

MIDTERM EVALUATION (MTE) OF THE GEF/CI PROGRAM “CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN PRIORITY LANDSCAPES OF OAXACA AND CHIAPAS”

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Final Report

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ACRONYMS

ADVC	Areas Designated for Voluntary Conservation (by its acronym in Spanish)
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CI	Conservation International
CONANP	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (by its acronym in Spanish)
CUCOS	United Coffee Growers of the Coast (by its acronym in Spanish)
FCCF	Forestry and Climate Change Fund
FONCET	Fondo El Triunfo (by its acronym in Spanish)
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ILM	Integrated Landscape Management
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OET	Ecological Land Use Plan (by its acronym in Spanish)
PA	Protected Area
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PIS	Priority Intervention Sites
PMU	Project Management Unit
SADER	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (by its acronym in Spanish)
SEMAEDES	Ministry of the Environment, State of Oaxaca (by its acronym in Spanish)
SEMAHN	Ministry of the Environment, State of Chiapas (by its acronym in Spanish)
SEMARNAT	Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (by its acronym in Spanish)
SHCP	Ministry of Finance (by its acronym in Spanish)
SLS	Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes
SLV	Sustainable Landscape Ventures
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCIRI	Union of Indigenous Communities of the Isthmus Region (by its acronym in Spanish)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Mid-Term Evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the project “Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas” (GEF ID: 9445) during its first three years of implementation. This project is implemented by Conservation International, with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas and Conservation International Mexico, A.C. as Executing Partners, with the objective of strengthening the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Mexico’s National System of Protected Areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas. The evaluation was carried out between July and November 2021 following a structured process of data collection and analysis, which included key informant interviews and a review of project documents. Data collection was carried out remotely given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions

Relevance

- The Project Document clearly and specifically identifies the problem to be addressed, and this is relevant to project stakeholders. In turn, the project’s intervention model is relevant to address the identified problem, as it bridges existing gaps between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods by introducing a focus on market access at the landscape level. However, there have been challenges to ensure ownership of this intervention model.
- The project is aligned to the focus of the current Government of Mexico on supporting sustainable rural livelihoods by linking conservation with a market-orientated value chain approach. Likewise, it is consistent with the priorities set out in GEF-6 programming, and with the priorities of CI both in Mexico and globally, given an increased focus on sustainable landscape management.
- The projects’ results framework clearly sets out the overall logic of intervention, but is beset by a confusion between outcomes and outputs. Most indicators are consistent with project objectives, outcomes and outputs, but, on occasions, the same indicators are used at different levels of the result chain. About two thirds of the indicators included in the results’ framework are not fully SMART, which limits the usefulness of this tool to monitor and evaluate project progress. While most targets are, in principle, achievable by the project end date, the project should prevent any additional delays.
- The project builds on previous CI and CONANP work, and adopts the CI landscape approach. However, it does not draw systematically on lessons learned from similar interventions implemented by other organizations. Links with existing GEF projects were clearly identified at project design, but the synergies established with ongoing GEF

projects are unclear. As a result of government change in 2018, there have been challenges to establish a collaboration with public-sector initiatives such as Sembrando Vida and Tren Transistmico.

Effectiveness

- As of October 2021, the project will likely achieve 89% of its outcome and output targets by project completion (24 out of 27) if further delays are prevented. It might prove challenging to achieve the targets of two indicators -namely a 15% income increase for all POs and POs benefiting from at least three financial mechanisms- and it is not possible to assess likelihood of achievement for one indicator given gaps in reporting.
- The project is on track to achieve the targets for Component 1 (land use planning and management). Under Component 2 (sustainable value chains), the project has progressed in elaborating intervention plans with POs, but their implementation is still in its beginnings. Under Component 3 (financing), significant progress was made in aligning existing financing, but the development of new financial mechanisms is still at initial stages. Most outputs and outcomes have yet to be achieved, so it is premature to assess their quality.
- While the project has set the stage to exceed several targets, including the number of POs supported, there is a risk that an increased scope comes at the expense of quality and depth.
- Progress towards expected outputs and outcomes has been hindered by several barriers, both internal and external to the project. The latter include a change in government policy in 2018, COVID-19 and security issues on the ground.

Impact

- While short-term outcomes are likely to be achieved by the project end date, more time is likely to be needed to achieve intermediate outcomes and impacts. Given delays in implementation, it is still early to observe intermediate outcomes and impacts on the ground, and it seems unlikely that these will be fully achieved by the project's end date. However, there is evidence that the project has advanced towards some short-term outcomes and is laying the basis for others.
- So far, the project has identified five potential demonstration cases to foster replication as a mechanism to amplify project impact beyond the POs directly supported. However, there is not a clear replication strategy, especially given that COVID-19 has limited experience exchanges.

Efficiency

- The project has disbursed 34% of its budget (2.46 out of 7.2 million USD) and mobilized 20.1% of the expected cofinancing (9.5 out of 47.5 million USD). While it is likely that additional cofinancing will materialize from SADER and USAID's SLV project, it might not be sufficient to achieve the target set in the Project Document.

- High staff turnover has caused delays in financial planning, and has required repeated training and closer oversight by CI-GEF. Interviews indicate that CI Mexico has increased its capacity for financial management, but audit documents were not shared with the evaluation team.
- The roles and responsibilities of the different actors were clearly defined at project design, but it took a long time for the co-Executing Agencies to agree on specific governance arrangements at the beginning of implementation, and adjustments were made to the original governance system. While this system has helped coordination, it has not proved efficient for decision-making and communication, with three persisting bottlenecks: decisions have to be approved by multiple levels of management inside CI Mexico, limited sharing of strategic information among people occupying different positions in the project's governance system, and differing visions regarding the approach to be followed to foster sustainable production.
- The project has successfully established partnerships with multiple stakeholders both at the strategic level and on the ground, thus acting as a catalyzer of existing initiatives by creating synergies. Nonetheless, the time required for establishing these synergies has been underestimated, and has added to project delays.
- While CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation, the capacity of the co-Executing Agencies was not analyzed in-depth at project design. CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for implementation, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase and a steep learning curve, as well as to adjustments in the roles and responsibilities of the project team to address unforeseen needs.
- While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain gaps in planning and monitoring. Procurement processes have also been a key challenge, but additional staff and the new CI-GEF procurement policy are expected to improve time efficiency. Staff turnover at CI Mexico, however, is still an issue, as is the large number of consultancies (over 30) planned for the current fiscal year, which will imply a considerable workload in terms of procurement, oversight, and, later, integration of results.
- Foreseeable risks were adequately identified in the Project Document and monitored through PIRs. COVID-19 was identified as an additional risk during implementation and a protocol was developed for field work. Mitigation measures are overall adequate and have been implemented, but in some instances, they are vague and they do not reflect directly on project operations.
- Safeguards plans were elaborated at project design, and manuals were developed during implementation to operationalize them. There is evidence that safeguards have been applied, but there are opportunities to broaden inclusion within POs and PAs. COVID-19 has restricted the implementation of safeguards on the ground by limiting participation, but adequate mitigation measures were implemented. However, a process is still ongoing

within the project team to mainstream social and environmental safeguards into operations and ensure ownership by field staff.

- The project has experienced considerable delays in implementation, thus making adaptive management a priority. The project has been able to adjust its implementation strategy to address unexpected developments and delays, but there is a tension between the need for flexibility on the ground and the need for planning to ensure a common vision and coordinated action. Recommendations for corrective actions were given in the PIRs for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, but progress in these actions is unclear.
- The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed. The budget covers key M&E activities, but is below the 3% indicated as a good practice for GEF projects of this size, and does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes. While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making. Additional challenges have been limited monitoring activities on the ground due to COVID-19 and the multiple demands on field staff.
- The Project Document contains a communication plan with some knowledge management elements. During project implementation, new communication channels were established beyond those identified in the Project Document to ensure effective engagement with rural producers and PA personnel. The knowledge management strategy has consisted in systematizing and disseminating knowledge generated by the project in local languages and in Spanish.

Sustainability

- The Project Document includes a specific sustainability strategy or exit strategy. While this has not been systematically implemented by the Executing Agencies, it has been complemented with new strategies, in particular in view of delays in project execution.
- While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. However, climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.

MTE Ratings

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Outcomes (Relevance)	Satisfactory (S) <i>Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings</i>	Project outcomes are consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for GEF-6 • The strategic priorities of CI both at the global level and in Mexico • The priorities of the Government of Mexico and the state governments of Oaxaca and Chiapas;

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of local communities. <p>Project design is overall appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes, but ownership of the project intervention model has been a challenge.</p>
Outcomes (Effectiveness)	<p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p><i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.</i></p>	The project has experienced considerable delays, but it is catching up. While good progress has been made in Component 1 and in aligning financing, Component 2 and the development of financial mechanisms under Component 3 are still at initial stages.
Outcomes (Efficiency)	<p>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</p> <p><i>Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings</i></p>	The project presents significant delays and low disbursements.
Outcomes (Overall rating)	<p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p><i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings</i></p>	While project design is appropriate to deliver outcomes, progress has been lower than expected due to significant delays in execution. This is due both to efficiency challenges and to external factors, namely the change in government policy in 2018, COVID-19 and security issues on the ground. However, the project is catching up and, if further delays are prevented, it will likely achieve 89% of its outcome and output targets by project completion.
Sustainability	<p>Moderately Likely (ML)</p> <p><i>There are moderate risks to sustainability</i></p>	While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. However, climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.
Monitoring & Evaluation (Design)	<p>Satisfactory (S)</p> <p>There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of M&E design meets expectations.</p>	The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed, with some shortcomings in the results framework. The budget covers key M&E activities, but does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes.
Monitoring & Evaluation (Implementation)	<p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p><i>There were some shortcomings and quality of M&E implementation more or less meets expectations.</i></p>	While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making.

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Implementation	Satisfactory (S) <i>There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of implementation meets expectations</i>	CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation. CI-GEF did not adequately assessed the capacities of the Executing Entities, and there have been challenges with the duration of procurement processes, but the latter is likely to improve with the new CI-GEF procurement policy.
Execution	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) <i>There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected.</i>	CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for execution, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase, a steep learning curve, and lengthy procurement processes. While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain challenges in governance, planning and monitoring.
Environmental and social safeguards	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>There were some shortcomings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation more or less met expectations.</i>	The quality of environmental and social safeguard plans is satisfactory and there is evidence that they have been implemented, but ownership of safeguards by the PMU is still an ongoing process, and there are opportunities to broaden inclusion within POs and PAs.

Recommendations

1. **Develop an adaptation management strategy.** Given the delays in implementation and disbursements, CI-GEF and the Executing Entities, including the PMU, should jointly develop an adaptation management strategy to ensure the achievement of project targets. This strategy should draw on a realistic assessment of a) potential delays in the remaining part of the project (e.g., caused by COVID-19), b) available cofinancing; and c) of the scope that the project can achieve given the available human and financial resources, without sacrificing quality and depth of support.
2. **Improve the efficiency of decision-making and communication processes.** The Executing Entities should address the challenges identified for efficient decision-making and communication by improving the project's governance system. In particular, multiple layers of approval should be reserved for the most strategic issues, thus letting operational decisions be made by the PMU. As for communication, the Executing Entities should make sure that staff involved in the project in different geographical locations and organizational roles can access updated information regarding project planning, progress and upcoming activities in a timely and user-friendly manner. This might be done either by creating new communication channels, or by improving the quality of those already existing, as

considered appropriate. In any case, this should not cause an additional workload to the staff.

3. **Close the gaps in planning and monitoring.** The PMU should make sure that planning is carried out in a way that ensures that all project stakeholders know what activities are expected in the next few months and what will be requested of them. In addition, information on project progress needs to be systematized and made available to project staff and stakeholders in a timely manner as an input for decision-making. Given the complexity of the project and the multiple emerging outcomes, the PMU should consider complementary approaches such as “Outcome Harvesting”¹ to better document what is happening on the ground and making progress visible. Also, given the multiple stakeholders involved in monitoring, the PMU should consider the use of an online monitoring system that allows uploading data through smartphones and computers to increase the efficiency and standardization of monitoring activities. Finally, while it might be challenging to adjust the indicators in the results framework at this stage, the PMU and CI-GEF could assess strategies to ensure SMART reporting against the existing indicators.
4. **Continue strengthening safeguards.** As a part of the ongoing process to mainstream safeguards in project operations, the PMU should make efforts to foster broader inclusion within the communities and organizations supported by the project.
5. **Advance in communication and knowledge management.** In the remaining part of the project, the PMU should devote more efforts to systematizing and disseminating the lessons learned from the project, especially those regarding the project’s intervention model. With the help of CI Mexico, any barriers should be removed for communication activities to take place.
6. **Develop an updated sustainability strategy.** Given the importance of linking the project with other initiatives to ensure continued work in the three landscapes and sustained outcomes, the Executing Entities, with the support of the PMU, should formalize and implement a systematic, updated sustainability strategy. This strategy should be developed by involving project partners and cofinanciers, thus providing articulating the different opportunities that have been emerging, and should consider existing risks to project sustainability, including political risks (elections) and environmental risks (climate change impacts) among others.

¹ See: <https://outcomeharvesting.net/welcome/>

1. EVALUATION MANDATE

1.1 Evaluation objectives and scope

As the project is in its third year of implementation, the purpose of this Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is to promote accountability and transparency and facilitate the synthesis of lessons learned. It will be primarily used as a monitoring and adaptive management tool by CI and its Executing Partners by identifying challenges and outline corrective actions to put the project on track to achieve its objectives by its completion date (February 2023). It will also be used by the GEF Secretariat for portfolio monitoring, and by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office to identify recurring issues across the GEF portfolio.

Based on consultations with project stakeholders during the inception phase, the specific objectives of this evaluation are the following:

- Provide a snapshot of the progress of the program in its different components and landscapes, and how they fit together.
- Produce evidence to determine to what extent and how can project objectives be achieved in the remaining time, identifying opportunities to improve efficiency in implementation processes.
- Serve as a space for reflection and learning regarding the project intervention model.

In light of the above, the MTE will focus on the following evaluation criteria² and the corresponding key questions:

1. **Relevance:** To what extent does the project meet the needs and priorities of its end users?
2. **Effectiveness:** To what extent is the project achieving its objectives?
3. **Impact:** To what extent has the project advanced towards strengthening biodiversity conservation in the National System of PAs and corridors through integrated landscape management?
4. **Efficiency:** To what extent is the project implementation timely and cost-effective?
5. **Sustainability:** To what extent are there risks to the sustainability of project benefits in the long term?

As explained in the third section of this report, an evaluation matrix (Annex 1) was developed as a guiding tool for this MTE, which identifies the specific dimensions and questions to be addressed under each evaluation criterion.

² For the definitions of these evaluation criteria, see the GEF Evaluation Policy (2019, p. 13) and the GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020, Annex 12, p. 89).

1.2 Methodology

This evaluation was carried out following a structured process of data collection and analysis to assess the relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the project, and taking into consideration the *GEF Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy* (especially Annex 12) and the *CI-GEF Evaluation Policy*.

1.2.1 Inception phase

To prepare this inception report, a preliminary review of project documents shared by the PMU was carried out, and five remote interviews were held with staff from the Project Management Unit (PMU), namely the Project Director, the three Landscape Managers, and the Safeguard Manager as agreed at the introductory meeting held on July 26, 2021 with CI-GEF. This allowed the evaluation team to develop the updated Theory of Change (ToC) of the project and the evaluation matrix (Annex 1), which includes the specific evaluation questions to be considered for each evaluation criterion, details the most relevant qualitative and quantitative indicators that will inform the evaluation questions, and specifies the key sources of information and data collection methods. These inputs were validated through an inception workshop with the PMU, the Implementing Agency and the Executing Agencies, which was held remotely on August 12, 2021. The inception report was then developed based on the feedback received at the inception workshop.

1.2.2 Data collection and analysis

Data collection took place between August 18 and September 24, 2021, and was carried out remotely given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

An in-depth desk review was carried out, including the documents provided at inception, as well as additional information provided by the PMU and policy documents. The full list of documents reviewed is included in Annex 2. In parallel, 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 30 project stakeholders (individually or as a group, as appropriate), using the questionnaires included in the Inception Report as a guide. Stakeholders interviewed include the GEF Operational Focal Point in Mexico, the Implementing Agency, the Executing Agencies, the PMU, as well as selected cofinanciers and participants (see the full list in Annex 3). The interviews were carried out in Spanish or English by Zoom, Teams, WhatsApp or telephone, depending on the access of project stakeholders to communication technologies. Constant communication was maintained with the PMU throughout the data collection phase to schedule interviews and address questions on the information provided.

The data collected were then systematized and matched with the evaluation questions included in the evaluation matrix. For each question, data from different sources were triangulated to ensure that evaluation findings are grounded in evidence and reflect the perspectives of different stakeholders. Based on the findings thus obtained, project results were assessed against the

project's results framework -which provides performance and impact indicators along with their corresponding means of verification- and against the ToC presented in Section 2, which was used as a reference to assess progress toward impacts and the relevance of the intervention model. On October 4, 2021, preliminary findings were presented to the project's Steering Committee and CI-GEF.

1.2.3 Reporting

The present report was elaborated considering the feedback received at the presentation of preliminary findings. The report includes a short overview of the project (Section 2.1), the updated ToC of the project (Section 2.2), evaluation findings for each of the evaluation criteria (Section 3), as well as conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations (Section 4). Outcomes, sustainability, project M&E, implementation & execution, and environmental & social safeguards were rated according to the scales provided in Annex II of the ToR.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Project overview

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) project **“Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas”** is implemented by Conservation International (CI), with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and Conservation International Mexico, A.C. (CI Mexico) as Executing Partners. The objective of the project is to strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in Mexico's National System of Protected Areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, in line with the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area. It is implemented in the neighboring states of Chiapas and Oaxaca in Southern Mexico, which are rich in biological³ and cultural diversity,⁴ but report some of the highest levels of poverty in the country,⁵ with an economy largely dominated by the primary sector and tourism exerting pressure on ecosystems.

The project works at the landscape scale by integrating management of Protected Areas (PAs) and land-use planning with a market-driven value chain approach to improve the livelihoods of people that reside within or nearby biodiversity hotspots. It is implemented in three priority

³ Both Chiapas and Oaxaca are highly diverse in terms of species and ecosystems. See:

<https://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/region/EEB/Chiapas.html> and <https://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/region/EEB/oaxaca.html>

⁴ By 2020, 31% of the population in Oaxaca and 28% in Chiapas spoke an indigenous language, with a presence of 14 and 13 indigenous peoples in each state, respectively; in Oaxaca, 4.7% of the population identifies as Afro-descendant. See:

<https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/2020/default.html> and <http://atlas.inpi.gob.mx/>

⁵ By 2018, 76% of the population lived in poverty in Chiapas, and 66% in Oaxaca. See: <https://www.coneval.org.mx/coordinacion/entidades/Paginas/inicioent.aspx>

landscapes -the Sierra Madre of Chiapas, the Sierra Sur and Isthmus of Oaxaca, and the Pacific South Coast of Oaxaca and Chiapas- with a target of 16 Primary Intervention Sites (PIS) of bio-cultural importance, totaling 208,160 hectares.⁶

The project has three components:

- **Component 1. Land use planning and management:** This component supports: a) the formulation and implementation of land management instruments with a landscape approach, primarily Ecological Land Use Plans (OETs, by its acronym in Spanish); b) the establishment and management of Areas Designated for Voluntary Conservation (ADVC) and local PAs, as well as the development of work plans in existing PAs; c) the strengthening of governance structures; d) the establishment of conservation agreements with communities, and the development of participatory monitoring systems for 15 priority species of reptiles, birds, mammals and plants.⁷
- **Component 2. Sustainable value chains:** The project provides training to producers' organizations on sustainable practices that are compatible with biodiversity conservation, helps them adopt some of those practices, and facilitates market linkages with potential buyers with an interest in sustainable products. The support is tailored to the needs of each organization and can span field schools and experience exchange for producers, liaison with potential buyers, the development of business plans and brands, and the procurement of equipment. To foster replication by other producers, the project offers Training of Trainers based on good practice guides, and seeks to establish at least one demonstration case for each of seven selected local value chains: coffee, honey, maize, ornamental plants, fish, shrimp, and tourism.
- **Component 3. Financing:** The project seeks to coordinate funding from different sources by building synergies and coherence among funders with presence in each landscape - including government programs, international projects, NGOs and the private sector- and by establishing mixed-finance mechanisms with both public and private-sector resources.

Across these components, the project seeks to articulate a wide array of stakeholders, including federal, state and municipal government agencies, community organizations (which are especially important since most of the land is collectively owned), producers' organizations, educational institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and private companies. Particular attention is paid to involving women, indigenous communities, Afro-descendants and other vulnerable populations, and in the protection of cultural diversity and local knowledge, which go hand-in-hand with biodiversity.

The governance system of the project is structured as follows:

⁶ Three PIS are located in Sierra Sur (56,276 ha), 9 on the Coast (101,908 ha) and 4 in Sierra Madre (49,976 ha).

⁷ These are: the horned guan, the military macaw, the lilac-crowned amazon parrot, the pink-headed warbler, the highland guan, The Baird's tapir, the jaguar, the Mexican spider monkey, the leatherback sea turtle, the cycad, the Espadaña cycad, the Chiapas' pine, the mangrove, the olive ridley sea turtle, and the American crocodile.

- A **Project Management Unit (PMU)** with a full-time staff of 14 people. The project management team includes the project director, one monitoring and evaluation (M&E) technician, and two financial officers. In addition, each landscape has a manager, an environmental technician and a value-chain technician, plus a coffee and cacao value-chain advisor who works across landscapes. The PMU is also supported by part-time staff, namely CI Mexico Safeguards Manager, M&E Manager, Communications Manager, and Financial Director.
- A **Steering Committee** for strategic decision-making, comprising the project director, as well as CI-GEF, CI Mexico and CONANP, each with two representatives.
- A **Coordination and Monitoring Group**, which oversees project execution and is composed by the PMU and the directors of PAs in the three landscapes.
- An **Advisory Council** composed by cofinancing partners.
- A **Grievance Mechanism** with a six-member committee including the project director, one representative from CI-GEF and two from both CI Mexico and CONANP.

The project was approved by the GEF in January 2018 and officially started in July of the same year, in concomitance with federal government elections. Its expected duration is four years (48 months), with its end date set for February 2023. However, the kick-off phase lasted until June 2019, including arrangements to launch activities on the ground (hiring staff, setting up field offices, and acquiring equipment), positioning the project with the new government that took office in January 2019, and validating project design with project partners and stakeholders. For practical purposes, execution started in July 2019, which means the project has been under execution for two years at the start of this MTE.

The project has an approved budget of \$7,350,250 USD in GEF grants, with an additional \$47,456,966 USD in expected cofinancing by 14 partners, including federal and state authorities, as well as NGOs and private companies.

