

**Final evaluation of the project
"Contributing to the integrated
management of biodiversity of the Pacific
Region of Colombia to Build Peace " -
Pacífico Biocultural**

GCP /COL/061/GFF

GEF ID 9441

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Bogotá, December 2025**

Quote required:

FAO, 2025. Final evaluation of the project "Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity of the *Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace* " - *Pacífico Biocultural*. GEFID 9441. Bogotá, Colombia, 2025.

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations concerning the legal or development status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The dashed lines on the maps represent approximate boundaries for which there may not yet be agreement. The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products, whether or not they are patented, does not imply that FAO endorses or recommends them over others of a similar nature that are not mentioned.

© FAO, 2025.



Some rights reserved. This work is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO License (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo/legalcode>).

Under the terms of this license, this work may be copied, redistributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes, provided that the work is properly cited. In any use of this work, it should not be suggested that FAO endorses any specific organization, product or service. The use of the FAO logo is not permitted. If the work is adapted, then it must be licensed under the same or equivalent Creative Commons license. If a translation of this work is created, you must include the following disclaimer along with the required citation: "This translation was not created by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO is not responsible for the content or accuracy of this translation. The original [language] edition shall be the authorized edition."

Disputes arising under the License that cannot be resolved amicably shall be resolved by mediation and arbitration as described in Article 8 of the License, except as otherwise provided herein. The applicable mediation rules shall be the mediation rules of the World Intellectual Property Organization <http://www.wipo.int/amc/en/mediation/rules> and any arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

Third-party materials. Users who wish to reuse material from this work that is attributed to a third party, such as tables, figures, or images, are responsible for determining whether permission is required for such reuse and for obtaining permission from the copyright holder. The risk of claims resulting from the infringement of any third party component of the work rests solely with the user.

Sales, royalties and licensing. FAO information products are available on the FAO website (www.fao.org/publications) and can be purchased upon request by e-mail to publications-sales@fao.org. Applications for commercial use should be sent to: www.fao.org/contact-us/licence-request. Rights and licensing inquiries should be sent to: copyright@fao.org.

Cover photo: ©

Summary

The "Pacífico Biocultural " project was implemented in six departments of the Colombian Pacific, one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, but also one with high levels of poverty and inequality. Its objective was to incorporate sustainable natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and the provision of ecosystem services in vulnerable landscapes, to generate local and global environmental benefits in support of the peace process.

The purpose of the evaluation was twofold: accountability and learning generation, with a participatory and collaborative approach. Due to security restrictions, it was not possible to visit the territories of the ethnic communities, so interviews and meetings were held in nearby cities. Although the findings reflect the experiences of those who participated, they constitute valid evidence for analysis, albeit with limitations in their representativeness.

The results show that the project effectively responded to the priorities of community and institutional partners, generating social and environmental benefits and contributing to peace building. With over 94% of the planned goals achieved —exceeding several targets—, community authority was strengthened, social cohesion was promoted, and the Pacific Regional System of Protected Areas (SIRAP) was consolidated as a regional governance platform. He also emphasized the mobilization of resources, efficient financial management and cofinancing in excess of commitments. Capacity building, the creation of new conservation areas and the promotion of green businesses have laid solid foundations for sustainability, although financial, institutional and security risks persist. Gender mainstreaming and the participation of ethnic communities ensured legitimacy and cultural relevance.

The evaluation concluded that the project was highly relevant, coherent and effective, with outstanding performance on its goals. Positioned ethnic communities as strategic partners in sustainable landscape management. The coordination between FAO, MinAmbiente and local stakeholders ensured legitimacy and replicable lessons learned.

It is recommended that the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico maintain relationships of trust with the communities, manage new sources of financing and strengthen the bioeconomy to consolidate community achievements and income. The communities are suggested to sustain co-responsibility with institutions and promote female and youth leadership. For new projects, ensure early participation of ethnic communities, maintain the mosaic approach and windows of intervention, institutionalize adaptive management and use letters of agreement as a co-responsibility tool.

Index

Summary.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	v
Abbreviations.....	vi
Executive summary.....	7
1. Introduction.....	3
1.1 Project background.....	3
1.2 Project context.....	4
1.3 Theory of Change	7
2. Methodology.....	9
2.1 Scope and objectives of the evaluation.....	9
2.2 Methodological design.....	11
2.3 Limitations.....	13
3. Project performance.....	15
3.1 Relevance	15
3.2 Coherence.....	17
3.3 Effectiveness.....	18
3.4 Capacity building.....	22
3.5 Progress towards impact.....	23
3.6 Additionality.....	25
3.7 Efficiency.....	26
3.8 Financial management and co-financing	27
3.9 Implementation.....	28
3.10 Execution.....	29
4. Sustainability.....	30
5. Design and implementation of the M&E system.....	32
5.1 M&E system plan	32
5.2 M&E system Implementation.....	32
6. Implementation of GEF policies and guidelines	35
6.1 Project partnership and stakeholder engagement	35
6.2 Communication and knowledge management products.....	35
6.3 Social and environmental standards.....	36
6.4 Gender and social inclusion	37
6.5 Indigenous peoples and local communities.....	38
7. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.....	39
7.1 Conclusions	39
7.2 Recommendations.....	42
7.3 Lessons learned and good practices	43
Appendix 1. Representation of the Theory of Change validated during Mid Term Review.....	46
Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix	47
Appendix 3. Results matrix with additionality analysis.....	53
Appendix 4. GEF Evaluation Criteria Scoring Table.....	60
Appendix 5. GEF qualification scheme and descriptors.....	62
Appendix 6. Persons interviewed	67
Appendix 7. GEF co-financing table.....	69

Appendix 8. OED validation system 71

Acknowledgments

The FAO Office of Evaluation would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation, led by Ms. Maria Alejandra Chaux of the FAO Office in Colombia. Ms. Lavinia Monforte, GEF Coordinator at the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED), has carried out quality control of the document and validated the ratings. The evaluation team was led by Doris Cordero, an independent international consultant, lead evaluator and head of the evaluation team; and Pablo Gutiérrez, PhD, a specialist in socioeconomic development and institutional strengthening, as the national evaluator.

The evaluation was carried out with the support of FAO Colombia staff and the project implementation team. Their vision, knowledge, advice and comments fueled this evaluation process. Special thanks to Agustín Zimmermann, Representative of FAO Colombia; Oscar Alzate, Project Coordinator and Gloria Teresita Serna, Project Director.

The assessment benefited from the input of many other actors and stakeholders, including government officials at the national, regional and local levels, members of Community Councils and Indigenous Peoples, and the staff of other organizations and research centers. Their contributions were fundamental to the team's work and are greatly appreciated.

Abbreviations

CCA	Community Conservation Areas
PA	Protected Areas
CAR	Regional Autonomous Corporations
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
DEX	Direct execution modality
ECA	Agricultural Field Schools
EX-ACT	EX-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (FAO)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, by its acronym in English
FAO-FMAM UC	FAO-GEF Coordination Unit
FLO	Funding Liaison Officer
GEF	Global Environment Facility
FPMIS	Field Program Management Information System (FPMS)
IIAP	Pacific Environmental Research Institute
INVEMAR	Marine and Coastal Research Institute
LTO	Chief Technical Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFS	Sustainable Forest Management
MUCB	Biodiversity Use and Conservation Mosaics
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
PNN	National Natural Parks of Colombia
SINAP	National System of Protected Areas
SIRAP	Regional System of Protected Areas
TdC	Theory of Change
UAV	Value Addition Units
PMU	Project Management Unit

Executive summary

Introduction

1. The project "Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity of the *Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace*", hereinafter "Pacífico Biocultural", was implemented in six departments of the Colombian Pacific. This region is part of the Chocó-Darién ecoregional complex, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet, covering an area of approximately 11 million hectares. Paradoxically, this region has high levels of poverty, social inequality and marginalization.
2. The project consisted of four components: 1) Institutional strengthening to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific region; 2) Integrated management of PA, buffer zones and Community Conservation Areas (CCA); 3) Sustainable production practices as alternatives for local development, biodiversity protection and support for the peace process; and 4) Knowledge management and M&E of the project. The actions took place in five areas called Mosaics of Biodiversity Use and Conservation (MUCB).
3. The evaluation served a dual purpose: accountability and generation of learning. The proposed objectives were: i) to evaluate the results of the project, its relevance for the participating partners and stakeholders, and its alignment with national needs and priorities; and ii) to document the main lessons learned for future projects or programs that seek to provide continuity, replicate or expand the results achieved.
4. A participatory and collaborative, learning-oriented methodological approach was used. The data collection was carried out using mixed data collection methods: document review, semi-structured interviews, and observation visits. The selection of the stakeholders consulted was done through purposive sampling, carried out with the support of the Project Management Unit (PMU). The information gathered was systematized and then triangulated in order to reinforce the validity of the findings obtained and the formulation of conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned based on evidence.
5. Given the security and public order situation in the Colombian Pacific, it was not possible to carry out direct observation visits to the territories of the project's partner ethnic communities. Instead, key community stakeholders and other interested parties traveled to the cities of Turbo, Tumaco and Cali, where interviews and meetings were held with the national evaluator. This approach made it possible to gather the relevant perceptions of the stakeholders consulted, to understand key dynamics and to feed the analysis of the evaluation criteria.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance. The project was highly relevant as it effectively responded to the environmental and development priorities of communities and institutional partners. Its design integrated conservation, sustainable production and territorial governance, aimed at generating social and environmental benefits in the landscapes of the Colombian Pacific. Alignment with national and international frameworks - including public policies, sectoral strategies and global commitments- ensured strategic relevance, territorial legitimacy and consistency with sustainable development objectives, strengthening the ownership of local stakeholders.

Conclusion 2. Coherence. The project approach was fully consistent with the reality of the Colombian Pacific and the MUCBs, integrating conservation and sustainable production in an articulated manner. Internal consistency was reflected in the logical sequence between objectives, results and activities. External coherence was expressed in the articulation with existing processes led by community and

institutional partners, which enhanced synergies, generated complementary actions and strengthened sustainability.

Conclusion 3. Effectiveness - Achievement of results. The project achieved outstanding performance in meeting its goals and objectives, with 94.2% progress in the expected results and surpassing several of the established targets. This effectiveness was made possible by the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities and institutions in the face of adverse conditions, including the pandemic, political changes and the law and order situation. The implementation of flexible strategies allowed the continuity of the processes and evidenced the commitment of the participating actors (Effectiveness | Achievement of results).

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness - Peacebuilding. Beyond the technical achievements, the project contributed to the consolidation of territorial peace through the strengthening of community governance, social cohesion and the generation of trust, which allowed the legitimization of conservation decisions and sustainable use of the territory. This contribution resulted in the recognition of community authority, participatory territorial planning and coordination with state institutions. This approach of co-responsibility and respect strengthened community authority and generated structural conditions for the construction of the possible future¹ projected.

Conclusion 5. Capacity building. Capacity building was a pillar of the project, generating technical, administrative and commercial skills in communities, institutions and productive organizations. Methodological diversity -diplomas, leadership schools, workshops and field schools- ensured broad and relevant coverage, promoting practical learning and cascading training processes. These efforts allowed Afro-descendant and indigenous communities to participate in more balanced conditions in territorial governance, consolidating their role as strategic actors. The impact achieved confirms that investing in local capacities is key to sustainability and ownership of results.

Conclusion 6. Progress towards impact. The project promoted structural changes in governance, conservation and bioeconomy. Guidelines were consolidated for territorial planning, community conservation, sustainable productive activities, green businesses and nature tourism. The communities went from being beneficiaries to implementing partners and SIRAP Pacifico was consolidated as a regional platform. At the community level, community forestry and green businesses demonstrated the capacity to generate income and social cohesion. These changes consolidated communities and institutions as strategic actors in sustainable landscape management.

Conclusion 7. Additionality. The additionality was reflected in a decisive impetus for the adoption and consolidation of innovative work and management approaches. This added value strengthened the project's capacity to experiment, learn and adjust its strategies according to the territorial contexts, favoring a more participatory, adaptive and sustainable management, demonstrating that international financing can trigger transformative processes with long-term impacts in complex territories, which would have been difficult to achieve without the donor's contribution.

Conclusion 8. Efficiency. Efficiency was based on strategic design and implementation decisions, such as territorial targeting in intervention windows and the use of letters of agreement as a contracting mechanism. Governance structures (committees) facilitated inter-institutional coordination and decision-making, optimizing the use of project resources. Despite administrative constraints, flexibility and adaptive management sustained implementation. The focus on intervention windows optimized impacts in large and complex territories.

Conclusion 9. Financial management and co-financing. The project demonstrated efficient financial management by executing 97.13% of the allocated budget, including resources paid and committed, reflecting an adequate use of grant resources. In turn, the mobilization of 112% of the committed

¹ El futuro posible es la visión compartida del territorio que las comunidades anhelan y trabajan por alcanzar.

cofinancing demonstrated a high level of ownership and commitment from institutional partners, who contributed their own resources in cash and in kind. This co-financing not only strengthened the implementation, but also contributed to the additionality of the project, allowing it to exceed most of the initially planned goals and provide greater sustainability of the results achieved.

Conclusion 10. Implementation - Execution. FAO effectively fulfilled its role as implementing agency, providing technical soundness, constant supervision and adaptive management in adverse scenarios. Their accompaniment ensured compliance with safeguards and the technical coherence of the interventions. The joint execution between FAO and MinAmbiente combined the technical capacity of the former with the political legitimacy of the latter, which facilitated the alignment of the project with national policies on biodiversity, climate change and land use planning. This complementarity of roles strengthened community articulation and project governance.

Conclusion 11. Sustainability. The project built a solid foundation for sustainability by strengthening community, institutional and business capacities, as well as institutional and financial frameworks. The promotion of bioeconomy and community forestry initiatives, including the obtaining of 20 and 30-year forest management permits and the creation of community enterprises, show continuity over time. However, sustainability faces financial, institutional and security risks that require additional support to ensure the permanence of the achievements attained.

Conclusion 12. Design and implementation of the M&E system. The monitoring and evaluation system was adequate, robust and innovative. Based on SMART indicators and technological tools such as Power BI, its effective implementation allowed for rigorous monitoring, traceability of results and transparency in accountability. The system facilitated decision making, learning and risk management during implementation. The use of the Power BI platform was limited by actors other than FAO.

Conclusion 13. Partnerships and stakeholder participation. The project consolidated a model of collaboration among multiple partnerships and stakeholders, integrating ethnic communities, the private sector, academia and public institutions. This articulation generated trust and legitimacy in the processes, and strengthened community ownership of the results. Academic and private involvement strengthened innovation. The strategic alliances and co-responsibility achieved ensured the territorial relevance of the interventions and enhanced their long-term sustainability.

Conclusion 14. Communication, management and knowledge products. Communication and knowledge management were consolidated as cross-cutting themes that strengthened appropriation, social cohesion, and the visibility of results. Community communication made it possible to give visibility to the voices of women, young people and ethnic communities. Knowledge management made it possible to systematize experiences and generate shared learning. However, limitations persisted in the joint visibility of the institutional partners.

Conclusion 15. Social and environmental standards. Adequate management of social and environmental standards made it possible to maintain a moderate level of risk throughout implementation. The risk analysis included social, political and institutional dimensions, with a differential ethnic and gender focus, and the adoption of preventive measures ensured respect for the rights of communities, cultural integrity and the conservation of biodiversity. With a focus on prevention and monitoring, the project ensured that no major corrective measures were required during implementation.

Conclusion 16. Gender and social inclusion. The gender approach was progressively mainstreamed, strengthening the participation of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive initiatives, mainly. The Gender Mainstreaming Plan, together with practical measures such as child care and the creation of the Indigenous Women's House, facilitated equal participation. Women's leadership in green business and community tourism strengthened social cohesion and legitimacy of the processes.

Conclusion 17. Ethnic communities. The active participation of ethnic communities was a central achievement of the project, guaranteed through FPIC processes and their participation in decision-making

spaces. This involvement on equal terms with institutional actors strengthened the legitimacy of the processes, ensured the cultural relevance of the actions and promoted co-responsibility in territorial management. The recognition of their leadership marked a structural change in the relationship with the institutions, allowing the consolidation (in process) of an inclusive and legitimate model of governance and co-responsibility.

Recommendations

To promote the sustainability of the results achieved:

Recommendation 1. For the FAO office in Colombia. It is recommended to continue supporting MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico in maintaining and strengthening the horizontal and trusting relationships built between communities and institutional actors, given that they constitute a fundamental element for sustainability in changing territorial contexts.

Recommendation 2. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico. To manage new sources of financing that allow for the continuity of ongoing actions and processes and to expand successful experiences, such as bioeconomy and sustainable forest management initiatives, which have contributed to consolidating the achievements made and generating income for communities.

For new similar projects:

Recommendation 3. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico. Ensure the early participation of ethnic communities in the design phase of new projects, as this strengthens their impact, consolidates local ownership and guarantees consistency with public policies. The application of the mosaic approach and intervention windows is fundamental to articulate conservation and sustainable production in large territories.

Recommendation 4. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico Institutionalizing flexibility and adaptive management mechanisms with clear protocols will allow sustaining processes in risk scenarios. For example, the use of letters of agreement (or other similar instruments) can be promoted as a tool for co-responsibility with ethnic communities by fostering effective inclusion, trust and ownership.

Recommendation 5. For the FAO office in Colombia and MinAmbiente. Replicate the co-execution model in future projects (provided that the donor's rules allow it), since the complementarity between technical and political aspects strengthens both the implementation of activities and the territorial impact. It is also recommended to use regional platforms, such as the Pacific SIRAP, to anchor processes in legitimate governance structures, facilitate institutional and community coordination, and ensure the sustainability of interventions.

Recommendation 6. For the FAO office in Colombia and MinAmbiente. Prioritize the strengthening of access to diversified markets, including short marketing circuits and local markets. To this end, it is suggested to establish commercial alliances with private actors, strengthen the company's own brands and promote product differentiation, to ensure competitive positioning. These actions will generate sustained income for communities and strengthen the long-term sustainability of bioeconomy initiatives.

Lessons learned

6. The lessons learned gathered during this evaluation correspond to proven and effective experiences that proved to generate positive results during project implementation. Their relevance lies in the fact that they constitute concrete references that could be replicated or scaled up in other contexts, since they offer practical solutions adapted to territories of high socio-

environmental complexity. Presenting them in a systematic way makes the most innovative and effective contributions visible, and at the same time provides useful inputs for the design and management of future projects.

