

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME/GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
ASSISTANCE TO SELECTED NON-ANNEX I PARTIES FOR THE PREPARATION OF
INITIAL NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

UNEP/GEF SUB-PROJECT GF/2200-97-44

ENABLING ACTIVITIES FOR THE PREPARATION
OF THE INITIAL NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
RELATED TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
- MAURITANIA -

PROJECT EVALUATION

Prepared by
FALL, Oumar
Independent consultant

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UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit

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ABBREVIATIONS

ASECNA	Agency for flights security and navigation
BFMS	Budget and Financial Management Service
CCD AP	Convention on Desertification Control Action Plan
CDHLCPI	Commissariat of Human Rights, of Poverty Relief, and Insertion
CNEA	National Alternatives Energies Unit
CNED	National Committee of Environment and Development
CRED	Regional Committee of Environment and Development
CTED	Technical Committee of Environment and Development
DAF	Directorate of Administration and Finance
DEA	Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Agriculture
DEAR	Directorate of Environment and of Rural Infrastructure
DRAP	Directorate of agro-sylvo-pastoral resources
DRFV	Directorate of Research, Training and of Extension Services
EA	Enabling Activities
ENDA	Environment and Development in the Third World
EOU	Evaluation and Oversight Unit
FST	Faculty of Sciences and Technology
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Green House Gases
IA	Implementing Agency
INC	Initial National Communication
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MAED	Ministry of Economic Affairs and of Development
MDRE	Ministry of Rural Development and of Environment
MIPT	Ministry of Interior and of Post and Telecommunication
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NST	National Study Team
PANE	Environmental National Action Plan
PMT	Project Management Team
ROA	Regional Office for Africa (UNEP)
UCCEE	UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and the Environment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WB	The World Bank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. The present evaluation covers the activities the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Government of Mauritania undertook to execute the project: Enabling Activities for the Preparation of Initial National Communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The evaluator compared planned outputs with the actual outputs delivered and assessed the steps needed to complete all the outstanding activities. The evaluator also highlighted lessons learned from the implementation of project activities in the area of climate change and assessed the appropriateness of this project in meeting the longer term objectives of UNEP, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Convention on Climate Change.

2. Finally, the evaluation determined the nature of corrective action needed to be taken by UNEP to ensure successful completion of objectives in a cost-effective way, with no additional funding from UNEP/GEF. Part of the assignment was a spot-check evaluation to obtain an accurate picture of delays to the project. The evaluator was asked to be in constant touch with UNEP and the national executing agency and to provide weekly reports until all project activities were finalized. The evaluation also assisted in reviving an improved work atmosphere.

The evaluation

3. In setting guidelines for the preparation of initial communications by Parties not included in Annex I, the Convention defined five objectives. To a large extent this project has contributed to the attainment of the objectives and those of GEF and UNEP. The project implemented nine activities and actual results correspond roughly to planned outcomes:

(a) A proper institutional framework for the project implementation was created. A project management team and a national study team (NST) were established under the auspices of the Directorate of Environment and Rural Infrastructure (DEAR) in consultation with relevant agencies. The composition of each of these organs has been defined and responsibilities clearly set. These two organs were established by a formal ministry statement in October 1997;

(b) A comprehensive greenhouse gases inventory, based on 1994 data, was issued for the assessment of mitigation options in November 1999 and distributed to the various project stakeholders in February 2001. A large number of consultants benefited from a training session over the methodology in May 1998. The selected inventory study group was assigned its work on 20 September 1998. A workshop was organized in December 1999 to examine and to validate reports of identified sector sub-groups: agriculture, forestry and land use, energy, wastes and industry;

(c) Programmes to address climate change and mitigation options were identified and assessed, after which a national mitigation strategy was formulated based on recommendations to reduce the volume and intensity of emissions from various sources;

(d) Assessments of the vulnerability of two sensitive sectors were conducted from which policy options were drawn;

(e) Policy frameworks for implementing adaptation measures and response strategies were developed;

(f) Project activities related to sustainable development, research and public awareness are meant to introduce a new environmental culture and mentality into people's daily lives and, in the case in point, were successful in achieving this goal;

(g) All expert groups expressed difficulties in collecting information from the public and industry during the greenhouse gases (GHGs) concentrations studies. This constraint was more pronounced in urban areas;

(h) The national communications project result were achieved and submitted to UNEP and the Convention secretariat.

4. The project management team and the national study team were established in accordance with the project specifications. However, the director of DEAR in charge of project implementation showed reluctance in involving these two bodies in the project activities. Nevertheless, at the commencement of the project, they were very dynamic and participated in preparing and launching the primary activities.

5. The studies, papers, publications, and workshop minutes produced by the project, or presented under its auspices conform to decision 10/CP.2 recommendations and represent the final expected outputs of the greenhouse gases inventory and determination of response measures and various related assessments.

6. The preparation of the initial national communications has raised public awareness and brought inventory and analytical tools in the area of climate change to the scientific community. Public awareness has also been adequately addressed through the media and government authorities have been continuously kept abreast of developments.

7. DEAR supervised the project implementation process, but it is to be noted that the project suffered from the apparent apathy and indifference of the Director of DEAR which led to a project “break-off” of about two years. In response to the lack of feed-back from Mauritania, UNEP, the implementing agency, decided to relaunch the project at the initiative of the Task Manager, who served as focal point during the implementation, responded to project queries, provided technical support and acted as financial intermediary to the Budget and Financial Management Service (BFMS) of UNEP. BFMS has given significant support and UNEP as a whole has been very tolerant in extending the project duration four times in response to Mauritania’s requests.

8. The UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and the Environment (UCCEE) was not involved in the management of the project. It is important to note the limited participation of government ministries. In fact, there were no permanent appointees by the ministries to the National Committee of Environment and Development (CNED) or the Technical Committee of Environment and Development (CTED). This restricted the information flow to top executives and inhibited integration of the climate change concerns into the development strategies of these departments.

9. The budget allocation for strengthening and consolidating national capacities represented the lion’s share of the GEF project budget. The project, having built effectively on the existing expertise, enabled researchers to apply and develop their skills in the fairly new academic science of climate change. The expert consultants were drawn from both public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations. The final results from these expert groups indicate the adequate establishment of a minimum level of expertise on the various climate change areas. It would be worthwhile, however, from a sustainability standpoint to reinforce the capacity of these groups to enable them in the future to identify vulnerability and adaptation measures and response strategies for the remaining sectors identified in the project document.

10. The process of formulating the Initial National Communication took into consideration actual national development frameworks and planning objectives.

11. UNEP support was considered by the project coordinating unit to have been instrumental in ensuring a prompt response to their requests. The UNEP Task Manager provided timely assistance and guidance to keep the project on track and within the budget. The core technical advisers were not contracted to write the sector reports, although they were available for consultation throughout the project duration. UNEP received timely progress reports from the coordination unit during the early and late stages of implementation.

12. Despite the achievements, the project encountered several problems:

(a) The public at large (general population, government officers and private enterprises) was often reluctant to communicate information on their activities. The studies, therefore, relied quite often on the means used by the Intergovernmental Panel of Climatic Change (IPCC);

(b) It was not always possible to ensure valid and reliable data;

(c) Time constraints: Despite project extensions time has been a limiting factor, as was anticipated. Other constraints were mainly of an institutional nature. The mobility of personnel in the public administration did not help in the monitoring or follow-up of the project by steering or advisory committees. The indifference of the Director of DEAR also affected project implementation. This led to inadequate and irregular consultations with stakeholders and thus project suspicion that demanded UNEP intervention.

13. All these constraints contributed to delaying the implementation of the work plan. The potential contribution of the project to furthering the objectives of the relevant global, regional, and national environmental assessments, policy frameworks and action plans, and its role in strengthening the Convention has been addressed throughout this evaluation.

14. It is to be noted that there is uncertainty as to whether this project design and implementation took place before UNEP guidelines on gender sensitivity were established. However, in all project workshops, the participation of women was quite high, unlike in the consulting group.

15. On an evaluation rating scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the highest and 5 the lowest) the project was awarded an overall rating of 2 and the following assessments given for individual items:

(a) Timeliness	3
(b) Achievement of results/objectives	2
(c) Completion of activities	2
(d) Project executed within budget	3
(e) Impact created by the project	2
(f) Sustainability	3

Lessons learned

16. The project experienced many ups and downs, from which future UNEP projects can draw lessons. Assessment of stakeholders' involvement in project implementation has shown a fairly unbalanced representation of the public at large (government institutions, gender groups, private enterprises and civil society) as compared to the individual private expertise:

(a) Attendance at the various national workshops contributed greatly to interaction between disciplines among government ministries, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and between scientists and the media. If capacity-building is to be sustainable, it must be based on enhancing local experience and weaving the networks of institutional relationships which are vital to fully involving and exploiting local expertise;

(b) The case of Mauritania shows that the financial mechanism or the cash advance procedures established by UNEP are open to misuse and mismanagement. UNEP should review these and consult other organizations such the World Bank in how to develop better procedures;

- (c) Monitoring and evaluation systems require some refinement at the host country level.