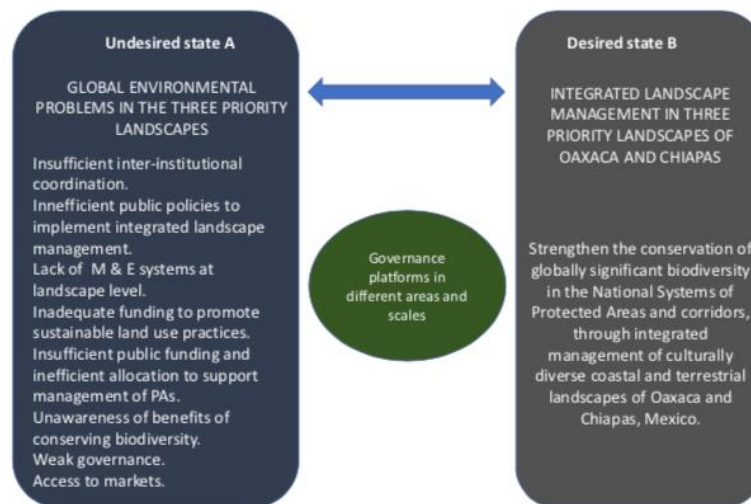
2.2 Updated Theory of Change

The Project Document identifies three key environmental problems that are affecting the project's priority landscapes: habitat loss and fragmentation, resulting from the conversion of forests for agriculture and cattle ranching, and the use of unsustainable practices; the overexploitation of wildlife, mainly caused by poaching and illegal wildlife trade; and climate change, which is affecting both forests and agricultural lands through more irregular rain patterns, as well as more frequent and intense extreme weather events.

Eight barriers were identified to have hindered progress in addressing these problems: insufficient inter-institutional coordination, inefficient public policies to implement integrated landscape management and mainstream the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, the lack of M&E systems at landscape level, inadequate funding to promote sustainable land use practices, insufficient public funding and inefficient allocation to support the management of PAs, lack of awareness of the benefits of conserving biodiversity, weak governance and stakeholder's participation at different levels, and insufficient capacities of small-scale producers and their organizations to access markets.

Based on this assessment, the Theory of Change (ToC) included in the Project Document (Figure 1) proposes the development of governance platforms to achieve landscape management and thus strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in PAs and corridors.

Figure 1. Theory of Change included in the Project Document



While this ToC clearly summarizes the situation analysis (undesired state) and the project objective (desired state), it fails to unpack the result chain, i.e., the way project components are expected to contribute to short-term and intermediate outcomes that, in turn, are expected to lead to the achievement of the project objective. The intervention model remains therefore implicit.

In light of this, the ToC was updated during the inception phase of this MTE based on a review of Project Documents, scoping interviews with project staff, and validation by key project stakeholders at the inception workshop. The resulting Theory of Change diagram is included in Figure 2 and is summarized as follows. It is intended as a “living tool” that can support the construction of a shared vision among project stakeholders, and be updated based on ongoing learning. For evaluation purposes, it will be used as a reference in this MTE to assess progress toward impact and to identify lessons learned that can help refine the intervention model.

The project seeks to address the barriers identified at the design stage through three interventions (**components**), which build on previous efforts in each landscape: support the design and implementation of land use management instruments with a landscape approach; provide training, support the adoption of sustainable practices and facilitate market linkages between producers’ organizations and potential buyers in selected value chains in PAs and corridors; and foster the coordinated channeling of funding at landscape level, which includes the implementation of mixed financing mechanisms (see Section 1.1).

These three components are to be implemented with broad stakeholder participation, which requires the adoption of processes that appropriately take into consideration gender inequalities and cultural diversity, so as to make sure that project activities are gender- and culturally-

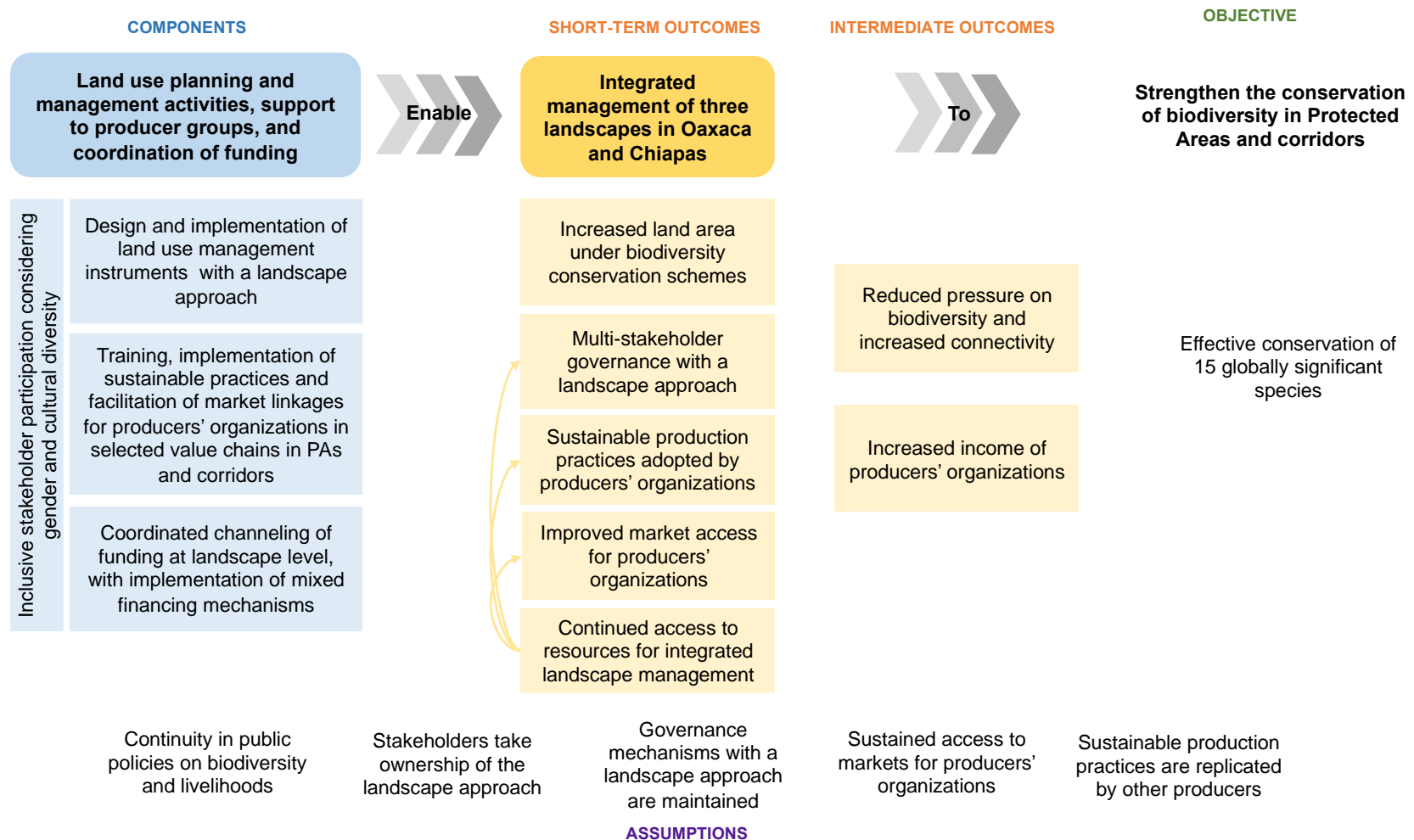
appropriate, governance mechanisms are inclusive, and economic benefits from sustainable value chains are equitably distributed among and within communities or organizations.

Through these interventions, the project seeks to influence the following **short-term outcomes**: increased land area under biodiversity conservation schemes; multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms strengthened with a landscape approach; sustainable practices adopted by producers' organizations; improved market access for producers' organizations; and continued access to resources for integrated landscape management.

These short-term outcomes, in turn, are expected to lead to two **intermediate outcomes** in the medium term: on the one hand, reduced pressure on biodiversity and increased connectivity among PAs in the three landscapes, and on the other hand, increased income of producers' organizations inside and in the surroundings of PAs, which is expected to further contribute to reduced pressure and increased connectivity by providing livelihoods that are compatible with biodiversity conservation.

These intermediate outcomes are expected to contribute to the project **objective** to strengthen biodiversity conservation, with a focus on 15 globally significant species, both within PAs and in corridors.

This result chain is grounded on five key **assumptions**, which, despite not being fully under the direct control of the project, need to take place for its objective to be achieved. On the one hand, the project assumes the continuity in public policies on biodiversity conservation and rural livelihoods for its components to deliver outcomes; and on the other hand, it is assumed that, to progress from outcomes to impact, stakeholders will take ownership of the landscape approach, governance mechanisms with a landscape approach will be maintained, producers' organizations will have continued access to the markets reached with project's support, and sustainable production practices will be replicated by other producers.

Figure 2. Updated Theory of Change⁸⁸ See Annex 4 for the diagram in Spanish.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Outcomes (Relevance)	<p>Satisfactory (S)</p> <p><i>Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings</i></p>	<p>Project outcomes are consistent with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for GEF-6 • The strategic priorities of CI both at the global level and in Mexico • The priorities of the Government of Mexico and the state governments of Oaxaca and Chiapas; • The needs of local communities. <p>Project design is overall appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes, but ownership of the project intervention model has been a challenge.</p>

3.1.1 Relevance of the project in relation with the problem it addresses

The Project Document clearly and specifically identifies the problem to be addressed. The three key environmental problems that are affecting the project's priority landscapes -namely habitat loss and fragmentation, the overexploitation of wildlife, and climate change- are highlighted in the Project Document, which further explains the root causes that underlie these problems, and identifies eight barriers that have hindered progress towards addressing them (see Section 2.2).

The problems and barriers addressed by the project are relevant to project stakeholders. Interviews with project stakeholders suggest that the three problems and eight barriers identified by the project are significantly affecting the three landscapes at different scales. Government stakeholders highlighted that the project has been particularly important to address the insufficient public funding at the federal and state level both for the establishment and management of PAs, and for the elaboration and monitoring of OETs. Regarding the latter, the state governments of Oaxaca and Chiapas have expressed that the elaboration of regional OETs with the support of the project is particularly relevant to update the information from state-wide OET, to generate more detailed information for the selected regions, and to regulate strategic territories that suffer multiple pressures, such real estate speculation. Government stakeholders also showed interest in the integrated landscape management approach and the safeguards fostered by CI as a means to improve environmental management and stakeholder participation given the existing pressures towards land use changes. The Ministry of Environment of the State of Oaxaca (SEMAEDES),

by its acronym in Spanish) expressed the interest to explore collaboration on sustainable value chains, which is an issue this agency is working on and that requires further support.

Likewise, the POs interviewed indicate that the project is helping them remove the barriers to access higher-paying markets for sustainable products and services, which include insufficient capacities to access markets, inadequate funding, and insufficient coordination among different initiatives. Most of the POs and tourism service providers working with the project have done previous work in biodiversity conservation and are already well aware of the benefits of conserving biodiversity, so this is a barrier that the project should address through replication.

The project's intervention model is relevant to address the identified problem, as it bridges existing gaps between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods by introducing a focus on market access at landscape level. In the past, CI has supported sustainable production but did not contemplate the necessary budget to develop the markets (i.e., for investing in activities such as certification, transformation, marketing etc.). Likewise, CONANP had traditionally focused on supporting sustainable production practices inside PAs, without focusing on market access nor on POs in the surrounding areas of PAs, despite their impact in land use change and degradation. Based on these previous experiences, the intervention model for this project introduces a market-driven approach -where sustainable practices are oriented towards complying with the requirements of specific buyers- complemented by an integrated landscape management approach that looks beyond PAs to reduce pressure on ecosystems and increase connectivity.

However, there have been challenges to ensure ownership of this intervention model. The lack of an explicit ToC (see Section 2.2) and of previous experience in market-driven approaches and financial mechanisms have caused challenges for field staff of the two Executing Agencies to embrace the proposed intervention model, resulting in long discussions to reach execution agreements on Component 2 and 3, causing delayed implementation. In addition, there is an ongoing tension between the directors of PAs at CONANP and the project regarding its priorities, as PA Directors, who face critical restrictions in financial and human resources, have pushed for a greater focus on Component 1 and work with POs inside PAs.

3.1.2 Consistency with country, GEF and CI priorities

The project is aligned to the focus of the current Government of Mexico on supporting sustainable rural livelihoods by linking conservation with a market-orientated value chain approach. While the government change in 2018 caused significant changes in the policy agenda and strategies, making the alignments identified in the Project Document obsolete, the project has successfully adjusted to these changes and stayed relevant to governmental priorities. This is demonstrated by consistencies with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2019-2024, the Environment Sector Programme, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2030 (NBSAP), the National Program for Protected Areas 2020-2024, and the national commitments to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD):

- The project is aligned to the objectives of the NDP 2019-2024, namely with the objective “Food self-sufficiency and rescue of the countryside” (Component 3 on economy), which foresees supporting the programme for the country’s coffee and sugar cane growers, among other actions. It is also consistent with the aim to implement sustainable production practices. More broadly, the project is aligned to the NDP in the sense that they both seek to reduce poverty, boost the domestic market and create sources of employment.
- The project is further aligned with the Environment Sector Program (2020-2024), which in its axis 5 on biodiversity and sustainable development includes public policies on the protection of biological diversity and sustainable forestry development.
- The project is consistent with strategic axis 2 (conservation and restoration) of the updated NBSAP (2016-2030) given that it will expand the surface of PAs. Furthermore, it is aligned to its strategic axis 3 (sustainable use and management) as it incorporates sustainable management and use of natural resources and addresses direct threats to areas of high biodiversity by seeking to convert conventional production into sustainable systems.
- The project also contributes to the main objectives of the National Program for Protected Areas (2020-2024), specifically: promote the participation of key stakeholders and local communities in the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services; address sustainable production and consumption of natural resources; enhance the coordination of public programs and environmental problems and increase capacity of society and government to value the natural capital within PAs.
- In addition, the project is expected to contribute to meet the Aichi Targets 11 and 12 (Protected Areas, Landscapes and Seascapes, and Species Extinctions) by improving PA management and establishing new PAs and corridors under an integrated landscape approach, but also to Targets 5 and 7 (Reduction of Habitat Loss and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources) by improving sustainable production in habitats that are critical for biodiversity conservation and the provision of ecosystem services.

The project is consistent with the priorities set out in GEF-6 programming. Regarding consistency with the GEF-6 Biodiversity Focal area, the project contributes specifically to Objective 1 on improving sustainability of PA systems and objective 4 on mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors. The project is particularly aligned with programs 1, 2 and 9. For instance, it is aligned with to GEF-6 Program 1 on improving financial sustainability and effective Management of the national ecological infrastructure, by improving the financial accessibility for PA management and sustainable production and by strengthening management of existing PAs through developing and implementing Annual Operational Plans for 662,417 ha. In addition, it should be noted that the project is also aligned with GEF-7 impact programme for the focal area biodiversity, in particular the objectives of managing biodiversity in production landscapes and harnessing biodiversity for sustainable agriculture. Finally, the species targeted by this project are aligned with the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Mexico is one of CI’s 16 priority landscapes globally for the implementation of CI’s sustainable landscape approach, under CI’s priority area “Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes”. This is one of the flagship projects to implement CI’s sustainable landscapes and

seascapes (SLS) approach. CI's global institutional strategy called "Southern Cross" changed a few years ago, and now includes SLS as a core area. While CI worked with the landscape approach before, combining conservation with productive activities, the new strategy further defined and systematized the SLS approach and developed tools that are tested in the present project. For instance, the project considers a rights-based approach to conservation to ensure that interventions respect the right of indigenous peoples and local communities by integrating them in project processes, respecting their rights over traditional knowledge regarding the use of biodiversity, and by implementing social and environmental safeguards plans.

The project contributes to CI Mexico's 2025 goals and has been a key step to refine the organization's intervention model at scale, and to expand its scope of work in Chiapas and Oaxaca. By 2025, CI Mexico aims to achieve 2.6 million hectares under conservation, to support 46 million small producers in Chiapas, Oaxaca and Tabasco and to improve the management of 10,000 km of coastal and marine resources. This project contributes directly to these objectives as its three priority landscapes are part of the CI Mexico focus areas, it is expanding the area under conservation through the creation of ADVCS and state PAs, and it is providing support to small producers. In this sense, it has also provided an opportunity to test CI Mexico's intervention model at scale, which seeks both to strengthen conservation and to support local producers by complementing conventional PA management with a landscape approach and a market orientation. Finally, the CI-GEF project plays an important role in CI's Mexico growth and consolidation process. The project, which is CI Mexico's first USD 8 million project, allowed the organization to develop capacities, and to catalyze additional opportunities and funding at a larger scale.

3.1.3 Result orientation

The projects' results framework clearly sets out the overall logic of intervention, but is beset by a confusion between outcomes and outputs. The project is clearly articulated around its three components, which contribute to the project objective by addressing the different types of barriers identified in the Project Document. Most project partners mention these components when speaking about the project, indicating that these have become a reference for them to understand how their work fits into the broader scope of the project. The outcomes are logically linked with the corresponding component and articulate with sufficient clarity the changes that the project seeks to influence.

However, the distinction between outcomes and outputs is sometimes unclear. Outputs are considered as the products, capital goods and services delivered by the project (i.e., which fall under the direct control of the project), while outcomes the changes in project participants that are influenced by project outputs. In this project, most outputs fail to specify what are the products, capital goods and services to be delivered by the project to influence the expected outcomes; these can only be identified when looking at the corresponding indicators (see Table 1). In some cases, shorter-term outcomes are included as outputs, despite not being under the direct control

of the project. Thus, while the results' framework provides a clear outcome-orientation, its usefulness as a management tool to monitor key outputs and communicate progress is limited.

Table 1. Detailed comments to the results' framework (outcomes and outputs)

Components	Outcomes <i>Changes in participants influenced by project outputs</i>	Outputs <i>Products, capital goods and services delivered by the project</i>	Comments
1. Integrated management of three priority landscape for strengthening biodiversity conservation through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas	1.1: Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.	1.1.1: A model of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for biodiversity conservation including protected areas and corridors developed and disseminated.	Output 1.1.1 should be formulated as a product. It is unclear what type of product is expected (e.g., a report, a toolkit, etc.).
	1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.	1.2.1: Draft legislation for the expansion of 102,403 hectares of two protected areas which have been locally consented and approved.	Output 1.2.1 does not reflect the adjustment in project approach (draft certification of ADVCS instead of draft legislation for the expansion of government-managed PAs).
	1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.	1.3.1: Participation of key stakeholders, including women and vulnerable groups, in integrated landscape management and in decision-making substantially strengthened.	For greater clarity, Output 1.3.1 should specify the services provided by the project to foster stakeholder participation. The number of participants can be used as an indicator.
2. Mainstreaming models of sustainable production with a market-driven value chain approach in agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, forest and tourism activities	2.1: The area of sustainable agricultural, fishery, aquaculture, forestry and tourism production is substantially increased through best practices and a market-driven value chain approach for biodiversity conservation	2.1.1: Conventional production is transformed into sustainable production practices in the 16 PIS through organizational strengthening activities like ToT programs, Exchange of experiences and others, developing market-driven value chains for biodiversity conservation.	Transforming sustainable production is not under the direct control of the project, and therefore cannot be an output. The output consists in the training delivered by the project, which help increase the area of sustainable production (outcome).
	2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable	2.2.1: Producer Organisations (PO) have improved access to markets and financial mechanisms	Improving market access and financial mechanisms is also an outcome (see ToC). Output 2.2.1 should

Components	Outcomes <i>Changes in participants influenced by project outputs</i>	Outputs <i>Products, capital goods and services delivered by the project</i>	Comments
	production practices with a market-driven value chain approach	due to sustainable products.	highlight what products, good or services is the project expected to deliver to influence these outcomes, for example, linkages established between POs and potential buyers.
3: Increasing financial sustainability in the integrated management of the three priority landscapes	3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP substantially increased.	3.1.1: Existing public and private programs mainstream their investments towards supporting the project activities, outputs and outcomes for ILM and SPP in the 16 PIS.	Investment mainstreaming is an outcome -it can be influenced by the project, but it is not under its direct control. Output 3.1.1 should indicate the coordination work carried out by the project to foster investment mainstreaming.
		Output 3.1.2: Mixed financing mechanisms not currently available in these landscapes (public-private partnerships, market-based financing, results oriented or other) are set up, as long-term solutions to reduce CONANP's funding gap and/or reduce the barriers to develop the market-driven value chains.	--

Source: Own elaboration based on the Project Document.

Most indicators are consistent with project objectives, outcomes and outputs, but, on occasions, there are duplications in the indicators used at different levels of the result chain. The results' framework comprises 30 indicators, 3 at the objective level, 9 at the outcome level and 18 at the output level. These indicators are consistent with the respective objective, outcomes and outputs, and help operationalize the result chain. However, indicators b) and c) at the objective level duplicate outcome indicators (see Table 2) and thus fail to operationalize how "effective conservation" looks like in practice, and to link this long-term goal, to which the project can only expect to be one contributing factor, with medium-term outcomes such as reduced pressure on biodiversity and increased connectivity (see ToC). Similarly, as a consequence of the confusion between outcomes and outputs mentioned above, some output indicators duplicate outcome indicators by measuring the same outcome with a different measurement unit, instead of measuring the services, products or capital goods delivered by the project to influence the corresponding outcome (see Table 2).

Table 2. Duplications in output and outcome indicators

Objective	Outcome	Output
b. 2,618,250 hectares with sustainable land use plans promoting biodiversity conservation	Outcome 1.1 Indicator 1: Number of ha with sustainable land use plans and other land use tools promoting biodiversity conservation. (Target: 2.6 million ha)	Output 1.1.1 Indicator 1: Number of gender-sensitive land use plans at an integrated landscape level. (Target: at least 1 per landscape)
c. 4,650 hectares under sustainable productive practices to support biodiversity conservation.	Outcome 2.1 indicator: Number of hectares where Producer Organisations (cooperatives, association, family business, etc.) in Primary Intervention Sites (PIS) have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach. (Target: at least 4,650 hectares)	--
--	Outcome 1.2 Indicator 1: Increase in number of hectares of protected areas (Target: 102,403 ha)	Output 1.2.1 Indicator 2: Number of hectares with draft legislation for the expansion of protected areas. (Target: 102,403 ha)
--	Outcome 3.1 Indicator 2: Increase in public-private funding for ILM and SPP* through new (innovative) financial mechanisms (e.g., green bonds, risk capital investments, carbon marketing, and others) or the expansion of existing ones in the country to cover these three landscapes. (Target: at least USD 500.000)	Output 3.1.2 Indicator: Number of financial mechanisms new to the region that are supporting project activities, outputs and outcomes, funded by diversified sources (could be market based, mixed public-private or other) as a long-term solution to for ILM and SPP activities in the three landscapes. (Target: At least 3 financial mechanisms)

Source: Own elaboration based on the Project Document.

Two thirds of the indicators included in the results' framework are not fully SMART,⁹ which limits the usefulness of this tool to monitor and evaluate project progress. As showed in Table 3, only 12 out of 30 indicators are fully SMART, while the remaining indicators do not provide accurate measures of project progress. In addition to the duplications mentioned above, recurring issues include lack of specificity and measurability, as well as unclear baselines that make it challenging to assess progress (see Annex 5 for detailed comments).

