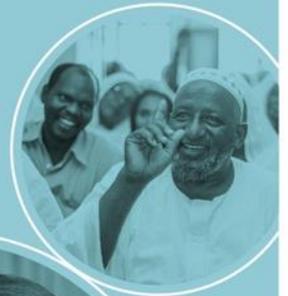


KNOWING WHAT WORKS



Central project evaluation

Integrated Biodiversity Management, South
Caucasus

Project number 2015.2101.2

Evaluation Report

On behalf of GIZ by Guido Schmidt, Nune Harutyunyan (Armenia), Sabina Rustamova – Aliyeva (Azerbaijan) and Nino Kheladze (Georgia)

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Abbreviations

AM	Armenia
AZ	Azerbaijan
BFD	Department of Biodiversity and Forestry, MEPA, Georgia
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EUR	Euro
GE	Georgia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
IBiS	Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus
IMBES	Integrated Management of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
MENR	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azerbaijan
MoEPA	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Georgia
NFA	National Forestry Agency, MEPA, Georgia
NFMIS	National Forest Management and Information System, Armenia
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
RECC	Regional Environmental Centre of the Caucasus
REG	Regional
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound
SMBP	Sustainable Management of Biodiversity Programme, South Caucasus
SNCO	State Non-Commercial Organisation
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature



The project at a glance

South Caucasus: Integrated Biodiversity Management

Project number	2015.2101.2
CRS-Code(s) (Creditor Reporting System Code)	41030
Project objective	The intersectoral management of biodiversity and ecosystem services has improved through the use of robust data
Project term	1 December 2015 – 30 November 2019, commissioned 19 August 2015
Project value	EUR 22,892,420
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Implementing organisations (in the partner country)	<p>Political partners: Armenia: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Azerbaijan: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources Georgia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture</p> <p>Implementing partners in Armenia: Ministry of Economy, State Forest Committee, State Forest Monitoring Center SNCO and Hayantar SNCO, Biore-sources Management Agency, and Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia). Azerbaijan: Ministry of Agriculture in Azerbaijan, ADA University, Western Caspian University, Baku State University, the Republican Centre for the Development of Children and Youth under the Ministry of Education and Azercosmos Open Joint Stock Company. In Georgia, Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, Tbilisi City Hall, Friends Association of Tusheti Protected Areas, Noah's Arc Center for the Recovery of Endangered Species.</p> <p>In all three countries, municipalities were also implementing partners.</p>
Other development organisations involved	None
Target group(s)	Biodiversity and land-use administrations at the national and local levels in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as civil society organisations, academic institutions, professionals, media and the public; in addition, regionally active professionals and initiatives.

1 Evaluation Objectives and Questions

The objectives and questions of the evaluation are the following.

1.1 Evaluation objectives

Random sample: The project under evaluation (see chapter 3.1 Evaluation object) has been selected randomly following the guidelines of central project evaluations the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ); 50% of the random regionally structured sample is selected each year by the GIZ evaluation unit.

Evaluation Type: According to the terms of reference and the GIZ evaluation guidelines, this is a final evaluation of the project, subject to it having ended on 30 November 2019. It aims to comply with the five standard evaluation criteria as defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria.

Stakeholder groups: The main stakeholders of this evaluation and their knowledge interests are:

- **GIZ corporate unit evaluation:** i) *accountability* towards the public (success rate of GIZ's projects); (ii) *learning* to understand strengths and weaknesses of single projects, potentials for replications in other countries and lessons learned in terms of GIZ's reputation in the participating countries as well as (iii) *informing* key stakeholders who inquire about GIZ activities in the Southern Caucasus and/or in the biodiversity and land-use sector (forest, agriculture, grazing), including combinations of biodiversity conservation with economic development and poverty reduction.
- **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ):** *accountability* towards the public (success rate of German development cooperation projects).
- **Project team:** (i) *learning and improving* to integrate lessons learned in the activities of the follow-up project and (ii) *better understanding* of key stakeholder perceptions.
- **Key project partners, especially the partner ministries of the three countries:** (i) *learning and supporting decision-making* for future cooperation initiatives and (ii) *informing* the target group on the progress made by the German development cooperation.

Follow-on project: A new project (ECOserve) had been commissioned in September 2018 by BMZ in the priority area Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, which started on 1 December 2018. It is not a formal follow-on project and will not be a part of the OECD/DAC criteria assessment of the selected project. However, the evaluation results can enhance subsequent activities.

Predecessor project: The project builds on two previous ones. This final evaluation takes these predecessor projects into consideration (where relevant) to make statements about long-term results and sustainability. BMZ terminated these predecessors earlier than originally commissioned so they could be merged into the project.

Use of results: The use of the evaluation results is two-fold. On one hand, the new evaluation system intends to enable a better perspective for observing long-term results such as the sustainability and mainstreaming of approaches in the partner structures. Central users of the evaluation results include the GIZ as an implementing agency and the BMZ as the commissioning party of this project. On the other hand, the results of the evaluation are of great interest to the project team and their internal learning. They can be fed into the follow-on project to apply results and potentially guide upcoming activities in the new project.

External and internal factors: The continuity of biodiversity-related activities by GIZ in the South Caucasus through ECOserve in 2020 has eased the work of the evaluators. The continuity of specific Integrated Biodiversity Management (IBiS) processes by ECOserve limits their suitability to assess the sustainability criteria. An important external factor is the territorial conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, a sensitive situation that affects the evaluation and presents challenges to finding appropriate

contributions when assessing the regional component. The project context influences the evaluation, as stakeholders might be biased regarding the regional approach¹. A final constraint for the evaluation has been the COVID-19 emergency, which has caused the evaluation mission to be cancelled though it had already been planned; instead, distanced interviews and workshops have been carried out.

1.2 Evaluation questions

The project is assessed on the basis of standardised evaluation criteria and questions to ensure comparability by GIZ. This is based on the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating int cooperation and the evaluation criteria for German bilateral cooperation.

Specific assessment dimensions and analytical questions are derived from this given framework by the GIZ. These assessment dimensions and analytical questions are the basis for all central project evaluations in GIZ and can be found in the evaluation matrix, which has been applied to the project (annex 1). In addition, the contributions to Agenda 2030 and its principles (universality, integrative approach, Leave No One Behind, multi-stakeholder partnerships) are also taken into account as well as cross-cutting issues such as gender, the environment, conflict sensitivity and human rights. Also, aspects regarding the quality of implementation are included in all OECD/DAC criteria.

The only additional explicit question from stakeholders interviewed during the inception mission – and derived from interviews of the KOMPASS report – refers to the sustainability and continuity of activities. This is addressed in the corresponding section; no other topics have been perceived. GIZ's sectoral unit has requested the evaluators to assess the knowledge management and legacy of the project, which will also be covered under 'sustainability'.

2 Object of the evaluation

The following section defines the object of the evaluation and outlines the results model, including hypotheses.

2.1 Definition of the evaluation object

The main object of evaluation is the selected project: South Caucasus: Integrated Biodiversity Management, which is identified by project number 2015.2101.2.

Temporal delineation: This evaluation concerns the project implemented between 1 December 2015 and 30 November 2019, with additional considerations on predecessor project final evaluations. The predecessor modules are 'Integrated erosion control in mountainous areas' (Project Number 2013.2143.9: 24 October 2013 – 30 November 2015²) and 'Sustainable management of biodiversity in the Southern Caucasus' (Project Number 2011.2197.9; 1 October 2011 – 30 November 2015³). A joint final evaluation⁴ was conducted for these projects in March 2015.

Financial delimitation: The project was financed by the German Ministry of Economic and Development

¹ As reflected in the KOMPASS report

² GIZ (2017): Schlussbericht TZ-Maßnahme: Integrierter Erosionsschutz in Gebirgslagen im Südkaukasus. Projektnummer: 2013.2143.9. December 2017. Unpublished report. Complementary information by the project director: "IEC project ended on 30.11.15, when IBIS started on 1.12.15. As agreed with BMZ, reports were continued to be prepared, but only to report on the progress of the ADA funded activities"

³ GIZ (2017): Schlussbericht TZ-Maßnahme: Nachhaltige Bewirtschaftung der Biodiversität im Südkaukasus. Projektnummer: 2011.2197.9. November 2017. Complementary information by the project director: "SMBP project ended on 30.11.15, when IBIS started on 1.12.15. As agreed with BMZ, reports were continued to be prepared, but only to report on the progress of the ADA funded activities".

⁴ GIZ (2015): Project evaluation report. Country: South Caucasus. Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus. Unpublished document.

Cooperation (BMZ) and was implemented by GIZ. The total budget of the project was initially EUR 9,900,000⁵ and was increased to EUR 22,892,420 (Status: 7 October 2019⁶), following modifications that included the addition of a new output (E). The activities co-financed by ADA University under the predecessor projects mentioned above are not part of this evaluation; they have been assessed separately. However, the work that has built on them – such as replication, adaptation or mainstreaming under IBiS – will be considered.

Geographical delimitation: The project covered Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as countries in the region of the South Caucasus, focusing on different result model elements at local, national and regional levels.

Political and sectoral context and the framework conditions: The political and sectoral **context** at times has been framed by geopolitical and cultural stresses, in particular between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also at other levels (tension between traditional inhabitants and refugees; Georgia's accession to the European Union). A strong focus on economic development also puts constraints on biodiversity conservation. The Caucasus is one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world, with ecosystems often preserved by traditional land-uses. The political and sectoral constraints are recognised in the project proposal and taken into account in terms of risk management. They are especially relevant to project implementation in Azerbaijan in relation to limited activity of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and at the regional level.

Cross-cutting issues: The project proposal mentioned 'gender' as a cross-cutting issue, considering that economic use of biodiversity, including agrobiodiversity, traditionally offers gender-differentiated employment and income opportunities. According to the project offer⁷, women tend to be responsible for harvesting collectable produce and tend to work at a subsistence level in agriculture, while men concentrate on market-oriented activities. As the collectors of wild products and the providers for the family, women are particularly and severely affected by resource degradation. This is equally the case in all three countries. In practice, women are generally denied the same access to land and natural resources as men. They perform most of the work but account for only around 10% of the representatives on decision-making committees at national and local levels. In the predominantly Christian countries of Armenia and Georgia, women's education level is high compared with that in Azerbaijan. Women are also comparatively well-represented in state institutions and NGOs whose remit is to manage biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Levels of intervention: The project acted at different **levels**, from local pilots to national tool and policy development to regional exchange and cooperation, which are also interconnected; with about half of the project budget targeting Georgia, 20% each Armenia and Azerbaijan and 10% the regional level. Capacity development was pursued at different levels and focus, with institutional processes such as academic and vocational training predominant over building the capacity of individuals in relevant professional positions. The project also aimed for societal and institutional development, with output C addressing the biodiversity perception by the public, and outputs A (at local) and B (at national) addressing institutional (coordination and cooperation) processes.

Target group of the project: According to the project proposal, the target group comprised all those in rural areas in the South Caucasus countries who make use of biodiversity (or will make use of it in the future) and benefit from ecosystem services. This amounted to about 50% of the population: 1.5 million (Armenia), 4.5 million (Azerbaijan) and 1.8 million (Georgia). The project focused on the predominantly poor rural population in the pilot areas. These citizens are directly affected if areas are threatened by erosion or degradation and traditional land use systems are therefore no longer viable. Around 3,000 households would directly benefit from measures to integrate forest and pasture management, protect against erosion and promote agrobiodiversity; 30,000 households would be indirect beneficiaries. There was particular awareness about the position of women and refugees.

Partners: The programme's **political partners** were the following ministries:

- Armenia: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure,
- Azerbaijan: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, and
- Georgia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

⁵ GIZ (2015): Projektangebot 14 July 2015. Unpublished document.

⁶ Written Communication by GIZ project manager

⁷ GIZ (2015): Projektangebot 14 July 2015. Unpublished document.

These were also part of the corresponding national steering structures. The specific denomination of the partner institutions has changed over time following administrative changes in the countries. Further high-level **implementing partners** were the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Environment of Armenia, the Ministry of Agriculture in Azerbaijan, and the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Rural Development and Infrastructure in Georgia.

Germany has been one of the strongest international donors for biodiversity in the Caucasus, while the United Nations Development Program, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the United States Agency for International Development and the Global Environment Facility have been active. The German Development Bank (KfW) has been running the 'four-pillar approach' on the priority area of environment in all three countries through schemes such as Transboundary Joint Secretariat, Support Programme for Protected Areas, Caucasus Nature Fund and Ecological Corridor Fund. The World Bank and others have been active, and donor coordination has been taking place, steered by the key national ministries⁸.

Other implementing partners were brought on board, including civil society organisations, academic institutions and media companies, plus regionally active professionals and initiatives. According to the project focus and context in the countries, there were certain differences; for example, regarding the role of NGO activities in Azerbaijan. In Armenia, the most relevant implementing partners were the Ministry for Environment and its subsidiary bodies, the State Forest Committee, the former Ministry of Agriculture (now Ministry of Economy), the state non-commercial organisations (SNCOs) Hayantar and State Forest Monitoring Center, the Bioresources Management Agency, and the Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia and municipalities in pilot communities. In Azerbaijan, the most relevant implementing partners were ADA University, Western Caspian University, Baku State University, the Republican Centre for the Development of Children and Youth under the Ministry of Education, Azercosmos Open Joint Stock Company and municipalities. In Georgia, the most relevant implementing partners (in particular for results GE01, GE06 and GE05) were: Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC), Tbilisi City Hall, Friends Association of Tusheti Protected Areas, Noah's Arc Center for the Recovery of Endangered Species and municipalities.

Other key stakeholders came from the public and private sectors as well as from civil society. In Armenia this includes the Ministry of Emergency Situations, State Cadastre, Council of Statistics, Community Agriculture Resource Management and Competitiveness Project, Marz administrations Yenokavan, Tavush Marz in Jer-muk, Vayots Dzor Marz, forest enterprises in Noyemberyan, Ijevan, Lalvar, Jiliza, Gugark, Stepanavan, Yeghegnut, and local self government bodies. Other key stakeholders in Azerbaijan were agencies of the Ministry of Agriculture such as the Agro Research Centre; the Land Use Control Department; Agrarian Credit and Development Agency, land users/community members of Ehen village and Ismayilli District Administration. Other key stakeholders in Georgia were the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, the Georgian Parliament, the Akhmeta Municipality, the Tusheti Protected Areas [Administration] and Tusheti Protected Landscape [Administration], landowners/local communities in Akhmeta Municipality, the Dedoplistskaro Municipality and Friends Association of Vashlovani Protected Areas.

2.2 Results model including hypotheses

Overall project structure: The project's objective and outcome was that the intersectoral management of biodiversity and ecosystem services, based on the use of robust data, is improved. The project developed pilot actions to mainstream biodiversity conservation in agriculture, forest and pasture land management. It aimed to take gains and knowledge for replication at the policy level, to strengthen a regional network and inform sustainability-oriented capacity building and awareness-raising actions. The project works primarily at the country level in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and on one output (D) at the regional level; the integrated overview presented here has been explicitly generated in the frame of the project evaluation.

Output level: According to the results matrix, the project encompassed five outputs at the overall project level, in some cases supported by 23 further results from the monitoring system at national level within the three project countries. As illustrated in the results model (Figure 1), the results were measured by 99 specific indicators dealing with the different components and countries. The five official project outputs from the results matrix⁹

⁸ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, also INT03 with other stakeholder, INT31 with other stakeholder

⁹ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

are:

Output A: Instruments and coordination processes for managing biodiversity and ecosystem services at local level were tested. It built on the work developed primarily with implementing partners (such as municipalities) at pilot case level in the three countries, under results AM02, AZ01, AZ02, AZ03, GE03 and GE05.

Output B: The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services has been improved. The activities were primarily carried out with the political partners in the three countries as well as with others such as the pasture platform. They were nurtured by output A and results AM01, AM03, AM04, AM05, AZ04, AZ05, AZ06, AZ07, GE01, GE02, GE04, GE05, GE06, GE08 and GE09, developing policy frameworks and mechanisms including forest sector reform (Georgia) and support to intersectoral bodies. Capacity building has also been developed at different levels (university master programme, vocational training) with universities, NGOs and institutions such as the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs; it involves coordination with the national ministries responsible for educational affairs. Related results are AM05, AZ07 and GE09.

Output C: The perception of the public towards the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem services is more positive; supported by results AM06, AZ08 and GE07. The activities cover urban biodiversity campaigning, nature walks and other activities in Tbilisi, Georgia, a high-level panel discussion on the value of ecosystems and biodiversity (also in Georgia), a summer symposium in the Koghb area on biodiversity for youth representatives (Armenia) and the development and dissemination of educational interlinked infographics and radio campaigns (Azerbaijan). These activities have been implemented with the political partners, municipalities, media institutions, schools and others.

Output D: The regional exchange on sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services will be improved. Main activities implemented by the GIZ project team are (addressing indicator D1): the organisation of international conferences on Erosion Control in Mountainous Areas and on Man and Biosphere Reserves, the development and transfer from Armenia to Azerbaijan and Georgia of an Erosion Control Handbook, together with several partners, including the pasture management platform (Armenia). Activities addressing indicator D2 include: setting up a web-based networking platform with RECC, organising a workshop on land degradation and target-setting in South Caucasus for environmental journalists with RECC. Actions addressing indicator D3/FO1 include: producing leaflets and brochures. To address indicator D4, RECC received support in updating its organisational strategy for 2019 to 2025.

The key underlying assumptions for this output were not explicitly stated though they are part of the country result models. They do however include willingness for regional exchange and cooperation, even if limited. Risks for achieving the output are manifold, especially the danger of increased conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Output E: The data basis for informed political and management decisions about Georgian's forests has improved. This output was added in 2017¹⁰. Cooperation with the political partner resulted in the development of a national forest information and monitoring system – fed by the first modern national forest inventory – and pilots in Akhmeta. Capacity building has also been developed. The output relied entirely on results GE05 and GE08 and it will continue under the ECOserve project.

Results: According to the results models, there were 23 country-focused results¹¹ for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, supporting the above-mentioned outputs. These included:

- AM 01 The legal, institutional and technical framework is improved,
- AM 04 The implementation capacity of relevant ministries and their subordinate bodies regarding the improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved,
- AZ 01 Social and economic benefits of improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services are demonstrated in Ismayilli, and
- GE 01: The legal, institutional and policy framework for management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved.

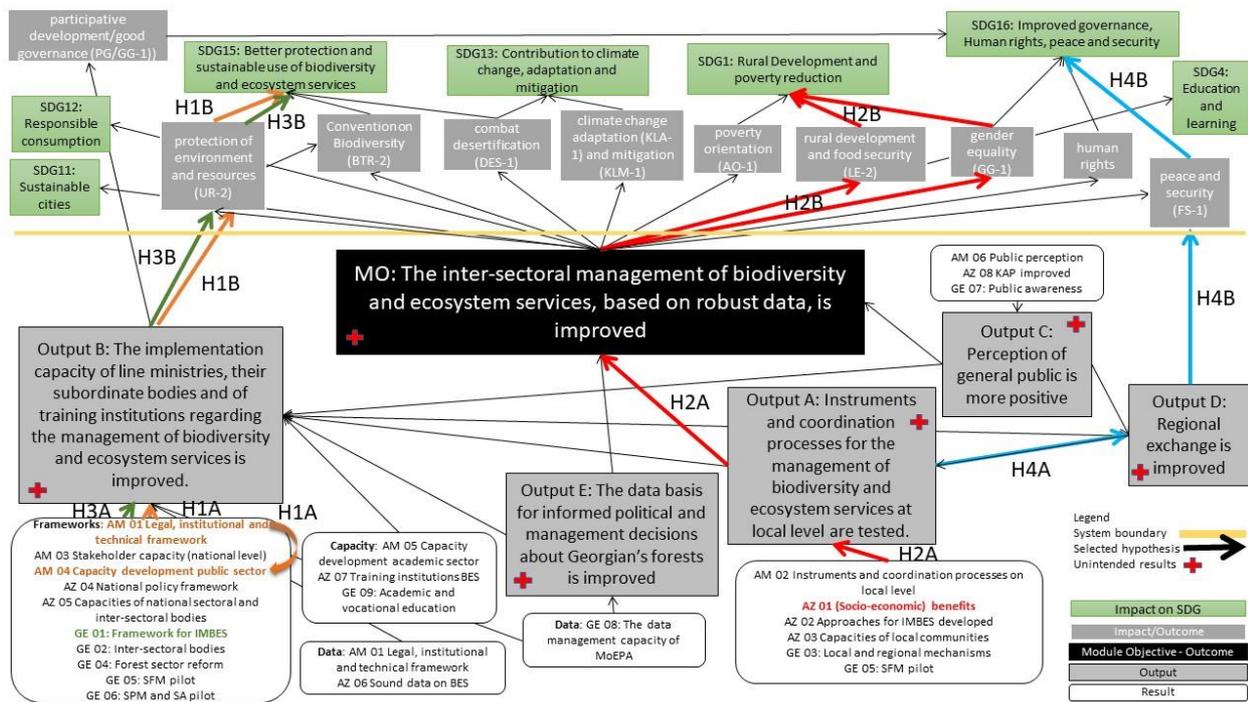
Impact level: The project will lead to improved gender equality (GG-1), participative development/good

¹⁰ GIZ (2017): Änderungsangebot 3 July 2017. Unpublished document.

¹¹ The non-numbered result "regional exchange" is included in all country results models.

governance (PG/GG-1), protection of environment and resources (UR-2), the Convention on Biodiversity (BTR-2), combat desertification (DES-1), climate change adaptation (KLA-1) and mitigation (KLM-1), poverty orientation (AO-1), rural development and food security (LE-2), peace and security (FS-1), and human rights (no code). Eventually¹², the project contributes at impact level also to SDGs such as rural development and poverty reduction (SDG1), improved governance, human rights, peace and security (SDG 16), contribution to climate change, adaptation and mitigation (SDG13), better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services (SDG 15), and human rights, peace and security (SDG16); additional SDG contributions have been identified by partners: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG4)¹³, sustainable cities and communities (SDG11)¹⁴ and responsible consumption and production (SDG12)¹⁵. This project was a stand-alone measure and no programme objective (and related indicators) has been provided.

Figure 1: Updated project-wide results model



There may be positive synergies with social and economic aspects such as risk reduction and increased economic benefits from integrated biodiversity and ecosystem service management because of rural development and poverty reduction impacts. Negative trade-offs with ecological aspects are not envisaged.

Assumptions and risks¹⁶: The key underlying assumptions for the project apply to almost all outputs: that the political relations between the countries do not deteriorate further and allow for a regional thematic exchange (explicitly related to output D), economic development policies do not continue at the expense of ecological sustainability and the status of organisations and representatives of the civil society does not deteriorate further. They also assume continued interest from local and national actors in vertical and intersectoral cooperation and willingness to disclose the methodology of data collection (related to outputs A, B and E). Risks for achieving the project’s overall outputs/results include the interference of individual interests with implementation, high turnover at the governmental level, the current lack of regulatory framework for integrated planning (related to outputs A and B), and contradictions or lack of alignment in support programmes of different donors.

¹² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBIS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

¹³ INT16 with partner organisation

¹⁴ INT14 with other stakeholder

¹⁵ INT16 with partner organisation

¹⁶ As documented in the online results monitoring system and in GIZ (2017): Description of the results based monitoring system IBIS. Unpublished document.

An updated results model linking results, outputs, outcome and impacts according to the text of this chapter has been prepared by the evaluators after the inception mission and validated with the project team. It is shown in Figure 1¹⁷, created for this report.

System boundary: The system boundary definition is based on the project's remit or area of control: results outside the system boundary are beyond the sole responsibility of the project and affected by other factors, stakeholders and interventions in the respective country. In general, results that depend on the political climate and economic conditions of partner countries lie outside of the model's system boundary. These factors include political (such as regional relations between the partner countries), institutional (implementation of strategies by governmental day-to-day biodiversity operations such as environmental impact assessments), regulatory (the adoption of laws) or economic (investments) – all conditions that cannot be controlled by the project. The same is true for results at the impact level, where various factors can contribute both negatively or positively (such as macro conditions, political climate, other donor programs) to the achievement or non-achievement of impacts. These factors will be examined in more detail as part of the contribution analysis.

Unintended results: After the inception mission, the GIZ team listed 14 positive and 3 negative unintended results of the project in a report¹⁸ deriving from the KOMPASS open interviews and internal team discussion. The positive includes: 'Crop-rotation approach introduced by IBiS in Dedoplistskaro municipality and upscaled by RECC has just been recognized as one of the 6 best practices of sustainable land management worldwide by the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)'. The negative results include: 'Tensions between intervention and non-intervention areas in connection with the implementation of pilot projects in the frame of the Armenian Territorial Reform Process (creation of enlarged communities)'. The evaluation team has identified six more unintended results and associated the overall 23 unintended results to either the output or the impact level.

Concept updates: The project was amended four times with official change offers, including a budgetary extension¹⁹ and a concept update in 2017²⁰, with the additional output E. For the results models in the countries, different updates have taken place²¹ on a regular basis in the monitoring sessions after every six months. They addressed the wording, institutional partners and their role, and the contribution of integrated experts from the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM).

Central results hypotheses: According to the online results monitoring, the outputs are linked to each other through specific results hypothesis. Thus, outputs A and B interact with output D:

- 'Work experiences in the three countries qualify for discussion at national level, and vice versa.'
- 'Local-level experiences in the three countries are taken seriously on regional level, and vice versa.'
- 'General public's attitudes and opinion influence regional dialogue.'

The module objective benefits from output A include the following:

- 'Successful intersectoral coordination, ideally coming up with win-win decisions, motivates sector specialists to work together to improve the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services.'
- 'Experiences from local level are considered relevant and are recognised when decisions are taken at national level.'
- 'Decisions are at least in parts based on robust information/ data from information and monitoring systems.'

Last, the benefits from output C came from: 'Changed knowledge, attitude and practice of general public regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services leads to improved IMBES (Integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services). The general public has a means to express their preferences and influence all relevant sectors to improve IMBES.'

The contribution analysis evaluation of effectiveness and impact has focused on the selected hypotheses for

¹⁷ With some minor additions including SDGs 4, 11 and 12, following the interviews carried out afterwards

¹⁸ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document.

¹⁹ GIZ (2016): Änderungsangebot 2 December 2016. Unpublished document

²⁰ GIZ (2017): Änderungsangebot 3 July 2017. Unpublished document

²¹ GIZ (2019): Updates of Results Models, Steering Structures and Stakeholder Maps within IBiS. October 2019. Unpublished document

the Theory of Change (marked in bold/colours and numbered in Figure 1) that are described in the corresponding chapters. The selection of these hypotheses is based on the following **criteria**:

- Representation (geographical): The hypotheses reflect work undertaken in the three countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) as well as at the regional level, including activities from the local to the regional levels.
- Representativeness (contents): The hypotheses reflect a variety of different action areas within the project and also focus two of the four selections on output B, given their relevance for the project.
- Relevance and impact: The selected results and hypotheses have been judged as relevant by the GIZ team, partners and stakeholders (within the KOMPASS report; an open recording of comparative perspectives of partners and target groups) and the evaluator team, and contribute to a variety of impacts, including SDGs.
- Sustainability and efficiency: In order to generate positive synergies within the appraisal across evaluation criteria (efficiency of the evaluation), the selected hypotheses allow for a more ample assessment of sustainability, with processes mainly finalised under IBiS and not carried forward under ECOserve.

3 Evaluability and evaluation process

3.1 Evaluability: data availability and quality

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the context and main features of the project, as well as of its implementation so far, the evaluation team has examined the most relevant sources of information available. The desk research provided context and background information and complemented and ensured the validity of the primary data collected during the evaluation, as well as the available project monitoring data.