Lesson learned 1. Capacity building - Inclusive and multi-stakeholder mixed methodologies. The mixed training strategy -integrating diploma courses, leadership schools, technical courses, practical workshops and field schools, with participatory methodologies and facilitators from the territory- proved to be a winning practice for strengthening local capacities. The inclusion of community leaders as trainers and the cultural proximity of professionals from the territory generated networks of trust and legitimacy, reinforcing the appropriation of the contents and community commitment. This formula allowed knowledge to be translated into applicable actions, while generating trust, legitimacy and social cohesion between communities and institutions. Its effectiveness shows that replicating this model in other contexts can be key to ensuring ownership of the processes, equity in participation and sustainability of results. **(11. Knowledge, collaboration and learning)**

Lesson learned 2. Efficiency - Adaptive Management. The project's experience showed that in highly complex contexts, the capacity to adapt and, in particular, flexible responses to internal and external difficulties are critical factors to ensure the continuity of actions. The reorganization of activities, the virtualization of processes and the targeting of interventions proved to be cost-effective measures that should be incorporated into the design of projects in regions with high levels of conflict. Adaptive management not only mitigated risks, but also generated capabilities and lessons learned applicable to future projects. Inter-institutional alliances and community legitimacy were indispensable conditions for sustaining implementation in difficult-to-access territories, offering support in risk management and guaranteeing the security of the technical teams through the role of the Indigenous Reserves and Community Councils as local guarantors. **(2. Project management including financial and human resources issues).**

Lesson learned 3. Sustainability - Capabilities, institutions and financing. The sustainability of a project's results requires a comprehensive approach that combines strengthening community capacities, consolidating institutional frameworks, and guaranteeing long-term sources of financing. It was also learned that sustainability must be planned from the project formulation stage, incorporating clear exit strategies and institutional support mechanisms that transcend the duration of international financing. This approach helps to ensure the permanence of the achievements attained. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 4. Sustainability - Bioeconomy. The project consolidated a green business model based on three replicable pillars: i) early strengthening of markets to align production with demand, ii) continuous technical and organizational support to ensure community response capacity, and iii) building stable, trusting business relationships between producers and buyers. This model also strengthened organizational capacities and facilitated the generation of new sources of financing. Taken together, these elements demonstrated that their integration contributes to ensuring the economic and social sustainability of the initiatives, becoming a reference for other projects that seek to promote the bioeconomy in diverse and complex territories. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 5. Sustainability. Promote co-responsibility schemes in new initiatives and provide sustainability to community activities to favor the appropriation and legitimacy of the processes. The strengthening of communication networks, together with the promotion of women and youth leadership, is a key factor in increasing the sustainability and protagonism of the communities in the medium and long term. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 6. Implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System - Transparency and Accountability. The combination of accessible technology and clear technical standards made the

system a benchmark of best practices for monitoring, accountability and knowledge management. The project developed an interactive M&E platform in *Power BI*, publicly accessible, that integrated indicators of results, outputs, risks and cross-cutting approaches such as gender. This tool improved transparency, facilitated consultation by different stakeholders and allowed for systematic monitoring of implementation. In addition, specific technical guidelines were applied to avoid double counting of indicators and to ensure methodological consistency in the generation of data. **(20. Monitoring and evaluation).**

Lesson learned 7. Implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System - Data for decision making. The generation of accessible, consistent and verifiable data makes the M&E system a key instrument for accountability and collective learning. The project demonstrated that having a solid monitoring system, based on *SMART* (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators, strengthens the credibility and usefulness of the results. The M&E system not only allowed for rigorous monitoring of progress and risks, but also established itself as a tool for timely decision making. **(20. Monitoring and evaluation).**

Lesson learned 8. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement - Role of ethnic communities. Working together with Community Councils and Indigenous Reserves is essential to achieve legitimacy and sustainability. Recognizing communities as active partners and not as beneficiaries makes it possible to build relationships of co-responsibility in implementation. Although multi-stakeholder management can be demanding in terms of time and effort, their contribution is decisive to give credibility to the processes. Experience shows that respect for the word and the building of trust are fundamental principles, together with the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as an indispensable condition in ethnic territories. **(7.Stakeholders engagement/Indigenous Peoples/Local communities).**

Lesson learned 9. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement- Multi-sector and multi-stakeholder governance. The creation of coordination bodies that integrate communities, public institutions, the private sector and academia is a replicable learning process to consolidate governance in complex territories. These coordination spaces strengthen the legitimacy of the processes, allow the alignment of conservation and development agendas, and generate trust among actors with diverse interests. The co-responsibility achieved ensures more inclusive decisions, improves implementation efficiency and lays a solid foundation for the sustainability of results in the medium and long term. **(7. Stakeholders engagement).**

Lesson learned 10. Communication - Empowerment through communication. The project showed that strategic communication must be defined from the outset, incorporating both the visibility of institutional partners and the participation of ethnic communities in decision-making. Communication is not an accessory component, but a pillar for ownership and social cohesion, especially when community exchange and dissemination processes are promoted. In this sense, community communication was consolidated as an empowerment tool that allowed women, youth and local leaders to recognize their voice in the process, strengthening the legitimacy of the results and the sustainability of the actions undertaken. **(12. Communication and outreach).**

Lesson learned 11. Gender and social inclusion - Operationalization of the differential gender approach. Experience has shown that integrating the differential approach from the design stage does not guarantee its full application during implementation. Effective mainstreaming requires specific plans, indicators and follow-up mechanisms to measure progress and make timely adjustments. Following the 2023 Mid-Term Evaluation, the more systematic adoption of the Gender Mainstreaming Plan strengthened the participation of women and youth in decision-making spaces, generating visible impacts on governance, community participation, and social cohesion. **(10. Gender equality).**

Lesson learned 12. Gender and social inclusion - Hiring with a differential ethnic approach. The application of an ethnic differential approach to the signing of letters of agreement between community partners and FAO, as a mechanism for contracting non-commercial services in territories with ethnic-territorial sovereignty, showed that adapting contracting mechanisms to the local context is key to strengthening governance, supporting the sustainability of results and improving efficiency in implementation. The transition of ethnic communities from a passive role as beneficiaries to implementing partners reflected a strengthening of their technical and administrative capacities, marking a structural change in the relationship between communities and institutions. **(10. Gender equality).**

GEF evaluation criteria assessment table

GEF Criteria/Dimensions	Classification:	Summary comments
A. RESULTS (relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency)	HS	The project demonstrated high relevance and coherence by aligning with the priorities of the FAO, the GEF and the national policy framework, responding to the needs of community and institutional partners, articulating a participatory and culturally appropriate approach, and complementing other relevant interventions. Furthermore, it achieved 94.20% of the expected results with efficiency and a cost-effective targeting strategy within the MUCB.
A1. Relevance.	HS	The project is highly aligned with FAO and GEF strategic priorities and the Colombian policy framework. In addition to responding to the priorities and needs of community and institutional partners.
A2. Coherence.	HS	The project's components and results were aligned with its objective, through a participatory and culturally appropriate approach (internal consistency). The project has an important connection and complementarity with other interventions carried out by community and institutional partners and other key actors (external coherence).
A3. Effectiveness	HS	The project achieved 94.20% of the expected results, surpassing several of the programmed goals. It is considered that all outcomes and targets will be met prior to project closure. The results achieved are relevant for the country, the Colombian Pacific region and especially for community and institutional partners.
A4. Efficiency	S	Results have been achieved in a timely and efficient manner, despite delays in the first years of implementation and administrative and financial bottlenecks. The project's governance structures favored efficiency by facilitating coordination between partners and actions aimed at meeting objectives. Targeting intervention windows within the MUCBs was a cost-effective strategy.
B. SUSTAINABILITY (financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, environmental dimensions, including risks to sustainability).	ML	The project laid a solid foundation for sustainability by strengthening community, business, institutional and academic capacities. There are financial, institutional, political and security risks to sustainability, which could have a negative effect on the continuity of the benefits achieved.
C. IMPLEMENTATION	HS	Project preparation, implementation, technical support and supervision were sound and timely. Relevant GEF and FAO policies were applied. The MTR recommendations were implemented.
D. EXECUTION	HS	The implementation of project activities was timely and generated high quality products and results. Relevant GEF and FAO policies were applied, despite the challenges of the territory itself.
M&E Plan	HS	The design of the M&E system was sound, adequate and functional. Having specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators made it possible to provide structured and rigorous monitoring of implementation.
Implementation of the M&E system	HS	The M&E system worked as planned, gathering information in a systematic and timely manner, with a sound methodology that facilitated implementation monitoring, decision making and learning. The Power BI platform facilitated transparency and public access to information, but it was not widely used by actors outside of FAO.

GEF Criteria/Dimensions	Classification:	Summary comments
Overall project appraisal	HS	The overall assessment of the project is consistent with the average of the ratings assigned to the criteria evaluated.

Legend:

All criteria except sustainability

Highly satisfactory (HS)

Satisfactory (S)

Moderately satisfactory (MS)

Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)

Unsatisfactory (U)

Highly unsatisfactory (HU)

Unable to assess (UA)

Sustainability

Highly likely (HL)

Likely (L)

Moderately Likely (ML)

Moderately unlikely(MU)

Unlikely(U)

Highly unlikely (HU)

Unable to assess (UA)

Validation by the FAO Office of Evaluation

The report has undergone independent quality assurance and validation processes conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED). As a result, the performance ratings of the project "Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity of the *Pacific Region of Colombia to Build Peace*" (ID FMAM 944), established in the GEF rating system, have been adjusted. The overall performance of the project is validated as Highly Satisfactory (HS); in addition, it is recognized that the project provided a decisive boost to the design and implementation of innovative approaches to biodiversity planning and management in the country, creating a significant incremental value. See Appendix 8 (OED validation system) for more information on the validation of the ratings for each criterion.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

1. The project "Contributing to the integrated management of the biodiversity of the Pacific region of Colombia for peace building" (hereinafter the Pacifico Biocultural project) has been financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for an amount of USD 7,562,558 and co-financed by different governmental entities for an amount equivalent to USD 31,394,186, reaching a total budget of USD 38,956,744.
2. The project was funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through its sixth GEF-6 replenishment. GEF CEO approval was received on April 12, 2019 and implementation formally began on November 30, 2019.
3. The implementation was under the responsibility of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The co-executing partner was the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MinAmbiente).
4. Initially, the project had two implementing agencies: FAO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the latter responsible for Component 3. In April 2021 UNIDO and MinAmbiente decided not to sign the project implementation agreement due to a legal issue, so the funds corresponding to Component 3 were transferred to FAO, which assumed the implementation of this component. Approval of this change by the donor was received at the end of August 2021, generating a delay of 1.6 years (20 months) in the implementation of Component 3 activities, counted from the project start date. UNIDO's exit was handled in an agile and efficient manner by FAO Colombia (EMT, 2023).
5. According to the Field Program Management Information System (FPMIS), the completion date was scheduled for November 30, 2024, with a duration of 5 years. Following the Mid-Term Review (MTR), conducted in the first half of 2023, and the meeting to share the results with the Project Steering Committee in August 2023, an extension for an additional 12 months was approved, with a closing date of November 30, 2025 and a total duration of six years. In addition, some changes to the project results framework were approved.
6. The project was implemented in six departments of the Colombian Pacific: Chocó, Risaralda, Valle del Cauca, Risaralda, Cauca and Nariño, all located in the Pacific region of Colombia. The actions were developed in five areas called Mosaics of Biodiversity Use and Conservation (MUCB)²: i) Katíos - Caoba; ii) Tatamá - Serranía de los Paraguas; iii) Farallones - Calima; iv) Munchique - Río Saija; and iv) Cabo Manglares - Awá Family. This area is part of the Chocó-Darién ecoregional complex, one of the most biodiverse places on the planet, covering an area of approximately 11 million hectares.
7. A mosaic of biodiversity use and conservation (MUCB) is a network of areas that combines strict biodiversity conservation with sustainable use landscapes where there are productive sites and ethnic communities, to achieve integrated management. This approach seeks the connection between ecosystems, local sustainable development and community participation for the protection and responsible use of its natural wealth.

² The mosaic approach to biodiversity use and conservation (MUCB) was developed by the National Natural Parks of Colombia. The Conservation Mosaics Program, funded by the GEF between 2006 and 2023, was one of the first initiatives in Colombia to address the challenge of working at the landscape scale, building on the experiences and lessons learned by other actors and covering coastal marine, Andean and Amazonian areas. The project used the experience built by this program as a reference.

8. This Final Evaluation (FE) served a dual purpose: accountability and learning. The results of the project, its relevance for the partners and stakeholders involved and its alignment with national needs and priorities were evaluated. The main lessons learned were also documented for future projects or programs that seek to provide continuity, replicate or expand the results achieved.

1.2 Project context

9. Colombia is one of the 17 most biodiverse countries in the world. It has 18 ecological regions and 65 types of ecosystems. Protected areas (PAs) and ethnic territories cover 41% of the national territory, harboring some of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world.
10. In biogeographical terms, the Colombian Pacific region is located in the intertropical confluence zone between the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Western Cordillera of the Colombian Andes to the east. This region is known for its great biological and cultural diversity, which is part of the *Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena hotspot*. It is also part of a larger unit known as the Biogeographic Chocó.
11. Paradoxically, the Colombian Pacific region has high levels of poverty, social inequality, and marginalization. The department of Chocó is the poorest in the country, with a poverty rate of 68.00%, followed by the departments of Cauca with 62.10%, Nariño with 47.60%, and Valle del Cauca with 26.90%.
12. The project was formulated with the objective of incorporating the sustainable management and conservation of biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services, which support human well-being, in vulnerable landscapes of the Colombian Pacific region, with a view to generating local and global environmental benefits, in support of the peace process. Box 1 contains general information on the project.

Box 1. General project information.

GEF ID	9441
Code	GCP /COL/061/GFF
Co-executing partners	- Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development - National Natural Parks of Colombia - SIRAP Pacific (Pacific Environmental Research Institute, John Von Neumann – IIAP, Marine and Coastal Research Institute “José Benito Vives de Andreis” – INVEMAR, Regional Autonomous Corporations – CAR)
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity BD-1 and BD-4 Land Degradation LD-3
Date of approval GEF (CEO)	April 12, 2019
Start date	November 30, 2019
Completion date	November 30, 2025
GEF Financing	USD 7,562,558
Co-financing	USD 31,394,186
Total budget	USD 38,956,744

Source: Initial report for the final evaluation of the project "Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity in the Pacific region of Colombia for peace building - Biocultural Pacific" (2025).

13. The project consisted of four components, which are detailed below:

14. Component 1: Institutional strengthening to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific region. Promoted the harmonization of territorial management tools to safeguard the cultural and biological diversity and ecosystem services of the Colombian Pacific region, as well as the strengthening of institutional and community capacities.
15. Component 2: Integrated PA management, buffer zones and Community Conservation Areas (CCA). Supported the strengthening of PA governance mechanisms and the improvement of their management effectiveness. It also supported CCAs, especially those developed by partner communities, in their formalization processes, in the development of territorial conservation strategies and in their management.
16. Component 3: Sustainable production practices as alternatives for local development, biodiversity protection and support for the peace process. Developed sustainable economic alternatives based on the production and use of products derived from biodiversity, with the objective of improving the quality of life of local communities, especially those located in PA buffer zones that were affected by the armed conflict.
17. Component 4: Knowledge management and project M&E. It contributed to the development of Comprehensive Participatory Action Plans (PPIA) in each of the MUCBs and to the implementation of a communication strategy appropriate to the context of each mosaic, aimed at disseminating the best practices and knowledge generated.
18. The project responded to national and international priorities and policies, in line with FAO's strategic objectives set out in the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031 and the FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) for Colombia 2021-2024. In terms of GEF priorities, the project was articulated with the Biodiversity and Land Degradation focal areas of the sixth replenishment.
19. At the national level, the project was linked to the country's national priorities as set forth in the three National Development Plans that were in effect between the design stage and project closing. It was also aligned with the Pacific Vision set forth in the Sustainable Pacific Vision Program and materialized in the Fund for the Development of the Todos Somos PAZcífico Plan.
20. Key project stakeholders and interested parties include: 1) Co-implementing partners; 2) Members of the Project Steering Committee, with a key role in decision-making; 3) Community actors, made up of twelve black communities organized in community councils, three indigenous peoples belonging to three indigenous reserves, and the actors that are part of the green business initiatives, the value-adding units and the nature tourism initiatives, who in turn belong to the different ethnic groups that participate in the project; 4) Governmental and non-governmental actors with a key role in the implementation of actions in the mosaics; and 5) Other actors who supported the implementation of actions in the mosaics. Table 1 contains information on these five stakeholder groups, detailing their role in the project.

Table 1. Key players, stakeholders and their role in the project.

Key players and stakeholders	Role in the project
Co-executing partners	
FAO	GEF Implementing and Executing Agency. Member of the Project Steering Committee.
MinAmbiente	It is the GEF Operational Focal Point and executing partner of the project in coordination with FAO.
National Natural Parks– PNN	The Pacific Territorial Directorate of PNN is the technical secretariat of the Pacific SIRAP. PA technical teams participate in the implementation of project actions, especially Component 2.
Technical Secretariat of the Regional System of Protected Areas SIRAP Pacifico	Technical coordination and management body of the Pacific SIRAP.
Pacific SIRAP Institutional Technical Committee	This body is part of the operational structure of the Pacific SIRAP.
INVEMAR	Marine-coastal research institute. Member of SIRAP Pacific.
IIAP	Research Institute of the Colombian Pacific. Member of SIRAP Pacific.
Project Steering Committee	
Delegate of the CARs - Corporación Autónoma Regional del Cauca (CRC)	Active participation in project decision making.
Community Councils Delegate	Active participation in project decision making.
Delegate of Indigenous Peoples	Active participation in project decision making. This position changes annually.
Community stakeholders	
Black communities organized in community councils (12)	The following are partners and participate in project implementation: i) ASOCASAN Community Council, ii) Bajo Mira y Frontera Community Council, iii) Yurumanguí River Community Council, iv) Cacarica River Community Council, and v) Community Council of the lower part of the Saija River.
Indigenous Peoples (3)	The following are partners and participate in the implementation of the project: i) Resguardo Indígena Calle Santa Rosa, ii) Resguardo Indígena de Arquía and iii) Resguardo Indígena El Gran Sábalo.
Green business initiatives (27)	They participate in the implementation of the project.
Value Aggregation Units – VAU (7)	They participate in the implementation of the project.

Tourism and Nature Initiatives (6)	They participate in the implementation of the project. The San Cipriano Foundation and Serraniagua stand out.
Key actors in the implementation of actions in mosaics	
Sustainable BioTrade Corporation	Non-Governmental Organization. Implementation of Component 3 actions.
Biolnnova	Non-Governmental Organization. Implementation of Component 3 actions.
WWF Colombia	Non-Governmental Organization. Implementation of actions of Components 1 and 2.
Ecohabitats Foundation	Non-Governmental Organization. Implementation of Component 2 actions.
Government of Nariño	It has been a partner in the project since its formulation. Significant co-financing contributions. It is the territorial entity with the highest number of actions planned to give continuity to the ongoing actions and results achieved after the end of the project.
Other stakeholders that supported the implementation of actions in mosaics	
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana - PUJ of Cali	It is the most relevant actor in the implementation of the Training and Capacity Building Plan for the members of SIRAP Pacific (diploma and school of leadership and territorial environmental governance).
Natura Foundation	Participated as allies of WWF Colombia in the consultancy for the valuation of ecosystem services.
PMA	Strategic ally in the prioritization of scenarios for the implementation of restoration processes and the design of strategies for ecological restoration, soil recovery and/or conservation for the binational project "Capacity building in Climate Change Adaptation through Food Security and Nutrition actions in vulnerable Afro-descendant and indigenous Awá communities" of Fondo Adaptación.
University of Tolima	Provided strategic support in sustainable forest management and tropical rainforest restoration.
Corpoversalles & Sigma Foundation	They supported the implementation of specific actions under Component 2.
Alexander Von Humboldt Institute for Research on Biological Resources (IAvH)	They carried out specific actions to complement technical studies of naidí and tetera in Nariño and Cauca.

Source: Adapted from the Terms of Reference.

1.3 Theory of Change

21. The project's Theory of Change (ToC) was reviewed, updated and validated during the RMT. After consulting with the PMU technical team, the technical team in charge of the final evaluation considers that the Theory of Concept is valid and up-to-date, since it clearly reflects the logic of the project. The representation of the Theory of Knowledge is found in Appendix 1.

22. Reading from the bottom up, first the main barriers to achieving the proposed objective are detailed and the problem that the project seeks to address is identified, then the desired situation is detailed, and a couple of assumptions or necessary enabling factors (outside the project's sphere of control) are listed in order to achieve the desired situation, such as the political support or backing of the project's partner institutions and communities, and the generation of environmental and socioeconomic benefits resulting from sustainable biodiversity management processes.
23. The components and results of the project's results framework belong to its sphere of influence (i.e. are controlled by the project), reflecting a causal relationship that responds to the causal or impact chains represented by the components, pointing out the complementarity and synergies between components and MUCB, and how the four components jointly contribute to the project's results and objective, in addition to providing feedback to each other in a horizontal logic. This section is framed in a box with a dashed line.
24. Component 1 has as its starting point the disarticulation between territorial planning instruments, focusing on the strengthening of institutions and ethnic communities as a first step to harmonize these instruments with a view to supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in addition to contributing to environmental management in the MUCB.
25. Component 2 seeks to improve the articulation between community and institutional actors, using the socio-ecosystemic connectivity approach, promotes long-term strategies for territorial management of the MUCB, which will reduce threats to biodiversity conservation in the region.
26. In a complementary manner, Component 3 acts at the local and productive unit level, promoting the transformation of traditional productive systems towards sustainable local development models. These models are based on the responsible use of biodiversity and forests, and on the recognition of ancestral knowledge and local knowledge. The objective is to improve food security and promote the generation and retention of economic surpluses by adding value to local production and its access to markets. The improvement of the living conditions of local communities, through the aforementioned actions, is expected to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of the rural population to factors of violence and illegality, thus supporting peace-building processes in the territory.
27. Component 4 is oriented towards knowledge management, monitoring of the MCUB action plans and the project itself, as well as the implementation of a Communication Strategy.
28. The environmental benefits expected in the long term, located in the upper part of the figure, cannot be attributed to or controlled by the project, but the project can contribute to them and generate the conditions for them to be achieved in the medium or long term.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

29. The evaluation served a dual purpose: accountability and generation of learning. The proposed objectives were: i) to evaluate the results of the project, its relevance for the participating partners and stakeholders, and its alignment with national needs and priorities; and ii) to document the main lessons learned for future projects or programs that seek to provide continuity, replicate or expand the results achieved.
30. The evaluation used a participatory and collaborative methodological approach, oriented towards learning. The ToC and the results chains were used as a starting point for the evaluation process. Causal relationships were identified between inputs, outputs, outcomes, expected and unplanned effects to which the project contributed.
31. The evaluation had a temporal scope that encompassed the project implementation period from its start date on November 30, 2019 through June 30, 2025. Notwithstanding the above, some specific data as of August 31, 2025 was included with the clarification of the case.
32. The geographic scope coincided with the area of intervention of the project, considering the interaction of actors and institutions between the national, regional and local scales.
33. Table 2 contains the criteria, dimensions to be assessed and evaluation questions. The evaluation sub-questions are detailed in the evaluation matrix (Appendix 2), which also contains the evaluation criteria, indicators, sources and methods for data and information collection.
34. Project performance in terms of results, sustainability, implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design, and M&E execution was rated according to GEF criteria. See ratings in Appendix 4. Appendix 5 presents the GEF rating scheme and its descriptors.

