

GEF Project ID: 9445



Terminal Evaluation Report

for the project

Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological
Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas

Prepared For :



Prepared By :



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PROJECT DETAILS

Strengthening the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the national system of protected areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico.

GEF Project ID	Approval FY	GEF Period
9445	2018	GEF - 6
Funding Source	Project Type	Implementing Agencies
GEF Trust Fund	Full-size Project	Conservation International

Executing Agencies

- National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
- Conservation International Mexico, A.C. CI Mexico

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADVC	Areas Designated for Voluntary Conservation
AGM	Accountability and Grievance Mechanism
CI	Conservation International
CIMX	Conservation International Mexico
CONANP	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
COP	Conference of the Parties
COVID	Coronavirus
CUCOS	United Coffee Growers of the Coast (acronym in Spanish)
EA	Executing Agency
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSP	Full-sized Project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMP	Gender Mainstreaming Plan
IA	Implementing Agency
ILM	Integrated Landscape Management
IPP	Indigenous Peoples' Plan
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PAs	Protected Areas
PIRs	Project Implementation Reports
PIS	Project Intervention Sites
PMU	Project Management Unit
POs	Producer Organizations
POETs	Territorial Planning (acronym in Spanish)
ProDoc	Project Document
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SEMAEDES	Ministry of the Environment, State of Oaxaca (acronym in Spanish)
SEMAHN	Ministry of the Environment, State of Chiapas (Spanish acronym)
SPP	Sustainable Production Projects
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UCIRI	Union of Indigenous Communities of the Isthmus Region (acronym in Spanish)
USD	United States Dollar

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

CI-GEF project summary information

Project Name	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas
Project Type	Full-sized Project
Funding Source	<p>GEF</p> <p>Co-financing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONANP • CI - Starbucks Foundation • COOPERATIVA AMBIO S.C. de R.L. • COSTA SALVAJE • FONDO DE CONSERVACION EL TRIUNFO (FONCET) • SEMAEDESO OXACA, SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE, ENERGÍAS Y DESARROLLO SUSTENTABLE • Ministry of Agriculture (SADER formally SAGARPA) • SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales • Fondo Oaxaqueno • Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC • SEMAHN CHIAPAS, SECRETARIA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE E HISTORIA NATURAL • La Frailecana • Master Chef • INTERCAFE • SmartFish AC • Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuícola A.C. (Cosia) • SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas) • CONAFOR Chiapas • UCIRI • SEMAEDESO • SEMAEDESO • CI - USAID SLV • Sociedad cooperativa de producción pesquera de bienes y servicios los agosteros de Topon • Café Capitán • CI - Mastercard • El Carrizal • ECOM
GEF Project ID	9445
Country (ies)	Mexico
Region	Latin America
GEF Focal Area	Biodiversity, Climate Change, Land Degradation
Approval date	01/10/2018
Implementing Agency	Conservation International
Executing Agencies	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and Conservation International Mexico (CI-Mexico)
GEF total grant	USD 7,219,450
GEF grant utilized	USD 6,861,967

Expected Co-financing	USD 47,459,966
Co-financing total realized	USD 76,554,679
Implementation timeframe	02/2018 – 04/2025
Project website	https://www.thegef.org/projects-operations/projects/9445
Project objective	To strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the National System of Protected Areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico.
Terminal Evaluation timeframe	
Evaluation team	Kevin Enongene, Elsie Fobissie, Kevin Fokou, Andrea Gonzalez & Maria Campo

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

Purpose of the Final Evaluation

This purpose of this final evaluation is to:

- 1 Promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishment.
- 2 Synthesize lessons that may help improve agency, country and GEF projects efficiency.
- 3 Provision of feedback on issues that are recurrent across the CI and GEF portfolio and need action and
- 4 Contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office databases for aggregation, analysis, and reporting on the effectiveness of GEF operations

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a. Provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project; and
- b. Assess the project's design, implementation, and achievement of objectives.

Terminal Evaluation approach and methodology

This terminal evaluation is based on the analysis of both primary and secondary data. To generate secondary data for this evaluation assignment, the evaluation team carried out a detailed review of various relevant project documents while primary data was collected through face-to-face and virtual interviews using an interview guide elaborated for the purpose of this assignment. Both the primary and secondary data were analyzed and used to elaborate the draft terminal evaluation report that was submitted to CI-GEF Agency for their review and feedback. Comments received from the project team were addressed and integrated as appropriate, to produce a final version of the terminal evaluation report that was submitted to CI-GEF thereafter.

Assessment of Project Results

The overall rating of assessment of achievement of project results is **Highly Satisfactory**, summarized from the assessment of the performance of project outputs and outcomes. Outcomes were rated in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability as shown below:

1. *Outputs*: Achievement of outputs is rated **Highly Satisfactory**. The project had a total of 7 outputs: three (3) for Component 1, two (2) for Component 2 and two (2) for Component 3. Under Component 1, two (Outputs 1.1.1 and 1.1.2) had their indicator targets expected while Output 1.3.1 was achieved at 100%. For the two outputs under Component 2, the indicator target for Output 2.1.1 was exceeded while Output 2.2.1. had its indicator targets achieved at 100%. The two outputs under Component 3 were achieved (Output 3.1.2) and exceeded (Output 3.1.1).
2. *Outcomes*: Achievement of outcomes is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all outcomes (Outcomes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, and 3.1). This is based on the ratings of four dimensions: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The overall outcome rating for the project is **Highly Satisfactory**. An overview of the assessment of the outcomes against the four dimensions: Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability is provided below:
 - a. *Effectiveness*: The effectiveness of outcome 1.1 is rated as Highly Satisfactory (100% average outcome achievement); Outcome 1.2 is rated Highly Satisfactory (100% average outcome achievement); Outcome 1.3 is rated Satisfactory (90% average outcome achievement); Outcome 2.1 was rated as Highly Satisfactory (107% average outcome achievement); Outcome 2.2 was rated Highly Satisfactory (197% average outcome achievement) while Outcome 3.1 was rated as Highly Satisfactory (138% average outcome achievement).

- b. *Efficiency* is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all project outcomes. The ratings were based on an assessment of how funds were managed and tracked and value for money.
- c. *Relevance* is rated **Highly Satisfactory** for all the project outcomes because of their alignment with national priorities of Mexico, relevant international legislative frameworks, and the GEF-7 programming directions.
- d. *Sustainability*: Outcomes 1.2 and 3.1 could face financial risks that could impede sustainability. The project would require additional financial resources for the management of the additional areas classified as protected areas (Outcome 1.2 – Moderately Likely). Similarly, changes in funding priorities of public and private financiers could disrupt the sustained flow of investments from public and private sources secured under Outcome 3.1 (Moderately Likely). From an institutional risk to sustainability stance, inadequate institutional capacity may make it hard for the project benefits of sustainable landscape management practices to be sustained beyond the project’s life (Outcome 1.1 – Moderately Likely). Climate change represents an environmental risk which may hamper the sustainability of the project outcomes. Changes in temperature and precipitation could negatively impact the existing and new areas brought under protected management (Outcome 1.2 - Moderately Likely), the sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and tourism production (Outcome 2.1 - Moderately Likely) and the income earned by producer organizations (Outcome 2.2 – Moderately Likely). The overall Sustainability rating is Likely.

Progress to Impact

Progress to Impact is rated **Satisfactory**.

At the time of this terminal evaluation (TE), all project activities have been implemented, most of them exceeded or achieved. The protected areas (Pas) have benefitted from more effective management practices and producer organisations have been introduced to more sustainable production practices, market-driven opportunities and an increase in income. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores for the various PAs have increased significantly among other achieved results, the impact of the project therefore is already obvious.

Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Systems

The overall M&E system is rated **Satisfactory**. The summary is provided below:

- a. *M&E Design*: The rating for M&E design is **Highly Satisfactory**.

The project from the onset had a monitoring and evaluation plan in place, with clear objectives and indicators. Project monitoring and evaluation has been conducted in accordance with Conservation International and GEF procedures and guidelines as expected. The M&E plan detailed all indicators, means of verification, and clearly defined the monitoring and evaluation roles and responsibilities of project stakeholders. It also allocated an adequate budget for M&E activities. In collaboration with the Executing Agency (EA), project stakeholders were responsible for ensuring that key monitoring and evaluation tasks were carried out in a timely and effective manner. These included:

- the project inception workshop and report;
- quarterly progress reporting, annual progress and implementation reporting (PIR); and
- documentation of lessons learned, and support for and cooperation with the independent external evaluation exercises.

The project Executing Agency is also responsible for ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, and for initiating key monitoring and evaluation activities, such as the independent evaluation exercises and frequent progress reporting.

b. *M&E Implementation* is rated **Satisfactory**.

The M & E plan was sufficiently budgeted, and the funding has been provided throughout the different stages of project implementation to ensure planned M & E activities are carried out as required and in a timely manner. A Midterm Evaluation conducted in 2021 and the ongoing Terminal Evaluation (TE) were also included in this budget. Periodic financial and technical reports have been produced as required throughout the project lifespan. Data on the progress and performance of the different output indicators has been collected and reported in the quarterly and annual reports produced between 2018-2024.

There were some delays at the start of the project, though things fell in place and implementation was on track making M & E activities to go on as planned. The EA has ensured the alignment of produced reports to relevant guidelines and assigned delivery timelines for all planned reports. There has been no evidence of any major problems in the management of the project, as the various stakeholders have worked in close collaboration and partnership to ensure that PIRs are elaborated annually to monitor progress made from implementation, while ensuring that lessons learned are properly documented and shared as expected. The coronavirus pandemic - COVID-19 which posed a risk in the early years of implementation ended and activities went as planned.

Assessment of Implementation and Execution

The overall quality of implementation/execution is rated **Satisfactory**.

Quality of Implementation: The quality of implementation rating is **Highly Satisfactory**.

Although the project experienced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team successfully brought activities back on track once conditions improved. This recovery is evident in the fact that most outputs were either achieved or exceeded.

The implementation of the project was well managed by the EA. As part of its technical and financial oversight role, Conservation International (CI) Mexico supported the project implementation by providing technical and financial guidance while ensuring compliance with GEF guidelines, safeguards requirements, and all technical and financial commitments.

Quality of execution: The quality of execution rating is **Satisfactory**.

The Project Steering Committee played the role of overall assurance, backstopping, and oversight role in the project, so far ensuring that all progress reports are produced in a timely manner.

Assessment of Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

The overall rating of the design and implementation of ESS is **Satisfactory**.

At the time of project design, a screening on safeguards was conducted for the Sustainable Landscapes project and an ESS Compliance workplan produced following prescribed guidelines. This screening pointed to three safeguards that could be triggered during project implementation: gender mainstreaming; stakeholder engagement; and accountability and grievance mechanisms. As per the evaluators, the ESS screening was done in an appropriate manner. The ESS safeguards that were triggered, implemented, monitored and indicators tracked and reported are described below:

a. *Gender* is rated **Satisfactory**. Gender mainstreaming was of great importance from the time of project design and all through implementation. As per the ProDoc, to ensure that the project met CI-GEF's "Gender Mainstreaming Policy #8", the Executing Agency prepared a Gender Mainstreaming Plan. As part of this plan, the project executing agency had committed to ensuring inclusivity as a fundamental

part of the project. This policy aimed at an equal representation of men and women within the project's activities to the highest extent possible. While gender was an essential element of this policy, the project also sought inclusion across expertise for all project components to ensure that the targets generated are feasible across a global setting and are not biased in any way.