3.1.1 Basic Documents

Table 1: Basic documents

Basic document	Available (Yes/No)	Estimation of actuality and quality	Relevant for OECD/DAC Criterion:
Projects proposal and overarching programme/funds proposal and the Ergänzende Hinweise zur Durchführung / additional information on implementation	yes	Updated in 2018 for a modification	Predecessors, relevance, sustainability,
Modification offers where appropriate	yes	From 2016, 2017 and 2019	Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency
Contextual analyses, political-economic analyses or capacity assessments to illuminate the social context	yes	Only specific information on GE forestry	Relevance, effectiveness
Peace & conflict assessment (PCA Matrix), gender analyses, environmental and climate assessments, safeguard and gender	yes	Peace & conflict assessment: available (in German) for the 3 countries from 2013/2014; with an update for GE (2017) that includes biodiversity/forest-relevant aspects Environmental and climate assessments is available (2015, in German only) Gender analysis is available from 2015 and 2019 for the predecessors and ECOserve.	Relevance, effectiveness, sustainability

Annual project progress reports and also programme reporting, if embedded	yes	Latest 2019	
Evaluation reports	Yes	For (one of) the predecessors ²² , a mid-term report, as well as KOMPASS ²³ and SDGs ²⁴	All
Country strategy BMZ	yes	Caucasus Initiative strategy 2009. It is understood as a 'general' strategic framework for IBiS.	Relevance
National strategies	yes	National strategies on SDGs, biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity CBD) and other topics such as gender or development. No regional strategy.	Relevance, sustainability, impact
Sectoral/technical documents such as brochures or workshop minutes, strategy documents and others	yes	Brochures, reports, leaflets; further available on request	All
Results matrix	yes	Updated version 12/2019	All
Results model(s)	yes	Region: from 2015. AM, 2019, short indications with limited explanation. AZ, 08/2019, with detailed monitoring and causal texts. GE: 2019, as overview, with background document ²⁵	Relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability
Data of the results-based monitoring system (WoM)	yes	The online results monitoring system shows justified differences when compared with the results models and results matrix. Software bugs cause inconsistencies.	All
Map of actors	yes	12 stakeholder maps available for AM, AZ and GE from 2019; no overall or regional map available. Supporting information is different (detailed in GE)	All
Capacity development strategy/overall strategy	yes	Updated version for the project from 2017; and 2018 evaluation matrixes for the 3 countries (not regional)	Sustainability
Steering structure	yes	Steering structure is present and documented for the three countries (updates in 2019). No steering structure at the regional level.	All
Plan of operations	yes	For the 3 countries latest update of 2019	Effectiveness, efficiency
Cost data (at least current cost commitment report/Kostenträger-Obligo Bericht). If available: cost data assigned to outputs.	yes	Last available version 12/2019	Efficiency
Excel-sheet assigning working-months of staff to outputs	yes	12/2019	Efficiency
Documents regarding predecessor project(s) (please specify if applicable)	Yes	Final evaluation of one predecessor (SMBP, 2011.2197.9, 2015), which considers integrated erosion	Predecessor(s), relevance

²² GIZ (2015): Project evaluation report. Country: South Caucasus. Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus. Unpublished document.

²³ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document.

²⁴ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

²⁵ RH Consulting (2016): Workshop Report of the first Results-based Monitoring Workshop for IBiS Georgia. "Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus" (IBiS). Tbilisi and Gudauri, Georgia, December 11-14, 2015. 20 pages. Unpublished document

		control in mountainous areas IEC (2013.2143.9) partly. ²⁶	
Documents regarding follow-on project (please specify if applicable)	No	Will not be evaluated; only relevant for identifying which processes are not carried forward under ECOserve	Impact, sustainability

3.1.2 Baseline and monitoring data Including partner data

Project's monitoring system: A monitoring system at project level has been in place: it includes a description of the system²⁷, terminology²⁸, offline results monitoring²⁹ and an online monitoring system. All categories necessary for a results-based management system have been tracked and kept up to date: baseline, half-yearly status update, sources for verification, time and frequency of data collection and person in charge. The evaluation team has used the project's monitoring data and found it very useful for understanding the its implementation.

In addition, three valuable assessments have been carried out by the project, providing useful information: a KOMPASS assessment that includes the underlying interview transcripts, an SDG contribution assessment and an assessment of unexpected results³⁰.

Partners' monitoring system: The political and implementing partners have no known monitoring systems relating to the project's progress. Therefore no additional information has been considered by the evaluation and no identified monitoring and baseline data has been excluded from the analysis. Neither has there been information about the exchange of experiences with German and other international implementing organisations regarding the use of secondary data and the collection of primary data.

Baseline information: No external baseline study has been conducted as it because it was considered unnecessary³¹ because the project proposal includes a baseline for module objective indicators that was grounded on the project team's assessment. No differences regarding reports of the predecessors or third-party reports have been identified by the evaluators. There is a baseline information on the main indicators collected for the development measure. There was no data basis system at the start of the project regarding output E.³²

Other German and international implementing organisations: No information is available on joint monitoring activities or data sharing with other international implementing agencies. Accordingly, no use of monitoring data from other implementing organisations has been made.

National data: Given the project focus, it gathers numerous national data on activities, indicators and results. No national monitoring system of the project implementation is known so the evaluation team will not make use of it.

3.2 Evaluation process

The evaluation process was affected by the COVID-19 emergency, which resulted in major changes to the initially planned process.

Involvement of stakeholders

²⁶ This evaluation covers mainly the "Sustainable Management of Biodiversity Programme, South Caucasus" (SMBP) (until 2015, see preliminary remark chapter 1). However, as the integration of SMBP with the project "Integrated Erosion Control in Mountainous Areas, South Caucasus" (IEC) was decided, the latter was also taken into account and – to a much lesser extent – assessed, specifically with emphasis on the upcoming integration. Therefore, general comments on "Integrated Erosion Control in Mountainous Areas" (IEC) are found in some of the chapters (which will be then clearly marked as such), but the main focus lies on SMBP. (Page 9 of Project Evaluation Report_S(MBP) (PN 11.2197.9)_IEC (PN 13.2143.9)_04082015)

²⁷ GIZ (2017): Description of the results-based monitoring system IBIS, 10 March 2017. Unpublished document.

²⁸ GIZ (2017): Terminology for the IBiS Result Based Monitoring. May 2017. Unpublished document.

²⁹ Latest: GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 080812/2019. Unpublished document. This system has been primarily used for the evaluation.

³⁰ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS, extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document

³¹ Complementary information by project director, 29 January 2020

³² Complementary information by project director, 29 January 2020

The evaluation process has involved stakeholders in the following way:

- **Planning:** During the inception mission, several interviews were held with Georgian political and/or implementing partners. The evaluator team has used findings from the interviews as input for completing the evaluation matrix and the report, including the selection of hypotheses. None of the interviews have revealed specific interest in or future use of the evaluation findings.
- **Implementation:** Interviews and a survey with stakeholders have been carried out to complement data needs of the evaluators, mainly in remote mode due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Completion:** A draft evaluation report has been shared with the political partners for comments in written form or for further discussion because a formal debriefing workshop could not be held properly due to the COVID-19 emergency.

The number and focus of interviews and the selection of the interview partners has depended on the analysis carried out previously and the identified gaps. During the inception mission, gender balance was not considered a constraint in stakeholder involvement at the policy level, though this aspect has been considered for the evaluation of pilots.

The evaluation team has overseen preliminary transfer of the evaluation results to GIZ, partners and other stakeholders during nation-wide debriefing workshops with the project teams. Due to technical constraints during COVID-19 and limited access to online workshops, partners were not involved at this point. Further transfer is up to GIZ to decide.

Many documents are available on the project, including much data relevant for the evaluation. This includes:

- Project documents, such as the project proposal and its modification, the results models and monitoring including technical documents such as minutes from meetings or brochures.
- Previous evaluations, such as those concerning the predecessor projects, KOMPASS, SDG contributions, as well as data from the supporting interviews.

The evaluation team has analysed documents and extract data into the evaluation matrix. Each piece of data included in the matrix has been referenced to ensure appropriate quoting transparency and follow-up validation, as well as a basis for the triangulation.

Additional data has been collected for the following circumstances:

- Existing data does not enable triangulation and further information sources need to be approached,
- Triangulation should be strengthened, and
- Existing data is outdated and new information is needed; for example, to assess the sustainability of the project in 2020

Additional data collection included:

- **Interviews:** Interview partners have been selected with the primary requirement to provide qualitative/quantitative data to the evaluation because they hold updated information or their viewpoints are relevant for triangulation and not reflected in previously existing data. Relevance for triangulation derives from active participation in the project (as political or implementing partner) or if the partner is active in the same field if not involved in the project. Priority has been given to interview partners linked more closely to the results, outputs and impacts assessed for the criterion Effectiveness and Impact. During the interviews, hand-written notes were taken and at times (as indicated in the notes) recording has taken place with the interviewee's explicit agreement. Code references were annotated for latter classification. Interview notes have been summarised in a text file – during the same day if possible when the impressions are fresh. In some cases (as indicated in the notes), they were submitted as drafts to the interviewees for review comments and stored for project team access at a GDPR-compliant online working platform for further use during the evaluation.
- **Survey:** One anonymous online survey – via surveymonkey – was targeted to the regional topic interest

group active on Facebook³³ to gather information from a broad network of more than 200 members with a specific interest (registration for the group is needed) and based at very different geographical locations. The survey results were downloaded, assessed and coded by the international evaluator, and again stored for project team access at a GDPR-compliant online working platform. However, only two group members answered the survey and the lack of response was considered as a qualitative element while the quantitative assessment was not carried out.

- Workshop: Due to the COVID-19 related cancellation of the evaluation mission, three debriefing workshops were held with the project team to address the three countries. At the workshops, the evaluation team presented the preliminary results and the remaining uncertainties, detailing specific questions to the participants. During the workshops, hand-written notes were taken and code references annotated for later classification; information was handled as for the interviews.
- Written consultation: As the participation of political partners in the online workshops was not feasible, the project team and the evaluators agreed that the best approach for receiving qualified and close-to-final feedback from them would be to ask for written comments on the second draft version of this evaluation report in August 2020.

The strengths of the selected data collection methods and analysis strategies showed in their efficiency, as they were based on existing data and limited the evaluation team's efforts to carry out and document additional data; as well as its feasibility planned for the evaluation mission. The weaknesses – in particular, due to COVID-19 restrictions – resided in limited direct contact with partners, stakeholders and target groups and their input, where this was required in addition to other sources.

As described above, the proposed approach enabled triangulation, even if it has not been achieved for some of the criteria (efficiency, predecessor project). The evaluator team considers the overall evidence as good; more details are provided within the evaluation matrix.

³³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1334694186549959/members/>

Table 2: List of stakeholders of the evaluation and selected interviewees

Organisation/ company/ target group	Overall number of people involved in evaluation (*gender disaggregation)	Participation in interview (number of people)	Participation in focus group discussion (number of people)	Participation in workshops (number of people)	Participation in survey (number of people)
GIZ	20 (11)	5 (3)		22 (11)	
GIZ project team/ GIZ partner country staff (including other projects)					
GIZ headquarters Germany					
Partner organisations (direct target)	17 (4)	17 (4)			
Armenia: Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economy and Investments					
Azerbaijan: Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources					
Georgia: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA) including different departments, the National Forestry Agency (NFA) and the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC)					
Other stakeholders (public actors, other development projects)	27 (13)	27 (13)			
Georgia: Parliament Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure (MRDI), Kakheti Governor's office, geographic company, expert, Centre for Biodiversity Research & Conservation					
Regional: Regional Environmental Center (REC) Caucasus, Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Georgia, KfW, Transboundary Joint Secretariat, South Caucasus, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Georgia, Embassy of the Czech Republic to Georgia, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)					
Armenia: Forest Monitoring Center under the Ministry of Environment, Hayantar State NGO, Community Agricultural Resource Management and Competitiveness project, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Armenia, Sustainable Development Agency (SDA) Non-Governmental Organisation					
Azerbaijan: Ministry of Agriculture, Western Caspian University. ADA University					
Final beneficiaries (indirect target)	13 (2)	11 (2)			2 of 230
Azerbaijan: Talistan Municipality, Executive Power Authority of Ismayilli region. Ehen village community. Republican Child and Youth Development Center of the Ministry of Education.					
Georgia: Administration of Akhmeta Municipality & Sakrebulo of Akhmeta Municipality, Tusheti Protected Landscape (TPL) Administration, Tusheti National Park (TNP) Administration					
Regional: Members of the Facebook group (2 of 230)					

Roles of international and local evaluator

The international evaluator is the team leader of the evaluation team. They drive the process, assess in detail the regional dimension of the project and ensures coherence and quality.

The local evaluators (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) are included in all central tasks of the evaluation such as participating in the inception mission (two of the three), cooperating in carrying out evaluation interviews and workshops, and assessing specific topics relevant to the assessment criteria for each of the countries. All local evaluators have a strong background on the technical topics, with one evaluator (Georgia) more experienced in geographical information systems, another in policy-making processes and the third in monitoring; this is considered as an advantage of the evaluator team.

In order to ensure the coherence of the assessment and ensure research triangulation, the evaluation team has worked in parallel and carried out many online and physical meetings. Team members collaborated with

comment boxes in one shared online version of the draft reports and matrix; all differences were discussed on during the drafting process. All evaluators carried out a final review of the whole report and did not deem a synthesis meeting necessary.

4 Assessment of the project to OECD/DAC criteria

The evaluation basis and the design for assessing the OECD/DAC criteria are outlined in this section. It first describes the overall approach, while specific aspects are rendered with more detail under each criterion.

Evaluation basis: The evaluation basis is different for each of the assessment criteria and will therefore be described individually or under each assessment dimension. The evaluation basis is extracted from project documents, with explicit references.

Evaluation design: The assessment follows the questions of the evaluation matrix and applies these to the project or to specific aspects in one or more of the three countries and at the regional level in the South Caucasus. Where relevant, a theory-based contribution analysis method has been used, complemented with exploration of the most significant change in the method for assessing unintended results. This can be based on the available project documents, including previous evaluations.

Empirical methods: Following the evaluation matrix, data from different sources has been collected, coded (marking relevant items, relevant and conflictive statements) and summarised. It has been analysed, based on triangulation and triangulated. The supporting evaluation matrix includes with each evaluation question the number of stakeholders that contributed as well as a reference to the data gathering methods; this information has been used to validate the assessment strength indicated in the Annex of this report – and finally evaluated. Based on the findings of the evaluation matrix plus further comments received by GIZ and project political partners, the evaluation report is elaborated.

4.1 Long-term results of predecessors

Evaluation basis and design for assessing long-term results of the predecessors

Evaluation basis: The final project evaluation assessment concluded as ‘successful’ the sustainability of the predecessor although the achievement of the three indicators could only be partially evaluated in 2015. Following the IBiS project proposal, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans were available for all three countries. No final results were achieved for the other two indicators – practical environmental education strategies, national standards for sustainable land/forest management agreed – before IBiS. This will be the basis of the evaluation assessing the long-term results of predecessors, which will also consider the three major risks for sustainability identified in the predecessor evaluation.

Evaluation design: The assessment has followed the questions of the evaluation matrix and applied these to the project overall; with two questions deemed not relevant due to the well-synchronised end/start time of the projects.

Empirical methods: Given the difficulty of identifying and mobilising stakeholders who have been following the various project developments over the years, the evaluators have relied mainly on documents such as the predecessor evaluation from 2015, the predecessor project final report and complementary data sources.

Analysis and assessment regarding long-term results of the predecessor

The **results and impact of the predecessor project** can still be perceived throughout the implementation of the project. This is not surprising as the project partly integrates and builds widely on the predecessor and its activities. In summary: biodiversity action plans are implemented, environmental education integrated in

curricula for secondary education, national standards adopted for sustainable resource management and transboundary challenges addressed. Impacts include improved regulatory framework, capacity development, instruments and methods for maintaining ecosystem services and biodiversity³⁴. In consequence, the project results monitoring³⁵ includes references to continued implementation of biodiversity action plans such as the Emerald Network in Georgia and the butterfly atlas in Armenia. Training modules on biodiversity and ecosystem services have been integrated as lectures in Azerbaijan into existing curricula as ‘general ecology’, ‘management of the environment’, ‘environmental impact assessment’, ‘economy of the environment’, and ‘ecological tourism’. In Armenia, the institutionalisation and the integration of the ecosystem services into the training curricula for local self-government bodies and community officials have advanced. In Azerbaijan, a draft rule for implementing environmental impact assessments and transboundary environmental assessments has been developed with the support of the project. The development of standards has been at the core of the project in Armenia and Georgia. The predecessor project had also anticipated the pilot sites and the intervention types in Azerbaijan.³⁶

The project team continues to explore the **factors of success** for the predecessor project. It highlights that ‘the strategic mix of demand/partner-oriented support and proactive development and piloting of methods and concepts is evidently quite successful... the strategic mix of supporting the elaboration of strategies and legal regulation, institutional capacity building and environmental education addresses well the problems in the three countries... to be responsive to “windows of opportunity”... [well organised] internal steering and management... [an exemplary] results based monitoring (RBM) system’³⁷.

The predecessor evaluation identified **three major risks for sustainability**: ‘1) The unpredictability and time-lapse of enforcement and implementation of laws and regulations; 2) Loss of capacity acquired by individuals; 3) Lack of focused links between political and administrative authorities at the different levels; including the institutionalization of newly conceptualised processes and standards’³⁸.

These are reflected by the project design’s risk assessment and addressed by risk mitigation measures. These include: ‘Diversifying the partner structure, training key actors (including those outside the ministries of the environment) and introducing transparent processes and consultation mechanisms. Capacity development, not only of specific individuals but also of organisations and networks, can alleviate the risks associated with staff turnover.’³⁹

4.2 Relevance

Evaluation basis and design for assessing relevance

The evaluation basis, design and methods are shown below for each of the three core dimensions of the relevance criteria.

Assessment dimension 1: The project design is line with the relevant strategic reference frameworks.

The assessment aimed to analyse whether the desired results at outcome and impact level of the project (see results model and results matrix in the annex) are in line with relevant strategic reference frameworks – such

³⁴ GIZ (2015): Project evaluation report. Country: South Caucasus. Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus. Unpublished document. Pages 11-17

³⁵ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 12/2019. Unpublished document.

³⁶ WS02 with GIZ

³⁷ GIZ (2015): Project evaluation report. Country: South Caucasus. Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus. Unpublished document. Pages 22-24

³⁸ GIZ (2015): Project evaluation report. Country: South Caucasus. Sustainable Management of Biodiversity, South Caucasus. Unpublished document.

³⁹ GIZ (2015): Project proposal TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBIS) Project number: 2015.2101.2, page 20-21

as the priorities of the BMZ⁴⁰, international conventions and agreement⁴¹ (though 'at implementation level, the tools and potential offered by these treaties have not been put to full use')⁴², regional strategies and coordination mechanisms such as the Ecoregional Conservation Plan and Caucasus Biodiversity Council⁴³, as well as with national strategies for Armenia⁴⁴, Azerbaijan⁴⁵ and Georgia⁴⁶.

As indicated in the evaluation matrix, the relevance criterion has mainly been assessed through analysing strategic documents, recent project assessment reports and project reporting that has undergone qualitative content analysis. Interviews with the BMZ representative and the project team, as well as interviews with political and implementing partners have complemented these secondary sources. The evaluators have particularly looked at the relevance of topics addressed by the project and focused the interviews on them. These subjects include integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in regional governance, improved framework providing a binding legal basis for intersectoral management of biodiversity, the Armenian National Forest Management and Information System (NFMIS), integrated erosion control and municipal spatial planning in Georgia. The findings have been assessed qualitatively according to the evaluation questions of the results matrix.

Assessment dimension 2: The project design matches the needs of the target group(s).

To analyse the needs and potential benefits to the project's target groups, the evaluation team aimed to cover groups such as:

- beneficiaries of locally implemented pilot projects (direct target group as considered under indicator MO3), who face real-life land-use management problems and expect guidance and support for local action such as integrated erosion control in Ismayilli, Azerbaijan and municipal spatial planning in Akhmeta (Georgia),
- staff of political and implementing partner institutions (direct target group), who require technical know-how

⁴⁰ German Development Cooperation (2009): Caucasus Initiative. Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus. "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources", pages 13-14. The goal is "...to contribute to the conservation of natural resources for current and future generations, while at the same time contributing towards improvement of local livelihoods and sustainable economic development...In line with the Caucasus Initiative, German development cooperation furthermore pursues, whenever possible and feasible, the harmonisation of approaches at a regional level and the promotion of cooperation between the countries of the southern Caucasus as a contribution to conflict prevention. This includes further stimulating and building on national efforts and enhancing and complementing interventions supported by other bilateral and multilateral donors...In order to ... achieve the overall goal, German development cooperation in the sector will be based on three pillars (programme areas): (1) conserving biological diversity as a basis for long-term economic development, (2) promoting the sustainable use of natural resources as part of local development, particularly in rural areas, and finally, (3) increasing preparedness for climate change by reversing land degradation as part of efforts to conserve present livelihoods and safeguard future potential for development...". In particular regarding the regional component, "...Interventions in the three pillars will take a regional approach whenever possible and feasible and will be aimed at strengthening transboundary cooperation by exploiting opportunities for bilateral or trilateral cooperation. This would involve, for example, transboundary protected areas, common approaches to protected area management, joint management of transboundary watersheds, the exchange of information and experience, information and knowledge management (IKM), joint development and marketing of natural resource products and environmental monitoring...".

⁴¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia are parties to most international environmental treaties, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (not Georgia), the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES; not Armenia). By ratifying the core international human rights treaties, all three countries have accepted certain legally binding international obligations.

⁴² German Development Cooperation (2009): Caucasus Initiative. Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus. "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources", page 9

⁴³ This body is not active. [http://www.panda.org/?171581/Caucasus Biodiversity Council Report](http://www.panda.org/?171581/Caucasus%20Biodiversity%20Council%20Report).

⁴⁴ UN Convention on Biodiversity conservation, Republic of Armenia 6th national report under UN CBD, UN CBD Aichi targets, 6th national report under UN CCD, UNFCCC 2nd National communication on climate change of Armenia (2010), "Strategy and National Program for Conservation and Use of Specially Protected Nature Areas" 2014, Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) 2017, "Strategy and National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Conservation, Protection, Reproduction and Use of Biological Diversity" adopted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia in 2015 (BSAP), "Natural Resources Management Strategy and the pro-gram of measures ensuring the implementation of the natural resources management strategy" 2018, National Environment Action Plans, National Forest Program (2005 amendment), National Forest Strategy and policy of RA (2005), MDG1, MDG7, 2010-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "Strategy and National Program for Conservation and Use of Specially Protected Nature Areas" (SPNA-SAP) 2014, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda strategy of the Republic of Armenia" 2018; The RA Tax Code (new regulations on natural resources use payment rates for the use of biological resources, 2016), The RA law "on making amendments and supplements to the RA Law on compensation tariffs for damage caused to flora and fauna as a consequence of violation of environmental protection laws" 2017, RA Government adopted decree No. 781-N on "Establishing the procedure of utilization of items of flora for their protection and reproduction in natural conditions" in 2014 (on newly detected species registered in the Red Data Book of Armenia),

⁴⁵ National Development Plan, Azerbaijan 2020: Outlook for the future'. State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Azerbaijan Republic (SPPRS, 2008-2015). State Programme on Reforestation and Afforestation for the period 2003–2008 and National Strategy and Action Plan on Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use for the period 2006–2009. The State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Azerbaijan Republic (SPPRS, 2008-2015). The State Programme for the Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Azerbaijan Republic (2009-2015). National Strategy and Action Plan on Protection of Biological Diversity and Sustainable Use, approved by Presidential Decree (No. 2358) 3 October 2016; and others.

⁴⁶ Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MoENR) (2015): Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ge/ge-nr-05-en.pdf>; Government of Georgia (2014): National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II). <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2342057?publication=0>; Parliament of Georgia (2018): Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity Code. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4276845?publication=1>

and support in developing and implementing biodiversity-related policies in regard to regional governance, forest management in Armenia and municipal spatial planning in Georgia, and

- participants in regional networking or awareness-raising activities (such as regional Facebook group) who are an indirect target group, with less obvious needs on improving professional qualification, knowledge, lifestyle or living conditions.

Several needs assessments have been carried out and documented by the project⁴⁷. These include assessments on geographic information system mapping capacity-building (Armenia), National Forest Management and Information System training in Gugark (Armenia), legislation changes (Armenia), spatial planning in Akhmeta (Georgia), data collection needs of the MEPA, BFD and the National Forestry Agency (Georgia), and others. To understand the project's relevance for the foreseen target group, additional perceptions have been collected from the KOMPASS report – in particular, the results and transcripts referring to the Most Significant Change and Outcome Harvesting and the Story Telling approaches, the project result monitoring (MO3). The project also drew on additional interviews and a survey with Facebook group members that addressed participant satisfaction and discussion dynamics. These collected results have been used for triangulation⁴⁸. The needs of marginalised or vulnerable population groups such as women or refugees have been assessed with more detail for the pilot carried out in Ismayilli (Azerbaijan), addressing the principle of Leave No One Behind. The evaluation follows the questions of the evaluation matrix.

Assessment dimension 3: The project design is in line with the chosen project objective, and assessment dimension 4: The project design was adapted to changes in line with requirements and re-adapted where applicable.

As mentioned the project's overall results model had been developed at the initial stages as a rough outline without further reviews; and the country result models have been developed at the project initiation in Georgia jointly with partners and stakeholders and adapted several times. The evaluation team has also prepared a new version of the overall project's results model after the inception mission, which was validated by the project team. However, no conceptual changes have been incorporated outside of the inclusion of unintended results, which were identified during the inception mission.

The dimensions have been assessed following the questions of the evaluation matrix, and the same sources used as for the previous assessment dimensions. An additional question remains as to whether and how the project's concept has incorporated the critical risks identified by the predecessor projects.

Analysis and assessment regarding relevance

Assessment dimension 1: The project design is in line with the relevant strategic reference frameworks.

The project was embedded in an important international, national and regional strategic framework. The **Ecoregion Conservation Plan of the Caucasus** refers to the Caucasus as 'one of the most biologically rich regions on Earth. It is one of WWF's 35 "priority places" and [includes two] of 34 "biodiversity hotspots" [Caucasus biodiversity hotspot and Irano-Anatolian biodiversity hotspot] identified by Conservation International as being the richest and at the same time most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on Earth.'⁴⁹ Key factors for biodiversity loss in the region are identified by the *Economy of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Scoping Study*.⁵⁰ Conservation strategies have been developed by global players such as the **United Nations Development Programme**⁵¹ and organisations such as WWF. The strategies refer to key areas such as mainstreaming biodiversity into the development, fiscal planning, and production sectors, unlocking the potential of protected areas,

⁴⁷ As reflected in GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

⁴⁸ On beneficiaries, e.g. in Georgia the Akhmeta municipality representative (Spatial planning issues)

⁴⁹ Caucasus Biodiversity Council (2012): Ecoregion Conservation Plan of the Caucasus 2012 Updated and Revised Edition, page 3. Updated at WS01.

⁵⁰ UNEP and WWF, 2013. TEEB Scoping Study for Georgia. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Geneva, Switzerland

⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme (2012) The Future We Want: Biodiversity and Ecosystems—Driving Sustainable Development. United Nations Development Programme Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-2020. New York

sustainable land management, and sustaining resilient forest ecosystems to benefit local economies and protect biodiversity.