Table 2. GEF criteria assessment questions.

Criteria	Dimensions	Evaluation questions
Result	<i>Relevance.</i>	1. To what extent did project implementation respond to the needs and priorities of community and institutional partners?
	<i>Coherence.</i>	2. Was the project approach coherent and adequate to address the reality of the Colombian Pacific and the MUCBs?
	<i>Effectiveness</i>	3. To what extent has the project achieved its results and objectives?
	<i>Progress to impact (will not be rated)</i>	4. What significant direct or indirect changes can be attributed to the project in relation to biodiversity conservation, local capacity building and/or community well-being in the MUCB?
	<i>Additionality (will not be rated)</i>	5. What is the incremental value that the GEF grant has contributed to the results achieved?

	<i>Capacity building (will not be rated)</i> <i>Co-financing (will not be rated)</i>	6. To what extent did the capacity building activities contribute to the achievement of project goals, outcomes and sustainability? 7. To what extent did the materialized co-financing contribute to project results, reflecting ownership by stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels?
	<i>Efficiency</i>	8. To what extent was an efficient use of resources achieved in the implementation of the project?
Implementation		9.1 To what extent did FAO fulfill its role as the project implementing agency? 9.2 How were the risks associated with project implementation identified and managed?
Execution		10. To what extent did FAO and MinAmbiente fulfill their role as co-executors of the project?
Sustainability		11. Will the results and processes initiated by the project and its partners continue in the medium and long term after its implementation?
M&E system plan		12.1 To what extent was the design of the M&E system or plan adequate and functional to effectively monitor project implementation?
Implementation of the M&E system		12.2. Did the M&E system or plan work as planned?
Other dimensions to be assessed/addressed (will not be graded)		
	<i>Project partnership and stakeholder engagement.</i>	13.1 How was the participation of civil society, ethnic communities (indigenous peoples and black communities), peasant communities and the private sector in the design and implementation of the project? To what extent did the various stakeholder groups take ownership of the project and what was the effect of this ownership? 13.2 What were the main characteristics of the collaboration between FAO and its partners during project implementation? To what extent was the configuration of the implementation model adequate, cost-efficient and sustainable?
	<i>Communication, knowledge management² and knowledge products.</i>	14.1 How did the project evaluate, document and disseminate its results, lessons learned and experiences?

		14.2 How likely are the communication products and activities to contribute to the sustainability and scaling up of project results?
	<i>Social and environmental standards</i>	15. To what extent was the social and environmental context considered during project design and implementation?
	<i>Gender and social inclusion</i>	16. To what extent was the differential approach - including gender, ethnicity, age and other equity dimensions - integrated into the project design and implementation?
	<i>Indigenous peoples and Afro-Colombian communities)</i>	17. To what extent did the project ensure effective participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, including the implementation of activities?
Lessons learned		18.1 What are the main lessons learned from the project results and experiences? 18.2 What were the best practices used (or generated) during project implementation?

Source: Initial report for the final evaluation of the project "Contributing to the integrated management of biodiversity in the Pacific region of Colombia for peace building - Biocultural Pacific" (2025).

2.2 Methodological design

35. The evaluation was aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards for evaluation, in line with the OED Handbook and its methodological guidelines and practices.

2.2.1 Data Collection

36. The data collection was carried out using mixed methods of data collection and data analysis tools.

37. Documentary review and analysis of available data and information including PRODOC, implementation strategies and plans, technical and financial reports, results framework, communication and knowledge management products and materials, consultancy reports, agreements with beneficiary stakeholders, among others. Documents related to the national and international political context and environment were also reviewed, as well as strategic documents from GEF-6, FAO and others relevant to the project and the evaluation.

38. Semi-structured individual and/or group interviews with key stakeholders and interested parties (key informants) at the national, regional and local levels. The interviews were conducted in person and virtually depending on the location and availability of the actors to be consulted. These spaces made it possible to obtain in-depth information on people's perceptions and experiences in relation to the project. During the interviews, thematic guides adapted to each profile were used, with technical questions for the institutions and non-governmental organizations, and experience stories for the communities.

39. The actors consulted were selected through intentional sampling with the support of the PMU. The criteria used were as follows: 1) Territorial in order to ensure the participation of national, regional and local level stakeholders including the five MUCBs; 2) Types of stakeholders in order to include people from the project implementation team, FAO, government institutions, partners,

representatives of community stakeholders and beneficiary organizations; 3) Representation of (groups of) women, youth, members of indigenous peoples, black communities, and other local stakeholders, trying to reflect their participation in the project; 4) Active participation in the different activities and initiatives promoted by the project.

40. Confidentiality and respect for the participants was ensured in all consultations, following FAO and GEF standards.
41. Field visits to the cities of Turbo, Tumaco and Cali to observe relevant local dynamics and conduct interviews and meetings. The visits to the cities of Turbo, Antioquia (August 7 to 9) and Tumaco, Nariño (September 4 to 7) were aimed at participating in the meetings of the mosaic committees of the MUCB Katíos-Caoba and Cabo Manglares-Familia Awá. Participation in these spaces made it possible to observe relevant dynamics among key actors, which facilitated a representative and contextualized data collection, considering the particularities of the territory. During both spaces, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, prioritizing community stakeholders and women's participation.
42. The visit to the city of Cali took place from August 25 to 27. Meetings and interviews were held with the PMU team and institutional stakeholders. This city was prioritized because it concentrates a significant number of institutional actors and stakeholders with strategic roles in the project.
43. Initial contacts with all actors were made through the PMU. A total of 42 key actors and stakeholders were consulted, including 17 women (40%). Eighteen institutional stakeholders, 12 community stakeholders and 12 stakeholders belonging to the PMU and FAO were consulted. A total of 33 interviews were conducted, of which six were group interviews. A list of the stakeholders consulted can be found in Appendix 6.
44. FAO and GEF frameworks related to gender mainstreaming, capacity building, indigenous peoples' participation and environmental and social safeguards were used as a reference throughout the evaluation process, and especially during the preparation of the evaluation report.

2.2.2 Data Analysis

45. The analysis of the information gathered began with the transcription of interviews, conducted both virtually and in person. Due to the security conditions in the Colombian Pacific, an anonymization protocol was applied to protect the identity of the participants. Subsequently, the transcripts were reviewed and contrasted with field notes and recordings. Once the data were transcribed, coding was advanced in ATLAS.ti, combining predefined categories -aligned to the evaluation questions- with emerging categories derived from recurrent themes. The coded information was segmented into thematic units and organized into tables of concurrences that facilitated the identification of patterns, trends and contrasts between actors, themes and mosaics (MUCB). This systematization and preliminary analysis was used as input for the preparation of the evaluation report and for the socialization of results with project stakeholders.
46. Complementarily, the information processed in ATLAS.ti was triangulated with other sources and methods, including interviews, meetings, field observations and documents on the same topic. This integration made it possible to reinforce the validity of the findings obtained in the preliminary analysis, ensuring consistency between different pieces of evidence. During this process, the evaluation matrix served as an organizational and articulation tool, structuring the information around evaluation criteria, dimensions, questions and sub-questions. The result was a comprehensive analysis that served as the basis for the formulation of findings, conclusions, recommendations and evidence-based learning.
47. This comprehensive analysis was possible thanks to the coordinated work of the evaluation team, composed of two professionals with specific and complementary functions. The two jointly conducted

the desk review, while the national specialist made visits to Tumaco and Cali to conduct interviews with local stakeholders and the PMU team. In parallel, the international specialist conducted virtual interviews with national and regional stakeholders and FAO professionals. In this way, it was ensured that the information collected, subsequently analyzed and triangulated, reflected both the representativeness of local voices and the strategic visions of the national and regional levels.

48. In addition, virtual meetings and working sessions were held with members of the PMU and FAO to analyze specific issues, triangulate information, improve understanding of processes carried out or underway, and review the achievement of results.

2.3 Limitations

7. The Colombian Pacific region is considered a high-risk area with security and public order problems; therefore, no observation visits were made to the territories of the project's beneficiary black communities and indigenous peoples. To mitigate this limitation, visits were made to the cities of Turbo, Tumaco and Cali, located near the MUCBs, where key community stakeholders and other interested parties were brought for meetings and interviews with the national evaluator.

3. Project performance

3.1 Relevance

To what extent did the project implementation respond to the needs and priorities of community and institutional partners??

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 1. The project's objectives, results and implementation strategy were aligned with the priorities of community and institutional partners, with the aim of contributing to the generation of social and environmental benefits and peace building in vulnerable landscapes of the Colombian Pacific.

49. The project design was relevant in that it was responsive to the needs and priorities of community and institutional partners, while facilitating the delivery of expected results. During the formulation stage, Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities were actively involved and later played a key role as project partners.
50. The planning and formulation of the project was led by the Pacific Regional Protected Areas System (SIRAP)³ in coordination with FAO and UNIDO, with the participation of the institutions that make up this collegiate body and a broad group of stakeholders selected for their competencies, mission, and sectoral and/or territorial scope. This process made it possible to orient the project's activities and objectives toward the needs and priorities of the various stakeholders involved.
51. In order to meet the stated objective and respond to the priorities of the community partners, the project focused on strengthening the capacities of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendant communities to improve social participation and environmental management in the Mosaics for the Use and Conservation of Biodiversity (MUCB). MUCBs are networks of sites that combine strict biodiversity conservation with sustainable use landscapes where there are productive sites and ethnic communities, to achieve integrated management. This approach seeks the connection between ecosystems, local sustainable development and community participation for the protection and responsible use of its natural wealth.
52. The project focused on harmonizing territorial planning instruments, reducing pressures and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in protected areas and their buffer zones, and promoting initiatives that promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and the generation of economic income. Capacity building, improved local governance arrangements and women's participation were cross-cutting themes in all the actions implemented.
53. In relation to the priorities of the institutional partners, the project responded to the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031, the FAO Country Program Framework 2021-2024, the UN Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development 2024-2027, and the GEF-6 Strategic Objectives related to the Biodiversity Strategy BD-1 & BD-4, the Land Degradation Strategy LT-3, and the Sustainable Forest Management Strategy SFM-1 & SFM-2.
54. At the time of formulation, the project was aligned with the FAO Strategic Results Framework 2014-2019, endorsed for the period 2018-2021 and subsequently brought together in the 20 programme areas of the FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031. It gives a central place to the transformation

³ The SIRAPs are subsystems of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) made up of the set of national, regional and local, public or private protected areas existing in the territories, based on the regionalization adopted by Decree 2372 of 2010, compiled by Decree 1076 of 2015. CONPES 4050 of 2021 "Policy for the Consolidation of the National System of Protected Areas - SINAP" recognizes the Pacific Regional Subsystem of Protected Areas - SIRAP Pacific.

towards efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agri-food systems to achieve better production, better nutrition, better environment and better life - the four improvements - leaving no one behind (RMT, 2023).

55. Specifically, the project was aligned with the programmatic spheres aimed at a Better Environment, MMA 1: Agri-food systems that mitigate the effects of climate change and adapted, MMA 2: Bioeconomy for Food and Sustainable Agriculture, and MMA 3: Ecosystem services and biodiversity for food and agriculture; and A Better Life, WV 5: Resilient Agri-Food Systems (RMT, 2023).
56. In relation to the FAO Country Programming Framework, the project formulation was carried out during the validity of the Country Programming Framework 2015-2019. Subsequently, the Country Program Framework 2022-2024⁴, aligned with the United Nations Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development 2020-2023, came into force. Of its three strategic areas, two are directly related to the project: (1) Stabilization, Peace with Legality, and (3) Technical Assistance for Accelerating Sustainable Development Goals Catalysts.
57. The project also responded to the five priority axes of the United Nations Framework for Sustainable Development Cooperation 2024-2027: 1) Consolidation of total peace, human security and social justice; 2) Human right to food, rural development, land management and water; 3) Social protection and socioeconomic inclusion, with emphasis on vulnerable populations, migrants and refugees; 4) Environment, climate action and clean energy transition; and 5) Enablers of the 2030 Agenda.
58. The project was also linked to the biodiversity, land degradation and sustainable forest management strategies of the GEF-6 Replenishment Period 6. In the Biodiversity Strategy, it responded to objectives BD-1 Increase the sustainability of protected area systems, and BD-4 Integrate conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in landscapes, seascapes and productive sectors. In the Land Degradation Strategy, it was linked to objective DT-3 Integrated Landscapes: Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the broader landscape. In the Sustainable Forest Management Strategy, it was aligned with objectives MFS-1 Maintenance of forest resources: Reducing pressures on high conservation value forests by addressing drivers of deforestation, and MFS-2 Improved forest management: Maintain flows of forest ecosystem services and improve resilience to climate change through improved forest management (RMT, 2023).
59. In the Colombian Pacific region, the project contributed to the implementation of the SIRAP Pacific 2023-2030 Action Plan. This responds to four specific objectives: 1) Increase the natural and cultural heritage conserved in the Pacific SIRAP, 2) Increase the connectivity of the Pacific SIRAP, 3) Increase the effectiveness in the management of the Pacific SIRAP, its protected areas and other *in situ* conservation strategies, and 4) Promote the co-responsibility of the productive sectors in the management of the National System of Protected Areas (SINAP) and in the retribution for the conservation actions carried out by the ethnic and local communities.

Finding 2. The relevance of the project has been maintained since its formulation. The vision of the national government in office in 2022, aimed at recognizing the cultural, environmental and social diversity of the territories, together with the adoption of new policies and regulations that promote sustainable forest management, community participation and conservation agreements, fully coincides with the project's conceptual proposal.

60. The project design was aligned with the National Development Plan 2018-2022 "Pact for Colombia, Pact for Equity", in which environmental sustainability and green growth were considered as cross-cutting axes of all public management, under the slogan "Produce by conserving and conserve by producing". As part of this plan, 13 crosscutting pacts were formulated, five of which were related to

⁴ This year a new FAO Colombia Program Framework has been developed, based on the United Nations Cooperation Framework for Sustainable Development 2024-2027, which is currently in the approval phase by the Colombian government.

the project's objectives and focus: i) Pact for sustainability, ii) Pact for peace-building, iii) Pact for equal opportunities for ethnic groups, iv) Pact for women's equality, and v) Pact for decentralization. Specifically, the project contributed to the agreements on the expansion and strengthening of protected areas anchored to the Pacific SIRAP, in addition to supporting the regional solidarity economy, as a contribution to peace building in territories affected by the presence of illegal economies (timber extraction, mining, illicit crops) and illegal armed groups (RMT, 2023).

61. The current president, Gustavo Petro Urrego (2022-2026), substantially changed the approach to address socio-environmental issues in rural territories, integrating economic incentives, community participation and conservation agreements, strengthening cooperation between state institutions and local communities, and inter-institutional coordination. The above is reflected in the National Development Plan 2022-2026 "Colombia global potential for life". This plan is structured around five thematic axes, all of which are aligned with the project's actions: 1) Land management around water and environmental justice, 2) Human security and social justice, 3) Human right to food, 4) Productive transformation and climate action, and 5) Regional convergence.
62. The change in the national government's approach was accompanied by new regulations that promote Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), encourage conservation agreements and strengthen the participation of local stakeholders. This new regulatory framework is aimed at strengthening the community forest economy, the conservation of strategic ecosystems and the inclusion of local communities in the management of natural resources. It also includes provisions that support restoration, sustainable harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products, recognition of ecosystem services, long-term planning and the inclusion of historically marginalized groups.

3.2 Coherence

Was the project's approach coherent and appropriate to address the reality of the Colombian Pacific and the Mosaics of Use and Conservation of Biodiversity (MUCB)??

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 3. The project's components and results were aligned with its objective, integrating sustainable management and biodiversity conservation in Colombian Pacific landscapes, through a participatory and culturally appropriate approach (internal coherence).

63. This coherence was reflected in a design with a clear logic between the main objective, specific objectives, results and activities. The Theory of Change (ToC), updated during the Mid-Term Review (2023), was validated in practice, demonstrating methodological consistency, strengthening the traceability of results and products, and ensuring that the causal sequence between activities, results and impacts remained solid in a context of high social and environmental complexity.
64. The role of community stakeholders was decisive for the internal coherence of the project, thanks to their ownership of the strategic themes of conservation, sustainable production and territorial governance. This ownership resulted in greater commitment in implementation, in the articulation with institutional partners and in the consolidation of results that responded more directly to local realities. In this sense, community participation strengthened the internal logic of the project, but also ensured coherence between objectives, activities and products generated.
65. The project also adopted a socio-ecosystemic approach that made it possible to conceive the MUCBs as assemblages of diverse systems that operate in an articulated manner in collective territories. This framework integrated national protected areas, civil society reserve areas, and community conservation areas -both consolidated and in the process of consolidation- with productive systems including agroforestry systems and areas under sustainable forest management. By promoting this articulation, the project contributed to overcoming the traditional fragmentation between

conservation and production, favoring a more integrated approach. As one actor interviewed put it: "Conservation should not work from the protected areas inward, but from the areas outward, and this project has that integrating vision."

66. Likewise, all activities were articulated with existing processes and implemented through "intervention windows" prioritized in the mosaics. This strategy favored alignment with local and community dynamics, as well as with the strategies of institutional partners and governmental actors at different levels.
67. Finally, the stakeholders consulted recognized the value of the mosaic approach to articulate conservation, ethnic territories and productive systems. They also emphasized that their integration with capacity building, green business and value chains made it possible to address more effectively some of the structural problems of the Colombian Pacific region, such as the pressure on natural resources and the lack of sustainable economic alternatives.

Finding 4. All the project's actions were coordinated with existing processes led by community and institutional partners, which made it possible to enhance synergies, develop complementary actions, be more effective and increase the prospects for sustainability (external coherence).

68. Given the role of SIRAP Pacífico in the design and later in the execution of the project, all activities were supported by the institutions that make up this platform - Regional Autonomous Corporations (CAR) in their role as environmental authorities, National Natural Parks (PNN), research institutes, governors' offices, municipal mayors' offices, Community Councils of Black Communities, Indigenous Councils and Reservations, the Departmental Systems of Protected Areas (SIDAP), and universities. This articulation made it possible to align the results and processes promoted by the project with the priorities of the stakeholders involved, contributing to the fulfillment of the objectives of both SIRAP itself and the institutional partners.
69. Within this framework, the Pacific SIRAP was consolidated as a benchmark environmental governance subsystem thanks to the project's impetus, which facilitated the articulation of different levels of authority, scientific knowledge and local and ancestral knowledge regarding biodiversity conservation. This process was strengthened by the synergies and complementarities generated between the institutions that make up SIRAP and the project, which made it possible to take advantage of technical capacities, financial resources and previous experiences to guide interventions more effectively. Institutional articulation was also reflected in the project management structure, in which the director belongs to the PNN team in the region, while the coordinator is attached to the Project Management Unit (PMU), which is directly linked to FAO.
70. This institutional and community framework not only strengthened socio-environmental management in the Colombian Pacific, but also demonstrated the viability of an inclusive and participatory governance model. The project experience showed that effective coordination between institutions and communities can enhance the legitimacy, coherence and sustainability of conservation, production and territorial development processes.
71. External coherence was reflected in the articulation with national policies, which gave the project legitimacy and strengthened its alignment with institutional strategies, sectoral plans and partner programs, as well as with community processes and territorial dynamics, generating trust and ownership.