While most targets are, in principle, achievable by the project end date, the project should prevent any additional delays. The project has accumulated considerable delays (see Sections 3.2 and 3.4) and, while some of the underlying causes have been addressed, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue causing delays by limiting in-person work on the ground in the coming months. The time needed for collaborative and participatory processes, which are key for

⁹ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.

ownership and sustainability, should not be underestimated, either. These factors, together with the possibility of a lower level of cofinancing than expected at project design (see Section 3.4.1), should be taken into consideration.

Table 3. SMART indicators in the results' framework

Component	Result level	Total number of indicators	SMART indicators
N/A	Objective	3	0
1	Outcomes	5	4
	Outputs	10	3
2	Outcomes	2	0
	Outputs	6	3
3	Outcomes	2	1
	Outputs	2	1
Total		30	12

Source: Own elaboration based on Annex 5.

3.1.4 Integration of lessons learned

The project builds on previous CI and CONANP work, and adopts the CI landscape approach. However, it does not draw systematically on lessons learned from similar interventions implemented by other organizations. For CI Mexico, an important lesson learned considered in the project design is adopting a “selling first” approach, i.e., establishing market links before providing technical assistance to producers to ensure market access. Before this model was incorporated into the present project, it was piloted in the project “Paisajes que alimentan el alma” with a focus on cocoa; learnings from this project were thus integrated in the present project. The project also builds on the previous work of CONANP to foster the adoption of sustainable production practices by POs in PAs, as well as on the global experience of CI as systematized in its SLM methodology, and through experience exchanges with other CI country teams (one of the latter was organized in June 2019 in Mexico). However, the project does not systematically draw on evidence from interventions implemented by organizations beyond the Executing Agencies, despite the considerable experience existing worldwide in these types of interventions.

3.1.5 Linkages with other interventions

Links with existing GEF projects were clearly identified at project design. These include nine projects implemented between 1995 and 2023, sized between USD 5.1 and 25 million, and addressing issues such as strengthening protected area management, integrating trade-offs between supply of ecosystem services and land use options into poverty alleviation efforts and development planning, mitigating climate change via sustainable forest management, conserving

genetic diversity in traditional agro-ecosystems, and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in Mexico's tourism sector.

This project complements other projects that (i) have been implemented before, (ii) are implemented concurrently, and (iii) will be implemented in the future. With regards to the preceding projects, complementarity has been ensured with GEF ID 2078, 2654, 2655,¹⁰ which the CI-GEF project complements with management actions in the area with a landscape approach, as well as by covering some needs for connectivity among PAs. During project implementation, the project has further built on previous CONANP and CI work leading the CI-GEF project to be described as the natural continuation of the preceding projects: ECOSECHAS (GEF ID 3816), Paisajes que alimentan el alma (other donations), and Best Practices for Sustainable Coffee in the Sierra Madre of Chiapas (CI Mexico, Starbucks). In line with the Project Document, meetings have been held with other ongoing GEF projects (ID 4763, 5089, 9613, 9555, and 9380)¹¹ to seek synergies during implementation.

On the other hand, establishing linkages with ongoing public-sector initiatives, such as Sembrando Vida and Corredor Transístmico, has proven challenging due to political issues. As a sizeable infrastructure program, Transístmico needs to develop an OET to ensure compliance with environmental regulations. The project is still seeking to harmonize this OET with the one already under development in Oaxaca. Challenges to ensure complementarity with Sembrando Vida have also been raised. While this flagship program has a strong focus on supporting rural livelihoods, it has been criticized for incentivizing slash-and-burn agriculture to plant government donated fruit trees, and attempts to align budgets and efforts have not been successful. In fact, the PIR 2021 gave a moderately unsatisfactory rating to Component 3 as no cofinancing has been leveraged yet from Sembrando Vida. The PMU, however, keeps in communication with both initiatives to leverage opportunities for joint action.

Complementarity with future projects is yet to be seen in practice, although there are good opportunities with the USAID's Sustainable Landscape Ventures (SLV) project¹² and a GEF-7 project on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Rural Landscapes of Mexico.¹³ Interviewees argued that this project establishes the enabling conditions for the SLV, which in turns provides a sustainability strategy for Components 2 and 3 by investing in blended finance in the landscapes to support sustainable production and market access, which can take years to consolidate (See Section 3.5). However, the PIR 2021 highlights that the project has yet to establish synergies with the SLV, as a letter of commitment including the exact amount of co-financing was still pending. Finally, the GEF-7 project on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Rural Landscapes of Mexico is still at the PPG

¹⁰ Consolidation of the Protected Area System (SINAP II) – Second, Third and Fourth Tranches

¹¹ Respectively: Strengthening Management Effectiveness and Resilience of Protected Areas to Safeguard Biodiversity Threatened by Climate; Strengthening Management of the PA System to better Conserve Endangered Species and their Habitats; Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement Criteria in Mexico's Tourism Sector; Sustainable Productive Landscapes; and Securing the future of Global Agriculture in the Face of Climate Change by Conserving the Genetic Diversity of the Traditional Agro-ecosystems of Mexico.

¹² See: <https://www.conservation.org/mexico/eps-usaid>

¹³ See: <https://www.thegef.org/project/mainstreaming-biodiversity-rural-landscapes-mexico>

stage and complementarity remains to be seen. The same applies to a project on forest carbon markets that CI Mexico is designing for submission to the Green Climate Fund, which is expected to provide financing for selected ADVs and POs.

3.2 Effectiveness

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Outcomes (Effectiveness)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.</i>	The project has experienced considerable delays, but it is catching up. While good progress has been made in Component 1 and in aligning financing, Component 2 and the development of financial mechanisms under Component 3 are still at initial stages.

3.2.1 Outputs and outcomes

It is likely that the project will achieve its targets under Component 1 if further delays are prevented, but full achievement under Components 2 and 3 is uncertain. As indicated in Table 4, four of the nine outcome indicators included in the results' framework are on target, four are likely to be achieved, and one is unlikely to be achieved. As for output indicators, ten are on target, six are likely to be achieved, two are unlikely to be achieved, and for one of them an assessment cannot be made given gaps in reporting.¹⁴ Twelve of the 15 indicators for Component 1 are on target, two are likely to be achieved, and in one case information is not available. Under Component 2, only one indicator is on target, while six are likely to be achieved and one is unlikely to be achieved. Likewise, one indicator for Component 3 is on target,¹⁵ two are likely to be achieved and one is unlikely to be achieved.

It seems likely that two indicators will face challenges to achieve their targets due to the barriers outlined in Section 3.2.2, and therefore should be monitored closely:

- Outcome 2.2 indicator: While it is likely that the project will achieve an average 15% income increase for the members of some POs, it is unlikely that this outcome target will be achieved by all 18 POs by the project end date, since some organizations might face additional challenges to achieve sustained sales to new buyers.
- Output 3.1.2 indicator: The development of four new financial mechanisms is still at initial stages and some might not be operational before project completion. In this context, it

¹⁴ Output 3.1.1 indicator 4 (percentage of youth participation in ILM governance mechanisms), which was not measured in 2020-2021 after the shift to remote activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁵ This is Output 3.1.1 indicator (number of public or private sources of ongoing investments that have supported or coordinated with the project). The reported progress is zero in the PIR 2021 and 13 for this evaluation. This difference cannot be explained by the different cut-off date, and is instead related to an adjustment in reporting, as clarified by the PMU. Moving forward, the PMU should ensure coherence in reporting this indicator.

might happen that the targeted 500,000 USD (Outcome 3.1 Indicator 2) will support project activities through one or two of these mechanisms, instead of three.

Table 4. Likelihood of achievement of outputs and outcomes (summary)

Component	Result level	On target	Likely to be achieved	Unlikely to be achieved	Information not available
1	Outcome	4	1	0	0
	Output	8	1	0	1
2	Outcome	0	1	1	0
	Output	1	5	0	0
3	Outcome	0	2	0	0
	Output	1	0	1	0
Total		14	10	2	1

Source: Own elaboration based on Annex 5.

A detailed assessment of likelihood of achievement of outcomes and outputs is provided in Annex 5. The next paragraphs provide a narrative summary of the progress in each project component.

The project has achieved considerable progress in Component 1 (land use planning and management). The project is currently supporting the elaboration of two regional OETs (Sierra Madre-Costa in Chiapas and Sierra Sur-Costa in Oaxaca), which will update and complement the existing state-wide OETs. These land use plans are expected to cover 3.7 million ha across the three project landscapes, thus exceeding the project target. While these are government-led processes, the project is providing funding and technical expertise; project partners have highlighted, in particular, the value added of the CI's landscape approach and of its environmental and social safeguards, emphasizing Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Governance bodies have been formally established for each OET in compliance with government regulations: these include a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee with broader stakeholder participation, which are expected to remain active after the OETs are issued to serve as governance bodies at landscape level. In addition, consultants have been hired to facilitate the process, which is now in its first stage (environmental agenda setting)¹⁶. Given this progress, the elaboration of OETs is on target to be concluded by the project end date, if further delays are prevented.

On the ground, the project has also supported gender mainstreaming into PAs' annual operational plans with workshops and training. In addition, the project has advanced toward the target of elaborating and implementing 15 biological monitoring plans, one for each priority species: all of them were elaborated, a virtual platform and smartphone application were set up for data collection and storage, and 26 monitoring brigades (including 10 PA brigades) are in the process

¹⁶ The next steps are: characterization, forecast, proposal and public consultation.

of being trained and equipped; however, actual monitoring has not yet started due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Due to a shift in public policy towards focusing scarce resources on maintaining the existing PAs, it was not viable to expand federal PAs, so the project has supported the certification of ADVCs and, more recently, the establishment of two state PAs. At the conclusion of these processes, these PAs are expected to jointly cover 144,090 ha, exceeding the project target (102,403 ha) by 41% (see Table 5).

Table 5. Progress in expanding PAs in the three project landscapes

	Sierra Madre	Sierra Sur	Coast	Total
ADVCs certified (ha)	0	35,794	0	35,794
ADVCs in process of certification (ha)	4,200	25,000	2,041	31,241
State PAs in process to be established (ha)	34,000	0	43,055	77,055
Total	38,200	60,794	45,055	144,090

Source: Own elaboration based on information provided by the PMU (see Annex 5).

The establishment of a multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape has been achieved with the creation of the two OET Technical Committees, and work is ongoing to ensure that they are functional, with an ongoing consultancy to develop procedure manuals. The reported participation of different types of stakeholders, women, indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants in these governance bodies has exceeded the targets, while there is no information on youth participation. To enhance landscape governance, the project is also providing governance and leadership training to selected PA Councils, namely the Wetlands Council of the Coast of Oaxaca, the Advisory Councils of Landscapes of the South (known as CAPAS Network), and a recently-created ADVC governance body in Sierra Sur.

A pending task for the remaining part of the project is the validation of an Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) model for biodiversity conservation in each landscape. This output was planned for year two of project implementation, but is dependent on progress in the other ongoing activities under this component, especially the elaboration of OETs. While it is feasible, in principle, to comply with this target by the project end date, it is still unclear what this model would entail in practice, and how it would be validated.

Under Component 2 (sustainable value chains), the project has progressed in elaborating intervention plans with POs, but their implementation is still in its beginnings. Interviews indicate that the project is prioritizing mid-sized POs with formalized organization structures and that have been previously supported by CONANP; the focus of the project is thus on helping them remove the remaining barriers to access better-paying markets for sustainable products. The project is following a stepwise intervention model to provide tailored support to these POs, which starts with FPIC, followed by the participatory development of an intervention plan and its implementation in collaboration with project partners. These plans can include activities such as

training on sustainable production practices through field schools and training of trainers, facilitation of market linkages, certification, branding or procurement of equipment to comply with the requirements of potential buyers, and access to finance. The project is also developing value-chain characterizations to inform planning and implementation.

The project has selected 18 POs across 8 value chains (livestock, cocoa, coffee, cashew, fish, shrimp, tourism and forestry), thus exceeding the target of 9 POs, and completed the elaboration of intervention plans for all of them, either individually for each organization or, in the case of tourism and shrimp, jointly for all the participating POs in the same value chain (six and two POs, respectively).¹⁷ Work with these POs is expected to benefit an area of 6,702 ha in the PIS (1,891 ha in landscapes and 4,811 ha in seascapes), with the participation of 1,828 producers, of which 423 are indigenous or Afro-descendant (23%) and 507 are women (28%).¹⁸ If this is achieved, the project will exceed its target of 4,650 ha with sustainable production practices by 28% and its target of 1,000 producers benefited by the project by 84%. It should be noted, however, that in-person training on sustainable production practices has yet to start due to COVID-19 related restrictions, and has been rescheduled for Fiscal Year 2022.

As showed in Annex 6, the project has facilitated business links for 13 POs with six potential buyers, thus advancing towards the target of establishing partnerships for nine POs, and initial sales were carried out by two POs with The Green Corner, thus achieving a modest progress towards the target of seven POs reaching new markets. Additional activities that have been carried out with POs have included, as needed, capacity building (organizational strengthening, food safety and business training), experience exchange, supporting the acquisition of equipment and the infrastructure, business development activities such as brand development and certification, the development of conservation agreements and the establishment of fishing refuge zones. Given that these activities are still at initial stages, it seems unlikely that the 15% income increase target will be achieved by the producers of all POs by the project end date.

To facilitate access to long-term finance, a pre-feasibility study was conducted in 5 POs by the Forestry and Climate Change Fund (FCCF), a project partner, for a long-term investment to support sustainable resin and timber production in the Sierra Madre landscape. The project is also partnering with USAID's SLV project to develop novel financial mechanisms; initial candidates to pilot these mechanisms include five POs supported by the project, which are under consideration given their level of organization maturity and readiness to receive credit and investment.¹⁹ It is thus realistic to expect that at least five POs will be able to access these financial mechanisms before project ending.

¹⁷ It should be noted that nine additional POs in the fishing value chain have started collaborating with the project in the Coast landscape after the cut-off date for this evaluation.

¹⁸ Sex is not specified for 35 producers, however, given that some POs have recently started to participate in the project.

¹⁹ These are Café Capitán Luis A. Vidal and Productores Orgánicos del Tacaná in the Sierra Madre landscape, as well as Unión de Comunidades Indígenas de la Región del Istmo (UCIRI), Cafetaleros Unidos de la Costa (CUCOS) and Jacaralito in the Sierra Sur landscape.

Under Component 3 (financing), there is progress in aligning existing financing, but the development of new financial mechanisms is still at initial stages. According to the information provided by the PMU to the evaluation team, activities of 13 organizations have been aligned with the project (the target being seven),²⁰ and an amount of 17.4 million USD in cofinancing is close to be secured, which constitutes considerable progress towards the target of 21 million USD. This amount includes an expected 7.4 million USD in cofinancing from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), as well as 10 million USD from USAID's SLV project. The project also maintains a dialogue with Sembrando Vida, a program established by the Ministry of Wellbeing in the current administration to foster reforestation in agricultural plots; it has however proved challenging to formalize a collaboration; this is due, among other reasons, to competition on the ground to recruit producers, and to the ongoing controversy regarding the negative environmental impacts of this program in the country.

As for the development of new financial mechanisms, a major contribution is expected by USAID's SLV project, which started in 2020 with the aim to mobilize investments through 2025 to enable smallholder farmers to overcome financial barriers and catalyze commercial investments in sustainable supply chains that preserve forests and improve livelihoods. As mentioned above, the two projects are still in the process of establishing operational synergies by identifying POs for a pilot phase. Likewise, agreements with FCCF to create a forest management financing mechanism in the PIS La Sepultura (Sierra Madre) have yet to be finalized. Due to COVID-19, a pre-feasibility study in the field was conducted in July 2021 and is now under revision. Additional efforts include the development of two local funds to support the operation of the Huatulco National Park (Coast) and ADVCS (Sierra Sur), which are expected to mobilize at least 250,000 USD by the project end date. So far, efforts have focused on the so-called "Huatulco fund", developed with Fondo El Triunfo (FONCET), which is expected to operate in collaboration with hotel associations and the Huatulco ASUR airport. The first step envisioned is the establishment of "urns for conservation" to collect donations by tourists, but a consultancy is in the pipeline to identify additional mechanisms. Overall, this suggests that the project will likely reach the target of 500,000 USD mobilized through new financial mechanisms; however, given that all of these initiatives are at very initial stages, this might happen through a smaller number of mechanisms than the three targeted.

Most outputs and outcomes have yet to be achieved, so it is premature to assess their quality. While a detailed assessment of project activities is beyond the scope of this evaluation, the following aspects can be pointed out regarding the scope of the processes carried out so far:

- The project has not been able to start work in two of the 16 PIS identified in the Project Document due to factors that are outside the control of the project (see Section 3.2.2);

²⁰ These include the following: Fondo Oaxaqueño, SmartFish, SADER, COPLADE, SEMAHN, SEMAEDES, SEMARNAT, Fondo de Conservación El Triunfo, UCIRI, Cooperativa AMBIO, Pronatura Sur AC, CONANP and CIIDIR.

- Ornamental plants and maize value chains, originally contemplated in the Project Document, were substituted for the forestry (resin) and livestock value chains in order to build on previous work done by CONANP with the latter;
- As pointed out in Section 3.4.5 below, the implementation of social and environmental safeguards has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions and an ongoing learning process in the PMU, which might reflect in the quality of outputs in terms of inclusive participation and gender mainstreaming.

3.2.1 Barriers and enabling factors

Progress towards expected outputs and outcomes has been hindered by several barriers, both internal and external to the project. Internal barriers include a lengthy kick-off phase and learning curve; limited ownership of the Project Document given language barriers and late integration of staff to the PMU; diverging approaches to Component 2 among the two Executing Agencies; lengthy decision-making; and delayed procurement processes (see Section 3.4 for more detail). External barriers include the following:

- Policy changes: As a new administration from a different political party took office at the end of 2018, public programming was substantially revised, with a reorientation of funds towards flagship programs and projects, high staff turnover, and cuts in financial and human resources in the environmental and rural sectors. This has affected the expected cofinancing from public-sector partners. Institutional continuity at CONANP has however helped navigate these changes.
- COVID-19: The ongoing COVID-19 has caused repeated interruptions in field work because some communities have been intermittently closed (a common safety measure in locations with limited access to health services) and CI protocols do not allow large gatherings to prevent infection. In addition, in the first months of the pandemic, institutions ceased to function normally and many procedures were paused. Some PMU staff were also infected.
- Security issues on the ground: In the majority of PIS, the PMU has faced security challenges to operate on the ground, such as organized crime, illegal logging, poaching, land tenure conflicts, mining interests and retribution from intermediaries. In two of them - PIS #2 Yautepec - Santo Tomás Teipan (Sierra Sur) and PIS # 9 Francisco del Mar (Coast) - these challenges have made it impossible to carry out work in the area.

In this context, adaptive management, building trust with local communities, the implementation of safeguards, and establishing synergies with other organizations since the onset of the project have been key enabling factors according to project stakeholders.

3.3 Impact

3.3.1 Progress toward impact

While short-term outcomes are likely to be achieved by the project end date, more time is likely to be needed to achieve intermediate outcomes and impacts. Given delays in implementation, it is still early to observe intermediate outcomes and impacts on the ground, and it seems unlikely that these will be fully achieved by the project's end date. However, there is evidence that the project has advanced towards some short-term outcomes and is laying the basis for others.

As explained in Section 3.2.1, the project is on track to expand the area with land use plans that promote biodiversity conservation through the elaboration of OETs, the certification of ADVCS and the establishment of state PAs. However, it should be noted that, while OETs were initially conceived as the first step to lay the basis for further work, they will be a legacy of the project.

In addition, the project is working towards strengthening governance mechanisms at landscape level by building the capacities of OET Technical Committees and other local governance bodies. In addition, the project has set the stage to expand the adoption of sustainable practices that are compatible with biodiversity conservation and to improve market access for POs by elaborating intervention plans and by starting to provide market-oriented support. Some progress has also been made to ensure continued financing for landscape management, both for POs by establishing partnerships with USAID's SLV project and the FCCF, and for some PAs by starting to set up the Huatulco Fund and the ADVC Fund.

However, mainstreaming integrated landscape management is a transformational process that cannot be concluded over a 4-year span, even more so given that the project is implemented over a large geographical area, with the involvement of a broad array of stakeholders at multiple scales. Similarly, achieving continued sales and sustained income increases for POs, even those with relatively high capacities, is usually a process that requires continued support for several years, as it can be affected by factors such as changes in organizational leadership and hydrometeorological events, especially in a climate-change context.

Proactively fostering replication is needed to ensure that sustainable production practices are more widely adopted in the three landscapes, and to catalyze market change beyond individual links with new buyers. The project is seeking to establish five demonstration cases with the most advanced groups that had benefited from previous support by CONANP, and assumes that some replication will take place at landscape level by other groups. So far, the project has identified five potential demonstration cases in the livestock, coffee, cocoa, fish and shrimp value chains,²¹ and additional demonstration cases are being considered in the tourism value chain. However, there is not a clear strategy to actually support replication, especially given

²¹ These are Los Ángeles, Café Capitán Luis A. Vidal, UCIRI, Luchadores del Castaño and Agostaderos de El Topón.

that COVID-19 has limited experience exchanges. Finally, while substantive progress can realistically be made in the next months to set up blended finance mechanisms, efforts will need to continue after the project ends to consolidate and scale these mechanisms.

Implementing a solid sustainability strategy will be thus crucial in the remaining part of the project (see Section 3.5), as will be monitoring progress towards intermediate outcomes and impacts. Regarding the latter point, it should be noted that SMART indicators are not in place to track reduced pressure on biodiversity, increased connectivity and the conservation of priority species (see Section 3.1.3). On the other hand, while the project has collected net income baselines for 3 POs and developed the ToR for a consultancy covering 7 additional POs, it could benefit by tracking sales to new buyers as a shorter-term indicator.

3.4 Efficiency

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Outcomes (Efficiency)	<p>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</p> <p><i>Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings</i></p>	The project presents significant delays and low disbursements.

3.4.1 Financing and cofinancing

As of June 30, 2021, the project had disbursed 34% of its budget (2.46 out of 7.2 million USD). Disbursement was low in 2018 given the lengthy process to set up the PMU and kickstart project activities on the ground. While disbursements have substantially increased in 2019, 2020 and 2021, they have not matched the budget originally planned, partly due to limited activities on the ground as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic (Table 6). To date, the project has disbursed 71.0% of the planned budget for Component 1, while disbursements for Components 2 and 3 reach 20.1% and 14.3% of the planned budget (Table 7). Overall, this is in line with the progress in implementation, which is far more advanced for Component 1. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the progress in the implementation of Component 1, though difficult to quantify numerically, does not seem to match the corresponding disbursement given that some activities, such as the elaboration of OETs, are still at initial stages and will likely require considerable funding beyond the in-kind cofinancing provided. The cumulative project management cost is 119,606 USD, i.e., 4.9% of the total disbursed budget. While this is in compliance with the 5% established by the GEF, it might surpass this ceiling in the scenario of a project extension, unless funded through savings in other components or cofinancing.

