capacities of the IFAS (Int_UZ04).

Contributions by the project to strengthening the capacities of the ICSD focused on the preparation of the REP4SD programme. This included the organisation of four regional meetings between December 2018 and April 2019, culminating in the approval of the REP4SD document in October 2019. Further support was provided in terms of organisational development through ICSD Scientific Information Centres (GIZ, 2021). Despite these contributions to enhance the role of the ICSD in the region, the evaluation team found that ICSD capacities remain rudimentary, as indicated by a lack of leadership in the organisation and unwillingness among the member states to assume a leadership role until late 2020: ‘The capacity of ICSD is the main issue.

[…] Uzbekistan did not have the capacity to take over and there was a lack of clear communication' (Int_UZ02). For a comprehensive list of the remaining issues regarding the capacity of the ICSD, see the assessment of effectiveness dimension 2 in section 4.4, above.

Furthermore, the project itself critically examined their contribution to this pathway of change: 'Despite the intensive cooperation with ICSD with different donors and many regional activities, the commission and its secretariat based in Tashkent is not able to elaborate the necessary processes of REP4SD autonomously without external support' (translated from GIZ, 2020b).

This perspective was confirmed by the evaluation team in interviews. Despite some interaction at the regional level, the project was not able to provide the extensive support the ICSD needed to enhance its own role and that of the IFAS in the region (Int_TJ03, Int_UZ04).

Given the limited results of strengthening the ICSD and, in turn, the IFAS as regional coordinators in the area of sustainable land use in Central Asia, this hypothesis is assessed as not confirmed.

Table 16: Selected results hypotheses for impact

Results hypothesis 2 (outcome – impact)	**O4 to I2:** submission of project proposals for development cooperation projects that involve the dissemination of key innovations of the regional programme to donor organisations or the Green Climate Fund result in the implementation of these proposals.
Main assumption	• National actors have a political interest in applying for further funding from the Green Climate Fund. • Key innovations of the project meet the interests and standards of the Green Climate Fund.
Risks	Lack of political will hinders implementation.
Alternative explanation	Project proposals are developed outside of the framework of sustainable land use in Central Asia.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Partly confirmed.

Hypothesis 2 at the impact level describes the contribution of the project to the submission of development cooperation projects on key innovations in sustainable land use and their subsequent implementation. According to the last progress report in 2020, the project achieved five out of six targeted proposals, including: Mainstreaming Climate Change into the GIZ Portfolio and Shelterbelts for Economic Development in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region in Tajikistan; Enhancing Resilient Rural Development through Adapted Land Use and Disaster Risk Mitigation in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; and the two regional project proposals Anchoring K-Link in Central Asia and Enhancing Climate Resilience in Central Asia.

In Tajikistan, stakeholders reported that the proposed projects involving the country were either in the preparatory phase or had started, despite some delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both governmental and donor partners confirmed this and were looking forward to collaborating further with GIZ on these projects. However, no impact of these projects could yet be identified at the time of the evaluation (Int_TJ01, Int_TJ03).

Given this evidence from project documents and interviews, the hypothesis is assessed as partly confirmed.

Table 17: Selected results hypotheses for impact

Results hypothesis 3 (outcome – impact)	**O5 to I3:** the summarised experiences of integrated land-use approaches (ILUMA) are incorporated in the implementation of new cross-border projects.
Main assumption	ILUMA is widely disseminated and accepted as state of the art by relevant actors in the sector.
Risks	Relevant actors do not have access to ILUMA.
Alternative explanation	Stakeholders rely on other frameworks for sustainable land use to implement joint projects.
Confirmed/partly confirmed/not confirmed	Not confirmed.

Hypothesis 3 at the impact level describes the contribution of the project to the aggregation of best practices in sustainable land use in the ILUMA document and the use of this knowledge in cross-border projects. It must be mentioned that a precondition for the effective use of the ILUMA framework in project implementation is knowledge of and access to this framework by all relevant stakeholders, mainly government partners.

In general, the results of communicating the ILUMA framework and of its use by national governments varied significantly between the target countries. In Tajikistan, the project specifically mentioned ILUMA as a framework that had been put forward to the national government (Int_TJ05). Indeed, governmental stakeholders confirmed the significance of ILUMA regarding the efforts to change forestry policies at the national level (Int_TJ01). In contrast to these successes in the dissemination of ILUMA in Tajikistan, stakeholders in the other countries in the region had little to no knowledge of the existence of this documented approach, despite it having been presented at an international conference in 2019 (GIZ PFB, 2020; Int_KAZ02, Int_UZ01, Int_KG08). There were two explanations for this discrepancy in the responses of interviewees:

- Government stakeholders and other donors mentioned receiving several concept papers on sustainable land use from donor organisations. The ILUMA approach therefore did not receive the necessary attention from stakeholders (Int_KAZ02, Int_KG08).
- As the ILUMA document outlines the overarching experiences from project implementation across Central Asia, the approach was perceived as rather theoretical. Consequently, the project opted to implement pilot projects that broadly followed ILUMA but which were named differently to cater to the national government's needs (Int_UZ04). For instance, in the case of Uzbekistan, stakeholders recognised that approaches similar to those proposed in the ILUMA document had been implemented (Int_UZ03). In addition, the World Bank project based in Kyrgyzstan made use of similar approaches on the advice of the project, without recognising ILUMA as a concept (Int_KG08, Int_KG07).

These findings indicate that the use of ILUMA was driven more by the need for national frameworks and policy review than by demand for regional coordination. In terms of the cross-border project, the evaluation team recognises that the project contributed to the development of the Aral Sea project. Yet, the staff of the Ecological and Economic Development of the Aral Sea Region project were not aware of ILUMA as a document (Int_KAZ02). Therefore, a direct contribution by ILUMA to the establishment of new cross-border projects cannot be determined.

Given the lack of a direct contribution by ILUMA to cross-border projects, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed.

Impact dimension 2 – Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes – scores **20 out of 40 points**.

Impact dimension 3: Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes

Although unintended results were not systematically monitored and documented, the evaluation team found that, throughout its implementation, the project yielded one positive unintended development result:

- In Uzbekistan, the increase in the duration of land tenure of beneficiaries stipulated by a presidential decree, and including sustainable land use, increased the incentive for private-sector actors to invest in the pilot sites. The government started to develop public-private partnerships for forest enterprises, therefore, and the project team observed foreign investor involvement in one of the pilot sites (Int_UZ04).

No negative unintended results could be identified by the evaluation team. Given this positive result, the unintended results are assessed as successful. Full marks were not given because unintended results were not monitored.

Impact dimension 3 – Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes – scores **24 out of 30 points**.

Methodology for assessing the impact

Table 18: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: impact

Impact: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	Analysis of secondary data, where relevant sources can be found. Further impact on: • SDG 15, SDG 1 and SDG 13. • UR-2 (Environmental and Resource Protection, Ecological Sustainability). • AO-1 (Poverty Orientation). • LE-1 (Rural Development). • KLA-1 (Adaptation to Climate Change). • PD/GG 1 (Participatory Development/Good Governance).	**Evaluation design:** contribution analysis. **Empirical methods:** interviews, validation workshop, secondary data analysis.	Anecdotal evidence.
Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	• Programme objective and sub-objective indicators. • Hypothesis 1. • Hypothesis 2. • Hypothesis 3.	**Evaluation design:** contribution analysis. **Empirical methods:** interviews, validation workshop.	Anecdotal evidence.
Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	• Project proposal, documents of the appraisal mission (gender analysis, capacity development strategy). • Reconstructed results model, unintended results: I3, I2, I6.	**Evaluation design:** most significant change. **Empirical methods:** interviews.	

4.6 Efficiency

This section analyses and assesses the efficiency of the project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see annex).

Summarising assessment and rating of efficiency

Table 19: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Efficiency	Production efficiency (Resources/Outputs)	60 out of 70 points
	Allocation efficiency (Resources/Outcome)	24 out of 30 points
Efficiency score and rating		Score: **84 of 100 points** Rating: **Level 2: successful**

According to the evaluators' analysis of the project's production efficiency, there are indications that output A, on integrative land-use schemes, could have been maximised with a different approach. Hindering factors were the external influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the high administrative costs in the first part of the project and the delays in reaching a financial agreement with the partner in Kyrgyzstan. Based on the analysis of the project's allocation efficiency, indicator achievement rates are moderate.

In total, the efficiency of the project is rated Level 2: successful, with 84 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of efficiency

The key issue under the criterion efficiency is the question of whether the project's use of resources was appropriate in terms of achieving both the outputs and the outcome (project objective). A distinction is made between two types of efficiency: production efficiency and allocation efficiency. While the former evaluates the transformation of inputs to outputs, the latter evaluates the transformation of inputs to results at the outcome level. This includes analysis of the extent to which even more results at the output level could have been achieved with the same overall use of funds. Therefore, it is not only a question of investigating how costs could have been saved but also of how existing resources could have been better used to achieve the desired results. Following GIZ's guidelines on assessing efficiency, this central project evaluation applied the 'follow the money' approach as a standard method for analysing the project's production efficiency. The evaluation team used an Excel tool developed by GIZ's Corporate Unit Evaluation to standardise the efficiency analysis of the project.

Efficiency dimension 1: Production efficiency

The following assessments are based on information extracted from the costs and commitments report and further discussions with the project team and stakeholders, using GIZ's 'follow-the-money' approach (Pallenberg, 2011: 46). The overview of costs (as at December 2020) is shown in the following table. Taking the final commitments until the project's end into account, project costs were found to be slightly lower than the planned budget of EUR 3,000,000.

Table 20: Overview of costs

Module objective	Integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive, and economically viable land-use approaches developed with the participation of land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society are implemented in Central Asian countries as an institutionalised part of government policy.
BMZ costs	EUR 5,821,874.01
Co-financing	EUR 0
Partner contribution	EUR 0
Total costs	**EUR 5,821,874.01**
Residual	EUR 323,852.08

As the project was commissioned before the *Gemeinsamen Verfahrensreform,* the progress reports did not contain any budget – actual comparison. Therefore, deviations between actual and planned budgets could not be analysed by the evaluation team.