At the time of this TE, the project has seen a significant participation of men and women in project activities which can be attributed to the level of achievements of the project. The project ensured gender mainstreaming and women's involvement during project implementation.

b. Stakeholder Engagement is rated **Satisfactory**. To ensure that the project meets CI-GEF Project Agency's "Stakeholders' Engagement Policy #9", a Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was developed by the Executing Agency during the design phase. The SEP was elaborated and included different categories of actors and their various roles and responsibilities within the confines of the project (state actors, development partners, private sector, academia, NGOs, as well as local government and cities). Overall, the following stakeholders participated in the project:

- Government Ministries
- Development agencies
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Communities / local populations / ejidos
- Municipal government & delegates
- State government
- Federal government
- Committees or government civil society bodies
- Assemblies or community boards
- Ejido councils
- Peasant organizations or social enterprises and
- Private Sector Leaders
- Companies
- Media

c. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) is rated **Highly Satisfactory**. The project's EA developed an Accountability and Grievance Mechanism at the design phase of the project, which was disseminated among the different stakeholders. All respondents also stated that no grievances were received during the implementation of the project.

Other assessments

Materialization of co-financing

The project was co-financed by Conservation International, CONANP, CI - Starbucks Foundation, COOPERATIVA AMBIO S.C. de R.L., COSTA SALVAJE, FONDO DE CONSERVACION EL TRIUNFO (FONCET), SEMAEDESO OXACA, SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE, ENERGÍAS Y DESARROLLO SUSTENTABLE, Ministry of Agriculture (SADER formally SAGARPA), SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, Fondo Oaxaqueño, Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC, SEMAHN CHIAPAS, SECRETARIA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE E HISTORIA NATURAL, La Frailescana, Master Chef, INTERCAFE, SmartFish AC, Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuicola A.C. (Cosia), SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas), CONAFOR Chiapas, UCIRI, SEMAEDESO, SEMAEDESO, CI - USAID SLV, Sociedad cooperativa de producción pesquera de bienes y servicios los agosteros de Topon, Café Capitán, CI – Mastercard, El Carrizal, and ECOM.

Knowledge management

A Knowledge Management Plan was developed and disseminated among all project stakeholders at inception to ensure proper reporting and documentation of lessons learned, as well as challenges encountered. Component 2 created awareness on the importance of sustainable biodiversity conservation in Oaxaca and Chiapas and Mexico as a whole. Success stories, best practices and lessons learned are published on blogs, websites, social media and other digital platforms.

Lessons Learnt

- 1. Adaptive management.** At the time of inception of the project, COVID-19 had not started and was therefore not identified as a risk of the project implementation. However, it became an actual risk that caused delays and/or slowed down project implementation. To mitigate this unforeseen hindrance, adjustments were made to the project activities to accommodate the travel and physical meeting restrictions imposed by governments due to the pandemic. Project staff switched to remote and hybrid mode of work as well as virtual meetings to help them implement the planned activities, such as stakeholder consultations. Health measures were put in place to ensure the safety of the project staff and other partners involved in the implementation. However, even though the project already put in place adaptive measures, COVID-19 slowed down during implementation. Putting in place adaptive management strategies will also help a project of this nature to better mitigate unexpected events that bring delays to its implementation.
- 2. The project fostered inclusiveness by involving the private sector, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, youth and women.** Among the stakeholder groups, there are private sector organizations who had committed to co-financing the project, such as the ADO Foundation, ALSEA and DANONE, although their co-financing did not materialize. Efforts were made to ensure the participation of women, indigenous peoples, people of Afro-descendant origin and youth in project activities, in the selection of stakeholders throughout the project implementation, taking into consideration their needs and interests as a minority or vulnerable group and putting measures in place to monitor and enhance their participation. The gender analysis developed at the inception phase of the project and the stakeholder engagement plan enabled this to happen.
- 3. Continuous close collaboration amongst the project stakeholders, creates a sense of ownership and encourages a strong participation in project activities.** The Sustainable Landscapes project did well in bringing diverse stakeholders from all levels of government all through the project, starting from the design phase through implementation. Stakeholder consultations facilitated the selection of project stakeholders who showed a strong sense of engagement, which may have positively impacted progress in achieving expected outcomes.

Recommendations

	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
	Sustainability	
1.	Sustainable long-term partnerships established within the framework of the project	For the successful achievement of project results and future interventions of this nature, long-term partnerships established during project implementation will need to be maintained even after the project ends. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders

FINDING/CHALLENGE		RECOMMENDATIONS
		Timeline: Future projects
2.	Better preparation for risks, especially security and political challenges, was identified as critical for future projects.	The project experienced delays due to political disruptions. For future initiative, it will be worthwhile to have contingency planning for potential social and political disruptions. In this way, the project will be better able to deal with these once they arise. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders Timeline: Future projects
3.	Causes of land degradation continuously need to be monitored across the landscapes, to ensure projects of this nature are beneficial and sustainable.	This project has created awareness on the causes of land degradation and the importance of biodiversity conservation and landscape management. For these benefits to have a long-lasting impact, they will need to continue monitoring the factors impacting landscapes. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP Timeline: Future projects
Knowledge management		
4.	It is required that knowledge products continue being disseminated to encourage wider audience.	Continuous awareness-raising and education is imperative, through reports, social media and project partner websites, to widen the audience and create impact. Responsibility: CI-GEF Timeline: By the end of project activities

Terminal Evaluation summary Rating

The table below summarizes the project ratings. The rating scale is provided in Annex C.

Area	Terminal Evaluation Rating
Assessment of project results: the extent to which project objectives were achieved	Overall rating of project results: Highly Satisfactory 1. Outputs: <i>Highly Satisfactory</i> 2. Outcomes: <i>Highly Satisfactory</i> . The breakdown is provided below: <i>a. Effectiveness: Highly Satisfactory</i> <i>b. Relevance: Highly Satisfactory</i> <i>c. Efficiency: Highly Satisfactory</i> <i>d. Sustainability: Likely</i>
Sustainability	Likely
Progress to Impact	Satisfactory

Area	Terminal Evaluation Rating
Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system	Overall rating of the quality of M&E systems: Satisfactory <i>a. M&E design: Highly Satisfactory</i> <i>b. M&E implementation: Satisfactory</i>
Assessment of Implementation and Execution	Overall rating of Implementation and Execution: Satisfactory <i>a. Quality of Implementation: Highly Satisfactory</i> <i>b. Quality of Execution: Satisfactory</i>
Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)	Overall rating of (ESS): Satisfactory <i>a. Gender: Satisfactory</i> <i>b. Stakeholder Engagement: Satisfactory</i> <i>c. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism: Highly Satisfactory</i>

3. INTRODUCTION: PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project “*Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas*” also referred to as Sustainable Landscapes project, is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded full-sized project (FSP) from the sixth replenishment cycle, that focuses on 2 major areas: the improvement of sustainability of protected areas systems and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes and seascapes and production sectors. The project therefore focuses on identifying the obstacles faced in the conservation of biodiversity and addressing them, while bringing an economic perspective into the management of landscapes. The target during the project was mainly production landscapes and seascapes. This project was specifically designed to integrate a market-driven value chain approach into the management of protected areas (PAs), with the aim of improving the livelihoods of people residing within or around these areas. The GEF implementing Agency was Conservation International (CIGEF) and the Executing Entities were the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and Conservation International Mexico (CI Mexico).

Project start and duration

The project received GEF approval in January 2018, actual implementation began in July 2018 and was expected to last for 60 months. The project further experienced delays which made it enter into full execution in July 2019. The expected completion date is April 2025 with a terminal evaluation planned to start towards the end of 2024.

Project objective and components

The objective of this project was “*Strengthening the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the national system of protected areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico.*”

To achieve the above-mentioned objective, the project had three components:

Component 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. Integrated management of three priority landscapes for biodiversity conservation is substantially strengthened through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.

Output 1.1.1. A model of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for biodiversity conservation including protected areas and corridors developed and disseminated.

Outcome 1.2. Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity

Output 1.2.1. Draft legislation for the expansion of 102,403 hectares of two protected areas which have been locally consented and approved.

Outcome 1.3. Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.

Output 1.3.1. Participation of key stakeholders, including women and vulnerable groups in integrated landscape management and in decision-making substantially strengthened.

Component 2: Mainstreaming models of sustainable production with 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.

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.

Outcome 2.2. Increased income of members of Producer Organizations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach.

Output 2.2.1. Producer Organizations (PO) have improved access to markets and financial mechanisms to due sustainable products.

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 sustainability increased.

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 3.1.2. 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.

4. EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

In 2021, a midterm evaluation was conducted for this project, to assess the performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the project in its first three years of implementation. This Mid-Term Review (MTR) ran from July to November of 2021 and was to be followed later by a terminal evaluation planned for the end of 2024. The evaluation team comprised Kevin Enongene – Team Leader; Elsie Fobissie – International Consultant; Kevin Fokou – International Consultant, Andrea Gonzalez – National Consultant, and Maria Campo – National Consultant. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Consultancy is included in Annex B followed by the profiles of the different team members in Annex C.

4.1. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this terminal evaluation is to:

- Promote accountability and transparency, and to assess and disclose levels of project accomplishment.
- Synthesize lessons that may help improve the selection, design, and implementation of future CIGEF projects.
- Provide feedback on issues that are recurrent across the CI and GEF portfolio and need attention; and
- Contribute to the GEF Evaluation Office databases for aggregation, analysis, and reporting on the effectiveness of GEF operations.

The objectives of the terminal evaluation include are to:

- ✓ Provide a comprehensive and systematic account of the performance of the project; and
- ✓ Assess the project's design, implementation, and achievement of objectives.

4.2. Evaluation criteria and questions

The evaluation was guided by the following criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, project M&E, Progress to Impact, Implementation and Execution plan, and Environmental and Social Safeguards. Details of the evaluation criteria and questions are presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria and questions considered for the Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project

Evaluation criteria	Scope	Evaluation questions	Rating scale
Relevance	Relevance assesses the extent to which the project's outcomes were consistent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities, and mandates of the Agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities, and mandates of the Agencies? • Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes? 	<i>Six-point rating scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly satisfactory (HS) to highly unsatisfactory
Efficiency	It assesses the extent to which the project implementation was cost-effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the project cost-effective? • How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation 	<i>Six-point rating scale</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly satisfactory (HS) to highly unsatisfactory

		compared to that of similar projects?	
Effectiveness	Effectiveness measures the extent to which the expected outcomes and objectives of the project have been achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the project's actual outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes? 	<p><i>Six-point rating scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly satisfactory (HS) to Highly unsatisfactory
Sustainability	Assesses the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes at the end of the project.	<p><i>Financial risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes? What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once GEF assistance ends? <p><i>Socio-political risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the project's long-term objectives? <p><i>Institutional framework and governance risks</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures, and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project benefits? Are requisite systems for accountability and transparency, and required technical know-how, in place? 	<p><i>four-point rating scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely (L) to Unlikely (U)