Also highlighted: 'Critical for conserving the Ecoregion's biodiversity is a fully representative network of protected areas... Action also needs to be taken to strengthen governance of the use of natural resources outside protected areas to ensure that biodiversity is conserved and used sustainably'⁵². As a direct reference supporting the project, the **German Development Cooperation Caucasus Initiative** can be quoted. Its overall goal is: 'To help preserve natural resources for current and future generations, while at the same time contributing towards local livelihoods and sustainable economic development... based on three pillars (programme areas): Preservation of natural heritage and the basis of human life by conserving biological diversity and land and water resources... Increased valorisation and sustainable use of biodiversity... Climate change mitigation and adaptation through reversing of land degradation'⁵³. The project explicitly addressed these aspirations with specific outputs and activities: for example, inventories and management plans for natural resources, fostering herb collection, awareness campaigns and pilots to control overgrazing. Furthermore, several **Sustainable Development Goals** are relevant for the project.⁵⁴

National strategies in the three countries are also explicitly targeted and implemented by project partners. In **Armenia**, the strategy and national action plan on conservation, protection, reproduction and use of biological diversity of the Republic of Armenia calls for '**integrated approaches** to embed environmental issues and concepts in political decision-making as well as in the curricula of education and training institutions. **Coordination across sectors** as well as the collaboration between state institutions, nonstate actors and different population groups should be improved. **Innovative approaches** have to be developed for reframing persisting conflicts of interest between sustainably using biodiversity and pursuing rapid economic development. Further, increasing the availability and liability of **data on biodiversity** and natural resources would lead to a more effective decision-making. The **effects of climate change** also need to be addressed as they exacerbate the existing challenges'. Explicit references are included in the Armenia development strategy for 2014-2025⁵⁵ and interviews linking the project to the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement.⁵⁶

In **Azerbaijan**, according to the national development plan, 'one of the main goals... is to achieve sustainable socio-economic development. Further measures will be taken to **preserve biodiversity**... restore green areas and effectively protect the available resources... In order to **use land resources effectively**, measures will be taken to prevent desertification...'⁵⁷ and a specific strategy refers to the objective of 'ensuring the broad extension of **environmental education in the society** for improving awareness of the population on biological diversity and ecosystem services'⁵⁸.

In **Georgia**, the strategic reference framework includes the national biodiversity strategy and action plan (2014), the third national environmental action programme of Georgia (2017-2021) (2018)⁵⁹, the organic law of Georgia – local self-government code (2014), the rural development strategy of Georgia 2017-2020 (2017)⁶⁰, the national forest concept for Georgia (2013)⁶¹ and others. 'One of the main goals... is creation of background for fulfilment of obligations undertaken under the European Union Association Agreement and facilitation of harmonisation with European environmental policy and strategies... [such as] important commitments for

⁵² Caucasus Biodiversity Council (2012): Ecoregion Conservation Plan of the Caucasus 2012 Updated and Revised Edition, pages 8-9.

⁵³ BMZ (2009): German Development Cooperation Caucasus Initiative Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources". Page 2

⁵⁴ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBIS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

⁵⁵ approved by the RA Government Decree N 442-N , March 27, 2014

⁵⁶ INT35, INT36and INT44 with partner organisation. Also: Armenia's 6th National report on Convention on Biological Diversity (2018)

⁵⁷ National Development Plan, Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the future', page 25 and 26

⁵⁸ Action plan "National Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for 2017-2020", page 5

⁵⁹ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (2018): Third National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia (2017-2021). <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo180258.pdf>

⁶⁰ Ministry of Agriculture (2017) Rural Development Strategy of Georgia 2017-2020. <http://enpard.ge/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Rural-Development-Strategy-of-Georgia-2017-2020.pdf>

⁶¹ Caucasus Environmental NGO Network –CENN (2014): National Forest Concept for Georgia. <http://environment.cenn.org/app/uploads/2016/09/CENN-BROCHURE-reduced-ENG.pdf>. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2157869?publication=0>.

conservation of species and habitats and sustainable use of biological resources... [and the] development of national guidelines for the **integration of biodiversity conservation into sectorial and cross-sectorial policies and strategies**, modification of the **spatial planning system**, and that 'by 2020, **forest biodiversity** is safeguarded through **sustainable management policies and practices**'⁶². 'Spatial planning is another tool for **mainstreaming biodiversity into sectorial and cross-sectorial plans** since spatial plans determine where exactly economic activities or infrastructure developments are to take place. The process of spatial planning provides a good opportunity for different sectors and stakeholders to coordinate and communicate between each other'. In addition: 'Preconditions for establishing an integrated sustainable forest management system in Georgia are: (a) optimal institutional set-up of the forestry sector including forest management and ownership forms, and (b) **adequate forestry legislation that takes full account of biodiversity values**'⁶³.

Under the national environmental action programme target 1 – promotion of sustainable management of biodiversity – several activities are included such as 'finalisation and adoption of the **law on biodiversity**' and improvement of legal framework and implementation of the **Sustainable Forest Management system**'⁶⁴. Further references can be found at the regional level, for example in the Kakheti regional development strategy. The latter establishes spatial planning for the future development of the region as goal 23, and that spatial planning and spatial land use plans should be developed and implemented in the region in objective 23.1⁶⁵.

The project design is rooted in its mission to recognise and **address intersectoral synergies and trade-offs**: '...The module objective of the measure is to promote better coordination of biodiversity and ecosystem services management across sectors on the basis of solid data...'⁶⁶. The project addresses the main land-use sectors and how to mainstream improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in these and it is in line with the strategies as recognised by numerous partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders.⁶⁷ It also fosters an enabling environment by fostering the adoption of biodiversity regulation⁶⁸, raising public awareness, biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors such as sustainable forest management, and it generates and shares data for impact assessment procedures.⁶⁹

The project is **fully aligned with the 'overall goal of German development cooperation** with the countries of the southern Caucasus in the field of natural resource management [which] is to help preserve natural resources for current and future generations while at the same time contributing towards local livelihoods and sustainable economic development... based on three pillars or programme areas: Preservation of natural heritage and the basis of human life by conserving biological diversity and land and water resources,... Increased valorisation and sustainable use of biodiversity... Climate change mitigation and adaptation through reversing of land degradation'⁷⁰. The project focuses on a selection of topics and addresses the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG1 Rural development and poverty reduction,
- SDG13 Contribution to climate change adaption and mitigation,
- SDG15 Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and
- SDG16 Human rights, peace and security (including governance and transparency)

Furthermore, the project contributes to overarching regional exchange and cooperation in an integrated and cross-cutting way that often addresses more than one SDG with the interventions. In words of a partner in

⁶² Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia (MoENR) (2015): Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ge/ge-nr-05-en.pdf>

⁶³ Government of Georgia (2014): National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II). <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/2342057?publication=0> & <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo158253.pdf>. Page 56

⁶⁴ Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (2018): Third National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia (2017-2021). <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/geo180258.pdf>. Pages 71 and 80

⁶⁵ Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021 (2013), page 45

⁶⁶ GIZ (2015): TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBiS), Project number: 2015.2101.2. Project proposal. Unpublished document.

⁶⁷ INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT17 with final beneficiaries, INT20 with partner organisation, INT21 with partner organisation

⁶⁸ INT04 with other stakeholders

⁶⁹ INT03 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders

⁷⁰ BMZ (2009): German Development Cooperation Caucasus Initiative Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources". Page 2.

Armenia: 'Erosion control measures and afforestation contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation. IBiS contributes also to SDG 15 (target 15.3) and SDG 16 (Transparency and participation, where all villages and workers participate); the latter contributes to stability.'⁷¹ This is also reflected in the project's result model. In addition to the above-mentioned focus SDGs, the project partners and beneficiaries have listed further contributions to SDG4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all)⁷², SDG11 (Sustainable cities and communities)⁷³ and SDG12 (Responsible consumption and production)⁷⁴.

In regard to **subsidiarity and complementarity**, multiple parties refer explicitly to the synergies developing between the project and strategies of other participants at the international and national levels. The United Nations has teamed up with IBiS and other sponsors to implement a project on applying landscape and sustainable land management for mitigating land degradation and contributing to poverty reduction in rural areas⁷⁵, a topic at the core of the project. There is also scheme for joint training of journalists with UNCCD⁷⁶. The cooperation of the GIZ with the German Space Agency has been viewed as 'particularly laudable'⁷⁷ by a partner. Synergies between the GIZ and UNDP on improving environmental information systems in Georgia and Armenia⁷⁸, on sustainable pasture management⁷⁹ and land degradation were successfully coordinated and leveraged.⁸⁰

Altogether, the **project is highly aligned with the relevant strategic reference frameworks at all levels** (national and regional policies and strategies, and strategies of international cooperation) and fully complies with the criteria of this assessment dimension (rating 30 of 30 points).

Assessment dimension 2: The project design matches the needs of the target group(s)

The project design refers to several overarching requirements: 'The need for intersectoral cooperation on protecting and sustainably managing biodiversity... a great need for training, both in terms of practical skills (e.g. vocational training and continuous professional development) and in planning and management... As part of these pilot measures, relevant actors will be provided with the skills needed'⁸¹. There are explicit references⁸² to the solid needs assessment undertaken and activities developed to strengthen ownership (for example the National Forest Management Information System based on requirements identified by target groups and beneficiaries.) The project has built on an assessment of **previously existing workstreams at the partner organisations** that clearly reflect current requirements.

In Armenia, activities were carried out jointly with the target groups (Aragatsotn and Shirak local areas - marzpetarans, including 55 community leaders) and the results of all pilot communities were assessed with the participation of local working groups⁸³. In Azerbaijan, 'local administration and local communities in the pilot sites are **enthusiastic about the pilots**'⁸⁴. In Georgia 'although women were underrepresented at various

⁷¹ AHT Group (2019): Integrated Biodiversity Management.South Caucasus. Monitoring of IBiS impact in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Also INT34 and INT36 with partner organisations

⁷² INT16 with partner organisation

⁷³ INT14 with GIZ

⁷⁴ INT16 with partner organisation

⁷⁵ Project reference GEF ID:5825 (2016-2019). Source: UN Website <https://www.unenvironment.org/regions/europe/our-projects/landscape-and-sustainable-land-management-georgia>

⁷⁶ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document, INT01 with other stakeholders

⁷⁷ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 35

⁷⁸ Explicitly stated in the Sixth National Report To The Convention On Biological Diversity Of The Republic Of Armenia, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/am-nr-06-en.pdf> pages 49 and. 92

⁷⁹ INT34 with partner organisations

⁸⁰ INT02 with other stakeholders, Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 36

⁸¹ GIZ (2015). Project proposal TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBiS) Project number: 2015.2101.2. Unpublished document

⁸² Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, pages 17, 34 and 35; and INT08 with other stakeholders, INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT12 with partner organisation, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT41 with other stakeholders

⁸³ INT44 with partner organisation

⁸⁴ AHT Group (2019): Integrated Biodiversity Management.South Caucasus. Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished

stages of the projects and activities, **women benefited** from further (and often unintended) project outcomes. For example, the fencing of pastures in Shenako led to the growth of herbs (used for food and medicine) that are collected and sold by women. Better views of Sonekhi mountain in front of Shenako and a safer settlement in Jvarboseli indirectly affect the development of tourism – and it is mainly women who manage guest-houses.⁸⁵

Sex-disaggregated data was collected during the project. **Needs of vulnerable groups** due to gender and ethnicity were respected and most of the components were inclusive. They considered the realistic needs of target communities and needs of poor population, especially within the pilots targeting land erosion prevention, improving the capacities of women in rural areas by addressing the need for sustainable pastures, ecosystem services and pilot actions targeting support to milk producers in Syunik. Community women actively engaged in afforestation activities and received payment for their work in Mets Mantash village (Armenia).⁸⁶ Also in Azerbaijan, gender aspects and consideration of vulnerable and poor stakeholders were built into the different activities, including training and cost-benefit assessments.⁸⁷ In Georgia, the project helped embed the gender considerations in its strategy documents and processes of forest management and spatial planning, and considered the relevance of decision-making and land and natural resource use for women.⁸⁸ Overall, there has only been one explicit complaint that suggested expansion of the project's scope '...to better meet partner's needs...'⁸⁹.

In summary, **the project strategy is very well designed to address the target groups' core problems and needs**. The core problem is highly relevant and the project addresses important priority areas, building on previously existing workstreams at the partner organisations. Pilots started with detailed and participative needs assessments. The project approach reduces gender-specific disadvantages, especially in rural areas. Overall, the project's suitability to address the needs of target groups was rated as very successful with 30 out of 30 points.

Assessment dimension 3: The project is adequately designed to achieve the chosen objective.

The project was based on results models developed for the three countries and at the regional level, with regular updates for the country models. The gap in updating the regional results model and the non-existence of a physical results model for the overall project could be criticised. The system boundary is properly defined.

In retrospect, the project design might have been less ambitious and allowed concentration on one economic land-use sector (such as grazing or forestry) in all three countries. It could have theoretically improved the magnitude of specific results and impacts, the development of tools and the exchange between countries. However, ambition has also been a positive project element and partners were interested in addressing more than one sector.

The predecessor evaluation identified three major risks for sustainability (see above in the text). These are reflected by the project design's **risk assessment**⁹⁰. They have continued to be relevant during the project implementation⁹¹ and have been addressed significantly by **risk mitigation measures** based on at least six-monthly assessments. The measures are founded on results-based monitoring and project tools such as training and steering through undersigning Memorandums of Understanding, regular reporting to partners, frequent

document. page 14

⁸⁵ GIZ/SET (2018): Evaluation of IbiS Pilot Projects in the Akhmeta Municipality, Georgia. Authors: Irakli Kochlamazashvili, Salome Gelashvili & Anja Salzer. Unpublished document, page 35; also positive response on a proper needs assessment from INT18 with final beneficiaries, INT19 with final beneficiaries, INT20 with partner organisation and INT26 with final beneficiaries

⁸⁶ INT13 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT17 with final beneficiaries, INT34, INT36 and INT44 with partner organisations

⁸⁷ Daniel Kieling (2018), Cost-benefit analyses of integrated biodiversity management practices in four pilot areas of the south Caucasus" Unpublished document. AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IbiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page.

⁸⁸ INT08, INT09, INT13, INT15, INT16 with partner organisation

⁸⁹ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IbiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 34, and INT13 with partner organisation

⁹⁰ GIZ, 2015. Project proposal TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IbiS) Project number: 2015.2101.2, page 20-21, also INT10 with other stakeholders

⁹¹ As indicated by INT39 with other stakeholders, INT32 with other stakeholders, INT17 with other stakeholders and in Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IbiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, pages 17, 24, 25 and 26

meetings with partners and stakeholders – generally called in by the respective government partner – improved donor coordination and the formation of specific working or support groups.⁹² In the case of Georgia, where IBiS was located at the partner premises, informal communication included high levels of government and partner capacity has increased as a consequence of IBiS. However, **understeering by one of the political partners** beyond the control of GIZ – this was a regional project not requested by the participating countries⁹³ – had combined with a lack of clear commitment to international cooperation with Western donors and highly centralised decision-making processes⁹⁴ hampered the project implementation. The project team addressed and finally resolved this issue. In regard to adequate resources and tools for addressing the regional output D, the exchange was judged by some stakeholders as very useful but ‘limited’⁹⁵, while it is a ‘prerequisite for building trust and cooperation between countries’⁹⁶ and fostering better transboundary resource management.

As a concept, the **project was well-designed to achieve the set objective**. Risks were accurately identified and tackled, which has been reflected in many interviews with partners and stakeholders. The project design was successfully adapted to the module objective, though it might be considered highly ambitious. The project results models have been well developed and updated for the three countries, though an overall model has not been generated (17 out of 20 points).

Assessment dimension 4: The project design was adapted to changes in line with requirements and readapted where applicable.

The **project deliberately followed the partner structures, processes and governance**; and made an initial mapping of partner-driven processes that were screened for engagement, which assured ownership from the beginning. The close contact with partners was valuable for identifying opportunities and acting on them.⁹⁷ A KOMPASS assessment was carried out in early 2019 to allow for the ‘incorporation of views and perspectives of political and implementing partners as well as stakeholders and beneficiaries into the programme’s result-based monitoring system’⁹⁸.

The **two main adaptations** to the project refer to the incorporation of a new output E project specific for Georgia as requested by the partner⁹⁹; and the intensification of work with the Azerbaijan Ministry of Agriculture. This is because the ‘cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment... was discontinued because its Production Policy Division was dissolved, and the newly-established Division for Organisation of Services and Risk Assessment has not yet expressed any need for advisory services. Together with the Ministry of Agriculture, a list of 14 environmental indicators for agriculture has been developed... and work remains positive...’¹⁰⁰ In addition, other opportunities have been exploited by providing policy development support, especially in Georgia¹⁰¹. In Armenia, the project had to deal with the change of personnel and responsibilities following the Velvet Revolution of 2018 which implied reforms in the national forestry system.¹⁰² Overall, not all the requests from partners in the three countries have been met and the project has not widened its scope.¹⁰³

In summary, the original project approach has been mainly implemented according to the project offer but **significant (new output E) and much-valued adaptation** has been undertaken by the project team after deliberation with partners and stakeholders, aiming to reduce project implementation risks and to address external

⁹² Reflected in GIZ (2019) IBiS project Georgia. Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure. 12/2015 – 11/2019. Tbilisi, 08/2019 (update). Unpublished document, and indicated by WS01 with GIZ, WS02 with GIZ, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT14 with GIZ and INT31 with other stakeholders.

⁹³ WS02 with GIZ, GIZ (2019) IBiS project Georgia. Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure. 12/2015 – 11/2019. Tbilisi, 08/2019 (update). Unpublished document. Page 1

⁹⁴ WS02 with GIZ, GIZ (2019) IBiS project Azerbaijan. Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure Baku, 01/2019. Unpublished document. Page 1

⁹⁵ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page.32, also INT15 with partner organisation

⁹⁶ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 32

⁹⁷ WS01 with GIZ, INT15 with partner organisation

⁹⁸ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 9

⁹⁹ GIZ (2017): Änderungsangebot 3 July 2017. Unpublished document.

¹⁰⁰ GIZ (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus. Progress report 3, pages 5 and 14

¹⁰¹ INT15 with partner organisation

¹⁰² WS01 with GIZ

¹⁰³ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 34

conditions such as institutional changes and new policy opportunities. Thus, the project has followed the initial requirements but has also shown flexibility to adapt; this is rated as very successful with **20 out of 20 points**.

Table 3: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: relevance

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and Rating
Relevance	The project design ¹⁰⁴ is in line with the relevant strategic reference frameworks.	30 out of 30 points
	The project design matches the needs of the target group(s).	30 out of 30 points
	The project is adequately designed to achieve the chosen project objective.	17 out of 20 points
	The project design was adapted to changes in line with requirements and readapted where applicable.	20 out of 20 points
Overall score and rating		Score: 97 out of 100 points Rating: Level 1 highly successful

4.3 Effectiveness

Evaluation basis and design for assessing effectiveness

Allocated under the effectiveness criterion, the evaluation aimed to analyse the extent to which the project has achieved its desired objectives (assessment dimension 1) and the degree that its measures have contributed to its objectives based on the project indicators (assessment dimension 2). The latter was mainly based on contribution analysis, while four key causal relations were selected for in-depth scrutiny. The evaluation of effectiveness also covered unintended results (assessment dimension 3).

The evaluation basis consisted of the selection of specific hypotheses of the results model (see below). The design was a theory-based contribution analysis and the empirical methods included use of information from available documents and interviews, carried out to ensure triangulation of data.

Assessment dimension 1: The project achieves the objective on time in accordance with the project objective indicators agreed upon in the contract.

The evaluation team has assessed to what extent the agreed project objective (outcome) has been achieved, measured against the objective indicators and if additional indicators are needed to reflect the project objective adequately. This required a comparison between the current status and the targets of the outcome indicators. To set the basis for the later assessment, in the inception phase indicators were examined for their SMART-ness (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timebound). The table below shows the assessment of the three module objective indicators¹⁰⁵, plus an additional indicator for outcome D – which is not covered by the MO indicators – to set the basis for evaluating part of the regional activities.

¹⁰⁴ The 'project design' encompasses project objective and theory of change (ToC = GIZ results model = graphic illustration and narrative results hypotheses) with outputs, activities, instruments and results hypotheses as well as the implementation strategy (e.g. methodological approach, CD-strategy, results hypotheses).

¹⁰⁵ On the basis the report GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document and of the (partially outdated) online monitoring system.

Table 4: Assessment of module objective indicators

Project objective indicator according to the offer / original indicator	Assessment according to SMART criteria/assessment	Adapted project objective indicator
<p>MO1: In two countries, national inter-sectoral bodies submit to decision-makers two recommendations each on introducing country-wide standards for balancing different interests, and for conflict resolution related to the management of biodiversity and ecosystems services. The role of women is explicitly addressed.</p> <p>Base value: 0 Target value: 2 in 2 countries each Source: Project monitoring plan</p>	<p>The indicator is specific (two countries, two recommendations for standards by intersectoral bodies), measurable (by GIZ, when informed about such activity or observed through official gazette or meeting minutes), achievable, relevant for conflict resolution and biodiversity management in land-use and time-bound to the finalisation of the project.</p> <p>However, different elements weaken the specificity: submission from national intersectoral bodies to decision-makers and how it addresses the role of women. These need validation in the reporting.</p>	<p>No adaptation needed</p>
<p>MO2: In two countries, two new national strategies or resolutions have been passed. Both contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the national environmental information systems.</p> <p>Base value: 0 Target value: 2 in 2 countries each Source: Project monitoring plan/Official gazette</p>	<p>The indicator is specific (two national strategies or resolutions in two countries; though it should be clearer if the indicator refers to either two or four strategies or resolutions overall), measurable (by GIZ) from following the official gazette, achievable (though project-external factors can have significant impact), relevant (for environmental protection and resource conservation, ecological sustainability and biodiversity convention) and time-bound to the finalisation of the project. There might be constraints on adopting the strategies or resolutions.</p>	<p>In two countries, two new national strategies or resolutions each have been passed.</p>
<p>MO3: In two countries, local representatives of the target groups in the pilot areas (both women and men) confirm that their satisfaction with the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services has risen by two points on a scale from 1 – 10.</p> <p>Base value: different for the pilot areas Target value: +2 Source: Project monitoring plan/Representative survey</p>	<p>The indicator is specific (increase of satisfaction by two points), measurable (by GIZ) through surveys, achievable, relevant (for environmental protection and resource conservation, as well as stakeholder engagement and replication) and timebound to the finalisation of the project.</p> <p>The only concern in practice is that the surveyed participants do not necessarily coincide and there might be a deviation of baseline or target perception. This cannot be addressed at this stage.</p>	<p>No adaptation is needed.</p>
<p>D2: On a web-based networking platform 50 participants of events for regional exchange share 150 posts (documents, comments) in three thematic groups.</p> <p>Base value: 0 Target value: 1 network, 50 participants, 150 posts on 3 thematic groups Source: GIZ reporting and result monitoring; Surveys and website statistics</p>	<p>This indicator is specific to a limit (assuming that all three quantifiers combined need to be achieved), measurable (by GIZ or on Facebook, by relatively simple counting), relevant – given the importance of social media in the region amid Covid travel restrictions However, more quality-related indicators such as surveys, website statistics and sources of the posting would have been useful to assess the quality of interaction and ‘network building’ and time-bound to the finalisation of the project. It might have been useful to clarify if the platform will count with 50 participants or if 50 participants shall have shares in the posts. No adaptation is needed.</p>	<p>No adaptation needed.</p>

To arrive at conclusions about the achievement of the objective indicators, the evaluation team built on secondary and primary data sources. During a qualitative content analysis, key project documents and relevant external documents are reviewed and examined for evidence regarding the indicators. The consultants further intend to collect and triangulate perceptions from key stakeholders, including (i) the project team management

and team members, (ii) key partners identified, and (iii) other relevant stakeholders (see Chapter 5.1).

Assessment dimension 2: The activities and outputs of the project contributed substantially to achieving the project's objective (outcome).

A contribution analysis was found to be most suitable considering real-world constraints for assessing how the activities and achieved results (outputs) of the project contributed to the project objective. The revised results-model that includes risks and assumptions has guided the analysis. Selection criteria for the hypotheses comprised the project's effort. During the inception mission the project discussed the feasibility of implementing contribution analyses in the given time frame as well as the general relevance of the selected hypotheses for the results model. These include the following:

- **Armenia** (Hypothesis H1A, bold brown colour arrows in Figure 1): Result AM01 contributes to Result AM04¹⁰⁶, based on results hypothesis: 'The use of improved framework documents and the information system contributes to the implementation capacities of ministries and their subordinate bodies'¹⁰⁷, with both results allocated within output B. This hypothesis is linked to the module objective indicator MO2. Key actors are the Bioresources Management Agency (BMA) and the Forest Monitoring Centre (of the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure) and the Pasture Platform for AM01, and the Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia for AM04.
- **Azerbaijan** (H2A, bold red colour arrows in Figure 1): Result AZ01 contributes to outputs A and B due to the hypothesis: 'Demonstrated socio-economic benefits motivate national sectoral and inter-sectoral bodies to improve policy framework based on pilot experiences'. Furthermore, they contribute to the Module Objective based on the hypothesis: 'The demonstration of socio-economic benefits from IMBES is an incentive to upscale IMBES approaches'¹⁰⁸. This hypothesis is linked to the module objective indicator MO3. Key actors are the forest department of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and local institutions and communities in Ismayilli for AZ01.
- **Georgia** (H3A, bold green colour arrows in Figure 1): Result GE01 contributes to output B¹⁰⁹ due to the hypothesis: 'National decisions provide the 'mandate' for intersectoral bodies'¹¹⁰. This hypothesis is linked to the module objective indicator MO1. Based on the stakeholder mapping document¹¹¹ some of the key bodies are: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Biodiversity and Forest Department, National Forestry Agency (NFA), Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus, local community members and landowners.
- At the **regional level** (H4A, bold blue colour arrows in Figure 1): Output B contributes to output D due to the hypothesis: 'Local level experiences in the three countries are taken seriously on regional level, and vice versa'¹¹². This is based on practice that adapts concepts to conditions in other countries by local experts (knowledge transfer) and then applies them, organises events on selected issues, and shares technical expertise among experts and managers through web-based networking platforms. Apart from experts and managers, the main actors for this hypothesis are the executing partners for the activities and subcontractors. This hypothesis is linked to the indicator D2.

A variety of data sources and data collection and analysis methods play a part in collecting evidence for the

¹⁰⁶ Activities linked in the Operational Plan to Indicator 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other" plays a crucial role in this hypothesis and will be analysed with most depth.

¹⁰⁷ GIZ (2017): Results model for Armenia – Explanation of hypothesis. Unpublished document.

¹⁰⁸ GIZ (2019): Explanation results model Azerbaijan 7 August 2019. Unpublished document.

¹⁰⁹ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document. Page 101.

¹¹⁰ RH Consulting (2016): Workshop Report of the first Results-based Monitoring Workshop for IBiS Georgia. "Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus" (IBiS). Tbilisi and Gudauri, Georgia, December 11-14, 2015. 20 pages; page 14. Unpublished document. There might be additional intermediate steps between Result GE01 and Output B, via Result GE06 because of the hypothesis: "Part of national framework improves local framework conditions for sustainable agriculture and pasture management" and to Result GE 05 due to the hypothesis: "New Forest Code provides safeguard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in pilot areas", which will also be looked at.

¹¹¹ GIZ (2019). Success Factor 2 – Cooperation, 12/2015 – 11/2019. Unpublished document.

¹¹² Online results monitoring system

outcomes, influencing factors and conflicting explanations. This includes the offline project result monitoring system including underlying documents, the KOMPASS report, a review of activities on the online networking platform¹¹³, interviews during the inception and evaluation mission with participating and non-participating stakeholders, and a survey targeted to Facebook group participants (with ‘topic relevance’ as selection criteria) to trigger pending information and confirm hypotheses and contributions. Alternative hypotheses have not been identified during the evaluation process.

The evaluation team has compiled all qualitative findings, using the structure of the evaluation matrix. In the first step, notes were taken during the actual interviews, with some recording included. The evaluation team used the on-paper and pencil technique to identify and code data as the interview progressed and prepared notes once the interview was over – at the end of each day while impressions were still vivid. Quantitative monitoring data was analysed descriptively. Statements on the counterfactual situation were gathered by interviews asking for significant changes, which were integrated into the assessment. The evaluation matrix was used to code all evidence marking relevant items and all relevant and conflictive statements, which were transferred to the analytical evaluation report text and used as a basis to evaluate the dimensions.