Table 6. Planned and disbursed budget (30 June 2021)

Concept	Project Document (USD)	Disbursed at the end of FY21 (USD)	Disbursed/planned (%)
Component 1	2,052,359	1,457,522	71.0%
Component 2	3,332,263	671,309	20.1%
Component 3	1,491,045	213,188	14.3%
Project Management	343,783	119,606	34.8%
Total	7,219,450	2,461,625	34.1%

Source: Information provided by the PMU.

Table 7. Disbursed budget by year (USD)

Concept	2018	2019	2020	2021
Component 1	19,358	416,651	429,740	582,992
Component 2	3,329	73,154	234,870	355,590
Component 3	3,938	46,798	54,619	106,367
Project Management Costs	20,821	30,059	19,153	66,127
Total disbursed	47,446	566,662	738,380	1,111,076
Project Document	1,340,137	1,348,457	1,439,671	1,484,527
Disbursed/planned (%)	3.5	42	51.3	74.8

Source: Information provided by the PMU.

Only 20.1% of the expected cofinancing (9.5 out of 47.5 million USD) has been disbursed, and while it is likely that additional cofinancing will materialize, it might not be sufficient to achieve the target. Six out of 14 cofinanciers identified in the Project Document did not provide any cofinancing (see Table 8). The most notable case is SADER (formerly called SAGARPA), which was planned to contribute 26.8 million USD in in-kind cofinancing through its programming before undergoing restructuring and cuts as the new federal administration took office in 2018. An additional 3.6 million USD has not yet materialized by five project partners in the private sector (ALSEA, Danone, Fundación ADO), the social sector (PRONATURA SUR A.C.) and academia (CIIDIR OAXACA, IPN). This situation has affected project implementation.

The project has responded to this situation by recruiting 10 new cofinanciers, which so far have disbursed 2.3 million USD in addition to the 7.2 million USD already provided by original cofinanciers. Furthermore, the project is currently close to signing an agreement with SADER for

7.4 million USD in cofinancing²² and is establishing a partnership with USAID's SLV project, which has an approved budget of 10 million USD and the goal to leverage 2 million USD in investments. In the scenario that the SLV budget is counted as cofinancing and the remaining original cofinanciers complete their planned disbursements (9.8 million USD still pending), leveraged funds would reach 36.8 million USD, 10.7 million USD short of the target. It is not clear, however, if SLV will benefit exclusively the three project landscapes.

Table 8. Planned and disbursed cofinancing

Cofinancier	Project Document (USD)	Disbursed at the end of FY21 (USD)	Disbursed (%)	Type	Component
CI-Starbucks Foundation	1,000,000	995,603	99.6%	In-kind	2
Fundación ADO	1,114,845	0	0.0%	NA	NA
Cooperativa AMBIO S.C. de R.L.	413,119	38,849	9.4%	In-kind	1
CIIDIR OAXACA, IPN	714,089	0	0.0%	NA	NA
WILDCOAST	729,405	114,286	15.7%	Cash	1, 2
Fondo de Conservación El Triunfo, A.C.	2,247,191	456,639	20.3%	In-kind	1
PRONATURA SUR A.C.	600,000	0	NA	NA	NA
UCIRI	68,900	13,113	19.0%	In-kind	2
SEMAEDES	434,931	165,997	38.2%	In-kind	1
ALSEA	500,000	0	NA	NA	NA
Danone	703,515	0	NA	NA	NA
SADER	26,800,000	0	NA	NA	NA
SEMAHN	2,430,971	2,393,529	98.5%	In-kind	1
CONANP	9,700,000	3,032,986	31.3%	In-kind	1
Master Chef	0	4,855	NA	In-kind	2
La Frailecana	0	89,641	NA	In-kind	1, 2
WILDCOAST	0	124,891	NA	In-kind	1,2,3
SEMARNAT	0	25,419	NA	In-kind	1, 2
Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC	0	5,314	NA	In-kind	2
SmartFish	0	19,350	NA	In-kind	2
Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuicola A.C.	0	20,808	NA	In-kind	2
CONAFOR	0	2,026,900	NA	In-kind	2

²² The cofinancing is planned to be provided through the following programs: 1. Desarrollo Productivo del Sur Sureste y Zonas Económicas Especiales; 2. Sustentabilidad y Bienestar para Pequeños Productores de Café; 3. Crédito Ganadero; 4. Investigación, Innovación Y Desarrollo Tecnológico Agrícola; 5. Incentivo Sistemas de Riego Tecnificado; and 6. Capitalización Productiva Agrícola.

Cofinancier	Project Document (USD)	Disbursed at the end of FY21 (USD)	Disbursed (%)	Type	Component
Fondo Oaxaqueño	0	27,641	NA	In-kind	2
INTERCAFE	0	428	NA	In-kind	2
SEMARNAT - Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas)	0	12,556	NA	In-kind	1
Total	47,456,966	9,568,805	20.2		

Source: Information provided by the PMU.

NA: Not applicable

CI Mexico has increased its capacity for financial management, but high staff turnover has caused delays in financial planning, requiring repeated training and closer oversight by CI-GEF. According to the interviews carried out for this evaluation, adequate accounting and financial systems are in place for project management, and the quality of financial planning and reporting has improved over time.²³ However, since project start, the PMU has had 3 financial officers, with the last change occurring in November 2020. Likewise, CI Mexico has had 4 directors of operations (the current one started her mandate in the course of this evaluation). One of the main reasons seems to be staff shortages resulting in excessive workload, given that these positions are in charge of financial management, procurement and donations. This has been partly remedied by hiring a procurement and donations manager at CI Mexico headquarters, and a junior officer dedicated to procurement and donations for the PMU (currently in progress). However, interviews suggest a continued need for greater administrative support to ensure more transparent processes and coordination with technical staff.

3.4.2 Governance system

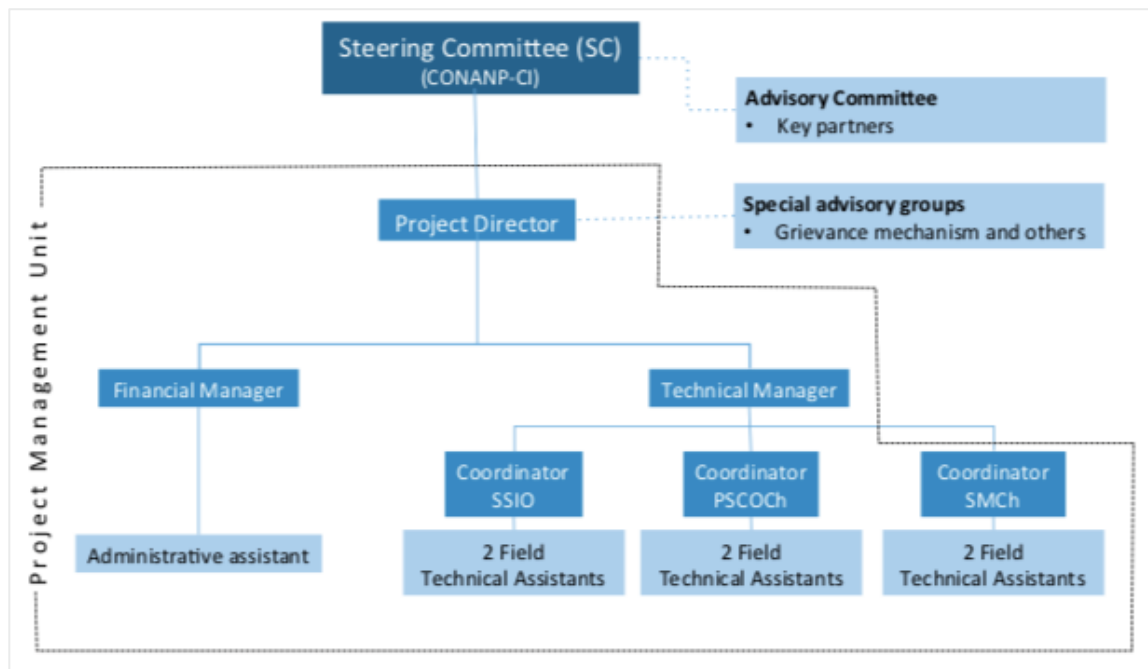
The roles and responsibilities of the different actors were clearly defined at project design, but underwent adjustments during implementation. The Project Document envisioned a governance structure composed by a Steering Committee, a PMU with 13 members, an Advisory Group, a Grievance Committee, and a Value Chains Advisory Group (see Figure 3). It also specifies the main responsibilities of these bodies, the two Executing Agencies and the members of the PMU, and foresees the creation of special advisory groups as needed.

However, interviews indicate that it took a long time for the co-Executing Agencies to agree on specific governance arrangements. This process resulted in the development of a governance manual, which establishes the responsibilities of the Project Director and details the composition,

²³ Since audit reports were not shared with the evaluation team, this finding could not be triangulated.

functions, and operation of the governance bodies -including the periodicity of meetings, key agenda items to be addressed and decision-making rules, among other aspects.

Figure 3. Project execution organizational chart according to the Project Document



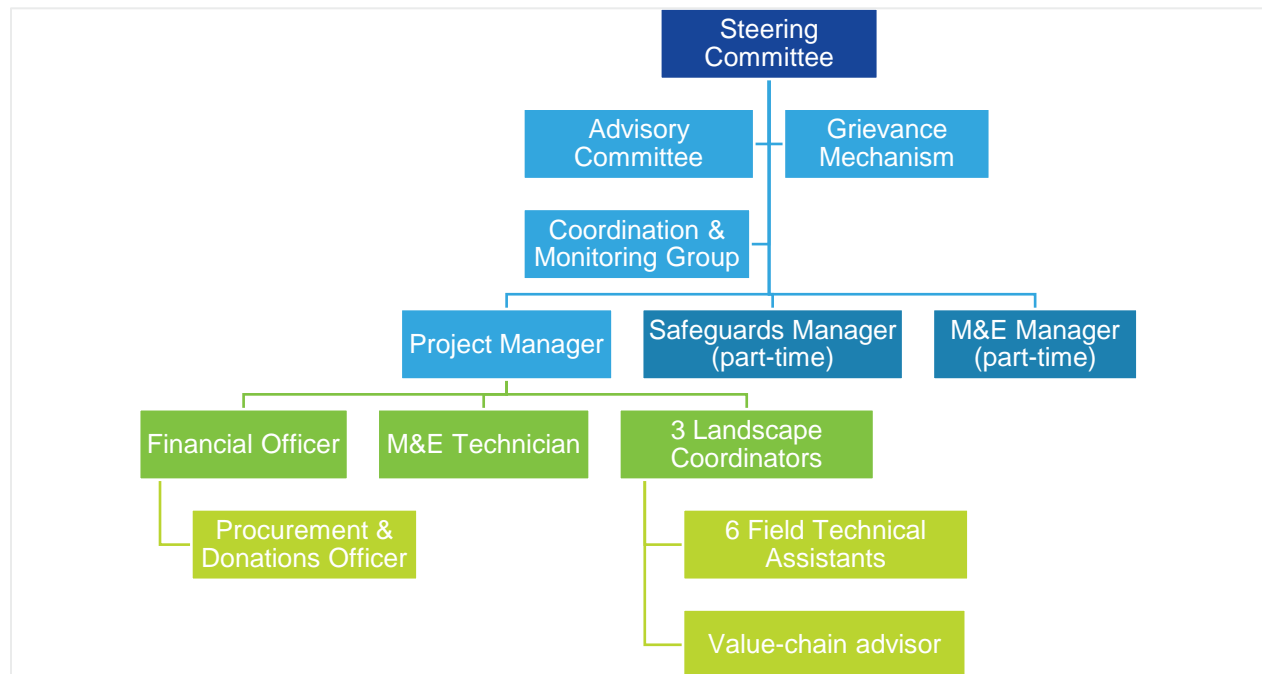
Source: Project Document, p. 58.

Adjustments were also made to the composition of the PMU to address emerging needs (see Section 3.4.3). This resulted in the in the following changes (see Figure 4):

- A Coordination and Monitoring Group, composed by the PMU, CI Technical Director, and the Directors of PAs in the project landscapes, was added to the governance structure with technical oversight functions.
- The Value Chains Advisory Group, intended to provide advice on the development of market-driven value chains, was not included in the governance manual and has not yet been created, but an internal working group on market access was recently set up.

In compliance with the governance manual, the Steering Committee has met twice a year since 2019. It was also mentioned in the interviews that the Coordination and Monitoring Group is meeting regularly and that the Advisory Committee has met twice. However, it is not clear from the available information if the Advisory Committee, which is due to session once a year, is active. As for the Grievance Mechanism Committee, it has not met because no grievances have been submitted so far.

Figure 4. Updated organizational chart



Source: Own elaboration based on project documents and interviews with the PMU

While the governance system has helped coordination, it has not proved efficient for decision-making, nor has ensured effective communication. Given the large number of staff participating in the project at different scales and with different roles, both within CI and CONANP, governance bodies have been an important space for coordination. However, interviews point to three persisting bottlenecks:

1. Decisions have to be approved by multiple levels of management inside CI Mexico, causing slow decision-making processes. While this is explained by the strategic importance of this project for CI Mexico and the need to build ownership of the project in the PMU, it has affected the timeliness of execution.
2. People occupying different positions in the project's governance system are not fully aware of information regarding the project that would help them better perform their responsibilities, understand their role within the broader scope of the project, and identify opportunities. Similar information gaps were also noticed in interviews with project partners, suggesting that there are weaknesses in communication. This might be linked, among other factors, to the existing opportunity areas in planning and monitoring (see Section 3.4.3).
3. Differing visions regarding the approach to be followed to foster sustainable production have caused delays to the implementation of Component 2 (see also Section 3.1.1). PA Directors have favored work with POs inside PAs and the use of a "capacity-first" approach, which focuses primarily on building capacities for sustainable production. While

this bottleneck has been addressed by the PMU and work is under way, it should be monitored to avoid further delays.

The project has successfully established partnerships with multiple stakeholders, but the time required has been underestimated. As explained in previous sections, the project has established multiple partnerships with organizations in the public, private and social sectors. This has happened across the three project components, both at the strategic level (with national and international organizations) and on the ground, with local actors that are active in each landscape. In this way, the project is acting as a catalyzer of existing initiatives by creating synergies. While this has been indicated as an enabling factor to achieve project outputs and outcomes, weaving together these partnerships has taken more time than expected, adding to the delays in implementation.

The capacity of the co-Executing Agencies was not analyzed in-depth at project design.

An in-depth analysis of the capacities of CONANP was not carried out at the design phase, as CI-GEF did not have direct access to this government agency. As for CI Mexico, its previous experience with a GEF-5 project (ECOSECHAS) was considered proof of sufficient capacity. However, ECOSECHAS had a much smaller size (1.5 million USD in grant funding), so scaling up operations has implied hiring additional staff and an ongoing process of capacity-building, which has affected the timeliness and quality of execution (see Section 3.4.3).

3.4.3 Quality of implementation and execution

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Implementation	Satisfactory (S) <i>There were no or minor short comings and quality of implementation meets expectations</i>	CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation. CI-GEF did not adequately assessed the capacities of the Executing Entities, and there have been challenges with the duration of procurement processes, but the latter is likely to improve with the new CI-GEF procurement policy.
Execution	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) <i>There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected.</i>	CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for execution, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase, a steep learning curve, and lengthy procurement processes. While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain challenges in governance, planning and monitoring.

CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation. While the capacity of Executing Agencies was not analyzed in-depth at project design, CI-GEF has provided them with oversight and technical assistance throughout the project cycle to support capacity building and ensure compliance with CI-GEF and GEF policies. The CI-GEF procurement policy, however, was mentioned as a key factor causing delays in

implementation, as until recently it contemplated five different thresholds with their corresponding procedures, with low thresholds for CI-GEF approval. The new CI-GEF procurement policy, which was recently approved, is expected to streamline procurement processes, as it reduces the thresholds to three and introduces a higher threshold for CI-GEF approval.

CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for execution, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase and a steep learning curve. As mentioned in the previous section, this is the first large GEF project for CI Mexico, which had to recruit additional staff to meet operational demands. CI Mexico's Executive Director personally lead the project since the approval of the project for implementation in January 2018 and until the project director took office in September 2018, two months after the official project start. As a cascading strategy was followed to hire the rest of the team, it took an additional 6 months to finalize the recruitment of the Financial Officer, the Landscape Coordinators and the field staff, which concluded in February 2019. The Safeguards Manager and the M&E Manager were hired in September 2019 and February 2020, respectively, and an M&E Technician was added to the team in February of 2021. As previously mentioned, the PMU is currently hiring a Procurement and Donations Officer to support the Financial Officer, given the growing workload in this area. Local offices also needed to be set up, and equipment acquired to ensure presence in the landscapes. This situation, together with the aforementioned turnover in some key positions, has meant a steep learning curve regarding CI-GEF requirements and a considerable time investment in capacity building. In addition, it has required some efforts to build ownership of the project approach.

In the case of CONANP, as a new administration took office in December 2018, the reorientation of environmental policy and the appointment of a new National Commissioner of Protected Areas in June 2019 caused some delays, but changes in staff were minimal, which granted certain continuity. However, ownership of the project has been an issue, since not all actors involved in execution were acquainted with the final version of the Project Document, and this did not match their expectations in all cases (see Section 3.4.2).

Overall, these situations have impacted project efficiency in two ways:

- Given this protracted kick-off phase (way longer than the usual 3 months), the project became operational on the ground in Fiscal Year 2020, i.e., in its second year of implementation, thus incurring in significant delays.
- Quality of execution has consistently been reported as an issue across different areas, such as planning, financial management, M&E, safeguards and procurement, with improvements as the PMU grew and staff was trained.

Roles and responsibilities have been evolving as the project team has been expanding and strengthening its capacities. The original composition of the PMU (see Figure 4 above) has been adjusted to address emerging needs. The PMU currently has 14 full-time staff, plus a part-time Safeguards Manager and a part-time M&E Manager at CI Mexico headquarters; a Procurement and Donations Officer is also being hired to support the Financial Officer. As a consequence, the functions originally assigned to the Technical Manager were instead spread across several staff. CI Mexico also provides support to the PMU through its Communication

Officer and Financial Department. Therefore, the PMU and its supporting staff is spread over different locations. With the restrictions to travelling imposed by COVID-19, this has proven a challenge for effective communication and coordination among team members.

Given the need to strengthen the PMU's capacities in value-chain approaches, it was also decided that one Field Technical Assistant in each landscape needed to have background and experience in this area, and an advisor on agroforestry systems for coffee and cocoa was hired for the Sierra Sur and Sierra Madre landscapes.

Procurement processes have been a key challenge, but additional staff are expected to improve time efficiency. Interviewees agree that procurement processes have been lengthy, causing delays and lost opportunities on the ground given the seasonality of biological monitoring and agricultural cycles. However, the hiring of a Procurement and Donations Officer in the PMU, together with a simplified CI-GEF procurement policy, are expected to speed up these processes. Staff turnover at CI Mexico, however, is still an issue, as is the large number of consultancies (over 30) planned for the current fiscal year, which will imply a considerable workload in terms of procurement, oversight, and, later, integration of results.

While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain gaps in planning and monitoring. Interviews indicate that efforts were made to consolidate the PMU and build capacities, resulting in improved performance and compliance with CI-GEF requirements. However, two related needs still stand out: the need to improve planning of project activities - while still retaining some flexibility- as a basis for the PMU and its support staff to work in an efficient and coordinated manner; and the need to improve the systematization of project information to facilitate its use. These aspects are analyzed in greater detail in Sections 3.4.6 and 3.4.7.

3.4.4 Risk Management

Foreseeable risks were adequately identified in the Project Document and monitored through PIRs. As shown in Table 8, some risks were underestimated (such as changes in government and in cofinanciers), while others did not consider possible impacts on project operations (such as the impacts of climate change and illicit activities), focusing exclusively on impacts in the project's landscapes. The mitigation measures are overall adequate and have been implemented, but in some instances, they are vague and do not reflect directly on project operations.

COVID-19 was identified as an additional risk during implementation and a protocol was developed for field work. COVID-19 was included in the PIRs as of substantial risk in 2020 and as a high risk in 2021. These ratings are justified given the delays caused in project activities and in the leveraging of funds. In response to this situation, CI developed a protocol to lower the risk of infection, which implied a shift to remote work, limited field visits, and meetings with small numbers of people on the ground, among other measures. While these measures have affected progress implementation and the application of safeguards, in addition to being adopted despite

demands from CONANP and some communities for continued presence on the ground, they are considered adequate.

Table 9. Comments on risk analysis

Risks	Rating	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
a. Impacts of global climate change	Substantial	Application of the ILM approach and land use planning at the landscape level	While some efforts were carried out to mainstream climate change into project activities, including the OET in Oaxaca, climate risk assessments are needed to manage the potential impacts of climate change in project operations.
b. Forest fires	Substantial	Land-use planning Introduction of best practices for sustainable production Support to fire brigades	The mitigation measures implemented are adequate.
c. Extreme weather phenomena	Substantial	Application of the ILM approach Reduction of the price-shock vulnerability of producers linked to climate change Strengthening of governance mechanisms and POs	The mitigation measures are vague and should be more specifically operationalized considering possible effects on project activities. A first step for this has been the development of a digital early warning system for extreme weather phenomena.
d. Social and political problems	Substantial	Capacity building, participatory processes and communication with project stakeholders Implementation of safeguards	The mitigation measures are adequate, but there are opportunities to improve the application of safeguards (see Section 3.4.5)
e. Illicit activities	Substantial	Application of the ILM approach Improved coordination among government institutions New economic opportunities through sustainable production activities Strengthened local groups to monitor illicit activities	These mitigation measures do not address the possible impacts of illicit activities on project operations (e.g., safety of field staff). Mitigation measures could include the development of safety protocols, staff training and systematically monitoring emerging risks in the three landscapes.
f. Changes in local, state and federal government institutions	Substantial	Constant communication and coordination with the three levels of government	This mitigation measure is adequate, but the risk was underestimated.
g. Weak institutional capacities for planning, management and governance in targeted areas	Substantial	Hiring of 13 project-staff that will help build planning, management and governance capacities on the ground	This mitigation measure is adequate. The staff has been increased to 14 and 26 CONANP staff are actively involved in the project. Building synergies with other organizations has also proved crucial.
h. Limited local capacity, commitment and/or governance	Substantial	The capacity and commitment of local people will be strengthened through trainings Strategies will be implemented together with communities to maximize ownership and uptake	The mitigation strategies provide a general orientation, but more specific actions should be included in the intervention plans and in the project's sustainability strategy to ensure ownership.
i. Changes in some institutions providing co-financing could lead to their inability to do so	Substantial	Approaching the new institution's leader as well as other possible co-financiers to fill in the gaps	The mitigation strategies are adequate, but the risk was underestimated (see Section 3.4.1).