		<p>Environmental risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outcomes? 	
Progress to Impact	This assesses the evidence on progress towards long-term impacts, and the extent to which the key assumptions of the project's theory of change hold.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent can the progress towards long-term impact may be attributed to the project? • How much change has been recorded or being to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • population of endangered species, • forest stock, • water retention in degraded lands? • How well did the project contribute to changes in policy/legal/regulatory frameworks? • How well did it contribute to change in socioeconomic status (income, health, well-being, etc.?) • Are there arrangements in the project design to facilitate follow-up actions? • Which are the GEF promoted approaches, technologies, financing instruments, legal frameworks, information systems adopted/implemented without direct support from, or involvement of the project? • What are the contributions of other actors and factors adopted/implemented without direct support from, or involvement of the project? • What barriers and other risks may prevent further progress towards long-term impacts? • What unintended impacts did the project record (both positive and negative impacts)? • What was the overall scope and implications of these impacts in the project? 	<i>Six-point rating scale</i> Highly Satisfactory (HS) to Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
Project M&E	Assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the	<i>For M&E design:</i>	<i>Six-point rating scale</i>

	project M&E plan and its implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the M&E plan at the point of CEO Endorsement practical and sufficient? • Did it include baseline data? • Did it specify clear targets and appropriate (SMART) indicators to track environmental, gender, and socio-economic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of the M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and budget adequate funds for M&E activities? <p><i>For M&E Implementation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the M&E system operated as per the M&E plan? • Was the M&E plan revised? If so, did this happen in a timely manner? • Was information on specified indicators and relevant GEF focal area tracking tools gathered in a systematic manner? • Were appropriate methodological approaches used to analyse data? • Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the M&E system used during the project implementation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Satisfactory (HS) to Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)
Implementation and Execution	This assesses if GEF projects consider the performance of the GEF Implementing Agencies and project Executing Agency(ies) (EAs) in discharging their expected roles and responsibilities	<p><i>Quality of Implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the agency deliver effectively on the following: project's identification; concept preparation, appraisal preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion, and evaluation, with focus on 	<p><i>Six-point rating scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Satisfactory (HS) to Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)

		<p>elements that were controllable from the given CI-GEF Agency perspective?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well were risks identified and managed by CI-GEF Agency? <p><i>Quality of Execution</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did the EA effectively discharge their role and responsibilities relating to: the appropriate use of funds; and procurement and contracting of goods and services? 	
Environmental and Social Safeguards	This assess whether appropriate environmental and social safeguards were addressed in the project's design and implementation	<p>A. Environmental and social safeguards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How appropriate was the screening/risk categorization of the project? • How effective is the implementation of the safeguard plans / management measures that were approved by CI-GEF Agency? • what worked well in implementation of the ESMF? • What needs to be improved in the implementation of the ESMF? <p>B. Gender Mainstreaming Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effective was the project in reaching women and integrating gender mainstreaming throughout its activities? were all activities planned in the GMP implemented? Yes/No Why? • Did the project face any challenges in implementing the GMP as initially proposed? Which challenges? How were the challenges overcome? • Compared to the original GMP, did the project had to implement any adaptations to promote meaningful participation of 	<p><i>Seven-point rating scale</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly Satisfactory (HS) to Highly Unsatisfactory (HU) And Unable to Assess (UA)

		<p>women and advance towards other gender sensitive targets?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the project team/stakeholders/beneficiaries observe any qualitative outcomes (either positive or negative) related to gender equality, that are difficult to capture in a quantitative project target? ● Considering all the above, what are the recommendations for future similar projects to effectively advance towards gender sensitive targets or seize opportunities to promote gender transformational change? ● Were there any key lessons learned and/or good practices identified in the project's efforts to implement gender sensitive measures? <p><i>Local communities and/or indigenous people as beneficiaries or key stakeholders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent did the project enhance women's leadership and meaningful participation in decision-making spaces and processes? ● To what extent did the project facilitated and enhanced the capacity of women and men to change negative gender norms, that could potentially prevent women from fully benefiting from project's Outputs and Outcomes? ● Are there any indications of the project influencing or enabling women's agency, access and control over assets, access to new economic opportunities or productive or conservation opportunities or roles? ● Were there any unintended outcomes (positive or negative) 	
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		<p>related to gender equality at the community level?</p> <p>C. Stakeholder Engagement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To what extent were your views and concerns considered by the project? ● What efforts was made by the project to enhance the meaningful participation local communities and/or indigenous people in project implementation? ● How well were there any additional efforts implemented to promote the participation of vulnerable or marginalized groups present in the prioritized communities? ● Overall, what is your level of satisfaction relating to your engagement in the project? ● Did then project achieve its stakeholder engagement targets? If yes/no, kindly provide a reason for the achievement/non-achievement? ● What are the recommendations for future similar projects to effectively engage stakeholders? <p>D. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the project dispose of an AGM? If yes, how was it disseminated? ● Were you aware of the grievance mechanism? ● Was the mechanism effective in addressing grievances? ● Were established channels and procedures, accessible and responded to the local communities and/or indigenous people and their needs? ● What are the recommendations for future similar projects 	
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		pertaining to the establishment and dissemination of an AGM?	
GEF Additionality	This assess the extent to which additional outcomes (both environmental and otherwise) was achieved that can be directly associated with the GEF supported project	<p>Specific Environmental Additionality: GEF provides a wide range of value-added interventions/services to achieve global environmental benefits (e.g. CO2 reduction, reduction / avoidance of emissions of POPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project generated global environmental benefits that would not happen without GEF's interventions? <p>Legal/Regulatory Additionality: the GEF supports stakeholders transformational change to environmentally sustainable legal/regulatory refers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project led to legal and regulatory reforms that would not have happened in the absence of the project? <p>Institutional Additionality / Governance additionality: GEF provides support to existing institutions to transform into an efficient and environmentally sustainable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project contributed towards strengthening institutions to provide a supportive environment for achievement and measurement of environmental impact? <p>Financial Additionality: GEF provides incremental cost which is associated with transforming a project with national/local benefits into one with global environmental benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the involvement of the GEF culminated in greater flows of financing from public and private sector sources that would otherwise not been the case? <p>Socio-economic Additionality: the GEF helps society improve their livelihood and social benefits through GEF activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the improvement in the living standard among population groups affected by 	Consultations (interviews)

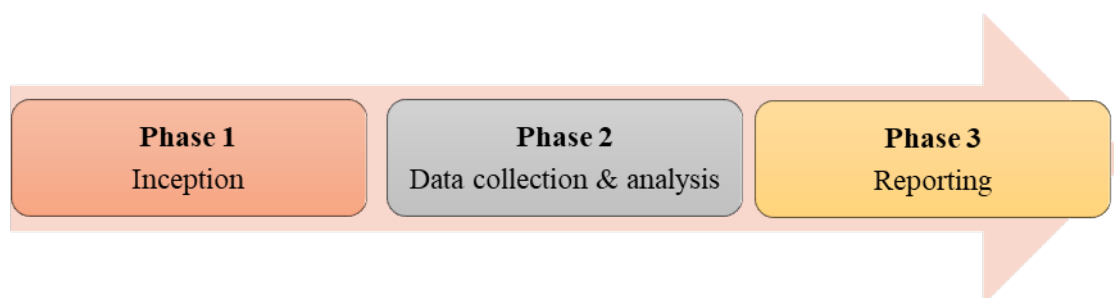
		<p>environmental conditions be attributed to contributions from the GEF?</p> <p>Innovative Additionality: The GEF provides efficient / sustainable technology and knowledge to overcome the existing social norm/barrier/practice for making a project bankable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the GEF involvement led to a fast adoption of new technologies, or the demonstration of market readiness for technologies that had not previously demonstrated their market viability? 	
Knowledge management	Assessment of the extent to which the knowledge management plan included in the project document was implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the knowledge management plan that was included in the project document implemented? • How were knowledge products under the project managed and disseminated (publication on websites, scientific publications, etc.) 	Consultations (interviews)

The overall outcome rating of the project is based on the individual outcome ratings. To obtain an individual outcome rating, each project outcome is rated against four dimensions: sustainability, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and the final rating of the outcome is obtained as a combination of the ratings obtained for the four dimensions.

4.3. Evaluation approach and data collection methods

For this terminal evaluation, a three-phased approach was employed as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Phases of the Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscape of Oaxaca and Chiapas TE



A. Inception phase

The objective of this phase was to enable the project stakeholders and the consultants to have a common understanding of the objectives and scope of the assignment.

A virtual kick-off meeting:

A virtual kick-off meeting was held on October 2, 2024, with members from the Conservation International-GEF Agency team (CI-GEF) and FOKABS Inc. team in attendance. The objective of the meeting was to introduce the evaluators to the evaluation commissioning team and to discuss, review and agree on the evaluation timeline. Both parties reached an agreement on the timelines for the different deliverables and the next steps - elaboration of the minutes of the kick-off meeting.

A virtual terminal evaluation inception workshop:

A virtual terminal evaluation inception workshop was organised on November 5, 2024 and was attended by 21 participants comprising the evaluators, CI-GEF, CI-Mexico, CONANP and other stakeholders. The evaluators presented the approach and methodology for realizing the assignment in Spanish and this was followed by a feedback/question-answer session. Following the workshop, the inception workshop report was prepared and submitted to CI-GEF.

B. Data collection and analysis phase

i. Secondary data collection

Desk review and research:

The evaluation team reviewed secondary documentation thoroughly to assess the level of achievement of the project since its inception to closure.

Sources of the secondary data

Sources of the secondary data included Project documentation such as Project Document, quarterly progress reports, financial reports, annual Project Implementation Reports (PIR), safeguards reports and management plans, mid-term review report, annual workplans, among others. The reports were reviewed to generate information relating to the evaluation criteria employed in the terminal evaluation.

ii. Primary data collection

Primary data was collected through stakeholder interviews based on the interview guide that was prepared during the inception phase of the assignment. The interview guide is composed of open-ended questions geared at capturing the interviewee's views around the different criteria against which the project is evaluated. Field visits were made to the project sites in Mexico during which the national consultant engaged with the project beneficiaries through interviews. Virtual interviews over Zoom were equally employed as well to engage with those project stakeholders who were out of the project sites visited and could therefore not be met physically.

C. Reporting phase

Following the analysis of data, the draft TE report was elaborated and submitted to CI-GEF on January 31, 2025, followed by a virtual workshop for the presentation of the TE findings organised on February 27, 2025. Comments received from the workshop participants and from the review of the draft report were addressed by the evaluation team and a final version of the document was submitted to CI thereafter.

4.4. Limitations to the evaluation

A key challenge faced by the evaluation team is related to the lack of availability and responsiveness of certain stakeholders¹ to interview requests. To ensure ample opportunity for participation, primary data collection was carried out between November and December 2024. Additionally, in January 2025, follow-up emails were sent to stakeholders who had not yet taken part, urging them to make themselves

¹ Bioconciencia, La Ventana, CONANP/PNH, CONANP Regional, INIFAP

available for discussions. Despite these persistent efforts, the team was ultimately unsuccessful in securing their participation.

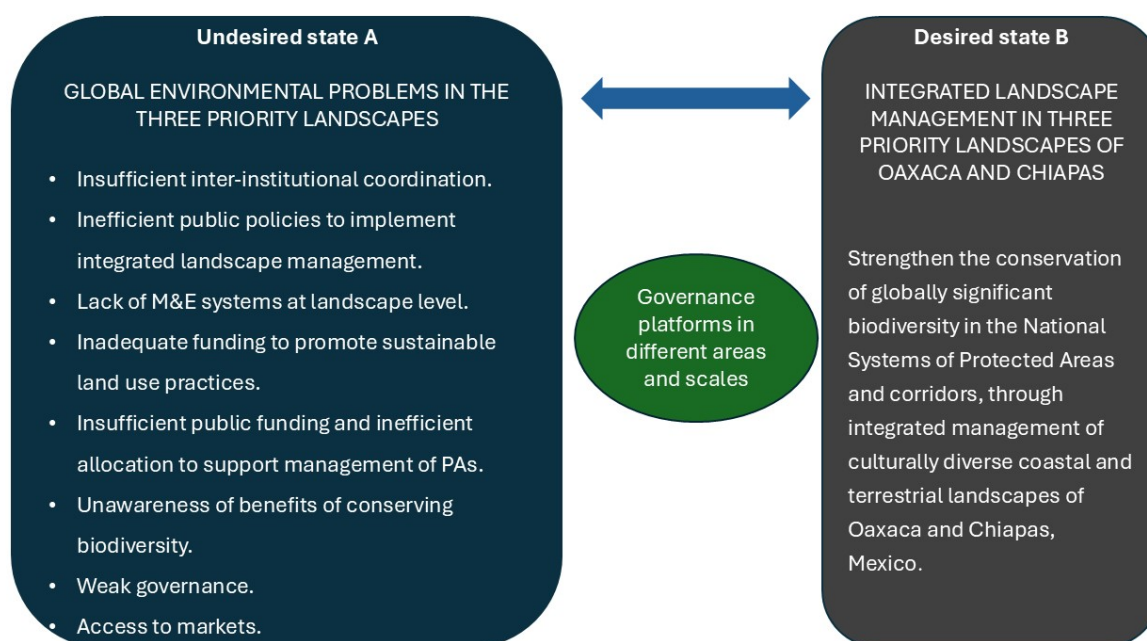
5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1. Theory of change

The Project Document highlights three major environmental challenges affecting the targeted landscapes, along with eight key obstacles to addressing them. The identified environmental issues include habitat loss and fragmentation due to deforestation for agriculture and cattle ranching, as well as the use of unsustainable land management practices; overexploitation of wildlife, primarily driven by poaching and illegal wildlife trade; and climate change, which disrupts both forests and agricultural lands through irregular rainfall patterns and an increase in extreme weather events.