Assessment dimension 3: The occurrence of additional – not formally agreed – positive results were monitored and new opportunities for positive results were seized. No project-related negative results occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.

As the third step, the evaluation also assessed unintended results under the effectiveness criteria. Unintended results could, for instance, refer to aspects that have influenced the attitude positively or negatively, the subjective norm or the perceived behavioural control of national actors. The evaluation team built on existing reports¹¹⁴ and the inception mission. Further information was gathered during interviews.

Analysis and assessment regarding effectiveness

Assessment dimension 1: The project achieves the objective on time in accordance with the project objective indicators agreed upon in the contract

The project objective indicators are consistent, as indicated previously. They have widely been achieved, with two project objective indicators fully achieved, one partially achieved, and one regional indicator is partially achieved. The project’s self-assessment of achieving milestones and indicators reflects good progress, but also the presence of minor and major deviations and one ‘off-track’ indicator case, which required revised planning.¹¹⁵ The following overview of the progress (by half-yearly monitoring periods) in achieving different milestones of the module objective indicators; those for the regional actions as well as for the associated key country indicators can be provided.

Figure 2: Achievement of module objective indicators and indicators for regional actions and the associated key country indicators along the six-monthly project milestones (MP). Source: Information from GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 12/2019. Unpublished document, with further review comments by IBiS team

Indicator	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	MP8	Legend
MO1									achieved
AM 3a									on track/partially achieved
AZ 5a									minor deviation
GE 2a									major deviation
MO2									off track, new focus
AM 1a									not assessed
AZ 4a									not applicable
GE 1a									
MO3									
AM 2e									
AZ 1a									
GE 3a									
D1									
D2									

In Armenia, the project supported the Ministry of Environment in its initiative to develop a national biodiversity

¹¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1334694186549959/>

¹¹⁴ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document; Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document.

¹¹⁵ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 12/2019. Unpublished document

information system based on the status assessment of the biodiversity monitoring, which facilitated a participative consultation process for elaborating its concept and roadmap. This serves as a basis for the corresponding electronic system development. The following strategies have also been developed with the support of the project: the Atlas for Armenian Butterflies as an element for biodiversity monitoring, the amateur fishing and hunting permit online management system that is now operational, and elaboration of the Armenian Bird Atlas.¹¹⁶ In **Azerbaijan**, cost-benefit analyses for two incentive mechanisms to implement sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level (Indicator A3 for result AZ01 under output A, contributing to indicator MO3) have been developed. The analyses are documented¹¹⁷ and address the following two mechanisms: erosion control measures and creation of hazelnut plantations.

In **Georgia**, project result GE01 and indicators of pilot cases 3e (GE03), 6f (GE06), 5d (GE05) as contribution to indicator MO are consistent. They have been achieved as documented by GIZ and partner sources¹¹⁸; The add-on of the project result GE01 such as the forest code is adopted by now. Furthermore, the recommendations on land degradation neutrality targets, windbreak policy and forest sector reform strategy and action plan (integrated in the national environmental action plan) are approved, while the education for sustainable development strategy & action plan developed by the two ministries and the protected area policy developed by the working group are not yet approved. In regard to the pilot cases the spatial plan of Akhmeta municipality, the forest management plan and pasture management plan for the Tusheti protected landscape are developed and approved.¹¹⁹

At the **regional level**, the indicator D1 has been partially achieved and indicator D2 has not been achieved. Though the web-based networking platform at Facebook has more than 50 participants (in fact 243 users), the number of posts reached 47 instead of the planned 150 posts, even if several thematic groups were addressed (more than three: biodiversity and land restoration, integrated erosion control, man and biosphere protected areas) and the main posts were read by about 50 members each. However, only a limited group of members have been active in posting. Activity had much declined at the end of the project, with only two responses received on a survey posted by the evaluators.¹²⁰

In summary, two module objective indicators have been fully achieved, one partially achieved and one regional indicator is partially achieved. With a more detailed look, several result indicators at output level have not been achieved, mainly due to aspects out of the scope of the project – such as the adoption of regulation. Despite these shortfalls, significant progress has been made in all areas. This has been confirmed by interviews with partners and this progress has been taken into account for the overall rating. In conclusion, the project has made very positive achievements (35 of 40 points).

Assessment dimension 2: The activities and outputs of the project contributed substantially to the project objective achievement/outcome.

¹¹⁶ GIZ (2019): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document, page 13. INT34, INT36 and INT44 with partner organisation, INT50 with other stakeholders

¹¹⁷ Daniel Kieling (2018), Cost-benefit analyses of integrated biodiversity management practices in four pilot areas of the south Caucasus" Unpublished document.

¹¹⁸ As included in the result: 1) the Forest Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan was integrated in the National Environmental Action Plan NEAP (page 83) Particularly, target 3: Capacity building for forest policy development, management and control entities (Source: Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia (2018): Third National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia (2017-2021). 2) Amended Law of Georgian Red List is available online. Parliament of Georgia. 2018. Law of Georgian Red List. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4433910?publication=0>. 3) Approved Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document is available online. Akhmeta Municipality. 2019. Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4744404?publication=0>. 4) Amended Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning is available online. Government of Georgia. 2019. Resolution 260 "Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning". http://gov.ge/files/525_72147_587258_260.pdf. 5) Amended Forest Code is available online. Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture. 2020. Forest Code. <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/246180?> and <https://info.parliament.ge/#law-drafting/17315>. 6) Forest Management Plan for Tusheti Protected Landscape is available at Akhmeta Municipality website: <http://akhmeta.gov.ge/ge/tushetis-daculi-landshap-tis-tqis-martvis-gegmis-proektis-sajaro-ganxilvistivis>. 7) Amended law on Biodiversity is available at IBiS DMS and at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 8) Amended law on hunting is available at IBiS DMS and at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 9) Documents on Political level and Management level Criteria's & Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) are available at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 10) Amended Bylaws (N241, N242, N179) are available at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 11) Policy on Protected Areas is available at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 12) Windbreak policy is available at the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture (MoEPA). 13) Education for Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan is available at the Environmental Information and Education Centre (EIEC). Further statements made by INT08 with other stakeholders, INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT11 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT32 with other stakeholders, INT33 with other stakeholders, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT40 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders, WS01 with GIZ

¹¹⁹ For example, INT12 with partner organisation, INT13 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT17 with final beneficiaries, INT32 with other stakeholders, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT39 with other stakeholders, INT40 with other stakeholders, WS01 with GIZ

¹²⁰ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 12/2019. Unpublished document, SUR1

Overall, the activities and outputs of the **project contributed substantially** to the project objective achievements due to steering and advisory work that placed biodiversity and ecosystem services on the relevant agendas. Financial and technical inputs were activated and communications improved, as documented by the project monitoring system and interviews, with no negative responses. There was an indication that similar processes without project support (for example the Telavi spatial planning document in Georgia) require longer timeframes.¹²¹ The project expected to indirectly benefit 30,000 households. It has accounted for 26,000 (rural) income measure beneficiaries (minimum of 500 women and 175 young people)¹²² and 6,900 training and education beneficiaries, including 300 women and 4,500 young people; this is lower than planned but it is a significant figure. Regarding the **assessed hypotheses** (see above and in Figure 1), the following contribution analysis findings can be listed.

In **Armenia**, the results hypothesis (H1A): 'The use of improved framework documents and of the information system contributes to the implementation capacities of ministries and their subordinated bodies' can be **confirmed**. The judgment of the improved implementation capacities has been primarily based on qualitative interview statements, as well as the quantitative monitoring of the project, carrying out the short-term training of 441 persons, which includes 101 women.¹²³ With the development and installation of the NFMIS and a geographical information system-based online information platform, the project has contributed to overcoming the lack of timely and consistent data on forest resources of Armenia. The platform was built to enable national capacities on national forest inventory, mapping, forest management planning and monitoring. It serves to improve the capacities of local forest enterprises, Hayantar and Environmental Monitoring Centre on operational forest planning and management by providing a common database for its users, facilitating processing and exchange of information as well as monitoring, control and reporting of forest activities. The system is set out for forest management practitioners and decision makers. It is contributing to more transparency and sustainable forest management throughout the sector, enabling local decision-makers in forestry with hands-on data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting tools promoting sustainable forest management.

In the field of hunting and fishing, an electronic license application system was established to fight illegal hunting and advisory services on limiting fishing seasons were provided. In accordance to output indicator 2.1, progress occurred in terms of policy recommendations based on monitoring data.

The butterfly atlas (based on monitoring data for butterflies) was used to update the Red List of Threatened Species. Thanks to monitoring data on animal species that can be legally hunted, the online licensing system can use real-time data. The new forestry network was finalised and handed over to the Ministry of Environment. The project provided support in revising environmental laws, including the legal gap analysis of regulations for flora and fauna, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Without the project, the building of regional expertise, networks and the grassroots emergence of good practice would have taken much longer or not even realised.¹²⁴

In **Azerbaijan**, the hypothesis (H2A) that 'demonstrated socio-economic benefits motivate national sectoral and inter-sectoral bodies to improve policy framework based on pilot experiences' **cannot yet be confirmed**. Even though 'the benefits exceed the costs many times over... [and] the break-even point is reached after only a few years... the main constraint on replicability is the fact that measures often involve a substantial initial investment'¹²⁵, which so far has not been established in the policy framework. In addition, systemic weaknesses in intersectoral coordination were still visible.¹²⁶ The positive note is that the demonstrated benefits have raised interest at the national level to establish a basis for replication in the next five-year plan.¹²⁷ The primary enabling factor has been community engagement in the activities, which includes additional measures to ensure

¹²¹ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 12/2019. Unpublished document, Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, pages 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 26; INT08 with other stakeholders, INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT11 with other stakeholders, INT16 with partner organisation, INT17 with final beneficiaries, INT32 with other stakeholders, INT33 with other stakeholders, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT39 with other stakeholders, INT40 with other stakeholders

¹²² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 46.

¹²³ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 46.

¹²⁴ GIZ (2019): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document, page 13. INT34, INT36 and INT44 with partner organisation, INT50 with other stakeholders

¹²⁵ GIZ (2019): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document

¹²⁶ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Page 24

¹²⁷ INT20 with partner organisation, INT21 with partner organisation, INT22 with other stakeholders, INT24 with other stakeholders

the sustainability (such as fencing, construction of small gabions, distribution of sainfoin seeds) and negotiations for the land use after erosion control.¹²⁸

In **Georgia**, the assessed hypothesis (H3A) that 'the implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved' because 'national decisions provide the "mandate" for intersectoral bodies'¹²⁹ can be **confirmed**. The technical work carried out under the project with partners and stakeholders towards decisions has significantly led to the Parliament of Georgia adopting intersectoral regulation.¹³⁰ Six recommendations¹³¹ from three committees have been developed, based on the existing mandates; two of them (indicator value) have been fully adopted. However, as indicated previously other framework conditions are necessary, such as the need for broad stakeholder support and ongoing political interest. The project has addressed these by activities targeting the formation of working groups, awareness-raising and advocacy support.¹³² Enabling factors for this contribution are the existence of national frameworks as guiding documents such as national environment action programme (2017-2021) that integrate the forest sector reform strategy and action plan (FSR SAP) supporting its implementation and the existence of national frameworks. The international commitments relevant to environment aspects supported the development of the laws and regulations. Without the project, the development and approval of the laws/regulations and strategies would be slower or not even possible (such as forest code approval and elaboration of biodiversity law).¹³³

At the **regional level**, the hypothesis (H4A) that 'local-level experiences in the three countries are taken seriously on regional level, and vice versa' can be **confirmed**. Examples are the transfer of erosion sensitivity mapping approaches from Georgia to Armenia and Azerbaijan, the inspiration by the forest program consultation process in Georgia for the pasture management platform in Armenia, regional indicator discussions, or the exchange between Armenia and Georgia on biodiversity monitoring.¹³⁴ The project has also acted as 'arms, ears and eyes in the region'¹³⁵ of global bodies such as UN organisations, which adds value for a serious approach. In any case, the hypothesis is only valid when underpinned by relevant needs assessment and targeted activities, such those also undertaken by the project.

Given that progress would have been absent or significantly slower without the project¹³⁶, an alternative hypothesis could be: Regional-level action drives the replication and adaptation of local-level experiences in and between the three countries. There is not a major difference between the two hypotheses, though the new one

¹²⁸ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 12/2019. Unpublished document, Page 64

¹²⁹ The hypothesis (H3A) that "the implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved" because "national decisions provide the 'mandate' for intersectoral bodies" is based on the understanding that intersectoral decisions shall be taken to ensure convergence of the sectors, in particular with biodiversity. To underpin the theory, several indicators were formulated by the project: 1a (M02): Until November 2019, two new national strategies or resolutions have been passed. Both contain conclusions derived from data provided by the national environmental information systems; 1b (B3): Until November 2019, two sectoral regulations or by-laws for sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services are approved by the government; 1c (ADA 1.1): Until November 2017, a set of national rules and standards for sustainable forest management agreed in the NFP process and according to international benchmarks has been submitted to the relevant decision makers for approval; 1d (IEC): Until March 2018, assessment tools of erosion hazard and pasture conditions are included in one national planning document and/or regulation; 1e (new) Until November 2019, an ESD strategy is developed in a participatory and intersectoral way; 1b, after ADA co-financing was over, became part of 1c and was followed-up there, 1e was integrated in 1a and followed-up there, these changes are documented in the results monitor and key information about the achievement of the target values are also documented in Results Monitor. According to the information provided in Results Monitoring and interviews, the indicators can be analysed as following: Analysis: 1a (M02): The key update in response to the target value of the indicator: the Windbreak policy was developed with IBiS support based on windbreak monitoring data and the forest and land use atlas of Georgia. The policy was accepted by MoEPA. Besides, IBiS supported development of the FSR SAP that considers forest cover map and wood market study. The FSR SAP was integrated in the third National Environment Action Programme (2017-2021) and approved by the Government of Georgia in May 2018. 1b (3b): The key update in response to the target value of the indicator: the sectoral regulations passed are amendments in Law of Georgia on Red List, amendments in Forest Code, revised forest related regulations 242 and 179. Sub-legal act on "Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning" considering IBiS supported Guiding Outline for Spatial Planning. Besides, important drafts as Biodiversity Law and Decree of the Minister on C&I for SFM. 1d (IEC): The key update in response to the target value of the indicator: The Soil Erosion Risk Model is suggested as the standard method for assessing land degradation (draft governmental decree on monitoring land degradations). Evaluation in detail: 1a (M02): Largely achieved. 1b (3b): Achieved. 1d (IEC): Largely achieved. Based on the valuation the hypothesis can be confirmed.

¹³⁰ INT10 with other stakeholders, INT11 with other stakeholders, INT15 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT17 with final beneficiaries, INT32 with other stakeholders, INT33 with other stakeholders, INT37 with other stakeholders, INT40 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders

¹³¹ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 12/2019. Unpublished document.

¹³² INT09 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders

¹³³ INT15 and INT16 with partner organisations; INT40 with other stakeholders

¹³⁴ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 08/2019. Unpublished document. INT15 with partner organisation. Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Page 29

¹³⁵ INT01 with other stakeholders

¹³⁶ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT01, INT02, INT05, INT06, INT08, INT16 with partner organisation

would put emphasis on the role and responsibility of regional actors and more effectively explain the relevance of regional activities undertaken within the project.

At the outset the project has identified important implementation risks, such as economic growth at the expense of the environmental dimension of sustainability, high turnover at government level, intersectoral conflicts, opposing interests and poor coordination of demands among partner organisations and donors.¹³⁷ A crucial **factor for success** has been the incorporation of these risks, along with appropriate mitigation measures in the project design. This includes the steering structure and operational plans such as developing activities based on pre-existing workstreams at the partner institutions, regular partner and management meetings and actions, and cooperation with other national institutions, donors and funding streams.¹³⁸

In an overview, the following information for the assessed effectiveness hypotheses can be summarised:

Table 5: Effectiveness contribution analysis overview. Own elaboration.

Code	Contribution	Hypothesis	Assessment
H1A	Result AM01 (The legal, institutional and technical framework is improved) contributes to result AM04 (The implementation capacity of relevant ministries and their subordinated bodies regarding the improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) (Output B).	The use of improved framework documents and the information system contributes to the implementation capacities of ministries and their subordinated bodies.	Confirmed
H2A	Result AZ01 (Socio-economic benefits of improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services are demonstrated in Ismayilli) contributes to outputs A (Instruments and coordination processes for the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services at local level are tested) and B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved). Furthermore, they contribute to the module objective (The inter-sectoral management of biodiversity and ecosystem services, based on robust data, is improved).	To output: demonstrated socio-economic benefits to motivate national sectoral and inter-sectoral bodies to improve policy framework based on pilot experiences. To outcome: the demonstration of socio-economic benefits from IMBES is an incentive to upscale IM-BES approaches.	Cannot yet be confirmed
H3A	Result GE01 (The legal, institutional and policy framework for improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) contributes to output B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved).	National decisions provide the 'mandate' for intersectoral bodies.	Confirmed
H4A	Output B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) contributes to output D (The regional exchange on sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services to be improved).	Local-level experiences in the three countries are taken seriously on regional level, and vice versa.	Confirmed, though an alternative hypothesis with weight to regional action could explain the process better

Other external **enabling factors** that have contributed to achieving the project's objectives manifest in the heightened public interest in environmental issues, community engagement and mobilisation across all age ranges, engagement and support from partners, the growth of national frameworks for providing a strategic

¹³⁷ GIZ (2015): Project proposal TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBiS) Project number: 2015.2101.2, page 20-21. Further details and similar comments from interviews in Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Pages 17, 19, 24.

¹³⁸ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document and WS01 with GIZ, WS02 with GIZ and WS03 with GIZ, INT03 with other stakeholders

roadmap with set targets, and international commitments relevant to biodiversity conservation. These have been addressed by the project.¹³⁹ The risk of failure has appeared in the Azerbaijan pilot when the community lost engagement due to technical failures in irrigation or fencing, but the final feedback from beneficiaries and partners shows that proper action was taken by the project.¹⁴⁰

Without the project, the building of regional expertise and networks as well as the grassroots emergence of good practice experiences would have been much slower or not even realised. The set-up methodologies would have started only four years later and policy support action for sustainable land-use would not have taken place on time.¹⁴¹ Such a significant contribution has been explicitly recognised – even in writing – by project partners¹⁴².

The overall activities and outputs of the project contributed to achieving its objectives due to steering and advisory work (such as placing biodiversity and ecosystem services on agendas), financial and technical inputs and activated and improved communications. Out of the four assessed hypotheses, the ones for Georgia and at regional level can be confirmed, though it requires certain framework conditions, such as the need for stakeholder support and continued interest. The hypothesis assessed in Azerbaijan cannot yet be confirmed as valid. The most important factor for success has been the risk management embedded in the project design, steering structure and operational plans. These include the development of activities based on pre-existing workstreams at the partner institutions, regular partner and management meetings and actions – including decisions on staff and partner support – and cooperation with other national institutions, donors and funding streams. External enabling factors that have contributed to achieving the project's objectives: increased public interest in environmental issues, community engagement, engagement and support from partners and the existence of national frameworks and international commitments. These have all been addressed by the project. As recognised explicitly by several partners, without the project the different workstreams would have been much slower or not even realised. Altogether, the contribution of the project to the assessed results is rated with 29 out of 30 points.

Assessment dimension 3: The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results was monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results were seized. No project-related (unintended) negative results occurred at impact level – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.

The project **self-assessment on unintended results**¹⁴³ includes a list of 14 positive and 3 negative results. On the positive side, another six unintended results were identified during the evaluation. Out of these overall 23 unintended results, 5 positive and 2 negative results can be associated with the output level; and the others with the impact level. These address extended awareness of the Bern Convention and the European Union Habitats Directive, improvements of policy-making processes (inter-institutional mediation), improved personal contacts and the development of a socially-relevant accessibility study for Akhmeta, Georgia. The negative results cover increased competition among NGOs and tensions between intervention and non-intervention territories (where the project acted and where not). The first one had been assessed according to its consequences for project interventions and a capacity-building exercise (strategy development) had been developed to overcome this conflict, which succeeded at least partially¹⁴⁴. The second one lies out of the scope of project action as it is strongly driven by the territorial reform process.

The **project monitoring**¹⁴⁵ refers 18 times to major deviations and 126 times to minor deviations. The report also reflects that a frequent reason for major delays is lack of enthusiasm from partner institutions and the project team's flexibility in shifting to another topic of partner interest: 'IBiS decided to let this indicator rest until

¹³⁹ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Pages 18, 19, 22, 23 and 25. GIZ (2019): Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure 12/2015 – 11/2019. Tbilisi, 08/2019 (update). Unpublished document

¹⁴⁰ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Page 23. INT03 with other stakeholders, INT18 with final beneficiaries, INT19 with final beneficiaries, INT21 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders

¹⁴¹ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT01, INT02, INT05, INT06, INT08, INT16 with partner organisation

¹⁴² For example, Republic of Armenia (2019): SIXTH NATIONAL REPORT TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

¹⁴³ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document. INT39 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders

¹⁴⁴ INT06 with other stakeholders

¹⁴⁵ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

[the partner]... shows interest in developing policy recommendations ... Therefore, IBiS primarily focused on building stronger working relations with [the partner]... in [another topic of the work programme]'. In two cases, major deviations were due to 'time constraints of GIZ IBiS team and limited staff'. This detailed monitoring reflects a transparent process and is linked to project risk management.

In general, the **team performance** was perceived¹⁴⁶ as very positive by partners and stakeholders and a contribution to preventing or mitigating risks. They describe the team as highly specialised, hard-working, creative, constructive, supportive, problem-solving and demand-driven, helpful and professional, and always eager to support. The team is seen as prepared to address ideas for pilot activities, and it shows a fruitful combination of international and local expertise and a 'learning by doing' approach.

Sporadic criticism refers to a lack of flexibility and adaptation, especially at the beginning of the project. one partner identified a weakness in the lack of guidance during the implementation process of policy documents. In the case of Azerbaijan, implementing programme activities without a cooperation agreement (due to the regional scope of the project) was extremely difficult.

Overall, **five positive and two negative unintended project results** have been detected at the output level. The positive results cover areas such as awareness-raising, increased data gathering and changes in making policy. The main negative result cites the project as a cause of competition between NGOs, which it has been partly addressed even though it is beyond the scope of the project itself. Altogether, the positive significantly outweighs the negative unintended results, and the project has taken action to reduce the primary negative unintended result even beyond the strict limits of its sphere. The assessment of additional results is rated with 29 out of 30 points.

Table 6: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: effectiveness

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score & Rating
Effectiveness	The project achieved the objective (outcome) on time in accordance with the project objective indicators. ¹⁴⁷	35 out of 40 points
	The activities and outputs of the project contributed substantially to achieving the project's objective (outcome). ¹⁴⁸	29 out of 30 points
	No project-related (unintended) negative results have occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.	29 out of 30 points
	The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results was monitored and opportunities for further positive results were seized.	
Overall score and rating		Score: 93 out of 100 points Rating: Level 1 highly successful

¹⁴⁶ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, Pages 34, 35, 36, 38, 39. WS02 with GIZ

¹⁴⁷ The first and the second evaluation dimensions are interrelated: if the contribution of the project to the objective achievement is low (2nd evaluation dimension) this must also be considered for assessing the first evaluation dimension.

¹⁴⁸ The first and the second evaluation dimensions are interrelated: if the contribution of the project to the objective achievement is low (2nd evaluation dimension) this must also be considered for assessing the first evaluation dimension.

4.4 Impact

Evaluation basis and design for assessing impact

This criterion examines whether the project contributes to achieving overall objectives that are not directly (at least not solely) attributable to the project.

Evaluation basis: The expected contributions of the project for the selected overarching development results (SDG15, SDG16; SDG1 and SDG17, see the revised results model in Figure 1) have been listed in the project proposal. No qualitative or quantitative baseline for the status of SDGs has been found for the three countries.

Evaluation design: To assess the impact, the evaluation team followed the evaluation matrix and first assessed changes at the impact level. This compared the expected impacts with the actual situation, including a review of unintended impacts. A contribution analysis of the project outcomes to the impact level was then applied, assessing the selected hypotheses (output B to SDG15, module objective to SDG1, output D to SDG16) for assessment dimension 2.

Evaluation method: The contribution analysis used available reports¹⁴⁹ and information from the project monitoring system and complemented these where needed for triangulation. It considered interviews with the most relevant partners and stakeholders for the selected hypotheses.

Assessment dimension 1: The intended overarching development results have occurred or are foreseen (plausible reasons).

The revised results model (Figure 1) reflects overarching development results (in accordance with the project proposal) and relevant SDGs¹⁵⁰; these have been built into the results model. The contribution has been primarily identified in qualitative terms (report, interviews) as contribution in terms of perception, and less in quantitative terms (number of people, size of area); no comparison could be developed in regard to the overall national progress or the remaining gap in achieving the national SDG targets.

Assessment dimension 2: The objective (outcome) of the project contributed to the occurred or foreseen overarching development results (impact).

The following selected hypotheses from the results model were examined in more detail to explain causal relationships between project results on output/outcomes and impact levels:

- Armenia (Hypothesis 1B, bold colour arrows in Figure 1): result AM01, result AM04¹⁵¹, and output B will contribute to the protection of environment and resources (UR-2). For SDG15, however, no hypothesis has been defined by the project for AM04. The project team has established a specific link between the output and impact level, despite the existing pathway through the outcome level; the more specific hypothesis has been assessed in order to identify more explicit arguments. In relation to contributions from AM01, the hypothesis is: 'Improvement of the institutional framework in the case of Armenia does not directly contribute to SDGs, but it improves capacities, which in return contributes to SDGs, particularly SDG 15, e.g. improving intersectoral coordination for IMBES.'¹⁵²
- Azerbaijan (H2B, red colour bold arrows in Figure 1): result AZ01, result AZ08¹⁵³ and outputs A and B will contribute to LE-2, GG-1 and SDG1, with the hypothesis: 'Better IMBES will provide livelihood

¹⁴⁹ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IbiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.; Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IbiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document.

¹⁵⁰ AHT Group (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus Monitoring of impact of IbiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. This is the first of two assessment reports.

¹⁵¹ Activities linked in the Operational Plan to Indicator 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other" plays a crucial role in this hypothesis and will be analysed with most depth.

¹⁵² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IbiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2; adapted to the specific activities underlying the selected chain

¹⁵³ including activities linked to the indicators A.1=2a (A concept for integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Ismayilli is developed, implemented and evaluated), A.1=2a (one rule for intersectoral coordination balancing different interests in the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is developed one pilot are in Ismayilli), and A3=1b (cost-benefit analysis for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level are carried out)

opportunities in the rural areas, which is an important aspect of rural development/poverty reduction¹⁵⁴.

- Georgia (H3B, green colour bold arrows in Figure 1): result GE01 and output B¹⁵⁵ would be contributing to the protection of environment and resources (UR-2), which leads to SDG15 (Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services) with the hypothesis: Legislation¹⁵⁶ provides the necessary – national - legal basis (here: for management and monitoring rules of the Emerald Network) as a means to better protect threatened habitats and species and to make the National Forest Inventory possible, as without it the inventory and monitoring of forest biodiversity would not be possible in the same way, making its protection more difficult.¹⁵⁷
- At the regional level (H4B, blue colour bold arrows in Figure 1): Output D: contributes to peace and security and SDG16 following the hypothesis: 'Regional dialogue will promote exchange and benchmarking of biodiversity actions, and strengthen capacities of professionals¹⁵⁸.'

Assessment dimension 3: The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level was monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results were seized. No project-related (unintended) negative results occurred at impact level – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.

A list of unintended results has been developed by GIZ¹⁵⁹ and its findings were complemented, assessed by the evaluators on whether they apply to the impact level, and checked through interviews with specific questions.