***Maximum principle and reallocation of funds**:*

Indicator achievements at output level are, in general, high and satisfactory, but one of the indicators, under output area A, could not be achieved. Reasons for the non-achievement of indicator levels can be partially attributed to the delay in and postponement of activities due to COVID-19. At the same time, as mentioned in section 4.4 on effectiveness, several unintended positive results were achieved but were not included in BMZ indicators.

While all indicators under outputs B and C have been achieved, indicator C1 (see table 21 below) could not be fully assessed, as the results of the survey among participants were not made available to the evaluators, and the final 'Wirkungsmatrix' simply stated that 20 people participated in the survey. Nevertheless, the achievement rates are satisfactory, as qualitative data showed that participants in the Green Central Asia programme were able to increase their knowledge and benefited from the programme. The evaluators concluded that, given the volume of resources, outputs were maxmised, especially in light of external factors that influenced certain achievements (e.g. COVID-19 and dependence on changing dynamics).

Table 21: Overview of achievement of outputs

Output indicators	Indicator A.1: two complete integrative land-use schemes at the national level have been drawn up, one each in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.	Indicator B.1: six proposals for development cooperation projects, including the dissemination of major innovations fostered by the regional programme, have been submitted to donor organisations or the Green Climate Fund.	Output C1: six months after completion, half of the participants (alumni) in further training and qualification measures on specialist topics and leadership can explain how they are applying the content of training in their daily tasks, citing a specific example.
Achievement	250%	100%	100%
Output indicators	Indicator A.2: four innovative land-use initiatives have been trialled in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.	Indicator B.2: aggregated facts and figures and success stories from projects/programmes related to land use and coordinated by the regional programme have been collated in a summary report and made available as recommended measures to national and regional partners and donor organisations.	Output C2: the participants in training and qualification measures (alumni) make use of expert networks for learning and mutual coaching on professional subjects.

Achievement	100%	100%	100%
Output indicators	Indicator A.3: 14 results of measures that improve data availability and the economic assessment or commercial application of integrative land use as the planning and decision-making basis for innovative land use have been documented.		Output C3: key actors in Central Asia manage and make use of innovative sectoral dialogue mechanisms for learning and exchanging experience on forms of integrative land use.
Achievement	36%		100%
Output indicators	Indicator A.4: in consultation with key actors, a conceptual framework has been drawn up for integrative land management at the regional level in Central Asia.		
Achievement	100%		

It was then interesting to assess the costs allocated under each output. Table 22 below shows that to achieve output A, 47% of project costs were used, output B used 13% of costs and output C, 33%. In the retrospective assessment, no costs were allocated to overarching costs, which could potentially be explained through the distribution of costs to other projects within the cluster.

How can this allocation be interpreted? According to high indicator achievements under output area A and the high relevance of these activities for the achievement of the module objective, the resource allocation appears justified. To achieve the project objective, it was of great importance to develop, implement and document different sustainable land management approaches. These approaches then had to be institutionalised within the respective government frameworks. Considering that output B consisted mainly of the documentation and compilation of integrative land-use schemes, best practices and lessons learned in the ILUMA document, it also appears to be justified that the lowest share of resources went into output area B. Output B can also be seen as a necessary precondition for the achievement of output A.

Table 22: Overview of costs allocated to outputs

	Output A	Output B	Output C
Outputs	Conceptual guidelines for tried-and-tested innovative initiatives for adapting to climate change and integrative land use have been developed and exchanged at the regional level.	Integrative land-use schemes have been disseminated in the Central Asian region, taking into consideration climate financing facilities.	The core competencies of key actors cooperating at the regional level have been strengthened concerning forms of integrative land use and their adaptation to climate change.
Cost incl. committed costs	EUR 2,740,241.13	EUR 738,316.78	EUR 1,946,604.18
Co-financing	EUR 0	EUR 0	EUR 0
Partner contributions	EUR 0	EUR 0	EUR 0
Total costs	**EUR 2,740,241.13**	**EUR 738,316.78**	**EUR 1,946,604.18**
Total costs as a percentage	**47%**	**13%**	**33%**

BMZ total as a percentage without co-financing	**47%**	**13%**	**33%**

With regard to the distribution of personnel to outputs, table 23 below shows that the national and international (AMA/PMA) GIZ staff dedicated the majority of their time to contributing to output A, making it the most expensive output in terms of staff costs. In contrast to the project management (on whose input the figures in table 23 below is based), many of the project staff observed high administrative costs, especially in the first part of project implementation. This was partly due to the large number of international staff that took over management responsibilities in the different countries. During implementation, the number of international staff was decreased and there was higher transparency in the budget allocation within the project. Table 22 below does not show any overarching costs, as the structure of the programme permitted the project management to distribute the administrative costs within the individual countries among the individual outputs.

Table 23: Distribution of personnel per output

	Output A	Output B	Output C	Overarching costs
International staff (AMA/PMA)	43%	26%	31%	0%
National personnel	54%	14%	32%	0%
Head office staff (IMA/PMI)	60%	0%	40%	0%

Besides the retrospective analysis of cost allocations, questions on the efficiency of the project were put to the project team and partners, to understand qualitative factors supporting or hindering the production efficiency of the project. The following conclusions could be drawn:

- **Linking up with other initiatives:** one of the issues that the project faced was the low budget in some of the individual countries in comparison with other donor initiatives. Because of this, the project's influence was lower and discussions arose early on among the project team about how they could remain relevant for the public implementation partners. An additional challenge was that the final budget took a long time to be confirmed, partly because it took BMZ and GIZ time to officially approve the transfer of the remaining budget of the predecessor project. When it became clear that the World Bank Integrated Management of Forest Ecosystems project would start, the colleagues approached the government through the World Bank and promptly received a higher level of cooperation and response (Int_UZ04*).*
- **Project management and leadership:** in terms of project management, many positive aspects were underlined within and outside of the GIZ team, e.g. dialogue, openness, reactivity and good planning.There was high attention to detail, especially since the change in leadership in 2018, and all interviewed partners confirmed a smooth relationship and good bilateral collaboration with GIZ.

Efficiency dimension 1 – Production efficiency – scores **59 out of 70 points**.

Efficiency dimension 2: Allocation efficiency

In terms of the allocation efficiency, the evaluation team assessed the extent to which the project's use of resources was appropriate in terms of achieving its objective, based on the Excel tool analysis. Further evaluation results relating to this dimension are considered plausible assumptions and anecdotal evidence. Nevertheless, the available evidence provided indications of how the outcomes could have been maximised. In contrast to production efficiency, allocation efficiency describes the transformation of inputs to outcomes. At the module objective level, indicators 1, 2 and 3 were achieved. The following table summarises the results already described in more detail in section 4.4 on effectiveness.

Table 24: Module objective indicator achievement rates

Module objective indicators	In two Central Asian countries, key actors have implemented, nationwide, five sectoral strategies, including guiding principles on integrative, gender-sensitive land use.	Lessons learned and conclusions from German development cooperation projects/ programmes in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change and integrative land use have been incorporated into five regional processes.	In 14 cases, managers in sectoral organisations at the national or regional level have implemented strategic change processes towards integrative land use and climate protection.
Achievement	100%	100%	100%

Given these achievement rates, the allocation efficiency appears to be highly satisfactory, especially considering that the achieved module objective indicator 1 relates to output area A, which was the most expensive one. Interviews and discussions revealed additional aspects to be considered under the assessment of allocation efficiency:

- **Holistic approach:** the multi-actor approach was found to be highly appropriate for building the capacities of and creating awareness among different actor groups and stakeholders, and, at the same time, it led to additional synergies within the output areas, particularly in terms of strengthened networks.
- **Synergies with other donor organisations and international agencies:** The project design and set-up meant the project had to closely collaborate with other donor organisations and implementing agencies, in particular the World Bank, KfW Development Bank and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. While this was very challenging, and the dependency on progress and communication, especially with the World Bank, complicated the implementation of the project, it also resulted in a larger contribution to overarching results: the GIZ project complemented other activities, which had a leveraging effect on the financial assistance that was provided (Int_UZ04, Int_KG07).

Efficiency dimension 2 – Allocation efficiency – **scores 25 out of 30 points**.

Methodology for assessing efficiency

Table 25: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency

Efficiency: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Production efficiency (Resources/Outputs)	Transformation of inputs to outputs based on: • GIZ efficiency tool. • The project's committed costs report. • Comparison of planned budget figures with actual figures. • Results matrix. • Progress reports. • RBM system.	**Evaluation design:** • The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). • Follow-the-money approach. **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	Questions regarding the project's efficiency were integrated into interviews and discussions to strengthen the evidence of secondary data.
Allocation efficiency (Resources/Outcome)	Transformation of inputs to outcome-based on: • GIZ efficiency tool. • The project's committed costs report. • Comparison of planned budget figures with actual figures. • Results matrix. • Progress reports. • RBM system.	**Evaluation design:** • The analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). • Follow-the-money approach. **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	Questions regarding the project's efficiency were integrated into interviews and discussions to strengthen the evidence of secondary data.

4.7 Sustainability

This section analyses and assesses the sustainability of the project. It is structured according to the assessment dimensions in the GIZ project evaluation matrix (see annex).

Summarising assessment and rating of sustainability

Table 26: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Sustainability	Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	17 out of 20 points
	Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	23 out of 30 points
	Durability of results over time	35 out of 50 points
Sustainability score and rating		Score: **75 out of 100 points** Rating: Level 3: moderately successful

The project's contribution to supporting sustainable capacities at the level of partner institutions is assessed as moderately successful. The evaluation team found that the project contributed, to some extent, to supporting sustainable capacities of all target groups, with some exceptions among the land-users. Furthermore, risks were identified for the durability of capacities in public institutions and especially within the ICSD at a regional level. The limited resources and low pay in the forestry and pasture department often result in high staff turnover – the main reason for the loss of capacities. Another risk to the durability of results was the limited awareness among public officials of the integrated land management approaches and where they were documented. The ILUMA document was known only to very few of the interviewed stakeholders. Positive indicators for durability were the agreements and programmes at a regional level, which included integrated land management approaches developed by the project (e.g. REP4SD). And where very little capacity-building was implemented. Owing to the efforts of other projects and donors, such as the World Bank, many results are durable.