3.3 Effectiveness

To what extent has the project achieved its results and objectives?

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 5. The project incorporated sustainable management, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services in landscape management, achieving an average of 94.20% of the planned results and goals (some of which were surpassed). It is currently working to meet all of the proposed goals.

72. The level of progress was based on the project's capacity for adaptation and resilience to adverse conditions. When it was not possible to develop activities in certain territories due to the presence of armed actors, alternatives were implemented such as the transfer of communities to other municipalities -for example, from Buenaventura to Guapi-, assuming additional costs but guaranteeing the continuity of the processes. These measures reflect operational flexibility and efficiency, and a strong commitment to communities.
73. In terms of quantitative results, significant progress was made in all components, with achievements that exceeded the planned goals. The additionality achieved in specific products and results is analyzed in section 3.5 Additionality.
74. Component 1 - Institutional strengthening to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific region. A total of 2,891,313 ha were characterized and mapped corresponding to the five prioritized MUCB. Of this area, 1,182,721 ha were selected as targeted operational windows.
75. The document "Guidelines for the harmonization of land use planning instruments with Black and Indigenous Peoples' own instruments and the development plans of the Peasant Reserve Zones" is currently being reviewed prior to its approval and publication. It is expected to serve as a guide for municipalities and departments of the Colombian Pacific region to harmonize their land-use planning instruments with the ethnic territories. Progress was also made in the implementation of the Training and Capacity Building Plan (see section 3.6 Capacity Building).
76. Component 2 - Integrated management of Protected Areas (PA), buffer zones and Community Conservation Areas (CCA). The reduction of pressures and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in six existing protected areas and their buffer zones was evaluated with the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), showing improvements between 93.60 and 100% in six protected areas. The project also supported the declaration of five new PAs (89,967 ha) and is in the process of declaring two more (258,272 ha), for a cumulative total of 348,239 ha. In addition, 282,883 ha of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation, including seven CCAs, apply sustainable management guidelines.
77. In addition, the development of the SIRAP Pacific Financial Sustainability Strategy was supported and the removal of 7 million tCO₂e was reported as a result of the implementation of the project's actions in the five prioritized MUCBs, estimated using the EX-ACT tool.
78. Component 3 - Sustainable production practices as alternatives for local development, biodiversity protection and support for the peace process. 15,632 hectares were established under sustainable production systems, linked to the support of 27 green business initiatives, seven Value Aggregation Units (VAUs)⁵ and six nature tourism ventures, through diagnoses, improvement plans, analysis methodologies and market development. The value chains of five emblematic Pacific products (naidí, piangua, Chinese potato, coconut and legal timber) were strengthened through market studies,

⁵ Value Added Units (VAU) are sustainable productive initiatives, based on the sustainable use of biodiversity, with physical infrastructure for the collection, transformation and/or value addition of products derived from biodiversity, with physical infrastructure for the collection, transformation and/or value addition of products derived from biodiversity, with physical infrastructure for the collection, transformation and/or value addition of products derived from biodiversity and contribute to reducing pressure on forests and strategic ecosystems. It can be stated that these are green businesses with a higher level of transformation and consolidation.

commercial alliances and marketing pilots. VAUs reported an increase of up to 67.1% in their revenues in relation to their revenues prior to the start of the project.

79. Another relevant achievement was the approval of the SFM Plan to the Community Council of the lower part of the Saija River, which covers an area of 2,529 ha⁶ and will be in effect for 20 years. Likewise, the Community Council of the Yurumanguí River, in the municipality of Buenaventura (Valle del Cauca), submitted a request for approval of an SFM Plan that is in the process of being approved for a 30-year period. Support was also provided to update the Departmental Green Business Plans in Nariño, Cauca and Risaralda, coordinating them with the National Green Business Plan 2022-2030.
80. Component 4 - Knowledge Management and M&E of the project. During implementation, the project strengthened its governance and monitoring mechanisms through six Steering Committees, eight Technical Committees and 30 Mosaic Technical Committees. During the same period, five Project Implementation Reports (PIR), 11 Project Progress Reports (PPR) and 70 monthly dashboards were prepared to report on technical and administrative progress. As of August 30, 2025, budget execution reached 94.60% and actions are underway to complete the implementation of planned activities.
81. To ensure traceability of progress, as part of the M&E system, an interactive platform was implemented in *Power BI* for public access, correlating output and outcome indicators. In line with FAO guidelines, indicators cannot formally exceed 100%; therefore, those that exceeded targets were recorded as value added or additionality. Table 3 presents the percentage of progress for each result, while Appendix 3 details results, targets and indicators, including the cases of additionality presented in section 3.5. This mechanism made it possible to systematically verify the progress made and to transparently reflect the relationship between outputs and results.

⁶ Resolution 1405 of 2024 of the Regional Autonomous Corporation of Cauca for the use of 2,529 ha in the municipality of Timbiquí, department of Cauca.

Table 3. Components, results and percentage of progress.

Results	Percentage of progress (%)*
Component 1. Institutional strengthening to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific	
Result 1.1 - The territorial and environmental management planning instruments are harmonized with the instruments developed by black communities and indigenous peoples to safeguard biological and cultural diversity and ecosystem services, leading to an overall reduction of potential threats from development-oriented activities.	87.40%
Outcome 1.2 - Improved capacity and participation of stakeholders to support the implementation of harmonized planning and environmental management in the MUCB.	100.00%
Component 2. Integrated PA management, buffer zones and Community Conservation CCA	
Result 2.1 - Reduced pressures and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in 581,859 ha of existing PA and their buffer zones.	99.00%
Outcome 2.2 - New PAs and CCAs receive support for their management plan and implementation.	82.50%
Component 3. Sustainable production practices as alternatives for local development, biodiversity protection and support for the peace process	
Outcome 3.1 - Biodiversity and ecosystem services are sustainably used in forest production systems and generate multiple environmental and socioeconomic benefits.	100.00%
Outcome 3.2 - Products and services derived from biodiversity have added value and their value chains are duly strengthened.	100.00%
Component 4. Knowledge management and project M&E	
Result 4.1 - Intermediate Evaluation Reports (RMT) and Final Evaluation (EF).	90.50%
Average progress	94.20%

Source: Excel file "Project Progress" that is part of the M&E system. These data were then triangulated by the evaluation team. The percentage of progress corresponds to the simple average of the outputs corresponding to each outcome.

82. Finally, the effectiveness was also evident on multiple levels. While MinAmbiente highlighted community ownership and governance as central achievements, PNN highlighted progress in communication and sustainability. Overall, the project not only met and exceeded its goals, but also demonstrated resilience in the face of risk contexts and the capacity to generate tangible results in the territories.

Finding 6. The project contributed to the consolidation of territorial peace by strengthening community governance, social cohesion and institutional trust. This created the conditions for decisions on conservation and sustainable use of the landscape to be recognized and respected by both internal and external stakeholders.

83. The project's contribution to territorial peace materialized in actions that reinforced community governance, promoted participatory territorial planning and strengthened trust between communities and institutions. These processes were perceived by local actors as a different form of peace, in which the community exercise of authority was recognized even in contexts of risk: *"It is another type of peace... the communities learned to manage their territory and the armed actors respected those decisions."* FAO's support was considered fundamental to sustain this process, in the words of one interviewee: *"The only ally, the only one going there was FAO...we were not going to let them down."*
84. These experiences show that the project acted as an effective territorial peace-building mechanism by legitimizing community decisions and offering alternatives for sustainable territorial management in the face of extractivism and violence. A key contribution was to enable local stakeholders to visualize the territory they long for, which made it possible to join forces to work for this projected possible future.
85. However, the creation of new community leadership, as a result of the project's actions, although a relevant achievement, also exposes social leaders to greater risks⁷. According to Global Witness, in 2023 Colombia was the most dangerous country in the world for land and environmental defenders, with 79 murders recorded, equivalent to approximately 40% of global homicides of social leaders in that year. This figure exceeds that recorded in other countries in the region, such as Brazil, where 25 cases were documented, while in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras the figures were considerably lower, reflecting the magnitude of the risk in Colombia compared to other countries and regions.
86. On the other hand, the results of the reflection process carried out by the Universidad Javeriana (2025), underline that territorial peace building in the Pacific emerges as a multidimensional process that articulates environmental governance, territorial planning and the emerging notion of "peace with nature". Within this framework, the project was based on the practices of black, indigenous and peasant communities who, in dialogue with environmental institutions and entities, proposed alternative models to extractivism and violence. The region, characterized by its biocultural richness, but at the same time, the presence of different socio-environmental and armed conflicts, requires decolonial approaches that integrate ancestral knowledge, territorial defense and environmental justice. In this sense, the project promoted the articulation between community and state actors to strengthen initiatives that demonstrated that territorial peace does not only imply the absence of war, but the guarantee of structural and symbolic conditions for a dignified life in harmony with the environment, as well as the basis of ancestral and territorial knowledge for the construction of territorial peace.

3.4 Capacity building

To what extent did the capacity building activities contribute to the achievement of project goals, outcomes and outputs?

Finding 7. Capacity building was a pillar of the project, generating technical, administrative and commercial skills in communities, institutions and productive organizations. Its impact was varied, in some cases comprehensive and transformative, while in others it was limited to technical-productive aspects.

87. Capacity building was one of the most solid and successful aspects of the project. A Training and Capacity Building Plan was designed, complemented with diploma courses and specialized courses in environmental management, land use planning and sustainable production. These processes enabled

⁷ Indepaz's Human Rights Observatory reported between 2024 and August 2025 that approximately 88 social leaders have been killed (including signatories of the Peace Accord). On the other hand, in 2023, the Ombudsman's Office recorded that 181 social leaders and human rights defenders were murdered in Colombia.

Afro-descendant and indigenous communities to acquire technical and administrative tools to participate in a more balanced way in governance and decision-making processes on their territories.

88. The plan was implemented in five modalities: i) Diploma in Territorial Environmental Governance; ii) Leadership and Governance School; iii) In-depth courses; iv) Short courses and workshops; and v) Agricultural Field Schools (ECAs). Together, these modalities achieved a broad and diverse coverage of stakeholders, including institutions, community and productive organizations.
89. The diploma course, offered by the Universidad Javeriana in Cali, was attended by 110 participants from the five mosaics, including women (47.30%) and young people, organized in three cohorts. It was co-constructed with SIRAP Pacífico and included community leaders as university-recognized faculty. Its impact was amplified with the Leadership School, replicated on nine occasions, which had 168 participants (58.90% women) generating cascade training processes. This investment is a key learning experience and a recommendation for future projects in the region.
90. In addition, a portfolio of 12 community initiatives was consolidated to reflect the appropriation of learning. An example is the work developed by one of the working groups of the first cohort, which focused on analyzing the inclusion of young people in productive projects that favor their permanence in the territories of the municipalities of Guapi, Timbiquí, López de Micay and Popayán in the department of Cauca. As a result, a comprehensive strategy was designed that combines education in agricultural entrepreneurship, intercultural dialogue, protection measures and promotion of agroforestry initiatives. These proposals were organized in project format, demonstrating their feasibility and creating a basis for the future management of resources for their execution.
91. The field schools were implemented in two forestry initiatives and ten sustainable production systems initiatives, far exceeding the established goals. In addition, actions were coordinated with the National Apprenticeship Service, which provided training in community tourism, gastronomy and environmental interpretation directly in the territories, closing gaps in access to technical training. At the same time, seven VAUs were strengthened with equipment and technical assistance, increasing local productive capacities.
92. The exchange of experiences was particularly valued by the communities, as it facilitated practical learning based on examples close to home. The Field School methodology was adapted to incorporate a territorial perspective, including the evaluation of impacts on biological connectivity. As one participant put it: *"A community gets much more excited when they see that another community has been able to do it."*

3.5 Progress towards impact

What significant direct or indirect changes can be attributed to the project in relation to biodiversity conservation, local capacity building and/or community well-being in the MUCB?

Finding 8. The project generated significant contributions in public policy, territorial governance and bioeconomy. Guidelines on land management, community conservation and nature tourism were consolidated, as well as the strengthening of the Pacific SIRAP and the transition of participating communities from beneficiaries to implementing partners.

93. The Guidelines for the harmonization of land-use planning instruments, developed in a participatory manner in conjunction with SIRAP Pacífico, are recognized as a useful national reference for mayors' and governors' offices in territories with ethnic communities. In addition, a biological connectivity exercise was developed, with fauna and flora indicators, which resulted in a GIS tool used by the CARs

and MinAmbiente to support conservation and restoration decisions. These contributions represent direct impacts on public policies and institutional capacity building.

94. Support for community-based tourism⁸ in the collective territories of black communities contributed to the generation of local income and provided key inputs for the construction of the Nature Tourism Policy, under the responsibility of MinComercio. These advances show how the project has influenced both the consolidation of sustainable production practices and the formulation of public policies that ensure their long-term projection.
95. The formation of the Pacific Bioeconomy Network, which groups 28 initiatives, led to the formulation of a Bioeconomy Vision document for the Colombian Pacific, adopted by MinAmbiente, and the management of additional resources by the *Global Green Growth Institute* (GGGI) to finance its implementation in 2026. This process, led by Corporación Biocomercio Sostenible, strengthened regional articulation and facilitated the transition of community bioeconomy initiatives to business models, increasing their sustainability and capacity to access markets.
96. Progress toward impact was also reflected in the consolidation of regional governance through SIRAP Pacific. The strengthening of its Technical Secretariat made it possible to coordinate, convene and guide the actions of multiple institutions, including the five CARs that comprise it, National Parks and the Pacific Environmental Research Institute (IIAP) and the Marine and Coastal Research Institute (INVEMAR).
97. At the community level, the change in the relationship with the institutions allowed the communities to play an active role, leading actions in their territories. These are FAO's contracting instrument for the procurement of services by eligible actors, in a transparent, impartial and efficient manner, seeking a balance between expected benefits and costs. The signing of letters of agreement allowed the transfer of technical, organizational and financial capacities from FAO to community organizations, thus contributing to their strengthening. In addition, those signed with community partners were formalized directly (without the need to submit three different quotations, as required by the FAO contracting manual), since they involved non-commercial activities or services in territories where ethnic-territorial sovereignty prevails⁹. The above reflects the application of an ethnic differential approach in the conditions established for the signing of these agreements.
98. The signing of 49 letters of agreement contributed significantly to the sustainability of initiatives such as green businesses, with broad participation of women and young people. Of this total, 34 were subscribed by communities and farmers' organizations, while 15 corresponded to non-governmental organizations, research institutes, CAR and universities. Together, these instruments represented an execution of US\$2.5 million, equivalent to 82% of the project's resources earmarked for contracting¹⁰. This process strengthened the technical and administrative capacities, especially of the community partners, and evidenced a structural change in the relationship between the project and its partners.
99. Also highlighted was the promotion of community forestry in the Community Council of the lower part of the Saija River and in the Community Council of the Yurumanguí River, with forestry management processes planned for 20 and 30 years, respectively. These advances made it possible to form community forestry companies and establish commercial agreements with the private sector, consolidating the communities as strategic actors in the sustainable management of the territory.

⁸ The consolidation of community tourism in black community territories is uncertain, given the public order situation in the region.

⁹ Based on Law 70 of 1993.

¹⁰ Around USD 1.25 million was allocated to community partners and farmer organizations. A similar amount was allocated to non-governmental organizations, research institutes, CARs and universities.

3.6 Additionality

What additional benefits were achieved through GEF support that would not have been achieved in the absence of the project?

Finding 9. The promotion of the development and implementation of innovative work and management approaches strengthened participatory methodologies in the territory and consolidated more effective governance and coordination mechanisms, generating results beyond the planned goals.

100. The evaluators agree with the stakeholders interviewed on the project's ability to give decisive impetus to the design and implementation of innovative planning and management approaches, such as the use of mixed and inclusive methodologies for capacity building, the participation of community leaders as trainers accompanied by professional specialists, and multi-sector governance, among others, as summarized in the lessons learned section, thus creating an incremental value recognized by all community and institutional partners. This additionality was reflected in products and processes not originally contemplated, which broadened the thematic coverage, the relevance of the interventions and the usefulness of the results, all of which were achieved thanks to GEF support. These approaches reinforced the sustainability of the actions and ownership by the local communities, confirming that the project responded to emerging needs and generated innovations beyond what was planned.
101. The additionality was also reflected in the quantitative results, where significant progress was recorded in all components and achievements that exceeded the planned goals. The M&E system, through the publicly accessible interactive platform in Power BI, made it possible to track progress and record the surpluses of the goals as added value generated by the project. Appendix 3 details the results, goals and indicators, highlighting those additional achievements in relation to what was planned.
102. In practice, additionality was evidenced in the selection of 1,182,721 ha as operational windows for the implementation of project activities, an area 121,066 ha additional to that planned in the project design document. Within these windows, work was carried out in 282,883 ha of strategic importance for biodiversity -72,690 ha more than planned- in the application of planning and management guidelines. The GEF Capacity Development Scorecard applied to the Regional Technical Table reached 33 points (71%), exceeding the established target of 20 points (44%) by 13 points (Component 1).
103. An emblematic example was the diploma course and the school of governance, recognized by both community and institutional partners as one of the most valuable contributions, for its contribution to local empowerment and the formation of territorial leadership. According to one of the stakeholders interviewed: *"Community and institutional partners recognize the diploma and the school of governance as one of the greatest added values."* In general, the implementation of the Training and Capacity Building Plan generated additional results by expanding coverage, strengthening the scope and contributing to the sustainability of the processes. These benefits demonstrate the project's ability to produce broader and lasting impacts that would have been difficult to achieve without GEF support (see section 3.6 Capacity Development).
104. In Component 2, the reduction of pressures and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in existing PAs and their buffer zones was evaluated with the Management Effectiveness Monitoring Tool (METT), registering improvements between 93.6% and 100% in six PAs, far exceeding the expected baseline levels. In addition, the project supported the declaration of five new PAs (89,967 ha) and has in progress the declaration of another two (258,272 ha), for a cumulative total of 348,239 ha, which includes 89,636 ha in addition to what was planned.

105. Also, 282,883 strategic hectares for biodiversity were incorporated, including seven CCAs, with sustainable management guidelines, representing an additional 72,690 ha. In terms of GHG emissions removal, the project doubled the initial target of 3.5 million tCO₂eq, reaching 7 million tCO₂e, estimated through EX-ACT for the five prioritized MUCBs (Component 2).
106. In Component 3, the goal of 10,000 hectares under sustainable production systems was far exceeded with the implementation of 15,000 hectares. Similarly, the target of a 10% increase in VAU revenues was exceeded with an average of 67% and individual cases exceeding 600%. Targets were also exceeded in community tourism, green business and sustainable productive systems, confirming the project's ability to transcend its initial objectives and generate additionality on various fronts - technical, pedagogical, market and governance - that would not have been possible without GEF support.
107. Also highlighted was the promotion of community forestry in the Community Council of the lower part of the Saija River and in the Community Council of the Yurumanguí River, with forestry management processes planned for 20 and 30 years, respectively. These advances made it possible to form community forestry companies and establish commercial agreements with the private sector, consolidating the communities as strategic actors in the sustainable management of the territory.

3.7 Efficiency

To what extent was an efficient use of resources achieved in the implementation of the project?

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 10. The governance structures of the project - the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee and the Mosaic Technical Committees - favored efficiency by facilitating coordination between community and institutional partners, the articulation of technical and financial resources, and the implementation of actions aimed at achieving the objectives.