Analysis and assessment regarding impact

Assessment dimension 1: The intended overarching development results have occurred or are foreseen (plausible reasons).

The project proposal specifies the overarching development results where the project is meant to contribute, including gender equality (GG-1), participative development/good governance (PG/GG-1), protection of environment and resources (UR-2), the Convention on Biodiversity (BTR-2), combatting desertification (DES-1), climate change adaptation (KLA-1) and mitigation (KLM-1), poverty orientation (AO-1), rural development and food security (LE-2), peace and security (FS-1), and human rights (no code).¹⁶⁰

A two-step **external assessment** has been carried out by the project to assess its contributions to the SDGs, concluding that the project contributes at impact level to SDGs such as SDG1 (Rural development and poverty reduction), SDG 16 (Improved governance, human rights, peace and security), SDG13 (Contribution to climate change, adaptation and mitigation), SDG 15 (Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services) and SDG16 (Human rights, peace and security).

The assessment, based on interviews, concludes that 'overall the key representatives of ministries, universities, local authorities and partner projects and programmes in all three countries estimate that the many IBiS activities contribute positively to the relevant SDGs. The stakeholders highly appreciated the regional events that gave opportunities for exchange'¹⁶¹. Further SDG contributions – beyond the foreseen to SDG4 (Ensure

¹⁵⁴ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2

¹⁵⁵ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document. Page 101.

¹⁵⁶ e.g. Law on Biodiversity, Forest Code and respective subsidiary legislation, Law on Georgian Red List

¹⁵⁷ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2; adapted after discussion with the project team

¹⁵⁸ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

¹⁵⁹ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document.

¹⁶⁰ GIZ (2015): Projektangebot 14 July 2015. Unpublished document.

¹⁶¹ AHT Group (2019): Integrated Biodiversity Management. South Caucasus. Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Pages 22-26. Also confirmed by additional interviews as INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT13 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation

inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all)¹⁶², SDG11 (Sustainable cities and communities)¹⁶³ and SDG12 (Responsible consumption and production)¹⁶⁴ – could be identified in interviews.

An implementing partner also ‘praised the knowledge transfer on ecosystem services as life-changing personal experiences, resulting in behavioural changes of beneficiaries’ and the project led to changing peoples’ mind-sets ‘but also ... to a more active and enthusiastic community life’.¹⁶⁵ However, not all possible SDG impacts have been fully exploited. For example, the design of the Georgia forest database only includes statistical elements that could be relevant for impacts beyond SDG15 – such as effects on incomes (SDG1), climate change adaptation (SDG13) or gender equality, either directly or by crossing data with other information sources.¹⁶⁶ The project expected to indirectly benefit 30,000 households, and has accounted for 26,000 rural income measure beneficiaries (minimum of 500 women and 175 young people)¹⁶⁷ and 6,900 training and education beneficiaries, including 300 women and 4,500 young people, which is lower than planned though still significant.

The results address specific groups of population, such as young people through schools and academic institutions or marginalised and poor stakeholders in rural areas with training and the focus of interventions.¹⁶⁸ Important work has been developed to assess the costs and benefits of interventions for women compared to men, for example on erosion control in Azerbaijan. ‘In the context of the cost-benefit assessment, a gender analysis matrix was generated to analyse the distribution of the net benefits between genders... with the implementation of the IBiS project to stop erosion, the promotion of alternative activities to generate income such as beekeeping and collection of wild plants benefits more women than man... The general result shows that men and women will have a similar range of net benefits from the implementation of erosion measures’¹⁶⁹. Women have acquired knowledge and skills, which has strengthened their role in the community. In some cases this created additional income opportunities that cover the needs of several families.¹⁷⁰ In Armenia, the project’s pilot has resulted in a rise in milk production by 30%, which primarily benefits women.¹⁷¹

In conclusion, the intended overarching development results regarding Sustainable Development Goals (1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16) are in line with the expected qualitative impact, though further links could have been established by the project. Specific attention has been paid to the role of women in rural areas and to young people. Therefore, the indicator achievement is rated with 35 of 40 points altogether.

Assessment dimension 2: The objective (outcome) of the project contributed to the occurred or foreseen overarching development results (impact).

The project contributions to overarching development goals such as the SDGs have been raised in several documents (from GIZ and partners) and interviews and address not only the selected hypotheses.

- In **Armenia** (hypothesis 1B), the result AM01 contributes indirectly to SDG15, based on the hypothesis that ‘improvement of the institutional framework... improves capacities, which in return contributes to SDGs, particularly SDG 15, e.g. improving intersectoral coordination for IMBES’¹⁷². The hypothesis has been **confirmed** regarding the adoption of the regulation on amateur fishing and the online hunting permit

¹⁶² INT16 with partner organisation

¹⁶³ INT14 with other stakeholders

¹⁶⁴ INT16 with partner organisation

¹⁶⁵ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. Page 37

¹⁶⁶ WS01 with GIZ

¹⁶⁷ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 46.

¹⁶⁸ AHT Group (2019): Integrated Biodiversity Management. South Caucasus. Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Pages 16-17, 27. GIZ (2019): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document. Page 15

¹⁶⁹ Kieling (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus. Cost-benefit analyses of integrated biodiversity management practices in four pilot areas of the south Caucasus. Hazelnut plantation. Unpublished document; Kieling (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus. Cost-benefit analyses of integrated biodiversity management practices in four pilot areas of the south Caucasus. Erosion control measures. Unpublished document, page 21

¹⁷⁰ GIZ (2018): Project Report IBiS 3. Unpublished document, page 13, GIZ (2019): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document, page 12, Interviews with final beneficiaries: INT18, INT19, INT26

¹⁷¹ INT47 with partner organisation

¹⁷² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2; adapted to the specific activities underlying the selected chain

management system installed to the Ministry of Environment server and operating to facilitate collaboration between citizens and the Ministry. The licensing system has substantially strengthened the overall capacities of the ministry to provide hunting and fishing permits in terms of technical capacities, collection of data on hunted species, and with better control and ability to sustainably manage biodiversity issues at national level. The permit system is definitively a big asset for its transparency of data. When a relevant timeline of data has been collected decision-makers will be able to use it to help improve the strategies, national policies and laws in conformity with sustainable biodiversity management principles because the collected data is traceable and regularly updated. This data can form a basis for decision-making on the species permitted for hunting, the hunting quota and how the hunting season is defined by the Government for every year. Since the permit applicant must indicate the exact hunting area as well as the targeted species, the accuracy of the data is also improved; this can contribute to species distribution modelling. The electronic platform has also strengthened capacities in the Ministry to facilitate its upscaling for other licensing procedures such as environmental impact assessments. The amateur hunting application system could be the first element of a general system of licensing planned for the National Biodiversity Information System of Armenia.

- Capacity development of relevant stakeholders was also achieved by forming the National Forest Management and Information System (NFMIS) and training the staff of Hayantar and the Forest Monitoring Center and various forest enterprises. Areas of training included forest monitoring skills such as geographic information system remote sensing and use of drones, and the model system employed by the Gugarq forestry service to manage coppiced woodland. Partners confirm sustainable results towards maintaining the improved institutional framework, which have underlined the continued allocation of Government budgetary funds and continued capacity building towards strengthening forest-related organisations after the project closes. Improved capacities and strengthened institutions contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources, forests and biodiversity (SDG15).¹⁷³
- Regarding **Azerbaijan** (H2B), the contribution of result AZ01, result AZ08¹⁷⁴ and outputs A and B to LE-2, GG-1 and SDG1, with the hypothesis that ‘better IMBES will provide livelihood opportunities in the rural areas, which is an important aspect of rural development/ poverty reduction’¹⁷⁵ is **confirmed** by interviews¹⁷⁶. They recognised the project’s contribution to generating income for families by sustainably using ecosystems, which reduce erosion and risks to their livelihood. Without the project’s innovative approach, no comparable action and impact would have occurred. No restriction to the hypothesis has been identified.¹⁷⁷
- Regarding **Georgia** (H3B), the contribution of result GE01 and output B¹⁷⁸ to SDG15 (Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services), with the hypothesis that ‘Legislation (such as Law on Biodiversity, Forest Code and respective subsidiary legislation, Law on Georgian Red List) provides the necessary national legal basis (here: for management and monitoring rules of the Emerald Network as a means to better protect threatened habitats and species and to make the National Forest Inventory possible, as without it the inventory (and monitoring) of forest biodiversity would not be possible in the same way, making its protection more difficult)’¹⁷⁹. The hypothesis is **confirmed** based on several interviews¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷³ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2; adapted to the specific activities underlying the selected chain, page 3

¹⁷⁴ including activities linked to the indicators A.1=2a (A concept for integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Ismayilli is developed, implemented and evaluated), A.1=2a (one rule for intersectoral coordination balancing different interests in the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is developed one pilot are in Ismayilli), and A3=1b (cost-benefit analysis for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level are carried out)

¹⁷⁵ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2

¹⁷⁶ INT18 and INT19 with final beneficiaries; Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcripts. Unpublished document, page 23.

¹⁷⁷ Interviews with final beneficiaries: INT18, INT19, INT26

¹⁷⁸ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document. Page 101.

¹⁷⁹ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2. INT03 with other stakeholders

¹⁸⁰ INT09 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT39 with other stakeholders

No restriction to the hypothesis has been identified and the scope has even widened to refer to tools and methodologies for knowledge management as developing the policy on protected areas and the guiding outline document for municipal spatial planning – which was used to develop subsidiary legislation on spatial planning.¹⁸¹ A reformulation of the hypothesis to ‘Legislation and related policy elements and tools provides the framework and support (here: for the Emerald Network as a means) to better protect threatened habitats and species’ could describe the impact more effectively.

- At the **regional level** (H4B), the fact that output D contributes to peace and security and SDG16 due to the hypothesis that ‘regional dialogue will promote exchange and benchmarking of biodiversity actions, and strengthen capacities of professionals’¹⁸² is **confirmed** and positive for the project’s impact on the project team’s internal exchanges¹⁸³. This was also verified from the viewpoint of partners and stakeholders. Exchanges that focused on ecological issues – while “political and territorial issues” remained outside the debate¹⁸⁴ – have established professional networks between the countries, facilitated trust and cooperation¹⁸⁵ and proved important in the context of the Caucasus Initiative that aims to diffuse conflicts in the region¹⁸⁶. Therefore they could be considered as contributions to peace and security and the associated SDG16, as reflected in the results model. However, the evaluation only reflects qualitative perceptions and no quantitatively accounted impacts. Regarding the Facebook group, its posts and reactions reflect professional interest. Important regional activities have been addressed in the group posts (see website¹⁸⁷), and some reactions (usually in a range of 6-22 out of a group of 200-400 members) can be noticed; the activity of the group however does not yet reflect benchmarking actions. The response rate to the group evaluation survey was also extremely low.

In an overview, the following information for the impact hypotheses assessed can be summarised:

Table 7: Impact contribution analysis overview. Own elaboration.

Code	Contribution	Hypothesis	Assessment
H1B	Result AM01 (The legal, institutional and technical framework is improved), result AM04 (The implementation capacity of relevant ministries and their subordinated bodies regarding the improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) and output B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) contribute to the protection of environment and resources UR-2 and SDG15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss)	Improvement of the institutional framework... improves capacities, which in return contributes to SDGs, particularly SDG 15 – improving intersectoral coordination for IMBES	Confirmed (stakeholder perception)
H2B	Result AZ01 (Socio-economic) benefits of improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services are demonstrated in Ismayilli), result AZ08 (Knowledge, attitude and practice of the general public regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved), output A (Instruments and coordination processes for the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services at local level are tested) and output B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their	Better IMBES will provide livelihood opportunities in the rural areas, which is an important aspect of rural development and poverty reduction	Confirmed (stakeholder perception)

¹⁸¹ INT10 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation, INT12 with partner organisation, INT14 with other stakeholders.

¹⁸² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

¹⁸³ for example “exchange visits and regional IBiS meetings (coffee table talks) allow national IBiS staff to exchange on specific topics, e.g. remote sensing” (AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 25

¹⁸⁴ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. page 32

¹⁸⁵ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. page 32

¹⁸⁶ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 25-26

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1334694186549959/>

	subordinate bodies and training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) contribute to LE-2 (rural development and food security), GG-1 (gender equality) and SDG1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere).		
H3B	Result GE01 (The legal, institutional and policy framework for improved management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) and output B (The implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved) contributing to the protection of environment and resources UR-2 [which leads to SDG15: Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services]	Legislation (such as law on biodiversity) provides the necessary (national) legal basis (here: for the Emerald Network as a means to better protect threatened habitats and species)	Confirmed (stakeholder perception) A reformulation of the hypothesis is suggested.
H4B	Output D (The regional exchange on sustainable management of biodiversity and ecosystem services to be improved) contributes to peace and security and SDG16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels)	Regional dialogue will promote exchange and benchmarking of biodiversity actions, and strengthen capacities of professionals	Confirmed (stakeholder perception)

The IBiS project has not been a stand-alone catalyst for achieving the listed overarching development results but it has actively interacted and searched for **synergies** with other initiatives, starting with the way that the objectives and workstreams have been previously embedded at the partners. Cooperation and development of synergies can be mentioned Table 4: Effectiveness contribution analysis overview for the GIZ local governance programme in South Caucasus¹⁸⁸ and the GIZ private sector development project¹⁸⁹ and a GIZ local community development project cofounded by US Development Aid USAID and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation¹⁹⁰, KfW initiatives¹⁹¹, cooperation with the Austrian and Czech Development Agencies¹⁹², United Nations Development Programme (sustainable pasture management, biodiversity finance BIOFIN¹⁹³) and the UNCCD and its work in knowledge management and training for environmental journalists¹⁹⁴. Synergies could also be seen in work with the WWF¹⁹⁵, RECC¹⁹⁶, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)¹⁹⁷, and Global Forest Watch (World Resource Institute) on the Forest Atlas¹⁹⁸. In some of these areas, GIZ action has been considered fundamental or GIZ has been the first actor to step up¹⁹⁹ and provide examples of cooperation.²⁰⁰

The project **builds on the existing framework** to generate impact. Some project activities were promoted as international best practice by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/ Food and Agriculture Organization and UNCCD, and some raised funds for replication by the Global Environment Facility and the international agricultural organisations mentioned above such as IFAD and FAO. The project was based on

¹⁸⁸ INT14 with GIZ, INT33 with other stakeholders

¹⁸⁹ This involved the establishment of a vine nursery and selection and preservation of local grape varieties as well as access to high-quality, more efficient and protected seedlings. The PPP is jointly implemented by the Vine and Wine Foundation of Armenia, the Armenian National Agricultural University (ANAU), Antes Weinbau Service GmbH and the University of Geisenheim. WS03 and follow-up email by GIZ Armenia

¹⁹⁰ INT42 with GIZ

¹⁹¹ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT03, INT05

¹⁹² INT31 with other stakeholders, WS01 with GIZ

¹⁹³ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT02, INT42

¹⁹⁴ INT01 with other stakeholders

¹⁹⁵ INT04 with other stakeholders

¹⁹⁶ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT01, INT06

¹⁹⁷ INT06 with other stakeholders

¹⁹⁸ Written comment by the project team

¹⁹⁹ INT04 with other stakeholders

²⁰⁰ INT01 with other stakeholders

previous tools and lessons such as the GIZ ValuES programme. IBiS has also supported EU accession processes with data and information such as that linked to the birds directive, the habitats directive and the Bern Convention.²⁰¹ The project built on the drive of 'enthusiastic' local communities, citizens, journalists and political leaders.²⁰² At the same time, the existing framework has also caused project implementation problems and delays including: unclear implementation processes, changes in the government, reorganisation of the responsible governmental agency, partners lack of drive to foster or follow up, decrease of meeting frequency and delayed approvals.²⁰³

However, if the IBiS project had not taken place it fundamental or ground-breaking work on biodiversity or increasing capacities would have not happened or been developed much later, given that IBiS is one of few donors in the biodiversity sector.²⁰⁴

Activity that **upscales mechanisms** has been at the core of the project since its beginning,²⁰⁵ which has been recognised by partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders as a powerful and well-used tool. This is shown in the case of pasture management methodologies, the development process of the spatial development plan for Akhmeta municipality and the testing of the national forest inventory software solution in the Akhmeta Forest District.²⁰⁶ Gaps in replication have been identified for the educational programme and the erosion control measures in Azerbaijan²⁰⁷ and the limited impact of the social online regional network. However, **limitations and constraints for replication** have been found primarily in the involvement of villagers, the available budgets, and the interest of the partners. Strategies employed to overcome these include implementing pilot projects on local level along with relevant actions on national level, identifying and strengthening leaders and change-makers in the community and the developing detailed cost-benefit assessments.²⁰⁸ Other **innovative approaches** with a potential for upscaling are approaches in the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (partially enhanced already as included in the national forest code and bylaws 241, 242, 179²⁰⁹), the techniques and methodology for forest account and inventory²¹⁰, holistic and landscape-based spatial planning approaches at municipality level such as the preparation of guidelines and subsidiary legislation²¹¹, the link with culture as with the Armenian Vine and Wine Book²¹², and the engagement of journalists at the workshop on land degradation target-setting in South Caucasus²¹³.

Overall, the four hypotheses for the project contributions to overarching development goals have been confirmed and one cannot be confirmed yet; the evaluation has compiled a many positive interview comments that recognise the project's contributions. As one of the key actors on biodiversity in the region, the project has built on synergies with other initiatives in parallel or worked to ensure the sustainability or replication of project methodologies, tools or results. It has largely built on existing frameworks, strengthening partner's capacities

²⁰¹ INT03 with other stakeholders

²⁰² AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document

²⁰³ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

²⁰⁴ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. Pages 26 and 36. AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Page 10. Interviews with other stakeholders: INT04, INT01, INT02

²⁰⁵ GIZ (2015): Projektangebot 14 July 2015. Unpublished document. Page 13

²⁰⁶ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. pages 19 and 39. GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document. GIZ/SET (2018): Evaluation of IBiS Pilot Projects in the Akhmeta Municipality, Georgia. Authors: Irakli Kochlamazashvili, Salome Gelashvili & Anja Salzer. Unpublished document, page 38

²⁰⁷ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. Page 22

²⁰⁸ GIZ/SET (2018): Evaluation of IBiS Pilot Projects in the Akhmeta Municipality, Georgia. Authors: Irakli Kochlamazashvili, Salome Gelashvili & Anja Salzer. Unpublished document. Pages 36. Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. Pages 21 and 37. Kieling (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSES OF INTEGRATED BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN FOUR PILOT AREAS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS. Hazelnut plantation. Unpublished document; Kieling (2018): Integrated Biodiversity Management, South Caucasus. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSES OF INTEGRATED BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN FOUR PILOT AREAS OF THE SOUTH CAUCASUS. Erosion control measures. Unpublished document.

²⁰⁹ INT09 with partner organisation

²¹⁰ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT08, INT10, INT11, INT12 with partner organisation

²¹¹ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. INT11 with other stakeholders, INT09 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation, INT33 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders

²¹² WS03 with GIZ

²¹³ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

and impact and taking advantage of opportunities; any negative framework conditions have been actively addressed. Upscaling has been at the core of the project since its design, and it has been partly successful with some outstanding examples in the fields of forest inventories or spatial planning. Gaps in replication have been identified for areas such as the educational programme and erosion control measures in Azerbaijan – due to a shortfall in high-level policy support and funding and the limited impact of the online social regional network. Some innovative approaches have been successfully implemented and replicated. For the above reasons, the impact dimension is rated with 27 out of 30 points.

Assessment dimension 3: The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level was monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results were seized. No project-related negative results at impact level have occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.

The project **self-assessment on unintended results**²¹⁴ include a list of 17 such results, and another 6 unintended results identified during the evaluation. Out of these 23, 14 positive and 3 negative results have been assessed by the evaluators to the impact level. On the positive side, these can be grouped as addressing additional replication of initiatives or tools: follow-up of agricultural pilots in Dedoplistskaro by the FAO/ European Neighborhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development III, the use of a handbook as educational material, extension of environmental training at schools in Armenia, the 'Otter island' Emerald Network initiative in Tbilisi, a geographical information system lab development, the international engagement and recognition of pilots in areas such crop-rotation, recognition by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification UNCCD, the extended awareness about the Bern Convention and the European Union Habitats Directive), improvements of policy-making processes, the promotion of well-trained staff and the effective opposition to a development project with negative biodiversity impacts. The negative results cover competition between NGOs, a temporary perception that 'Germans will take the land away', and tensions between intervention and non-intervention territories; the last one is out of the project's scope and strongly driven by the territorial reform process.

The main **risks at the impact level** relate to possible changes in biodiversity policy priorities; for example. after political or institutional changes, misunderstandings with stakeholders and a shortfall in effective donor coordination. The main tools to manage risks at impact level involve coordination with other international organisations including donors, participation in different stakeholder working groups; for example, a working group on policy development attended by technical experts and low-level management of the organisations and characterised by frequent meetings with partners at all levels.²¹⁵

The way **framework conditions** played a negative role can be seen with project support for the Regional Environmental Center Caucasus (RECC) as a strong regional player for biodiversity, despite the lack of funding it had been receiving from the three countries. The 'strong promotion of RECC... made them also a stronger competitor for national NGO (contradicting its mandate).'²¹⁶ However, the project addressed this unintended result of stoking competition to be avoided and minimised.

The project had explored 'five different organisations with regional mandate or interest, and strengthening them through cooperation'²¹⁷ as a potential partner for strengthening biodiversity capacities in the South Caucasus. The decision to opt for RECC was not an easy one. 'RECC was supported to update their strategy for the years of 2019-2025, with support of an international ... consultant. A strategy workshop (regional) was conducted in Georgia with the participation of Government officials, NGOs and international organisations of the three countries. The regional dimension of the work of RECC was confirmed and put more into focus'²¹⁸. However, the conflict of interest and the competition with local and national NGOs has only been recognised but not properly addressed in the strategy. It has only partly been approached with resolve from RECC recently to involve other NGOs in projects and expand their capacity to jointly apply for governmental funds in Georgia. The project has

²¹⁴ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document. Interviews with other stakeholders: INT39, INT41

²¹⁵ GIZ Steering Georgia, page 6-7. INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT15 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders, INT40 with other stakeholders. WS01 with GIZ, WS02 with GIZ.

²¹⁶ GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document.

²¹⁷ Indicator D4/FO2; GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

²¹⁸ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

also engaged national NGOs for implementing actions and contributed to expanding the financing landscape.²¹⁹

Overall, 14 positive and 3 negative unintended results can be associated with the impact level. On the positive side, the majority refers to the replication of initiatives or tools. On the negative side, promotion of a regional partner possibly stimulated competition among NGOs but significant action was developed by the project to mitigate and revert this negative result. The main risks at the impact level relate to possible changes in the biodiversity policy in the countries and lack of effective donor cooperation. Tools employed by the project to mitigate such risks include the coordination with other donors, participation in working groups and frequent meetings with partners at all levels. The assessment concludes that the project has monitored the occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level and additional opportunities for more positive results have been seized. Few project-related negative results at impact level have occurred and the project responded adequately to manage them; this is rated with 26 out of 30 points.

Table 8: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: impact

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Impact	The intended overarching development results occurred or are foreseen (plausible reasons). ²²⁰	35 out of 40 points
	The objective (outcome) of the project contributed to the occurred or foreseen overarching development results (impact). ²²¹	27 out of 30 points
	No project-related (unintended) negative results at impact level have occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.	26 out of 30 points
	The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level was monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results were seized.	
Overall score and rating		Score: 88 out of 100 points Rating: Level 2 successful

4.5 Efficiency

Evaluation basis and design for assessing efficiency

The GIZ efficiency tool for data collection and assigning costs to project outputs was used for the assessment. The analysis of the data with the efficiency tool follows the analytical questions in the evaluation matrix, which are based on the follow-the-money approach. However, the module was generated in 2015. Without applying the full budget preparation to fill in the efficiency tool – and partner contributions were not well documented – the matrix could only partially be applied with a low level of evidence strength. Thus, the significant effort of incorporating data in the GIZ efficiency tool has only yielded a single result, which is a distribution of budget along with the outputs; the use of the tool has not been very efficient for this assessment. The applied

²¹⁹ Heitmann, Udo (2018): REC Caucasus Draft Strategy 2019-2025. Unpublished document, INT06 with other stakeholders

²²⁰ The first and the second assessment dimensions are interrelated: if the contribution of the project outcome to the impact is low or not plausible (second assessment dimension) this must be considered for the evaluation of the first assessment dimension also.

²²¹ The first and the second assessment dimensions are interrelated: if the contribution of the project outcome to the impact is low or not plausible (second assessment dimension) this must be considered for the evaluation of the first assessment dimension also.

methodology therefore is a descriptive expert judgment, based on the available project data as well as interviews with GIZ and project partners. A cost-benefit analysis of the whole module is out of the scope of this evaluation.

Analysis and assessment regarding efficiency

Assessment dimension 1: Production efficiency: the project's use of resources is appropriate for the outputs achieved.

The contract value of the German contribution for the whole duration of the project was EUR 22,892,420, of which EUR 22,526,489.54 was spent or committed until the time of data collection (according to the cost-commitment-sheet of 13 November 2019). According to regulations at the time of the project offer, programme expenditures were not planned according to costs per output, thus cost-output-relations were established by retrospective estimations during the evaluation.²²² **Resources were distributed differently among the five outputs.** The two outputs targeting on-site implementation (A with 19% and E with 13% of the budget share) accumulate the largest share of the project budget, closely followed by output B (31%) which includes capacity building and technical work with partners and stakeholders. Output C, which targets education and awareness, covers 14% of the budget – approximately half of the previously mentioned outputs – and output D was 7%, including the costs for preparing and conducting regional activities and events. Overarching costs amount to 15% according to the cost-assignment by the project management.

These figures²²³ are reliable because the cost of human resources has been allocated in detail as well as major project investments (>EUR 50,000) and the rest of the costs have been allocated proportionally to the personnel costs. The distribution of the costs among outputs appears reasonable and reflects that the major efforts of the project were dedicated to outputs A, B and E, which was in line with the project objective, operational plans and monitoring information of the results-based auditing; they show numerous activities being developed for these outputs.

Applying the follow-the-money approach, the relevant **preliminary statements** are that first, a major part of the project results were achieved and significant impact has been tracked by GIZ and the partners, even if the full initial project's ambition have been reached. Partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders have also expressed their high degree of satisfaction with the project team performance, technical knowledge and received inputs, including appropriate innovative solutions.²²⁴ The budget planning and instrument selection were not documented in an accessible way for the evaluators, which could be improved in the future to track decision-making; however some successful elements could be discerned. This includes **maximising the resources available on-site** for the work and exchange with partners by employing project staff or local experts instead of international short-term experts who require adaptation and also face constraints in transmitting trust and engagement to partners²²⁵.

For the necessary long-term technical expertise, the temporary engagement of seconded experts is a preferred way to ensure continuity²²⁶, institutionalise the work relationship and ensure in-country presence by peers. **Financing of partners** (including non-governmental organisations) instead of possibly more scattered subcontracting of services strengthens partner institutions and project sustainability; with important packages under outputs A, B and E covering pilot projects and capacity-building activities. For output D, the selection of the right partner was well documented²²⁷ and justified. It included supplementary capacity building for the partner to enable it to perform better; for the other outputs this has not been assessed in detail. However, given the implementation of locally fixed pilots, the selection of financing agreements also includes territorially-restrictive criteria.

²²² WS02 with GIZ

²²³ Efficiency Evaluation Tool, using information provided by the project in March 2020

²²⁴ For example INT43 with partner organisation. The following based on INT45 with GIZ

²²⁵ INT45 with GIZ

²²⁶ GIZ (2019): IBIS Progress report on a TC module 4. Unpublished document.

²²⁷ GIZ (2019): MP8 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBIS 12/2019. Unpublished document.