In total, the sustainability of the project is rated Level 3: moderately successful, with 75 out of 100 points.

Analysis and assessment of sustainability

Since the analysis of sustainability went hand in hand with the assessments of the impact and effectiveness of the project, a similar methodological basis was chosen, so that the findings could build on each other. Perception-based findings from interviews were supplemented with data from secondary documents, i.e. on what approaches, methods, models, instruments, etc. are in place and on what resources and capacities at the individual, organisational or societal/political level are available. Again, business case studies were analysed to identify possible supporting and hindering factors for sustainability. Thus, there were certain limitations to the assessment of sustainability. As many of the training sessions were being conducted during the evaluation assessment, views on the sustainability of the activities were difficult to obtain.

Sustainability dimension 1: Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders

The first dimension assesses the extent to which the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the project have the institutional, human and financial resources, as well as the willingness, to sustain the results of the project over time. The sustainability of the capacities built is assessed as good. Under output C, the project focused completely on strengthening the core competencies of key actors cooperating at the regional level in terms of

integrative land-use patterns and their adaptation to climate change. Looking at the capacities that were built by the programme overall, the following capacities stand out:

- Through the provision of external expertise, advice and infrastructure the ICSD had the capacity to agree on and finalise the REP4SD programme.
- Through Green Central Asia, participants in training programmes and networks from organisations in all five Central Asian countries strengthened their networking and leadership skills. The participants interviewed highlighted the improved leadership skills, regional project applications and a strengthened network as direct results of Green Central Asia (survey_01).

Some of the challenges of establishing the desired capacities included:

- implementation challenges, such as uncertainties around the registration of the network, which prevented the provision of more technical expertise through an institutionalised channel and led to members assessing the subsequent collaboration through this network as minimal (Int_KG06, Int_UZ03),
- failure by landowners at pilot sites to implement what they learned, because of a) a lack of water and the financial resources to implement drip irrigation in Tajikistan and b) persistent conflicts over land use with neighbours (e.g. caused by uncontrolled grazing of livestock) (FGD_UZ01, FGD_TJ02, FG_TJ01).

Overall, the project succeeded in establishing the capacities of stakeholders and target groups, resulting in an increased ability to handle issues relating to sustainable and integrative land management at both a national and regional level.

Sustainability dimension 1 – Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders – scores **17 out of 20 points.**

Sustainability dimension 2: Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities

The second sustainability dimension assesses the extent to which the project contributed to the above-mentioned capacities of stakeholders to sustain positive results over time. The project's contribution to supporting sustainable capacities is assessed as moderately successful. While the results of applying the Kirkpatrick model to determine the effectiveness of the training for land users in the pilot areas showed some evidence that capacities have been built, the knowledge was not always put to use, owing to such challenges as a lack of water and financial resources (FGD_UZ01, FGD_TJ02, FGD_TJ01).

However, the main aim of the project was to apply what had been learned from the pilot measures to national policy development. Although the sites were not suitable for all aspects of the pilot approaches, government stakeholders from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan confirmed the importance of the exchange enabled through the pilots and other dialogue formats with land-users, civil society organisations and government stakeholders (Int_KG04, Int_UZ03, Int_TJ01, Int_TJ02). For example, the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan highlighted that if the regulations for the private sector and individuals are clear, this helps create more land for forest farms. In Kyrgyzstan, the Pasture Department in the Ministry of Agriculture confirmed that all the opinions of the private sector, civil society organisations and land-users were taken into account in the process to develop the new by-laws.

The project's contribution to sustainable capacities was greater when it came to building national and regional networks and fostering exchange among key stakeholders in the region. Stakeholders from other organisations, especially state and civil society organisations, were able to get introduced to each other. It is challenging to find a common language between state and non-governmental organisations. At the regional level, the establishment of these contacts helped those involved learn about approaches in different countries and, before the pandemic, there were several ideas on how to network. The NGO Eco Museum invited the members to several workshops. The alumni of these programmes were invited to introduce themselves to each other and roles were assigned to each country to manage the network. The programme lasted for one year, so it was not just a short-term endeavour (Int_KG04, Int_UZ03, Int_TJ01, Int_TJ02*).*

In Kyrgyzstan, the project addressed the sustainability risk that staff of the forest enterprises who had undergone training and capacity-building would leave, because of low pay. The project developed a merit-based incentive mechanism, taking into account the forest enterprises' incomes. Although the incentive mechanism was approved, it could not be fully implemented, owing to the release of the new Budget Code in Kyrgyzstan. To address this issue, the project developed a new programme-based budgeting methodology for forest enterprises and trained the enterprises in this methodology (Int_KG07).

All measures were carried out exclusively with existing, locally established partner organisations with relevant mandates, to institutionalise innovations and new capacities in the long term. As an investment in human resource development, the qualification and further training of experts and managers in sectoral organisations contributed to sustainably increasing the expertise in the sector. The evaluators expect that the human capacity development measures will take effect in the medium to long term, thereby consolidating the objectives achieved during the programme term (Int_KG04, Int_UZ03, Int_TJ01, Int_TJ02, GIZ, 2020c).

Sustainability dimension 2 – Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities – scores **23 out of 30 points**.

Sustainability dimension 3: Durability of results over time

The third sustainability dimension assesses the extent to which the results of the project will persist over time and are influenced by contextual factors. The durability of results at the national level was assessed as high, as the Central Asian governments have assigned importance to the management of forest lands. In most countries, the issues of forest management, pasture management and climate change are already high-priority. According to interview partners, this strong focus is highly likely to continue (Int_UZ01, Int_KAZ01, Int_TJ07). Concerns over the durability of results were mentioned by interview partners in Kyrgyzstan, however. There is a risk that the forest agency in the country will remain unwilling to fully institutionalise the 2018 regulation on the use of pastureland. The ministry does not monitor its implementation and the government agencies do not enforce it. The 2020 policy brief showed that only 15–20% of forest agencies are implementing the regulation (Int_UZ01, Int_KAZ01, Int_TJ07). At the end of the project, many government specialists, NGOs, private-sector actors and land-users still had very limited awareness of the holistic view on forest systems, including water systems and pasture management issues. The view on forest systems predominantly focused on products such as medicinal herbs. Capacity-building of decision-makers and experts in the system must be maintained to educate them further on how they can interact with local communities and raise awareness of environmental issues. Given the efforts of the GIZ follow-up project (PN 2020.2213.5) focusing on the institutionalisation of the existing results, it is likely that this aspect will be strengthened (Int_UZ01, Int_KG02). To secure the durability of results at the pilot sites and ensure that the insights gained from pilot-site measures continue to be used, they have to be monitored and frequently revisited by technical government staff at the national level (Int_TJ01*).* Achieving durability of results also means that tested approaches have to be continuously replicated and tested by local land-users supported through local government structures. This is a prerequisite to investing more in community mobilisation and developing the capacities of the local staff. The forest agency's resources are scarce, however, and it will depend on further financial support. Currently, there is no clear indication that the national ministries are considering providing financial assistance.

At the level of regional cooperation, the chances of results being durable are assessed as slightly less likely. The national ICSD offices are often understaffed. Salaries of ICSD staff in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are among the lowest for public officials in both countries. Furthermore, the interest of the national governments in strengthening and working with the ICSD has not always been consistent. All these factors could slow down the implementation of REP4SD and threaten the durability of the capacities built within the ICSD offices (Int_UZ02, Int_KAZ02).

Sustainability dimension 3 – Durability of results over time – scores **35 out of 50 points.**

Methodology for assessing sustainability

Table 27: Methodology for assessing OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability

Sustainability: assessment dimensions	Basis for assessment	Evaluation design and empirical methods	Data quality and limitations
Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	The dimension is assessed against the project's module objective indicators 1, 2 and 3 and their maintained application and output indicators A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 and C3.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	No limitations.
Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	See above.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	Anecdotal evidence.
The durability of results over time	See above.	**Evaluation design:** the analysis follows the analytical questions from the evaluation matrix (see annex). **Empirical methods:** interviews, document analysis.	Anecdotal evidence.

4.8 Key results and overall rating

The project achieved satisfactory results. Considering the complexity of the sector and the involvement of myriad national and international actors, as well as many challenges in the political-structural landscape, the project provided considerable support to government actors at the regional and national levels, achieving its goal to institutionalise integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches as part of government policy. The design of the project was in line with the interests and strategies of national governments, and with the regional interest of the Central Asian countries. The design was very well adapted to past and ongoing GIZ initiatives.

Direct efforts to coordinate within German development cooperation resulted in shared activities with KfW Development Bank and the institutionalised coordination of efforts to strengthen sustainable land use on a regional level through the ICSD. The project was able to exploit synergies and support several projects of international donors based on regular exchange mainly driven by the project itself, thanks in large part to the expertise gained through extensive piloting of integrative land management methodologies in all target countries.

Strengthening the capacities of key stakeholders through the leadership academy was successful, while the usefulness of the ensuing network remains to be seen. Regarding the capacities of the ICSD in coordinating regional processes, problems remain, due to a period without leadership and regional commitment. Regarding the implementation of the REP4SD process, the analysis showed that the project supported strategic

processes in every country. REP4SD was developed with these experiences in mind, but, owing to the capacity issues at the ICSD, this action plan had not yet produced tangible results at the time of this evaulation.

Regarding new development cooperation projects, the first projects have been approved and launched. Concrete results were not yet measurable at the time of this evaulation.

Regarding the implementation of cross-border projects based on ILUMA, the evaluation found that ILUMA were mostly driven by the national need for sustainable land-use models, without a direct connection to more regionally focused projects.

Table 28: Rating and score scales

100-point scale (score)	**6-level scale (rating)**
92–100	Level 1: highly successful
81–91	Level 2: successful
67–80	Level 3: moderately successful
50–66	Level 4: moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5: unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6: highly unsuccessful
Overall rating: The criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability are knock-out criteria: if one of these criteria is rated at level 4 or lower, the overall rating cannot go beyond level 4, although the mean score may be higher.	