108. In terms of efficiency, one of the most relevant factors was the role of coordination and decision-making mechanisms. The Steering Committee, the Technical Committee and the Mosaic Technical Committees were consolidated as key spaces that made it possible to align actions with community and institutional priorities, solve problems in a timely manner and orient interventions towards the project's objectives. MinAmbiente and PNN emphasized that this institutional framework strengthened territorial governance and generated trust among stakeholders. However, it was noted that the joint visibility of the results could have been greater, which partially limited the inter-institutional positioning of the project.
109. At the operational level, the combination of community instruments and institutional arrangements, in most cases, facilitated the achievement of results. The letters of agreement with communities and the work with productive organizations were perceived as agile mechanisms for mobilizing resources and sustaining local processes. At the institutional level, the interaction between community leadership, regional authorities and national entities enhanced the appropriation and effectiveness of the actions. However, some stakeholders pointed out administrative and financial bottlenecks, which generated delays in disbursements that, in some cases, discouraged organizations supported by Corporación Biocomercio, showing the need for greater agility in financial execution. For example, at Coagropacífico and Chocolates Tumaco, bureaucratic procedures slowed procurement and affected the delivery of results. Despite these limitations, the flexibility and resilience of the communities made it possible to maintain the continuity of activities and ensure the efficient use of available resources.

110. Efficiency was also helped by strategic design and implementation decisions. The Mid-Term Evaluation highlighted two factors that continue to hold true. The first was the expansion of goals, under the principle of "leaving no one behind", which made it possible to work with more communities and processes than originally planned, using the same technical and financial resources but achieving a broader impact. The second was the decision to focus on intervention windows within each mosaic, instead of covering its entire extension, which was key given the magnitude of the territories (such as the Katíos-Caoba mosaic, with almost one million hectares), the social complexity, the problems of public order and the difficulties of access. This measure, adopted after an analysis conducted by the Implementation Unit and validated by the institutional partners in 2021, reduced travel costs and dispersion of efforts, resulting in a more cost-efficient implementation with a greater concentration of impacts (EMT, 2023).

3.8 Financial management and co-financing

To what extent did the expected co-financing materialize? How did the materialization of a higher-than-planned co-financing affect the project results?

Finding 11. The project executed 97.13% of the total allocated budget and continues working to complete the total execution of resources. At project closing, 112% of the programmed cofinancing was received.

111. Execution of 97.13% of the total project budget includes amounts paid and committed as of August 31, 2025. Table 4 presents the project budget approved by the GEF, and the amounts executed (paid and committed) as of August 31, 2025.

Table 4. Total executed budget and balance as of August 31, 2025.

Component	Total budget	Paid	Committed	Total executed (paid and committed)		Balance
	USD	USD	USD	USD	%	USD
1	1,333,199	1,196,421	95,275	1,291,696	96.89%	41,503
2	2,680,399	2,386,497	219,280	2,605,777	97.22%	74,622
3	2,874,296	2,552,610	289,521	2,842,130	98.88%	32,166
4	314,542	259,528	8,140	267,668	85.10%	46,874
Subtotal	7,202,436	6,395,056	612,216	7,007,272	97.29%	195,165
PMU	360,122	337,334	888	338,222	93.92%	21,900
TOTAL	7,562,558	6,732,390	613,104	7,345,494	97.13%	217,065

Source: UMP (2025).

112. The project received 112% of the cofinancing committed during the design phase. The contributions made by MinAmbiente, the IIAP, the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of Nariño, CORPONARIÑO and the Cauca Regional Autonomous Corporation stand out. This co-financing of more than 100% is not only another way of demonstrating

the commitment of the institutional partners to the project's objectives - through the allocation of their own resources, in cash and in kind, for the implementation of complementary actions - but also contributed directly to the additionality of the project, by helping to exceed the initially planned goals.

113. Appendix 7 details the co-funding committed by the partners in the design phase and the amounts received at project closure.

3.9 Implementation

To what extent did FAO fulfill its role as the implementing agency of the project?

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 12. The implementation function was performed effectively, ensuring technical oversight, adaptive management and management capacity. This ensured inter-institutional articulation, project continuity in the face of adverse contexts and the strengthening of territorial governance through SIRAP Pacifico and community partners.

114. The coordination between FAO and MinAmbiente allowed the implementation of the project to combine technical soundness with political legitimacy, ensuring adaptive management and alignment with public policies. While FAO contributed its methodological experience, management capacity and support to the project implementation unit, MinAmbiente facilitated the alignment with public policies and the linkage of institutional actors through the Pacific SIRAP. This complementarity ensured that the results transcended the operational and were integrated into institutional frameworks that strengthen their sustainability.
115. There is broad consensus among the stakeholders consulted in recognizing FAO as an effective implementing agency, noted for its technical soundness, management capacity and ability to adapt to adverse contexts. It is recognized that the departure of UNIDO generated significant challenges that were eventually resolved by FAO.

Finding 13. The project demonstrated a high capacity for adaptive management in the face of public order challenges, implementing strategies that made it possible to meet the planned goals and ensure the continuity of the processes.

116. Throughout its implementation, the project faced adverse external conditions derived from the security context in the Colombian Pacific, which in some cases prevented direct access to the territories. In response to these restrictions, alternative strategies were designed, such as moving activities to the municipal capitals, always in coordination with the communities. This operational flexibility ensured community participation and avoided disruption of key processes.
117. Thanks to these measures, the project was able to meet the planned activities, results and goals, despite the adverse conditions. This performance reflects the strength of the governance mechanisms and the adaptability of the project implementation unit and local partners. A key learning is that, in regions with high conflict, flexible institutional and community arrangements are essential to sustain effectiveness and ensure that objectives are achieved in a cost-efficient manner and with social legitimacy.
118. Other challenges faced by the project during the first years of implementation tested its resilience and were documented in the Mid-Term Evaluation (2023). These include the COVID-19 pandemic, the exit of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) as a co-executing agency, the deterioration of law and order in the Pacific, and the change of national government in 2022. The coordinated response from the project implementation unit, with support from FAO and MinAmbiente, made it possible to maintain the continuity of the project and ensure the orientation of actions towards its strategic objectives.

119. The pandemic limited mobility and contact with communities, forcing activities to be transferred to the virtual world and to municipal capitals; even so, the first Steering Committee was installed and implementation continued. UNIDO's exit in 2021 generated a 20-month delay in Component 3, but FAO assumed implementation with donor support, avoiding major impacts (RMT, 2023).
120. Finally, the security situation in the Pacific became more complex with the growing presence of illegal armed groups, as reported by INDEPAZ (2022). This context represented a significant risk for the project implementation unit team, which received risk management support from the United Nations. In this scenario, the accompaniment and support of the Indigenous Reserves and Community Councils has been decisive, since the legitimacy of FAO as an external partner linked to the communities generated a margin of protection and made it possible to sustain the planned activities.

3.10 Execution

To what extent did FAO fulfill its role as executing agency of the project in partnership with MinAmbiente?

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 14. The technical soundness and management capacity of FAO, as executing agency, together with the role of MinAmbiente as co-executing agency - guiding the project towards compliance with public policy and providing technical guidelines - made it possible to effectively fulfill the role of project executors.

121. The FAO, in its role as implementing agency, contributed technical expertise, credibility and management capacity, elements that proved crucial to sustaining implementation in complex contexts. Its leadership allowed to provide continuity to the processes, maintain traceability of results through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and ensure adaptive management in the face of external and internal changes.
122. MinAmbiente acted as co-executor and strategic guide for the project, ensuring consistency with national biodiversity, climate change and land-use planning policies. It also provided specific technical guidelines and participated in product validation, harmonization workshops and training processes. Its role was more visible during the second half of the execution period, when the participation of agencies such as the Directorate of Forests and Biodiversity, the Office of International Affairs and the Directorate of Land Management increased, strengthening the link between public policy and actions in the territory.
123. The combination of these roles was strengthened by the governance arrangements, which included the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee and the Mosaic Technical Committees. These spaces facilitated decision-making, inter-institutional articulation and coordination with community partners, ensuring that implementation transcended the operational to become integrated into broader institutional and territorial frameworks.
124. The coordination between FAO and MinAmbiente allowed the implementation of the project to combine technical soundness with political legitimacy, ensuring adaptive management and alignment with public policies. While FAO contributed its methodological experience, management capacity and support to the project implementation unit, MinAmbiente facilitated the alignment with public policies and the linkage of institutional actors through the Pacific SIRAP. This complementarity ensured that the results transcended the operational and were integrated into institutional frameworks that strengthen their sustainability.

4. Sustainability

Will the strategic processes initiated by the project continue in the medium and long term once its implementation is complete?

Rating: Moderately likely

Finding 15. The project laid a solid foundation for sustainability by strengthening community, institutional, and business capacities. These advances ensure projection over time, although they require additional consolidation to guarantee their permanence.

125. All the stakeholders consulted agreed that the project generated progress towards sustainability, although each highlighted different dimensions. PNN highlighted the community agreements, the Universidad del Tolima and Universidad Javeriana the capacity building opportunities, Corporación Biocomercio the advances in bioeconomy, and MinAmbiente the need to strengthen local organizations. For the evaluation team, these contributions reflect that sustainability depends on a balance between consolidated community capacities, institutional frameworks and sustained financing.
126. At the community level, technical and organizational capacities were strengthened through training, diploma courses and specialized courses. The existence of 20- and 30-year permits for SFM activities in the Community Council of the lower Saija River and in the Community Council of the Yurumanguí River (in the process of approval), together with the establishment of forestry companies and marketing agreements, created conditions of continuity for local initiatives. In this area, the tropical rainforest restoration course and the low impact forestry course, led by the Universidad del Tolima, ensure the transfer of knowledge and sustainable practices in forest management.
127. In addition, the promotion of the bioeconomy, specifically 40 initiatives -including green businesses, VAUs and nature tourism initiatives- promoted the sustainable use of natural resources and productive diversification, generating new sources of income and strengthening the projection of community initiatives. Although progress has been made in market access, not all initiatives have consolidated agreements with buyers, and in some cases this access is still incipient and needs to be strengthened.
128. At the institutional level, progress was made in SIRAP Pacifico's Financial Sustainability Strategy, leaving inputs and guidelines for future resource mobilization, and a legacy of training resources was consolidated to strengthen sustainability at the institutional, business and community levels.
129. In summary, sustainability was enhanced by the articulation between communities, institutions and markets, although the permanence of these achievements requires maintaining accompaniment, securing sources of financing and linking the processes with national and regional public policies.

Finding 16. The sustainability of the results achieved faces financial, institutional, political and security risks. The project anticipated some of them and promoted closure strategies and mitigation mechanisms that favor the continuity of community and institutional processes.

130. Sustainability was identified as one of the main bottlenecks of the project. During its implementation, funding was guaranteed for the operation of SIRAP Pacifico and the committees that accompanied the project, but after its completion, limitations began to emerge in mobilizing the institutions' own resources. In this context, the creation of a sustainability endowment fund was proposed, although there is still no entity to lead its implementation, which reflects a financial and institutional risk.
131. At the community level, organizations with greater capacities show projection and the possibility of maintaining processes over time, while those with less strength face difficulties in sustaining results. Political changes, the financing of SIRAP Pacifico and the deterioration of public order are among the

risks most frequently mentioned, which threaten the continuity of what has been achieved. To mitigate them, the project strengthened community capacities in governance and negotiation, providing them with tools to sustain conservation and development processes even in adverse contexts.

132. As part of the closure strategy, the systematized documentation will be delivered in an organized hard disk, together with a series of publications, including brochures aimed at community partners, and a digital platform, which will contribute to ensure the protection of the knowledge generated. In parallel, several bioeconomy initiatives made progress in building their own brands and generating clients, strengthening their positioning in the market and creating concrete opportunities for generating income for the families and organizations involved. These advances, together with capacity building, do not eliminate risks, but they create favorable conditions for the continuity of results.

5. Design and implementation of the M&E system.

To what extent was the design of the M&E system or plan adequate and functional to effectively monitor project implementation?

5.1 M&E system plan

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 17. The design of the M&E system was sound, adequate and functional. Having specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators made it possible to provide structured and rigorous monitoring of implementation.

133. The M&E system made it possible to systematically monitor project implementation and the associated risks, highlighting the collection of information in a structured manner through defined and periodically updated indicators, which provided consistent and verifiable data. In addition to the application of guidelines to avoid double counting of indicators and to ensure methodological consistency.
134. In the second half of the project, the design of the M&E system was improved to strengthen the results logic and traceability, which allowed capturing processes and results in a more structured way, and facilitated accountability.
135. As part of this redesign, the PMU team developed an interactive platform in *Power BI*¹¹, publicly accessible, which integrated indicators of results, products, risks and cross-cutting approaches such as gender. This tool increased transparency and efficiency in information management, while allowing for systematic monitoring of environmental, social and political risks. However, there is little evidence of the appropriation of this platform by actors other than FAO, which reduced its potential as a shared management and learning tool.

5.2 M&E system Implementation

Rating: Highly satisfactory

Finding 18. The M&E system worked as planned, gathering information in a systematic and timely manner, with a sound methodology that facilitated implementation follow-up. The information generated was used as input for decision-making and learning processes.

136. The consistent operation of the M&E system, gathering periodic information through defined indicators and updated reports, ensured a systematic and timely flow of data, which strengthened the credibility and usefulness of the system. The application of strict methodological guidelines to avoid double counting of indicators reinforced the technical soundness of the process, ensuring the validity of the information collected.
137. The information produced was used to make adjustments during implementation and to manage risks, providing inputs to respond to unforeseen events such as changes in the political environment. The system also contributed to the project's internal learning through feedback from the technical teams and the systematization of progress.
138. Additionally, the M&E platform developed in *Power BI* constituted a relevant advance in terms of transparency and public access to information. Its design made it possible to visually and interactively integrate indicators of results, products, risks and cross-cutting approaches, facilitating consultation by institutional and community stakeholders. This tool represents an innovative effort to bring project

¹¹ <https://pacificobiocultural.fao.org.co/index.php/plataformame/>

results to a wider audience and contribute to collective learning, although its use by actors other than FAO was limited.

6. Implementation of GEF policies and guidelines

6.1 Project partnership and stakeholder engagement

Finding 19. The project consolidated a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration and participatory governance model that integrated ethnic communities, public institutions, local governments, the private sector and academia. This model generated ownership and trust among actors and stakeholders.

139. Community participation was broad and significant, with a leading role played by the Community Councils, the Indigenous Reserves and various local organizations, which contributed to guaranteeing the territorial relevance of the interventions and reinforced the legitimacy of the project in the MUCBs. MinAmbiente highlighted this relationship with ethnic communities as a central aspect of the implementation.
140. At the same time, Corporación Biocomercio highlighted the consolidation of commercial alliances as a key contribution to linking with the private sector and promoting bioeconomy and green business initiatives. In addition, the importance of coordinating with the chambers of commerce to boost future market actions between producers and partners was stressed. For their part, the Universidad del Tolima and the Universidad Javeriana emphasized their role as an academic node, contributing to the articulation between applied research and the needs of the territory.
141. These differentiated contributions reinforced the legitimacy of the processes, favored community ownership and strengthened trust between institutions, communities, the private sector and academia. Although some stakeholders pointed out criticisms related to the intermediation of the organizations in certain processes, in general the positive assessment of the multi-stakeholder partnership model prevailed as a significant achievement of the project and as a key condition for the sustainability of the results over time.

6.2 Communication and knowledge management products

Finding 20. Communication was consolidated as a transversal axis of the project, with emphasis on community communication based on its own cultural forms. Knowledge dissemination and management products were generated to strengthen ownership, awareness and collective learning, in addition to facilitating the systematization of experiences and their replicability.

142. The Communication Strategy, developed in 2022, guided the project's approach to communication. It was structured along four axes: i) internal communication, which strengthened cohesion among partners and facilitated understanding of a complex project; ii) external communication, aimed at making actions and results visible through regional and local media and social networks; iii) community communication, which built its own language reflecting expectations and cultural forms of the communities, consolidating them as protagonists in the processes; and iv) knowledge management and systematization, which made it possible to disseminate results, involve new actors -including the private sector- and contribute to the sustainability and scaling up of impacts.
143. Internal communication was aimed mainly at institutional partners and members of the PMU, through the preparation of progress reports, periodic reports, dashboards and systematization documents, supported by online repositories, data exchange protocols and interoperability standards that ensured transparency, access and avoided duplication of efforts. These inputs made it possible to strengthen internal cohesion, capitalize on lessons learned, identify successes and mistakes, and monitor the project's progress.

144. External communication was aimed at making actions and results visible in specialized media and social networks, with the consolidation of the project's web page standing out. Various institutional actors consulted highlighted weaknesses in the joint visibility of institutional partners and in the consolidation of inputs as contributions to public policies.
145. The project's website is an effective communication tool, presenting in a structured manner the components, audiovisual materials, documents and monitoring sections that reinforce transparency and accountability. Its main strength lies in the clarity with which it makes visible the objectives, progress and community and ethnic approaches, which facilitates appropriation by different audiences. However, the limited updating of content, especially in recent news and reports, reduced its potential as a dynamic information channel. The portal lacks a greater inclusion of testimonies and communicative products generated directly by the communities, which would have allowed a more authentic reflection of the impacts on the territory and consolidate the community dimension of communication.
146. Community communication was aimed at local partners through participatory processes and territorial appropriation. Initiatives such as the "*Caminar la palabra*" strategy, the creation of community communication collectives and a network of communicators for conservation, with broad participation of women and young people, stand out. These actions helped overcome traditional isolation and strengthen social cohesion. It also facilitated learning in the use of basic technological tools and promoted interaction with clients and green business partners, expanding opportunities for visibility and sustainability.
147. In knowledge management, a knowledge dialogue approach and the "trainer of trainers" methodology predominated, prioritizing horizontal learning and the integration of traditional and technical knowledge in capacity building processes. We also promoted the co-creation of communication products with communities, institutions and partners. The project systematization exercise, currently underway, with the active participation of multiple stakeholders, stands out.
148. Multimodal tools (videos, photography, *storytelling*) and participatory methodologies (workshops, exchanges, continuous consultation processes and WhatsApp groups) were used to strengthen internal communication, facilitate external dissemination, promote the construction of community communication languages and nurture knowledge management. These contributions broadened the ownership of the project and were reflected in the generation of products, transparency in the relationship with the communities, the appropriation of basic technological tools and the active participation of women and young people. As pointed out by one of the stakeholders interviewed, "*one of the most relevant achievements was to have consolidated communication as a tool for territorial development and conservation*".

6.3 Social and environmental standards

Finding 21. The project considered social and environmental risks in its design and monitored them systematically. This made it possible to maintain the moderate risk level throughout implementation.

149. The project design incorporated an exhaustive analysis of environmental, social, political and institutional risks, accompanied by a risk management plan with a gender and ethnic differential approach. This process was framed within the FAO and UNIDO Environmental and Social Safeguards, ensuring alignment with international standards (RMT, 2023).
150. During the design phase, the risk rating certification form reported a moderate level in relation to safeguards. Among the most relevant risks were identified: the presence of indigenous and black communities in the execution areas (FAO Safeguard 9 and UNIDO Safeguard 4), and the

implementation of activities in protected areas and buffer zones (FAO Safeguard 2). PRODOC also highlighted Safeguard 8 on gender equity as a cross-cutting issue (WTR, 2023).

151. In 2022, the risk matrix was updated incorporating two new factors: i) the COVID-19 pandemic and ii) the lack of political will of local authorities and the private sector to apply territorial harmonization guidelines. Even with these updates, the Mid-Term Review (2023) maintained the moderate risk classification, and it was not necessary to activate additional mitigation measures, beyond the constant monitoring and preventive measures already integrated in the planning.
152. During the second half of the project, the M&E system included a specific module for monitoring compliance with safeguards and the risk plan. The interactive platform in *Power BI*, integrated indicators for results, outputs, risks and cross-cutting approaches such as gender. The system allowed monitoring of social, environmental and external risks, including those associated with FPIC, security, public order, political changes and the pandemic.
153. Overall, risk management was adequate and ensured that interventions respected community rights, cultural integrity and biodiversity conservation, without requiring corrective measures. The environmental and social risk rating for the project remained at the moderate level.
154. The complaints and grievances mechanism established in the project's operations manual served as a preventive measure to channel the concerns of local stakeholders. To date, no complaints have been registered through this system.

6.4 Gender and social inclusion

Finding 22. The project's design incorporated the differential approach - including gender, ethnicity and age - and guaranteed the participation of Community Councils and Indigenous Reserves as active partners in planning and implementation. Gender mainstreaming was implemented gradually during execution, achieving significant results in the participation of women in decision-making.