Conclusions and recommendations

17. At national level more transparent and participatory management practices are recommended, as well as active involvement of stakeholders, particularly from the public and private sector. There is no doubt that the decentralization principle of UNEP in project finance management encourages more involvement and responsibility by project host countries, but it also provides a high degree of latitude. To ensure a better delivery system a pre condition that expenses over a certain amount must be subject to the prior approval of the project task manager should be established.

18. Effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation systems would benefit from more frequent evaluation or control. Some countries cannot handle similar projects without full-time oversight from the implementing agency

19. Specific recommendations regarding potential follow-up evaluation measures which would enable UNEP and GEF to gauge the longer-term and sustainability of the project activities are:

(a) A follow-up review of projects and their impacts on policy-making, capacity-building and public awareness after a year or so is critical;

(b) Financial and technical support will be needed to consolidate the projects' results for at least two years;

(c) Terminal reports should be prepared as prescribed in UNEP's project documents. The terminal report can help solve difficulties and problems during or immediately after project implementation and provide substantial input to the final project evaluation report.

INTRODUCTION

20. Under the guidance of the UNEP Chief of the Evaluation Unit and in close collaboration with the UNEP/GEF Executive Coordinator and the UNEP Task Manager for Climate Change Enabling Activities, a combined mid-term review and final evaluation was undertaken of the UNEP/GEF sub project GF/2200-97-44 - Assistance to selected non-Annex I Parties - Mauritania: enabling activities for the preparation of initial national communications related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The evaluation was conducted over a five-month period, Starting 15 May 2001. Part of the evaluation took the form of a spot-check to establish what was causing considerable delays in the project. What is referred to in the terms of reference as mid-term review, therefore, justified UNEP's timely intervention through the consultant to assist in taking corrective action for a relaunching of the stalled project.

21. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the evaluator, who interviewed project participants and stakeholders.

A. Background and scope of the evaluation

22. The project evaluated has been implemented internally by the UNEP Task Manager for Climate Change Enabling Activities, currently located in the Division of Policy Development and Law and externally by the Directorate of Environment and Rural Infrastructure at the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment of Mauritania with the support of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). This project provided financial assistance to Mauritania to:

(a) Prepare the greenhouse gas inventory;

(b) Identify and assess mitigation options;

- (c) Develop a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of various sectors;
- (d) Identify adaptation options for the first stage;
- (e) Build capacity to integrate climate change concerns into planning;
- (f) Ensure public awareness and provide other relevant information required to achieve the broad objectives of the Convention as set out under article 4.

23. The evaluator compares the planned outputs of the project to the actual outputs and assesses the steps needed to complete all the activities. The evaluator also highlights the lessons learned from the implementation of project activities in the area of climate change and assesses the appropriateness of the project in meeting the longer term objectives of UNEP/GEF and the Convention on Climate Change. The evaluation also determines what corrective action should be taken to ensure successful completion of project objectives in a cost-effective way.

B. Review of the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Environment Programme

24. The ultimate objective of the Convention on Climate Change is the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that “would prevent continued dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (art.2 of the Convention). In order to achieve this goal, all Parties to the Convention, have committed themselves to a number of response measures listed under article 4 of the Convention. One of these commitments is for each Party to prepare, periodically update and communicate information related to the implementation of the Convention in that Party (art. 12.1 of the Convention).

25. GEF and UNEP share, in this regard, the same objective, since GEF represents the interim financial mechanism of the Convention and UNEP, *inter alia*, acts as an implementing agency to GEF, that is to providing financial resources and technical assistance for enabling activities.

26. The guidelines set by the Convention for the preparation of initial communication by Parties have five principal objectives that take into account article 4.7:

- (a) To assist the Party in meeting its commitment under article 12.1;
- (b) To encourage the presentation of information in ways that are consistent, transparent and comparable, as well as flexible to improve the completeness and reliability of activity data, emissions factors and estimations;
- (c) To serve as policy guidance to GEF for the timely provision of financial support needed by the Party to meet its obligations;
- (d) To facilitate the process of preparation, compilation and consideration of the communications;
- (e) To ensure that the Conference of Parties has sufficient information to carry out its responsibilities to assess the overall aggregated effects of the steps taken by the Parties and to assess the implementation of the Convention.

C. The country commitment under the Convention on Climate Change

27. Article 12.1 of the Convention on Climate Change requires that each Party, in accordance with article 4.1, communicate to the Conference of the Parties, through the Convention secretariat:

- (a) A national inventory of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer;
- (b) A general description of steps taken or envisaged to implement the Convention;
- (c) Any other information relevant to the achievement of the objective of the Convention and suitable for inclusion in its communication.

28. The commitment of Mauritania under the Convention consists of reporting to the Conference of Parties through appropriate channels on the amount of emissions, and on the measures that can be taken to reduce these emissions from the levels they would otherwise be at and adapt to climate impacts. Article 12.5 of the Convention specifies the timing of the submission as being within three years of the entry into force of the Convention for each Party. Mauritania which signed and ratified the Convention on 12 June 1992 and 20 January 1994, respectively intended to prepare and submit its initial national communication at the sixth session of the Conference of Parties, then at the seventh one held in Morocco in October 2001, and now at the eighth, that is, four years after the approval of UNEP/GEF funding of the project in August 1997.

D. Methodology of the evaluation

29. This evaluation had four components. The first was a review and assessment of reports and documents from or commissioned by the implementing institutions. The second was an information search through project stakeholders and personnel not directly involved in the project to seek impacts of the project. The third component was a review of the results and lessons learned from the implementation process as well as a review of the assumptions and planned outputs and results. The fourth was a structured survey and informal interviews among project personnel and a selected group of personnel involved. A total of 33 informal meetings were held with the national project experts and staff, as well as four workshops to either train experts or consult with stakeholders.

30. The evaluation has focused on four different areas of interest and achievement indicators:

- (a) Political results: Mauritania had to achieve its Initial National Communication in order to report on it to the Conference of the Parties;

- (b) Technical results: The project was intended to bring about capacity-building, research and analysis of methodological issues related to the Convention and to facilitate dissemination and use of this knowledge in the area of climate change for the conclusion of the Initial National Communication to the Conference of the Parties;

- (c) Management results: The Atmosphere Unit of UNEP gave the responsibility of project implementation to DEAR with the support of an official on secondment from the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment of Mauritania;

- (d) Cost-effectiveness and project achievement indicators: The Task Manager and Evaluation and Oversight Unit agreed with the evaluator to combine the budgeted mid-term review and final evaluation of the project in a single assignment.

31. In the following sections, the report assesses the extent to which the outlined objectives have been met. Each question raised for the evaluation is examined by restating the objective and background situation, before assessing project implementation results. Chapter I gives an overview of the perceived value of the project, chapter II the lessons learned, and chapter III gives some recommendations for future activities.

I. THE EVALUATION

A. Project assistance to the country to meet to its commitment

1. Objective

32. Analyse the quality and usefulness of the planned and current project outputs and determine how these contribute to the attainment of results and overall objectives identified in the approved project proposal in meeting its contractual commitments. It should determine whether the project has been able to answer the identified needs and problems in Mauritania.

2. Background

33. The Government of Mauritania, which ratified the Convention on Climate Change on 20 January 1994, is fully committed, as a non-Annex I Party, to the implementation of the Convention, hence its intention to prepare and submit its Initial National Communication within a reasonable timeframe (November 2000) after the coming into force of the Convention or after the approval of GEF funding of the project. The evaluation has to determine how the enabling activities have or have not assisted the country in responding to its contractual commitment under the Convention.

3. Assessment of the project assistance

34. This is a standard “enabling-activities” project, which aims to assist Mauritania, a country which is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. This includes the country’s specific needs and concerns “with arid and semi-arid areas,...” (article 4.8 (c)), “with areas prone to national disasters” (article 4.8 (d)), “with areas liable to drought and desertification and with fragile ecosystems...” (article 4.8 (g)), “whose economy is highly dependent on income generated from the production, processing and export...”(article 4.8(h)). Mauritania falls under the provisions of article 4 of the Convention with its diverse geographical and climatic zones, ranging from desert in the north, sahelian and agro-sylvo-pastoral in the centre and the south, and a long stretch of littoral zone.

35. The objective of the project (with expedited financing support of \$350,000) was to enable Mauritania to fulfil its reporting requirements under the Convention. That was the requested budget which reflected the current specific needs and concerns of the country aimed at fulfilling its commitments in the implementation of the Convention. The amount was realistically estimated by the country and critically reviewed and disbursed by UNEP. Technical assistance was also available to Mauritania upon request.