Table 29: Overall rating of OECD/DAC criteria and assessment dimensions

Evaluation criteria	Dimension	Max	Score	Total (max.100)	Rating
Relevance	Alignment with policies and priorities	30	28	**88**	Level 2: successful
	Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	30	28		
	Appropriateness of the design	20	15		
	Adaptability – response to change	20	17		
Coherence	Internal Coherence	50	47	**92**	Level 1: highly successful
	External Coherence	50	45		
Effectiveness	Achievement of the (intended) objectives	30	25	**74**	Level 3: moderately successful
	Contribution to the achievement of objectives	30	20		
	Quality of implementation	20	14		
	Unintended results	20	15		
Impact	Higher-level (intended) development changes/results	30	24	**69**	Level 3: moderately successful
	Contribution to higher-level (intended) development results/changes	40	20		
	Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development results/changes	30	25		
Efficiency	Production efficiency	70	59	**84**	Level 2: successful
	Allocation efficiency	30	25		
Sustainability	Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	20	17	**75**	Level 3: moderately successful
	Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	30	23		
	Durability of results over time	50	35		
Mean score and overall rating		100	**80**		**Level 3: moderately successful**

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Key findings and factors of success/failure

To facilitate learning from the outcomes of this evaluation, this section corroborates key factors of success and central weaknesses of the project. Efforts and positive achievements relating to the key factors of success (which sometimes overlap) have the potential to bolster current achievements, mitigate current or future risks, or be applied to other similar projects.

Factors of success

- **Highly demand- and needs-driven activities:** the project was well designed. During the evaluation, the evaluators understood that the project was built on the long-lasting land management and climate-change experience accumulated by GIZ in the region.
- **Engagement of relevant stakeholder groups:** the project engaged all relevant stakeholders in introducing integrative sustainable land management approaches in the region: government agencies, civil society organisations, private-sector organisations and land-user groups.
- **Reliance on external technical expertise:** the project partners benefited in particular from the involvement of individual experts in developing integrative land management approaches, policy amendments and by-laws.
- **Coordination and synergies with other projects and donors:** there were synergies among projects throughout GIZ, which complemented each other. Furthermore, knowledge management within GIZ ensured the exchange of experiences/approaches and information. Synergies with other development partners were also successfully established.

Factors of weakness

- **Communication gaps in the first phase of implementation:** communication was not very well managed at the beginning, especially regarding activities at the regional level. The national project teams often functioned as separate projects, with little coordination and interaction. This improved slightly as implementation of the project progressed.
- **Large, diffuse team and high administrative overhead costs:** the regional project team was quite large, given the overall budget, and included a lot of international staff. This strained the budget and made regional coordination of the project challenging. This situation improved during implementation.
- **Diverging political interests among government stakeholders regarding integrative land management:** during project implementation, there were conflicts of interest among users or user groups, which were further aggravated by government agencies competing over competencies and funding. This was a challenge to the coordination and long-term planning of the project, as government agencies were often realigned and restructured as a result.
- **Understaffing and underfunding of the ICSD:** the understaffing and underfunding of the ICSD, and lack of political interest in regional cooperation in some countries, challenged the ambitions of the project to build sustainable regional capacities.
- **Limited influence on partners due to comparatively small budget:** the budget in some of the individual countries was low in comparison with other donor initiatives. Consequently, the influence of the project was lower, and discussions arose early on among the project team as to how they could remain relevant for the public implementation partners.

Findings regarding 2030 Agenda

Universality, shared responsibility and accountability

The project focused on contributing to several SDGs (1, 13, 15). Under **SDG 15** – protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss – the focus was on targets 15.2. – sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation – and 15.3. – combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world. The evaluation team identified contributions to several achievements in relation to improved and sustainable land use – for instance, by ensuring farmers' uptake of sustainable land management practices.

The positive results produced by the approaches also included higher expected incomes from greater diversification and increased surface area of arable land, indicating the potential to contribute to **SDG 1** on poverty reduction if scaled up by national governments. Strengthening the ability of poor landowners to profit more from their land has also contributed to improving food security, **SDG 2**. Similarly, biodiversity has increased, contributing to **SDG 13** on climate change, although no conclusive evidence could be gathered in this regard.

The interplay of economic, environmental and social development

Social, economic and environmental results were all related within the project structure. This is reflected in the project objective: integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches developed with the participation of land-user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society are implemented in Central Asian countries as an institutionalised part of government policy. Within this main objective, improved sustainable use of agricultural land was intertwined with the social and financial security of land-users in areas of Central Asia who earn their livelihood for the most part from pastureland, forestland, afforestation for wood-based business models[10] and agroforests. The coordination of different forms of land use aimed to increase the income of the local population, especially smallholder farmers. Through better coordination of the interests of land-user groups (e.g. small and large farmers, forest users, concessionaires) their resilience to economic and natural changes was strengthened.

Inclusiveness/leave no one behind

Gender is a cross-cutting social, economic and cultural issue. The project always endeavoured to include women, closely monitored the potential for gender mainstreaming and made an effort to improve the gender balance accordingly. The roles of each gender and their specific access to and use of land are different. The different needs of women and men are considered in political and strategic operational decision-making processes (at national and local level). The gender perspective is incorporated into the development of legal foundations. Women are actively involved in land-user organisations. Development parameters and data are collected in gender-specific monitoring. Intact soils and land-use systems are more resilient to negative impacts of climate change, such as extreme droughts.

The indirect target group consists of mostly poor land users. It is very important to them that they generate income through the management of land resources. For this reason, measures for economic evaluation (e.g. cost-benefit analyses) or the valorisation of integrative land use were promoted by the project.

In summary, there are many thematic overlaps in the results regarding the protection and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) and combating climate change and its impacts. While not the primary objectives of the project, achieving gender equality (SDG 5), improving food security (SDG 2) and combating climate change (SDG 13) were also contributed to.

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5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations based on the findings discussed in the previous sections of this report are divided into two sections. All recommendations are addressed to GIZ and specific actors and stakeholders within GIZ.

Recommendations for similar project interventions and the design of new projects (addressed to GIZ FMB):

- Investment projects that provide complementary assistance to financial assistance projects have great potential to leverage overarching development results sustainably. While creating these synergies can lead to impactful results, it is also recommended to leave a certain amount of flexibility in the project design, to decrease dependency and avoid encountering roadblocks during implementation.
- Given the ongoing situation caused by COVID-19, projects should plan hybrid training models and set up online as well as offline training to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of that training.

Recommendations for general project implementation (addressed to the project team):

- Incorporate refresher training in the project, so that the main training can be conducted in the early phase of the project, followed by less rigorous refresher training. It is important that the capacity-building that was not conducted in the previous phase because of COVID-19 is carried out as part of these training sessions.
- More activities and capacity-building efforts should be implemented through local organisations to ensure that the results are durable and are not adversely affected by rapid changes at the national level.
- Established results on the use of integrated land use management need to be monitored and frequently revisited with technical government staff at the national level.

List of references

GIZ standard project documents

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World Bank (2018): *Kazakhstan Community-Private Plantations: Analysis to Better Understand the Potential for Developing Forest Plantations*, Washington DC: Program on Forests (PROFOR).

Annexe: Evaluation matrix

Relevance

OECD-DAC Criterion Relevance - Is the intervention doing the right things? (max. 100 points)
The 'relevance' criterion focuses on the intervention's design. It refers to the extent to which the objectives and design of a development intervention are consistent with the (global, country and institution-specific) requirements, needs, priorities and policies of beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups, organisations and development partners). It also identifies the ability of the intervention's design to adapt to a change in circumstances.
"Relevance" is assessed in relation to 1) the **time of the intervention design**[1] and 2) from **today's perspective**[2].

Assessment dimensions	**Filter - Project Type**	**Evaluation questions**	**Clarifications**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** *(Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)*	**Data sources** *(e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)*	**Data Quality and limitations** *(Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)*	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Alignment with policies and priorities	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives aligned with the (global, regional and country-specific) policies and priorities of the BMZ and of the beneficiaries and stakeholders and other (development) partners? To what extent do they take account of the relevant political and institutional environment?	• Orientation at BMZ country strategies and BMZ sector concepts • Strategic reference framework for the project (e.g. national strategies including the national implementation strategy for Agenda 2030, regional and international strategies, sectoral and cross-sectoral change strategies, in bilateral projects especially partner strategies, internal analytical framework e.g. safeguards and gender[4] • Orientation of the project design at the (national) objectives of Agenda 2030 • Project contribution to certain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) • Explanation of a hierarchy of the different	Comparsion of project objectives (from Offer; PV) with BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie), BMZ Reform 2030	Document Review	PV (Project Offer), BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie) BMZ Reform 2030,	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

				policies, priorities (especially in case of contradictions)					
	Alignment with the needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives aligned with the development needs and capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders involved (individuals, groups and organisations)?	• Also: consideration of stakeholders such as civil society and private sector in the design of the measure	Comparison of project objectives (from Offer, PV) with needs Interview results from ICSD, ministries and agencies. Also assessment of reasoning in project offers and other needs assessments	Interviews and document review	Documents: PV (Project Offer), PÖK Kyrgyzstan, PÖK Tajikistan, PÖK Usbekistan, PEV predecessor project Interviews with: Uzbekistan (Department of International relations and ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agency, CEP, Forest Enterprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and the Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)	Limitation: face to face interviews are not possible, also in-depth assessment according to interviews will be limited to 3 countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan). Assessment of needs in other countries will have to be done based on the review of secondary data. Data quality: good	