At the time of CEO approval, a Theory of Change (ToC) was developed for the Conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity in priority landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project. This ToC is presented in **Figure 2**. During the mid-term review, the ToC of the project was revised – see **Figure 2** for the revised version of the project’s ToC.

Figure 2: Theory of change of the project at CEO approval



Source: ProDoc

The project aims to overcome the challenges identified during the design phase through three key interventions, which build on previous initiatives in each landscape. These interventions include providing training, promoting the adoption of sustainable practices, and facilitating market connections between producers' organizations and potential buyers in selected value chains within protected areas (PAs) and corridors. Additionally, the project will support the development and implementation of land use management tools using a landscape approach and promote the strategic allocation of funding at the landscape level through mixed financing mechanisms.

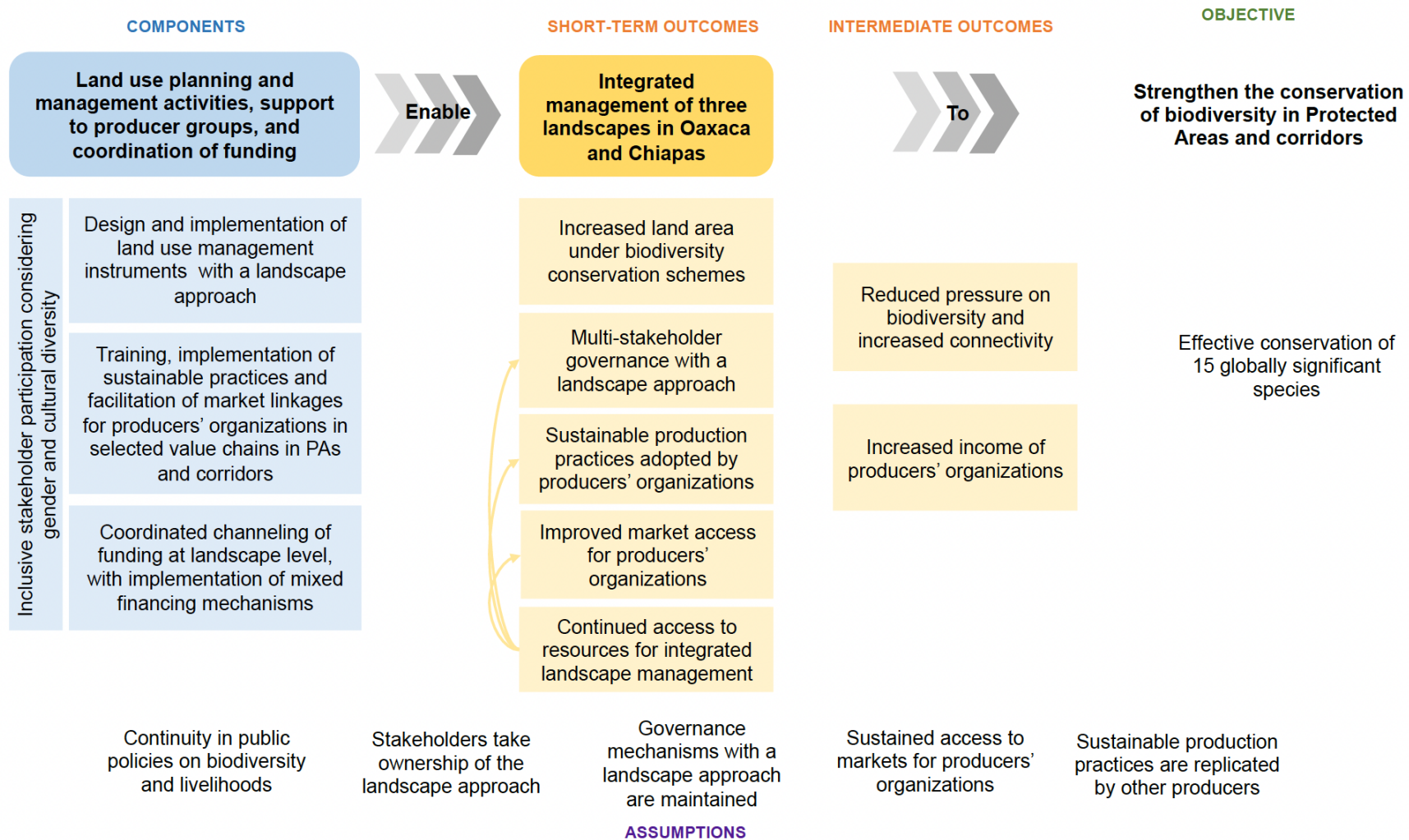
Through these three interventions, the project seeks to achieve several short-term outcomes, including an increase in land area under biodiversity conservation measures, strengthened multi-stakeholder governance structures using a landscape approach, the adoption of sustainable practices by producers' organizations, enhanced market access for these organizations, and sustained funding for integrated landscape management.

In the medium term, these short-term outcomes are anticipated to result in two key intermediate outcomes. Firstly, they aim to reduce pressure on biodiversity while improving connectivity between PAs within the three landscapes. Secondly, they aim to increase the income of producers' organizations operating in and around PAs, thereby promoting livelihoods that support and align with biodiversity conservation objectives. Ultimately, these changes are expected to reinforce biodiversity conservation, particularly focusing on 15 globally significant species, both within PAs and in connecting corridors.

The project's success is dependent on five key assumptions: (1) for the interventions to achieve their intended outcomes, public policies on biodiversity conservation and rural livelihoods must remain consistent; To achieve the transition from outcomes to impact: (2) stakeholders need to take ownership of the landscape approach; (3) governance structures based on the landscape approach must be sustained; (4) producers' organizations must retain access to the markets established with the project's support; and (5) the replication of sustainable production practices by other producers will happen.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity in PAs and corridors, through its three main components - C1, C2 and C3, focusing on land use planning & management, sustainable value chains and financing respectively. The Theory of Change highlights the challenges faced in biodiversity conservation in the landscapes and outlines the transition that is expected to come as a result of the implementation of project activities. It discusses the different environmental problems facing biodiversity conservation in Mexico and specifically within the three project landscapes, such as insufficient inter-institutional coordination among the various actors and an inefficient enabling political atmosphere that favours a more sustainable management of landscapes. The activities of the Sustainable Landscapes project are expected to address the barriers to sustainable management already identified, by creating land use plans for the landscapes, promoting awareness on the importance of sustainable biodiversity conservation through the introduction of sustainable agricultural practices to replace the conventional practices, and improving on the ability of small-scale farmers to face the environmental impacts they already face. The livelihoods of the local communities will be enhanced by giving them access to better market-driven value chain opportunities. While the ToC gives a timeline on the impact of achieved results in the short and intermediate term, it leaves out long term outcomes which may even be after the life of the project.

Figure 3: Updated Theory of Change of the Project



Source: Project Mid-term Review Report

5.2. Assessment of project results

5.2.1. Outputs

Overall output rating: Highly Satisfactory

The Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project is comprised of seven (7) outputs: Component 1 has three (3), there are two (2) for Component 2 while Component 3 has two (2). The expectation at the time of project design was that all outputs would be completely achieved by the time the project ends. The project's kick-off was delayed due to the procurement policy of the CI-GEF which made the project only enter full implementation in FY2020 which was supposed to rather be its second year of execution². Despite this delay, the project succeeded in catching up and achieving most outputs before the end. The assessments of achievements against project outputs at the time of this TE are summarised below.

Component 1: Integrated management of three landscapes for strengthening biodiversity conservation through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas.

Component 1 activities were impacted negatively by the elections that delayed the implementation of certain activities such as the development of integrated land use and management plans. This was worsened by a consequent ban on non-essential government expenses which slowed down the disbursement of funds for project implementation, and the unforeseen coronavirus pandemic accompanied by government restrictions on travel and meetings. However, gender mainstreaming activities continued to be on track throughout project execution as actions have been taken to integrate gender into land use plans, workplans and annual operational plans for the target protected areas. Despite the delays that slowed down implementation at the start of the project, the activities of Component 1 were achieved as planned.

Results analysis of outputs under Component 1: Indicators under Component 1 mostly witnessed delays and were envisaged for completion in the first quarter of 2025. Indicator 1 had some activities (Activity 1) delayed but not all. This had to do with the design of a strategy for the implementation of territorial planning known as POETs in Oaxaca and Chiapas. These POETs have been developed and are operational as initially planned for both states Oaxaca and Chiapas, which marked a major shift in landscape governance. Activity 2 under Indicator 1 (gender mainstreaming) has been achieved despite minimal delays during implementation. Trainings and workshops have been organized in the various protected areas and with the production organizations as planned, specific recommendations for the integration of gender into landscape management plans have been developed and documented.

Table 2: Results analysis of outputs under Component 1

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
Output 1.1.1: A model of Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) for biodiversity conservation including protected	Output Indicator 1: Number of gender-sensitive land use plans at an integrated landscape level. <i>Target 1:</i> At least 1	Project experienced delays in the execution of this output, linked to elections, budget deficit and government expenditure	Exceeded

² Final MTR, 2021

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
<p>areas and corridors developed and disseminated</p>	<p>Output Indicator 2: Number of gender-sensitive annual operational plans, one per federal Protected Area (PA), to be updated each year during the lifetime of this project.</p> <p><i>Target 2:</i> 9 operational plans per year</p> <p>Output Indicator 3: Number of Biodiversity monitoring protocols developed and implemented in each landscape.</p> <p><i>Target 3:</i> 15</p> <p>Output Indicator 4: The Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) model for biodiversity conservation is validated by the coordinating body in each priority landscape.</p> <p><i>Target 4:</i> Model validated in Y2</p>	<p>restrictions. Land use plans were developed and are operational for both Oaxaca and Chiapas.</p> <p>Target 2: Similarly, planned gender mainstreaming activities were achieved on a continuous basis throughout implementation. 72 men and 55 women from the ANP teams, participated during annual planning processes. This led to the integration of a gender perspective into the POAs of 10 ANPs.</p> <p>Target 3: Biodiversity monitoring protocols were designed -16 community brigades and monitors trained; 20 capacity building workshops organized with about 200 participants; and 1,164 monitoring sessions conducted during the project³.</p> <p>Target 4: ILM model systematization has been concluded but model is not yet validated.</p>	<p></p>
<p>Output 1.2.1: Draft legislation for the expansion of 102,403 hectares of two protected areas which have been</p>	<p>Output Indicator 1: Percentage of rural and indigenous communities that grant their consent in PAs following the process of gender-sensitive</p>	<p>Target 1: FPIC process has been conducted with all the rural and indigenous communities interested in receiving ADVC certification.</p>	<p>Exceeded</p>