155. The project fully integrated the ethnic differential approach in its implementation by recognizing Community Councils and Indigenous Reserves as active partners in planning, decision-making and execution of activities. The analysis of the role of ethnic communities in the project is addressed in section 6.5.
156. In parallel, the project consistently promoted the equitable participation of women and men in its decision-making mechanisms, including the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee. Likewise, the active presence of women was ensured in the sessions of the five MUCB Technical Committees, aimed at the construction, consultation, validation and follow-up of the Participatory Action Plans for the 2022-2025 period in each mosaic.
157. In terms of gender, mainstreaming was initially limited, although the inclusion of women in different activities was guaranteed. As of the Mid-Term Evaluation (2023), this approach was strengthened with the more systematic adoption of the Gender Mainstreaming Plan - contained in the design document - which, with its indicators, goals and periodic follow-up, allowed for articulating actions and guiding the PMU towards a more effective implementation.
158. Progress has materialized in the growing participation of women in productive, governance and community communication initiatives. Significant examples include the construction of the Indigenous Women's House in the Arquía Resguardo, which transformed community dynamics by strengthening the role of women; the allocation of 50 hectares (of 200 hectares destined for sustainable productive activities) in Calle Santa Rosa for artisan associations that take advantage of natural fibers for the production of handicrafts; female leadership in more than 50% of green businesses and UAVs, reaching close to 90% in community tourism; and mangrove restoration

initiatives linked to food security. In addition, about 50% of women participated in capacity building activities. These actions show a tangible impact on the expansion of their role in decision-making related to the project's interventions in the MUCBs.

159. In addition, specific measures were adopted to facilitate participation, such as the provision of childcare spaces during community activities.
160. Finally, the project's results framework included a specific gender indicator that establishes that at least 40% of the SFM initiatives and productive systems were led by women (Result 3.1). This goal was achieved, since five of the 12 initiatives supported were led by women, which corresponds to 41.7%.

6.5 Indigenous peoples and local communities

Finding 23. The active participation of ethnic communities was a central axis of the project, supported by consultation processes and governance mechanisms that strengthened the legitimacy of the actions implemented.

161. The participation of the ethnic communities was a guiding principle from the design of the project. Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) was applied and obtained in 15 processes, ensuring that Community Councils and Indigenous Reserves were informed and consulted prior to the implementation of activities. This approach made it possible to align actions with territorial and cultural priorities, generating trust and legitimacy. Beyond FPIC procedures, the ethnic communities played a prominent role in decision-making through their participation in the Steering Committee and the Mosaic Technical Committees, where they exercised their voice on an equal footing with other institutional actors.
162. The processes of territorial planning and advocacy in national, departmental and local policies effectively included women, men and young people, many of whom belonged to ethnic communities. Examples of inclusion are the creation of the Indigenous Women's House in the Arquía Indigenous Reserve, the participation of women in more than 50% of green businesses, and female leadership in community tourism (90%). These experiences show an effort to integrate stakeholders in a differentiated manner in territorial planning and management.

7. Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned.

7.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. Relevance. The project was highly relevant as it effectively responded to the environmental and development priorities of communities and institutional partners. Its design integrated conservation, sustainable production and territorial governance, aimed at generating social and environmental benefits in the landscapes of the Colombian Pacific. Alignment with national and international frameworks - including public policies, sectoral strategies and global commitments- ensured strategic relevance, territorial legitimacy and consistency with sustainable development objectives, strengthening the ownership of local stakeholders.

Conclusion 2. Coherence. The project approach was fully consistent with the reality of the Colombian Pacific and the MUCBs, integrating conservation and sustainable production in an articulated manner. Internal consistency was reflected in the logical sequence between objectives, results and activities. External coherence was expressed in the articulation with existing processes led by community and institutional partners, which enhanced synergies, generated complementary actions and strengthened sustainability.

Conclusion 3. Effectiveness - Achievement of results. The project achieved outstanding performance in meeting its goals and objectives, with 94.2% progress in the expected results and surpassing several of the established targets. This effectiveness was made possible by the resilience and adaptive capacity of communities and institutions in the face of adverse conditions, including the pandemic, political changes and the law and order situation. The implementation of flexible strategies allowed the continuity of the processes and evidenced the commitment of the participating actors (Effectiveness | Achievement of results).

Conclusion 4. Effectiveness - Peacebuilding. Beyond the technical achievements, the project contributed to the consolidation of territorial peace through the strengthening of community governance, social cohesion and the generation of trust, which allowed the legitimization of conservation decisions and sustainable use of the territory. This contribution resulted in the recognition of community authority, participatory territorial planning and coordination with state institutions. This approach of co-responsibility and respect strengthened community authority and generated structural conditions for the construction of the possible future¹² projected.

Conclusion 5. Capacity building. Capacity building was a pillar of the project, generating technical, administrative and commercial skills in communities, institutions and productive organizations. Methodological diversity -diplomas, leadership schools, workshops and field schools- ensured broad and relevant coverage, promoting practical learning and cascading training processes. These efforts allowed Afro-descendant and indigenous communities to participate in more balanced conditions in territorial governance, consolidating their role as strategic actors. The impact achieved confirms that investing in local capacities is key to sustainability and ownership of results.

Conclusion 6. Progress towards impact. The project promoted structural changes in governance, conservation and bioeconomy. Guidelines were consolidated for territorial planning, community conservation, sustainable productive activities, green businesses and nature tourism. The communities went from being beneficiaries to implementing partners and SIRAP Pacifico was consolidated as a regional platform. At the community level, community forestry and green businesses demonstrated the capacity to generate income and social cohesion. These changes consolidated communities and institutions as strategic actors in sustainable landscape management.

¹² El futuro posible es la visión compartida del territorio que las comunidades anhelan y trabajan por alcanzar.

Conclusion 7. Additionality. The additionality was reflected in a decisive impetus for the adoption and consolidation of innovative work and management approaches. This added value strengthened the project's capacity to experiment, learn and adjust its strategies according to the territorial contexts, favoring a more participatory, adaptive and sustainable management, demonstrating that international financing can trigger transformative processes with long-term impacts in complex territories, which would have been difficult to achieve without the donor's contribution.

Conclusion 8. Efficiency. Efficiency was based on strategic design and implementation decisions, such as territorial targeting in intervention windows and the use of letters of agreement as a contracting mechanism. Governance structures (committees) facilitated inter-institutional coordination and decision-making, optimizing the use of project resources. Despite administrative constraints, flexibility and adaptive management sustained implementation. The focus on intervention windows optimized impacts in large and complex territories.

Conclusion 9. Financial management and co-financing. The project demonstrated efficient financial management by executing 97.13% of the allocated budget, including resources paid and committed, reflecting an adequate use of grant resources. In turn, the mobilization of 112% of the committed cofinancing demonstrated a high level of ownership and commitment from institutional partners, who contributed their own resources in cash and in kind. This co-financing not only strengthened the implementation, but also contributed to the additionality of the project, allowing it to exceed most of the initially planned goals and provide greater sustainability of the results achieved.

Conclusion 10. Implementation - Execution. FAO effectively fulfilled its role as implementing agency, providing technical soundness, constant supervision and adaptive management in adverse scenarios. Their accompaniment ensured compliance with safeguards and the technical coherence of the interventions. The joint execution between FAO and MinAmbiente combined the technical capacity of the former with the political legitimacy of the latter, which facilitated the alignment of the project with national policies on biodiversity, climate change and land use planning. This complementarity of roles strengthened community articulation and project governance.

Conclusion 11. Sustainability. The project built a solid foundation for sustainability by strengthening community, institutional and business capacities, as well as institutional and financial frameworks. The promotion of bioeconomy and community forestry initiatives, including the obtaining of 20 and 30-year forest management permits and the creation of community enterprises, show continuity over time. However, sustainability faces financial, institutional and security risks that require additional support to ensure the permanence of the achievements attained.

Conclusion 12. Design and implementation of the M&E system. The monitoring and evaluation system was adequate, robust and innovative. Based on SMART indicators and technological tools such as Power BI, its effective implementation allowed for rigorous monitoring, traceability of results and transparency in accountability. The system facilitated decision making, learning and risk management during implementation. The use of the Power BI platform was limited by actors other than FAO.

Conclusion 13. Partnerships and stakeholder participation. The project consolidated a model of collaboration among multiple partnerships and stakeholders, integrating ethnic communities, the private sector, academia and public institutions. This articulation generated trust and legitimacy in the processes, and strengthened community ownership of the results. Academic and private involvement strengthened innovation. The strategic alliances and co-responsibility achieved ensured the territorial relevance of the interventions and enhanced their long-term sustainability.

Conclusion 14. Communication, management and knowledge products. Communication and knowledge management were consolidated as cross-cutting themes that strengthened appropriation, social cohesion, and the visibility of results. Community communication made it possible to give visibility to the voices of women, young people and ethnic communities. Knowledge management made it possible

to systematize experiences and generate shared learning. However, limitations persisted in the joint visibility of the institutional partners.

Conclusion 15. Social and environmental standards. Adequate management of social and environmental standards made it possible to maintain a moderate level of risk throughout implementation. The risk analysis included social, political and institutional dimensions, with a differential ethnic and gender focus, and the adoption of preventive measures ensured respect for the rights of communities, cultural integrity and the conservation of biodiversity. With a focus on prevention and monitoring, the project ensured that no major corrective measures were required during implementation.

Conclusion 16. Gender and social inclusion. The gender approach was progressively mainstreamed, strengthening the participation of women and young people in decision-making spaces and productive initiatives, mainly. The Gender Mainstreaming Plan, together with practical measures such as child care and the creation of the Indigenous Women's House, facilitated equal participation. Women's leadership in green business and community tourism strengthened social cohesion and legitimacy of the processes.

Conclusion 17. Ethnic communities. The active participation of ethnic communities was a central achievement of the project, guaranteed through FPIC processes and their participation in decision-making spaces. This involvement on equal terms with institutional actors strengthened the legitimacy of the processes, ensured the cultural relevance of the actions and promoted co-responsibility in territorial management. The recognition of their leadership marked a structural change in the relationship with the institutions, allowing the consolidation (in process) of an inclusive and legitimate model of governance and co-responsibility.

7.2 Recommendations

To promote the sustainability of the results achieved:

Recommendation 1. For the FAO office in Colombia. It is recommended to continue supporting MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico in maintaining and strengthening the horizontal and trusting relationships built between communities and institutional actors, given that they constitute a fundamental element for sustainability in changing territorial contexts.

Recommendation 2. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico. To manage new sources of financing that allow for the continuity of ongoing actions and processes and to expand successful experiences, such as bioeconomy and sustainable forest management initiatives, which have contributed to consolidating the achievements made and generating income for communities.

For new similar projects:

Recommendation 3. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico. Ensure the early participation of ethnic communities in the design phase of new projects, as this strengthens their impact, consolidates local ownership and guarantees consistency with public policies. The application of the mosaic approach and intervention windows is fundamental to articulate conservation and sustainable production in large territories.

Recommendation 4. For the FAO office in Colombia, MinAmbiente and SIRAP Pacífico Institutionalizing flexibility and adaptive management mechanisms with clear protocols will allow sustaining processes in risk scenarios. For example, the use of letters of agreement (or other similar instruments) can be promoted as a tool for co-responsibility with ethnic communities by fostering effective inclusion, trust and ownership.

Recommendation 5. For the FAO office in Colombia and MinAmbiente. Replicate the co-execution model in future projects (provided that the donor's rules allow it), since the complementarity between technical and political aspects strengthens both the implementation of activities and the territorial impact. It is also recommended to use regional platforms, such as the Pacific SIRAP, to anchor processes in legitimate governance structures, facilitate institutional and community coordination, and ensure the sustainability of interventions.

Recommendation 6. For the FAO office in Colombia and MinAmbiente. Prioritize the strengthening of access to diversified markets, including short marketing circuits and local markets. To this end, it is suggested to establish commercial alliances with private actors, strengthen the company's own brands and promote product differentiation, in order to ensure competitive positioning. These actions will generate sustained income for communities and strengthen the long-term sustainability of bioeconomy initiatives.

7.3 Lessons learned and good practices

163. The use of innovative work and management approaches consolidated lessons learned that can be replicated in highly conflictive and bioculturally rich territories. Four pillars stand out: adaptive management, local capacity building, multi-sector and multi-stakeholder governance, and communication, which constitute strategic inputs to guide future interventions integrating conservation, sustainable development and social cohesion.
164. The lessons learned gathered during this evaluation correspond to proven and effective experiences that proved to generate positive results during project implementation. Their relevance lies in the fact that they constitute concrete references that could be replicated or scaled up in other contexts, since they offer practical solutions adapted to territories of high socio-environmental complexity. Presenting them in a systematic way makes the most innovative and effective contributions visible, and at the same time provides useful inputs for the design and management of future projects.

Lesson learned 1. Capacity building - Inclusive and multi-stakeholder mixed methodologies. The mixed training strategy -integrating diploma courses, leadership schools, technical courses, practical workshops and field schools, with participatory methodologies and facilitators from the territory- proved to be a winning practice for strengthening local capacities. The inclusion of community leaders as trainers and the cultural proximity of professionals from the territory generated networks of trust and legitimacy, reinforcing the appropriation of the contents and community commitment. This formula allowed knowledge to be translated into applicable actions, while generating trust, legitimacy and social cohesion between communities and institutions. Its effectiveness shows that replicating this model in other contexts can be key to ensuring ownership of the processes, equity in participation and sustainability of results. **(11. Knowledge, collaboration and learning)**

Lesson learned 2. Efficiency - Adaptive Management. The project's experience showed that in highly complex contexts, the capacity to adapt and, in particular, flexible responses to internal and external difficulties are critical factors to ensure the continuity of actions. The reorganization of activities, the virtualization of processes and the targeting of interventions proved to be cost-effective measures that should be incorporated into the design of projects in regions with high levels of conflict. Adaptive management not only mitigated risks, but also generated capabilities and lessons learned applicable to future projects. Inter-institutional alliances and community legitimacy were indispensable conditions for sustaining implementation in difficult-to-access territories, offering support in risk management and guaranteeing the security of the technical teams through the role of the Indigenous Reserves and Community Councils as local guarantors. **(2. Project management including financial and human resources issues).**

Lesson learned 3. Sustainability - Capabilities, institutions and financing. The sustainability of a project's results requires a comprehensive approach that combines strengthening community capacities, consolidating institutional frameworks, and guaranteeing long-term sources of financing. It was also learned that sustainability must be planned from the project formulation stage, incorporating clear exit strategies and institutional support mechanisms that transcend the duration of international financing. This approach helps to ensure the permanence of the achievements attained. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 4. Sustainability - Bioeconomy. The project consolidated a green business model based on three replicable pillars: i) early strengthening of markets to align production with demand, ii) continuous technical and organizational support to ensure community response capacity, and iii) building stable, trusting business relationships between producers and buyers. This model also strengthened organizational capacities and facilitated the generation of new sources of financing. Taken together, these elements demonstrated that their integration contributes to ensuring the economic and social

sustainability of the initiatives, becoming a reference for other projects that seek to promote the bioeconomy in diverse and complex territories. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 5. Sustainability. Promote co-responsibility schemes in new initiatives and provide sustainability to community activities to favor the appropriation and legitimacy of the processes. The strengthening of communication networks, together with the promotion of women and youth leadership, is a key factor in increasing the sustainability and protagonism of the communities in the medium and long term. **(13. Sustainability).**

Lesson learned 6. Implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System - Transparency and Accountability. The combination of accessible technology and clear technical standards made the system a benchmark of best practices for monitoring, accountability and knowledge management. The project developed an interactive M&E platform in *Power BI*, publicly accessible, that integrated indicators of results, outputs, risks and cross-cutting approaches such as gender. This tool improved transparency, facilitated consultation by different stakeholders and allowed for systematic monitoring of implementation. In addition, specific technical guidelines were applied to avoid double counting of indicators and to ensure methodological consistency in the generation of data. **(20. Monitoring and evaluation).**

Lesson learned 7. Implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System - Data for decision making. The generation of accessible, consistent and verifiable data makes the M&E system a key instrument for accountability and collective learning. The project demonstrated that having a solid monitoring system, based on *SMART* (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators, strengthens the credibility and usefulness of the results. The M&E system not only allowed for rigorous monitoring of progress and risks, but also established itself as a tool for timely decision making. **(20. Monitoring and evaluation).**

Lesson learned 8. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement - Role of ethnic communities. Working together with Community Councils and Indigenous Reserves is essential to achieve legitimacy and sustainability. Recognizing communities as active partners and not as beneficiaries makes it possible to build relationships of co-responsibility in implementation. Although multi-stakeholder management can be demanding in terms of time and effort, their contribution is decisive to give credibility to the processes. Experience shows that respect for the word and the building of trust are fundamental principles, together with the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) as an indispensable condition in ethnic territories. **(Stakeholders engagement/Indigenous Peoples/Local communities).**

Lesson learned 9. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement- Multi-sector and multi-stakeholder governance. The creation of coordination bodies that integrate communities, public institutions, the private sector and academia is a replicable learning process to consolidate governance in complex territories. These coordination spaces strengthen the legitimacy of the processes, allow the alignment of conservation and development agendas, and generate trust among actors with diverse interests. The co-responsibility achieved ensures more inclusive decisions, improves implementation efficiency and lays a solid foundation for the sustainability of results in the medium and long term. **(7. Stakeholders engagement).**

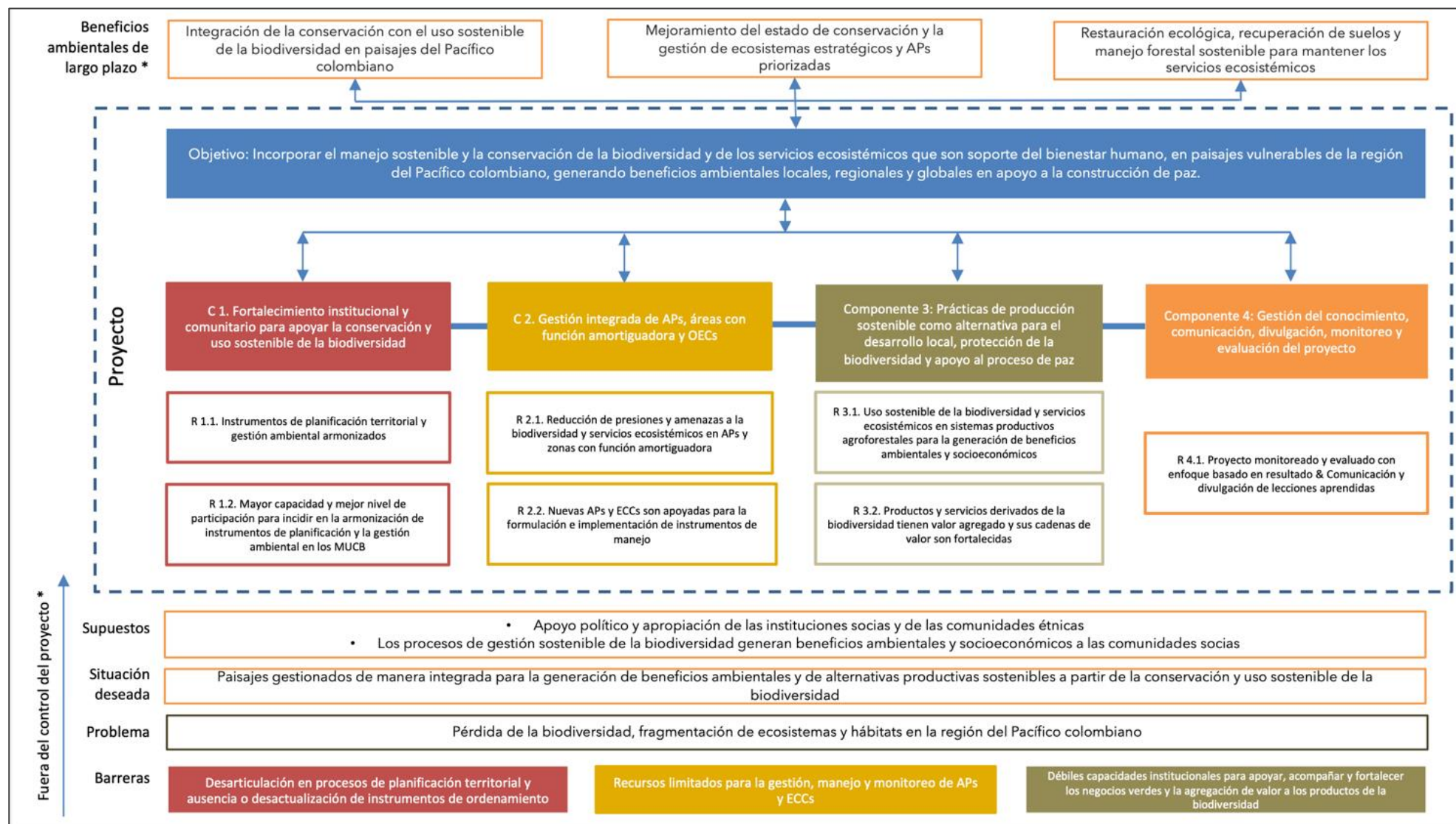
Lesson learned 10. Communication - Empowerment through communication. The project showed that strategic communication must be defined from the outset, incorporating both the visibility of institutional partners and the participation of ethnic communities in decision-making. Communication is not an accessory component, but a pillar for ownership and social cohesion, especially when community exchange and dissemination processes are promoted. In this sense, community communication was consolidated as an empowerment tool that allowed women, youth and local leaders to recognize their

voice in the process, strengthening the legitimacy of the results and the sustainability of the actions undertaken. **(12. Communication and outreach).**