36. Project preparation took a relatively short period of time (as shown below) compared with standard project requests.

PROJECT PREPARATION TIMETABLE

January 1997	Formal request from Mauritania received by UNEP
January - June 1997	Negotiation of Enabling Activities project proposal for Mauritania (Ministry of Rural Development and of Environment and UNEP)
July 1997	Project proposal sent by UNEP to GEF
August 1997	GEF project approval for \$350,000 budget and starting date for the project
2 February 1998	French version Enabling Activities project document signed by Mauritanian Minister of Planning
4 February 1998	French version Enabling Activities project document signed by UNEP

37. The national team did not seem to experience any problems in accessing climate change resources. International and national documentation available at project level were easily accessible to the experts in charge of the different project studies. UNEP designated a task manager and set institutional arrangements, which gave total authority to Mauritania to implement the project. The UNEP Budget and Financial Management Service (BFMS) made 10 financial disbursements representing 89,7 per cent of the total amount. Training workshops, greenhouse gases (GHGs) inventories, mitigation and policy frameworks analysis were all undertaken to collect all the information necessary for the preparation of the Initial National Communication under the supervision of the UNEP Task Manager.

B. Impact of project results on the Convention on Climate Change and usefulness to Global Environment Facility projects

1. Objective

38. Measure the impact of the planned and current results of the first activity on the preparation of the Initial National Communication. This should also include a determination of the usefulness of the results to GEF funded projects on enabling activities to prepare national communications related to the Convention.

2. Background

39. This project aims to enable the country to report on the amount of emissions, and on the measures that can be taken to reduce these emissions and adapt to climate change impacts. The outcome presented may be seen as a question of proving the appropriateness of the project results to the objectives of the Convention, and their usefulness to future GEF projects.

3. Assessment of the results

40. By addressing climate change impacts on environment this project has contributed to the fulfillment of UNEP's objective through provision of new data, climate change impacts and response strategy assessments, and implementation of the Convention on Climate Change to meet national commitments and to promote capacity-building in climate change issues, this project has to a great extent contributed to the objectives of the Convention. In setting guidelines for the preparation of initial communications by Parties (not included in Annex I) the Convention defined its five objectives. These have been met in one way or another by the project, demonstrating its usefulness. Regardless of the delay that has been observed in finalizing the Initial National Communication and the quality of this document, the country could report its amount of emissions, assess its vulnerability to climate change, and on the measures of mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts. In preparing the Initial National Communication, the project also awakened public awareness on climate change.

C. Comparison of the actual project results with planned project results

1. Background and objective

41. Evaluate whether the actual results of the project compare with the long-term and short-term results identified and suggest what needs to be done further. The project document set out for each individual project activity the major expected outputs. One way to determine if the project has been successful or not is to compare the actual results with planned results in the project document.

2. Assessment of the results

42. The project included nine main activities:

Activity 1: Establishment of a project management team and a national study team under the auspices of the Directorate of Environment and Rural Infrastructure in consultation with relevant agencies

43. The composition of each of these organs was defined and its responsibilities clearly set. These two bodies were established by the Ministry of Rural Development and Environment in October 1997. While DEAR changed its leadership in June 1998, the project coordination has changed its coordinator three times. The 23 experts comprising the four core groups went through a selection process. These formed the national study team. The Director of DEAR, together with the project coordinator and the leader of each core group formed the project management team. They were all active at different stages and participated successfully in project implementation. The Centre National de Recherche Agronomique et du Développement Agricole (National Research Centre), located in Kaedi (in the countryside) and FST, which could not collaborate with the new acting Director of DEAR, were less involved. The national consultants were either university academic staff or qualified national experts. Each ministry was represented at a high level of qualification. The project enjoyed very wide national support, including from non-governmental organizations and civil society at the beginning. All participants shared in the public awareness exercise and contributed to inventory activities as well as other project successes.

Activity 2: Greenhouse gases inventory

44. Seven major outputs were identified for this activity which was the main component of the project. Following the set by the second guidelines Conference of Parties the GHGs inventory, based on the 1990 IPCC methodology, was to be undertaken focusing on some gases emitted by some selected processes and sources. The actual results correspond to planned results:

(a) A comprehensive GHGs inventory, based on the 1994 data, was issued for the assessment of mitigation options in November 1999 and distributed to the various project stakeholders in February 2001;

(b) In the various documents the experts identified shortcomings and gaps in the IPCC guidelines in relation to local conditions;

(c) Recommendations on areas of targeted research to improve future inventories were suggested; proposals on revisions to the existing IPCC GHGs inventory methodology were put forward;

(d) The mechanism for regular updating and management of the inventory database was not well defined;

(e) A large number of consultants benefited from a training session on methodology held in May 1998. The selected inventory study group was inaugurated on 20 September 1998;

(f) A workshop was held in December 1999 to examine and validate reports of sector subgroups identified in Mauritania: agriculture, forestry and land use, energy, wastes and industry.

45. Only one particular result was not specifically addressed. The original research needed to develop and/or apply new emission factors for specific activities. However, the group could not identify or anticipate new emissions since all known ones were already included.

Activity 3: Programme to address climate change and its adverse impacts, in particular abatement and sink enhancement

46. A workshop was held in December 1999 to acquaint experts with the programme. Mitigation scenarios based on a number of socio-economic and technology options (including models that best fit Mauritania's state of economic development) for minimizing GHGs emissions in the long run were identified and assessed. A national mitigation strategy was formulated, based on recommendations made by the group to reduce the number and intensity of emissions from various sources (energy, land-use change, agriculture, industries and waste management) and the enhancement of sinks. A wrap-up workshop was organized from 17 to 21 May 2001 with the facilitating support of the Environment and Development in the Third World (ENDA), a non-governmental organization, based at Dakar, to present the results to selected experts, non-governmental organizations, and two representatives of planning departments, the MAED and the CDHLCPI. This workshop combined the review of mitigation options results with training on Vulnerability assessment methodology.

Activity 4: Policy options for monitoring systems and response strategies for impacts

47. A comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of climate change in the sectors of agriculture and coastal ecosystem was drawn up by the group from past and existing studies. The experts also identified and developed policy options for monitoring systems and response strategies for climate change impacts on these two sectors. In particular, the implication of future climate change in affecting the desertification problem in Mauritania was addressed. The assessment of impacts has included the use of scenarios for future regional climate change obtained from general circulation models like the possible doubling of carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentrations. The predicted future climate in the Mauritanian region has been estimated and the vulnerability of specific resources (coastal zones, infrastructure and agriculture in the Brakna) ecosystems and associated species has been evaluated based on climate-ecosystem response models. Vulnerability of resources (especially due to sea level rise in the coastal region) to climate change was analysed.

48. While assessments of vulnerability of the two sectors were conducted, giving rise to policy options, other sectors mentioned in the project document (forest and land use, water resources, energy, human health, aquatic life, and the implication of climate change for exacerbating desertification) were left for the next national communication. Likewise, possible changes in air quality, water quality, atmospheric deposition and the potential impacts on health were not addressed. A workshop was held, with the assistance of ENDA, to review the results, particularly in terms of report presentation and the projection time span. In this regard, the workshop concluded with an iterative exercise of editing.

Activity 5: Policy frameworks for implementing adaption measure and response strategies (stage 1)

49. A range of potential adaptations (stage 1) options for the two selected sectors were identified and assessed allowing the formulation of a national strategy to minimize the impacts of climate change. Policy frameworks for implementing adaptation measures and response strategies were developed accordingly. These policies have adequately addressed integrated coastal zone management, and produced plans for timely response to natural disasters, such as drought and floods, as well as proposals for reducing desertification. A workshop was held in May 2001, again with the assistance of ENDA, to enable experts to review the results of studies on adaptations and measures to contain the identified impacts. The workshop identified what sectors were to be covered (agriculture and the coastal zone) and set the appropriate work plan. Due to lack of time before the seventh session of the Conference of Parties of the Convention, participants decided, after consultation with the project coordinator, to leave other sectors mentioned in the project document for the next communication.

Activity 6: Building capacity to integrate climate change concerns into planning

50. A workshop was held with the aim of strengthening national capacities to integrate climate change concerns into national planning in the short-, medium-and-long term. Participants benefited from:

- (a) Education and training exercises on how common national socio-economic issues influence climate change and sustainable development;
- (b) A presentation of the results and recommendations of the various studies;
- (c) The plans and aims of the project, as well as the potential benefits of the project to the Mauritanian economy if successfully implemented.

51. With the participation of the various partners in the sector of environment the workshop participants fully committed themselves to share the project results and recommendations.