Standardised cost-efficiency benchmarks have usually not been applied in the project, given the specific tasks and circumstances. **State-of-the-art innovation** has been applied where the demand for such approaches came from partners (such as the use of drones and earth observation), where benefits of the action were better demonstrated (as with cost-benefit assessments) or where roll-out and operational costs could be reduced. Overall, the project constructed **logical intervention sequences** describing risks, deviations and possible causes. The only identified example of an efficiency gap is the fact that an international conference on erosion control was held with 86 participants before the Armenian-language erosion control handbook was published in other regional languages²²⁸. According to efficiency criteria this conference should have taken place later, once the translations were available, but efficiency has not been the only criteria used.

Because of the project background during the evaluation not all indicators could be fully assessed. However, important examples of production efficiency and only one single case for limited efficiency have been identified. Among the positive aspects, resource allocation focused on strengthening trust-building, partner institutionalisation and innovation has contributed most to production efficiency. Altogether, production efficiency is rated with 68 of 70 points.

Assessment dimension 2: Allocation efficiency: the project's use of resources is appropriate for the outcome achieved (objective).

The project claims it has **maximised the project outcome** with the same amount of resources and the same or better quality²²⁹ but this is not sufficiently documented to allow a proper judgment by the evaluators. However, the positive perception by partners and the number of positive unintended results²³⁰ strongly support such claims strongly. Benchmarks at outcome level have not been used and are not known to the evaluators.

The project has implemented different resource use strategies such as financing partners, subcontracting, financing staff and innovative activities. This minimises risks and allows for lessons (though there is little documentation). Scaling up approaches has been a core element of the project. **Synergies** with other GIZ projects²³¹ and funds from other donors, including KfW and the Global Environment Facility have been documented in the relevance section of this assessment and will not be repeated in this chapter. These synergies cover different outputs in the three countries and also at the regional level. They address allocation efficiency during the project time, the mitigation of possible risks²³² and sustainability beyond the project scope. **Partner contributions** were estimated²³³ at EUR 2,000,000 and have been delivered²³⁴, including a programme office and staff to manage and coordinate the project, which amounts to about 1,000 expert months. It also includes a contribution to management and administrative costs; provision of facilities and equipment for training; and technical, financial and human resources support for environmental communication campaigns and other awareness-building activities among the general public. Given the environmental budgets in all three countries, this can be considered a significant contribution, though it cannot be judged if it is 'proportionate'.

In regard to the extent to which the outcome could have been maximised with the same resources (maximum principle), conclusions rely primarily on stakeholder opinions and qualitative analysis since benchmarks for a comparable broad combined intervention package are not known to the evaluators. They have not been identified by the project. Coordination with other development partners was actively sought where relevant, synergies were established and no synergy losses due to insufficient coordination and cooperation were observed. Thus, the allocation efficiency is rated with 25 out of 30 points.

²²⁸ GIZ (2018): IBiS Progress report on a TC module 3. Unpublished document: REG Output 4

²²⁹ INT45 with GIZ

²³⁰ See above in the assessment of Effectiveness and Impact

²³¹ INT33 with other stakeholders, INT42 with GIZ

²³² WS01 with GIZ, INT31 with other stakeholders

²³³ GIZ (2015): Project proposal TC measure: Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBiS) Project number: 2015.2101.2

²³⁴ INT45 with GIZ

Table 9: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: efficiency

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and rating
Efficiency	The project's use of resources is appropriate for the outputs achieved. [Production efficiency: resources/outputs]	68 out of 70 points
	The project's use of resources is appropriate for the outcome achieved (objective). [Allocation efficiency: Resources/Outcome]	25 out of 30 points
Overall score and rating		Score: 93 out of 100 points Rating: Level 1 highly successful

4.6 Sustainability

Evaluation Basis and Design for Assessing Sustainability

The evaluation aims at analysing whether the project results are likely to be sustainable, and whether positive prerequisites for ensuring the long-term success of the project are in place – taking into account the economic, social and ecological sustainability dimensions.

Evaluation basis: The evaluator team assumes that achieved results are intended to be maintained beyond the project's implementation time and for partially achieved results, implementation will continue or the partially achieved status will be maintained. The effectiveness and impact assessments provide a basis for understanding the achievements by the end of the project. The institutional (including financial, staff and technological aspects) and the ecological dimensions of sustainability are of particular interest; no trade-offs are expected.

Evaluation design: Since the analysis of sustainability also goes hand-in-hand with the assessment of the project's impact and effectiveness, the evaluation team implemented a similar methodology that allows it to base findings upon the different evaluation criteria assessments. The evaluation focused on the processes that finalised with IBiS ('exit strategy') and are not continued through ECOserve, allowing for a sustainability assessment at least for the period between November and March/April 2020. In addition, the team identified three sustainability risks in the evaluation of the predecessor project, which were taken up to assess durability. It examined external factors and risks to sustainability and elaborated on potential scenarios.

Empirical methods: Following the evaluation matrix and focusing on selected outputs, data from different sources have been collected, coded and summarised. These results were analysed, based on triangulation. Finally, they are evaluated.

Perception-based findings from interviews and documents have been supplemented with 'hard facts'; analyses of approaches, methods, models, instruments that are in place and what resources and capacities at the individual, organisational or societal/political level in the partner countries are available. The strength of narrative for most sustainability questions is medium, given the fact that most of the project's processes have been supported by ECOserve, in some cases with fewer resources²³⁵. The evaluation matrix was used to code all evidence, marking relevant items, relevant and conflictive statements that were then transferred to the analytical evaluation report text and used as a basis for the evaluation of the dimensions.

²³⁵ WS01, with GIZ

Analysis and assessment regarding sustainability

Assessment dimension 1: Prerequisite for ensuring the long-term success of the project: results are anchored in (partner) structures.

To ensure that the results can be sustained in the medium to long term by the partners themselves, the project has strengthened institutional, personnel and financial sustainability through partner ownership and capacity expansion along several main action lines: to build on existing structures and workstreams at the partner organisations (for example, in the educational system) or support emerging structures²³⁶ to extend partner's decision-making and operational capacity. This includes deployment of local short-term experts who turn into 'new permanent staff'²³⁷, targeted organisational development and training (of trainers), developing replicable pilots and actions based on cost-benefit assessments, and facilitating access to funding streams beyond the project duration. And finally, the project aims to generate a positive recognition of success and pride among the participants: for example, with public events themed around social sustainability.²³⁸ Concepts and approaches that have been anchored firmly in the partner structures include: stimulating partners to make decisions, developing their organisations along with 'very practical'²³⁹ standard working methods and tools (ecosystem accounting, criteria and indicators for forest management, forest inventories, spatial planning processes, education and training materials; addressing technological sustainability by gathering data, more efficient drone use) and 'learning by doing'. The **continuous use** of these concepts – for example in replications – has been confirmed in many interviews. There has been particular praise for the approach on spatial planning in Georgia.²⁴⁰

However, not all work developed during the project is fully adopted and in place. Work remains to be done on the Regional Environmental Center's strategic plan²⁴¹, the Facebook platform, adoption of the Georgian biodiversity law and the Georgian policy document on protected areas²⁴², the Armenian Forest Management and Information System (NFMIS)²⁴³, and the full inclusion of approaches into the national strategic plans and their finance.²⁴⁴ As mentioned, permanent staff positions at some partners have been created to ensure that achieved results continue. In some cases, the project has contributed to identifying and applying for third-party funding²⁴⁵ and remaining activities will be supported by the ECOserve project (and in a limited way the upcoming GIZ project Good Governance for Local Development)²⁴⁶, which acts as a 'sort-of' follow-up project.²⁴⁷ Evaluators consider this combination of capacities a positive basis for building on the results at the administrative and the political-public level. No trade-offs with the ecological sustainability dimension have been identified, which is a not surprising result given the focus of the project.

If the project has been strengthening or weakening **conflict escalation in the long-term**, reference must be

²³⁶ As the Armenian Pasture Platform, INT44 with partner organisation and Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, page 18

²³⁷ INT37, INT40, WS01

²³⁸ GIZ (2018): Project Report IBiS 3. Unpublished document. INT09 with partner organisation, INT11 with other stakeholders, INT12 with partner organisation, INT13 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation, INT30 with other stakeholders, INT33 with other stakeholders, INT37 with final beneficiaries, INT40 with other stakeholders, INT41 with other stakeholders. WS01 with GIZ

²³⁹ INT37 with final beneficiaries

²⁴⁰ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, pages 37 and 39. Interviews with other stakeholders: INT03, INT06, INT08, INT09 with partner organisation, INT10, INT11, INT33, INT39. INT13 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation

²⁴¹ It has been presented to the board in 2018 and in 2019. However, the board has requested to develop a complementary action strategy focused on the external interactions of the organisation (INT06 with other stakeholders)

²⁴² INT15 with partner organisation

²⁴³ INT50 with other stakeholders refers to NFMIS as part of the institutional system on forest management in the Aragats pilots, but not in the Shirak and Aragatsotn pilots. INT36 with partner organisation refers to "partially covered" aspects of capacity building.. Also referred to in Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document, pages 17-18

²⁴⁴ INT21 with partner organisation, INT27 with partner organisation. For example, the developed concept on extracurricular activities for Azerbaijani school children cannot be introduced for the next three years due to regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. 22)

²⁴⁵ For example: Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility, INT09 with partner organisation, INT13 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders

²⁴⁶ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT10, INT14. WS01 with GIZ

²⁴⁷ WS03 with other stakeholders

made to two unintended results: tensions between intervention and non-intervention areas in Armenia, and temporary land ownership distrust in Azerbaijan. While the second was only temporary, the first issue remains. It complicates the social sustainability dimension but it emerged beyond the scope of the project and outside of its sphere of influence. But even when taking this complication into account, the tangible positive conflict reduction effects of the project outweighs the criticism. The criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management in Georgia has improved stakeholder engagement and conflict resolution for forestry-related issues. In the Ismayilli pilot in Azerbaijan, the conflict over limits to grazing was discussed and a fencing solution agreed; in Dedoplistskaro, a working group was established to prevent fires, protect windbreaks and solve conflicts (which is still sometimes difficult); and the regional exchanges among professionals are vital in the context of the Caucasus Initiative that aims to diffuse conflicts in the region.²⁴⁸

In relation to the newly created and strengthened capacities anchored in the partner structures as well as the 'de-facto' follow-up project ECOserve, the grounding of results in the partner structure reflects a conscious and ambitious approach since the project began. It is rated with 46 out of 50 points.

Assessment dimension 2: Forecast of durability results of the project are permanent, stable and long-term resilient.

Beyond the outstanding project efforts to build partner capacities and strengthen structures, the interviews carried out at political and technical levels reflect a high interest and commitment to continue with the initiated policy developments and to maintain and roll out lessons learned from the pilots. These experiences have contributed to achieving the set objectives with innovative and stimulating approaches in the institutional sustainability dimension. National financial allocation remains the most relevant barrier to overcome and primary **risks** have been identified for the continuity of the National Forest Management and Information System in Armenia²⁴⁹. Environmental education and the task of replicating integrated erosion control in Azerbaijan also face challenges with future funding pending governmental decisions; this is despite the positive responses received during the interviews. The project team has taken an active role in discussing the added value of such financial investments and while temporarily pausing further project activities (such as complementary capacity building) in case the anticipated governmental commitments are not implemented as planned.²⁵⁰ In the medium term, a similar risk could also be faced at Georgian municipalities in their capacity to deal with spatial planning, and even in Akhmeta for a future update of the approved plan.²⁵¹

Altogether, a significant part of the project results is permanent, stable and long-term resilient under current conditions. However, upcoming funding will be a major risk for the durability of achieved results, even if important sources for the coming years have been unlocked with the support of the project. No trade-offs between sustainability dimensions have been identified by the evaluators. The durability is rated with 46 out of 50 points.

Table 10: Sustainability assessment.

²⁴⁸ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Pages ii, 4, 11 and 25. GIZ (2019): Unintended results of IBiS. extracted from KOMPASS report, other RBM data, and team internal discussions. November 2019. Unpublished document.

²⁴⁹ Interviews: INT34, INT35, INT36. INT44 with partner organisations

²⁵⁰ WS03, with GIZ

²⁵¹ WS01 with GIZ, WS02 with GIZ, WS03 with GIZ, INT08 with other stakeholders, INT09 with partner organisation, INT10 with other stakeholders, INT15 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT17 with other stakeholders, INT20 with partner organisation, INT30 with other stakeholders, INT32 with other stakeholders. Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document. Pages 21 and 22

Table 10: Rating of OECD/DAC criterion: sustainability

Criterion	Assessment dimension	Score and eating
Sustainability	Prerequisite for ensuring the long-term success of the project: results are anchored in (partner) structures.	46 out of 50 points
	Forecast of durability: results of the project are permanent, stable and long-term resilient.	46 out of 50 points
Overall score and rating		Score: 92 out of 100 points Rating: Level 1 highly successful

4.7 Key Results and overall rating

Key results regarding selected hypotheses

Relevance: The project aligns with the relevant strategic reference frameworks at all levels (national and regional policies and strategies, strategies of German development cooperation). The project strategy works effectively to address the target groups' core problems and needs. The core problem is highly relevant and the project addresses important priority areas, building on existing workstreams at the partner organisations. The pilots began with detailed and participative needs assessments. The project approach reduced gender-specific disadvantages, especially in rural areas. As a concept, the project was well-designed to achieve the set objective. Risks were identified and tackled, which has been reflected in many interviews with partners and stakeholders. The project results models have been developed and updated for the three countries though an overall model has not been generated. The original project approach has been mainly implemented according to the project offer, but with significant (new output E) and much-valued adaptations such as strengthening work with proactive partners and supporting new policy development initiatives. The project team undertook these measures after deliberation with partners and stakeholders, aiming to reduce project implementation risks and address external conditions such as institutional changes and new policy opportunities.

Effectiveness: The module objective indicators are consistent and in line with SMART-criteria as indicated previously. Two module objective indicators at output level were fully achieved, one partially achieved, and one regional indicator was partially achieved. However, significant progress has been made in all areas, as confirmed by interviews with partners. Overall, the activities and outputs of the project contributed substantially to achieving the project objective due to steering and advisory work, financial and technical inputs and improved communications. The evaluation of the improved implementation capacities has been based on qualitative interview statements as well as the quantitative monitoring of the project. The following contribution analysis findings can be listed in relation to the assessed hypotheses:

In **Armenia**, the results hypothesis 'the use of improved framework documents and of the information system contributes to the implementation capacities of ministries and their subordinated bodies' can be **confirmed**.

In **Azerbaijan**, the hypothesis that 'demonstrated socio-economic benefits motivate national sectoral and intersectoral bodies to improve policy framework based on pilot experiences' **cannot yet be confirmed**.

In **Georgia**, the assessed hypothesis that 'the implementation capacity of line ministries, their subordinate bodies and of training institutions regarding the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is improved' because the statement that 'national decisions provide the "mandate" for intersectoral bodies' can be **confirmed**. However, as indicated, not all national decisions or regulations have yet been adopted. This leads to the conclusion that some **conditions** can be observed, such as the need for broad stakeholder support and remaining political interest. The project has addressed these by activities targeting the development of working

groups, awareness-raising and advocacy support.²⁵²

At the **regional level**, the hypothesis that 'local-level experiences in the three countries are taken seriously on regional level, and vice versa' can be **confirmed**. Without the project, progress however would have been absent or significantly slower²⁵³. An alternative hypothesis could be: 'Regional-level action drives the replication and adaptation of local-level experiences in and between the three countries.'

The most important factor for success has been risk management in the project design, steering structure and operational plans. This included the development of activities based on existing workstreams at the partner institutions, regular partner and management meetings and actions – including decisions on staff and partner support – and cooperation with other national institutions, donors and funding streams. External enabling factors that have contributed to achieving the project's objectives are the increased public interest in environmental issues, community engagement, support and engagement from partners, and the existence of national frameworks and international commitments. All these have been properly addressed by the project. Several partners have explicitly recognised that the different workstreams would have been much slower or not even realised without the project. Five positive and two negative unintended project results have been associated with the output level. The positive results cover awareness-raising, increased data gathering, changes in policy-making and others. The main negative result refers to the competition between NGOs that the project inspired. However, the project has achieved partial success in overcoming it even though it is beyond the scope of the project itself. Altogether, the positive predominates against negative unintended results, and the project has taken action to reduce the primary negative unintended result even though it does not lie within the boundaries of its remit.

Impact: The intended overarching development results regarding Sustainable Development Goals (1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16) are in line with the expected impact. The project aimed to indirectly benefit 30,000 households, and has accounted for 26,000 rural income measure beneficiaries (minimum of 500 women and 175 young people)²⁵⁴ and 6,900 training and education beneficiaries, including 300 women and 4,500 young people. This is lower than planned but still a significant figure. Specific attention has been paid to the role of women in rural areas and to young people. The four hypotheses regarding project contributions to overarching development goals have been confirmed, and the evaluation has compiled a large number of positive interviews that recognise the project's contributions. The following statements can apply:

- In **Armenia**, result AM01 contributes indirectly to SDG15, based on the hypothesis: 'Improvement of the institutional framework... improves capacities, which in return contributes to SDGs, particularly SDG 15, e.g. improving intersectoral coordination for IMBES'²⁵⁵. The hypothesis has been **confirmed**.
- In **Azerbaijan**, the contribution of result AZ01, result AZ08²⁵⁶ and outputs A and B to LE-2, GG-1 and SDG1 – with the hypothesis that 'better IMBES will provide livelihood opportunities in the rural areas, which is an important aspect of rural development/ poverty reduction'²⁵⁷ – is **confirmed** by interviews recognising the project's efforts to generate income by sustainable use of ecosystems, which also reduces erosion and livelihood risks. No restriction to the hypothesis has been identified.²⁵⁸
- In **Georgia**, the contribution of result GE01 and output B²⁵⁹ to SDG15 (Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services), is **confirmed** with the following hypothesis: 'Legislation (e.g. Law on Biodiversity, Forest Code and respective subsidiary legislation, Law on Georgian Red List) provides the necessary (national) legal basis (here: for management and monitoring rules of the Emerald

²⁵² INT09 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders

²⁵³ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT01, INT02, INT05, INT06, INT08, INT16 with partner organisation

²⁵⁴ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 46.

²⁵⁵ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2; adapted to the specific activities underlying the selected chain

²⁵⁶ including activities linked to the indicators A.1=2a (A concept for integrated management of biodiversity and ecosystem services in Ismayilli is developed, implemented and evaluated), A.1=2a (one rule for intersectoral coordination balancing different interests in the management of biodiversity and ecosystem services is developed one pilot are in Ismayilli), and A3=1b (cost-benefit analysis for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level are carried out)

²⁵⁷ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2

²⁵⁸ Interviews with final beneficiaries: INT18, INT19, INT26

²⁵⁹ GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document. Page 101.

Network as a means to better protect threatened habitats and species and to make the National Forest Inventory possible, as without it the inventory (and monitoring) of forest biodiversity would not be possible in the same way, making its protection more difficult)²⁶⁰. A reformulation of the hypothesis to 'Legislation and related policy elements and tools provide the necessary framework and support (here: for the Emerald Network as a means) to better protect threatened habitats and species' could better describe the impact reached.

- At the **regional level**, the fact that output D contributes to peace and security and SDG16 due to the hypothesis that 'regional dialogue will promote exchange and benchmarking of biodiversity actions, and strengthen capacities of professionals'²⁶¹ is **confirmed**.

As one of the key actors on biodiversity in the region, the project has developed multiple synergies with other initiatives in parallel or in ensuring sustainability or replication of project methodologies, tools or results. The project has built on existing frameworks, strengthening partner's capacities and impact and engaging with opportunities; any negative framework conditions have been actively addressed. It has been designed with the mission to upscale mechanisms at its core and it has been partly successful, with some outstanding examples of this in areas such as forest inventories or spatial planning. Gaps in replication have been identified for the educational programme and erosion control measures in Azerbaijan due to shortfalls in high-level policy support and funding, and the limited impact of the social online regional network. Some innovative approaches have been successfully implemented and replicated. Overall, 14 positive and 3 negative unintended results can be associated with the impact level. On the positive side, the majority refers to the replication of initiatives or tools.

On the negative side, competition among NGOs was possibly stimulated by the promotion of a regional partner; however, the project developed significant action to mitigate this. The main risks at the impact level relate to possible changes in national biodiversity policies and ineffective donor cooperation. Tools employed by the project to address such risks include coordination with other donors, participation in working groups and frequent meetings with partners at all levels. The assessment concludes that the project has monitored the additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level and other opportunities for positive results have been seized. Few project-related negative results at impact level have occurred, and the project responded adequately to manage them.

Efficiency: Resources were differently distributed among the five outputs. The two outputs targeting on-site implementation (A with 19% and E with 13% of the budget share) accumulate the largest share of the project budget, closely followed by output B (31%), which includes capacity-building and technical work with partners and stakeholders. Output C targeting education and awareness covers 14% of the budget – approximately half of the previously mentioned outputs – and output D covers 7%, including costs for preparing and conducting regional activities and events. Overarching costs amount to 15% according to the cost assignment by the project management. Applying the follow-the-money approach, the preliminary statements suggest that a major part of the project results has been achieved and that significant impact has been tracked by GIZ and the partners. Partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders have expressed their satisfaction with the project team performance, technical knowledge and inputs, including appropriate innovative solutions. The project has constructed logical intervention sequences describing risks, deviations and possible causes. Though not all evaluation indicators could be fully assessed due to the project background, important examples of production efficiency have been identified and only one single case of limited efficiency has been found. Among the positive aspects, a resource allocation focusing on strengthened trust-building, partner institutionalisation and innovation has contributed most to production efficiency.

The project claims that it has maximised the outcome with the same amount of resources and achieved the same or better quality. Different resource use strategies have been implemented by the project; these include financing partners, subcontracting, financing staff and innovative activities. These activities certainly minimise risks and resulted in experiences, which currently have little documentation. Scaled up approaches constitute a core element of the project. Benchmarks at outcome level have not been used, but synergies with other GIZ projects and funds from other donors, including KfW and the Global Environment Facility have been identified.

²⁶⁰ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document, page 2. INT03 with other stakeholders

²⁶¹ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

Partner contributions were estimated at EUR 2,000,000 and have been delivered. They include a programme office and staffing to manage and coordinate the project, which amounting to around 1,000 expert months.

Sustainability: In view of the newly created and/or strengthened capacities anchored in the partner structures as well as the follow-up project ECOserve, the grounding of results in the partner structure reflects a conscious and ambitious approach since the project started. A significant portion of the project results prove to be permanent, stable and long-term resilient under the current conditions. However, upcoming funding will be a major risk for the durability of achieved results even if important funding sources for the next years have been unlocked with the support of the project.

Table 11: Overall rating of OECD/DAC criteria and assessment dimensions

Criterion	Score	Rating
Relevance	97 out of 100 points	Level 1 = highly successful
Effectiveness	93 out of 100 points	Level 1 = highly successful
Impact	88 out of 100 points	Level 2 = successful
Efficiency	93 out of 100 points	Level 1 = highly successful
Sustainability	92 out of 100 points	Level 1 = highly successful
Overall score and rating for all criteria	92.6 out of 100 points	Level 1 = highly successful

Table 12: Rating and score scales

100-point-scale (Score)	6-level-scale (Rating)
92–100	Level 1 = highly successful
81–91	Level 2 = successful
67–80	Level 3 = moderately successful
50–66	Level 4 = moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5 = unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6 = highly unsuccessful

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Factors of Success or Failure

Factors for success or failure are summarised according to the success factors outlined by the GIZ capacity WORKS management model with consideration of external factors:

Management of the project: A factor of success much appreciated by partners and beneficiaries is the competence of the project team, referring to inputs received by 'knowledgeable experts'. In addition to technical competence, the social competence that enables a good advisor²⁶² – the capacity for active listening and a proactive readiness to constructively address ideas such as pilot activities or changes in the project – have been highlighted as relevant to the project's success. The team's strength contrasts with some criticism on the engagement of short-term experts as one reason for lower levels of participation in the planning and management of the pilots, which did not allow for establishing essential long-term perspectives and relationships of mutual understanding and trust.²⁶³

Strategy: The project strategy has been based on a thorough assessment of approximately 100 existing partner initiatives as options for engagement.²⁶⁴ This has built on the structures and priorities of the partners and ensured a high level of partner ownership and a prompt start. All relevant activities began with proper needs assessments²⁶⁵, which partners and beneficiaries have appreciated. The project has developed and implemented tailor-made methodological approaches²⁶⁶ and fostered learning and exchanges across the region and beyond²⁶⁷. Another strong strategic aspect showed in the way that relevant actions on national level (output B) to promote scaling-up, replication and sustainability have accompanied pilot projects at local level (output A).²⁶⁸ The project also had a strong focus on regulatory, institutional and financial sustainability after it ended. As project exit strategy it then provided support to partners to identify and access third-party financing.²⁶⁹

Cooperation: The entire project was dedicated to fostering intersectoral inter-administrative cooperation, which reflected well in results such as the support to spatial planning. Close cooperation and communication with the partners has been fundamental for the project's progress and success; this can explain the results achieved in Georgia where the project's offices were based within the political partner's building – and also the slow progress in Azerbaijan where communication was more centralised. Community engagement has been mentioned by beneficiaries and partners as central to success.²⁷⁰ The cooperation with other projects, institutions and development agencies has fostered synergies and replication or adaptation of the tools to other geographic areas within the region.²⁷¹

Steering: Appropriate steering has been a precondition that ensures the project is strategically oriented and working on an operational level. Generally, steering has proved successful given that it is a regional project not requested by the individual participating countries²⁷². Steering could also be based on the detailed monitoring system in place, which helped to track and discuss implementation constraints. Transparency in information

²⁶² At the initial stage of the project in November 2015, a training session on advisory skills was carried out. Arlinghaus, Susanne & Roland Hackenberg (2016): Team event "How to be a good advisor?" Report. 02/2016. Unpublished document.

²⁶³ GIZ/ISET (2018): Evaluation of IBiS Pilot Projects in the Akhmeta Municipality, Georgia. Authors: Irakli Kochlamazashvili, Salome Gelashvili & Anja Salzer. Unpublished document. Page 35

²⁶⁴ WS02 with GIZ

²⁶⁵ As reflected in GIZ (2019): MP7 Regional compilation for BMZ indicators IBiS 08/2019. Unpublished document

²⁶⁶ For example, interviews with other stakeholders: INT08, INT10, INT11, INT33, INT41, INT12 with partner organisation. AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. INT09 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation

²⁶⁷ For example, the spatial planning study trip to Austria was mentioned in some interviews as a very valuable experience.

²⁶⁸ WS01 with GIZ

²⁶⁹ For example: Green Climate Fund and Global Environment Facility, INT09 with partner organisation, INT13 with partner organisation, INT16 with partner organisation, INT39 with other stakeholders, WS01 with GIZ

²⁷⁰ Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBiS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 53 pages, plus additional interview transcriptions. Unpublished document

²⁷¹ Interviews with other stakeholders: INT03, INT04, INT31, INT14, INT06

²⁷² WS02, GIZ (2019) IBiS project Georgia. Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure. 12/2015 – 11/2019. Tbilisi, 08/2019 (update). Unpublished document. Page 1

management has also been appreciated by the project partners, who considered themselves to be well-informed of developments.²⁷³ Outstanding elements also include exchange with other donors and international partners such as the German development bank KfW. However, under-steering by a political partner – due to lack of clear commitment to international cooperation with Western donors and highly centralised decision-making²⁷⁴ – has hampered the project implementation. This was actively addressed by the project team.

Learning and innovation: The project implemented a 'learning by doing' approach, encouraging the partners to assume leadership in decision-making and implementation.²⁷⁵ This action was further strengthened by identifying and building capacity with leaders and change makers in the community as a way to empower it.²⁷⁶ Partners and beneficiaries also appreciate the wealth of innovative tools they discovered within the framework of the project. Several of these have been fully adopted by their institutions after the project.²⁷⁷

External factors: A major factor for success or failure is the capacity and continuity of partner organisation engagement, which has resulted in important adaptations (such as the governmental restructuring after the 'Velvet Revolution' in Armenia in May 2018) and in strategy changes or delays of implementation. The political context presents another external factor; for example, the European accession processes of Georgia and Armenia, which have increased political interest and action in the field of biodiversity.