	Standard	To what extent are the intervention's objectives geared to the needs and capacities of particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations)? Concerning groups, a differentiation can be made by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.?	• Reaching particularly disadvantaged groups (in terms of Leave No One Behind, LNOB) • Consideration of potential for human rights and gender aspects • Consideration of identified risks	Assessment project objectives (from Offer, PV)	Document Review	Documents: PV (Project Offer)	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good		
Appropriateness of the design[3]	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design appropriate and realistic (in terms of technical, organisational and financial aspects)?	• Realistic project goal from today's perspective and given the available resources (time, finances, partner capacities) • Consideration of potential changes in the framework conditions • Dealing with the complexity of framework conditions and strategic reference frameworks and with possible overloading • Strategic focusing	Assessment of stakeholders opinions on how realistic the project objectives are and what potential changes in the framework conditions posed a threat to the reaching of the objectives.	Document Review and interviews	Results Matrix	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good		
	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design sufficiently precise and plausible (in terms of the verifiability and traceability of the system of objectives and the underlying assumptions)?	Assessment of the (current) results model and results hypotheses (Theory of Change, ToC) of the actual project logic: • Adequacy of activities, instruments and outputs in relation to the project objective to be achieved • Plausibility of the underlying results hypotheses • Clear definition and plausibility of the selected system boundary (sphere of responsibility) • Appropriate consideration of potential influences of other donors/ organisations outside the project's sphere of responsibility • completeness and plausibility of assumptions and risks	Consistency, coherence and quality of ToC	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Progres reports to BMZ Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relations and ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agency, CEP, Forest Enterprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit),	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good		

			for the project results • How well is co-financing (if any) integrated into the overall concept of the project and what added value could be generated for the ToC/project design?			Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and the Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)		
	Standard	To what extent is the intervention's design based on a holistic approach to sustainable development (interaction of the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability)?	• Presentation of the interactions (synergies/trade-offs) of the intervention with other sectors in the project design - also about the sustainability dimensions in terms of Agenda 2030 (economic, ecological and social development)	Assessment of PV(project offer) and the planned interventions to target environmental, social and economic development.	Secondary data analysis	PV(project offer)	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
Adaptability – response to change	Standard	To what extent has the intervention responded to changes in the environment over time (risks and potentials)?	• Reaction to changes during the project including change offers (e.g. local, national, international, sectoral changes, including state-of-the-art sectoral know-how)	Assessment of adaption of the project to the following changes: a) every year new director of SAEPF Kyrgyzstan, b) Membership frozen in ICSD (Kyrgistan). c) New Partner agency in Kazsachtsan because of Merger. d) Turkmenistan pasture reform could not be implemented due to short notice government decision.	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Interviews with the project team, ICSD	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

Coherence

OECD-DAC Criterion Coherence - How well does the intervention fit? (max. 100 points)
This criterion refers to the intervention's compatibility with other interventions in a country, sector or institution as well as with international norms and standards. **Internal coherence** addresses the synergies and division of tasks between the intervention and other interventions of German development cooperation and also the intervention's consistency with the relevant international norms and standards to which German development cooperation adheres. **External coherence** considers the intervention's complementarity, harmonisation and coordination with the interventions of other partners, donors and international organisations. The "coherence" criterion relates both to the intervention's design as well as to the results it achieves.

Assessment dimensions	**Filter - Project Type**	**Evaluation questions**	**Clarifications**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)	**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Internal coherence	Standard	Within German development cooperation, to what extent is the intervention designed and implemented (in a sector, country, region or globally) in a complementary manner, based on the division of tasks?	• Also analysis of whether the project takes the necessary steps to fully realize synergies within German development cooperation	Comparsion of project objectives (from Offer; PV) with BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie), BMZ Reform 2030. The perspective of partner GIZ and BMZ financed projects: GIZ Transboundary water management in Central Asia, Community-based management of walnut forests and pasture in South of Kyrgyzstan.	Interviews and document review	Interview with FMB, BMZ, GIZ (Koschkin, Milow) Review of BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie), BMZ Reform 2030.	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent are the instruments of German development cooperation (Technical and Financial Cooperation) meaningfully interlinked within the intervention (in terms of both design and implementation)? Are synergies leveraged?	• if applicable, also take into account projects of different German resorts/ministries	The perspective of partner GIZ and BMZ financed projects, FMB and BMZ: (GIZ Transboundary water management in Central Asia, Community-based management of walnut forests and pasture in South of Kyrgyzstan)	Interviews and document review	Interview with FMB, BMZ, GIZ (Koschkin, Milow) Review of BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie), BMZ Reform 2030.	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent is the intervention consistent with international and national norms and standards to which German development cooperation is		Comparison to BMZ Reform 2030, Convention of human rights,	Interviews and document review	Review of BMZ Eckpunkte Papier 2016, REP4SD, (EU Zentral Aisen Strategie), BMZ Reform 2030.	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

		committed (e.g. human rights)?						
External coherence	Standard	To what extent does the intervention complement and support the partner's efforts (principle of subsidiarity)?		*Regionales Wissensnetzwerk Weidemanagement, Regionaler Umweltaktionsplan und ICSD und IFAS, Weltbank Programm CAMP4ASB – Climate Adaptation Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin, GCFProgramme, CACILM II Programm der FAO, EU-Zentralasien Dialog, CAREC Environmental Dialogue etc.); Nachweise der Integration der Lernerfahrungen und Schlussfolgerung der deutschen EZ in diese Prozesse (z. B. Beratungsinputs von Fazilitatoren der Prozesse, aktive Teilnahme von Personal deutscher EZ-Vorhaben an Arbeitsgruppen und Gremien der Prozesse, Vorstellung von Lernerfahrungen auf Veranstaltungen im Rahmen der Prozesse, Umsetzungsmechanismen dieser Prozesse, welche Lernerfahrungen und Schlussfolgerungen deutscher EZ-Vorhaben integrieren).*	document review	Review of Thematische Beschreibung regionaler Prozesse (Beispiele: Regionales Wissensnetzwerk Weidemanagement, Regionaler Umweltaktionsplan und ICSD und IFAS, Weltbank Programm CAMP4ASB – Climate Adaptation Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin, GCFProgramme, CACILM II Programm der FAO, EU-Zentralasien Dialog, CAREC Environmental Dialogue etc.); Nachweise der Integration der Lernerfahrungen und Schlussfolgerung der deutschen EZ in diese Prozesse (z. B. Beratungsinputs von Fazilitatoren der Prozesse, aktive Teilnahme von Personal deutscher EZ-Vorhaben an Arbeitsgruppen und Gremien der Prozesse, Vorstellung von Lernerfahrungen auf Veranstaltungen im Rahmen der Prozesse, Umsetzungsmechanismen dieser Prozesse, welche Lernerfahrungen und Schlussfolgerungen deutscher EZ-Vorhaben integrieren).	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention's design and implementation been coordinated with other donors' activities?	• Also: To what extent could synergies be achieved through co-financing (where available) with other bilateral and multilateral donors and organizations and how did co-financing contribute to improved donor coordination?	Compare with other programmes Weltbank Programm CAMP4ASB – Climate Adaptation Mitigation Programme for the Aral Sea Basin, GCFProgramme, CACILM II Programm der FAO, EU-Zentralasien Dialog, CAREC Environmental Dialogue, BMU/IKI Ecosystem-based land use and ecosystem	Interviews and document review	Interviews with project team	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

				conservation in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan BMU/IKI Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in agricultural landscapes in Tajikistan BMU/IKI Ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the high mountain regions of Central Asia BMZ Community-based management of walnut tree forests and pastures in Southern Kyrgyzstan Federal Foreign Office (AA) (via GIZ) Transboundary water management in Central Asia BMU/IKI Support for the Green Economy in Kazakhstan and Central Asia World Bank Project on Integrated Management of Forest Ecosystems in Kyrgyzstan IFAD project to improve the quality of livestock farming and the market development in Kyrgyzstan FAO/GEF GEF-funded project on sustainable livestock sustainable forestry in mountain regions Joint activities on Maintenance measures.				
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention's design been designed to use existing systems and structures (of partners/other donors/international organisations) for implementing its activities? To what extent are these systems and structures used?	• Also analysis of whether the project is taking the necessary steps to fully realize synergies with interventions of other donors at the impact level	Perception of project team and study of PV	Interviews and document review	Interviews with project team	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

	Standard	To what extent are common systems (together with partners/other donors/international organisations) used for M&E, learning and accountability?		Perception of the project team and partners on systematic efforts in monitoring	Interviews and document review	Interviews with project team and partners	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	How involved are the individual partners in the implementation of country projects? To what extent is the cooperation positive?		Perception of project team/country leads and cooperation partners	Interviews and document review	Interviews with project team and partners	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	How could the regional cooperation be strengthened more in the last phase of the project? Regionality – how is regionality implemented? Are there themes that are implemented in all countries, or are they country-specific?		Perception of political partners, project team and experts (UNCCP, etc)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / The imit Country coordinators and other partners (Worldbank, UNCCP)	Limitations: as this is a question by the project it might be difficult to find interview partners, that have ideas on new promising cooperation options.	
	Standard	What should cooperation look like in the future? Which partners should the project cooperate with more intensively? (Because Kyrgyzstan is not a member)		Perception of political partners, project team and experts (UNCCP, etc)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators and other partners (Worldbank, UNCCP)	Limitations: as this is a question by the project it might be difficult to find interview partners, that have ideas on new promising cooperation options.	

Effectiveness

OECD-DAC Criterion Effectiveness - Is the intervention achieving its objectives? (max. 100 points)
'Effectiveness' refers to the extent to which the intervention has achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives (at outcome level), including any differential results across beneficiary and stakeholder groups. It examines the achievement of objectives in terms of the direct, short-term and medium-term results.