³ Project final report

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
locally consented and approved.	<p>Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).</p> <p><i>Target 1: 95%</i></p> <p>Output Indicator 2: Number of hectares certified as Areas Destined Voluntarily to Conservation (ADVC).</p> <p><i>Target 2: 102,403 hectares</i></p>	<p>Target 2: Certification of over 118,284ha of communal lands has been completed. About 44,568ha of land are still in the process of being certified.</p>	
<p>Output 1.3.1: Participation of key stakeholders, including women and vulnerable groups, in integrated landscape management and in decision-making substantially strengthened.</p>	<p>Output Indicator 1: Percentage of key stakeholders that are represented in the three governance bodies for integrated landscape planning and management.</p> <p><i>Target 1: 70%</i></p> <p>Output Indicator 2: Percentage of women participating in ILM governance mechanism.</p> <p><i>Target 2: 30% of women out of a baseline of 15%.</i></p> <p>Output Indicator 3: Percentage of indigenous peoples and afro descendants participating in ILM governance mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Target: 20% of Indigenous Peoples and afro descendants, consistent with proportion within the population of the three landscapes.</i></p> <p>Output Indicator 4: Percentage of youth</p>	<p>Target 1: An agreement was reached with CONANP and the consultant for POET to develop governance bodies for Chiapas and Oaxaca. The land use plans for the two states have been completed and published by the committees of each state.</p> <p>Target 2: 29.4% of participants in the ILM governance mechanisms were women.</p> <p>Target 3: 18.5% Indigenous peoples' organizations and 0.8% identified as afro-Mexicans represented throughout implementation and land use documents translated into indigenous languages.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
	<p>participating in ILM governance mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Target:</i> At least 10% consistent with population representation age classes 20 - 29 yrs.; baseline is the minimal participation of youth in decision making spaces.</p>	Target 4: 6.4% youth participated in ILM governance mechanisms	

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.

For Component 2, most of its outputs were completed by the time of this evaluation as planned.

Results analysis of outputs under Component 2: Component 2 focused on supporting Producer Organizations (POs) to achieve sustainable value chains, beginning from the elaboration of intervention plans. This was followed by the integration of sustainable production practices to replace the conventional practices in a bid to open up market-driven opportunities for producer organizations. This was achieved as sustainable fishing practices were integrated into the fishing sector and POs in Topon and Carrizal benefitting from the introduction of these practices through trainings. Women were encouraged to participate and received trainings on the transformation of fishery products in their local communities.

Table 3: Results analysis of outputs under Component 2

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
<p>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</p>	<p>Output Indicator 1: Number of Producer Organizations (PO) with potential to transform conventional production practices with market orientation in the primary intervention sites that are identified, selected and classified and/or its creation supported.</p> <p><i>Target 1:</i> At least 9 POs</p> <p>Output Indicator 2: Number of producers (broken down into M/W,</p>	<p>Target 1: 27 producer organizations (POs)</p> <p>Target 2: Two evaluations on the sustainable practices conducted, showing significant progress in the adoption of sustainable production practices in target POs⁴ (1993 producers and</p>	Exceeded

⁴ FY24 Q1 progress report.

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
chains for biodiversity conservation.	<p>Indigenous peoples, afro descendant and vulnerable groups) organized in POs that have 6-10 points in the ISP, that participate in transforming conventional production into sustainable production practices in the 16 PIS and 10 PAs.</p> <p><i>Target 2:</i> At least 1,000 seeking proportional participation of M/W, IP and afro descendants and youth.</p> <p>Output Indicator 3: Number of demonstration cases of a successful model of sustainable with a market-driven value chain for biodiversity conservation will be established in each of the three landscapes to promote learning by doing.</p> <p><i>Target 3:</i> At least 1 per landscape.</p>	<p>6,911.35 hectares covered⁵).</p> <p>Internal regulations for the incorporation of sustainable fishing practices and protection of flora and fauna obtained. Trainings on best fishery production practices conducted in local areas with women fully included.</p> <p>Awareness-raising and communication campaigns on 15 landscape species launched, to share knowledge and educate on Mexico's biodiversity widely and promote sustainable practices. Over 900,000 people reached. 29.5% women, 70.5% men, 19.8% identify as indigenous people or afro descendants.</p> <p>Target 3: 3 demonstration cases of successful models of sustainable production with a market-driven value chain for biodiversity conservation was systematized including Café Capitán in Jaltenango, Chiapas; Los Agostaderos de Topón in Pijijiapan, Chiapas; and Cafetaleros Unidos de la Costa S.C.L. in Pochutla, Oaxaca.</p>	

⁵ FY24 Q2 progress report

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
<p>Output 2.2.1: Producer Organizations (PO) have improved access to markets and financial mechanisms due to sustainable products.</p>	<p>Output 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.</p> <p><i>Target 1:</i> At least 9 POs.</p> <p>Output Indicator 2: Number of PO that have been benefitted from financial mechanisms for investment in sustainable practices and value chain development.</p> <p><i>Target 2:</i> At least 3.</p> <p>Output Indicator 3: Number of value chains that have reached new markets by participating in existing brands or through the creation of their own brand.</p>	<p>Target 2: Fishery equipment has been successfully modernized, and an evaluation of the net income for PO men and women conducted.</p> <p>Twelve fisheries benefitted from managerial capacity building, exceeding the target of 9.</p> <p>Target 1 & 3: Value chains for shrimp fishing received support from the project on partnerships into new markets and integrating gender perspective into the value chain activities. The project supported in modernizing equipment used in fishing processing plants in Chiapas and this opened up lots of market opportunities in the local market. Similarly, value chains for coffee, resin and cocoa benefitted from a market-oriented approach, leading to a significant increase in the income. Café Capitán for instance has received the Fair Trade certification and now sells to both national and international markets.</p> <p>Producer Organizations in Oaxaca and Chiapas realized a 78% increase in income for sustainable livestock, coffee, resin and cocoa value chains.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating

Component 3: Increasing financial sustainability in the integrated management of the three priority landscapes.

Component 3 focuses on the development of new finance mechanisms and alignment of previously existing mechanisms to support or promote ILM and SP activities in 16 PIS.

Results analysis of outputs under Component 3: Component 3 output indicators are reported to have been completed, with one achieved while the other was underachieved. Thirteen key project partners have been successfully aligned financially to the project, exceeding the target of seven, with about 29 million USD aligned (target USD 21 million). The project also supported the PO CUCOS in accessing financing from El Buen Socio (Output 3.1.2). The establishment of the Huatulco Fund could not be achieved hence the activity was cancelled.

Table 4: Results analysis of outputs under Component 3

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
Output 3.1.1: Existing public and private programs mainstream their investments towards supporting Project activities, outputs, and outcomes for ILM and SPP in the 16 PIS	Output Indicator 1: Number of public or private sources of ongoing investment that have supported or coordinated with project activities, outputs, and outcomes for ILM and SPP in the 16 PIS. <i>Target:</i> At least 7 support programs	A total of USD29 million so far has been aligned as well as activities of thirteen key project partners. 13 partners aligned	Exceeded
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	Output Indicator 3.1.2.: 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 for ILM and SPP activities in the three	Target 1: CUCOS accessed financing from El Buen Socio with the support of the project. Establishment of Huatulco Fund cancelled due to budget adjustments made. However, collection boxes were set up at the Huatulco airport and hotels in the bays, expected to	Achieved

Output	Output Indicators	End-term project status	Rating
develop the market-driven value chains.	landscapes. <i>Target: At least 1</i>	raise at least \$12,500USD.	

5.2.2. Outcomes

5.2.2.1. Relevance

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 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Under Outcome 1.1, 2 land use plans were elaborated for 9 Protected Areas (over 662000 hectares), with an improved Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score of about 63.2 out of 100. State POETs which were to be established for Oaxaca and Chiapas have been published by the state governments. FY25. Fifteen globally significant species now have a conservation and monitoring plan developed and are being implemented. This activity had been delayed by covid-19 but was completed. Gender was actively integrated into the activities under Outcome 1.1 and other project outcomes and is reflected in the activities of other project components.

Mexico has prioritized biodiversity conservation and sustainable land-use planning through its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and the National Development Plan (PND). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 (Life on Land), emphasizes the need for ecosystem conservation and sustainable land-use management. Additionally, Mexico's Programa de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (Protected Natural Areas Program)⁶ also seeks to expand and effectively manage conservation spaces. Furthermore, Mexico is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)⁷, reinforcing its commitment to biodiversity conservation at a landscape scale. Hence, outcome 1.1 aligns well with Mexico's national and international priorities, supporting integrated landscape management to enhance biodiversity conservation.

Stakeholder consultations during the TE revealed that outcome 1.1 was aligned with national priorities. A respondent from Conservation International⁸ opines that the project is consistent with Mexico's national priorities by emphasizing biodiversity conservation, sustainable production, and financial sustainability. Furthermore, this respondent noted that the project had integrated biodiversity conservation into landscapes through governance mechanisms, sustainable practices, and expansion of protected areas. It was his assertion that stakeholder needs were met by incorporating community participation, gender mainstreaming, and capacity-building initiatives for local organizations. Finally, it must be noted that the project successfully developed land management plans, which were scaled from the local landscape level to the state level, showcasing alignment with national goals and priorities. The relevance Outcome 1.1 is rated **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.

Outcome 1.2 rating: Highly Satisfactory

⁶ See: [LINK](#)

⁷ See: [LINK](#)

⁸ Interview with Conservation International, Mexico

Three certification applications for Areas Voluntarily Destined for Conservation (ADVCs) had been filed, covering over 67000 hectares. However, progress reports indicate that the project has successfully achieved the certification of one ADVC covering 118,284, hectares (six ADVCs). Certification of more ADVCs is pending for a total of 44,568 hectares (three ADVCs). The project signed agreements with leaders of the ADVCs and carried out the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) procedures before engaging in the certification process. Insecurity, however, arising from disagreements within the Santa Catarina Juquila community in response to the extension of their ADVC, caused significant delays as access to PAs in that community became restricted.

The project strongly aligns with Mexico's national priorities for biodiversity conservation. Mexico has committed to expanding its Protected Natural Areas (Áreas Naturales Protegidas - ANPs) under its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Aichi Target 11 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which emphasize in increasing protected areas and ensuring their effective management. The National Development Plan (PND) provide legal mandates for expanding conservation areas. Additionally, the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) actively promotes the designation and management of new protected areas, with recent expansions focused on preserving globally significant ecosystems, such as tropical forests, wetlands, and marine biodiversity hotspots. Mexico's Climate Change Strategy also underscores the role of protected areas in mitigating environmental degradation and enhancing ecosystem resilience⁹.

A TE respondent noted that the outcomes of the project such as the designation of new protected areas (e.g., Tacaná Volcano and La Frailecana) and the publication of land-use planning instruments in Oaxaca and Chiapas align with Mexico's broader environmental and sustainability goals¹⁰. That said, this respondent revealed that the limited reach of these tools or instruments, the lack of a sustainable financing mechanism, and challenges in expanding to broader landscapes indicate that while aligned in intent, the outcomes were insufficient to comprehensively address stakeholder needs.

The relevance of Outcome 1.2 is rated **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi sector participation improved.

Outcome 1.3 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Multi-stakeholder bodies were planned to be established for each priority landscape and the project successfully entered into an agreement with two stakeholders. This was meant to support the creation of governance bodies which would in turn promote the integration of women and vulnerable groups into landscape management. The governance body for Chiapas was established and that for Oaxaca is ongoing pending publication and establishment. This body served an important role in ensuring that the PAs benefit from the different activities aimed at integrated management. Stakeholder participation during the implementation gave the project a strong backing as most of the relevant stakeholders in both Oaxaca and Chiapas were actively involved.