Activity 7: Programmes related to sustainable development, research and public awareness

52. The project aimed at developing programmes in climate change which are related to sustainable development, research and systematic observations, education and public awareness and training. These activities were meant to introduce a new environmental culture and mentality into people's daily lives. The results were successful, particularly through the use of television and radio, as well as newspaper articles, conference speeches and non-governmental organizations pilot projects. Among these were initiatives where Kaedi Youth Club and PK 15 planted trees. The evaluation went through all these communication activities of the project. It is worth noting that the project relied on local non-governmental organizations to carry out these activities. Indeed, the civil society plays a very dynamic role in Mauritania. These non-governmental organizations, which include many high-ranking persons, have developed an effective network and have, in a few years, become an influential lobby.

Activity 8: Provision of other information

53. Other relevant information required to achieving the broad objective of the convention under article 4, including:

- (a) Relevant data and materials for GHGs emission trends analysis;
- (b) The financial and technological resource needs and constraints for containing future climate change;
- (c) Needs and constraints required to reduce uncertainty margins in future national communications;
- (d) Research needs for assessing the interaction between desertification with the climate system in Mauritania may be carried out, where possible.

Activity 9: Preparation of the initial national communication

54. This activity was assigned to a consulting bureau, with two qualified experts to prepare the National Communication together with the project experts. A commission of government representatives met with civil society. The objective was to enable experts and policy makers to review the draft and to ensure that the document met the desired scope and quality and reflected national policies on sustainable management of climate change in the long term. The approved first National Communication, which did not meet the deadline of the seventh session of the Conference of Parties in Morocco on October 2001, went through an impressive improvement exercise which ended in November 2001.

3. Institutional component

55. Participation in five international seminars, six workshops and 10 media interviews with experts and scientists raised public awareness on climate change as well as capacity-building among existing scientific and technical experts in both the public and the private sector. In other words, public awareness was raised considerably through these activities. Also there was adequate public participation through responses to questionnaires designed to compile the large-scale GHGs inventories.

56. This activity also brought inventory and analytical tools to the scientific community in the area of climate change. Government authorities were also regularly informed which led to the successful finalization of the first national communication.

4. Technical component

57. The following documents were produced by the project or presented under its auspices:

(a) GHGs Inventory Report/Rapport National sur l'inventaire des Gaz à Effet de Serre en Mauritanie, Juillet 1999;

(b) Rapport final de l'atelier régional de formation sur l'inventaire des GES, Juin 1998 (Final report on the regional training workshop on inventory of Green House Gases);

(c) Journées nationales d'information et de sensibilisation sur les changements climatiques; Avril 1998;

(d) Workshop minutes.

58. These documents reflect government efforts to conform to decision 10/CP.2 of the second session of the Conference of Parties recommendations and represent the final expected outputs of the implemented activities. The workshops were an opportunity for the stakeholders to learn about the process of climate change and to consequently provide their inputs. The analysis that took place thereafter brought tremendous improvement to the quality of the outputs comprising the content of the initial national communication. This dynamic has contributed to the attainment of results and overall objective of meeting commitments to the Convention. As already stated, both the public and private media have been used to create and enhance public awareness. The software programme cc: info/Web has been used effectively as a tool to enhance the national and international flow of information.

Project activities implementation timetable

October 1997	Establishment of project steering committees (PMT, NST)
2 February 1998	Enabling Activity project French version document signed by Minister of Planning of Mauritania
4 February 1998	Enabling Activity project French version document signed by UNEP
29 March-1 April, 1998	Initial national workshop to introduce the plans and aims of the project/Journées nationales d'information et de sensibilisation sur les CC
26-28 May, 1998	Regional workshop (Mauritania-Central African Republic) aimed at experts training on Green House Gases inventory methodology
17 January 1999	The hand-over between the project co-ordinators: Magrega and Mustafa
July, 1999	Issuance of Green House Gases Inventory Draft Report
December, 1999	Workshop validating Green House Gases inventory results and on

	mitigation studies methodology
9 January, 2001	The hand-over between the coordinators Mustafa and Baye Fall
17-21 May, 2001	Workshop on mitigation results and training on V/A methodology
6 July, 2001	Workshop organized by non-governmental organization -“Au Secours” for Policy makers and Planners (activity 6) in collaboration with the project
6-20 July, 2001	Media coverage for public awareness on climate changes, organized by non-governmental organization “Association de l’arbre” in collaboration with the project
12 July, 2001	Lecture in Nouakchott University Campus on climate change sponsored by the project
20 July, 2001	Creation of “youth club” in Kaedi by non-governmental organization - “Secours Environnement” in collaboration with the project
19 August, 2001	Final editing of mitigation studies by ENDA
19-23 August, 2001	Workshop on Validation of Vulnerability assessment studies and initial national communication preparation
3 September, 2001	Creation of the “friendly pilot project” by non-governmental organization - “Association du Développement Durable in collaboration with the project
10-11 October, 2001	Government validation of initial national communication
18 October, 2001	Submission of the draft edition of the Mauritania INC to UNEP
July 1999; Dec 1999; Oct, 2000; 31 Aug, 2001; Dec 2001	Successive expected completion dates of the project

D. Effectiveness of the organizational structure, management and financial systems

1. Objective

59. Review the effectiveness of the organizational structure, management and financial systems, which affected the implementation of the project. This will be completed by examining the staffing, administrative arrangements and operational mechanisms with an emphasis on its coordination within and outside of UNEP. The evaluator will seek the views of relevant UNEP and GEF staff members on the usefulness of the project in enhancing the work of both UNEP and GEF in the area of climate change.

2. Background

60. Under the project institutional arrangement the following were identified:

(a) DEAR as the coordinating authority;

(b) The National Committee for Environment and Development (CNED) to ensure the participation of other government institutions and agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Environmental National Action Plan (PANE);

(c) Regional Committee of Environment and Development (CRED) as the regional representation of CNED and;

(d) The Technical Committee of Environment and Development (CTED) comprising all government ministries involved at the technical level and non-governmental organizations. The Project Management Team (PMT) and NST, the project implementation units, are within the DEAR those organs dealing directly with the project.

61. A set of terms of reference for each body was developed to assign individual project missions to each component of the institutional framework. A review of the effectiveness of these combined systems called for a scrutiny of each component individually and then coordination within and outside UNEP. Particular attention was given to the assumptions and risk anticipated in this regard.

3. Assessment of the institutional arrangement

62. The institutional arrangement for Climate change activities in Mauritania evolved around the Enabling Activities project. From an organizational point of view, DEAR was the executing agency and was to supervise the project implementation process. It is worth noting (see rating implementation section) that CNED, CRED, and CTED did not play an active role due to their voluntary “seclusion” by the Director of DEAR.

63. The actions of the Director of DEAR had the effect of stalling the project, particularly his dismissal of no fewer than three project coordinators during the project lifetime. The impact was considerable as the coordinator handles all day-to-day activities and acts as liaison between UNEP and the Government. The Project Management Team, headed by the Director of DEAR which also comprises the project coordinator and the thematic group leaders, did not work as an operating unit in integrating the project with other environmental issues and activities. This was not the case at the start of the project where the Project Management Team (PMT) comprised all stated agencies mentioned in the project document. The PMT has ceased to play its defined role since 1997 coinciding with the de facto appointment of the Director of DEAR to project coordinator. Before the latest re-launching operation in May 2001, that is four years later, there was no activity undertaken despite the Task Manager’s frequent written warnings. As a matter of fact, the stalling of the project was engendered by the disinterest of all experts and, government agencies in collaborating with the project due to the negligence of the top officials particularly the Director of DEAR. NST in turn did not play its role in project implementation. The institutional framework showed its limits, from the freezing of all local structures to the re-launching stage, a factor which was not anticipated but which also contributed to the stalling.

64. UNEP as an implementing agency, played a technical support and advisory role through its Atmosphere Unit with the support of the Regional Office for Africa (ROA) and the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment based in Denmark. The Task Manager Atmospheric Unit was at the heart of project implementation, responding successfully to project queries and technical support and acting as the financial intermediary with BFMS. He made one trip to Mauritania to assist with the regional workshop. No particular demand was addressed to UCCEE. BFMS has lent noticeable support in transferring cash advances in a timely way (a week or less from the date of issuance of the request to the project bank account in Mauritania) and in assisting the project coordinator in his financial reporting. Funds were directly transferred to the project account according to the table below.