Assessment dimensions	**Filter - Project Type**	**Evaluation questions**	**Clarifications**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)	**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Achievement of the (intended) objectives[1]	Standard	To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is the intervention expected to achieve, the (intended) objectives as originally planned (or as modified to cater for changes in the environment)?	• Assessment based on the project objective indicators (agreed with BMZ) • Check whether more specific or additional indicators are needed to adequately reflect the project objective	Final Version of Monitoring data (all output and outcome indicators) end of January / February and perception of stakeholders on quality of achievement (Do the indicators capture the results or are specifications needed)	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Review of Monitoring System Interviews with Project Partners (especially Tajikistan) Uzbekistan (Department of International relations and ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agency, CEP, Forest Enterprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and the Natural Resources	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

						Republic of Kazakhstan)		
Contribution to the achievement of objectives	Standard	*To what extent have the intervention's outputs been delivered as originally planned (or as modified to cater for changes in the environment)?*		Perception of Stakeholders (see above)	Interviews	(see above)	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent have the delivered outputs and increased capacities been used and equal access (e.g. in terms of physical, non-discriminatory and affordable access) guaranteed?		Perception of partners	Interviews	(see above)	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives?	• Assessment based on the activities, TC-instruments and outputs of the project (contribution-analysis as the focus of this assessment dimension and minimum standard, see annotated reports) • What would have happened without the project? (usually qualitative reflection)	Assessment of Hypotheses: **1) Output C to O3 to Module Objective:** The coordination of interests of key actors (land user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society), enabled through strengthened capacities in the area of land use, leads to the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches. 2) **O1 to O3 to Module Objective:** The strengthened capacities within the ICSD contribute to the coordination of interests of key actors (land user groups, government agency actors, the private sector and civil society), resulting in the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches. **3) Output B to Output**	Contribution analysis Interviews and review of documents	1) interviews with and user groups, government agency actors (ICSD), the private sector and civil society; review of sectoral land use approaches and land use approaches enabled through capacity building of the project (e.g.: Participatory Forest Management contract) 2) interviews with project team government agency actors (ICSD); review of ICSD specific land-use approaches 3) Interviews with staff responsible for REP4SD	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

				A to Module Objective: tested integrated land-use approaches at a national level are incorporated in a conceptual framework for integrated land management (REP4SD), leading to the implementation of integrative, sustainable, climate-sensitive and economically viable land-use approaches.				
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives at the level of the intended beneficiaries?		Assessment of effect on the indirect target group (farmers)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with government agency actors and target group representatives were possible	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the achievement of objectives at the level of particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.)?		(see above)	Interviews and review of documents	(see above)	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	*Which internal factors (technical, organisational or financial) were decisive for achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended objectives?*	• Internal factors = within the project's sphere of responsibility/system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s).	Assessment of success factors: 1): (KGZ) orientation on the government partner organization needs 2) (KGZ) policy dialogue and cooperation with financial assistance development partner organization (the World Bank). Assessment of negative factors: 1) Long time needed for the consideration of SFF project proposals hindering immediate addressing of the partner's request/needs. 2) uncoordinated team, causing the project to	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Interviews with project staff and government agency actors	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

				miss out on synergies between the countries.				
	Standard	*Which external factors were decisive for the achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended objectives (taking into account the anticipated risks)?*	• External factors = outside the project's sphere of responsibility/system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s).	Assessment of how the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions caused a delay in the implementation of the planned activities.	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Inteviews with project staff / Änderungsangebot 3 Monate Verlängerung	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
Quality of implementation	Standard	What assessment can be made of the quality of steering and implementation of the intervention in terms of the achievement of objectives? What assessment can be made of the quality of steering and implementation of, and participation in, the intervention by the partner/executing agency?	Capacity Works considerations: - **Results-oriented monitoring (ROM / WoM)** is established and used, e.g. for evidence-based decisions, risk management. Data are disaggregated by gender and marginalized groups. unintended positive and negative results are monitored. Conflict-sensitive monitoring and explicit risk-safety monitoring are particularly important for projects in fragile contexts. - A bindingly communicated **strategy** agreed with the partners is pursued - Involvement and **cooperation** of all relevant actors (including partners, civil society, private sector) - **Steering**: decisions influencing the projects' results are made in time and evidence-informed. Decision processes are transparent. - **Processes**: Relevant change processes are anchored in the cooperation system; project-internal processes are established and regularly reflected and	Assessment of 1) Results-oriented monitoring (ROM / WoM) is established and used, e.g. for evidence-based decisions, risk management. (KOMPASS was implemented (Excel Monitoring Sheet), Quality management documents (Capacity Works, RBM, etc.) See PFB for Risks and assumptions) 2) Bindingly communicated strategy agreed with the partners is pursued 3) Involvement and cooperation of all relevant actors (including partners, civil society, private sector) 4)Steering: decisions influencing the projects' results are made in time and evidence-informed. Steering is coordinated and clear (Synergies across countries are used) Decision processes are transparent. 5) Processes: Relevant change processes are anchored in the cooperation system; the issue of coordination across countries and problem of large spread out team.	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	1) GIZ Team (M&E persons), PV, Monitoring system 2) GIZ team and main cooperation partner in each country 3) GIZ team and partners from government and civil society 4) GIZ team 5) GIZ team 6) GIZ team	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

			optimised. - **Learning and innovation**: There is a learning and innovation-friendly work culture that promotes the exchange of experience; learning processes are established; context-specific adjustments are possible	6) Any approaches for learning and innovation.				
Unintended results	Standard	To what extent can unintended positive/negative direct results (social, economic, environmental and among vulnerable beneficiary groups) be observed/anticipated?	• The focus is on the outcome level, but for the analysis, the unintended effects can also be included on the output level	Unintended results on outcome level: Greenbelt and other transboundary projects, etc. resulting from the project	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	project team, partner responsible for greenbelt and transboundary project	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	What potential benefits/risks arise from the positive/negative unintended results? What assessment can be made of them?	• also check whether the risks were already mentioned and monitored in the design phase	Assessment of risks and benefits of results above	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Interviews with project staff and government agency actors	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	How has the intervention responded to the potential benefits/risks of the positive/negative unintended results?	• Check if positive results at the outcome level have been monitored and set in the value	Assessment of Risk mitigation strategies In the case of Turkmenistan, it was planned to support the elaboration of by-laws to the Pasture law with subsequent piloting of its mechanisms in two regions. However, the process of adoption of the legal documents turned out to be very lengthy. Given the peculiarities of the country, the national partner could not support piloting without approved legal documents. It was decided to adjust the	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	Interviews with project staff and government agency actors	Limitations: None found so far. Data quality: good	

				offer, and remove this indicator. Instead, AV agreed with a national partner to support with capacity building of Hydromet services and institutional analysis of the NAP process. This approach was welcomed and fully supported by MAEP. UZB: -Due to COVID -19 restriction measures, some activities had to be postponed or cancelled, e.g. in July there was a plan to implement grafting on the pilot sites and it was decided to cancel this activity at that time, but implement pruning activities in Autumn. TJK: we adapted to the COVID situation and shifted the majority of our activities to an online format.				

Impact

OECD-DAC Criterion Impact (higher-level development results) - What difference does the intervention make? (max. 100 points)
Based on recognisable higher-level development changes (at impact level), the criterion of "higher-level development results (at impact level)" relates to the extent to which the intervention has already produced significant positive or negative, intended or unintended results at the overarching level (contributions to the observed changes), or is expected to do so in the future. This includes any differential results across different stakeholders and beneficiaries. This criterion refers to the results of the development intervention.

Assessment dimensions	**Filter - Project Type**	**Evaluation questions**	**Clarifications**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)	**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Higher-level (intended) development changes[1]	Standard	To what extent can the higher-level development changes (social, economic and environmental dimensions and the interactions between them) to which the intervention will/is designed to contribute be identified/foreseen)? (Specify time frame where possible.)	• Consider module proposal for suggested impact and program objective indicators (program proposal), if it is not an individual measure • Potential basis for assessment: program objective indicators, identifiers, connection to the national strategy for implementing 2030 Agenda, connection to SDGs	Results Model / See PV SDG Working Group Johannes Keil will check for documentation of SGD (aggregation) process, SDGs: 15.1, 15.2 Kyrgyzstan: National Development Strategy 2018-2040 In Uzbekistan with new approaches by the current Government and fast changes in all spheres, Project supported a national partners in addressing given tasks on the development forest sector and cooperation with local people in participatory forest management approach. TJK: indirect contribution to the SDGs, national development strategies, INDC and update to NDC, Bonn challenge, Contribution to the achivement of the NBSAP In TKM SLUCA supported in review of the National Climate Change Strategy in the area of adaptation	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	PV, Resultst Model, Kyrgyzstan National Development Strategy 2018-2040, TJK national development strategies, INDC and update to NDC, Bonn challenge, Contribution to the achivement of the NBSAP, TKM National Climate Change Strategy in the area of adaptation (approved in 09/19). Interview with SDG working group, and national gov. partners	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

				(approved in 09/19). This document is in line with many other national strategic documents that cover the period until 2030.				
	Standard	To what extent can the higher-level development changes (social, economic, environmental dimensions and the interactions between them) be identified/foreseen at the level of the intended beneficiaries? (Specify time frame where possible.)		Assessment of target group partners were applicable	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest Entreprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent can higher-level development changes to which the intervention will/is designed to contribute be identified/foreseen at the level of particularly		Assessment of target group partners were applicable	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

			disadvantaged/vulnerable groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.) (Specify time frame where possible.)				Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest Entreprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)		
Contribution to higher-level (intended) development changes	Standard	To what extent has the intervention actually contributed to the identified and/or foreseeable higher level development changes (social, economic, environmental dimensions and their interactions, taking into account political stability) that it was designed to bring about?	• Contribution analysis (evaluation design) as minimum standard and focus of this assessment dimension, further approaches are possible and welcome, see also annotated reports • Evaluation of the project's contribution to impacts based on an analysis of the results hypotheses from outcome to impact level	Assessment of : 1) O2 to I1: The strengthened capacities within the ICSD contribute the strengthening of the IFAS structure 2) O4 to I2: Submission of project proposals for DC projects that involve the dissemination of key innovations of the regional programme to donor organizations or the Green Climate Fund result in the implementation of these proposals 3) O5 to I3: The summarized experiences of Integrated land use approaches (Iluma) are incorporated in the implementation of new cross-border projects	Interviews and review of documents	1) Interviews with ICSD, project staff tasked with ICSD / IFAS, project team 2) Interviews with with project team and involved GCF representatives 3)) Interviews with partner projects Interview GIZ projects (tanboundary water management, greenbelts (Koschkin, Milow)	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention achieved its intended (original and, where applicable,	• This question can already be assessed in Dimension 1 Question 1, the contribution to	Assesment of Monitoring System indicators and project	Interviews and review of documents	monitoring system and interviews with project team	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	revised) development objectives?	impact is assessed in Dimension 2, Question 1	team perception on these				
Standard	To what extent has the intervention achieved its (original and, where applicable, revised) development objectives at the level of the intended beneficiaries?		Assesment of Monitoring System indicators and project team perception on these	Interviews and review of documents	monitoring system and interviews with project team	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to higher-level development changes/changes in the lives of particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders that it was designed to bring about? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.).		Assessment of target group partners were applicable	Interviews and review of documents	monitoring system and interviews with project team	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
Standard	*Which internal factors (technical, organisational or financial) were decisive for achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended development objectives?*	• Internal factors = within the project's sphere of responsibility / system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s)	Assessment of the follwoing: 1) in Kyrgyzstan: 2) In Kazahstan: 3) In Turkmenistan: how the recognisition of GIZ expertise in the area of adapation to climate change (e.g. both by national (MAEP), and development partners (UNDP) enabled the efficient implöemetaation of the programme 4) in Usbeskistan: 5) in Tajikistan:	Interviews and review of documents	monitoring system and interviews with project team	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