Outcome 1.3. aligns closely with Mexico's national priorities on environmental governance and participatory decision-making. Mexico's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) underscores the importance of multi-stakeholder governance for biodiversity conservation. Additionally, the General Law on Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection (LGEEPA) mandates participatory environmental management, emphasizing collaboration between government entities, civil society, and the private sector¹¹. The National Development Plan (PND) 2019-2024 prioritizes inclusive governance and sustainable resource management, recognizing the role of multi-sector participation in achieving conservation goals. Furthermore, Mexico's commitments under the

⁹ Mexico Climate Change Mid-Century Strategy. [LINK](#). (See line of action M 4.6)

¹⁰ CONANP

¹¹

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Action Plan for the 30x30 Initiative advocate for integrated governance approaches at the landscape level¹². The National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) also implements governance models that involve diverse stakeholders in managing protected areas. The relevance of Outcome 1.3 is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

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

Outcome 2.1 rating: Highly Satisfactory

The conventional or traditional practices that had been employed in the fishing production sector were replaced by sustainable practices introduced by the project. This was accompanied by a strong plan to integrate women participation in the development in the sustainable practices through trainings which served as an opportunity for knowledge and experience-sharing. This also opened the way to improve the value chains within not only the fishing sector but other forestry sector, as well as enhance the livelihoods of local communities. Other sectors that benefitted from the introduction of sustainable practices by the project and market-driven value chains included cocoa, resin, nature tourism, sustainable livestock and coffee. Café Capitán, for example, received the Fair-Trade certification and got exposed to better markets both at the national and international level, thus an improvement in the income of coffee Producer Organizations.

Outcome 2.1 aligns closely with Mexico's national priorities as outlined in various policies and strategies. Mexico's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) emphasizes sustainable production systems that integrate biodiversity conservation. The National Development Plan (PND) prioritizes sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries to enhance productivity while preserving natural resources. Mexico's commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs 2, 12, 14, and 15) further reinforces its focus on market-driven sustainability practices. The outcome's relevance is rated as **Highly Satisfactory**.

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 rating: Highly Satisfactory

The project intended establishing the impact of sustainable practices and market-driven approaches on the producer organizations, by taking stock on the increase in income realized within the producers. The aim was to get at least a 15% increase in producers' incomes as a result of sustainable practices replacing conventional production practices. Capacity strengthening was also expected to positively impact the producers' income within the communities, as it opened up avenues for accessing markets and financial mechanisms. Sustainable production practices have been successfully introduced into Producer Organizations for coffee, cocoa, resin and sustainable livestock. This has helped improve their production levels and also increase their income levels. The fishing sector has also benefitted from the introduction of these practices, which have opened up market opportunities especially at the international level. Coffee and cocoa have seen significant improvement in their production and marketing due to these practices and Pos have reported about 78% increase in their income.

Outcome 2.2 is consistent with Mexico's national priorities for economic development, rural livelihoods, and environmental sustainability. Mexico's National Development Plan (PND) emphasizes fostering inclusive economic growth and improving rural incomes through sustainable and competitive value chains. Mexico is also a signatory to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible Production and Consumption) reinforce the commitment to sustainable economic models that benefit rural producers. Furthermore, programs led by the National Institute for Social Economy

¹² [LINK](#)

(INAES) support producer organizations in improving value chains through sustainable practices¹³, demonstrating strong alignment with the project's intended outcomes. The outcome's relevance is rated **Highly Satisfactory**.

Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased.

Outcome 3.1 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Aligned co-financing at the time of this TE stood at USD29 million comprising investments from both public and private institutions in the landscapes. It remains a challenge for the project to source stakeholders who will support the benefits of the project in terms of sustainable production and management even beyond the project lifespan. Some POs have secured over 574,820 USD in funding and continue searching for more opportunities till the project runs through. Increased investments for ILM and SPP will translate into green growth in line with objective 4 of Mexico's National Development Plan

The relevance of this project relative to its alignment of the GEF focal area and CI priorities is fully discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

Relevance to GEF Focal Area and operational program strategies

The Sustainable Landscapes project aligns with three of the GEF-6 Programming focal areas Biodiversity, Climate Change, and Land Degradation, each of which has a different objective – Biodiversity focal area has as objective is to protect and restore critical ecosystems, maintain globally significant biodiversity, and reduce threats to endangered species through habitat conservation, sustainable land management practices and community engagement. On the other hand, the Climate Change focal area has as objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by supporting projects that promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable land use and carbon sequestration initiatives. The objective of the Land Degradation focal area is to combat desertification and land degradation by promoting sustainable land management practices, including reforestation, soil conservation and integrated watershed management. The project is an important step towards achieving sustainable practices in the exploitation of biodiversity, improving community access to the different financing mechanisms through which they can better manage their biodiversity around them, while addressing key environmental problems which are habitat loss and fragmentation, over-exploitation of wildlife and climate change.

The objective of the project was to strengthen the conservation of globally significant biodiversity in the National System of Protected Areas and corridors, through integrated management of culturally diverse coastal and terrestrial landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas, Mexico. This objective justifies the project's alignment with GEF-6 programming directions.

Stakeholders consulted for the TE expressed views that the project was aligned with GEF-6's focus on biodiversity and sustainable production systems, addressing landscape conservation and expanding protected areas. However, stakeholders also indicated that the GEF-6 strategies have evolved over eight years, requiring adjustments during implementation.¹⁴ Respondents from CONANP¹⁵ and the Ministry of Finance¹⁶ asserted that the project was fully aligned with GEF-6 programming directions.

¹³ [LINK](#)

¹⁴ Interview Conservation International

¹⁵ Interview with CONANP

¹⁶ Interview with Mexico Ministry of Finance

Appropriateness of project design in delivering the expected outcomes

The project had a project document and results framework elaborated during the project design phase, thus establishing a clear link between project outputs and expected outcomes. The project interventions were relevant at the time of project design and inception and through implementation, reason why some could be achieved within the stipulated timelines despite delays. At project design, a stakeholder mapping and an engagement plan were created through consultations with key actors. This helped specify the roles, level of participation and commitment of the various stakeholders in the project, with the aim of ensuring the active participation of key stakeholders and vulnerable groups. Stakeholders involved in this project vary including relevant government institutions, funders, investors, vulnerable groups, local communities, public and private sector actors from Mexico and other parts of the globe, all actively participating to ensure a successful project delivery.

Stakeholders found the design of the project appropriate although citing some areas for improvement. It was revealed by an interviewee that the design of the project was appropriate, emphasizing adaptive management and collaboration among diverse actors¹⁷. However, this respondent further noted that initial challenges such as lack of cohesion between CI and CONANP teams, communication issues, and resource allocation inefficiencies impacted implementation. One respondent stated that the project design effectively integrated landscape management with biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development¹⁸. It was his assertion that the project included adaptive management tools like the Landscape Assessment Framework and the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool to track progress. However, this same respondent stated that challenges like stakeholder disengagement and market limitations revealed areas for improvement.

Relevance to CI Institutional Priorities

Conservation International's work is guided by the "Southern Cross" which consists of four interconnected priority areas; (1) Nature for Climate; (2) Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes; (3) Ocean Conservation at Scale and (4) Innovation in Science and Finance. The Sustainable Landscapes project is relevant to Priority Two – Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes, with outcomes indirectly yielding co-benefits for priorities 1 and 4. It is also aligned with the thematic priorities of CI Mexico as the Executing Agency of the project with a major role to play throughout the design and implementation. CI has worked and continues working closely with many other institutions and government actors in biodiversity conservation and sustainable production landscapes and marketing within the Mexican context, therefore contributing a major role to the success of the project. The focus of CIMEX is on the improvement of governance and financial mechanisms for the conservation of ecosystem services, which puts it in alignment with the current Sustainable Landscapes project. Mexico is one of the 16 priority landscapes for implementing some of its activities under the priority area "Sustainable Landscapes and Seascapes". In Oaxaca, for example, CI-Mexico is working on other projects focusing on sustainable coffee production with Starbucks, and on cocoa production and marketing in Chiapas¹⁹. This project aligns very well with CI Mexico's 2025 goals to achieve 2.6 million hectares of land under conservation, to support 46 million small producers in Oaxaca, Chiapas and Tabasco while improving the management of 10,000km of coastal and marine resources²⁰. These goals are in direct alignment to the expected results of the Sustainable Landscapes project.

¹⁷ Interview with CONANP

¹⁸ Interview with Conservation International

¹⁹ ProDoc

²⁰ MTR report

5.2.2.2. Effectiveness

Component 1: Integrated management of three priority landscape for strengthening biodiversity conservation through land-use planning and the expansion and management of protected areas

Component 1 focused on setting the groundwork for sustainable land use planning and management beginning with the establishment of land use plans POETs and work plans for the three priority landscapes. Once the land use plans were created, their implementation of the plans began. At the time of this terminal evaluation, the project had completed and published two land use plans in Oaxaca and Chiapas. The project also developed 4 training modules in 3 locations in Chiapas and carried out 12 capacity building workshops for implementation and interpretation of the land use planning programs. These workshops saw the participation of 233 participants from the producers, academia, CSOs, private sector and the government including 30% indigenous people, 79% men and 21% women. The project also created and implemented monitoring systems for priority species while strengthening governance structures within the landscapes. The rating for management efficiency had improved to about 63,2 out of 100 implying that the management had been reinforced for the target protected areas as planned. Women empowerment and their participation and representation including community groups was highly encouraged and was thus a major part of the management plans established under the project interventions.

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 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Indicators are Achieved. Average % outcome achievement is 100%

Table 5: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 1.1 indicators

Outcome 1.1 indicators	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: Number of ha with sustainable land use plans and other land use tools promoting biodiversity conservation	Target 1.1.1: 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)	Two land use plans established and published – Oaxaca and Chiapas.	100%	Achieved
Outcome Indicator 1.1.2.: Number of globally significant species under conservation	Target 1.1.2: Conservation and monitoring plans for 15 globally significant species developed and implemented.	Data was collected for developing monitoring plans and the plans developed and implemented.	100%	Achieved

and monitoring plans				
Outcome Indicator 1.1.3: 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)	Target 1.1.3: 9 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).	9 federal protected areas have a METT score of 63.2 out of 100.	100%	Achieved
Average % outcome achievement			100%	

Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.

Outcome 1.2 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Indicator target was exceeded above 100%

Table 6: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 1.2 indicators

Outcome indicators	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.2.1: Increase in number of hectares of protected areas.	Target 1.2.1: 102,403 ha of land cover increase of PAs within the three priority landscapes, reaching a new cover of 812,262 ha.	118,284 hectares	106%	Exceeded
Average % outcome achievement			106%	

Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi sector participation improved.

Outcome 1.3 rating: Satisfactory

Indicator target was achieved at 90%

Table 7: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 1.3 indicators

Outcome indicators	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: A multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape is	Target 1.1.1: Multi-stakeholder coordination body for each priority landscape is	Coordination body established for Chiapas, but Oaxaca has been signed pending establishment.	90%	Underachieved

established and functional	established and functional.			
Average % outcome achievement			90%	

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

Component 2 focused on introducing sustainable production practices to replace the conventional methods of production. This was done by providing training to producers' organizations on these practices, follow up to ensure that they adopted these practices and opening their access to markets and potential buyers. To achieve this, training of trainers' (ToT) program was organized with the aim of getting full engagement from the vulnerable groups and local communities and ensure the sustainability of this intervention. Access to long-term financing and the modernisation of production equipment was a priority in the project interventions, to ensure sustainability of good practices within the POs. Through the USAID-funded Sustainable Landscape Venture (SLV) project, two POs – UCIRI and Café Capitan were able to access funding of up USD \$181,185 and USD \$393,635 respectively.

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.