Lesson learned 11. Gender and social inclusion - Operationalization of the differential gender approach. Experience has shown that integrating the differential approach from the design stage does not guarantee its full application during implementation. Effective mainstreaming requires specific plans, indicators and follow-up mechanisms to measure progress and make timely adjustments. Following the 2023 Mid-Term Evaluation, the more systematic adoption of the Gender Mainstreaming Plan strengthened the participation of women and youth in decision-making spaces, generating visible impacts on governance, community participation, and social cohesion. **(10. Gender equality).**

Lesson learned 12. Gender and social inclusion - Hiring with a differential ethnic approach. The application of an ethnic differential approach to the signing of letters of agreement between community partners and FAO, as a mechanism for contracting non-commercial services in territories with ethnic-territorial sovereignty, showed that adapting contracting mechanisms to the local context is key to strengthening governance, supporting the sustainability of results and improving efficiency in implementation. The transition of ethnic communities from a passive role as beneficiaries to implementing partners reflected a strengthening of their technical and administrative capacities, marking a structural change in the relationship between communities and institutions. **(10. Gender equality).**

Appendix 1. Representation of the Theory of Change validated during Mid Term Review



Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Criteria and dimensions to be assessed	Assessment questions	Assessment sub-questions	Indicators	Methods	Sources
RESULTS					
1. Relevance *	1. To what extent did project implementation respond to the needs and priorities of community and institutional partners?	1.1 How did project implementation respond to the environmental and development priorities of community and institutional partners (national, regional, local government, civil society organizations, private entities, the four FAO enhancements, focal areas and GEF operational program strategies)? 1.2 Was the project design appropriate to address the relevant priorities and needs and deliver the expected results? 1.3 Have there been any changes in the relevance of the project since its formulation, such as the adoption of new policies, plans or programs, that have affected it? Are the objectives and results still relevant?	- Degree to which the project is aligned with FAO, GEF and Colombian government priorities. - Extent to which the project responds to the needs of local stakeholders. - Degree of adaptive management of the project in the face of changes in the national political context.	Document review.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Strategic Framework, Country Program Framework and FAO strategic information. - GEF Strategy Documents. - National, regional and local strategies, instruments and policies.
2. Coherence *	2. Was the project approach coherent and adequate to address the reality of the Colombian Pacific and the MUCBs?	2.1 What approach(es) were adopted to address the specific environmental issues of the MUCBs and how consistent is it with those realities? (Internal coherence) 2.2 To what extent are the 4 project components, 7 outcomes and 21 outputs aligned with the project objectives? (Internal coherence) 2.3 To what extent was the implementation of the project articulated with other strategies developed by FAO, community and institutional partners in the MUCBs?	Evidence (examples) of synergies and complementarities with other interventions of FAO, project partner organizations, and other actors, and how these add value to the project and avoid duplication.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Documentation related to other interventions and projects. - Key players.

		(External coherence) 2.4 To what extent was the project able to generate synergies and complementarities with other initiatives implemented by external actors, avoiding duplication of efforts? (External coherence)			
3. Effectiveness *	3. To what extent has the project achieved its results and objectives?	3.1 Were there any unplanned or undesired positive or negative results? 3.2 To what extent were the results set out in the project results framework achieved? 3.3 To what extent did the project contribute to the consolidation of peace in the Colombian Pacific territories and specifically in the MUCBs where it was implemented? What specific actions were taken to facilitate this process?	Level of contribution of the project's activities and products to the achievement of the proposed results and objectives.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Technical products developed by the project. - Key players.
4. Progress towards impact	4. What significant direct or indirect changes can be attributed to the project in relation to biodiversity conservation, local capacity building and/or community well-being in the MUCB?		Extent to which the actions promoted by the project are contributing to the conservation of ecosystems within the MUCB.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Technical products developed by the project. - Key players.
5. Additionality *	5. What is the incremental value that the GEF grant has brought to the results achieved (in terms of innovative approaches, technologies, best practices, green business, etc.)?		- Project contribution to legal and/or regulatory changes. - Evidence of the project's contribution to improving the standard of living of the beneficiary groups.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Technical products developed by the project. - Key players.
6. Capacity building	6. To what extent did the capacity building activities contribute to the achievement of project goals, outcomes and sustainability?		Contribution of capacity-building activities to the achievement of project results.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Technical products developed by the project. - Reports and documents on capacity building processes. - Key players.

7. Co-financing *	7. To what extent did the materialized co-financing contribute to project results, reflecting ownership by stakeholders at the national, regional and local levels?		- Planned co-financing versus co-financing received. - Evidence (examples) of the effect of co-financing on project results.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR) - Partnerships and stakeholder Co-financing - Key players.
8. Efficiency *	8. To what extent was an efficient use of resources achieved in the implementation of the project?	8.1 To what extent did the project governance structure facilitate or hinder project implementation, timely resolution of problems and contribution to project objectives? 8.2 To what extent did the intervention modalities, institutional structure, resources and technical, operational and financial procedures facilitate or hinder the achievement of results? 8.3 How did the project respond to external (context) and internal (funding, scheduling, staffing, etc.) changes throughout the implementation cycle? (Adaptive Management)	- Relationship between resources (human, financial, technical and operational), results, products generated and time spent. - Degree of adaptive management of the project in the face of changes in the context, including administrative, operational, financial or managerial elements.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Technical products developed by the project. - Key players.
IMPLEMENTATION					
9. Implementation *	9. To what extent did FAO fulfill its role as Project Implementing Agency?	9.1 How were the risks associated with project implementation identified and managed?	- Level of technical assistance provided by FAO to monitor progress and technical quality of project actions and products. - Evidence (examples) of risk identification and implementation of corrective actions.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Documentation related to risk identification and management. - Key players.
EXECUTION					
10. Execution *	10. To what extent did FAO and MinAmbiente fulfill their role as co-executors of		Perceptions of the stakeholders interviewed on the functioning of the institutional structures and	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Documentation related to project management.

	the project?		organizations responsible for project implementation.	Focus groups.	Key players.
SUSTAINABILITY					
11. Sustainability *	11. Will the results and processes initiated by the project and its partners continue in the medium and long term after its implementation?	11.1 How did the implementation of the project contribute to the strengthening of systems, institutions and capacities in the territory, and how sustainable are the results achieved, particularly those derived from the training and capacity building plan?" 11.2 What are the main risks identified that could affect the sustainability of project results (financial, institutional, environmental, socio-political or other)? 11.3 Were opportunities identified, anticipated and adequately planned for to ensure the continuity of the positive effects generated by the project implementation, including a project closure strategy or plan? 11.4 How did the project contribute to strengthening systems, institutions and capacities as a means to contribute to sustainability?	- Evidence (examples) of the sustainability of the results achieved. - Evidence (examples) of risks that could affect the sustainability of project achievements. - Level of ownership by beneficiaries, institutions and other key stakeholders of the results and initiatives developed within the framework of the project.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Documentation related to project management. - Documentation on new related initiatives. - Key players.
M&E SYSTEM DESIGN					
12. M&E system design *	12. To what extent was the design of the M&E system or plan adequate and functional to effectively monitor the implementation of the project?	12.1 Did the indicators used make it possible to monitor the results of the project? Does the project results framework have specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators?	Evidence of the existence and operation of an M&E plan or system.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Project M&E plan and/or system. - Key players.
M&E SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION					
13 M&E system Implementation*	13. Did the M&E system or plan work as planned?	13.1 Did the M&E system or plan collect the information used in a systematic, timely and methodologically sound	Evidence (examples) of adaptive management based on information	- Document review. - Semi-structured	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Project M&E plan and/or system.

		manner? 13.2 To what extent was the information generated by the M&E system or plan used for timely decision making as well as to foster learning during project implementation?	generated by the M&E system. Evidence of learning based on information generated by the M&E system.	interviews.	Key players.
OTHER DIMENSIONS TO BE ASSESSED					
14. Project partnership and stakeholder engagement	14 How was the participation of civil society, ethnic communities (indigenous peoples and black communities), peasant communities and the private sector in the design and implementation of the project?	14.1 To what extent did the various stakeholder groups take ownership of the project and what was the effect of this ownership? 14.2 What were the main characteristics of the collaboration between FAO and its partners during project implementation? To what extent was the configuration of the implementation model adequate, cost-efficient and sustainable?	Evidence of the participation and empowerment of partners and other stakeholders in the execution of the project.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Documentation related to project management. - Key players.
15. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	15.1 How did the project evaluate, document and disseminate its results, lessons learned and experiences? 15.2 How likely are the communication products and activities to contribute to the sustainability and scaling up of project results?		- Evidence of how the project documents and shares its results, learning and experiences. - Evidence of new initiatives based on the results, lessons learned and experiences of the project.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Communication and knowledge management strategy and products generated by the project. - Key players.
16. Social and environmental standards	16. To what extent was the social and environmental context considered during project design and implementation?	16.1 Were mitigation measures adopted (if any) adequate and implemented according to the project's Environmental and Social Safeguards framework?	Evidence of implementation of environmental and social strategies and safeguards.	- Document review. - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus groups.	- PRODOC. - Project reports (PIR/PPR). - Project management documents - Project risk management plan. - FAO Environmental and Social Framework. - Key players.

17. Gender and social inclusion	17. To what extent was the differential approach - including gender, ethnicity, age and other equity dimensions - integrated into the project design and implementation?	17.1 Did the project achieve the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the decision-making processes related to the actions implemented in the MUCBs? 17.2 What specific actions were carried out to encourage the participation of women and youth in project activities in the MUCBs?	• Level of participation of men and women in the training and implementation of project activities. • Evidence (examples) of women's participation in project decision-making.	• Document review. • Semi-structured interviews. • Focus groups.	• PRODOC. • Project reports (PIR/PPR). • Project management documents • FAO Gender Equality Policy. • Key players.
18. Ethnic communities.	18. To what extent did the project ensure effective participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, including the implementation of activities?	18.1 To what extent were ethnic communities informed, consulted and involved in the decision-making processes prior to project implementation? (Prior Consultation - Free, Prior and Informed Consent)." 18.2 To what extent were the territorial planning processes and national, departmental and local policies supported by the project inclusive and integrated all stakeholders, including ethnic communities, women, men and youth? (Inclusion) 18.3 How were cultural differences between project partners addressed and managed?	• Strategies for the participation of black communities and indigenous peoples in project activities. • Perceptions of the actors of black communities and indigenous peoples on the FPIC process.	• Document review. • Semi-structured interviews. • Focus groups.	• PRODOC. • Project reports (PIR/PPR). • Project management documents. • FAO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. • FAO Manual on FPIC. • Key players.
19. Lessons learned	19.1 What are the main lessons learned from the project results and experiences? 19.2 What were the best practices used (or generated) during project implementation?		• Learnings identified and documented. • Evidence (examples) of innovations and best practices identified.	• Document review. • Semi-structured interviews. • Focus groups.	• PRODOC. • Project reports (PIR/PPR). • Communication and knowledge management strategy and products generated by the project. • Key players.

* Criteria to be assessed according to the dimensions of analysis given by the GEF.

Appendix 3. Results matrix with additionality analysis

Results chain	Indicators	Objective at the end of the project	Means of verification	Results achieved	Percentage of progress (%)*	Additionality**
Component 1. Component 1. Institutional strengthening to support the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Colombian Pacific						
Result 1.1 The territorial and environmental management planning instruments are harmonized with the instruments developed by black communities and indigenous peoples to safeguard biological and cultural diversity and ecosystem services, leading to an overall reduction of potential threats from development-oriented activities.	Target area of the project (hectares - ha) to reduce current and potential pressures from competing land uses and land uses that degrade forests.	44,084,957 ha (marine area: 34,762,783 ha; continental area: 9,322,174 ha), corresponding to the Pacific SIRAP management area (indirect target landscape), of which at least 1,061,655 ha (total direct area).	Approved planning instruments. GEF-7 Tracking Tool indicators updated at the midpoint and end of the project.	2,891,313 ha were characterized and mapped corresponding to the 5 prioritized MUCBs. From this area, 1,182,721 ha were selected as operational windows focused on the implementation of activities. In coordination with WWF Colombia, a socio-ecosystemic connectivity model was consolidated.	89.80%	The operational windows where the implementation of activities was focused covered an additional 121,066 ha to the planned area.
	Hectares (ha) of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation outside PAs that apply guidelines to be included in planning instruments, under improved management.	210,193 ha of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation outside PAs.		282,883 ha of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation outside PAs apply guidelines and are managed to be included in planning instruments under sustainable	85%	The project covered an additional 72,690 hectares of strategic importance for biodiversity, outside of protected areas, with guidelines applied for their inclusion in planning instruments and

				management through Community Councils. The document "Guidelines for the harmonization of land use planning instruments with Black and Indigenous Peoples' own instruments and the development plans of the Peasant Reserve Zones" is in the revision phase, prior to its approval and publication. The guidelines are expected to guide the municipalities and departments of the Colombian Pacific in the harmonization of their land-use planning instruments with the ethnic territories.		their better management. The document Guidelines for harmonization... is in the revision phase prior to its approval and publication.
Result 1.2 Improved capacity and participation of stakeholders to support the implementation of harmonized planning and	Increased management capacity of SIRAP Pacifico, as measured by the GEF Capacity Development Scorecard.	Capabilities in SIRAP Pacific: Regional Technical Committee 44%.	GEF capacity development scorecard updated at the project's mid-term and final points.	The Regional Technical Committee's capacity development scorecard was updated for EF, yielding the following results: 33 points equivalent to 71% , significantly exceeding	100%	With 33 points (71%), the Regional Technical Committee far exceeded the initial goal of 20 points (44%), generating an additional 13 points,

environmental management in the MUCB.				the target of 20 points (44%).		equivalent to an increase of 27%.
---------------------------------------	--	--	--	--------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------

Component 2. Integrated PA management, buffer zones and Community Conservation CCA.						
Result 2.1 Reduced pressures and threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services in 581,859 ha of existing PA and their buffer zones.	Protected Area (PA) management effectiveness as measured by the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT).	Katíos NP: 76	METT updated at the midpoint and end of the project.	Katíos NP: 78	100.00%	The result (78%) exceeded the target of 76%, generating an additional 2 percentage points in management effectiveness.
		Farallones National Park: 77	Reports analyzing multitemporal changes in land cover.	Farallones National Park: 81	100.00%	Addition of 4 percentage points.
		Tatamá NP: 78	Updated GEF 7 core indicators.	Tatamá NP: 77	98.70%	
		Munchique NP: 78		Munchique NP: 73	93.60%	
		DNMI Cabo Manglares Bajo Mira and Frontera: 48		DNMI Cabo Manglares Bajo Mira and Frontera: 62	100.00%	Addition of 14 percentage points.
		RFPR Rio Bravo: 50		RFPR Rio Bravo: 50	100.00%	

Result 2.2 New PA and ACC receive support for their management and implementation plan.	Area (ha) of new PAs in process of declaration (3 public PAs)	258,603 ha	Proposals for the establishment of new PAs.	89,967 ha of newly declared protected areas: - 11,599 ha Kokoi Euja Regional Protected Forest Reserve - Golden Frog Territory (Santa Rosa Street) (PIR 2022) - 39,792 ha DNMI Serranía de los Paraguas (Valle del Cauca) (PIR 2022). - 18,127 ha of the Páramo del Duende Regional Natural Park (Valle del Cauca) (PIR, 2023). - 18,115 ha of the Alto Calima DRMI (Valle del Cauca) (PIR 2024).... • 2,334 ha of the DRMI Subxerophytic Enclave Atuncela (Valle del Cauca) (PIR 2024). 2025 - Processes for declaring new Protected Areas (PA): 1) Los Relictos de Caoba - 66.691 ha and 2) Serranía de Los Paraguas - 191.581 ha. With support from CORPARIEN and CODECHOCÓ. Both	80%	Declaration of two new PAs in process: 1) Los Relictos de Caoba - 66.691 ha and 2) Serranía de Los Paraguas - 191.581 ha. The total accumulated area amounts to 348,239 ha, which includes 89,636 ha additional to what was planned, resulting from the sum of the new areas in process and those previously declared.
			Official bulletin.			
			Basic GEF-7 indicators updated at the intermediate and final points of the project.			

				areas are located in the department of Chocó.		
	Area (ha) sustainably managed through Community Conservation Areas (CCAs).	210,193 ha	Project monitoring reports. Basic GEF-7 indicators updated at the intermediate and final points of the project.	282,883 ha of strategic importance for biodiversity conservation apply sustainable management guidelines. 7 ACCs are included.	85%	This result represents an additional 72,690 ha over the planned area.

Component 3: Sustainable production practices as alternatives for local development, biodiversity protection and support for the peace process						
Result 3.1 Biodiversity and ecosystem services are used sustainably in forest production systems and generate multiple	Area (ha) under sustainable production systems.	10,000 ha	Field reports. Project reports (PIR, mid-term and final evaluation).	15,632 ha under sustainable production systems	100%	This result represents an additional 5,632 ha over the planned area.

environmental and socio-economic benefits.	Proportion of SFM initiatives and sustainable production systems led by women.	40%	Survey results made available to producers.	Five (5) of the 12 Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) initiatives and sustainable production systems supported by the project are led by women, which corresponds to 41.7%.	100%	Target exceeded by 1.7%.
			Project reports (PIR, mid-term and final evaluation).			
Result 3.2 Products and services derived from biodiversity have added value and their value chains are duly strengthened.	Percentage change in average annual VAU revenue over baseline	Average annual income of COP 102,948,450 (10% increase).	Income evaluation results.	COP 156,398,242 average annual income from VAUs by 2024. This represents an increase of 67.1%, significantly exceeding the 10% target.	100%	A 67.1% increase in revenues was achieved, exceeding the 10% target by 57.1 percentage points.
			Household surveys.			

Component 4: Knowledge management and project M&E						
Result 4.1 Midterm Evaluation Reports (MER) and Final Evaluation (FE).	Progress in the implementation of the project.	100%	Implementation Reports (PIRs).	6 Steering Committees, 8 Technical Committees and 30 Mosaic Technical Committees have been held.	90.50%	
			Project Progress Reports (PPRs).			
			Midterm Evaluation Reports (MER) and Final Evaluation (FE).	In addition, the following have been prepared: 5 Project Implementation Reports (PIR), 11 Project Progress Reports (PPR) and 60 monthly dashboards. As of August 2025, the budget execution is 94.60%. Actions continue to be developed to advance in the execution of activities. More than 112% of the committed cofinancing has been mobilized.		

