Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO
Economic Cooperation and Development

Management Response

Mid-Term Evaluation
Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia

By NewForesight, Circle Indonesia and Dalberg

September 2025

1) Background

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, acting through the Swiss Cooperation Office in Indonesia has retained services of NewForesight, Circle Indonesia and Dalberg for the External Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia (hereafter: SLPI or the Program).

The SLPI Phase I covered the period from 2023 to 2025. The program aims to promote sustainable livelihoods and protect natural ecosystems through improved management of commodity-producing landscapes across Indonesia using a Sustainable Landscape Approach (SLA).[1] SLPI's core objectives are to reduce deforestation, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and reduce rural poverty by connecting smallholder farmers to global markets.

The Program consists of two main components: **Component 1** brings together four implementing consortia organisations[2], each with distinct area of expertise, which facilitate landscape work in selected Indonesian provinces in Sumatra and Kalimantan; **Component 2**, the Program Support Structure, is led by a national and global team of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and provides cross-cutting support to the Program by building capacity, facilitating knowledge exchange, and linking landscape-level efforts with national policy processes.

The evaluation was conducted with a **learning-oriented purpose**. Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Assess the continued relevance of SLPI, and the performance of the two Program Components;
- Identify where SECO's funding is likely to generate the greatest added-value and long-term sustainability;

[1] SECO (2023), SECO's Engagement in Sustainable Landscape Approaches, Position Paper.

[2] The four consortia are respectively lead by Daemeter, GIZ, Kaleka and Swisscontact.

- Based on the findings, make recommendations for SLPI's remainder and potential next phase.

2) Appreciation of the Report: Structure, Methodology & Process

Structure: The report is well-structured and clearly presented, enabling a good understanding of the findings and recommendations. It provides a thorough assessment of the Program's main strengths and areas for improvement, while also offering strategic guidance for shaping the follow-on phase. Although the report is somewhat lengthy, this is justified by the Program's complexity and the multiple components involved.

Methodology: The evaluation adopts a robust methodology, guided by a contribution analysis approach. It transparently outlines how the methodology was applied and the data assessed using evidence weighting framework.

Process: Collaboration with the evaluators was effective, thanks to the numerous iterations between SECO, the evaluation team, and the implementing agencies. The inclusion of a local consultant in the evaluation team proved valuable, ensuring access to relevant field-level information. In the final phase, the completion process experienced a slight delay due to the evaluator lead's change, but this did not affect the overall quality of the evaluation.

3) Key Findings and Lessons learnt

Main **findings according to DAC criteria** are summarized below:

- **Relevance**: *highly satisfactory* – with its focus on the subnational level and its on-the-ground implementation through Component 1's grassroots organizations, the SLPI has ensured that stakeholder needs are effectively met.
- **Effectiveness:** *satisfactory* – The majority of activities have been delivered across Components 1 and 2 of SLPI, although with varying strength of evidence. For some programmatic outcomes (e.g. governance, ecosystem protection, knowledge exchange) there is a good level of evidence that progress has been made, however, for other outcomes (more and sustainable production, inclusive practices), the evidence on effectiveness was relatively weak due to the lack of outcomes-based reporting.
- **Efficiency**: *satisfactory* – From an output perspective, most activities were delivered within the planned timeframes, reflecting a generally efficient implementation. However, a key limitation lies in the inability to clearly identify several outcome-level changes resulting from these activities. This undermines the overall confidence in the Program's efficiency, as the link between outputs and tangible outcomes remains weak.
- **Sustainability**: *satisfactory* – considering that landscape approaches require time to be effectively implemented. However, a major shortcoming remains the continued heavy reliance on landscape consortiums to drive implementation, alongside persistent challenges related to government capacity and the mobilization of alternative funding sources, including from the private sector. These issues will need to be prioritized in Phase 2 to ensure the long-term sustainability of SLPI.

Among **the key lessons** generated by phase I:

- **Continue building strong, sustainable, and inclusive multi-stakeholder fora (MSFs):** More time and effort are needed to strengthen the MSFs and position local governments as the true lead actors behind the initiatives.
- **Strengthen MEL approaches to improve understanding of progress and communication of Program achievements:** The absence of a common logical framework in phase I has made it difficult to assess and communicate the Program's impact. Strengthening MEL is also essential for securing cofinancing and ensuring long-term sustainability.
- **Stimulate investment into SLPI:** The long-term sustainability of SLPI depends on financing from both public and private sectors, and on reducing reliance on donor funding.
- **Focus SECO support strategically:** In a budget constraint environment, it is important for SECO to focus contributions where they create the most value, such as in areas less attractive to the private sector and with a higher public good character.