Outcome 2.1 rating: Highly Satisfactory

Indicator target was exceeded

Table 8: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 2.1 indicators

Outcome indicators	2.1	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: 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 1.1.1: 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)	Sustainable practices adopted on 5,006.35 hectares	107%	Exceeded
Average % outcome achievement				107%	

Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach

Table 9: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 2.2 indicators

Outcome indicators	2.2	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: Increase in income of PO members, disaggregated by sex		Target 1.1.1: 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.	Average income has increased by 29.6%	197%	Exceeded
Average % outcome achievement				197%	

Component 3: Increasing financial sustainability in the integrated management of the three priority landscapes.

The third component of the Sustainable Landscapes project sought to align existing financing and provide access to new financial mechanisms for producers. This was achieved by close collaboration and partnerships with other actors, through which USD 29 million has been aligned and made available to some producer organizations, to enable them to maintain the sustainable practices they adopted. Funds were planned to be established to manage the operation of some protected areas such as the Huatulco Fund which was expected to manage the Huatulco National Park. Though this did not come to fruition as planned, the project continued exploring different investment mechanisms.

Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased.

Outcome 3.1. rating: Highly Satisfactory
Outcome indicator exceeded

Table 10: End of project target vs actual level of outcome achievement for Outcome 3.1 indicators

Outcome indicators	3.1.	End of project target	Actual project achievements	% achievement	Rating
Outcome Indicator 1.1.1: Increase in public-private co-funding aligned for integrated landscape		Target 1.1.1: At least USD 21 Million of the ongoing investments from public and private institutions in the three	USD 29 millions of ongoing investments aligned to the project	138%	Exceeded

management and sustainable production with market-orientation and value-chain approach	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).			
Average % outcome achievement			138%	

Success Factors

Stakeholders shared diverse views relating to the success factors of the project. According to one respondent, contributing factors included: Strong partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations, adaptive use of scientific and community-based knowledge for biodiversity conservation, and financial support from international agencies like USAID and Sustainable Landscape Ventures²¹. **Constraining factors according to this same respondent included:** COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, security issues in some regions such as San Francisco del Mar, and limited organizational capacity in cooperative, strong collaboration with CONANP, effective governance structures, and gender integration were critical to the project's success. However, adaptive management strategies helped navigate challenges like government transitions and the pandemic.

It was also revealed that other contributing factors included²²:

- Collaborative efforts: Engagement with local stakeholders, such as the Sierra Madre Group, and partnerships with universities and civil associations.
- Specific achievements: Designation of new protected areas and development of territorial planning tools; and
- Governance initiatives: Training of "Guardians of Planning" in Chiapas to support land-use governance.

Another respondent was also of the opinion that the project successfully strengthened approximately ten Natural Protected Areas in Oaxaca²³. Key activities, such as participatory workshops and focusing on species, ensured that objectives were met. Other contributing factors according to another respondent included: integration of feedback focused on conservation, sustainable production, and financial sustainability, effective transition from planning to actionable outcomes²⁴. Collaboration across diverse institutions and the integration of local stakeholders, clear alignment with ecological and community priorities facilitated impactful interventions. Another respondent also opined that contributing factors included: community involvement, gender inclusivity, and effective team planning while constraining

²¹ Conservation International

²² CONANP

²³ CONANP

²⁴ CONANP

factors were insecurity in certain areas, internal conflicts, resource delays, and the COVID-19 pandemic²⁵. Finally, it was revealed by another respondent that the fact that the project surpassed its targets in some indicators, showcased its effectiveness.²⁶ The land use plans for the two states have been established and published as expected. Other constraining factors included risks related to governance and implementation timelines, though these were managed adaptively.

5.2.2.3. Efficiency

The efficiency is rated for the project as a whole and according to the different project outcomes, as discussed below.

The assessment of the efficiency of the project outcomes was conducted using the efficiency of resource methodology. The efficiency of resource use was determined on the basis of comparing physical implementation (completion rate of delivered outcomes – average % achievement of outcomes) to resources used (resource use rate) at the closing date. The physical implementation rate of each outcome targeted by the Project was compared to the expenditures made at the closing date. Ideally, the budget utilization rate for each outcome was to be employed in the calculation but this was not possible as the tracking of the budget by CI-GEF happened at the component level rather than the outcome level (see **Table 11** for the computed percent of funds spent per component). Hence, the percent of funds spent at the component level was used in the calculation. For instance, the percent of funds spent for component 1 at TE was used as basis for the computation of the efficiency ratio for its outcomes – Outcome 1.1 and 1.2 and the same approach was adopted for outcomes under component 2 and 3. The approach used is based on the relationship between the two variables (rate of outcome achievement and percent of funds spent) as follows:

- **Highly Satisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate (efficiency ratio) is ≥ 1
- **Satisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate is ≥ 0.80 and < 1
- **Moderately Satisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate is ≥ 0.60 and < 0.80
- **Moderately Unsatisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate is ≥ 0.40 and < 0.60
- **Unsatisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate is < 0.40
- **Highly Unsatisfactory:** achievement rate of the project's outcome compared to the expenditure rate is < 0.20

Table 11: Analysis of the funds budgeted versus amount spent at the end of the project

Project component	Amount budgeted in ProDoc (USD)	Amount expended at the end of project (USD)	Percentage of funds spent
Component 1	3,333,420	3,207,804	96%
Component 2	2,768,732	2,594,330	94%
Component 3	759,819	735,813	97%

Based on the calculated resource efficiency ratio, all the project outcomes are rated Highly Satisfactory from an efficiency stance (**Table 12**).

²⁵ CONANP

²⁶ Secretaria de Hacienda, Mexico

Table 12: Analysis of the efficiency of the project outcomes

Project Outcome	Average outcome achievement (%) (A)	Percent of funds spent (B)	Efficiency ratio (A/B)	Efficiency rating of Outcomes
Outcome 1.1	100	96	1.04	Highly Satisfactory
Outcome 1.2	106	96	1.1	Highly Satisfactory
Outcome 1.3	96	96	1	Highly Satisfactory
Outcome 2.1	107	94	1.11	Highly Satisfactory
Outcome 2.2	197	94	2.1	Highly Satisfactory
Outcome 3.1	138	97	1.42	Highly Satisfactory

The project adopted participatory governance models, open communication channels, and effective monitoring mechanisms. However, the widespread geographical distribution of intervention sites and reliance on external consultancies posed efficiency challenges. Efficiency could have been enhanced by consolidating intervention sites, strengthening local partnerships, and reducing dependence on external consultancies²⁷. While communication lines were functional, decision-making processes sometimes suffered due to financial and operational constraints. The project team adapted by fostering collaboration between implementing agencies and local stakeholders.

There was collaboration with local organizations to leverage existing expertise. Additionally, there was also the use of consultants to adapt project outputs to local needs²⁸. However, efficiency was undermined by fragmented coordination, unstandardized protocols, and delays in hiring and resource allocation.²⁹ The project should have been conducted in a different way by performing an early alignment workshop to establish a shared vision, translating and disseminate key documents, such as the ProDoc, to all stakeholders, and standardization of monitoring protocols from the outset. The organizational arrangements were appropriate and efficient in that internal reorganizations and the elimination of key technical roles created inefficiencies.³⁰ Additionally, more stable institutional structure and consistent team could have enhanced efficiency. The lines of communication between the entities and government were not fully operational because communication gaps persisted, particularly between executing entities and government institutions.³¹ This led to misaligned expectations and reduced coordination effectiveness.

The mechanisms for efficiency used by the project included regular meetings to present resource allocation transparently and adaptive management strategies. However, early-stage inefficiencies like delayed resource distribution and administrative overheads hindered efficiency. The project should have been conducted more efficiently by prioritizing immediate needs such as training and equipment earlier in the timeline and ensuring smoother collaboration between CI and CONANP could have improved efficiency³².

The lines of communication between CI-GEF and the executing agencies, and between the executing entities and government institutions in the project country, were fully operational, although initial conflicts between CI and CONANP impacted collaboration³³. Financial resources were sometimes diverted to administrative expenses, leading to dissatisfaction among some stakeholders. Additionally,

²⁷ Conservation International

²⁸ CONANP

²⁹ CONANP

³⁰ CONANP

³¹ CONANP

³² CONANP

³³ CONANP

funding was not always equitably allocated to field operations, which limited the impact in certain areas. For example, delayed delivery of monitoring tools and equipment affected project implementation timelines.

Project Financing

Analysis of GEF funds by project components

Funding for this project came from GEF and both in-kind and grant contributions from fourteen (14) other funders and donors, which were jointly used in the implementation of project activities across the three different components. These contributions came from private sector companies, Conservation International and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and were allocated for different categories including equipment procurement, project management costs, professional services among others.

Financial Management

From the time of CEO approval or endorsement for the Sustainable Landscapes project, a Project Director was chosen to work under the guidance and supervision of the Project Steering Committee (PSC). This Project Director, together with other members of the Project Management Unit (Technical Manager, three Priority Landscape Coordinators, six Field Technical Assistants, one Finance Manager and one administrative assistant) had the responsibility of providing day-to-day insight on project progress, as well as preparation of technical and administrative reports. The PD was also responsible for the good execution of the project and will receive guidance from the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC provided oversight on the project, organized meetings to monitor progress and approve annual workplans, providing feedback on project activities and requesting approvals from the PMU as required.

The Project Management Unit, hosted by CONANP, the co-executing agency, was responsible for the organization of key Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tasks. The Finance Manager managed the financial, material and human resources of the project, while tracking the use of the financial support received by project funders as well as contracts. He/she also ensured compliance with CI-GEF agency provisions.

The project followed strict CI procurement policies during implementation by paying attention to value for money and ensuring transparency in its procurement and management is respected. The project Executing Agencies (CONANP and CI-Mexico) prepared financial and technical reports annually, which were submitted to CI-GEF for review and approval. These reports were then audited annually by external auditors appointed by the EAs. Comments raised by CI-GEF on the submitted reports were sent to the project partners to be addressed, after which a revised version is submitted to CI-GEF. By building on existing structures and expertise from key relevant institutions, and through the submission to the procurement procedures set up during the project design phase, the project managed to maintain good value for money.

The project experienced significant delays in the implementation of its activities³⁴ and achievement of outcomes as per progress reports³⁵. Delays caused by the procurement and disbursement processes, and a change in government in 2018 had also been discussed at the start of the project. Insecurity within some local communities and the federal and state elections that were planned in Mexico also caused some delays in the project.

The Project Document clearly outlined the different roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and project partners were clearly from the time of project inception, which facilitated collaboration between them while ensuring a considerable level of efficiency in project implementation. The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) posed a minimal risk, as adaptive measures were implemented such as remote

³⁴ MTR report, 2021

³⁵ PIR FY24

or hybrid methods of engaging with project stakeholders and putting in place health and safety measures to protect project staff.

Pertaining to leveraging additional resources, new funding sources were secured through the collaboration between CI-GEF and the executing agency CI-Mexico³⁶. The project was funded by USAID, and the restoration project complemented these interventions. For instance: In 2020, CI Mexico secured a project with USAID valued at USD 10 million, thus aligning with the objectives of the GEF-6 project. The project collaborated with SLV-USAID to design a roadmap for obtaining financing from a blended finance platform³⁷. Component 3 successfully met its target, but there was some confusion during the planning phase due to the way it was framed as an investment. This led to differences in understanding the counterpart contributions at the activity level, particularly in relation to landscape investments. Despite these challenges, the objective was ultimately achieved³⁸.