Standard	*Which external factors were decisive for the achievement/non-achievement of the intervention's intended development objectives?*	• External factors = outside the project's sphere of responsibility / system boundary. The project is implemented jointly by GIZ and the official partner(s). • Take into account the activities of other actors or other policies, framework conditions, other policy areas, strategies or interests (German ministries, bilateral and multilateral development partners)	Assessment of the follwoing: 1) in Kyrgyzstan: how changes in the national legal framework (introduction of Budget Code) slowed down implementation of activities within Forest Sector Reform piloting agenda. 2) In Kazakhstan a) how change of management in the key partner government organization impedes decision making b) (Administratively on GIZ side) how a lengthy delay in the prolongation of a consultancy company's framework contract impeded implementation of delivery on ouput in Kazakhstan. 3) in Turkmenistan how the policy changes of government affected the implementation. accomodate the request of national and development partners 4) In Usbekistan: how new approaches by the current Government and fast changes in all sphere helped the project support of national partner in addressing given tasks on development forest sector and cooperation with local people in participatory forest management approach. 5) in Tajikistan: how the implementation was affected by relatively hostile relationship between Germany and Tajikistan (BMZ exit strategy, late or no answers to offical letters by the German embassy, non inclusion	Interviews and review of documents	1) Kyrgystan: Interviews with project team, Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit. 2) Kazakhstan: interviews with project team, Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan. 3) Uzbekistan: interviews with project team, Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest Entreprise Penjikent.	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

			of regional partners in gov negotiations)				
Standard	To what extent has the intervention achieved structural or institutional changes (e.g. for organisations, systems and regulations)?		Perception of project partners in all countries and project team	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest Entreprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

						(Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)		
	Standard	To what extent did the intervention serve as a model and/or achieve broad-based impact?	• Scaling-up is a consciously designed process to anchor changes in organisations and cooperation systems (e.g. concepts, approaches, methods) to generate broad impact • There is vertical scaling-up, horizontal scaling-up, functional scaling-up or a combination of these[2] • also analyse possible potential and reasons for not exploiting it	Assessment of scaling up attempts (e.g. Greenbelt and Transboundary Watermanagent and strengthening of IFAs structure) aswell as asessment of initiatives by project parterners in sustainabliy land use that were intiated by the project	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with Greenbelt project, Transboundary Watermanagent project and f IFAs. Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest Entreprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	*How would the situation have developed without the intervention?*	• usually qualitative refelction, quantitative approaches welcome	Assessment of partners perceptuion (political and implmentation)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with Project Partners Uzbekistan (Department of International relationsand ecotourism development of the State Committee on Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan, KRASS NGO), Tajikistan (Forest Agengy, CEP, Forest	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

							Entreprise Penjikent), Kyrgystan (Forest Ecosystems Development Department (FEDD), State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Pasture Department, Ministry of Agriculture, GEF/WB Integrated Forest Ecosystems Management Project Implementation Unit), Kazakhstan (Department of Foresestry and Protected Areas, Committee of Forestry and Wildlife, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources Republic of Kazakhstan)		
Contribution to higher-level (unintended) development changes	Standard	To what extent can higher-level, unintended development changes (social, economic and environmental dimensions and their interactions, taking into account political stability) be identified/foreseen? (Specify time frame where possible.)		Asessment of 1) I1 The structure of IFAS has been strengthened (in parallel with tranboundary watermanagement programme) 2) I3 Experiences from implemented approaches are translated into new cross-border projects (e.g. Greenbelt, Pistachio Management, Protected area management 3) I2 Project proposals for DC projects are implemented (Greenbelt / transboundary water) 4) I6 The will to reform on the part of the governments of Central Asian countries is strengthened through ICDS	Interviews and review of documents	1) Interviews with IFAS, project team 2) Interviews with partner projects Interview GIZ projects (tanboundary water management, greenbelts 3) nterviews with partner projects Interview GIZ projects (tanboundary water management, greenbelts, project team 4) intercview with project team, ICDs	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	Standard	To what extent has the intervention brought about foreseeable/identifiable unintended (positive and/or negative) higher-level development results?	• Analyse whether the risks were already known in the design phase • Check how the assessment of risks in connection with (unintended) negative or (not formally agreed) positive results at the impact level in the monitoring system has been carried out (e.g. use of 'compass') • measures taken to avoid or counteract the risks/ negative effects/ trade-offs[3] • Determine relevant framework conditions for negative results and the project's reaction to them • Examine to what extent potential (not formally agreed) positive results and synergies between the ecological, economic and social development dimensions have been monitored and exploited	Asessment of 1) I1 The structure of IFAS has been strengthened (in parallel with tranboundary watermanagement programme) 2) I3 Experiences from implemented approaches are translated into new cross-border projects (e.g. Greenbelt, Pistachio Management, Protected area management 3) I2 Project proposals for DC projects are implemented (Greenbelt / transboundary water) 4) I6 The will to reform on the part of the governments of Central Asian countries is strengthened through ICDS	Interviews and review of documents	(see abaove)	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to foreseeable/identifiable unintended (positive and/or negative) higher-level development results at the level of particularly disadvantaged or vulnerable groups of beneficiaries and stakeholders? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.)		Perception of tartget group representatives and project team	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with target group representatives and project team	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	How has the ILUMA document spread and incorporated into strategies in the region		Perception of project parbers and project team and assement of new stratgies rgegarding their reference to ILUMA	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with project partners, review of relevant new strategies	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

Efficiency

OECD-DAC Criterion Efficiency - How well are resources being used? (max. 100 points) This criterion describes the extent to which the intervention delivers results in an economic and timely way (relationship between input and output, outcome and impact level). The evaluation dimension '**production efficiency**' refers to the appropriateness of the relationship between inputs and outputs. The evaluation dimension '**allocation efficiency**' refers to the appropriateness of the relationship between the inputs and the results achieved (project/development objective; outcome/impact level) by the intervention. The "efficiency" criterion relates both to the intervention's design and implementation and to the results it achieves. **Assessment dimensions** **Filter - Project Type** **Evaluation questions** **Clarifications** **Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)* **Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)						**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Production efficiency	Standard	How are the intervention's inputs (financial, human and material resources) distributed (e.g. by instruments, sectors, sub-interventions, taking into account the cost contributions of partners/executing agencies/other beneficiaries and stakeholders etc.)?	• Description of the data: Costs per output, type of costs, agreed and provided partner contributions • Description of the deviations between original planned costs and actual costs (with comprehensible justification, changes are certainly desirable for increased efficiency)	Analysis of Kosten Obigop report with guidance of project team (efficiency tool)	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent have the intervention's inputs (financial, human and material resources) been used economically in relation to the outputs delivered (products, investment goods and services)? If possible, refer to data from other evaluations in a region or sector, for instance.	• Use of 'Efficiency tool' including instructions and use of the follow-the-money approach as evaluation design (may be combined with other high-quality approaches) • Output level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment)[1] compared to possible alternatives with a focus on the minimum principle (use of comparative data if available) • The project is oriented on internal or external benchmarks in order to achieve its effects economically • Regular reflection of the resources used by	Comparison of project costs (ouptuts and staff costs) with comparable other projects in central asia and in other countries from perspective of sectoral experts (e.g. FMB and project team); Assessment of processes implemented to ensure efficient spending.	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff. Interview of project staff and sectoral experts (FMB))	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

				the project with focus on economically use of ressources and cost risks • The overarching costs of the project are in an appropriate proportion to the costs of the outputs					
	Standard	To what extent could the intervention's outputs (products, investment goods and services) have been increased through the alternative use of inputs (financial, human and material resources)? If possible, refer to data from other evaluations of a region or sector, for instance. (If applicable, this question adds a complementary perspective*) * This case is always applicable in the technical cooperation (TC), please answer the question bindingly	• Use of 'Efficiency tool' including instructions and use of the follow-the-money approach as evaluation design (may be combined with other high-quality approaches) • Output level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC instruments (personnel instruments, financing, materials and equipment)[1] compared to possible alternatives with focus on output maximization (use of comparative data if available) • Analysis of alternative options for allocating resources and shifts between outputs for output maximisation • saved resources can and should be used to maximise outputs • Reflection of the resources during the design phase and regularly during the implementation of the project with focus on output maximisation (with comprehensible justification, changes are certainly desirable for increased efficiency) • 'imaximising outputs' means with the same resources, under the same conditions and	The project manages its resources in order to achieve other outputs faster/ better if outputs have been achieved or cannot be achieved (final evaluation).	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