Risks	Rating	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
j. CONANP'S budget continues to decline prohibiting the institution's full participation in this project	High	Development of financial mechanisms under Component 3	The mitigation measure is adequate in the medium-term, but the possible impacts of this risk on project operations are not addressed.

Source: Own elaboration based on Project Document.

3.4.5 Social and environmental safeguards

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Environmental and social safeguards	<p>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</p> <p><i>There were some shortcomings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation more or less met expectations.</i></p>	The quality of environmental and social safeguard plans is satisfactory and there is evidence that they have been implemented, but ownership of safeguards by the PMU is still an ongoing process, and there are opportunities to broaden inclusion within POs and PAs.

Safeguards plans were elaborated at project design, and manuals were developed during implementation to operationalize them. As part of the project design, a Safeguards Screening was carried out by CI-GEF in August 2016, which found the project not to cause negative environmental and social impacts (Category C) and identified five safeguard policies triggered by the project:

- Involuntary resettlement;
- Indigenous peoples plan with FPIC;
- Grievance mechanism;
- Gender mainstreaming plan; and
- Stakeholder engagement plan.

Actions taken to address the recommendations of the Safeguards Screening included the development of guiding principles for the project, the identification of social safeguards for improved governance mechanisms in the priority landscapes and of restrictions of access to natural resources, as well as the elaboration of an Indigenous Peoples Safeguard Plan, a Grievance Mechanism, a Gender Mainstreaming Plan, and a Stakeholder Engagement Plan, all included in the Project Document. These documents, which were reportedly elaborated in consultation with local stakeholders, include comprehensive assessments of the key issues in the three landscapes, and identify objectives, activities and indicators.

The Project Document also establishes the development and application of a protocol to obtain the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of indigenous and rural communities, and seeks to mainstream safeguards, across the results' framework, which sets out targets for gender-sensitive

land-use and PA plans (Output 1.1.1 Indicators 1 and 2), includes an output indicator on FPIC (Output 1.2.1 Indicator 1), seeks to monitor the participation of different stakeholder groups, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, women and youth in landscape governance bodies (Output 1.3.1 Indicators 1 to 4), and targets a proportional participation of women, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and youth in the adoption of sustainable production practices (Output 2.1.1 indicator 2). While not all of these indicators are fully SMART (see Annex 5), the inclusion of these elements is important to monitor the application of safeguards.

During implementation, the PMU elaborated a Governance Manual, which specifies the composition and operation of the Grievance Committee, and a Safeguards Manual, which provides practical orientation for the application of safeguards and specifies the steps to be followed to obtain the FPIC.

There is evidence that safeguards have been applied, but there are opportunities for broader inclusion. PIRs and interviews indicate that FPIC has been obtained by all communities and POs with ongoing work on ADVCS and sustainable value chains, and that it has been embedded in the processes for the elaboration of OETs. There are also indications that the project is keeping updated stakeholders maps in the three landscapes, and monitoring participation from women, indigenous peoples and Afrodescendants, which has exceeded the targets (See Annex 5). However, interviews indicate that there are opportunities to improve inclusion inside POs and PAs based on a more detailed understanding of how different characteristics (such as gender, age and culture) intersect in project participants and thus affect their social relationships (including their position within communities), their capacities, vulnerabilities and needs. Two key barriers for this to happen are analyzed in the next paragraphs.

COVID-19 has restricted the implementation of safeguards on the ground by limiting participation, but adequate mitigation measures were implemented. As reported in PIRs and interviews, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited the possibility to carry out in-person, community-wide FPICs, given that face-to-face meetings have become less regular, and video calls are sometimes unfamiliar to actors or not viable due to limited internet access. As a temporary solution, the project is receiving the FPIC from community leaders, who have previously held meetings with the community members to ensure their approval. Given restrictions to travelling, it has also become more difficult for the Safeguards Manager to operate from the CI Mexico headquarters, which put a strain on communication between the Safeguards Department and the field staff.

A process is still ongoing within the project team to mainstream social and environmental safeguards into operations and ensure ownership by field staff. A Safeguard Manager was hired in September 2019 (two months after the actual start of project execution, and 14 months after the official project start) to oversee the application of safeguard instruments. The Safeguard Manager currently works across different CI Mexico projects, devoting about one third of her time to this project. Her activities have included providing training, advice and feedback to field staff regarding the mainstreaming of safeguards into project operations, as well as overseeing safeguards reporting in coordination with the M&E Manager. The Safeguard Manager also developed the manual mentioned above and established the Mechanism's email and hotline,

which so far has only received queries that have been addressed without deriving in grievances. However, the PIR for Fiscal Year 2021 notes that “the project is still in the sensitization phase, and efforts towards building awareness of gender issues and appropriating these matters beyond the Safeguards Department must continue. For example, 3 PAs did not participate in the development of gender-sensitive workplans, and the Project’s field teams continue to struggle using gender measures and viewing the gender perspective as a matter that is not only the responsibility of the Safeguards Manager”. Interviews further indicate that the quality of reporting on safeguards from field staff still needs to be improved.

3.4.6 Adaptive management

The project has experienced considerable delays in implementation, thus making adaptive management a priority. Delays were mainly due to government change in 2018, a lengthy kick-off phase, the learning curve for CI Mexico as the Executing Agency in charge of operations, COVID-19, and the long time needed to plan activities in each landscape given their specificities. While most of these factors are analyzed in previous sections, it is important to highlight that a greater investment of time was discovered to be necessary to understand the context of each territory and define appropriate responses. The socio-political diversity of the landscapes (e.g., organizational, logistics and quality capacities in production; quality and status of agreements between groups in the landscapes; deep-rooted dynamics of assistance; unintended favoring of some productive groups from public policy, etc.) was not considered in the initial project design and demanded more attention during implementation than anticipated.

The project has been able to adjust its implementation strategy to address unexpected developments and delays, but there is a tension between the need for flexibility on the ground, and the need for planning to ensure a common vision and coordinated action. The PMU has adjusted in multiple ways to the factors mentioned above, including the hiring of additional project staff, capacity building, the recruitment of additional cofinanciers, the application of COVID-19 protocols, and short-term planning of activities based on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this MTE is also expected to provide inputs to identify further adaptive measures to achieve project targets. However, interviews indicate that this flexible manner of operating has clashed with the need for formal planning to ensure a common vision and coordinated action among the multiple stakeholders that participate in the project.

Recommendations for corrective actions were given in the PIRs for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, but progress in these actions is unclear. While the PMU explained that these recommendations are discussed at the meetings of the Coordination and Monitoring Group and considered in Annual Work Plans, there does not seem to be a reporting mechanism that allows to follow up on whether these recommendations have been implemented and how.

3.4.7 M&E system

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Monitoring & Evaluation (Design)	Satisfactory (S) <i>There were no or minor short comings and quality of M&E design meets expectations.</i>	The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed, with some shortcomings in the results framework. The budget covers key M&E activities, but does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes.
Monitoring & Evaluation (Implementation)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>There were some short comings and quality of M&E implementation more or less meets expectations.</i>	While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making.

The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed. The M&E plan contemplates 13 activities in total, including project steering committee meetings, quarterly progress reporting and evaluations. It defines their respective frequency, responsible parties and the indicative budget foreseen for an activity. The plan includes all essential M&E activities and allows for adequate reporting. However, as noted above, some of the indicators included in the results' framework are not fully SMART.

The budget covers key M&E activities, but does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes. The indicative budget for M&E, which is displayed by line in the Project Document, totals up to USD 146,498, equivalent to 1.8% of the GEF grant. This is below the 3% indicated as a good practice for GEF projects between 5 and 10 million USD.²⁴ Likewise, interviews suggest that the budget has not allowed for close monitoring of the multiple project activities occurring in the three landscapes, which involves data collection on the ground.

While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making. As for other aspects of project execution, there was a learning curve in M&E activities and a lack of dedicated staff, which has been addressed with capacity building and the hiring of a Monitoring Technician in February 2021. This has resulted in improvements in planning and reporting. Among other actions, monitoring information has been organized in a database with links to the corresponding evidence. However, while PIRs and quarterly reports have been duly completed, there is a need of systematizing and summarizing the large amount of monitoring information collected so that it can be more easily used for project management and decision-making at different levels. Overall, the lack of systematization of project information makes it difficult to grasp project progress in a detailed manner. Other factors affecting M&E quality have been the COVID-19 global pandemic,

²⁴ See GEF, 2020. Guidelines on the project and program cycle policy (2020 update), para 19.

which has made it difficult to conduct monitoring activities on the ground, and the multiple demands on field staff, which have tended to prioritize action and addressing emerging issues over planning and reporting.

3.4.8 Communications and knowledge management

The Project Document contains a communication plan with some knowledge management elements. The communication plan lays out how social marketing tools, positioning and content dissemination fit with the project components and are expected to enable outcome achievement, particularly given the strong market approach that the project takes. The knowledge management strategy consists of a paragraph within the communication strategy in the Project Document, and thus is very general.

Based on lessons learned included in the PIR 2020, three communication channels were created. First, an alliance was formed with the Mexican Secretariat of Communications to provide internet services to rural communities to improve access to healthcare and economic opportunities through new communication channels. Second, as a means of dissemination to other development professionals, the project attended the III Latin American and Caribbean Congress of Protected Areas in Perú to present the project. It was positively received, and attendance to the Congress proved to be beneficial both to disseminate the project as well as to learn and incorporate new ideas to it. Lastly, to maintain all partners well-informed, the team has begun sending a monthly newsletter to key stakeholders presenting the project's advances. Three issues of the newsletter were published in 2020: in February-March, April and May. A remaining challenge in developing communication activities (e.g., publications in social networks) is timeliness, as all content needs to go through the CI Mexico's headquarters.

During project implementation, new communication channels were established beyond those identified in the Project Document to ensure effective engagement with rural producers and PA personnel. To address this, the project has created new communication channels from which information and ideas will be disseminated. Next to the already mentioned internet service provision, congress attendance, and newsletters, mechanisms that have been identified include WhatsApp groups, webpages, a fact sheet, and a booklet. WhatsApp groups have turned out useful to maintain contact to local stakeholders and CONANP staff when visits were not possible under COVID-19. For instance, they allowed to keep community members aware of progress, maintain trust and assuage fears in the community that the program had abandoned activities with them. Another way that project awareness and trust of local stakeholders was built is by ensuring that information collected by the project returns to the local stakeholders. An interesting instance could be witnessed during the economic and financing characterization consultancy for fisheries in the Costa landscapes. When returning the consultancy's results, the community members were highly reassured and many rumors quelled, as it turned out there was widespread confusion and distrust as to why the consultants had asked certain information viewed as intimate or irrelevant, and the results helped many contextualize the reason behind the questions.

The knowledge management strategy has consisted in systematizing and disseminating knowledge generated by the project in local languages and in Spanish. Three types of knowledge management activities and products have been identified, including peer learning activities, devolution of the knowledge produced to local stakeholders, and a lesson-learned workshop. In 2020, there have been significant project achievements related to knowledge generation and management, including peer learning and knowledge coproduction activities that were aligned to the Knowledge Management Plan. In 2021, significant efforts were made to ensure that information collected by the project such as that raised by the Landscape Assessment Framework, returns to the local stakeholders. Finally, the project organized a face-to-face workshop on lessons learned in July 2021 (in which the Sierra Sur team did not participate as they contracted COVID) resulting in a document that includes mind maps and most importantly a comprehensive table that lists activities to continue doing, increase or decrease at landscape level. Nonetheless, interviews indicate that more efforts are needed to document these lessons and feed them into project design.

3.5 Sustainability

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Sustainability	Moderately Likely (ML) <i>There are moderate risks to sustainability</i>	While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. However, climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.

3.5.1 Factors affecting the sustainability of project benefits

The Project Document includes a specific sustainability strategy or exit strategy.²⁵ This explicitly addresses key factors to maintain the integrated management of the selected landscapes: i) strengthening of public policy related to the management of protected areas; ii) strengthening the institutional framework, by generating coordination platforms that include institutions from various sectors traditionally investing financial resources in social and production programs; iii) building social and cultural enabling factors, by building on local knowledge, the active participation of key stakeholders and capacity building; iv) generating economic incentives, by increasing the value of products and services related to sustainable practices and thus family income and mobilizing state-level incentive programs to promote it; and v) developing innovative financial mechanisms with support from key decision makers, including both public and private sources.

²⁵ See Section G, p. 39.

Although the Project Document refers explicitly to all these aspects, the sustainability strategy is particularly strong on the financial aspects. Component 3 was designed as the financial sustainability strategy for the integrated management of the three selected landscapes, in particular through better coordination with ongoing investments of government agencies so that they invest in the ILM approach, the expansion of successful financial mechanisms that already supported conservation and management of ecosystems in Mexico, as well as novel blended finance mechanisms. While environmental and climate change aspects are not explicitly mentioned in the sustainability or exit strategy contained in the Project Document, the project does promote the adoption of sustainable production practices with climate adaptation cobenefits.

The Project Document refers to two mechanisms to further support the sustainability of project results. On the one hand, it claims that production practices will be assessed through the Index of Project Sustainability (IPS), a 10-scale tool developed and applied by CONANP. By the end of the project, production practices in the target areas (at least 4,650 hectares) would reach at least 6 points in this index, meaning that they would be reasonably sustainable. In addition, the project would apply CI's Landscape Assessment Framework "to evaluate the indicators that together characterize the overall sustainability of a landscape against broader integrated management objectives" (p. 17). This framework includes indicators relating to natural capital, sustainable production, governance, and human well-being. Assessing these indicators would "enable key stakeholders to monitor and communicate the progress of a landscape towards sustainability" (p. 17).

The sustainability strategy included in the Project Document has not been systematically implemented by the Executing Agencies, but has been complemented with new strategies, in particular in view of delays in project execution. While some project activities are implicitly contributing to ensure continued benefits after the project ends, the PMU does not seem fully aware of the strategy and has not systematically followed up on its implementation. While project staff has confirmed that CONANP's IPS and CI's Landscape Assessment Framework are being used for the work on the ground, it is not clear how these tools are feeding into a broader assessment of sustainability at project level. On the other hand, given the delays in the implementation the project, CI Mexico is seeking to provide continuity to Components 2 and 3 by linking them to other projects, such as the recently-started, USAID's SLV project, and GEF-7 project "Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Rural Landscapes of Mexico", whose concept was approved in June 2020 with CI Mexico and SADER as executing agencies. While this would support the sustainability (and expansion) of project results, interviews indicate that it has not been widely communicated with project partners, and that further work is needed to link the project with these new initiatives on an operational level.

While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. As outlined in the updated ToC, activities and outputs under Component 1 are planned to result in increased land area under biodiversity conservation schemes and multi-stakeholder governance with landscape approach, which in turn would result in reduced pressure on biodiversity and increased connectivity. Activities and outputs in Component 2 are expected to result in the adoption of sustainable production practices and

improved market access for producers' organizations, which in turn would result in increased income of producers' organizations. As discussed in Section 3.2.1, as of September 2021, the project has made moderate progress on achieving these outcomes, especially those related with its second component. The next paragraphs provide more detail on the level of implementation of the project's sustainability strategy under Components 1 and 2, identifying the factors that can potentially affect whether the project's outcomes and impacts will be sustained in the long term.

Reduced pressure on biodiversity and increased connectivity

Legal, policy and regulatory frameworks

Progress has been very good in the development of OETs at the regional level, although it is uncertain whether they will be finalized by the end of the project in June 2022. As noted earlier, while this is technically feasible, these processes are usually very long and highly participatory and thus may require more than the nine months currently available. Once they are issued, OETs become binding for government institutions, which need to ensure that they are enforced. The OETs have indeed an important command and control aspect: forestry permits and Municipal Urban Development Plans, for example, have to adhere to them. Thus, their implementation is expected to contribute to reduce the pressure on biodiversity and increase connectivity.

Although, as indicated, there has been limited progress in the creation of new PAs, there has been good progress in the creation of ADVCs, which are certified by CONANP. Although they are a useful and reasonable solution to the change in government priorities, ADVCs do not imply the same level of public commitment than government PAs, as, according to art. 77 bis of the Federal Law on Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection and the regulations of this law on PAs, they are to be managed by land owners without mandating financial support from the government, and can be more easily cancelled. In short, the enabling conditions for the sustainability of this outcome regarding the legal, policy and regulatory framework are likely to be in place by the end of the project, with some concerns regarding the level of legal commitment of ADVCs.

Political and institutional factors

The responsibility of implementing the OETs will primarily fall on government institutions, most notably the State Ministries of Environment with the support of SEMARNAT. The federal institutions are committed, with federal elections only planned in 2024, but, as discussed below, lack the human and financial capacities required to closely follow up and support the implementation of regional OETs. Moreover, state elections are planned for December 2022 in the state of Oaxaca. Although, once issued, OETs become binding for state authorities whoever wins the elections, the level of implementation is sensitive to the importance the winning party gives to the environmental agenda. The project plans to finalize Oaxaca's OET before the elections, but this is not totally certain, as the elaboration of a OET can be a lengthy process. There is therefore uncertainty regarding political buy-in Oaxaca. This is not the case in the state of Chiapas, where state elections are planned in 2024, but turnover in governance structures is a risk for the sustainability of project results. Other stakeholders have also a role to play in the implementation of OETs. As discussed in Sections 3.2.1 and 3.4.5, the project has engaged a

wide variety of stakeholders in the development of the OETs through the creation of committees. While the establishment of these committees is key, this does not ensure that they will continue to be operational after the project is over. These aspects could hinder the implementation of the OETs. As for ADVCS in communal lands, community assemblies have formally expressed their willingness to put their land under conservation practices, which is expected to facilitate their continued management.

Technical and physical factors

Technical capacities seem adequate at SEMARNAT to oversee the implementation of the OETs, but the agency lacks the human and financial resources required – a situation that is not likely change by the end of the project (see below). Technical capacities are limited in many ADVCS, but the project is making an effort to strengthen them. While the technical capacities of land owners may have increased by the end of project, they may still require support from time to time, which public institutions may not be able to provide, and their physical capacities (e.g., equipment) may still be limited then.

Socio-cultural factors

The project comprises activities to build the capacity and increase the ownership of the inhabitants of the three landscapes. However, as discussed, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited the implementation of these activities, likely reducing the buy-in of OEs and sustainable production practices. It is uncertain how the pandemic and related government measures will evolve, and thus the capacity of the project to build socio-cultural enabling conditions for the long-term adoption of these plans and practices.

Financial factors

As noted, the project has a strong focus on mobilizing financial resources for the sustainability of the integrated management of the three landscapes. These efforts, however, are more focused on sustainable livelihoods (Component 2) than on biodiversity conservation (Component 1). While reducing the dependence on public budget is a useful approach given the current policy environment in Mexico, public institutions such as CONANP, SEMARNAT and the State Ministries of Environment still have a key role to play in biodiversity conservation, including legal enforcement, PA management and support to non-governmental actors, which is not matched by adequate financial resources. This deficit can hinder the implementation of the OETs and, more indirectly, the work of ADVCS, as they may need support from public institutions in the medium term. However, support from international and private funds can contribute to the sustainability of conservation efforts to some extent. CI Mexico is currently designing a project on forest carbon markets for submission to the Green Climate Fund, which is expected to provide financing for selected ADVCS and POs. The project is also trying to set up a fund for the Huatulco National Park and one for the ADVCS, but efforts are still in their beginnings and a comprehensive strategy has yet to be developed. Another opportunity that is being explored is for CONANP to provide continued support to biological monitoring through its subsidy programs. On the other hand, the fact that Mexico is one of the 16 priority landscapes for CI globally means that this institution will

continue working in these areas, contributing to mobilize resources for biodiversity conservation; the timing and amounts are however uncertain.

Environmental and climatic factors

The project promotes environmental sustainability by fostering an integrated landscape approach that boosts ecosystem connectivity. As desired impacts have not yet materialized, it will be key that project stakeholders take the ownership of the landscape approach at different scales. While this is likely, at least to a certain extent, staff turnover in the public sector and in partner organizations is always a risk. In addition, the conservation of biodiversity could be hampered by the program “Sembrando Vida”, which is controversial in terms of its environmental impacts, and the large-scale investment project “Corredor Transistmico”, which may threaten biodiversity if its development is not informed by the OETs. This risk would be mitigated by establishing synergies with these two initiatives, which has proven challenging for Sembrando Vida, while for Corredor Transistmico there are plans to coordinate the OET to be elaborated under this initiative with those in development with project support.

Increased income of producers’ organizations

Legal and regulatory

As of the September 2021, there has been limited progress regarding financial commitments by the public sector to support the sustainable productive practices promoted by the project, due to changed priorities and budget cuts in the Mexican federal government. For example, SADER, the National Forest Commission (CONAFOR) and the National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries (CONAPESCA), which are mentioned in the Project Document, have not committed financial resources yet, nor there is any evidence of these institutions incorporating the practices promoted by the project in their intervention models, policies and practices. There are good prospects however in the medium term with SADER, which will likely provide 7.4 million USD in in-kind cofinancing to be used for Component 2. There has also been progress regarding legal agreements with international funds and development partners that will support the sustainability of activities leading to increased income of producers’ organizations. In particular, USAID has legally committed USD 10 million for this through the SLV project, which will mobilize blended finance mechanisms at scale (up to 40 million USD) to support market access.²⁶ Likewise, CI Mexico’s GEF-7 project will be further supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable production practices in the three selected landscapes, among others in Mexico. The project has also established a collaboration with the FCCF and SmartFish for them to support market access for forestry and fisheries POs, and with The Green Corner, which has started selling some products from the project areas. In sum, while it is unlikely that the legal and regulatory framework will contribute to sustained market access and increased income for POs once the project ends in all

²⁶ SLV is considering to provide support to four POs currently participating in this GEF-6 project.

landscapes and value chains, international funds, development partners and private institutions will likely have legal commitments to provide longer-term support after the project's completion.

Political and institutional

While the current administration in Mexico has put an emphasis on linking conservation with sustainable production, there is limited political and institutional buy-in of market-driven approaches. Politicians, public servants working on biodiversity, and conservation practitioners in Mexico are not keen on market approaches as they are more used to approaches that focus on producers. The project is building capacity on market-driven approaches and will likely achieve some progress in that front, but it is not likely that these stakeholders will buy the approach before the end of the project, especially taking into account the delays in implementing activities related to Component 2. Given its financial constraints, CONANP's main priority will likely still be covering human resources gaps for everyday PA management, including biodiversity monitoring and conservation. As mentioned, there are better prospects with SADER, but these may not be enough to advance the agenda forward in all landscapes and sectors to the scale envisioned in the Project Document.

Technical and physical factors

Given delays in implementing activities related to Component 2, it is not likely that the producers' organizations will have the knowledge, equipment and infrastructure required to sustain the production practices promoted by the project after project completion at the scale foreseen in the Project Document, and to achieve regular sales to new buyers in high-paying markets. The technical and physical enabling environment may be set by then in some cases (where agreements with private institutions are more advanced, where organizations had a greater baseline capacity and/or markets are more mature, for example cashew nut in Los Angeles), but this will not likely be the general situation, especially considering the vastness and complexity of the project area and COVID-19 related restrictions. Limited coordination between the stakeholders that are more willing to support these activities (e.g., USAID, FCCF and SmartFish), and internally at CI between the team that will manage the USAID project and the team in charge of this project, might be challenge for sustainability.