Financial disbursement and issues timetable

12 February, 1998	First disbursement: \$ 75.000
27 April, 1998	Second disbursement: \$ 15 000
24 May, 1998	Third disbursement: \$ 35 000
02 June, 1998	Hand-over between the Directors: Fall Oumar and Cheikh Ahmedould Khalifa
06 June 1998	The hand-over between the accountants: Ahmed Salem and Coulibaly Zeidane
07 September, 1998	Fourth disbursement: \$ 43 538
25 November 1998	The hand-over between the accountants: Coulibaly Zeidane and Ahmed Salem

17 January 1999	The hand-over between the coordinators: Magrega and Mustafa
01 November, 1999	Fifth disbursement: \$ 42 570
15 May 2000	DEAR Director ceases to sign project cheque and accounting
15 May 2000	The hand-over between the accountants: Ahmed Salem & Taleb Sidi Mohamed
18 September, 2000	Sixth disbursement: \$ 28 594.70
09 January, 2001	The hand-over between the co-ordinators: Mustafa and Baye Fall
12 May, 2001	Seventh disbursement: \$ 34 298
01 June, 2001	Eighth disbursement: \$ 7 250
20 September, 2001	Nineth disbursement: \$ 4 500
25 September 2001	Tenth and last disbursement: \$ 28 749.30
18 October, 2001	Submission to UNEP of the draft edition of the Mauritania Initial National Communication
December 1999; October, 2000; 31 August, 2001; December 2001	Expected completion dates of the project

65. UNEP has been very tolerant in extending the project duration four times in response to Mauritania's difficulties and in reviewing the budget three times.

E. Assessment of the consultants' qualification for the project implementation

1. Objective

66. Assess the quality of consultants used in the implementation of the various project components, identify the lessons learned and provide recommendations on how such involvement could be improved.

2. Background

67. Climate change is a wide topic, which involves almost every government department, the private sector and civil society. For the implementation of this Enabling Activities project, teams were established under the auspices of DEAR among which a number of national consultants were selected based on existing scientific and technical expertise.

68. These expert groups (GHGs mitigation, vulnerability and impact assessment and adaptation, policy analysis and frameworks, etc.) who were assigned the tasks of carrying out the project activities, particularly thematic studies, needed additional technical background on methodologies and IPCC guidelines.

69. The implementing agency was UNEP, while the executing agency was DEAR. Both agencies played a crucial role in drawing up the country proposal for enabling activities and in selecting local consultants as well as the external technical expertise of ENDA. The key player in the implementation of the project was DEAR of which the project coordinator is a staff member.

70. According to the project document, DEAR would maximize the use of national expertise and institutions from public and private sector institutions and non-governmental organizations. DEAR showed full commitment to the pledge. From nine experts involved, back in 1997, in the inventory activity along with ENDA the project raised this number, at the re-launching operation, to 23 experts. Among all these university graduate experts, only eight demonstrated total commitment and full capacity to successfully conduct their respective assignments. These were the group leaders whose selection did the UNEP Task Manager approve and who were relied on to carry out the remaining project activities.

71. The preparation of the first National Communication provided a consulting bureau with the opportunity of getting involved in preparing a synthesis of the expert studies. Two experts from the bureau

attended the training workshop aimed at learning the process of Initial National Communication formulation. Only one of them demonstrated full commitment to preparing the draft report to be submitted to government representatives and partners. The role played by ENDA in training the experts and reviewing the various studies documents is worth noting. ENDA demonstrated full qualification for its work contracts.

72. The project document placed a strong emphasis on drawing from available expertise in the country from both the public and private sector. The project also included budget provision for enhancing the capacities of country experts in the various climate change issues, through group training workshops, as well as through hiring and subcontracting various national consultants and institutions.

73. On aggregate, the budget allocation for strengthening and consolidating national capacities represented a large share of the total GEF project budget (see also rating the implementation section). Yet, it is to be noted that in terms of cost-effectiveness, these workshops were overly expensive. It shows that the project coordination unit was more worried about implementing activities and meeting deadlines of the work plan and less concerned with the per-unit cost of participation. As an illustration of this, the last workshop on communication preparation registered only six regular participants.

74. The project, while effectively building on existing expertise, enabled researchers to develop their skills in the fairly new science of climate change. The thematic teams (vulnerability and adaptation, GHGs inventories, mitigation) were drawn from experts who were involved in the few desertification-control-related initiatives that had previously taken place in Mauritania. The expert groups were composed of both public sector (ministerial departments, academia), private sector (private consultants), and non-governmental organization representatives.

75. The final outputs from the technical teams provide a fairly good indication of a good level of expertise in the various climate change areas. Five workshops were organized by the project on experts training sessions (on environmental impacts, IPCC models and methodologies for GHGs inventories, mitigation options and strategy formulation, vulnerability assessment tools, preparation of national communication). The last project coordinator attended one international training workshop in Canada, on projects formulation under clean development mechanism, and one in Bamako related to Rio conventions focal points, held on 26-30 March 2001 and 13-17 August 2001 respectively. His predecessors had participated in another three international workshops.

F. Assessment of project capacity-building under the project

1. Objective

76. Assess the role the project made in building the capacity of the participating national institutions in the area of reporting to the Conference of Parties and assess the long-term sustainability of the benefits of this capacity-building.

2. Background

77. FST, CNEA, ASECNA, DRAP/MDRE newly re-structured into Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Agriculture (DEA), Agrhymet Unit, and non-governmental organizations were all co-opted as National Study Team members and thus counterpart agencies in the area of GHGs inventories, mitigation analysis and vulnerability adaptation studies. It was stated in the project document that they could benefit from institutional strengthening. The National Committee of Environment and Development, Technical Committee of Environment and Development, Regional Committee of Environment and Development, Directorate of Environment and of Rural Infrastructure, and Project Management Team are institutions comprising representations of various government ministries and civil society.

3. Assessment of capacity-building under the project

78. The preparation of the Initial National Communication also relied on local technical expertise in climate change related areas. It is worthwhile though, for the sustainability of these capacities, to:

(a) Reinforce those at individual agency level;

(b) Encourage development planners and decision makers to integrate climate change concerns into future planning priorities.

79. No formalized training other than GHGs inventory methods has benefited ministries and government agencies, or those directly in charge of planning and decision-making. From a sustainability standpoint, it would have been more beneficial to the country to strengthen these institution representatives first, instead of private consultants.

80. While several workshops were organized to raise project capacity-building efforts as mentioned in section E, attendance at those workshops was uneven; whereas those of 1997 and 1999 registered a wide range of participants from various ministries, private sector, university staff, and non-governmental organizations. The workshops in 2001, recorded attendance mainly from the project private experts and non-governmental organizations representatives. None of the government agencies benefited from training.

81. Government elections were pointed at in explanation of this general indifference, along with the discouragement of the Director of DEAR. There was never a demand for training expressed to the project coordination unit, nor did the unit request any assistance from UNEP to identify training programmes.

G. Assessment of the integration of the results into national policy making and/or planning

1. Objective

82. Identify and assess any measures that national institutions have initiated to integrate the results and recommendations of the initial national communications into national policy-making and/or planning. The evaluator should also make specific recommendations regarding follow-up measures that would enable longer-term benefits and sustainability of project activities.

2. Background and objective

83. The project aimed to strengthen the national capacity to integrate climate change concerns into medium-and long-term planning through education and training for national development planners and policy and decision makers. A workshop on this particular aspect was held but attendance was disappointing, with only MAED, the Ministry of Interior and of Post and Telecommunication and the Ministry of Rural Development and of Environment participating.

84. The ultimate goal is to integrate the results and recommendations of the Initial National Communication into national planning. However, since the Initial National Communication has just been finalized, the process of appropriation of its conclusions by national planning will obviously take some time. The process of formulation of the Initial National Communication took into consideration the actual national development framework and targeted planning objectives.

H. Assistance provided by the United Nations Environment Programme

1. Objective

85. Determine the future assistance required from UNEP. Identify the lessons learned and provide recommendations that might improve the delivery of similar assistance in similar projects. Has UNEP provided assistance effectively during the implementation stage?

2. Background

86. UNEP initiated this enabling activities project from the formulation stage until its funding by the GEF secretariat. UNEP assigned a project task manager for the supervision task and provided technical assistance.

3. Assessment of assistance provided by the United Nations Environment Programme

87. UNEP support was considered by the project coordinating unit to have been instrumental in ensuring prompt response to their requests. It is also reported by the project coordinating unit that the UNEP project Task Manager provided timely assistance as requested by the teams and guidance to keep the project on track and within the budget.

88. He provided tools (guidelines, several communications, advice and reviews) to help carry out the various assessments. He visited Mauritania to supervise the regional training workshop on Green House Gases inventory which he initiated to benefit the experts from Central African Republic and Mauritania from ENDA training expertise. The UNEP/GEF Coordination Office provided assistance all along, in particular in financial matters. The other core technical advisors (UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and the Environment, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, secretariat of the Convention on Climate Change and ROA) were not consulted, although they were available for operational support throughout the project duration. Their assistance, which Mauritania is of great need of would certainly be sought for future national communications.

I. Effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluations systems developed by the project

1. Objective

89. Review the adequacy of the monitoring and evaluations systems developed to supervise and implement the project and based on the lessons learned, provide recommendations that could improve current procedures related to monitoring and evaluation.

2. Background

90. UNEP entrusted the Government of Mauritania with total responsibility in the implementation process with the provision of a quarterly progress reporting prepared by the project coordinating unit. These reports were to enable DEAR to provide an overview of progress on implementation on an ongoing basis and identify shortcomings at an early stage before reporting to UNEP. To assess the adequacy of the monitoring and evaluations systems developed for project supervision and implementation, current practices and relationships are to be critically examined.

91. The coordinators in UNEP from the Atmosphere Unit, BFMS, and UNEP/GEF Coordination Office received timely progress reports from the project coordination unit during the early stages of the project implementation. When these were not received, every effort was made to obtain the latest information. Good project reports and timely completion of project activities, attest to the effective monitoring and follow-up throughout the project.

92. According to the project document, each of the NSTs would provide monthly progress reports to the Project Management Team, DEAR and UNEP. This was to enable DEAR to evaluate progress, identify difficulties and provide remedies at the early stages of project implementation. DEAR was requested to provide quarterly progress reports and financial reports to UNEP. The Project Management Team and National Study Team were to meet every quarter to review project progress and provide technical and scientific, policy and strategic guidance. The minutes of these meetings were to be shared among all the participating institutions, and quarterly progress financial reports should have been provided to UNEP based on UNEP's standard format. The Project Management Team and National Study Team did not meet these reporting requirements and failed to deliver the required progress reports on time.

93. A transparent communication approach would have enabled DEAR and its supporting institutions to evaluate the implementation of the project on an ongoing basis, to assess the quality of the work and its conformity to the terms of reference and deadlines, and to identify difficulties and shortcomings at early stages. Unfortunately, this approach seems not to have been effectively executed during the "breakdown period" of the project implementation corresponding to the DEAR institutional collapse.

94. The disbursements table (see above) is indicative of the project implementation status with two gaps (December 1999 and October 2000), corresponding to the project-induced breakdowns concurrent with the institutional paralysis in DEAR.

95. The project document also mentioned that cash advances were to be made quarterly, subject to:

(a) Timely confirmation by DEAR that the expected rate of expenditure and the actual cash position necessitate the payment;

(b) Satisfactory financial report of the previous quarter expenditures;

(c) Timely and satisfactory progress reports on project implementation. The project coordinating unit - apart from the "breakdown period" - regularly met the three requirements as shown by the disbursements table.

96. UNEP was compelled to adhere to this good practice management approach given its distant location from Mauritania, in addition to agreeing to the Government's request to quicken the process so that the initial national communications could be submitted at to the seventh session of the Conference of Parties in October 2001.

J. Technical and operational constraints

1. Objective

97. Identify any technical and/or operational constraints encountered during project implementation including those that contributed to delays in implementing the approved work plan. Identify further the actions required by UNEP and the national executing agency to overcome the constraints, and any appropriate alternative measures that needs to be taken.

2. Background

98. This project like any other was susceptible to technical and/or operational constraints during its implementation.

3. Assessment of the constraints encountered during project implementation

99. The first types of constraints were encountered during the GHGs inventory activities according to expert reports and workshop minutes. The group of consultants interviewed during informal meetings confirmed:

(a) The public at large (general population, government services, civil society, and private enterprises) was reluctant to communicate information on their activities for several reasons:

- (i) Lack of time for interviews;
- (ii) Lack of information on the purpose of the interviews and the scope of the project;
- (iii) Lack of available recorded data in the informal sectors;
- (iv) Confidentiality.

This led to contradictory data. With respect to industrial liquid wastes, for example, only scanty information was collected for the country's two biggest cities (Nouakchott and Nouadhibou); no information on solid wastes was available for the secondary and small towns. There was a deliberate ('hold') on information in the industry sector at large. Despite the existence of a large government statistics department providing free access to information, there was no data on environmental issues. For example, the necessary data for calculating nitrous oxide (N₂O) emissions is not available up today. Therefore, access to information is still an ever-constant constraint and the studies relied quite often on the means used by the IPCC model;

(b) Quality data was not available (the last agricultural census was in 1983); there was discordance in the statistics (GHGs emissions are different and vary from one ecosystem to another; since the consultants could not visit all regions the use of pondered means values and extrapolations were frequent in doing calculations); there was a lack of data on agricultural by-products and no guidelines in IPCC documents. There were difficulties in the estimation of carbon flows and costs associated with mitigation options for the land-use change and forestry sector pass to operate the models which require detailed data (models being tested mainly in developed countries);

(c) Time constraints: Despite project extensions this was a limiting factor to almost all implemented activities (as was anticipated). Indeed the natural resources potential and the emerging enterprises in the industrial sector gave an illustration of the time limit when the evaluator checked on this assertion with the group of consultants. Time horizons used were different from one expert to another and all vis-à-vis the socio-economist who was responsible for projecting figures. There was, therefore, a lack of standardized data;

(d) Budget constraints: Stakeholders felt resources were not sufficient to implement project activities. Rather, the evaluation conclusion is that the budget matched the project needs even though there had been an internal transfer from some budget components to others.

99. 100. Other constraints were mainly of an institutional nature. The 'mobility' of personnel at the project coordination unit did not help the stability and follow-up of the project by the steering or advisory committees.

101. These constraints induced a third category which was of a more personal nature this time: the personnel mobility which brought together, a large number of consultants with people from a limited number of disciplines (forestry and environmentalist) at a time when anxiety was expressed relating to project duration. This last situation brought about, as anticipated, inadequate and irregular consultations among various stakeholders and thus a project 'stall' which occasioned numerous claims and which could end only with UNEP intervention.

102. All these constraints delayed the work plan originally spread over a period of 24 months, to a project duration of 52 months, ending in December 2001.

K. Potential contribution of the project

1. Objective

103. Determine the potential contribution of the project to furthering the objectives of the relevant global, regional, and national environmental assessments, policy frameworks and action plans and to strengthen the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

2. Background

104. There have been past and on going activities related to climate change as well as a legal frame work, which gave environmental assessments standards and tools. This project aimed to bring forth, through some enabling activities, ways to further the objectives of environmental assessments, policy frameworks and action plans and to strengthen the Convention. The evaluation would seek to provide an assessment of the potential contribution of the project to these targets.

3. Assessment of the results

105. This issue is addressed throughout this evaluation, under the different assessment headings.

L. Assessment of the project's gender considerations

1. Objective

106. Determine the extent to which gender considerations were incorporated into the various technical and operational aspects of the project.

2. Background

107. Although gender issues were not included explicitly in the project document, household energy sources comprising charcoal and fuel-wood which are GHGs, and project activities of this nature in dealing with climate change, suggest women were at the top of the stakeholders list. The report will, therefore, determine the extent to which gender considerations were incorporated into the various and operational aspects during the project implementation.

108. It is to be noted that there is uncertainty as to whether this project design and implementation took place before the UNEP guidelines on gender sensitivity were established. However, options to abate GHGs emissions, and response measures relating to vulnerability assessment induced a shift from traditional fuel wood consumption as an energy source to new emission-free technologies.

109. This would imply a saving on hard work involving women like collecting firewood for household cooking and domestic energy usage. In all project workshops, women's share in attendance was estimated at over 37 per cent. However, in the experts group there was only one woman participating and women were therefore underrepresented.

M. Suggestions or recommendations, to relaunch project activities as appropriate

1. Objective

110. Propose concrete suggestions or recommendations, to the national executing agency and UNEP and assist them in undertaking them as appropriate for a project relaunch.

2. Background

110. 111. The project was launched in October 1997 but effectively took off in February 1998 for a two-year duration. From September 1998 there were two long stalls of ten months each followed by a dismissal of the project coordinator (see “Project activities implementation timetable” page 15). This raised concerns about project completion. This issue is addressed throughout this evaluation, under the different assessment headings.

N. Rating the project implementation

1. Background and objective

112. The results of the project are evaluated against its objectives and achievement indicators listed above in section D of the introduction. This task may not be easy due to three different management styles used during the implementation stage. However, there will be a presentation or an explanation of this rating.

(a) Timeliness

113. The project was expected to last two years (from August 1997 to December 1999). Eventually, the project was revised three times extending the duration till August 2001. There was a fourth revision ending on December 2001 to allow for the completion of the project activities. Besides the 10 months of start and the last 10 months, significant delays in the implementation of project activities occurred. The project registered a change of directors and three unjustified as well as unforeseen replacement shifts at the project coordination level. Also, accountants were changed, implying a loss in efficiency and possible breakdown in accountability. The UNEP project Task Manager sent a fax on April 2001 to both Ministers of Planning and of Rural Development and Environment expressing his serious concern about the stalled project activities. The evaluator considers these delays outside the control of UNEP and the responsibility of the Government of Mauritania and DEAR. The following table presents the preliminary time line of the project.