5.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

Bearing in mind the assessment and the success factors summarised in section 5.1, the following aspects are highlighted as key recommendations for the GIZ team involved in the related and ongoing ECOserve project, as well as for the partners:

An exit strategy: Though most objectives of the project have been achieved, linked follow-up steps are still in progress such as the replication of pilots or endorsement of regulations. This process is currently supported – if less extensively – under the new ECOserve project though the specific areas are not covered within this new activity. GIZ shall provide partners with a clear idea of what they can expect from the ECOserve follow-up and when the follow-up support will cease completely.

Stronger links to SDGs: The project documents²⁷⁸ have shown that it has provided relevant contributions to the national strategies dealing with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and this message has been reinforced by the interviews, revealing further SDG contributions that had not been recognised previously. It is therefore recommended to GIZ to undertake a more explicit linking of the project work to the SDGs. It is also recommended that GIZ network and discuss this linkage with partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This will increase the political and public visibility of the project results and ease identification and access to funding sources beyond the limited biodiversity sector.

Improved regional exchange: Regional exchange has only been partially successful beyond the effective face-to-face networking events and conferences and it could have played a more prominent role.²⁷⁹ Though the information transfer on good practice has been fostered by events and publications, discussion and interactions and transboundary action has been more limited. COVID-related restrictions are also likely to affect such activities under ECOserve and change the perception and use of socially distanced tools and formats, which shall be explored by the GIZ team in cooperation with partners.

General recommendations for other projects in the field of biodiversity management and beyond include:

Strengthen project ownership at partner institutions: The project strategy and steering structure aimed to ensure and bolster partner ownership of the process. It has proved very valuable and promotable as good

²⁷³ WS02 with GIZ, INT15 with partner organisation, Interviews with other stakeholders: INT01, INT02

²⁷⁴ WS02 with GIZ, GIZ (2019) IBiS project Azerbaijan. Success Factor 3 – Steering Structure Baku, 01/2019. Unpublished document. Page 1

²⁷⁵ WS02 with GIZ

²⁷⁶ WS02 with GIZ

²⁷⁷ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document. Interviews with other stakeholders: INT08, INT10, INT11, INT33, INT41. INT09 with partner organisation, INT12 with partner organisation, INT15 with partner organisation

²⁷⁸ AHT Group (2019): Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs. Unpublished document.

²⁷⁹ INT15 with partner organisation

practice. This includes the selection of project components based on a thorough assessment of previously existing partner initiatives (rather than promoting completely new workstreams), the decision-making processes with partners in an active role, and the 'learning by doing' approach during implementation. Though this sometimes implies trade-offs (for example, temporary deviations in implementation, second-best site selection from a purely technical viewpoint²⁸⁰), the gains are considerable and reflected in partner appreciation of the project and the quality of the collaboration it entailed.

Addressing ecosystem services supports more robust decision-making. The process of addressing, valuing and improving ecosystem services – and their fragility, deterioration and restoration – develops awareness within the local population and at administrative levels. This recognition supports identification of possible trade-offs in planning and management and contributes to more robust decision-making on local or national development choices, including risks and resilience and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

²⁸⁰ INT42 with GIZ

Annex: Evaluation matrix

OECD-DAC Criterion RELEVANCE (max. 100 points)						
Assessment dimensions	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources	Evidence strength	
The project concept (1) is in line with the relevant strategic reference frameworks. Max. 30 points	Which strategic reference frameworks exist for the project? (e.g. national strategies incl. national implementation strategy for 2030 agenda, regional and international strategies, sectoral, cross-sectoral change strategies, if bilateral project especially partner strategies, internal analysis frameworks e.g. safeguards and gender (2))	A Strategic frameworks exist for the project on national and international level;	Documents and interview, survey	BMZ strategy. Regional strategies by non-governmental stakeholders (UNDP, WWF). KOMPASS report, interviews. Facebook group survey	high	
		AM International and national strategies, strategic frameworks and legislation related to biodiversity, sustainable management of natural resources, SPNA exist and are considered (Results hypothesis: "Improved framework provides a binding legal basis for inter-sectoral management. Stakeholders use the information system to improve the inter-sectoral management of biodiversity and ecosystem services").	Documents and interview, survey	AM: UN Convention on Biodiversity conservation, UN CBD Aichi targets, Republic of Armenia 6th national report under UN CBD (2018)(RA MinEnv), 6th national report under UN CCD (2018), UN-FCCD 3rd National communication on climate change of Armenia 2015, "Strategy and National Program for Conservation and Use of Specially Protected Nature Areas" 2014, Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) 2018, "Strategy and National Action Plan of the Republic of Armenia on Conservation, Protection, Reproduction and Use of Biological Diversity" RA Government, 2015 , "Natural Resources Management Strategy and the program of measures ensuring the implementation of the natural resources management strategy" 2018, National Environment Action Plans, National Forest Program (2005 amendment), National Forest Strategy and policy of RA (2005), MDG1, MDG7, 2010-2020 Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "Strategy and National Program for Conservation and Use of Specially Protected Nature Areas" (SPNA-SAP) 2014, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda strategy of the Republic of Armenia" 2018; The RA Tax Code (new regulations on natural resources use payment rates for the use of biological resources, 2016), The RA law "on making amendments and supplements to the RA Law on compensation tariffs for damage caused to flora and fauna as a consequence of violation of environmental protection laws" 2017, RA Government adopted decree No. 781-N on "Establishing the procedure of	moderate	

				utilization of items of flora for their protection and reproduction in natural conditions" in 2014 (on newly detected species registered in the Red Data Book of Armenia). Sources: Interviews with stakeholders, Interviews on inception missions, sept. 2019, Kompas report, Progress reports 2016, 2017, 2018, Results matrix, IBIS Project proposal, SDG report, Leaving no one behind, UNSDG operational guide for UN country teams, BMZ strategy 2009.REC Caucasus Strategy 2018, Interviews with partner organizations.	
		AZ: International and national strategies, strategic frameworks and legislation related to biodiversity, sustainable management of natural resources, SPNA exist and are considered	AZ: Documents, interviews/workshops	AZ: SDG targets and strategies, CBD strategy, National Development Plan, Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the future'; "Strategic roadmaps for the national economy and key sectors of the economy"; State Programme for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in the Azerbaijan Republic (SPPRSD, 2008-2015); The State Programme for the Socio-Economic Development of the Regions of the Azerbaijan Republic (2009-2013), "National Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for 2017-2020"; Amendment offer -IBIS,2017 , Kompas report 2019, Interviews with stakeholders and partner organizations conducted in March- April. 2020	good
		GE: Strategic frameworks exist for project result, GE01	Documents, interviews and project monitoring system	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (53-54 pg); • Third National Environmental Action Programme of Georgia (2017-2021) (71; 80 pg); • National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II) (pg 56, 59, 66); • Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity Code; • Organic law of Georgia - local self-government code; • German Development Cooperation (2009). Caucasus Initiative. Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus. Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources; • Rural development strategy of Georgia 2017-2020 (2017); • The Third National Communication of Georgia to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (2015) • United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) / Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) • The Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention); 	strong

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National forest concept for Georgia (2013). Hunter, Justine et al. (2019): IBIS. The qualitative KOMPASS assessment. 25 pg Kakheti Regional Development Strategy (2014-2021) - 2013 <p>Interviews</p> <p>Project monitoring system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents <p>Project Progress report</p>	
To what extent is the project concept in line with the relevant strategic reference frameworks?	GE The project result, GE01 addresses relevant elements of strategic reference frameworks.	Documents and Interview	As above plus GE: Documents: Project Proposal; the KOMPASS report (pg 24-25, 36), SDG report (pg 3-4, 7, 11-12, 24) with viewpoints collected by interviews from project partners and stakeholders; Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (53-54 pg); National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II) (pg 56, 59, 66); Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity (https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4276845?publication=1); Additional interviews/communications might be needed in 2020 to cross check the information.	strong	
	AM: Project concept is in line with the following strategic frameworks relevant for Armenia	AM: Documents, interviews/workshops, international strategic frameworks	AM: Documents: Project proposal, Kompass report (pgs. 17-19), Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs, (SDG1: SDG13, SDG 15, SDG 12, pg.2, SDG 13, 13.2), Interviews of project partners and stakeholders, Armenia's 6th National report on Convention on Biological Diversity (2018), Interviews with GIZ IBIS Armenia Team. Interviews with project partners and stakeholders.	moderate	
	AZ: The pilot on integrated erosion control measures in Ismayili (Result 1) addresses key topic of the relevant strategic framework	AZ: Documents, interviews	AZ: National framework documents (e.g. SDGs), Kompass report Interviews with stakeholders, Ismayili District Administration and partner organizations conducted in March- April, 2020	good	
To what extent are the interactions (synergies/trade-offs) of the intervention with other sectors reflected in the project concept – also regarding the sustainability dimensions (ecological, economic and social)?	The project concept reflects possible synergies and trade-offs with other sectors, and their likeliness and impact.	Documents, interviews, workshop	Project concept, KOMPASS report, interviews and workshops (with GIZ team and partners).	moderate	
	GE: The project result, GE01 reflects possible synergies and trade-offs with other sectors, and their likeliness and impact.	GE: Documents and Interview	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (53-54 pg); National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II) Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity Code; Organic law of Georgia - local self-government code; 	strong	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021 (2013)). Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	
		AM: The project's Logic of intervention (based on principle of integrated biodiversity management) was enshrined in agricultural, educational and regional development and planning strategies of the project, as well as socio-economic components streamlining improved biodiversity management, erosion prevention, capacity building and legal/institutional governance sectors in line with UN CBD, UN CCD, existing national strategies on biodiversity conservation, forests, country's development agenda, SDGs, poverty reduction strategies.	AM: Documents, interviews,	AM: Project proposal, project progress reports, Results Model for AM, the KOMPASS report; Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs; Interviews with GLZ staff, Programme Director, Hans-Joachim Lipp (16.09.19); Workshop with IBiS Team Armenia (9/2019). Additional interviews are needed to evaluate impact of 4 main components of the project in AM, including effectiveness of collaboration with different partner institutions, in particular, in light of government reform, policies, and effective implementation.	moderate
	To what extent is the project concept in line with the Development Cooperation (DC) programme (If applicable), the BMZ country strategy and BMZ sectoral concepts?	Project concept is in line with the BMZ Caucasus Initiative strategy	Documents and Interview	BMZ (2009): German Development Cooperation Caucasus Initiative Regional Concept for the Southern Caucasus "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources". Interviews with GLZ	moderate
	To what extent is the project concept in line with the (national) objectives of the 2030 agenda? To which Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is the project supposed to contribute?	The project addresses the SDG cross-cutting complexity and variety in the development and implementation of its activities, where relevant. REG: The project contributes to regional cooperation, in particular SDG 16	Documents and Interview	Above-listed documents, and in particular the SDG report	good
		GE: The project result GE01: B "Municipal spatial planning document development in Georgia" is in line with the (national) objectives of the 2030 and contributes to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	Documents and Interview	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture. 2019. 2020 Action Plan of National Forestry Agency UN. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development Nabuurs, P. Hammermann - AHT GROUP AG. Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to Overarching Results. 2019 Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report	strong
	To what extent is the project concept subsidiary to partner efforts or efforts of other relevant organisations (subsidiarity and complementarity)?	The project is designed and implemented with the aim of adding value to parallel initiatives (e.g. UNDP, GEF, others).	Documents and Interview	Above-listed documents, and in particular the KOMPASS and SDG report and underlying interviews. Complementary interviews will be scheduled with regional actors	good
	To what extent does the project complement bilateral or regional projects? To what extent does it complement other global projects?	The project complements other regional projects	Overall/REG: Documents and interview, survey	Overall: BMZ strategy 2009. CBD and SDG Reports. Regional strategies by non-governmental stakeholders (UNDP,	moderate

				WWF). KOMPASS report, REC-C strategy and interviews. Facebook group survey	
<p>The project concept (1) matches the needs of the target group(s).</p> <p>Max. 30 points</p>	<p>To what extent is the chosen project concept geared to the core problems and needs of the target group(s)?</p>	<p>The needs and problems of project target groups, beneficiaries are taken into consideration from the beginning of the project design and throughout the project implementation.</p> <p>REG: Facebook group members consider the group content and dynamics as relevant and of added value</p>	<p>Documents and interviews. REG: In addition, survey.</p>	<p>Project concept and status reports. REG: KOMPASS, Workshop, Survey with Facebook group users.</p>	<p>strong</p>
		<p>AZ: The pilot in Ismayili addresses core problems and needs of the local population</p>	<p>AZ: Documents, focus group discussion, interviews</p>	<p>AZ: KOMPASS report, SDG report, and notes from KOMPASS focus group discussion (July 2019, Ehen); Interviews with MENR and Ismayili District Administration and stakeholders</p>	<p>good</p>
	<p>How are the different perspectives, needs and concerns of women and men represented in the project concept?</p>	<p>AM: Gender was initially taken into consideration during the project proposal development, and was monitored throughout the whole implementation period. Gender is considered as a reporting tool during capacity-building training</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews (Ibis team, IBIS Gender expert, partners)</p>	<p>AM: Project concept and status reports. Interview GIZ team, AM capacity building; Prproject proposal, Results matrix.</p>	<p>moderate</p>
	<p>To what extent was the project concept designed to reach particularly disadvantaged groups (LNOB principle, as foreseen in the Agenda 2030)? How were identified risks and potentials for human rights and gender aspects included into the project concept?</p>	<p>AM: LNOB principle is enshrined within the project proposal document, in particular, focusing women (especially disadvantaged, in poor socio-economic conditions) which use ecosystem services. Human rights aspects is evident in particular in selection of target groups (benefitting different stakeholders and using public participation and inclusiveness).</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews</p>	<p>AM: Project proposal, project progress reports, KOMPASS report; Monitoring of impact of IBiS in relation to the Overarching Results / Selected SDGs; Interviews with GIZ staff. Leaving no one behind, UNSDG operational guide for UN country teams,</p>	<p>good</p>
	<p>To what extent are the intended impacts regarding the target group(s) realistic from today's perspective and the given resources (time, financial, partner capacities)?</p>	<p>AM: Planned impacts on target groups (also including gender issues) are realistic from today's perspective and the given resources.</p> <p>GE: Planned impacts on target groups (also including gender issues) of the project result, GE01 are realistic from today's perspective and the given resources</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews</p> <p>GE: Documents and Interview</p>	<p>AM: Project concept and status reports. Interview GIZ team,</p> <p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural development strategy of Georgia 2017-2020 (2017); National forest concept for Georgia (2013). Law of Georgia on Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity (2018) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Georgia 2014 – 2020 Guiding Outline of Municipal Spatial Planning Documentation <p>Interviews</p> <p>Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report</p>	<p>good</p> <p>strong</p>

<p>The project concept (1) is adequately designed to achieve the chosen project objective.</p> <p>Max. 20 points</p>	<p>Assessment of current results model and results hypotheses (theory of change, ToC) of actual project logic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent is the project objective realistic from today's perspective and the given resources (time, financial, partner capacities)? - To what extent are the activities, instruments and outputs adequately designed to achieve the project objective? - To what extent are the underlying results hypotheses of the project plausible? - To what extent is the chosen system boundary (sphere of responsibility) of the project (including partner) clearly defined and plausible? - Are potential influences of other donors/organisations outside of the project's sphere of responsibility adequately considered? - To what extent are the assumptions and risks for the project complete and plausible? 	<p>The project results model addresses critical risks identified by predecessors (e.g. implementation gap of strategies).</p>	<p>Documents, Interviews.</p>	<p>Predecessor final evaluation report; Project proposal; Interviews, KOMPASS report.</p>	<p>good</p>
		<p>The regional activities have addressed relevant topics and modes/tools for the target audiences</p>	<p>Documents, Interviews. additionally REG: Survey</p>	<p>KOMPASS report, Project progress reporting, Survey with Facebook group members</p>	<p>good</p>
		<p>AM: Project objectives are realistic in terms of resources and financial capacities, while the issue of timeframe can be discussed from the point of view of efficiency for several components (especially related to outside factors). Majority of project activities and strategies were checked against the demands and were evaluated as realistic based on the needs of stakeholders.</p> <p>AM 01 Legal, institutional and technical framework Result 01. The legal, institutional and technical framework for IMBES is improved.</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews with GIZ IBIS</p>	<p>AM: Project progress report 2018, Kompass report, Project proposal, results model Ibis, Interviews with partners.</p>	<p>good</p>
		<p>AM: Activities, instruments and outputs are designed in line with intervention logic, and are methodology-based, activities and outputs are implemented, monitored and adequately documented.</p>	<p>AM: Documents, Interviews</p>	<p>AM: project reporting, monitoring, evaluation documents, SDG report</p>	<p>moderate</p>
		<p>AM: Project has achieved the plausible results (compared and based on Hypothesis) with regards to component /result 5 (Capacities of academic institutions in the field of IMBES are improved), and Result 3 (Capacities of relevant stakeholders on IMBES are improved).</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews with GIZ IBIS, project documentation on activities, Interviews and questionnaires with Partner agencies</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews with GIZ IBIS, project documentation on activities, Interviews and questionnaires with Partner agencies.</p>	<p>good</p>
		<p>AM: Cooperation with ADA, CARMAC project, as well as UNDP GEF project is outlined and defined in between the coordinating Ministry and considered within the project implementation phase.</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews with GIZ IBIS, project documentation on activities, Interviews and questionnaires with Partner agencies (recipients of IBIS capacity-building), beneficiary organizations (from government, academia, civil service)</p>	<p>AM: Documents and interviews with GIZ IBIS, project documentation on activities, Interviews and questionnaires with Partner agencies.</p>	<p>good</p>
		<p>GE: Project result, GE01: B contributing to attain the project objective is accomplished;</p>	<p>GE: Documents and Interview</p>	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan Document • Law of Georgian Red List • Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document • Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning • Forest Code 	<p>strong</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Management Plan for Tusheti Protected Landscape • law on Biodiversity • law on Hunting • Documents on Political level and Management level Criteria's & Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) • Bylaws (N241, N242, N179) • Policy on Protected Areas • Windbreak policy • Education for Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan • Pasture Conditions Sssessment (soil erosion risk model) Guideline • Pasture Management Plan Development Road Map <p>Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS</p>	
		GE: The donors/organisations outside of the project sphere of responsibility are taken into consideration and communicated throughout of the implementation of project result, GE01: B	GE: Documents and Interview	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong
		GE: Project risks and assumptions are considered during the project result, GE01: B design and throughout the implementation	GE: Documents and Interview	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong
	To what extent does the strategic orientation of the project address potential changes in its framework conditions?	AM: The project reacts promptly and in a flexible way to political changes and uses windows of opportunity to achieve targets and objectives. Project implementation and strategic frameworks were adjusted to the changes taking place in the country (government reform)	AM: Documents and interviews	AM: Project progress report 2018, Kompass report, Project proposal, results model ibis,	moderate
	How is/was the complexity of the framework conditions and guidelines handled? How is/was any possible overloading dealt with and strategically focused?	Overall: Overloading of work was adequately dealt with and reduced/managed.	Interviews	Overall: Workshop. Project progress reports. Kompass report. Interviews partners	moderate
The project concept (1) was adapted to changes in line with requirements and re-adapted where applicable. Max. 20 points	What changes have occurred during project implementation? (e.g. local, national, international, sectoral, including state of the art of sectoral know-how)?	The project concept has been adapted to exploit opportunities and prevent risks emerging from external changes.	Documents and interviews	Overall: Project result monitoring steering needs; Workshop. Kompass report	moderate
		AZ: The project concept for the Ismayilli pilot on erosion control has been adapted to exploit opportunities and prevent risks emerging from external changes.	Documents and interviews	AZ: KOMPASS report, progress reports, CBA report and notes from KOMPASS focus group discussion (July 2019, Ehen); Interviews with MoA and Ismayilli District Administration (Evaluation Mission)	good

		GE: Changes occurred during the implementation of project result, GE01: B3 are documented and responded adequately	Documents and interviews	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	moderate
	How were the changes dealt with regarding the project concept?	Overall: the project concept included opportunities, as e.g. a new Result in GE	Documents and interviews	Overall: Project result monitoring steering needs; Workshop	moderate

OECD-DAC Criterion EFFECTIVENESS (max. 100 points)

Assessment dimensions	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators	Data collection methods (e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, documents, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, survey, etc.)	Data sources (list of relevant documents, interviews with specific stakeholder categories, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	Evidence strength (moderate, good, strong)
The project achieved the objective (outcome) on time in accordance with the project objective indicators.(1) Max. 40 points	OVERALL: To what extent has the agreed project objective (outcome) been achieved, measured against the objective indicators? Are additional indicators needed to reflect the project objective adequately?	OVERALL: Project objective indicators are consistent and have been achieved. REG: The indicators D2 for result D is consistent and has been achieved.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, workshop	OVERALL/REG: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews with GIZ and partners, Workshop.	strong
		GE: Project result, GE01 (and indicators of pilot cases 3e (of GE03), 6f (of GE06), 5d (of GE05)) as contribution to indicator MO is consistent and have been achieved.	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan Document • Law of Georgian Red List • Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document • Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning • Forest Code • Forest Management Plan for Tusheti Protected Landscape • law on Biodiversity • law on Hunting • Documents on Political level and Management level Criteria's & Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) • Bylaws (N241, N242, N179) • Policy on Protected Areas • Windbreak policy • Education for Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan • Pasture Conditions Assessment (soil erosion risk model) Guideline • Pasture Management Plan Development Road Map 	strong

					Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS	
			AM: Activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other" , and indicator 1d "NFMIS is fully operational in all FEs" are consistent and is achieved partially. Indicator is under Result : "Ministries and subordinated bodies with improved capacities develop and/or enforce framework documents and information system". Contribution to MO1	AM: Interviews, documents, project reports, monitoring missions	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "high-light" reports (will be uploaded in DMS); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews	good
			AZ: (A3) Cost-benefit analyses for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level are carried out has been achieved. Contribution to Indicator MO3.	AZ: Interviews, workshop, documents, project reports, monitoring missions	AZ: Cost-Benefit Assessments, Project Report, Results Model and Monitoring System, Evaluation of Pilots, KOMPASS interviews, Workshop with GIZ	strong
		To what extent is it foreseeable that unachieved aspects of the project objective will be achieved during the current project term?	does not apply, as this is a final evaluation			
	The activities and outputs of the project contributed substantially to the project objective achievement (outcome).(1)	To what extent have the agreed project outputs been achieved, measured against the output indicators? Are additional indicators needed to reflect the outputs adequately?	OVERALL: Project activities are judged as significant contributions to the project objectives by different parties.	OVERALL: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, workshop.	OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report,	strong
	Max. 30 points		GE: Project result, GE01 is judged as significant contributions to the project objectives by different parties	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan Document • Law of Georgian Red List • Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document • Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning • Forest Code • Forest Management Plan for Tusheti Protected Landscape • law on Biodiversity • law on Hunting • Documents on Political level and Management level Criteria's & 	strong

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Bylaws (N241, N242, N179) Policy on Protected Areas Windbreak policy Education for Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan Pasture Conditions Assessment (soil erosion risk model) Guideline Pasture Management Plan Development Road Map <p>Interviews</p> <p>Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS</p>	
		AM; Activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other", additional indicator 1d "NFMIS is fully operational in all FEs", are evaluated and assessed as effectively contributing to the achievement of the output : "Ministries and subordinated bodies with improved capacities develop and/or enforce framework documents and information system"	AM Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports (will be uploaded in DMS); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews	good
		AZ: (A3) Cost-benefit analyses for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level are judged as significant contributions to the project objectives by different parties. Contribution to Indicator MO3.	AZ: Interviews, workshop, documents, project reports, monitoring missions	AZ: Cost-Benefit Assessments, Project Report, Results Model and Monitoring System, Evaluation of Pilots, KOMPASS interviews, Workshop with GIZ	good
	How does the project contribute via activities, instruments and outputs to the achievement of the project objective (outcome)? (contribution-analysis approach)	Project activities are judged as significant contributions to the project objectives by different parties. REG: Activities under indicator D2 are judged as significant contributions to the project objectives, following the hypothesis.	Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, workshop.	Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews with GIZ and GE partners. REC-C strategy workshop, strategy document and implementation update (document or interview March 2020) plus workshop	strong
		GE: Project result GE01 contributes via the defined hypothesis	Documents and Interview	As above plus GE: Documents: Project Proposal; the KOMPASS report (pg 24-25, 36), SDG report (pg 3-4, 7, 11-12, 24) with viewpoints collected by interviews from project partners and stakeholders; :Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (53-54 pg); National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II) (pg 56, 59, 66); Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity (https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/4276845?publication=1); Additional interviews/communications might	strong

				<p>be needed in 2020 to cross check the information.</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Project monitoring system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents <p>Project Progress report</p>	
		<p>AZ: (A3) Cost-benefit analyses for two incentive mechanisms for the implementation of sustainable management of biodiversity and ES at local level contributes via the defined hypothesis to Indicator MO3.</p>	<p>AZ: Interviews, workshop, documents, project reports, monitoring missions</p>	<p>AZ: Cost-Benefit Assessments, Project Report, Results Model and Monitoring System, Evaluation of Pilots, KOMPASS interviews, Workshop with GIZ</p>	
		<p>AM: activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other, and Indicator 1d "Improvement of the usage of NFMS, and its two modules", additional indicator 1d "NFMS is fully operational in all FEs" is evaluated and assessed as effectively contributing to the achievement of the output : "Ministries and subordinated bodies with improved capacities develop and/or enforce framework documents and information system" Project Result 01 Legal, institutional and technical framework, according to the defined hypothesis.</p>	<p>Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>AM: Final SDG highlight report, Interview with project beneficiary, Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews</p>	<p>strong</p>
	<p>Implementation strategy: Which factors in the implementation contribute successfully to or hinder the achievement of the project objective? (e.g. external factors, managerial setup of project and company, cooperation management)</p>	<p>OVERALL/REG: The implementation strategy has addressed external and internal risks and factors, and built them in..</p>	<p>OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, survey, workshop</p>	<p>OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports (11/2019, Overall and AM); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews</p>	<p>strong</p>

		GE: The implementation strategy has addressed external and internal risks and factors during the implementation of the result and built them in.	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong
	What other/alternative factors contributed to the fact that the project objective was achieved or not achieved?	OVERALL/REG: The implementation strategy has addressed external and internal risks and factors, and built them in. At the regional level, the REC-C strategy considers risks from lack of buy-in from national governments and associated to decreasing use of the Facebook group.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, survey, workshop	OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews during Inception Mission with GIZ and GE partners. REG: REC-C strategy workshop, strategy document and implementation update (document or interview March 2020), and survey with Facebook group	strong
		GE: The project team (and partners) have identified and addressed other factors than those above during the implementation of the result GE01	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong
		AM: Project team has reported on certain factors, which contributed to the achievement of the result	AM Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	AM: Project progress report 2018, project reporting documents, KOMPASS report, Interview with GIZ IBIS Armenia Team, interviews with partners	good
		AZ: External factors impeding Hypothesis "Demonstrated socio-economic benefits motivate national sectoral and inter-sectoral bodies to improve policy framework based on pilot experiences" from R1 to R4 have been identified and addressed by the project	Documents and interviews	AZ: KOMPASS report, and notes from KOMPASS focus group discussion (July 2019, Ehen); SDGs report, Progress report	good
	What would have happened without the project?	OVERALL/REG: The project has made significant contributions to the set objectives, which would not have been achieved by other means.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, survey, workshop	OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews and survey with Facebook group	moderate