4) Shortcomings and other Important Considerations

At the beginning of the evaluation process, there was an expectation that the evaluation could provide a clear performance scoring of the four landscape projects. However, as the evaluation progressed, it became clear that this was not feasible, as the Program's MEL framework and the available data were not designed to support such comparisons. This underscored the importance of strengthening the Program's MEL approach in future phases to enable more meaningful cross-landscape performance assessments.

5) Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE			RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
A – Strategic					
Recommendation 1 Continue to build strong, sustainable and inclusive multi-stakeholder forums	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: Government to lead supported by landscape consortiums **Priority:** Very High – An appropriate, high functioning governance structure driving SLA is crucial towards its longer-term sustainability.	
	Response: WEHU fully recognizes that the institutionalization processes of MSFs are time- and resource-intensive, and that continued support beyond a single project phase is essential to strengthen ownership and build the capacities of local governments to lead MSFs. Priority for continued support will be given to landscape initiatives that demonstrate strong commitment from local governments, as well as active participation and financial contribution from the private sector. Continued funding for MSFs is also aligned with SECO's role within SLAs—namely, as a financier of elements with a strong public good character that ensure solid foundations for SLA implementation.				
	Measure: Support to multi-stakeholder forums will be continued and strengthened in the next phase, both through the individual landscape projects and via targeted capacity building provided under Component 2. Focus will lie on strengthening the institutional sustainability of MSF governance.				
Recommendation 2 Continue to undertake inclusive land mapping	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: Mapping efforts (landscape consortiums) in collaboration with government; Land	
	Response: Land mapping efforts and the establishment of monitoring systems are fundamental prerequisites for both environmental				

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE			RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
and monitoring, and drive cost-efficiency by leveraging digital technologies	conservation and social uplift objectives of the Program. They are essential to preventing potential conflicts between communities and to integrating local communities into deforestation mitigation efforts. Measure: Monitoring and mapping activities will continue in Phase II, under Component 1 of the SLPI. Many partners have already introduced innovative mapping technologies during Phase I, such as remote sensing tools like Airbus Starling and Maphubs. In the next phase, these approaches will be further promoted through the SLPI community of practice and, if proven successful, positioned at the national level as best practice candidates for scaling.			conflict process and management to be led by government (supported by landscape consortiums), in liaison with companies and smallholders (2.2) **Priority:** High – Mapping efforts are a crucial pre-requisite to achieving certification and better land conservation and management, including in the context of increasing sustainability regulation (EUDR). Where land zoning is uncertain or undefined – poor land management is more likely to occur (e.g. deforestation).	
Recommendation 3 Strengthen land tenure processes via driving efficiencies in the Plantation Cultivation Registration Letter (STD-B permits) issuance, continue to strengthen certification efforts by raising awareness and building the business case for it for all stakeholders	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: Government – all levels (STDB); landscape consortiums and companies (certification), UNDP to facilitate government connections. **Priority**: Very High – Strengthening land tenure is a pre-requisite to certification. Certification is a major priority of SLPI as a way to increase income and ensure sustainable production.	
	Response: The definition of land tenure rights and the promotion of smallholder certification through RSPO and ISPO remain key activities of the Program. While the project can support smallholders in obtaining cultivation registration certificates, it cannot directly improve the processes related to STD-B, as this falls under the primary responsibility of the Indonesian central government. At most, Component 2 could be used to raise awareness about inefficiencies within the STD-B system. Measures: The Program will continue to strengthen smallholders' land tenure and certification efforts in its second phase.				
Recommendation 4	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		

<table>
<tr><th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th><th colspan="3">MANAGEMENT RESPONSE</th><th>RESPONSIBILITY</th><th>TIMING</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Strengthen Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training</td><td colspan="3">Response: WEHU recognizes that strengthening GAP is essential to reconcile higher agricultural productivity with environmental sustainability, making it a key measure within the SLPI to reduce deforestation. GAP training also has strong potential to attract private sector financing, as it improves product quality and market competitiveness. In a co-financing approach that characterizes the SLPI, GAP training should be supported by the private sector, while SECO grant will focus on activities with a higher public good character (see recommendation 1).</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Responsibility: Private sector in conjunction with landscape consortiums

Priority: Moderate – GAP training has proved to be well received by farmers and important to certification and achieving sustainability outcomes. Wherever possible, landscape consortiums should explore company co-financing options for GAP training.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Measures: GAP training will remain a core activity in the second phase of the SLPI, but financing will be encouraged through the private sector rather than SECO grant.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Recommendation 5

Stimulate efforts to foster more gender inclusive practices and stronger labor protections via trainings and capacity uplift with companies</td><td>Fully agree</td><td>Partially agree</td><td>Not agree</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3">Responsibility: Landscape consortiums in conjunction with private sector