Project revisions and expected completion timetable

6 June 1998	The hand-over between the accountants : Ahmed Salem and Coulibaly Zeidane
25 November 1998	The hand-over between the accountants : Coulibaly Zeidane and Ahmed Salem
31 December 1998	First budget revision
17 January 1999	The hand-over between the coordinators : Magrega and Mustafa
15 May 2000	The hand-over between the accountants : Ahmed Salem & Taleb Sidi Mohamed, and break of DEAR's signature of the project checks
15 September 2000	Second budget revision extending the duration to October 2000
9 January, 2001	The hand-over between the coordinators Mustafa and Baye Fall
13 February 2001	Third budget revision extending the duration to 31 August 2001
December 1999; October, 2000; 31 August, 2001; December 2001	Expected completion dates of the project

114. Based on the above analysis and the absence of time restriction to a non-Annex I Party by the Convention, a rating of 3 corresponding to good on a scale of 60 per cent achievement in timeliness is awarded. This rate could have been improved if DEAR had demonstrated better collaboration with the project's successive coordinators or worse if we were just to consider the duration alone without time elasticity afforded to non-Annex I Party.

Rating on the timeliness

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 - 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
		√		

(b) Achievement of results and objectives

115. The objectives already reviewed above were attained and the results have been achieved at 80 per cent rate leaving a provision of 20 per cent for non-completed activities such as the ministries involvement, and other sectors left out in vulnerability studies. Even though the quality of the Initial National Communication may now correspond to the average standard, there is uncertainty as to whether this result corresponds to Mauritania's expectations in this regard. In other words, an Initial National Communication has been formulated which summarizes the process Mauritania went through to meet its commitment; but there is still some work to do. A grade of 2, that is very good, is given since approximately 80 per cent of the project results and objectives have been performed.

Rating on the achievement of results and objectives

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 - 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
	√			

(c) Completion of activities

116. The nine activities set for the project were completed at more than 75 per cent. But completion of activities does not only refer to the fact that workshops were actually held according to schedule (which cannot have been the case due to changes of project coordinator and other project management problems); the impact and the costs of these workshops are to be considered in the completion as well. Therefore, a grade of 2, that is very good, is granted.

Rating on the completion of activities

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 - 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
	√			

(d) Attainment of outputs

117. The major outputs set for individual activities were attained except those referred to in the preceding indicators. This leads to a grade of 2 as over 75 per cent may be considered as having been obtained.

Rating on the attainment of outputs

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 - 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
	√			

(e) Project executed within budget

118. This is by far the worst indicator and the project has faced some bottlenecks because of the national institutional arrangements. The project was nationally executed by DEAR. A bank account was opened for the purpose and transfers were made directly to this account by UNEP.

119. Full responsibility was supposedly given to the project coordinator to implement the activities and to proceed with the expenses. But, in reality, no expense could be borne without the Director of DEAR's approval. At one time it was the Director of DEAR himself who signed cheques along with the project coordinator. Later, he transferred that function to an accountant appointed by him for counter-signing every cheque along with the project coordinator, since no public bank account can be operated without two signatures. The project had known three different accountants.

120. The frequent changes in project coordination and accountants meant, that there was a lack of supporting documentation of reports relating to the period August 1997 to January 1999. The UNEP Project Task Manager sent an immediate fax to the Minister of Rural Development and of Environment expressing his serious concern about the frequent changes and the lack of communication on project activities. It was later, during the evaluation, that it was discovered that the main reason for the dismissal of the first coordinators was the propensity of the DEAR Director to attempt to mismanage the funds for his own sake. Fortunately, he did not succeed.

121. Consistent records of the changing of budgets and expenses during project implementation have been difficult to trace. A better system for internal bookkeeping has been presented by the evaluator to the national project coordinator and accountant, in application of the UNEP principle of evaluation as a learning process.

122. All disbursements were made on time, upon request and consent of the Project Task Manager. Three budget revisions were made during project implementation to rephase unspent balances from one year to the next against either respective objects of expenditure, or to extend project duration.

123. There is no accounting discrepancy to mention other than the payment of salaries to a project supporting personnel that are not budgeted for. The total amount budgeted for the project coordinator and the secretary is what the coordination unit shared with other project staff comprising a clerk, a computer programmer and an accountant. This was meant to comply with the ministry's standardized project allowances and staffing.

124. The project document expected in-kind support from the Government of Mauritania amounting to \$ 80,000 over the period of the project. This contribution paid for office costs, vehicles for field trips, the salaries of the technicians and other supporting staff.

125. The project provided some office equipment, which raised the performance of the project. For all these reasons a rate of 3 is awarded, that is to acknowledge the personal effort of the current project coordinator to stay to the project budget.

Rating on the execution within budget

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 – 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
		√		

(f) Impact created by the project

126. The most significant impact of the project would be in the area of capacity-building where a group of experts developed tremendous qualifications in climate change concept and applications. Public awareness, database (GHGs inventory, vulnerability assessment, mitigation measures), frameworks options and response strategies as tools for further analysis and comprehensiveness of climate change are all considered valuable impacts of the project, particularly in this country which has been severely affected by successive droughts and desertification. A rating of 2 is given since the expected impact has been achieved at least at 80 per cent.

Rating on the impact created by the project

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 – 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
	√			

(g) Sustainability

127. The project document referred to a number of national agencies (Project Management Team, National Study Team, National Committee of Environment and Development, Regional Committee of Environment and Development, Technical Committee of Environment and Development, etc). However, these agencies were not really active during project implementation.

128. According to the project document, the Project Management Team and National Study Team were to meet quarterly to review the project implementation and provide guidance. But, because of the lack of interest on the part of the Director of DEAR, they could not perform their functions.

129. The project stated as its main sustainability indicator the strengthening of scientific, technical, and institutional capacities in various aspects of the proposed activities, which has been relatively well addressed, except for government agencies. Indeed over 68 per cent of the budget was devoted to this objective.

130. One of the project goals was also to set up a data collection and management system that was meant to regularly update the GHGs inventory which would contribute to sustaining one of the major components of the climate change process. This has been addressed in the final report of the national communications.

131. Since policies have not yet been integrated into planning and thus implemented and given the high mobility in project participants implying that very little capacity-building is nested in the participating agencies, which can also prove to be a constraint for the implementation for a follow-up project, a rating of 3 is given.

Rating on the sustainability

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 – 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
		√		

(h) Overall project rating

132. With four ratings grades of 2, and three ratings of 3, the overall approximated average grade is 2, that is in the range of 75 per cent corresponding to “very good”. Unless the quality of the final product (the Initial National Communication) is technically lower than the average standard, given the extended project duration, which would downgrade the whole project rating, this grade corresponds to a general appreciation of the project by the external observers, notably some international partners and private individuals.

Rating the overall project

Excellent 1 90 - 100 %	Very Good 2 75 - 89 %	Good 3 60 - 74 %	Satisfactory 4 50 - 59 %	Unsatisfactory 5 < 49 %
	√			

II. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

133. The project experienced many ups and downs, the lessons of which can benefit future UNEP projects. Each of the various study groups underscored the value to various team members of visiting institutions, villages and inventory sites as well as attending training sessions. They noted that this whole exercise was a sort of learning process from which they greatly benefited particularly through the interactions, contacts and training.

134. The assessment of the stakeholder involvement in project implementation has shown a fairly unbalanced representation of both the private and the public sector as compared with the experts, and the gender issue as well. Of the various project components this is where composition of the country teams in the future requires more attention to ensure a better balance among identified groups. In this regard, government policy should induce more participation of the civil society.

135. The various national workshops aimed at sensitizing policy makers and planners of the different study results failed in pulling together various government institutions, non governmental organisations, the private sector, scientist, and the media. These workshops could have constituted important vehicles for generating public awareness and creating capacity for future climate-related assessments.

136. The assistance provided by UNEP was praised by many observers particularly in the host country. However, one lesson was the need for closer control of financial expenditures as long as UNEP maintains its decentralized principle in finance management.

137. Effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluations systems developed to supervise and implement the project was not followed by Mauritania. The quarterly reports were not sent to UNEP on a regular basis in the beginning and the lack of reports complicated the project evaluation process. One way to prevent such difficulties in the future would be to subordinate expenditures above a certain amount to UNEP approval; hence, if a project is about to pay for a bill or to purchase an item, it has to seek the UNEP Task Manager’s approval. A report being delayed for any reason would then find persuasive means of forcing its issuance by invoking that condition.