Socio-cultural factors

As politicians and public servants, most producers are not used to the market-driven approach promoted by the project. It usually takes several years for producers and producers' groups to adopt a business mindset and thus operate as businesses. The project span is too short to achieve this, even discounting for COVID-related delays. Thus, delays in implementing Component 2 can further hinder the effectiveness of the project in achieving continued adoption of the sustainable production practices promoted by the project. Interviews suggest that, at this stage, POs often depend on a leader or champion, and that there is significant leadership turnover in POs, which can negatively affect the sustainability of project outcomes in terms of knowledge and buy-in.

Financial factors

As noted, financial support from public institutions to POs seems likely only with SADER, covering some -but not all- landscapes and value chains. However, development partners, in particular USAID, and international funds, in particular the GEF, are expected to contribute to this to a very significant extent. Some private investors, most likely FCCF, and businesses, such as The Green Corner, will likely support activities leading to increased income of producers' organizations.

Environmental and climatic factor

The project promotes sustainable agriculture practices within a broader integrated landscape management approach. These practices are informed by environmental assessments conducted with POs based on their local knowledge, which include the identification of climate risks; however, sound climate risk assessments are not carried out systematically.²⁷ This can compromise the contribution of the promoted practices to adaptation, and even result in maladaptation. Moreover, progress in adoption might be piecemeal given delays in implementing Component 2. Furthermore, it is worth noting, that the economic activities promoted by the project are highly exposed and sensitive to climate change, and that there are limits to adaptation. Thus, climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.

4. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Conclusions

Relevance

- The Project Document clearly and specifically identifies the problem to be addressed, and this is relevant to project stakeholders. In turn, the project's intervention model is relevant to address the identified problem, as it bridges existing gaps between biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods by introducing a focus on market access at the landscape level. However, there have been challenges to ensure ownership of this intervention model.
- The project is aligned to the focus of the current Government of Mexico on supporting sustainable rural livelihoods by linking conservation with a market-orientated value chain approach. Likewise, it is consistent with the priorities set out in GEF-6 programming, and with the priorities of CI both in Mexico and globally, given an increased focus on sustainable landscape management.

²⁷ However, the PMU has expressed that it intends to work on these assessments as part of the implementation of the PO intervention plans.

- The projects' results framework clearly sets out the overall logic of intervention, but is beset by a confusion between outcomes and outputs. Most indicators are consistent with project objectives, outcomes and outputs, but, on occasions, the same indicators are used at different levels of the result chain. About two thirds of the indicators included in the results' framework are not fully SMART, which limits the usefulness of this tool to monitor and evaluate project progress. While most targets are, in principle, achievable by the project end date, the project should prevent any additional delays.
- The project builds on previous CI and CONANP work, and adopts the CI landscape approach. However, it does not draw systematically on lessons learned from similar interventions implemented by other organizations. Links with existing GEF projects were clearly identified at project design, but the synergies established with ongoing GEF projects are unclear. As a result of government change in 2018, there have been challenges to establish a collaboration with public-sector initiatives such as Sembrando Vida and Tren Transistmico.

Effectiveness

- As of October 2021, the project will likely achieve 89% of its outcome and output targets by project completion (24 out of 27) if further delays are prevented. It might prove challenging to achieve the targets of two indicators -namely a 15% income increase for all POs and POs benefiting from at least three financial mechanisms- and it is not possible to assess likelihood of achievement for one indicator given gaps in reporting.
- The project is on track to achieve the targets for Component 1 (land use planning and management). Under Component 2 (sustainable value chains), the project has progressed in elaborating intervention plans with POs, but their implementation is still in its beginnings. Under Component 3 (financing), significant progress was made in aligning existing financing, but the development of new financial mechanisms is still at initial stages. Most outputs and outcomes have yet to be achieved, so it is premature to assess their quality.
- While the project has set the stage to exceed several targets, including the number of POs supported, there is a risk that an increased scope comes at the expense of quality and depth.
- Progress towards expected outputs and outcomes has been hindered by several barriers, both internal and external to the project. The latter include a change in government policy in 2018, COVID-19 and security issues on the ground.

Impact

- While short-term outcomes are likely to be achieved by the project end date, more time is likely to be needed to achieve intermediate outcomes and impacts. Given delays in implementation, it is still early to observe intermediate outcomes and impacts on the ground, and it seems unlikely that these will be fully achieved by the project's end date.

However, there is evidence that the project has advanced towards some short-term outcomes and is laying the basis for others.

- So far, the project has identified five potential demonstration cases to foster replication as a mechanism to amplify project impact beyond the POs directly supported. However, there is not a clear replication strategy, especially given that COVID-19 has limited experience exchanges.

Efficiency

- The project has disbursed 34% of its budget (2.46 out of 7.2 million USD) and mobilized 20.1% of the expected cofinancing (9.5 out of 47.5 million USD). While it is likely that additional cofinancing will materialize from SADER and USAID's SLV project, it might not be sufficient to achieve the target set in the Project Document.
- High staff turnover has caused delays in financial planning, and has required repeated training and closer oversight by CI-GEF. Interviews indicate that CI Mexico has increased its capacity for financial management, but audit documents were not shared with the evaluation team.
- The roles and responsibilities of the different actors were clearly defined at project design, but it took a long time for the co-Executing Agencies to agree on specific governance arrangements at the beginning of implementation, and adjustments were made to the original governance system. While this system has helped coordination, it has not proved efficient for decision-making and communication, with three persisting bottlenecks: decisions have to be approved by multiple levels of management inside CI Mexico, limited sharing of strategic information among people occupying different positions in the project's governance system, and differing visions regarding the approach to be followed to foster sustainable production.
- The project has successfully established partnerships with multiple stakeholders both at the strategic level and on the ground, thus acting as a catalyzer of existing initiatives by creating synergies. Nonetheless, the time required for establishing these synergies has been underestimated, and has added to project delays.
- While CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation, the capacity of the co-Executing Agencies was not analyzed in-depth at project design. CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for implementation, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase and a steep learning curve, as well as to adjustments in the roles and responsibilities of the project team to address unforeseen needs.
- While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain gaps in planning and monitoring. Procurement processes have also been a key challenge, but additional staff and the new CI-GEF procurement policy are expected to improve time efficiency. Staff turnover at CI Mexico, however, is still an issue, as is the large number of consultancies

(over 30) planned for the current fiscal year, which will imply a considerable workload in terms of procurement, oversight, and, later, integration of results.

- Foreseeable risks were adequately identified in the Project Document and monitored through PIRs. COVID-19 was identified as an additional risk during implementation and a protocol was developed for field work. Mitigation measures are overall adequate and have been implemented, but in some instances, they are vague and they do not reflect directly on project operations.
- Safeguards plans were elaborated at project design, and manuals were developed during implementation to operationalize them. There is evidence that safeguards have been applied, but there are opportunities to broaden inclusion within POs and PAs. COVID-19 has restricted the implementation of safeguards on the ground by limiting participation, but adequate mitigation measures were implemented. However, a process is still ongoing within the project team to mainstream social and environmental safeguards into operations and ensure ownership by field staff.
- The project has experienced considerable delays in implementation, thus making adaptive management a priority. The project has been able to adjust its implementation strategy to address unexpected developments and delays, but there is a tension between the need for flexibility on the ground and the need for planning to ensure a common vision and coordinated action. Recommendations for corrective actions were given in the PIRs for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, but progress in these actions is unclear.
- The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed. The budget covers key M&E activities, but is below the 3% indicated as a good practice for GEF projects of this size, and does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes. While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making. Additional challenges have been limited monitoring activities on the ground due to COVID-19 and the multiple demands on field staff.
- The Project Document contains a communication plan with some knowledge management elements. During project implementation, new communication channels were established beyond those identified in the Project Document to ensure effective engagement with rural producers and PA personnel. The knowledge management strategy has consisted in systematizing and disseminating knowledge generated by the project in local languages and in Spanish.

Sustainability

- The Project Document includes a specific sustainability strategy or exit strategy. While this has not been systematically implemented by the Executing Agencies, it has been complemented with new strategies, in particular in view of delays in project execution.

- While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. However, climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.

Table 10. MTE Ratings

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
Outcomes (Relevance)	Satisfactory (S) <i>Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings</i>	Project outcomes are consistent with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for GEF-6 • The strategic priorities of CI both at the global level and in Mexico • The priorities of the Government of Mexico and the state governments of Oaxaca and Chiapas; • The needs of local communities. Project design is overall appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes, but ownership of the project intervention model has been a challenge.
Outcomes (Effectiveness)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings.</i>	The project has experienced considerable delays, but it is catching up. While good progress has been made in Component 1 and in aligning financing, Component 2 and the development of financial mechanisms under Component 3 are still at initial stages.
Outcomes (Efficiency)	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) <i>Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings</i>	The project presents significant delays and low disbursements.
Outcomes (Overall rating)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings</i>	While project design is appropriate to deliver outcomes, progress has been lower than expected due to significant delays in execution. This is due both to efficiency challenges and to external factors, namely the change in government policy in 2018, COVID-19 and security issues on the ground. However, the project is catching up and, if further delays are prevented, it will likely achieve 89% of its outcome and output targets by project completion.
Sustainability	Moderately Likely (ML) <i>There are moderate risks to sustainability</i>	While the policy environment is not favorable to full ownership and sustainability of results, the project is actively seeking to secure funds from different sources for continued work in the three landscapes. However,

Project dimension	MTE Rating	Justification
		climate change remains an important risk to the increased income of POs.
Monitoring & Evaluation (Design)	Satisfactory (S) <i>There were no or minor short comings and quality of M&E design meets expectations.</i>	The M&E plan included in the Project Document is sound and detailed, with some shortcomings in the results framework. The budget covers key M&E activities, but does not allow for detailed monitoring of the multiple activities occurring in the three landscapes.
Monitoring & Evaluation (Implementation)	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>There were some short comings and quality of M&E implementation more or less meets expectations.</i>	While additional dedicated staff has helped improve reporting, there is a need to further systematize project information to facilitate its use for decision-making.
Implementation	Satisfactory (S) <i>There were no or minor short comings and quality of implementation meets expectations</i>	CI-GEF has provided adequate supervision and has addressed emerging challenges in implementation. CI-GEF did not adequately assessed the capacities of the Executing Entities, and there have been challenges with the duration of procurement processes, but the latter is likely to improve with the new CI-GEF procurement policy.
Execution	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU) <i>There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected.</i>	CI Mexico had to build internal capacity for execution, leading to a lengthy kick-off phase, a steep learning curve, and lengthy procurement processes. While CI Mexico has strengthened its capacity, there remain challenges in governance, planning and monitoring.
Environmental and social safeguards	Moderately Satisfactory (MS) <i>There were some shortcomings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation more or less met expectations.</i>	The quality of environmental and social safeguard plans is satisfactory and there is evidence that they have been implemented, but ownership of safeguards by the PMU is still an ongoing process, and there are opportunities to broaden inclusion within POs and PAs.

Source: Own elaboration based on Annex 2 of the ToR.

4.2 Recommendations

1. **Develop an adaptation management strategy.** Given the delays in implementation and disbursements, CI-GEF and the Executing Entities, including the PMU, should jointly develop an adaptation management strategy to ensure the achievement of project targets. This strategy should draw on a realistic assessment of a) potential delays in the remaining part of the project (e.g., caused by COVID-19), b) available cofinancing; and c) of the scope that the project can achieve given the available human and financial resources, without sacrificing quality and depth of support.
2. **Improve the efficiency of decision-making and communication processes.** The Executing Entities should address the challenges identified for efficient decision-making and communication by improving the project's governance system. In particular, multiple layers of approval should be reserved for the most strategic issues, thus letting operational decisions be made by the PMU. As for communication, the Executing Entities should make sure that staff involved in the project in different geographical locations and organizational roles can access updated information regarding project planning, progress and upcoming activities in a timely and user-friendly manner. This might be done either by creating new communication channels, or by improving the quality of those already existing, as considered appropriate. In any case, this should not cause an additional workload to the staff.
3. **Close the gaps in planning and monitoring.** The PMU should make sure that planning is carried out in a way that ensures that all project stakeholders know what activities are expected in the next few months and what will be requested of them. In addition, information on project progress needs to be systematized and made available to project staff and stakeholders in a timely manner as an input for decision-making. Given the complexity of the project and the multiple emerging outcomes, the PMU should consider complementary approaches such as "Outcome Harvesting"²⁸ to better document what is happening on the ground and making progress visible. Also, given the multiple stakeholders involved in monitoring, the PMU should consider the use of an online monitoring system that allows uploading data through smartphones and computers to increase the efficiency and standardization of monitoring activities. Finally, while it might be challenging to adjust the indicators in the results framework at this stage, the PMU and CI-GEF could assess strategies to ensure SMART reporting against the existing indicators.
4. **Continue strengthening safeguards.** As a part of the ongoing process to mainstream safeguards in project operations, the PMU should make efforts to foster broader inclusion within the communities and organizations supported by the project.

²⁸ See: <https://outcomeharvesting.net/welcome/>

5. **Advance in communication and knowledge management.** In the remaining part of the project, the PMU should devote more efforts to systematizing and disseminating the lessons learned from the project, especially those regarding the project's intervention model. With the help of CI Mexico, any barriers should be removed for communication activities to take place.
6. **Develop an updated sustainability strategy.** Given the importance of linking the project with other initiatives to ensure continued work in the three landscapes and sustained outcomes, the Executing Entities, with the support of the PMU, should formalize and implement a systematic, updated sustainability strategy. This strategy should be developed by involving project partners and cofinanciers, thus articulating the different opportunities that have been emerging, and should consider existing risks to project sustainability, including political risks (elections) and environmental risks (climate change impacts) among others.

4.3 Lessons Learned

- Integrating biodiversity conservation with sustainable value chains requires diverse teams with expertise in environmental management, market access and social safeguards. In addition to recruiting different profiles, continuous capacity building, effective communication and building a learning-oriented organizational culture at all levels can help achieve shared understandings and practices across the staff.
- Working with multiple partners at different scales is key to achieve sustained landscape management. Building on previous work in the same geographical area and establishing links with other interventions both at the strategic level and on the ground with local stakeholders helps generate efficiencies and ensure that the results achieved will be maintained. However, it takes a long time to build synergies and a common vision, given differing priorities and timelines. In this context, effective planning, monitoring and communication (both of the intervention model and of progress) are key to ensure a common vision and coordinated action.
- Mainstreaming integrated landscape management is a transformational process that cannot be concluded over a 4-year span, even more so given that the project is implemented over a large geographical area, with the involvement of a broad array of stakeholders at multiple scales. Similarly, achieving continued sales and sustained income increases for POs, even those with relatively high capacities, is usually a process that requires continued support for several years, as it can be affected by factors such as changes in organizational leadership and hydrometeorological events, especially in a climate-change context.
- While financial aspects are key to the sustainability of project results, these are only one of the factors that affect their sustainability. Political ownership, technical capacity, access to inputs and integration of climate-resilient practices informed by robust climate risk assessments are also crucial.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
1. RELEVANCE To what extent does the project meet the needs and priorities of its end users?			
1.1 Relevance of the project in relation with the problem it addresses	<p>Does the Project Document clearly and specifically identify the problem to be addressed?</p> <p>Is the problem relevant to the local stakeholders involved in the project?</p> <p>Does the project intervention model offer the most effective way to address the identified problem?</p>	<p>Level of clarity and specificity of the problem analysis in the Project Document, including identification of root causes</p> <p>Evidence of the relevance of the problem to project stakeholders</p> <p>Extent to which a clear and evidence-based relationship is established in Project Documents between the problem and project objectives/ components</p>	<p>Document Review (Project Document, Inception Workshop Report, Stakeholder Engagement Plan)</p> <p>Interviews (SEMAEDES, SEMAHN, project participants)</p>
1.2 Consistency with country, GEF and CI priorities	<p>Is the project consistent with the biodiversity conservation priorities of the federal government of Mexico and the state governments of Chiapas and Oaxaca?</p> <p>Is the project consistent with GEF and CI priorities?</p>	<p>Existence of a clear relationship between relevant policies and project objectives/ components</p>	<p>Document Review (Project Document, national planning and legal documents, GEF and CI programming documents)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, CONANP, SEMARNAT, SEMAEDSO, SEMAHN, GEF Operational Focal Point)</p>
1.3 Result orientation	<p>How clear and logically integrated are the project objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities?</p> <p>How feasible and realistic are the targets given the time and budget available?</p>	<p>Consistency between project objective, outcomes, outputs, activities, and the corresponding indicators</p>	<p>Document Review (Project Document, PIRs)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU)</p>

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
	<p>Are the indicators consistent with the project objectives, outcomes, outputs and activities?</p> <p>Are the indicators SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)?</p>	<p>Quality²⁹ of the results framework in the Project Document</p> <p>Feasibility of objectives, outcomes and outputs within the project's budget and timeframe</p>	
1.4 Integration of lessons learned	To what extent were lessons learned from other projects incorporated into the project design and implementation?	Examples of integration of lessons learned in project design and implementation	Document Review (Project Document) Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, CONANP, PMU)
1.5 Linkages with other interventions	<p>Were other relevant interventions clearly identified in the Project Document?</p> <p>To what extent does the project complement (and not duplicate) other interventions?</p> <p>Is the project working in coordination with other interventions to seek synergies?</p>	<p>Other interventions in the sector described in the Project Document, and their possible linkages with the program and project analyzed</p> <p>Level of coherence and complementarity of the project with interventions of other donors in the three landscapes</p>	<p>Document Review (Project Document, documents from other relevant interventions)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP, SEMARNAT, SEMAEDSO, SEMAHN, cofinanciers)</p>
2. EFFECTIVENESS: To what extent is the project achieving its objectives?			
2.1 Outputs and outcomes	<p>Were there any changes in the results framework (including expected outputs and outcomes) after the start of implementation?</p> <p>To what extent has the project made progress in achieving the goals set out in the results framework included in the Project Document?</p> <p>What has been the quality of the outputs and outcomes achieved?</p>	<p>Progress toward targets at the output and outcome level</p> <p>Quality of outputs and outcomes</p> <p>Level of achievement of the targets set out in the GEF Monitoring Tool and the GEF core indicators</p> <p>Examples of unintended results</p>	<p>Document Review (Project Document, PIRs, GEF focal area Tracking Tools and/or Core Indicators)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP)</p> <p>Traffic light analysis</p>

²⁹ The relevant GEF policies and guidelines will be considered when assessing the quality of this and other project elements.

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
	<p>What has been the progress in achieving the targets set out in the GEF Monitoring Tool and the GEF core indicators?</p> <p>Have there been any unintended results (positive or negative)?</p>		
2.2 Barriers and enabling factors	What actors and factors are enabling and hindering the achievement of expected outputs and outcomes?	Type of barriers and enabling factors	<p>Document review (PIRs, minutes of Steering Committee meetings)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP)</p>
3. IMPACT To what extent has the project advanced towards strengthening biodiversity conservation in the National System of PAs and corridors through integrated landscape management?			
3.1 Progress toward impact	<p>To what extent has the project contributed to expanding the area with land use plans that promote biodiversity conservation?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to strengthening governance mechanisms at landscape level?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to expanding the productive area with sustainable practices that support biodiversity conservation?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to improved market access for producers' organizations?</p> <p>To what extent has the project contributed to continued financing for landscape management?</p> <p>To what extent has the progress contributed to increasing the income of producers' organizations?</p>	<p>Progress toward targets (outcome and impact indicators)</p> <p>Qualitative evidence of progress toward impact and causal pathways</p> <p>Evidence of continuity, mainstreaming, replication, scaling up and market change (directly or indirectly influenced by the project)</p> <p>Examples of unintended impacts</p> <p>Type of barriers and enabling factors</p>	<p>Document review (PIRs and other progress reports)</p> <p>Interviews (CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP, project participants and cofinanciers)</p>

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
	<p>To what extent has the progress contributed to reducing pressure on biodiversity and increasing connectivity?</p> <p>To what extent has the project advanced towards the conservation of priority species identified in its design?</p> <p>If so, through what processes have the impacts occurred (continuity, mainstreaming, replication, scaling up and market change)?</p>		
4. EFFICIENCY To what extent is the project implementation timely and cost-effective?			
4.1 Financing and cofinancing	<p>Is there any difference between planned and actual expenditures? Why? ³⁰</p> <p>Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) occur as planned? How did this affect project progress?</p> <p>Are adequate accounting and financial systems in place for project management and the production of accurate and timely financial information?</p> <p>Have financial resources been used efficiently? could have they been used more efficiently?</p>	<p>Level of discrepancy between planned and executed budget (total, by year and component)</p> <p>Level of discrepancy between planned and leveraged cofinancing (in kind and in cash)</p> <p>Availability and quality of financial reports</p> <p>Level of management costs and discrepancy with planned costs</p> <p>Costs related to results achieved, compared to costs of similar projects in other organizations (if feasible given existing information)</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, progress reports, financial reports, audit reports, budget execution analysis reports and adjustments made by the project team)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, GEF Operational Focal Point, PMU, cofinanciers)</p>
4.2 Governance system	<p>Were the roles and responsibilities of the different actors clearly defined in the project design?</p>	<p>Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, PIRs, Stakeholder Engagement Plan, minutes of Steering Committee meetings)</p>

³⁰ This includes a detailed analysis of project disbursement.