			with the same or better quality						
	Standard	Were the outputs (products, investment goods and services) produced on time and within the planned time frame?		Outputs (products, investment goods and services) were produced on time within the planned time frame, wihot extensive delays	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	GIZ Climate methodology - to what extent can synergies be used for the project?		Comparison of GIZ Climate methodology	Secondary data analysis / Interviews	GIZ Climate methodology	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
Allocation efficiency	Standard	*By what other means and at what cost could the results achieved (higher-level project objective) have been attained?*		The project approach described in the module proposal with regard to the module objective to be achieved is state-of-the-art under the given framework conditions	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent – compared with alternative designs for the intervention – could the results have been attained more cost-effectively?	• Outcome level: Analysis of approaches and activities as well as TC-instruments in comparison to possible alternatives with focus on minimum principle (use of comparative data if available) • Regular reflection in the project of the input-outcome relation and alternatives as well as cost risks • The partner contributions are proportionate to the costs for the outcome of the project	The project is geared to internal or external benchmarks in order to achieve its impacts cost-effectively.	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	Standard	To what extent – compared with alternative designs for the intervention – could the positive results have been increased using the existing resources? (If applicable, this question adds a complementary perspective*) * This case is always applicable in the technical cooperation (TC), please answer the question bindingly	• Outcome level: Analysis of applied approaches and activities as well as TC-instruments compared to possible alternatives with focus on maximizing the outcome (real comparison if available) • The project manages its resources between the outputs in such a way that the maximum effects in terms of the module objective are achieved • Regular reflection in the project of the input-outcome relation and alternatives • Reflection and realization of possibilities for scaling-up • If additional funds (e.g. co-financing) have been raised: Effects on input-outcome ratio (e.g. via economies of scale) and the ratio of administrative costs to total costs • Losses in efficiency due to insufficient coordination and complementarity within German DC are sufficiently avoided	i) The project takes the necessary steps to fully realise synergies with interventions by other donors at the level of impact. ii) Losses in efficiency due to insufficient coordination and complementarity with the interventions of other donors are sufficiently avoided. ii)The project takes the necessary steps to fully realise synergies within German development cooperation. iv)Efficiency losses due to insufficient coordination and complementarity within German DC are sufficiently avoided. v)Combined financing has led to or is expected to lead to a significant expansion of the impacts. vi)As a result of the combined financing, the overall costs have not risen disproportionately in relation to the total costs. vii)The partner contributions are proportionate to the costs of the outputs of the project.	Follow the Money, Secondary data analyses (Efficiency tool) , interviews with project staff	Project documents: Kosten-Obligo Report, Excel Personalinsturmente	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

Sustainability

OECD-DAC Criterion Sustainability - Will the benefits last? (max. 100 points)
The 'sustainability' criterion relates to continued long-term benefits (at the outcome and impact level) or the probability of continued long-term benefits – taking into account observed or foreseeable risks – over time, particularly after assistance has ended.

Assessment dimensions	**Filter - Project Type**	**Evaluation questions**	**Clarifications**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)	**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Capacities of the beneficiaries and stakeholders	Standard	To what extent do the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) have the institutional, human and financial resources as well as the willingness (ownership) required to sustain the positive results of the intervention over time (once assistance has drawn to a close)?	• Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) projects primarily address final beneficiaries, whose resilience to crises and recurring shocks is to be strengthened. The focus for TDA projects is thus often on the resilience of final beneficiaries and/or at least the continuity of the measure (see explanation in dimension 3) (clarification in the inception phase of the evaluation).	Assessment of 1) Creation of Alumni and regional expert network in the field of Natural rexource management and climate change adaptation 2) Collection of all the reuslts ioif the last 10 years of project acitivities in one central document and dissemination to central stakeholders (ILUMA) 3) Collection of availabl documents of climate change adaptation and NRM and handover to regional organisations for further use. (CAREC) (ongoing proccess)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	To what extent do the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) have the resilience to overcome future risks that could jeopardise the intervention's results?		Perception of the project team and partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mitCountry coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	Contribution to supporting sustainable capacities	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies) having the institutional, human and financial resources as well as the willingness (ownership) required to sustain the intervention's positive results over time and to limit the impact of any negative results?	• Analysis of the preparation and documentation of learning experiences • Description of the anchoring of contents, approaches, methods and concepts in the partner system • Reference to exit strategy of the project • If there is a follow-on project, check to what extent the results of the evaluated project are taken up; the anchoring of the effects in the partner's organisation should be pursued independently of a follow-on project, since sustainability should be achieved even without donor funds • Transitional Development Assistance (TDA) projects primarily address final beneficiaries, whose resilience to crises and recurring shocks is to be strengthened. The focus for TDA projects is thus often on the resilience of final beneficiaries and/or at least the continuity of the measure (see explanation in dimension 3) (clarification in the inception phase of the evaluation).	Perception of the project team and partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good		
		Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to strengthening the resilience of the beneficiaries and stakeholders (individuals, groups and organisations, partners and executing agencies)?		Capacities and approache anchored in the partners organisation The partners strongly identify identify with the project and the implemented results	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	Standard	To what extent has the intervention contributed to strengthening the resilience of particularly disadvantaged groups? (These may be broken down by age, income, gender, ethnicity, etc.)		Perception of the project team and partners and representatives of target groups	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
Durability of results over time	Standard	*How stable is the context in which the intervention operates?*		Kyrgyzstan: political instability cause frequent change of management in the key government partner organization, which potentially influences consistency of sector policy and implementation of reform ideas. While the project cannot influence political aspects, it is oriented at anchoring of innovative approaches of sustainable land management in normative and legal documents. Likewise, capacity development of government organizations' staff is implemented to sustain the capacities within the supported institutions. in TKM SLUCA worked on anchoring the topic of sustainable pasture management, adaptation to climate change in strategic documents or national legislation. That ensures sustainability for the principles proposed in the frame of German development cooperation. TJK: New projects by other donors, e.g. WB Resiland project, IFAD, etc. --> through well stablished relationships these oragnisations are interested in scaling our approaches	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mitCountry coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Standard	*To what extent is the durability of the intervention's positive results influenced by the context?*	• Consideration of risks and potentials for the long-term stability of the results and description of the reaction of the project to these	see above	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mitCountry coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

		Standard	To what extent can the positive (and any negative) results of the intervention be deemed durable?	• Consideration of the extent to which continued use of the results by partners and beneficiaries can be foreseen • Reference to conditions and their influence on the durability, longevity and resilience of the effects (outcome and impact) • In the case of projects in the field of Transitional Development Assistance (TDA), at least the continuity of the measure must be examined: To what extent will services or results be continued in future projects (of GIZ or other donors/organizations) or their sustainability ensured? (Clarification in the inception phase)	Assement of likelyness of continued use Asessment of factors that might influence results	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mitCountry coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good		

Predecessor project, follow-on project and further evalutation questions

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Assessment dimensions	**Evaluation questions**	**Basis for Assessment / Evaluation indicators** *(e.g. module objective/programme indicators, selected hypotheses, or more generally a definition of the aspects to be used for evaluation)*	**Evaluation Design and empirical methods** (Design: e.g. Contribution analysis, Follow-the-Money Approach) (Methods: e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, online survey, etc.)	**Data sources** (e.g. list of relevant documents, interviews with stakeholder category XY, specific data, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	**Data Quality and limitations** (Description of limitations, assessment of data quality: poor, moderate, good, strong)	**Data Quality Assessment** (weak, moderate, good, strong)
Impact of the predecessor project (if predeseccor project exists)	*Which results were envisaged at the impact level of the predecessor project and which were achieved?*	Impact Results documented in the final progress report and the Project evaluation of the predecessor project	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Which results of the predecessor are still visible today at impact level?	Perception of project team and comparison of indicators with present indicators for overlaps	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Which results of the predecessor are only visible today at impact level?	Perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	How were changes in the framework conditions handled over time (including transition between different projects)? Which decisions in previous projects influence the impact of the predecessor as well as the current project until today? How?	Perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	What were factors for success / failure for the impact of the predecessor?	Assessment of the evaluation results and the perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	…					
Sustainability of the predecessor project (if predeseccor project exists)	*Which results were envisaged at the outcome level of the predecessor project and which were achieved?*	Impact Results documented in the final progress report and the Project evaluation of the predecessor project	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Which results at outcome level (and important outputs) are still present or have been further developed by the partners? (without external funding vs. with external funding)	Perception of project team and comparison of indicators with present indicators for overlaps	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	How were the results of the predecessor anchored in the partner structure?	Perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	

	How were changes in the framework conditions handled over time (including transition between different projects)? Which decisions in previous projects influence the sustainability of the predecessor and the current project until today? How?	Perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	What were factors for success / failure for the sustainability of the predecessor?	Assessment of the evaluation results and the perception of project team and project partners	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
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Follow-on project: Analysis of the design and recommendations for implementation (if a follow-on project exists)	Evaluability and design of the successor: Are the results model for the follow-on project including the results hypotheses, the results-oriented monitoring system (WoM) and the project objective indicators plausible (and in line with current standards)? Are there - also based on the evaluation of the current project - recommendations for improvements in the further course of the follow-on project?	Comparison of PV of follow- on project with results from evaluation	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	Based on the results of the evaluation of the current project: Which recommendations can be derived for the implementation of the follow-on project?	Asessment of key evaluation results	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	What should cooperation look like in the future? Which partners should the project cooperate more intensively? (In view of the fact that Kyrgyzstan is not a member)	Perception of political partners, project team and experts (UNCCP, etc)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators and other partners (Worldbank, UNCCP)	Limitations:as this is a question by the project it migh be diffcult to find interviewpartners, that have ideas on new promising cooperation options.	
	To what extent can the learning from the Aral Basin 4 project plan be taken over into SLUCA in the future?	Perception ofproject team and experts (Aral Basin 4 project plan)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews withproject team and experts (Aral Basin 4 project plan)	Limitations:None found so far. Data quality: good	
	How could the regional cooperation be strengthened more in the last phase of the project?	Perception of political partners, project team and experts (UNCCP, etc)	Interviews and review of documents	Interviews with the partners / mit Country coordinators and other partners (Worldbank, UNCCP)	Limitations:as this is a question by the project it migh be diffcult to find interviewpartners, that have ideas on new promising cooperation options.	

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