138. Major technical and operational constraints encountered during project implementation including those that contributed to delays in implementing the approved work plan included data quality and the institutional framework. While the former arises from a classical set of problems which may never get a standardized answer, so long as these change in conjunction with their settings, the latter, on the contrary, falls into managerial issues easy to deal with.

III. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

139. At the national level, more transparent and participatory management practices are recommended, as well as more active involvement of stakeholders. Official representatives of the public stakeholders to National Committee of Environment and Development and National Study Team should report systematically and frequently on the project development and results to the decision makers at high political levels.

140. With regard to stakeholder involvement, government policy should induce more participation of civil society but with a higher representation of the Government at the decision-making level. Particular precautionary measures should be taken when determining project participants and selecting national expertise; somehow complaisant familiarity driven criteria and/or attitudes are carried out when selection is done by the project host country alone. In this regard, the implementing agency can play an important role.

141. The decentralization principle of UNEP induces a certain level of active involvement and responsibility on the part of the project host countries. To ensure that funds are properly directed to project activities, there is a need to subordinate project payments to a written approval statement from UNEP. This would call for additional administrative work from UNEP, which can be budgeted for but might improve UNEP assistance delivery in similar future projects.

142. Set out below are specific recommendations regarding potential follow-up evaluation measures that would enable UNEP and GEF to gauge the longer-term benefits and sustainability of project activities:

(a) A follow-up review of the project and its impacts on policy-making, capacity-building and public awareness after a year or so is critical; the most effective method would probably be to do this through the project task manager or a national consultant who would be assigned a catalytic role;

(b) It is useful for the sustainability of the project results, to reinforce capacity-building to identify vulnerability and adaptation measures, response strategies in left-out sectors, as well as to enhance development planners and decision makers' capacity to integrate climate change concerns into planning in future priorities and assistance;

(c) It is expected that there will be little voluntary investment in impacts and adaptation from the Government. Financial and technical support will, therefore, be needed to consolidate actual project results for two years to come. GEF and other financial mechanisms could be urged to support Mauritania in this regard;

(d) A terminal report as planned in the project document could have been beneficial to the final evaluation to ensure a more comprehensive of the project.

Annex I

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Ministry of Rural Development and Environment:

Mr Dah ould Abdel Jellil, Minister of Rural Development and Environment
Mr Zeidane ould Sidi Boubacar, General Secretary of Ministry of Rural Development and of Environment
Mr Cheikh Ahmed ould Khalifa, Director of DEAR
Mr Coulibaly Oumar, Députy Director of DEAR
Mr Baye Fall, project coordinator
Mr Mustapha ould Mohamed, former project coordinator
Mr Abdallahi Magréga, former project coordinator

Representatives of organizations:

Dr Thies, Technical advisor to MDRE, GTZ
Mr Ba Amadou, WB
Ms Ankie, UNDP
Mr Brahim Sall, CCD/Convention on Biological Diversity synergy project, GTZ
Mr Libasse Ba, ENDA-Tiers Monde Senegal
Mr Cola Cisse, ENDA-Tiers Monde Senegal

Experts:

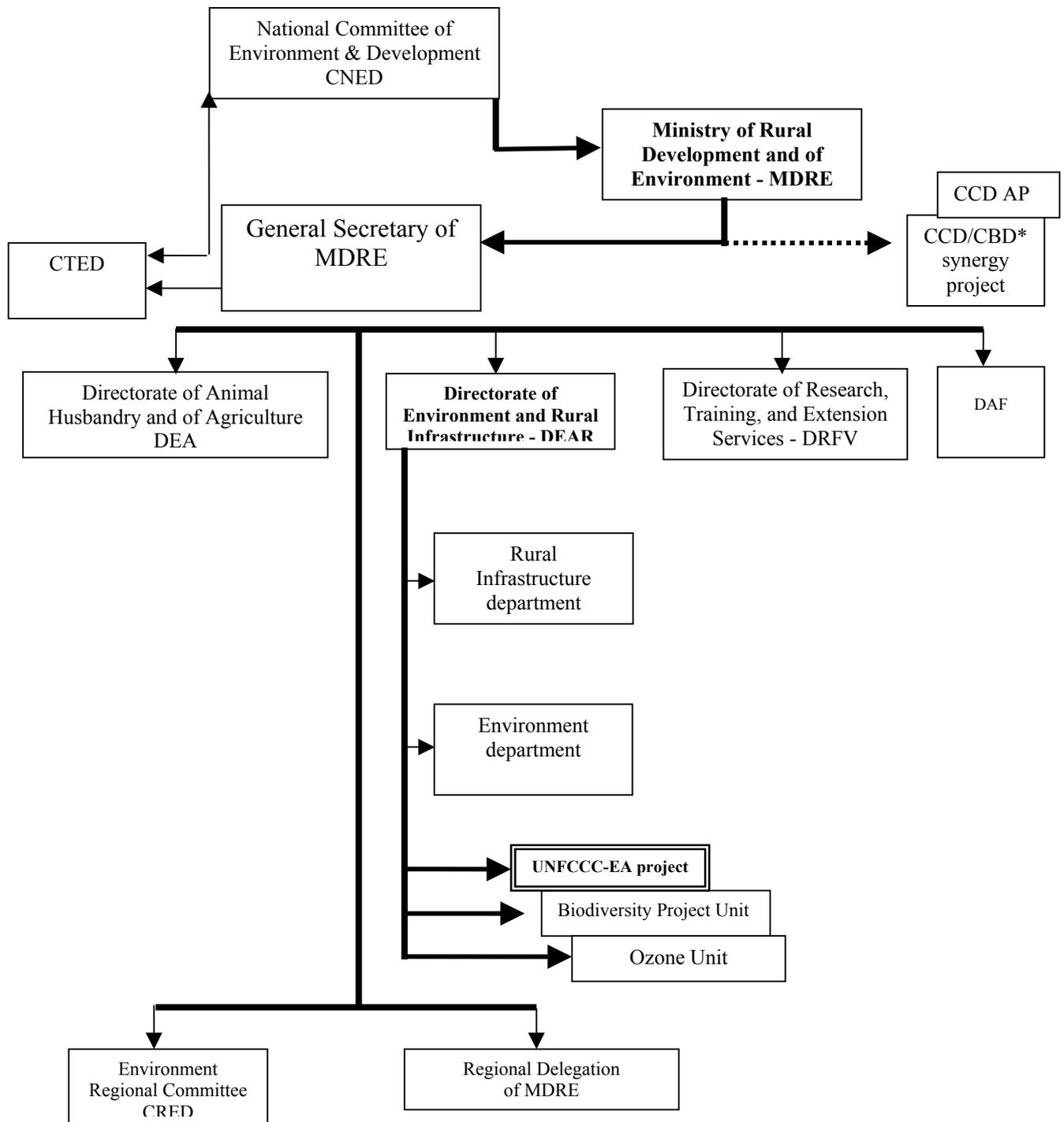
Mr Saadna ould Navé, Chemistry
Mr N'Dongo Abdarraahmane, Ingeneering Energy
Mr Sidaty ould Dah, Environmentalist
Mr Mohamed ould Hamza, Forestry
Mr Mohamed Lemine ould Abboye, Environmentalist
Mr Diop Boubacar, Forestry
Mr Tourad ould Abdel Baghi, Ingeneering Energy
Mr Ahmed ould Hamed, Ingeneering Energy
Mr Maaloum Dine ould Maouloud, Forestry
Mr Yahya ould M'Khaytir, Agricultural economist
Mr Lemhaba ould Noueysri, Forestry
Mr Dahmoud ould Merzoug, Forestry
Mr Chaikhna ould M'Baré, Forestry
Mr Brahim ould Ethmane, Forestry
Mr Bah ould Sid'Ahmed, Forestry
Mr Mouhamedou ould Abba, Forestry
Mr Mohamed Abdallahi ould Selmé, Forestry
Mr Ainina ould Abdel Jellil, jurist
Mr Mohamed El Hacén ould Khouna, forestry
Ms Nagia mint Ahmed, NGO
Mr Baba Fall, NGO
Mr Hamoud ould Sid'Ahmed, jurist
Mr Ahmed ould Mohamed Lemine ould Bedieu, Computer programmer
Mr Chouaib ould Abdallahi, Geographer
Mr Fah ould Elemine, Economist
Mr Kane N'Diawar, Geographer consultant
Mr Kane Hamidou Baba, Sociologist consultant

Others:

Mr Sidiould Taleb Boubacar, Accountant
Mr Ahmed Salemould Bouya, Accountant
Mr Coulibaly Zeidaneould, Accountant
Mr Mohamed Abdallahiould Tolba, NGO ADD
Mr Mohamed, NGO SOS palmier
Mr Bnejara, NGO SOS Environment

Annex II

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE IMPLEMENTING STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CNED



* Convention on Biological Diversity

Annex III

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