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
	<p>To what extent were the capacities of the executing entities analyzed during the design phase?</p> <p>How efficient and effective has the project governance system proved to be during implementation for decision making, communication flows and coordination?</p> <p>To what extent have effective partnerships for project implementation been established with relevant stakeholders at different levels?</p>	<p>Evidence of analysis of execution capacity</p> <p>Evidence of any bottlenecks in decision-making</p> <p>Extent and quality of interaction/ exchange between project executors and local partners, as well as within the PMU and the Executing Agencies</p> <p>Number and types of partnerships established between the project and local organizations</p> <p>Number, type and quality of mechanisms in place to promote stakeholder participation at each stage of the project (design, implementation and monitoring)</p>	<p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP, project participants and cofinanciers)</p>
4.3 Quality of implementation and execution	<p>How efficient is the performance of the implementing entity (including project design, implementation and supervision of project execution)?</p> <p>How efficient is the performance of the executing entities (including execution arrangements, work planning, procurement processes and project monitoring)?</p>	<p>Quality of implementation</p> <p>Quality of execution</p>	<p>Document review (annual workplans, PIRs and other progress documents, project manuals and systems, minutes of Steering Committee meetings)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP)</p>
4.4 Risk Management	<p>Were all relevant risks identified in the Project Document? How well have new risks been identified, e.g. COVID-19?</p> <p>What has been the quality of the risk mitigation strategies developed? Have they been sufficient?</p>	<p>Extent to which the planning documents anticipated or reflected the risks faced by the project during implementation</p> <p>Quality of information systems in place to identify and analyze new risks</p> <p>Quality of risk mitigation strategies identified and implemented</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, PIRs, minutes of Steering Committee meetings)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU)</p>

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
		Consistency of risk analysis and implementation of mitigation measures with international standards	
4.5 Social and environmental safeguards	<p>Were safeguards plans designed in a timely manner?</p> <p>Are safeguards measures, including the grievance mechanism, being effectively implemented? Are stakeholders aware of this mechanism and what is their opinion if it has been activated?</p> <p>Have additional safeguards been activated during project implementation?</p> <p>Have there been any changes to the risks identified in the safeguard form and safeguard plans? What has been the level of participation of stakeholders, including indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in the intervention areas, in decision-making on project implementation?</p> <p>How has local and traditional knowledge been integrated into project activities?</p> <p>To what extent has the gender perspective been integrated into project design, implementation and monitoring?</p>	<p>Existence and quality of safeguard plans</p> <p>Level of implementation of safeguard plans</p> <p>Level of stakeholder satisfaction regarding their participation in the project</p> <p>Evidence of use of local and traditional knowledge</p> <p>Extent to which the project was designed and implemented in a way that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits</p> <p>Extent to which gender disaggregated data is gathered and reported on beneficiaries</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, Safeguards Screening Form, Screening Results and Safeguards Analysis, safeguard manual, gender mainstreaming plan, engagement plan, grievance mechanism, PIRs)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP, project participants)</p>
4.6 Adaptive management	<p>Has the project experienced any delays in its implementation? If so, for what reasons, and what actions were taken?</p> <p>Did the project undergo significant changes as a result of recommendations from the steering committee, workshops or other review procedures?</p>	<p>Responsiveness of implementing and executing agencies to recommendations made through the review processes (PIR)</p> <p>Examples of changes in project strategy/approach as a direct result of recommendations made</p>	<p>Document review (PIRs, annual workplans, minutes of Steering Committee meetings)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, Operational Focal Point, PMU, CONANP)</p>

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
	How were lessons from the adaptive management process documented and with whom were they disseminated?	Proportion of adaptive management processes documented and shared with partners	
4.7 M&E system	<p>Does the Project Document include a methodologically sound monitoring and evaluation plan? Does the M&E plan define the responsibilities, logistics and schedule of M&E activities?</p> <p>Have adequate resources been budgeted for M&E activities and have they been sufficient at the implementation stage?</p> <p>To what extent has the M&E plan been implemented and have any adjustments been made to the plan?</p> <p>How has the information generated by the M&E system been used during project implementation?</p>	<p>Methodological soundness of the M&E plan, including clarity of M&E protocols</p> <p>M&E funding (planned and disbursed)</p> <p>Timeliness and quality of monitoring reports</p> <p>Extent to which the M&E system provides the necessary information to report on progress, establishes clear protocols, involves key stakeholders and uses existing data systems</p> <p>Examples of M&E information use</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, PIRs, monitoring and progress reports)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU)</p>
4.8 Communications and knowledge management	What is the project's progress in implementing its communication and knowledge management strategy?	<p>Existence and quality of a communication plan, communication protocols and feedback mechanisms</p> <p>Number and type of external communication mechanisms or activities implemented</p> <p>Perceived level of stakeholder awareness of project results and activities (visibility of the project)</p> <p>Existence and quality of a knowledge management strategy</p> <p>Number and type of knowledge management activities and products developed</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, communication plan and materials)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, CI Mexico, PMU)</p>

Dimension	Specific questions	Indicators	Methods and key information sources
		Effects of knowledge management activities and products developed	
5. SUSTAINABILITY To what extent are there risks to the sustainability of project benefits in the long term?			
5.1 Factors affecting sustainability of project benefits	<p>Does the project have a specific, sufficient and realistic sustainability strategy, and to what extent has they been implemented? Does it have an exit strategy?</p> <p>To what extent do legal and regulatory, political and institutional, technical and physical, socio-cultural, financial, environmental and climatic or other factors affect, positively or negatively, whether the project's results and impacts will be sustained in the long term?³¹</p>	<p>Existence and quality of a sustainability and exit strategy</p> <p>Level of implementation of the sustainability strategy</p> <p>Evidence of obstacles and/or risks to the sustainability of project results</p>	<p>Document review (Project Document, PIRs)</p> <p>Interviews (CI-GEF, GEF Operational Focal Point, CI Mexico, PMU, CONANP, project participants and cofinanciers)</p>

³¹ This question covers project ownership by participating institutions, organizations and communities.

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

Project documents:

- Project Identification Form (PIF), CEO Endorsement, and Project Document (including Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Mainstreaming Plan, Indigenous Peoples Plan and Grievance Mechanism)
- Safeguards Screening Form, Screening Results and Safeguards Analysis
- Inception Workshop Report
- Governance Manual, Safeguards Manual, Identity Manual
- Annual Workplans
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) 2019, 2020 and 2021, Quarterly Reports, 2020 Output Delivery Report, Project-wide Activity Monitoring Database, GEF focal area Core Indicators
- Communication products, including project webpages,³² booklet, summary and newsletters
- Lessons learned and knowledge management: final systematization report (2021)
- Steering Committee minutes
- Additional information provided by the project at the request of the evaluation team on progress towards targets, disbursement and cofinancing

GEF and CI documents:

- CI Policy for Work during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- CI Sustainable Landscape approach: Implementation Guidebook
- CI-GEF Evaluation Policy for GEF-Funded Projects
- GEF Guidelines on Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020 update)
- GEF-6 and GEF-7 Programming Directions

National planning and legal documents:

- Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection Law (1988, latest reform 2021)
- Regulation of the Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection Law on Protected Areas (2000, latest reform 2021)
- National Development Plan 2019-2024
- Environment Sector Program 2020-2024
- National Program for Protected Areas 2020-2024

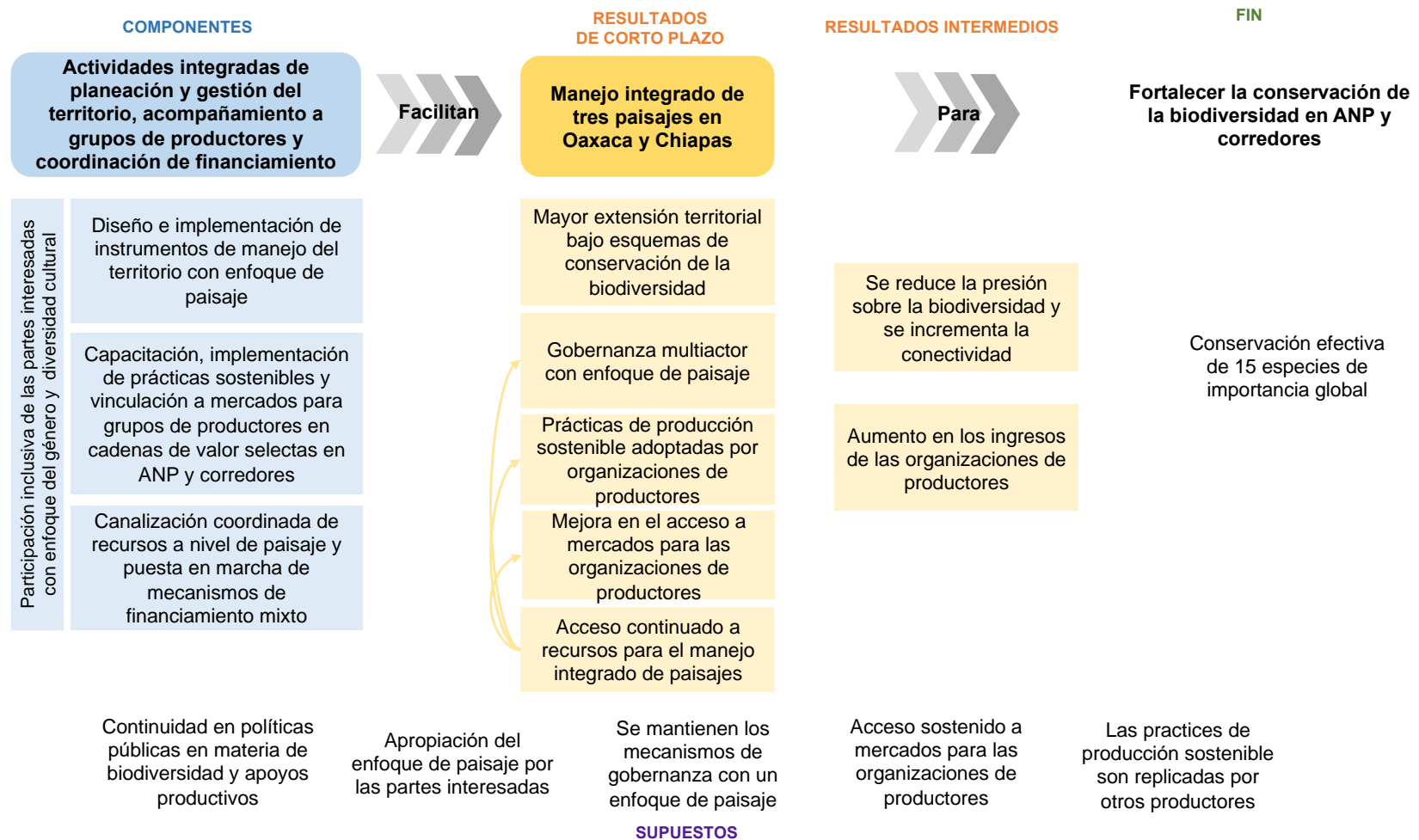
³² <https://www.conservation.org/mexico/iniciativas/paisajes-sostenibles> and <https://www.conservation.org/gef/projects/conservation-and-sustainable-use-of-biological-diversity-in-priority-landscapes-of-oaxaca-and-chiapas>

Annex 3: Interviews

#	Name	Organization	Position	Role played in the project	Interview date
1	Daniela Carrión & Orissa Samaroo	CI-GEF	Project Management	Implementing Agency	13/09/2021
2	Shannon Wicks & Susana Escudero	CI-GEF	Financial Leads	Implementing Agency	02/09/2021
3	Juan Manuel Labougle	CI México	Technical Director	Executing Agency	03/09/2021
4	Tatiana Ramos Maza	CI México	Executive Director	Executing Agency	14/09/2021
5	Brenda Janeth Pequeño Vargas & Flor Elisa Hernández Reyes	SHCP	Director General of International Forums and Green Funds & Deputy Director	GEF Operational Focal Point	15/09/2021
6	Fernando Camacho Rico	CONANP	Head of Institutional Development and Promotion	Executing Agency	01/09/2021
	Adrián Méndez	CONANP	Regional Director	Executing Agency	
7	Edmundo Aguilar	CONANP	Director, National Park Huatulco	Executing Agency	20/09/2021
8	David Olvera	CI México	Project Director	PMU	30/08/2021
9	María Elena Zarco	CI México	Director of Operations	Executing Agency	13/09/2021
10	Sandro Miranda	CI México	Financial Officer	PMU	21/09/2021
11	Gustavo Garduño	CI México	M&E	PMU	31/08/2021
	Monserrat García Samano	CI México	Safeguards Manager	PMU	
12	Eri Abel Ortiz Arguello	CI México	Landscape Manager	PMU	30/09/2021
	Ramón Alberto Flores Moreno	CI México	Landscape Manager	PMU	
	Elida Aniksi Domínguez Hernández	CI México	Landscape Manager	PMU	
13	Carlos Paz	SmartFish	Business Advisor	Cofinancing partner	22/09/2021
14	Kaspar Wansleben	FCCF	Project Focal Point	Cofinancing partner	16/09/2021

#	Name	Organization	Position	Role played in the project	Interview date
15	Leif Nutto	Unique	Consultant for the FCCF	Cofinancing partner	23/09/2021
16	José Juan Hernández Chavez	SEMARNAT	Underministry of Environmental Planning and Policy	Participant	15/09/2021
17	Helena Iturribarría	SEMAEDES	Executive Director	Participant	14/09/2021
18	María del Rosario Bonifaz	SEMAHN	Underministry of the Environment	Participant	14/09/2021
19	Eliazin Perez Gomez	El Castaño	Fisherman	Participant	24/09/2021
20	Mario Ramón Becerra	El Topón	Fisherman	Participant	21/09/2021
21	Cris Maday Juárez Matías	Senderos y Humedales de la Costa	Administrator	Participant	23/09/2021
22	Reyder Pérez Roblero & Sady Velásquez	Café Capitán	President & Manager of Internal Control and Production	Participant	13/09/2021

Annex 4: Updated theory of change in Spanish



Annex 5: Detailed analysis of the results' framework

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
COMPONENT 1: Integrated management of three priority landscape for strengthening biodiversity conservation through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas						
Outcome 1.1: Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.	Outcome 1.1 Indicator 1: Number of ha with sustainable land use plans and other land use tools promoting biodiversity conservation.	1.1 Indicator 1 baseline: 0 ha with sustainable land use plans at landscape level in the selected project area.	1.1. Indicator 1 target: 2.6 million ha (PA and corridors) with sustainable land use plans and other tools for land use (scale 1: 50,000). (806,753 hectares in the Sierra Madre of Chiapas; 953,972 hectares in the Sierra Sur of Oaxaca; 857,525 hectares in the South Pacific Coast of Oaxaca and Chiapas)	The State process to start the land use plans was completed successfully. The project launched two processes of Land Use Plans, covering 3.7 million hectares between the states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. The consulting firms to conduct the process in each State have been hired and the process is in its initial phase.	The indicator is SMART.	On target (It is expected that land use plans will be completed in 2022.)
	Outcome 1.1 Indicator 2: Number of globally significant species under conservation and monitoring plans.	1.1 Indicator 2 baseline: 0 conservation and monitoring plans for globally significant species.	1.1 Indicator 2 target: Conservation and monitoring plans for 15 globally significant species developed and implemented.	Conservation and monitoring plans for 15 globally significant species developed, but not yet implemented due to COVID-19 restrictions. 26 monitoring brigades newly established or integrated into the monitoring system (including the 10 PAs brigades). Launched and implemented a multi-year consultancy in charge of training and following up on biological monitoring. The app and the platform to collect the monitoring information is up and running. Provided monitoring gear to all participating brigades. Consultants have trained the monitoring brigades in protocols for 12 of the 15 species (pending: spider monkey, Chiapensis pine and cycad).	The indicator is SMART.	On target (It is expected that conservation and monitoring plans will be implemented in Fiscal Year 2022.)

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				The project has installed trap cameras in the three landscapes to monitor tapir and jaguar.		
	Outcome 1.1 Indicator 3: Increase in the average ³³ management effectiveness of the landscapes including Protected Areas over the baseline, according to Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) baseline score (14 PAs).	1.1. Indicator 3 baseline: 14 PAs have together an average management effectiveness of score of 49 out of 100 (according to METT).	1.1. Indicator 3 target: 14 PAs (with a coverage of 662,417 ha) have together an average management effectiveness score of at least 60 out of 100 (according to METT).	10 PAs (totaling 581,632.23 hectares) were evaluated with an average score of 60.3/100 in September, 2019. The project had planned for this year to work with State governments to integrate the 4 State PAs present in the region. COVID-19 caused the closing down of State offices, but the Project was successful in contacting State PAs after their reopening.	The end-of-project target seems too low and should be adjusted. It was reached in 2019, when the project was just starting execution.	On target
Output 1.1.1: A model of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for biodiversity conservation including protected areas and corridors developed and disseminated.	Output 1.1.1 Indicator 1: Number of gender-sensitive land use plans at an integrated landscape level.		Target: At least 1	The 2 land use plans that are in process will cover 3.7 million ha. The consulting firms to conduct the process in each State have been hired and the process is in its initial phase.	This indicator duplicates Outcome 1.1 indicator 1 and does not specify when a plan counts as gender-sensitive.	On target (It is expected that land use plans will be completed in 2022.)
	Output 1.1.1 Indicator 2: Number of gender-sensitive annual operational plans, one per Protected Area (PA), to be		Target: 14 operational plans per year	10 gender-sensitive operational plans developed yearly (2019-2021) for federal PAs (with the exception of 3 federal PAs in FY21, which did not develop workplans due to factors including an early start of forest fires season). Additionally, the Project developed 1 annual workplan for a regional federal PA	The target should be adjusted to the 10 PAs present in the project area. The indicator does not specify when a plan	On target

³³ Simple (not weighted) arithmetic average

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	updated each year during project life time.			<p>(it integrated into its annual operating program the concept of gender mainstreaming)</p> <p>1 workplan carried out for the first time in FY21 for the ADVC Santa María Guienagati.</p> <p>The project had planned for this year to work with State governments to integrate the 4 State PAs present in the region. COVID-19 caused the closing down of State offices, but the Project was successful in contacting State PAs after their reopening, and they are on route to develop an annual workplan the following year.</p>	counts as gender-sensitive.	
	<p>Output 1.1.1</p> <p>Indicator 3:</p> <p>Number of Biodiversity monitoring protocols developed and implemented in each landscape.</p>		Target: 15	<p>Conservation and monitoring plans for 15 globally significant species developed, but not yet implemented due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>26 monitoring brigades newly established or integrated into the monitoring system (including the 10 PAs brigades).</p> <p>Launched and implemented a multi-year consultancy in charge of training and following up on biological monitoring.</p> <p>The app and the platform to collect the monitoring information is up and running.</p> <p>Provided monitoring gear to all participating brigades.</p> <p>Consultants have trained the monitoring brigades in protocols for 12 of the 15 species (pending: spider monkey, Chiapensis pine and cycad).</p> <p>The project has installed trap cameras in the three landscapes to monitor tapir and jaguar.</p>	The indicator is SMART.	<p>On target</p> <p>(It is expected that conservation and monitoring plans will be implemented in Fiscal Year 2022.)</p>

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	Output 1.1.1 Indicator 4: The Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) model for biodiversity conservation is validated by the coordinating body in each priority landscape.		Target: Model validated in Y2	<p>Pending</p> <p>In FY21, the project planned to strengthen the multistakeholder coordination bodies present in the region, which also required the identification, integration, (in some cases) creation and strengthening of already-present local governance bodies.</p> <p>The project was able to identify the region's existing governance mechanisms; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the other activities were paused. Nevertheless, the project was able to advance on the creation of an ADVC governance body and establishing a governance and leadership training program for governance body members.</p> <p>Additionally, the project has been implementing the LAF every year in each landscape. The information obtained will be used to propose the integrated landscape management model.</p>	The indicator is not specific, as it is not clear what product is expected. This makes it challenging to measure achievement.	Likely to be achieved The ILM expects to develop the ILM models in Fiscal Year 2022, but the content and the validation process are not yet defined.
Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.	Outcome 1.2 Indicator 1: Increase in number of hectares of protected areas.	1.2 Indicator 1 baseline: 709,951 ha of PAs within the three priority landscapes.	1.2 Indicator 1 target: 102,403 ha of land cover increase of PAs within the three priority landscapes, reaching a new cover of 812,262 ha.	<p>The Project was able to certify the following hectares (35,794 ha) in the Sierra Sur landscape (certification completed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santa María Guienagati (29,794 ha) • Santo Domingo Petapa (6,000 ha). <p>It is also worth mentioning that the project has entered the following hectares (65,241 ha) into the certification process (certification not yet completed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santo Domingo Petapa (4,000 ha) // Sierra Sur Landscape • Guevea de Humboldt* (21,000 ha) // Sierra Sur Landscape • Copalita, Oax. (2,041 ha) // Costa Landscape (Fishing Refuge Zone) 	The indicator is SMART.	On target

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuevo Guerrero (600 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Rizo de Oro (800 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Ovando la Piñuela (2,800 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Censo-Cerro Brujo (34,000 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape (this will be a State PA) <p>These hectares were projected to be certified during FY21, but the National Agrarian Registry closed down its offices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the ADVC certification process requires the approval of the Agrarian Registry, the Project has not been able to complete the certification process of these areas, and these will be certified in FY22.</p> <p>The establishment of State PA La Joya Buenavista – Los Patos Solo Dios (43,055.35 ha) has recently started // Costa Landscape.</p> <p>At the conclusion of these processes, these APs will jointly cover 144,090.35 hectares, exceeding the target by 41,687.35 ha.</p>		
Output 1.2.1: Draft legislation for the expansion of 102,403 hectares of two protected areas which have been locally consented and approved.	Output 1.2.1 Indicator 1: Percentage of rural and indigenous communities that grant their consent in PAs following the process of gender-sensitive Free, Prior and		Target: 95%	<p>For all ADVCs on community lands, agreements (“actas”) were signed by community leaders.</p> <p>The total number of communities with indigenous presence is difficult to calculate in the region due to the widespread coexistence of indigenous and non-indigenous individuals in the communities. When the Project identifies speakers of indigenous languages in a community, the FPIC process is carried out, as is the case in the following 9 communities:</p>	This indicator is not fully adjusted to the ADVC-focused approach taken by the project to expand PA surface. All communities should provide their consent in line with project safeguards, so	On target

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	Informed Consent (FPIC).			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agostaderos de Topón Luchadores del Castaño Carrizal Huatulco (3 FPICs for different entities) San Pedro Tapanatepec Santa María Guienagati Guevea de Humboldt 	the target should be 100%.	
	Output 1.2.1 Indicator 2: Number of hectares with draft legislation for the expansion of protected areas.		Target: 102,403 ha	<p>The Project was able to certify the following hectares (35,794 ha) in the Sierra Sur landscape (certification completed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Santa María Guienagati (29,794 ha) Santo Domingo Petapa (6,000 ha). <p>It is also worth mentioning that the project has entered the following hectares (65,241 ha) into the certification process (certification not yet completed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Santo Domingo Petapa (4,000 ha) // Sierra Sur Landscape Guevea de Humboldt* (21,000 ha) // Sierra Sur Landscape Copalita, Oax. (2,041 ha) // Costa Landscape (Fishing Refuge Zone) Nuevo Guerrero (600 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Rizo de Oro (800 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Ovando la Piñuela (2,800 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape Censo-Cerro Brujo (34,000 ha) // Sierra Madre Landscape (this will be a State PA) <p>These hectares were projected to be certified during FY21, but the National Agrarian Registry closed down its offices due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the</p>	This indicator duplicates outcome 1.2 indicator and does not inform about the corresponding outputs.	On target

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				<p>ADVC certification process requires the approval of the Agrarian Registry, the Project has not been able to complete the certification process of these areas, and these will be certified in FY22.</p> <p>The establishment of State PA La Joya Buenavista – Los Patos Solo Dios (43,055.35 ha) has recently started // Costa Landscape.</p> <p>At the conclusion of these processes, these APs will jointly cover 144,090.35 hectares, exceeding the target by 41,687.35 ha.</p>		
Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.	Outcome 1.3.1 Indicator 1: A multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape is established and functional	1.3 Indicator 1 baseline: None governance mechanism existing at landscape level. There are basic efforts and interest of many stakeholders to improve governance.	1.3 Indicator target 1: Multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape is established and functional.	<p>Multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape is identified</p> <p>Advanced on the creation of an ADVC governance body.</p> <p>Worked on establishment of a governance and leadership training program for governance body members.</p>	The indicator is SMART.	On target
Output 1.3.1: Participation of key stakeholders, including women and vulnerable groups, in integrated landscape management and in decision-making	Output 1.3.1 Indicator 1: Percentage of key stakeholders ³⁴ that are represented in the three governance bodies for integrated landscape		Target: 70%	<p>100% participations of key stakeholder groups.</p> <p>The project ensured the participation of all stakeholders in the governance bodies developed for Oaxaca and Chiapas.</p>	The indicator is not specific and does not have a baseline. This baseline should be defined based on a stakeholder mapping exercise for each governance body,	On target

³⁴ Key stakeholders are those belonging to the different sectors constituting a PA Advisory Council: social, private, productive, academic, CSO, government).