Appendix 4. GEF Evaluation Criteria Scoring Table

GEF Criteria/Dimensions	Classification:	Summary comments
A. RESULTS (relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency)	HS	The project demonstrated high relevance and coherence by aligning with the priorities of the FAO, the GEF and the national policy framework, responding to the needs of community and institutional partners, articulating a participatory and culturally appropriate approach, and complementing other relevant interventions. Furthermore, it achieved 94.20% of the expected results with efficiency and a cost-effective targeting strategy within the MUCB.
A1. Relevance.	HS	The project is highly aligned with FAO and GEF strategic priorities and the Colombian policy framework. In addition to responding to the priorities and needs of community and institutional partners.
A2. Coherence.	HS	The project's components and results were aligned with its objective, through a participatory and culturally appropriate approach (internal consistency). The project has an important connection and complementarity with other interventions carried out by community and institutional partners and other key actors (external coherence).
A3. Effectiveness	HS	The project achieved 94.20% of the expected results, surpassing several of the programmed goals. It is considered that all outcomes and targets will be met prior to project closure. The results achieved are relevant for the country, the Colombian Pacific region and especially for community and institutional partners.
A4. Efficiency	HS	The achievement of results has been timely and efficient, despite the delays experienced in the first years of implementation. The project's governance structures favored efficiency by facilitating coordination between partners and actions aimed at meeting objectives. Targeting intervention windows within the MUCBs was a cost-effective strategy.
B. SUSTAINABILITY (financial, socio-political, institutional and governance, environmental dimensions, including risks to sustainability).	ML	The project laid a solid foundation for sustainability by strengthening community, business, institutional and academic capacities. There are financial, institutional, political and security risks to sustainability, which could have a negative effect on the continuity of the benefits achieved.
C. IMPLEMENTATION	HS	Project preparation, implementation, technical support and supervision were sound and timely. Relevant GEF and FAO policies were applied. The MTR recommendations were implemented.
D. EXECUTION	HS	The implementation of project activities was timely and generated high quality products and results. The relevant policies of the GEF and FAO were applied, despite the challenges inherent to the territory.
M&E Plan	HS	The design of the M&E system was sound, adequate and functional. Having specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators made it possible to provide structured and rigorous monitoring of implementation.
Implementation of the M&E system	HS	The M&E system worked as planned, gathering information in a systematic and timely manner, with a sound methodology that facilitated implementation monitoring, decision making and learning. The Power BI platform facilitated transparency and

GEF Criteria/Dimensions	Classification:	Summary comments
		public access to information, but it was not widely used by actors outside of FAO.
Overall project appraisal	HS	

Appendix 5. GEF qualification scheme and descriptors

PROJECT PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

As mentioned in the methodology, the overall rating of the project outcome will be based on the following criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

Table A presents the performance¹³ descriptors for each specific rating. In most cases, actual performance may not completely match any of the rating descriptions. Therefore, a rating will be based on the description that provides the best fit based on the evidence. When the available evidence is insufficient to provide the performance, the performance will be rated as unable to assess. Performance will be rated on a six-point scale.

Table A. Project performance assessment

Ratings	Description
<i>Highly satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>Results exceed objectives and are highly relevant, consistent and cost-effective.</i>
<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>The level of results achieved meets the objectives. The results are relevant, consistent and cost-effective.</i>
<i>Moderately satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>The level of results achieved was generally close to the objectives. Most of the objectives were met or almost met, but some were not. The results are relevant, consistent and cost-effective.</i>
<i>Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)</i>	<i>In general, the level of results achieved is lower than the objectives, although some results were substantially achieved. The results are generally relevant, but not sufficient given the costs or, alternatively, generally cost-effective, but not adequately relevant and consistent.</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>The expected results were not achieved, or the achievement was substantially less than expected, and/or the results achieved are not relevant or consistent. Alternatively, the result was not cost-effective compared to the alternatives.</i>
<i>Highly unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>A negligible level of results was achieved or the project had substantial negative consequences, which outweighed its benefits.</i>
<i>Unable to assess (UA)</i>	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of achievement of the results.</i>

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability will be assessed taking into account the likelihood of occurrence of financial, socio-political, institutional, governance and environmental risks. The assessor may also take into account other risks that may affect sustainability. Overall sustainability will be assessed using a six-point scale, as detailed in Table B.

¹³ The 2022 final draft of the Guidelines for GEF Agencies for Conducting Final Evaluations of Full-Size Projects features new descriptors reported here.

Table B. Sustainability ratings

Rating	Description
<i>Highly likely (HL)</i>	There is a negligible risk to the continuation of benefits and, based on progress to date, the long-term objectives of the project are expected to be achieved.
<i>Likely (L)</i>	Either there is a negligible risk to the continuation of benefits or there are some risks, but the magnitude of their effect is too small or the probability of their materialization is too small. Overall, the net benefits of the project are likely to continue.
<i>Moderately Likely (ML)</i>	Some risks to sustainability exist and may have some effect on the continuation of benefits if they materialize. However, the probability of materialization of these risks is low. Net income is more likely to continue than to decline.
<i>Moderately unlikely (MU)</i>	There are significant risks to sustainability. The effect on earnings continuation would be material if these risks materialize and the likelihood of materialization of these risks is significant. Overall, the net benefits of the project are likely to decrease.
<i>Unlikely (U)</i>	Due to the high risks, the net benefits of the project are unlikely to continue to accrue, and the progress made so far is likely to be lost. The project is unlikely to achieve its long-term objectives.
<i>Highly unlikely (HU)</i>	The project is not expected to achieve its long-term objectives. The principal risks have either already materialized and have stopped the accumulation of net income or have a high probability of materializing soon and will stop the accumulation of net income when they materialize.
<i>Unable to assess (UA)</i>	It is not possible to assess the expected impact and magnitude of sustainability risks.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

The quality of implementation and execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation refers to the role and responsibilities performed by the GEF Agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of implementation refers to the roles and responsibilities played by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF Agencies and implemented the funded activities on the ground (this could be FAO itself with co-executing partners or an implementing partner identified by an FAO Operational Agreement). Performance will be rated on a six-point scale.

Table C. Implementation and execution ratings

Ratings	Implementation	Execution
Highly satisfactory (HS)	The performance of the GEF Agency was exemplary. Project preparation and implementation were solid. The Agency ensured that relevant GEF policies were applied in project preparation and implementation. Project oversight was strong: the agency identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The agency ensured that project implementation remained on track and that project activities were completed on time.	The performance of the executing agency was exemplary. The implementation of project activities was timely and of high quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were met. GEF Agency guidance was followed and corrective action, if necessary, was taken promptly. Measures were taken to mitigate sustainability risks and measures were taken to support project monitoring. Project activities were completed on time.

Ratings	Implementation	Execution
Satisfactory (S)	Performance met expectations and had no notable weaknesses. Project preparation and implementation were sound, and relevant GEF policies were applied. The GEF Agency monitored the project well: it identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The GEF Agency ensured that project implementation was on track.	Performance met expectations and had no notable weaknesses. The implementation of project activities was timely and of high quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were met. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed. Measures were taken to mitigate risks to the sustainability of project results.
Moderately satisfactory (MS)	Performance had some weaknesses, but met expectations overall. Project preparation and implementation were adequate and relevant GEF policies were applied, although there are some areas of weakness. Project supervision was adequate: the GEF Agency identified and addressed emerging concerns, although some may have been inadequately addressed. Project implementation experienced minor delays and some activities may have been abandoned.	Performance had some weaknesses, but met expectations overall. The implementation of project activities was generally timely, but with some instances of delays. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were applied, although some minor errors may also have been noted. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed and the problems were resolved. There were some areas of improvement in execution.
Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)	Performance did not meet expectations, although there were some areas of solid performance. The preparation and implementation of the project had weaknesses, although they were not too serious. Project supervision was somewhat weak; although the GEF Agency identified most of the emerging concerns, many remained unaddressed or were inadequately addressed. Project implementation was delayed and some activities were abandoned or scaled down due to problems that were largely within the control of the GEF Agency.	Performance did not meet expectations, although there were some areas of solid performance. The implementation of project activities was delayed and the capacities of the executing agency significantly limited project implementation. Several errors in adherence to GEF policies and requirements were noted. In general, the GEF Agency's guidelines were followed and problems were solved, but such actions were generally not timely. There are several areas for improvement in execution.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Performance did not meet expectations. Project preparation and implementation were weak. Project oversight was weak: emerging concerns were not identified in a timely manner and were either not addressed or inadequately addressed. Activities were not implemented on time or were not carried out. Project implementation was delayed and several activities were abandoned or scaled down.	Performance did not meet expectations. Implementation of project activities was delayed and at least some activities were abandoned due to factors largely within the control of the executing agency. Many errors in compliance with GEF policies and requirements were observed. The GEF Agency's guidance was either not implemented or was implemented with considerable delay.
Highly unsatisfactory (HU)	The performance had severe shortcomings. The GEF Agency mismanaged the implementation of the project and its supervision was poor. Emerging concerns were not identified in time, including those that should have been obvious. Although cases of mismanagement were discovered, no corrective actions were taken. Project activities were poorly implemented and several had to be abandoned.	The performance had severe shortcomings. There were several cases of mismanagement on the part of the executing agency. Emerging concerns were not identified in time, including those that should have been obvious. Most of the activities were poorly executed, experienced delays and had reduced activities. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were not applied.
Unable to assess (UA)	The information available is not sufficient to allow performance rating.	The information available is not sufficient to allow performance rating.

MONITORING, FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

The quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of: i) quality of the project M&E plan design and ii) quality of project M&E during implementation. The following table presents the relevant descriptors for each rating.

Table D. M&E Valuations

Ratings	M&E Plan	Implementation of M&E
<i>Highly satisfactory (HS)</i>	<i>The M&E plan is a good practice and has no weaknesses. Its alignment with the project's ToC is robust. Complete baseline data has been provided. The specified indicators are appropriate and the arrangements for implementing the plan are adequate. Overall, the M&E plan exceeds expectations and is exemplary.</i>	<i>The implementation of the M&E plan was excellent. Weaknesses in the M&E plan, if present, were promptly addressed. M&E activities were carried out in a timely manner, and M&E data were used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation exceeded expectations and was exemplary.</i>
<i>Satisfactory (S)</i>	<i>The M&E plan is sound and has no or only minor weaknesses. Its alignment with the project's ToC is robust. The baseline data provided or its collection is planned at the beginning of the project. The specified indicators were appropriate and the arrangements for implementing the M&E plan were adequate. The plan met expectations.</i>	<i>Implementation of the M&E plan was generally strong. Deficiencies in M&E were addressed in a timely manner. M&E activities were carried out in a timely manner, and M&E data were used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation met expectations.</i>
<i>Moderately satisfactory (MS)</i>	<i>The M&E plan is generally sound. Its alignment with the project's ToC is robust. The specified indicators were appropriate and the arrangements for implementing the M&E plan were adequate. There were areas where the M&E plan could be strengthened, but overall the plan was adequate.</i>	<i>Implementation of the M&E plan was generally strong, with some weaknesses. In general, the shortcomings in M&E were addressed, although some deficiencies persisted. Some M&E activities were delayed. M&E data were used for reporting, but had little use for improving project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation met expectations with some areas of underperformance.</i>
<i>Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)</i>	<i>The M&E plan is weak overall, although it has strengths in some areas. Alignment with the project ToC is weak. The specified indicators are generally appropriate, but additional indicators are required to adequately capture project results or the arrangements for collecting data on the indicators are not adequate. The plan needs several improvements to meet expectations.</i>	<i>Implementation of the M&E plan was weak or did not address weaknesses in the original plan. Most M&E activities were completed, and some were suspended or delayed. M&E data were not reported in a timely manner: there is little evidence to suggest that the data were used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation did not meet expectations, although there are some areas of adequate performance.</i>

Ratings	M&E Plan	Implementation of M&E
<i>Unsatisfactory (U)</i>	<i>The M&E plan had serious shortcomings. Alignment with the project ToC is weak. No baseline data is provided nor is there any indication that baseline data would be collected at the start of the project. Indicators do not adequately address project outcomes and other results; relevant indicators have not been specified for several outcomes. There are gaps in the arrangements for the implementation of the M&E plan. No or inadequate budget has been provided for the M&E system.</i>	<i>Implementation of the M&E plan was weak or did not address weaknesses in the original plan. Several M&E activities were abandoned or incomplete. The data collection methodology was not sound. M&E data were not reported in a timely manner: there is little evidence to suggest that the data were used to improve project implementation. M&E implementation did not meet expectations.</i>
<i>Highly unsatisfactory (HU)</i>	<i>No M&E plan has been prepared.</i>	<i>No or insignificant M&E activities were implemented, apart from conducting the project evaluation.</i>
<i>Unable to assess (UA)</i>	<i>It cannot be evaluated because the project documents are not available.</i>	<i>It cannot be evaluated as the final evaluation does not adequately cover M&E implementation.</i>

Appendix 6. Persons interviewed

Name and surname	Position/Role in the project	Organization/Location
Adriana Arcos	Implementing partner of component 3	Corporación Biocomercio
Alexander Gaviria	Graduate researcher and trainer	Universidad Javeriana
Ana María García	International Affairs Office	MinAmbiente
Andrés Carmona	Director of environmental management	CVC
Beatriz Henao	Administrative professional	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Camila Salazar	Planning Advisory Office	National Natural Parks
Carolina Torres	Professional protected and conservation areas	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Catalina Gaviria	Professional nature tourism	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Celmira Castillo	Founding Partner	Raíces del Manglar
Claudia Marcela Ayala	Professional communication	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Daniela Vargas	Representative	Chocolates Tumaco
Diana Isabel Zúñiga	Valle del Cauca Regional	National Natural Parks
Diego Gonzalez	Cacique of the Indigenous Resguardo	Arquí Indigenous Reservation
Francisco Narváez	Institutional and community strengthening coordinator	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Fredy Caicedo	Prosecutor Community Council	Consejo Comunitario Bajo Mira y Frontera
Harlenson Pinilla	Katíos National Park Director	National Natural Parks
Hellen Caravallí	Founding Partner	Raíces del Manglar
Jaime Vasquez	MUCB Local Technical Supervisor	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Jeferson Quinto	Member of the Community Council	Cacarica River Community Council
José Fernando Mejía	Professional monitoring and evaluation	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
José Gómez	Implementing partner of component 3	Corporación Biocomercio

José Sánchez	Representative	Invemar
Juan Fernando Pertúz	International Affairs Office	MinAmbiente
Julio Cesar Rodríguez	SIRAP Pacífico Delegate	CRC
Lady Paz	Professional Forest Management	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Lorenzo Campos	GEF RLC <i>project task manager</i> & GTO	FAO
Luis Fernando Gomez	Pacific Region Coordinator	WWF
Luis Martinez	Representative	Chocolates Tumaco
Maria Claudia Torres	Researcher	Alexander von Humbolt Institute
María Fernanda Villarreal	Regional director and technical delegate SIRAP	Corponariño
María Robertina Sevillano	Founding Partner	Raíces del Manglar
Mauricio Bastidas	SIRAP Technical Delegate	Corponariño
Olivio Bisbiscus	Delegate of the Gran Sábalo Indigenous Reservation	Resguardo Indígena Awa Gran Sábalo
Omar Melo	MFS Researcher and Trainer	University of Tolima
Oscar Alzate	Project coordinator	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Pablo Coymen	Director of the cooperative	Coagropacífico
Rubén Darío Guerrero	Directorate of Forestry and Biodiversity	MinAmbiente
Samny Brito	Missionary professional Katíos Caoba	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO
Silvia Magnolia Ordoñez	Founding partner and legal representative	Raíces del Manglar
Victor Quiñones	Director of the cooperative	Coagropacífico
Yesid Orlando Medina	Geographic information systems professional	UMP Pacífico Biocultural - FAO

Appendix 7. GEF co-financing table

Name of co-financier	Type of co-financier	Co-financing at the beginning of the project **. (USD)			Materialized co-financing at final project evaluation (USD)		
		In kind	Cash	Total	In kind	Cash	Total
MinAmbiente	National government	1,196,757		1,196,757	5,924,765		5,924,765
PNN		1,548,715		1,548,715	389,422		389,422
IIAP	Research Institutes	484,838		484,838	2,341,503		2,341,503
INVEMAR		41,143	106,800		41,143	106,800	147,943
Gobernación de Nariño - Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development	Regional governments	26,227	504,823		569,657	3,475,130	4,044,787
Governor's Office of Nariño - Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development		4,189,000		4,189,00			
Government of Chocó		72,012	96,833				
CARDER	Regional environmental authorities	274,264	135,824				
CVC			5,871,918	5,871,918		5,718,902	5,718,902
CRC					1,132,692		1,132,692
CORPONARIÑO		93,429	6,546,997*			14,037,568	14,037,568
CODECHOCÓ			3,547,790*	3,547,790			
CC Mayor del Alto San Juan - ASOCASAN	Community organizations and black communities	170,010		170,010			
CC of the Cacarica River Basin - Choco		118,748		118,748			
Resguardo Comunidad La Sierpe Resguardo Calle Santa Rosa		40,500		40,500			
CC del Bajo Mira y Frontera		157,611		157,611			
Sustainable BioTrade Corporation - CBS Colombia	Non-Governmental Organizations	395,926		395,926	204,079		204,079
BIOINNOVA		731,768		731,768	40,482		40,482

San Cipriano Foundation		108,488		108,488	184,374		184,374
Tropic Foundation				219,329	219,329		219,329
Ecohabitat		247,628		247,628	312,247		312,247
UNIDO	United Nations Agencies	800,000	2,423,765*				
FAO		510,000	1,200,000*		50,000	471,733	521,733
TOTAL		10,959,436	20,434,750	31,394,186	11,409,693	23,810,134	35,219,826

* Grant

** Confirmed upon approval by the GEF CEO.

Appendix 8. OED validation system

GEF criteria requiring qualification	Rating assigned by the evaluation team	Rating assigned by the OED	OED Comments
A. RESULTS	HS	HS	The rating coincides with the average of the ratings assigned and validated in A1, A2, A3 and A4. Therefore, OED validates the "Highly Satisfactory" rating for the project results.
A1. Relevance.	HS	HS	The report demonstrates the project's strong alignment with the country's current environmental and development priorities, GEF priority areas and operational strategies, the FAO Country Programming Framework, the mandates of the implementing partners, and the needs and priorities of the intended beneficiaries. Therefore, OED validates the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" in relation to the relevance of the project.
A2. Coherence.	HS	HS	The report indicates strong internal coherence. It also provides evidence of an important connection and complementarity between the project and other interventions carried out by community and institutional partners and other key actors. Therefore, OED validates the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" for project coherence.
A3. Effectiveness	HS	HS	The report presents the profile of a project that achieved its expected results. The OED validates the "Highly Satisfactory" rating for the effectiveness of the project.
A4. Efficiency	HS	S	The evaluation explains how results have been delivered in a timely and efficient manner, with an adequate governance structure that facilitated the exchange between project partners and FAO. However, there are also delays in the first years of implementation and administrative and financial bottlenecks. The report states that these were addressed; it does not directly explain the impact they had on the project. In any case, it can be deduced that these were minimal. OED considers that the evaluation of this criterion is more in line with a "Satisfactory" rating, according to the GEF descriptors.
B. SUSTAINABILITY	ML	ML	The evidence provided by the evaluator describes a situation in which the project laid a solid foundation for sustainability, especially by strengthening community, business, institutional and academic capacities. There are financial, institutional, political, and security risks to sustainability. The project anticipated some of them and promoted closure strategies and mitigation mechanisms that favor the continuity of community

			and institutional processes. For this reason, the OED confirms the rating of "Moderately Likely".
C. IMPLEMENTATION	HS	HS	The evaluation commends the implementation performance and provides evidence to support its findings. Therefore, the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" is confirmed by OED.
D. EXECUTION	HS	HS	The evaluation praises the execution performance, notwithstanding the difficulties inherent to the territory, and provides evidence to support its findings. Therefore, the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" is confirmed by OED.
M&E Plan	HS	HS	The report provides evidence of the establishment of a good monitoring and evaluation system, with SMART indicators that allowed for structured and rigorous monitoring of implementation. Therefore, the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" is confirmed by OED.
Implementation of the M&E system	HS	HS	The evaluation explains that the monitoring and follow-up system worked as planned and that the information generated was used as input for decision-making and learning processes. Therefore, the rating of "Highly Satisfactory" is confirmed by OED.
Overall project appraisal	HS	HS	The overall assessment of the project is consistent with the average of the ratings assigned to the criteria evaluated.

Legend:

All criteria except sustainability

Highly satisfactory (HS)

Satisfactory (S)

Moderately satisfactory (MS)

Moderately unsatisfactory (MU)

Unsatisfactory (U)

Highly unsatisfactory (HU)

Unable to assess (UA)

Sustainability

Highly likely (HL)

Likely (L)

Moderately Likely (ML)

Moderately unlikely (MU)

Unlikely (U)

Highly unlikely (HU)

Unable to assess (UA)