Priority: Moderate – SLPI’s work is important towards building more sustainability oriented local companies, and ensuring they’re on track to be certified. However, allocation of resources (i.e. SLPI support) should be targeted towards companies most in need of capability uplift. Ideally, in the longer run companies drive and self-fund labor and gender inclusion efforts due to regulatory forces.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Response: Inclusion measures have been in place since the first phase of the Program, with the focus primarily on integrating the perspectives of minority and vulnerable groups within the MSFs. While inclusion remains important as a measure to reduce poverty, it was decided not to define a specific outcome for this in the next phase, but rather to mainstream it throughout the Program. The complexity of actors and objectives in the first phase highlighted the importance of concentrating the design on a few targeted key outcomes.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Measures: The Program will continue to promote inclusion measures in the second phase, for example by improving the collection of gender-disaggregated data and working with trade unions to ensure better labor conditions in the palm oil sector.</td></tr>
</table>

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE			RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Recommendation 6 Stimulate investment into landscapes	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: Landscape consortiums **Priority**: High – The longer-term sustainability of SLPI relies on finance from both the public and private sectors, with reduced reliance on donor funding.	
	Response: WEHU fully recognizes the importance of promoting substantial and diversified investments in landscape initiatives as a key measure to enhance impact, ensure long-term sustainability, and reducing donor reliance. This aligns with SECO's broader support of SLA initiatives, where its investment is intended to act as a facilitator and catalyst for additional funding rather than as a long-term financier. Specific measures have been planned in the second phase to enhance financial sustainability of the landscape initiatives.				
	Measures: In the second phase of SLPI, co-financing of at least 50% and active participation from the private sector and other donors will remain prerequisites for accessing SECO's funding. Each initiative is expected to develop a long-term financing plan that guides partner commitments both in terms of implementation and financial contributions. Through the newly added Public Financial Management (PFM) component, the SLPI also addresses the improvement and expansion of public funding mechanisms. Additionally, targeted capacity building provided by UNDP should help landscapes attract greater investments and secure long-term financial sustainability.				
Recommendation 7 Continue investing in Component 2 to strengthen policy connections, knowledge sharing while reallocating the majority of resources to the local level	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: UNDP **Priority**: Moderate – Further training content should be novel and meet the needs of stakeholders. Prioritization should be given to in-person events and building connections between local and national level actors, as well as expanding the remit to foster connections with multinational	
	Response: WEHU fully acknowledges the importance of having a dedicated support structure within the SLPI's to coordinate the four landscape initiatives, provide strategic steering advice and linkage with national level. We agree that the resources available for Component 2 should be reallocated to the national level to ensure contextually appropriate support. The UNDP mandate under Component 2 must also be restructured to assume a stronger coordinating role rather than operating as an isolated component. In Phase I, UNDP focused primarily on capacity building and knowledge exchange among the landscapes.				

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE			RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
	Looking ahead, UNDP will adopt an integrated oversight role, encompassing strategic guidance, advisory support, and technical input.			companies - leveraging UNDP's large network.	
	Measure: The role and responsibilities of Component 2 will be strengthened to ensure that UNDP assumes a more prominent oversight role, while additional resources will be allocated at the local level. To support this new setup, dedicated Terms of Reference have been developed, and Strategic and Technical Oversight Groups have been introduced.				
Recommendation 8 Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approaches to enhance understanding of progress and communications on program achievements	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree	**Responsibility**: UNDP should lead this work, landscape consortiums organizations to implement. **Priority**: Very High – The lack of a common framework has made it difficult to understand and communicate the impact of SLPI. Further, it is crucial towards securing co-financing and ensuring the program's longer-term sustainability.	
	Response: WEHU fully recognizes the importance of strengthening the Program's MEL approach to ensure effective monitoring, enable timely corrective measures, communicate the Program's results, and attract additional investments. The Program should adopt a MEL framework that is both methodologically rigorous and flexible enough to accommodate the specificities of each landscape initiative.				
	Measure: In preparation for Phase II, an overarching Theory of Change and an aggregated logframe have been developed, which will be refined during the inception phase. UNDP is expected to take the lead in overseeing the overall MEL approach to ensure credible measurement and program-level monitoring, with dedicated resources allocated for this purpose. These instruments should not be considered a one-off exercise; they are designed as management instruments and will serve as the foundation for annual Learning Events and Steering Committee Meetings. They will be regularly revisited and adapted to ensure the approach remains relevant and effective.				

Place, Date

Ferrini Lia ARKAIP
11.11.2025

Info: admin.ch/esignature | validator.ch

Lia Ferrini
Program Manager

Place, Date

Peter Martin RQCCAP
11.11.2025

Info: admin.ch/esignature | validator.ch

Martin Peter
Deputy Head Trade Promotion