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
substantially strengthened.	planning and management.				to make sure that all the relevant individuals or organizations are participating within each stakeholder group.	
	Output 1.3.1 Indicator 2: Percentage of women participating in ILM governance mechanisms.	Baseline: 15%	Target: 30% of women	57% of women participated in the ILM governance mechanisms.	It is not clear how the baseline was set, and if the change in women's participation is attributable to the project.	On target
	Output 1.3.1 Indicator 3: Percentage of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants participating in ILM governance mechanisms.		Targets: An average of 20% of Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, consistent with their proportion within the population of each landscape ³⁵	72% of indigenous and afro descendant peoples participated in the ILM governance mechanisms.	The indicator is SMART.	On target
	Output 1.3.1 Indicator 4: Percentage of youth participating in ILM governance mechanisms.	Baseline: minimal participation of youth in decision making spaces	Target: At least 10%, consistent with population representation age classes 20 – 29 yrs	Youth participation was last reported at 2.5% in the PIR for Fiscal Year 2020. The pandemic has created difficulties in collecting clear age statistics due to the virtual nature of the meetings. As the staff returns to the communities and to the field, it will be possible to have this data again.	The indicator is SMART.	Information not available

³⁵ The average proportion of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants of the population in the three landscapes is 22% (see Appendix V.2 Indigenous Peoples plan), with significant differences that spread from 5.3% (SMCh) to 11.6% (PCOCh) up to 53.3% (SSO).

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				As temporary mitigation, an online attendance list protocol was built in collaboration with the M&E team.		
COMPONENT 2: Mainstreaming models of sustainable production with a market-driven value chain approach in agriculture, fishing, aquaculture, forest and tourism activities, as a pillar of integrated management of the three priority landscapes.						
Outcome 2.1: The area of sustainable agricultural, fishery, aquaculture, forestry and tourism production is substantially increased through best practices and a market-driven value chain approach for biodiversity conservation. ³⁶	Outcome 2.1 indicator: Number of hectares where Producer Organisations (cooperatives, association, family business, etc.) in Primary Intervention Sites (PIS) have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach.	2.1 Indicator baseline: On zero ha, Producer Organizations ³⁷ in Primary Intervention Sites (PIS) have adopted sustainable production practices as evaluated with CONANP's Index of Project Sustainability (IPS)	2.1 Indicator target: On at least 4,650 hectares in the PIS sustainable practices have been adopted, as indicated by reaching the highest scores (6-10 points) for CONANP's Index of sustainable projects (ISP)	<p>The project has selected 18 POs with 6,702 ha in the PIS (1,891 ha in landscapes and 4,811 ha in seascapes) for adoption of best practices.</p> <p>It was planned by the project to launch the adoption of best practices in the 18 POs; however, due to COVID-19, this was not possible due to the risk of contagion posed to communities. This is also the case with ToT and training modules, which will have to be implemented in the following year. The project also initiated the drafting of intervention plans for cocoa, coffee (in coordination with SLV), fishing, tourism and livestock.</p> <p>Moreover, the project successfully started training POs in the fishing, cocoa and livestock value chains to set up infrastructure and develop capacities to improve their production mechanisms.</p> <p>It is worth noting that 4,461 hectares were georeferenced, which will serve as a baseline through which to gauge the progress on best practices adoption.</p>	<p>The baseline is not realistic, since some of the POs selected were already working with CONANP on the adoption of sustainable practices. This progress cannot be attributed to the project.</p> <p>A baseline for every PO should be developed to monitor what sustainable practices are already in place, and which ones will be the target of the project in each case.</p>	Likely to be achieved (POs have been selected and initial activities are ongoing in some of them, but training on sustainable practices has not yet started due to COVID-19 restrictions.)

³⁶ The project will use CONANP's (2014) sustainable business strategy and index: http://negocios-sustentables.conanp.gob.mx/documentos/ESTRATEGIA_NAL_NSS.pdf

³⁷ As a result of consultations carried out in the workshops and interviews with producers, organized groups and staff of CONANP, there are no such practices in the primary intervention sites that were evaluated under CONANP's sustainable business strategy.

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
Output 2.1.1: Conventional production is transformed into sustainable production practices in the 16 PIS through organizational strengthening activities like ToT programs, Exchange of experiences and others, developing market-driven value chains for biodiversity conservation.	Output 2.1.1 indicator 1: Number of Producer Organisations (PO) with potential to transform conventional production practices with market orientation in the primary intervention sites (PIS) that are identified, selected and classified and/or its creation is supported.		Target: At least 9 POs	The project has selected 18 POs with 6,702 ha in the PIS (1,891 ha in landscapes and 4,811 ha in seascapes) for adoption of best practices in Livestock, Cocoa, Coffee, Cashew, Fish, Shrimp and Tourism.	The indicator is SMART.	On target
	Output 2.1.1 indicator 2: Number of producers (broken down into M/W, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant and vulnerable groups) organized in PO that have 6-10 points in the ISP, that participate in transforming conventional production into		Targets: At least 1,000 producers, seeking proportional participation of M/W, IP and Afro- descendants and youth	The project plans to support 1,848 producers (266 women, 742 men, 840 not specified), 423 of which are indigenous. ³⁸ It was planned by the project to launch the adoption of best practices in the 18 POs; however, due to COVID-19, this was not possible due to the risk of contagion posed to communities. This is also the case with ToT and training modules, which will have to be implemented in the following year. The project achieved the drafting of intervention plans for cocoa, fishing, livestock and tourism. Moreover, the project successfully started training POs in the fishing, cocoa and livestock value chains to set up	The indicator is SMART.	Likely to be achieved (POs have been selected and initial activities are ongoing in some of them, but training on sustainable practices has not yet started due to COVID-19 restrictions.)

³⁸ Updated as of October 1st, 2021.

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	sustainable production practices in the 16 PIS.			infrastructure and develop capacities to improve their production mechanisms. It is worth noting that 4,461 hectares were georeferenced, which will serve as a baseline through which to gauge the progress on best practices adoption.		
	Output 2.1.1 indicator 3: Number of demonstration cases of a successful model of sustainable production with a market-driven value chain for biodiversity conservation that is established in each of the three landscapes to promote learning by doing.		Target: At least 5 cases	The project is working on the development of 5 success cases, which will be then demonstrated to other communities. Potential demonstration cases have been identified for the livestock, coffee, cocoa, fishing and shrimping value chains.	The indicator is SMART.	Likely to be achieved (Potential demonstration cases have been identified, but progress is still limited.)
Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach	Outcome 2.2 indicator: Increase in income of PO members, disaggregated by sex	2.2 Indicator baseline: To be defined during first year of the project once the PO are identified; during PPG we found that most of the producers or cooperatives do not have standardized recordings of their income and profits.	2.2 Indicator 1 target: An average 15% of income increase of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach.	To measure the final increase in income from producers, the project has developed 3 baselines of producers' current net income for the POs El Pelicano (Costa, cashews), Luchadores del Castaño (Costa, fishing), and Los Ángeles (SMCh, livestock). The project has also developed the ToR for a consultancy to establish a net income baseline for the following POs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corazón del Valle (pine resin), SMCh - Capitán Luis Vidal (coffee), SMCh - Productores Orgánicos Tacaná (coffee), SMCh - Cacao Constitución (cacao), SMCh - Cacao Costa Rica (cacao), SMCh 	The indicator could be difficult to achieve in the project time-span, as sustained income increase is a consequence of continued sales to new buyers, which can take years to consolidate. Volume of sales to new buyers could be a more realistic indicator	Unlikely to be achieved (While it is likely that a 15% income increase will be achieved in some POs, this is unlikely to happen in all POs.)

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CUCOS (cacao, tropical fruits), SSIO - UCIRI (cacao, tropical fruits), SSIO <p>The Project, based on the intervention plans developed to increase 15% of the producers' income, has supported the following POs to reach national markets through the buyer The Green Corner (supermarket):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Los Ángeles PO (Sierra Madre, cattle ranch) - El Pelicano PO (Costa, cashew) <p>The Project is also currently supporting 6 POs in the linking process to the following national partners in the private sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mercado Libre: Volcán Tacaná (SMCh, coffee) Captain Luis Vidal (SMCh, coffee) UCIRI (SSIO, coffee / cocoa) - CUCOS (cocoa, SSIO) - Green Corner: Luchadores del Castaño (scale, PSCOCh) - SmartFish: Agostaderos de Topón (shrimp, PSCOCh) 	to track progress in the short to medium term.	
Output 2.2.1: Producer Organisations (PO) have improved access to markets and financial mechanisms due to sustainable products.	Output 2.2.1 indicator 1: Number of PO that have a partnership with a buyer that will help guide the development of their value chains early on in the process.		Target: At least 9 PO	<p>Initial links have been established between 10 POs and 5 potential buyers, but partnerships have not yet been established.</p> <p>It has been difficult to acquire commitment from buyers that will guide the development of their value chains (the POs) due to the travel and face-to-face meeting restrictions imposed by COVID-19.</p> <p>It is worth noting that face-to-face meetings are key to establishing trust and business deals between communities and buyers, and a lack of such meetings makes both parties reticent to commit to long-term trust relationships.</p>	The indicator might not be measurable in all cases, as not all buyers establish formal partnerships with POs.	Likely to be achieved (Given the links in process to be established in 10 POs, and ongoing work with 8 additional POs, it seems likely that the target will be achieved.)

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	Output 2.2.1 indicator 2: Percentage of PO that benefit from financial mechanisms for investment in sustainable practices and value chain development.		Target: 50%	The Project is working with the SLV-USAID project to develop such type of financial mechanisms for investment in sustainable practices and value chain development.	The indicator is SMART. It should be clarified that the target refers to 50% of the 9 POs targeted in the previous indicator, and not to the total number of POs participating in the project, which is higher.	Likely to be achieved (It seems likely that the financial mechanisms under development will benefit 5 POs before the project end).
	Output 2.2.1 indicator 3: Number of value chains that reach new markets. ³⁹		Target: 7 POs	<p>The Project, based on the intervention plans developed to increase 15% of the producers' income, has supported the following POs to reach national markets through first sales to the supermarket chain The Green Corner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Los Ángeles PO (Sierra Madre, cattle ranch) El Pelicano PO (Costa, cashew) <p>Additionally, the Project was able to link Café Capitán with EZA Naturisch in Austria. They sent an order of 17T of coffee for November, under the condition that they carry out a FairTrade certification.</p> <p>The Project is also currently supporting 6 POs in the linking process to the following national partners in the private sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mercado Libre: Volcán Tacaná (SMCh, coffee) Captain Luis Vidal (SMCh, coffee) UCIRI (SSIO, coffee / cocoa) CUCOS (cocoa, SSIO) 	The indicator is not specific, as "reaching new markets" can be interpreted in different ways. In addition, the unit of measurement is not clear as the indicator refers to "value chains", while the target refers to POs. To monitor the market linkages facilitated by the project, a specific variable should be used, such as the sales made by POs to new buyers thanks to project support.	Likely to be achieved (So far, only 2 POs have carried out pilot sales, but market linkages are in the process of being built for 7 additional POs.)

³⁹ There will be 1 value chain for each of the 7 products previously identified.

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Corner: Luchadores del Castaño (scale, PSCOCh) SmartFish: Agostaderos de Topón (shrimp, PSCOCh) 		
COMPONENT 3: Increasing financial sustainability in the integrated management of the three priority landscapes						
Outcome 3.1.: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased. *SPP: Sustainable Production Projects with market-driven value-chain approach	Outcome 3.1 Indicator 1: Increase in public-private co- funding aligned for integrated landscape management and sustainable production with market-orientation and value- chain approach	3.1 Indicator 1 baseline: Zero. Public- private funding for ILM is virtually limited to the environmental sector (SEMARNAT, CONANP, CONAFOR and a few corporations and CSO) A comprehensive baseline assessment will be delivered during the first project year. A first approximation to potential investments from public programs: Baseline investment on PA management 2016 (CONANP, 2017) ⁴⁰	3.1 Indicator 1 target: At least USD 21 Million of the ongoing investments from public and private institutions in the three landscapes, will be aligned with this project to support integrated landscape management and sustainable production in the last project year (2022) (alignment will be determined by an alignment criteria catalogue to be developed by the project).	An amount of 17.4 million USD in cofinancing was aligned to the project. Despite delays due to COVID-19, the Project is in the process of signing a counterpart letter with the Ministry of Agriculture (SADER, in Spanish) for the government agency to contribute \$ 7.4 million USD through their public programs that aligned with the project intervention sites. To expedite the process, the Steering Committee came to the resolution that they would include a representative from SADER to the Committee to help improve communication. This institution closed during the pandemic, hampering the counterpart process; however, contact was reestablished in June and the process is starting again. The Project has also established the foundations for work with the government initiative Sembrando Vida, of the Secretariat of Wellbeing. This is a government initiative to foment reforestation in agricultural plots through financial incentives and training on agroforestry systems, which could be channeled into activities in Components 2 and 3. The estimated cofinancing that this alliance would imply is still to be defined.	The baseline is not clear: it is set at zero, but then it is reported that CONANP alone was investing USD 2 million on average in the three landscapes at the time of project design. This makes it challenging to measure the actual progress attributable to the project.	Likely to be achieved

⁴⁰ Balderas et al. 2017: ProDoc, baseline assessment citing CONANP's Internal document.

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
		a) SMCh, USD 868,000; b) PCOCh, USD 847,000; c) SSO, USD 311,000. Total amount invested by CONANP (annual average): USD 2 Million and diminishing. 2016 key investments supporting productive activities from other government institutions (SEMARNAT, CDI, CONAFOR, SEDESOL, SAGARPA) in these landscapes were approximately of: USD 71 Million.				
	Outcome 3.1 Indicator 2: Increase in public-private funding for ILM and SPP* through new (innovative) financial mechanisms (e.g., green bonds, risk capital investments,	3.1 Indicator 2 baseline: No innovative financial mechanisms identified in the three priority landscapes, however there are several successful financial mechanisms	3.1 Indicator 2 target: At least US\$500.000 will be funded for ILM and SPP* through additional and diversified sources of funding (did not exist before project start) in the 16 PIS.	In 2020, CI secured a project with USAID for USD 10 Million that is aligned with the objectives of the GEF 6 project. The project worked with the SLV-USAID project to design a roadmap to obtain financing from a blended finance platform. As a part of this road map, it was planned that the first step of this roadmap is to select the most matured producer organizations to be investable and credit-ready.	The indicator is SMART.	Likely to be achieved (The development of new financial mechanisms is still at very initial stages, but it is likely that the targeted amount of

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
	carbon marketing, and others) or the expansion of existing ones in the country to cover these three landscapes.	operating in the country (priority species fund, Paralelo 28, Paisano initiative, El Triunfo Fund, FINDECA), and the project could benefit from scaling and adding new and diversified sources of funding.		<p>The Huatulco Fund and the ADVC Fund was agreed and has begun development with FONCET to receive funds through hotel groups and the Huatulco ASUR airport, who are interested in donating and establishing a collection strategy for tourists to maintain the Fund. It is expected that at least 250,000 USD will be mobilized to the landscapes from these funds.</p> <p>Agreements with FCCF to create a forest management financing mechanism in the PIS La Sepultura have yet to be finalized. Due to COVID-19, international flights were not permitted, which barred access from Luxembourg consultants to carry out a pre-feasibility study in the field. This was carried out in July 2021 and is now under revision.</p>		funding will be reached by project completion.)
Output 3.1.1: Existing public and private programs mainstream their investments towards supporting the project activities, outputs and outcomes for ILM and SPP in the 16 PIS.	Output 3.1.1 Indicator: Number of public or private sources of ongoing investments that have supported or coordinated with project activities, outputs and outcomes for ILM and SPP in the 16 PIS.		Target: At least 7 support programs	Activities of 13 organizations have been aligned to the project. These include the following: Fondo Oaxaqueño, SmartFish, SADER, COPLADE, SEMAHN, SEMAEDESO, SEMARNAT, Fondo de Conservación El Triunfo, UCIRI, Cooperativa AMBIO, Pronatura Sur AC, CONANP and CIIDIR.	The indicator is SMART, but reporting should be more specific as to which activities were aligned.	On target
Output 3.1.2: Mixed financing mechanisms not currently available in these landscapes (public-private partnerships, market-	Output 3.1.2 Indicator: Number of financial mechanisms new to the region that are supporting		Target: At least 3 financial mechanisms	The project worked with the SLV-USAID project to design a roadmap to obtain financing from a blended finance platform. As a part of this road map, it was planned that the first step of this roadmap is to select the most matured producer	The indicator is not relevant at the output level and duplicates Outcome 3.1 Indicator 2.	Unlikely to be achieved (The development of new financial mechanisms is still at initial

Expected result	Indicator(s)	Project baseline	End of project target	Cumulative progress since project start (September 8 th , 2021)	Comments on indicators	Likelihood of achievement
based financing, results oriented or other) are set up, as long-term solutions to reduce CONANP's funding gap and/or reduce the barriers to develop the market-driven value chains.	project activities, outputs and outcomes, funded by diversified sources (could be market based, mixed public-private or other) as a long-term solution to for ILM and SPP activities in the three landscapes.			<p>organizations to be investable and credit-ready.</p> <p>The Huatulco Fund and the ADVC Fund was agreed upon and has begun development with FONCET to receive funds through hotel groups and the Huatulco ASUR airport, who are interested in donating and establishing a collection strategy for tourists to maintain the Fund.</p> <p>Agreements with FCCF to create a forest management financing mechanism in the PIS La Sepultura have yet to be finalized.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19, international flights were not permitted, which barred access from Luxembourg consultants to carry out a pre-feasibility study in the field.</p>		stages, so it seems unlikely that 3 of them will be supporting project activities before project completion.)

Source: Information on cumulative progress was provided by the PMU.

Annex 6. POs and tourist services providers

Organization	Value chain	Landscape	Progress
Café Capitán Luis A. Vidal	Coffee	Sierra Madre	EZA Natürisch (Austria) sent an order of 17 tons of coffee for November 2021, under the condition that the PO carries out a Fairtrade certification (in progress) Market linkages are also being established with Mercado Libre Donated equipment for a dry mill Conservation agreement in progress Organizational strengthening is ongoing
Productores Orgánicos Tacaná	Coffee	Sierra Madre	Market linkages are being established with Mercado Libre
Nueva Costa Rica	Cocoa	Sierra Madre	Market linkages with AMCO. The Project will explore future niche market linkages through CHOCOA Fair and Museo del Chocolate.
Grupo de Ganadería Sostenible Los Ángeles	Livestock (dairy)	Sierra Madre	Three pilot sales to The Green Corner (37.5 kg total) as a first step to establish a formal commercial agreement A vacuum packer was delivered and the producers were trained to use it Organizational strengthening is ongoing Corporate image development A draft strategy was elaborated to establish a field school in sustainable livestock The Project paid to legally formalize the group. Donation of supplies for cold chain to deliver pilot sales to Mexico City.
Corazón del Valle	Forestry (resin)	Sierra Madre	A joint strategy for resin production was developed with four additional POs (Ejido California, Copropiedad Niños Héroes, Ejido Niquidambar, Ejido Tierra y Libertad) A feasibility study was conducted for the 5 POs by the FCCF for a long-term investment to support resin and timber production
Luchadores de El Castaño	Fish	Coast	Establishment of a primary processing site, business and food safety training in collaboration with SmartFish, including the donation of a cold chain Market linkages are being established with The Green Corner A conservation agreement was signed to protect the river crocodile A Fishing Refuge Zone is being developed for this PO (25 ha). This PO was analyzed with the Ocean Outcomes Triple Impact study, which provides deep insight of the organization and an environmental, social, and financial improvement plan.

Organization	Value chain	Landscape	Progress
			Training on implementation of improvement in fishing practices in Peru. Exchange of experiences with fisheries across Chiapas.
El Carrizal	Shrimp	Coast	Market linkages are being established with Comercializadora SmartFish A conservation agreement was signed to protect the river crocodile. A Fishing Refuge Zone is being developed for this PO (ha unknown). This PO was analyzed with the Ocean Outcomes Triple Impact study, which provides deep insight of the organization and an environmental, social and financial improvement plan. Exchange of experiences with fisheries across Chiapas.
Agostaderos deTopón	Shrimp	Coast	Establishment of a primary processing site, business and food safety training in collaboration with SmartFish, including the donation of a cold chain Market linkages are being established with Comercializadora SmartFish A conservation agreement was signed to protect the jaguar and the river crocodile. A Fishing Refuge Zone is being developed for this PO (~300 ha). This PO was analyzed with the Ocean Outcomes Triple Impact study, which provides deep insight of the organization and an environmental, social and financial improvement plan. Exchange of experiences with fisheries across Mexico and South America. Exchange of experiences with fisheries across Chiapas.
Costa Verde	Tourism	Coast	Market linkages with Introspecta are in process.
Senderos y Humedales de la Costa	Tourism	Coast	Online marketing training.
Aquabuses SA de CV	Tourism	Coast	Online marketing training. The Project paid for Birding certification for service provider (NOM09TUR2002). In process of training in best practices in tourism (social, financial, organizational, environmental).
El Madresal	Tourism	Coast	In process of training in best practices in tourism (social, financial, organizational, environmental). Market linkages with Introspecta are in process.
La Escobilla	Tourism	Coast	--

Organization	Value chain	Landscape	Progress
Sociedad Cooperativa Tangolunda	Tourism	Coast	Online marketing training. In process of training in best practices in tourism (social, financial, organizational, environmental).
El Pelicano	Cashew	Coast	First sales to The Green Corner. Brand strengthening activities Business training Financial analysis of PO to define real costs of their products. Paid organic certification of SAGARPA.
UCIRI	Cocoa, tropical fruits	Sierra Sur	A plant nursery for 32,800 cocoa plants was established to supply producers A drying and fermentation center was built, and training was provided in crop management, plant production, and post-harvest processes. Digital marketing training. Market linkages are being established with Rito Chocolate and Mercado Libre.
CUCOS	Cocoa, tropical fruits	Sierra Sur	Market linkages are being established with Rito Chocolate and Mercado Libre.
El Jacaralito	Coffee	Sierra Sur	Proposal of conservation agreement Markets identified (Blasón, Louis Dreyfuss) Organizational training in process in cooperation with CI-Starbucks Project.

Source: Own elaboration based on information provided by the PMU.



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