			<p>GE: The project result GE01 has made significant contributions to the set objectives, which would not have been achieved by other means.</p>	<p>GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest Sector Reform Strategy and Action Plan Document • Law of Georgian Red List • Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document • Rule on Spatial and Urban Planning • Forest Code • Forest Management Plan for Tusheti Protected Landscape • law on Biodiversity • law on Hunting • Documents on Political level and Management level Criteria's & Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) • Bylaws (N241, N242, N179) • Policy on Protected Areas • Windbreak policy • Education for Sustainable Development Strategy and Action Plan • Pasture Conditions Ssessment (soil erosion risk model) Guideline • Pasture Management Plan Development Road Map <p>Interviews</p> <p>Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS</p>	strong
			<p>AM: Without activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriv-ing from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and indicators AM 01: 1d"Improve-ment of the usage of NFMS, and its two modules", additional indicator 1d "NFMS is fully operational in all FEs", would not have been achieved..</p>	<p>AM Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>AM: Interviews with partners, Kompass report, Project progress reports, project monitoring materials, Project monitoring system; SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews</p>	strong
<p>No project-related (unintended) negative results have occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately.</p> <p>The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results has been monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results have been seized.</p>	<p>Which (unintended) negative or (formally not agreed) positive results does the project produce at output and outcome level and why?</p>	<p>OVERALL/REG: The project has achieved unintended results and these are tracked/reported by the project or partners.</p>	<p>OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews with partners and stakeholders</p>	moderate	

Max. 30 points		GE: Unintended results related to the project result GE01 are tracked/reported by the project or partners.	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Document: Unintended results of IBIS, 2019 Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS	moderate
		AZ: Unintended results which have occurred related to Result 1 are tracked, and action has been taken by the project to maximise positive and minimize negative effects.	AZ: Interviews, workshop, documents, project reports, monitoring missions	AZ: KOMPASS report, SDG report, notes from KOMPASS focus group discussion (July 2019, Ehen); GIZ pilot evaluation report, Interviews with MoA and Ismayili District Administration (Evaluation Mission)	good
		AM: No unintended negative result exists for activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, no unintended negative results exists for the activity indicator AM 01: 1d"Improvement of the usage of NFMIS, and its two modules", additional indicator 1d "NFMIS is fully operational in all FEs".	AM: Interviews, documents, project reports, monitoring missions	AM: "Highlight reports", Interviews with partners, Kompass report, Project progress reports, project monitoring materials, Project monitoring system; SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews during Inception Mission GIZ, Interview with Forest committee, Interview with Hayantar.	moderate
	How were risks and assumptions (see also GIZ Safeguards and Gender system) as well as (unintended) negative results at the output and outcome level assessed in the monitoring system (e.g. 'Kompass')? Were risks already known during the concept phase?	OVERALL/REG: Risks and assumptions were known during the project concept phase, and have been considered in the monitoring system at output and outcome level.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; SDG evaluation; Interviews with political and implementing partners	moderate
		GE: Risks and assumptions were known during the project result GE01 concept phase, and have been considered in the monitoring system at output and outcome level.	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong

		<p>AM: Risks and assumptions were known for activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions (on decision making level) contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS), the project indicator 1c: (FO): Concept of information system for managing biodiversity and ecosystem services is endorsed, and indicator 1d (FO): Improvement of NFMS modules, and have been considered in the monitoring system at output and outcome level.</p>	<p>AM: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports (will be uploaded in DMS); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews during Inception Mission GIZ Tobias Wittman, and partner agencies of Hanantar, FMC, FC, and Min. of Environment. Additional documents or interviews scheduled with beneficiaries and GIZ team can be requested.</p>	<p>moderate</p>
	<p>What measures have been taken by the project to counteract the risks and (if applicable) occurred negative results? To what extent were these measures adequate?</p>	<p>OVERALL: Adequate risk mitigation measures have been taken by the project.</p>	<p>OVERALL: Documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>OVERALL: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation.</p>	<p>moderate</p>
		<p>GE: Adequate risk mitigation measures have been taken by the project during the project result implementation.</p>	<p>GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)</p>	<p>strong</p>
		<p>AM: Adequate risks mitigation measures were outlined and implemented with regards to the project activity 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS), indicator 1c: (FO): Concept of information system for managing biodiversity and ecosystem services is endorsed, and indicator 1d (FO): Improvement of NFMS modules, risks are described and will be mitigated through activities of 2019.</p>	<p>AM: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system</p>	<p>AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports (will be uploaded in DMS); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews during Inception Mission GIZ Tobias Wittman, and partner agencies of Hanantar, FMC, FC, and Min. of Environment. Additional documents or interviews scheduled with beneficiaries and GIZ team can be requested.</p>	<p>good</p>
	<p>To what extent were potential (not formally agreed) positive results at outcome level monitored and exploited?</p>			<p>Not assessed; the difference between "potential (not formally agreed)" and "unintended" results has been requested to GIZ for clarification, but no such</p>	

					clarification has been provided	
			GE: Potential positive results at outcome level based on result GE01 have been monitored and exploited by GIZ and/or partners.	GE: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	Document: Unintended results of IBIS, 2019 Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS	moderate
			AM: Potential positive results at outcome level (e.g. based on activities linked to indicators 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems", 1c: (FO): Concept of information system for managing biodiversity and ecosystem services is endorsed, and indicator 1d (FO): Improvement of NFMS modules, have been monitored by GIZ and exploited at its initial stage by partners.	AM: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports ; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Interviews during Inception Mission with GIZ	moderate

OECD-DAC Criterion IMPACT (max. 100 points)							
Assessment dimensions	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources (list of relevant documents, interviews with specific stakeholder categories, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	Evidence strength (
The intended overarching development results have occurred or are foreseen (plausible reasons). (1)	Standard	To which overarching development results is the project supposed to contribute (cf. module and programme proposal with indicators/ identifiers if applicable, national strategy for implementing 2030 Agenda, SDGs)? Which of these intended results at the impact level can be observed or are plausible to be achieved in the future?	OVERALL: Intended overarching development results have been achieved by the project (or significant contributions have been made).	OVERALL: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system.	OVERALL: SDG evaluation (primary source); Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, workshop.	strong	
Max. 40 points			GE: Intended overarching development results (SDG15 "Better protection and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services") have been significantly contributed by the outcome GE01	GE: Documents, interviews, project monitoring system	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture. 2019. 2020 Action Plan of National Forestry Agency United Nation. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development Nabuurs, P. Hammermann - AHT GROUP AG. Monitoring of impact of IBIS in relation to Overarching Results. 2019 Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documentsProject Progress report	strong	

		Standard	Indirect target group and 'Leave No One Behind' (LNOB): Is there evidence of results achieved at indirect target group level/specific groups of population? To what extent have targeted marginalised groups (such as women, children, young people, elderly, people with disabilities, indigenous peoples, refugees, IDPs and migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS and the poorest of the poor) been reached?	AZ: Marginalised groups have been reached by the pilot activities under R1, contributing to LE-2 (rural development and food security), GG-1 (gender equality) and SDG1 (Rural development and poverty reduction)	AZ: Project monitoring system, Reports, Focus Group (KOMPASS), Interview	AZ: Project monitoring system, including quantitative and qualitative data., SDG report, progress reports. Interview Ismayili District Administration and other stakeholders, CBA report	good
The project objective (outcome) of the project contributed to the occurred or foreseen overarching development results (impact). (1) Max. 30 points		Standard	To what extent is it plausible that the results of the project on outcome level (project objective) contributed or will contribute to the overarching results? (contribution-analysis approach)	OVERALL/REG: The results of the project on outcome level (project objective) contributed or will contribute to the overarching results, following the results hypothesis from Output D to the impact level.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system.	OVERALL: KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; Interviews.	strong
				GE: The project result GE01 contributed to the overarching results (UR-2, PG/GG1 and SDG15).	GE: Documents, interviews, project monitoring system	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture. 2019. 2020 Action Plan of National Forestry Agency United Nation. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development Nabuurs, P. Hammermann - AHT GROUP AG. Monitoring of impact of IBIS in relation to Overarching Results. 2019 Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents/Project Progress report	strong
		Standard	What are the alternative explanations/factors for the overarching development results observed? (e.g. the activities of other stakeholders, other policies)	OVERALL/REG: Other factors (e.g. projects) have been identified and have contributed to the project development results at regional level. There are synergies with other activities/initiatives towards regional exchange and collaboration.	Interviews, documents, project monitoring system.	OVERALL: SDG evaluation Interviews	good
				GE: Other factors (e.g. projects) have been identified and have contributed to the overarching development results	GE: Documents, interviews, project monitoring system	Documents as rules, Interviews with stakeholders	good
		Standard	To what extent is the impact of the project positively or negatively influenced by framework conditions, other policy areas, strategies or interests (German ministries, bilateral and multilateral development partners)? How did the project react to this?	OVERALL: The project maximises the impact by considering and building in framework conditions, other policy areas, strategies or interests. GE: The project result GE01 maximises the impact on UR-2 and SDG15 by considering and building in framework conditions, other policy areas, strategies or interests.	OVERALL: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system. REG: documents, interviews	OVERALL: SDG evaluation (primary source); Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, Interview with partners	strong
					GE: Documents, interviews, project monitoring system	Documents: Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity Code (2018); Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document, 2019 ; Draft Forest Code; Draft law on Biodiversity. Interviews	good
		Standard	What would have happened without the project?	OVERALL: The project has made relevant contributions towards achieving development results, which would not have been achieved by other means.	OVERALL/REG: Interviews, documents, project monitoring system, survey	OVERALL: KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation; Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; Interviews. Survey with Facebook group members	good
		Standard	To what extent has the project made an active and systematic contribution to widespread impact and	REG: Project made active, systematic and innovative contribution to regional exchange and collaboration (SDG16).	REG: Documents and interviews	REG: REC-C strategy workshop, strategy document and implementation update. Interview. Project reporting	strong

			were scaling-up mechanisms applied (2)? If not, could there have been potential? Why was the potential not exploited? To what extent has the project made an innovative contribution (or a contribution to innovation)? Which innovations have been tested in different regional contexts? How are the innovations evaluated by which partners?	GE: Project made an innovative contribution under the project outcome GE01	GE: Documents and interviews;	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria's & Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM); Guiding Outline of Municipal Spatial Planning Documentation Akhmeta Spatial Planning Document; Pasture conditions assessment (soil erosion risk model) guideline; Pasture Management plan development road map. Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents/Project Progress report	strong	
				GE: Successful innovation of the project under the outcome GE01 have been scaled up or replicated.	GE: Documents and interviews;		strong	
	No project-related (unintended) negative results at impact level have occurred – and if any negative results occurred the project responded adequately. The occurrence of additional (not formally agreed) positive results at impact level has been monitored and additional opportunities for further positive results have been seized.	Standard	Which (unintended) negative or (formally not agreed) positive results at impact level can be observed? Are there negative trade-offs between the ecological, economic and social dimensions (according to the three dimensions of sustainability in the Agenda 2030)? Were positive synergies between the three dimensions exploited?	GE: Positive synergies between three dimensions (ecological, economic and social dimensions) are observed under the project result GE01	GE: Documents and interviews;	Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Georgia's Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (53-54 pg); National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP II) Georgian Space Planning, Architectural and Construction Activity Code; Organic law of Georgia - local self-government code; Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021 (2013)). Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents/Project Progress report/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong	
				Overall: (unintended) negative or (formally not agreed) positive results at impact level have been achieved and – if negative – properly addressed	Documents and interviews;	Interviews. Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019), report on unintended results.		
	Max. 30 points	Standard	To what extent were risks of (unintended) results at the impact level assessed in the monitoring system (e.g. 'Kompas')? Were risks already known during the planning phase?	GE: The risks were known and documented during the planning phase of result GE01	GE: Documents and interviews;	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong	
		Standard	What measures have been taken by the project to avoid and counteract the risks/negative results/trade-offs (3)?	GE: The appropriate actions were taken by the project to avoid risks/negative results of the result GE01	GE: Documents and interviews;	Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS/ Steering Structure Document (2019)	strong	
				AZ: The appropriate actions were taken by the project to avoid risks/negative results of the result AZ01, e.g. a rejection due to negative cost-benefit results	AZ: Documents and interviews;	AZ Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews with Ministry and municipality and other stakeholders	moderate	
		Standard	To what extent have the framework conditions played a role in regard to the negative results? How did the project react to this?	REG: The project reacted to framework conditions to revert the risk of negative results (lack of governmental support to REC-C to develop its regional function).	REG: Interviews, workshop, documents	REG: KOMPASS report and interviews, Project progress reports. Interviews with (regional) partners	moderate	
		Standard	To what extent were potential (not formally agreed) positive results and potential synergies between the ecological, economic and social dimensions monitored and	REG: Potential positive results and synergies from fostering cooperation and exchange between professionals have been monitored and exploited.	REG: Survey; workshop	REG: Survey with Facebook group members.	moderate	

		exploited?					
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OECD-DAC Criterion EFFICIENCY (max. 100 points)						
Assessment dimensions	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators (pilot phase for indicators - only available in German so far)	Data collection methods (e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, documents, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, survey, etc.)	Data sources (list of relevant documents, interviews with specific stakeholder categories, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	Evidence strength (moderate, good, strong)	
<p>The project's use of resources is appropriate with regard to the outputs achieved.</p> <p>[Production efficiency: Resources/Outputs]</p> <p>Max. 70 points</p>	To what extent are there deviations between the identified costs and the projected costs? What are the reasons for the identified deviation(s)?	The project manages its resources according to the planned cost plan (cost lines). Only with comprehensible justification deviations from the cost plan.		This indicator is not applicable, as the project was commissioned under the previous procedure. However, qualitative non-accessible information on budget development and implementation including examples has been gathered from the AV.		
	Focus: To what extent could the outputs have been maximised with the same amount of resources and under the same framework conditions and with the same or better quality (maximum principle)? (methodological minimum standard: Follow-the-money approach)	The project reflects whether the agreed effects can be achieved with existing resources.	GIZ project proposals, reporting, interviews	Project proposals, progress and final reports, Interview with project manager	low	
		The project manages its resources according to the planned costs of the agreed services (outputs). Only on comprehensible grounds deviations from the costs. The overall cost of the project is proportionate to the cost of the outputs. The services provided by ZAS Aufschriebe have a reasonable added value for the achievement of the outputs of the project.	GIZ project proposals, reporting, interviews	Project proposals, progress and final reports, Interview with project manager	low	
		The overall cost of the project is proportionate to the cost of the outputs.	Documents, Reporting system, complemented with qualitative information from documents, interviews and workshops	progress reports, results matrix of the latest progress report, Contracts for major (>50,000 EUR) procurements of materials and equipment and possible financing. Interview with project manager	moderate	
		The services provided by ZAS Aufschriebe have a reasonable added value for the achievement of the outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
	Focus: To what extent could outputs have been maximised by reallocating resources between the outputs? (methodological minimum standard: Follow-the-money approach)	The project manages its resources to achieve / better reach other outputs when outputs have been achieved or can not be achieved (final evaluation).	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	

	Were the output/resource ratio and alternatives carefully considered during the design and implementation process – and if so, how? (methodological minimum standard: Follow-the-money approach)	The proposed instrument in the proposed module could be well realized in terms of estimated costs in relation to the projected outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
		The partner constellation proposed in the module proposal and the associated levels of intervention could be well realized in terms of estimated costs in relation to the projected outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
		The thematic layouts proposed for the project in the proposed module were well implemented in terms of estimated costs in relation to the projected outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
		The risks described in the module proposal are well traceable in terms of estimated costs in relation to the projected outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
		The scope of the project (for example, regions) described in the module proposal could be fully realized in terms of estimated costs in relation to the projected outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low	
		The approach of the project described in the module proposal with regard to the outputs to be provided corresponds to the state-of-the-art under the given framework conditions.	Overall: Primarily GIZ Documents, Reporting system, complemented with qualitative information from interviews and workshops	progress reports, results matrix of the latest progress report. Interview with project manager and partners	moderate	
	The project's use of resources is appropriate with regard to achieving the projects objective (outcome). [Allocation efficiency: Resources/Outcome]	To what extent could the outcome (project objective) have been maximised with the same amount of resources and the same or better quality (maximum principle)?	The project is based on internal or external benchmarks in order to achieve its effects cost-effectively.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
	Max. 30 points	Were the outcome-resources ratio and alternatives carefully considered during the conception and implementation process – and if so, how? Were any scaling-up options considered?	The project steers its resources between the outputs, so that the maximum effects in terms of the module goal are achieved (final evaluation)	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
			The proposed instrument in the proposed module could be well realized with regard to the estimated costs in relation to the intended module objective of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
			The partner constellation proposed in the module proposal and the associated intervention levels could be well realized with regard to the estimated costs with regard to the targeted module objective of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low

		The thematic layouts proposed for the project as proposed in the module proposal have been well implemented with regard to the estimated costs in relation to the intended module objective of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
		The risks described in the module proposal are well traceable with regard to the estimated costs in relation to the targeted module objective of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
		The scope of the project (e.g., regions) described in the module proposal could be fully realized in terms of estimated costs in relation to the targeted module objective of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low
		The approach of the project described in the module proposal with regard to the module objective to be achieved corresponds to the state-of-the-art under the given framework conditions.		Cannot be assessed at the outcome level; has been assessed at the output level.	
	To what extent were more results achieved through cooperation / synergies and/or leverage of more resources, with the help of other ministries, bilateral and multilateral donors and organisations (e.g. co-financing) and/or other GIZ projects? If so, was the relationship between costs and results appropriate or did it even improve efficiency?	The project is taking the necessary steps to fully realize synergies with intervention by other donors at the impact level.	GIZ Documents, reporting system, complemented with interviews and workshops	progress reports, results matrix of the latest progress report, Contracts for major (>50,000 EUR) procurements of materials and equipment and possible financing. Interview with project manager and other donors	moderate
		Loss of efficiency due to insufficient coordination and complementarity with interventions by other donors are sufficiently avoided.	GIZ Documents, reporting system, complemented with interviews and workshops	progress reports, results matrix of the latest progress report, Contracts for major (>50,000 EUR) procurements of materials and equipment and possible financing. Interview with project manager and other donors	moderate
		The project is taking the necessary steps to fully realize synergies within German development cooperation.	GIZ Documents, reporting system, complemented with interviews and workshops	progress reports, results matrix of the latest progress report, Contracts for major (>50,000 EUR) procurements of materials and equipment and possible financing. Interview with project manager and other donors	moderate
		Economic losses due to insufficient coordination and complementarity within German development cooperation are sufficiently avoided.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager and German development cooperation	moderate
		The combination financing has led to a significant expansion of the effects and this is to be expected.		Does not apply	
		Due to the combination financing, the overarching costs have not increased disproportionately in relation to the total costs.		Does not apply	
		Partner contributions are proportionate to the costs of the outputs of the project.	No specific GIZ documents available	Interview with project manager	low

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OECD-DAC Criterion SUSTAINABILITY (max. 100 points)							
Assessment dimensions	Filter - Project Type	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators	Data collection methods (e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, documents, project/partner monitoring system, workshop, survey, etc.)	Data sources (list of relevant documents, interviews with specific stakeholder categories, specific monitoring data, specific workshop(s), etc.)	Evidence strength (moderate, good, strong)	
Prerequisite for ensuring the long-term success of the project: Results are anchored in (partner) structures. Max. 50 points	Standard	What has the project done to ensure that the results can be sustained in the medium to long term by the partners themselves?	OVERALL: The project has jointly with the partners set up institutional capacities (knowledge, procedures e.g. to access future funding), low-cost maintenance options and other elements for sustainability.	Interviews and documents, online information, survey, workshop	Interviews with government officials and stakeholders; Project Final Report, KOMPASS interviews with biodiversity stakeholders (partners). Survey to the Facebook group members. Workshop.	good	
			GE: The project (result GE01) has jointly with the partners set up institutional capacities (knowledge, procedures), low-cost maintenance options and other elements for sustainability.	GE: Interviews and documents	Documents Interviews Project monitoring system: DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report	strong	
			AZ: The project has undertaken all reasonable efforts (under result AZ01) to make the erosion control pilot and its replication in AZ sustainable, looking for close partnership with national and local institutions and stakeholders.	AZ: Interviews and documents	AZ: Project reporting, Pilot evaluation reports, KOMPASS report, interviews and focus group in Ehen (April 2019), interviews (MoA, Ismayili District Administration)	good	
			AM: Project indicator 4a. "Users of relevant environmental information systems, (e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other), have formulated two policy recommendations (on technical level) based on verifiably generated data, NBMS was developed in close partnership with lead stakeholder agencies.	AM: Documents, interviews	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; project "highlight" reports (will be uploaded in DMS); KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews during Inception Mission GIZ staff AM. (additional documents will be reviewed and interviews performed in March 2020 as applicable).	strong	
	Standard	In what way are advisory contents, approaches, methods or concepts of the project anchored/institutionalised in the (partner) system?	OVERALL: The partner has actively incorporated the project's tools, approaches and methods in its own day-by-day work. REG: The REC-C strategy developed with the support of IBiS is being implemented timely.	REG: Interviews and documents, online information, survey	REG: Interviews with government officials and REC-C; Project Final Report, KOMPASS interviews with biodiversity stakeholders (partners). Survey to the Facebook group members.	strong	
			GE: The partner has actively incorporated the project's results (Under GE01) tools, approaches and methods) in its own day-by-day work.	GE: Interviews and documents, online information	Documents Interviews Project monitoring system: DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report	strong	
	Standard		REG: The REC-C Strategic Plan has been implemented for activities and milestones in 2019-2020.	REG: Documents and interviews;	REG: Interviews with GIZ and REC-C; regional REC-C strategy workshop documents and REC-C strategy	moderate	
		To what extent are the results continuously used and/or further developed by the target group and/or implementing partners?	AM: Project result AM01 (including indicators 1a. "Two national strategies or resolutions contain conclusions deriving from data provided by the users of relevant environmental information systems, e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and "NFMIS is fully operational in all FOS") is institutionalized used by partner organizations.	AM: Interviews and documents, online information	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes; Interviews	strong	

			GE: The project results (Under GE01) are upscaled, replicated	GE: Interviews and documents	Documents: Online articles Interviews Project monitoring system: Project proposal, DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documentsProject Progress report	strong
	Standard		REG: REC-C Strategic Implementation Plan is being implemented and supported by governments.	REG: Interviews and documents, workshops	REG: Interviews with GIZ and REC-C; regional REC-C strategy workshop documents and REC-C strategy.	good
		To what extent are resources and capacities at the individual, organisational or societal/political level in the partner country available (long-term) to ensure the continuation of the results achieved?	GE: resources and capacities at the individual or organisational level is available (until 2021+) to ensure the continuation of the results achieved under GE01	GE: Interviews and documents	Documents Interviews Project monitoring system: DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documentsProject Progress report	strong
			AM: resources and capacities at the individual or organisational level is available to ensure the continuation of the results achieved (project result AM01 with specific focus on indicator 4a Users of relevant environmental information systems, (e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS) and other) an related activities, have formulated two policy recommendations (on technical level) based on verifiably generated data. 4b A total of two forest enterprises manage forests according to national principles for sustainable forest management.	AM: Interviews and documents, online information	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes;	good
	Standard	If no follow-on measure exists: What is the project's exit strategy? How are lessons learnt for partners and GIZ prepared and documented?	REG: REC-C Strategic Implementation Plan is being implemented and supported by governments.	REG: Interviews and documents, workshop	REG: Interviews with GIZ and REC-C workshop; regional REC-C strategy workshop documents and REC-C strategy.	good
	and Fragility	To what extent was the project able to ensure that escalating factors/dividers (1) in the context of conflict, fragility and violence have not been strengthened (indirectly) by the project in the long-term? To what extent was the project able to strengthen deescalating factors/connectors (2) in a sustainable way?	The project has contributed to reducing conflict	Interviews and documents, workshop	SDG report, interviews, unintended results	good
Forecast of durability: Results of the project are permanent, stable and long-term resilient. Max. 50 points	Standard	To what extent are the results of the project durable, stable and resilient in the long-term under the given conditions?	REG: REC-C Strategic Implementation Plan is being implemented and supported by governments.	REG: Interviews and documents, workshop	REG: Interviews with GIZ and REC-C and workshop during Evaluation Mission; regional REC-C strategy workshop documents and REC-C strategy.	good
			AM: The result of the Project under AM01 (especially 4a Users of relevant environmental information systems, (e.g. national biodiversity monitoring system (NBMS), have formulated two policy recommendations (on technical level) based on verifiably generated data. 4b A total of two forest enterprises manage forests according to national principles for sustainable forest management is durable), stable and resilient	AM: Interviews and documents, online information	AM: Project monitoring system; Project progress and final reports; KOMPASS report and interviews, SDG evaluation and supporting interview quotes;	good
			GE: The results of the project (Under GE01) is durable, stable and resilient in the long-term under the given conditions	GE: Interviews and documents	Documents Interviews Project monitoring system: DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documentsProject Progress report	strong
	Standard	What risks and potentials are emerging for the durability of the results and how likely are these factors to occur?	REG: REC-C Strategic Implementation Plan is being implemented and supported by governments.	REG: Interviews and documents	REG: Interviews with GIZ and REC-C and Evaluation Mission; regional REC-C strategy workshop documents and REC-C strategy.	

		What has the project done to reduce these risks?	GE: The actions were made to make the project result (Under GE01) durable due to occurring risk	GE: Interviews and documents	Documents Interviews Project monitoring system: DMS database/Project Documents/Sectoral documents Project Progress report	strong

Additional Evaluation Questions						
Assessment dimensions	Evaluation questions	Evaluation indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources	Evidence strength	
Impact and sustainability (durability) of predecessor project(s)	Which of the intended impact of the predecessor project(s) can (still/now) be observed?	Results of the predecessor projects are still in place	Documents, interviews	Predecessor final report, project proposal,	moderate	
	Which of the achieved results (output, outcome) from predecessor project(s) can (still) be observed?	Impacts of the predecessor projects are still in place	Interviews	Project manager	moderate	
	To what extent are these results of the predecessor project(s) durable, stable and resilient in the long-term under the given conditions?	Not assessed as the GIZ funding has continued				
	In what way were results anchored/institutionalised in the (partner) system?	Results have been incorporated in the administrative system and processes	Documents, interviews		moderate	
	How much does the current project build on the predecessor project(s)? Which aspects (including results) were used or integrated in the current project (phase)?	The project builds on predecessors, and integrates its results	Documents, interviews	Project proposal, interview with project manager	moderate	
	How was dealt with changes in the project context (including transition phases between projects/phases)? Which important strategic decisions were made? What were the consequences?	There was no transition phase, but an immediate switch.				
	Which factors of success and failure can be identified for the predecessor project(s)?	Factors for success and failure for the predecessors projects are clear	Documents, interviews	Predecessor project evaluation. Workshops.	low	
Follow-on project (if applicable)	Based on the evaluations results: Are the results model including results hypotheses, the results-oriented monitoring system (VoM), and project indicators plausible and in line with current standards? If applicable, are there any recommendations for improvement?	Not applicable				
Additional evaluation questions	Has the project knowledge been appropriately organised and disseminated to assure uptake of its legacy?	The project knowledge has been well and as far as possible open-access documented	Documents, interviews	Website, interview with project director	moderate	
	Has the project's concept incorporated the critical risks identified by the predecessor projects?	The project has dealt with the risks identified in the predecessor projects for sustainability	Documents, interviews	Website, interview with project director	moderate	

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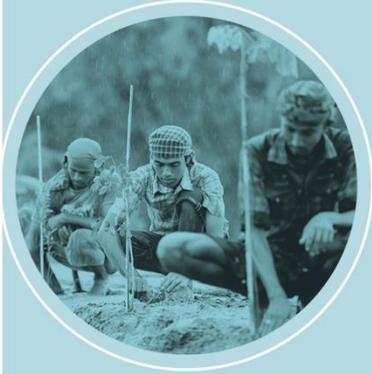
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