5.2.2.4. Sustainability

1. Financial risk

At the time of this evaluation, project documents and other relevant documents reviewed indicated that there were budget deficits that impacted project implementation which may have delayed project implementation. However, there is little evidence as to whether this poses a financial risk to the sustainability of project interventions. Financial reports produced so far, indicate that the funds have been used in a sustainable manner capable of taking the project to the end without any major shortage of funds. The involvement and engagement of government institutions as project stakeholders showed country ownership throughout the project’s implementation, however the midterm review highlighted country ownership as a minor challenge, due to the ProDoc not being made available to all project stakeholders. At the time of the TE, there was not much evidence as to this being a hinderance to financial sustainability. Under Outcome 1.3, a budget deficit within the project made it difficult to establish a governance body in Oaxaca (Output 1.3.1, Activity 1). While the project supported the expansion of protected areas (Outcome 1.2), additional resources may be required for the management of the new areas classified as protected areas except the government assumes full responsibility to ensure the management of such sites after the life of the project. Similarly, there has been an increased access to investments (Outcome 3.1) from public and private sources under the project and changes in funding priorities of the public and private financiers could jeopardise the sustained flow of investments. The evaluation did not identify financial risk to sustainability for the other outcomes.

Table 13: Analysis of the sustainability of the project outcomes

Project Outcome	Financial risk rating
<i>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.</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.</i>	Moderately Likely
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.</i>	Likely
<i>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</i>	Likely

³⁶ Conservation International

³⁷ Conservation International

³⁸ Conservation International

<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach</i>	Likely
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased</i>	Moderately Likely

2. Socio-political risk

At the start of the project, to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and the consequent travel restrictions imposed globally, an adaptive measure was applied. Though Covid-19 was highlighted as a risk factor during the implementation of project activities, PIRs did not indicate any major impact of the pandemic on project activities apart of delays. To mitigate this risk, project staff switched to remote or hybrid mode of performing project-related tasks and activities, meetings and other engagements with project stakeholders. In-person meetings were done virtually.

Another socio-political risk was political elections at the federal and state levels and change in government within Mexico. However, as the Government of Mexico is a signatory to the Convention on Biodiversity, the nation is committed to conserving its biodiversity and consequently, a change of government is unlikely going to affect any of the project outcomes. The socio-political risk to the sustainability of all the project outcomes is rated Likely.

3. Institutional risk

Throughout the project's implementation, there was an active participation of both state and non-state actors such as NGOs, and the private sector. It is believed that this active engagement and collaboration will continue throughout the project's execution and even beyond the life of the project. Despite delays highlighted, it is expected that the benefits of the project will continue to be felt even after its lifespan. There is however the risk that inadequate institutional capacity may make it hard for the project benefits of sustainable landscape management practices to be sustained once the project ends (Outcome 1.1).

4. Environmental risks

Climate change represents a key environmental risk that may jeopardise the sustainability of some of the project outcomes. Changes in climatic parameters such as temperature and rainfall could negatively affect the existing and new areas brought under protection (**Outcome 1.2**), the sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and tourism production (**Outcome 2.1**) and the income earned by producer organizations (**Outcome 2.2**). It could have been beneficial if the sustainable practices promoted within the framework of the project could be those with potentials of strengthening the resilience of the beneficiaries to climate change.

A summary of the sustainability rating on the project outcomes is presented in the **Table 14**.

Table 14: Overview of sustainability rating

Project outcomes	Sustainability dimensions				Overall sustainability rating
	Financial risk	Socio-political risk	Institutional risk	Environmental risk	
<i>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.</i>	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity</i>	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
<i>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</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach</i>	Likely	Likely	Likely	Moderately Likely	Likely
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased</i>	Moderately Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely	Likely
Overall Sustainability rating					Likely

Overall outcome rating

The final rating for outcomes is Highly Satisfactory (Outcomes 2.1, 2.2 and 3.1), Moderately Satisfactory (Outcome 1.1 and 1.3 (and Moderately Unsatisfactory (Outcome 1.2) (See **Table 15**).

Table 15: Assessment of overall outcome rating

Project outcomes	Sustainability dimensions				Outcome Final rating
	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability	
<i>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.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 1.2: Expansion of protected areas with globally significant biodiversity.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 1.3: Governance in the three priority landscapes with multi-stakeholder and multi-sector participation improved.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>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.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (PO) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
<i>Outcome 3.1: Access to investments from public and private programs oriented towards ILM and SPP* substantially increased.</i>	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Highly Satisfactory	Likely	Highly Satisfactory
Overall project outcome rating					Highly Satisfactory

5.3. Progress to impact

Progress to impact for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Priority Landscapes of Oaxaca and Chiapas project is rated **Satisfactory**.

As per the project document (ProDoc), the project intended addressing three key environmental problems affecting the target landscapes, which include:

- loss of habitat and fragmentation, as a result of the conversion of forests for agricultural purposes and constant clearing of forests for subsistence activities, wood for building materials, road construction, mining among others, which poses a threat to wildlife.
- Overexploitation of wildlife, caused by illegal wildlife trade and poaching for the subsistence of surrounding communities near the priority landscapes and
- Climate change

. At the time of this terminal evaluation, all project outputs had been achieved or exceeded. Progress reports elaborated for the project, including Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) and quarterly progress reports indicate significant progress in terms of achieving expected results. Conservation and monitoring plans have been developed and monitoring brigades are being implemented in the intervention sites. Similarly, the management scores of the target protected areas have been improved and gender mainstreaming activities including trainings, and the elaboration of relevant documents for the effective mainstreaming of gender have been carried out successfully.

The project conducted activities that helped to improve sustainable practices related to landscape management and thereby enhanced the livelihoods of local communities by increasing their net income. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores of the target protected areas in the three landscapes have increased from 49 to 63.2 out of 100. Training sessions were organized as part of project activities on gender and safeguards and at the state level on monitoring. The project also carried out sensitization and awareness-raising activities on social media such as a biodiversity pride campaign with the aim of bringing to light the sustainable practices developed and the importance of the conservation of species.

It was revealed that the long-term impact of the project included: strengthened natural area protections and the empowerment of local communities, as well as addressing unforeseen administrative and environmental risks.³⁹ A respondent cited the training of local actors and community-based conservation efforts, and ecological or biodiversity conservation, creation of protected areas such as Tacaná Volcano and La Frailesca, development of territorial planning instruments in Oaxaca and Chiapas, and training initiatives for local governance ("Guardians of Planning")⁴⁰. Other impacts included increased knowledge among producers and the adoption of sustainable practices⁴¹. Additionally, the project exceeded hectare-related targets and engaged more producers than initially planned. Another respondent stated that the project's long-term impacts include strengthened environmental governance, increased community capacity, and formalised land management plans⁴². Finally, Certification of Voluntary Conservation Areas (VCAs), productive reconversion, and territorial planning that emphasized sustainable land management were fundamental impacts of the project.⁴³

³⁹ CONANP

⁴⁰ CONANP

⁴¹ Secretaria de Hacienda, Mexico

⁴² Conservation International

⁴³ CONANP

Unintended impacts

At the time of the terminal evaluation, there has been little or no evidence of any adverse or unintended impacts of the activities implemented under this project. It is expected that the project will bring great improvements to sustainable landscape management in the target areas and bring economic benefits to the surrounding communities.

5.4. Assessment of project monitoring & evaluation systems

The overall M & E systems is rated Satisfactory.

5.4.1. M&E design

The rating for M & E design is Highly Satisfactory.

From the project design phase, the project had a monitoring and evaluation plan elaborated, to facilitate assessment of project activities and results. The objectives discussed in the project results framework were clear and had SMART indicators to help in tracking the environmental, socio-economic and gender mainstreaming results. Expected project outcomes as well as outputs and indicators, targets and project baselines for the different components were also discussed in the results framework. The allocated budget of \$USD 146,498 (One Hundred Forty-six Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety-Eight)⁴⁴ set aside for M & E activities was not realistic as the midterm review highlighted that the budget for M & E was less than the GEF requirement (3% of project funds), given that it does not give room for monitoring activities within each landscape. Monitoring and evaluation of the Sustainable Landscapes project activities were carried out through following:

- Inception workshop and report
- Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings (annually)
- CI-GEF Project Agency Field Supervision Missions
- Project Results Monitoring Plan
- Quarterly progress reports
- Financial reports and statements (Annually)
- Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) (Annual)
- Midterm Review, and
- Final evaluation of the project

5.4.2. M&E implementation

The M & E implementation for the project is rated as Satisfactory.

The total budget allocated for M & E of the project was sufficient to ensure that the M & E activities were conducted in a timely manner. Periodic financial and technical reports (quarterly and annually) have also been produced since the start of project implementation, as well as the ongoing terminal evaluation. Data on the progress of the various output indicators has been collected and reported in the quarterly and annual reports produced between July 2018 and December 2024, as well as the midterm review report produced in November 2021.

The Executing Agencies have so far respected the assigned CI-GEF policies and guidelines as well as the delivery timelines for the expected reports in accordance with project stipulations. The EAs have also produced PIRs annually to monitor progress made from implementation till date, while ensuring that lessons learned are properly documented and shared as expected. The PIRs and quarterly progress reports are not user-friendly – it is hard to follow the progress that is being made towards the achievement of the output and outcome indicators.

⁴⁴ ProDoc

Table 16: M&E design and implementation rating

Monitoring and Evaluation	Rating
M & E Design	Highly Satisfactory
M & E Implementation	Satisfactory
Overall M & E	Satisfactory

5.5. Assessment of project implementation and execution

The quality of implementation and execution is rated as **Satisfactory**.

5.5.1. Quality of Implementation

Quality of Implementation: The quality of implementation rating is **Highly Satisfactory**.

CI-GEF played a leading role in the design of the project from the concept note phase to the CEO endorsement package. CI-GEF ensured that the GEF guidelines were followed in the project preparation process. During project implementation, CI-GEF tracked the project risks on an ongoing basis. Some of the risks highlighted at the start of project implementation have remained valid till the time of this TE. One of such risks was financial, though rated moderate during implementation has remained an unchanged risk. Another risk highlighted was Covid-19, an unforeseen risk but only at the very start of project implementation and therefore did not affect the project. The Grants Manager ensure that the grant agreement between CI-GEF and CI Mexico was followed accordingly, and the evaluation did not identify any challenge relating to the management of the grant agreement between the two entities.

During project delivery, CI-GEF provided technical and financial oversight to the project implementation process through the review and provision of feedback to the CI Mexico team on the different reports produced by CI Mexico, notably the PIRs and financial reports. The PIR format for the current project was not found to be user-friendly as getting information on the status of achievement of the different output and outcome indicators was quite challenging.

5.5.2. Quality of Execution

Quality of execution: The quality of execution rating is **Satisfactory**.

At the start of the project, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was established comprised of CI-Mexico, CONANP, and CI-GEF and Secretaria de Hacienda y Credito Publico as the GEF Operational Focal Point, to support project management, monitoring, and oversee project implementation. The PSC which comprises leaders of the three partners above, met annually to provide an oversight role and guidance in project execution, review and approve project annual budget and work plans, discuss any implementation issues and provide solutions as well as support coordination and communication between the key project partners, providing feedback on project outputs and outcomes and document approval from the PMU or EAs.

From the onset of the project, there was a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the different institutions and structures involved in the project. The overall guidance of project execution remains in the hands of EAs while chairing and participating in the PSC.

Financial Management and procurement:

The Finance Manager, under the guidance of the CI-Mexico and CONANP Project Directors was responsible for managing the finances of the project with the oversight of the CI-GEF Agency. The Finance Manager has the responsibility of updating and maintaining the project budget, tracking use of financial resources, advise on any budget management and reporting issues, review all financial transactions of the project, processing invoices and payments among others.

5.6. Assessment of the environmental and social safeguards

5.6.1. Overall Environmental Safeguards Rating

Overall Environmental and Social Safeguard rating is **Satisfactory**.

A safeguard screening and compliance process was conducted during project inception involving all project partners. The Director of Compliance for Conservation International served as safeguard compliance expert, to work in collaboration with the other stakeholders in ensuring that safeguard requirements are respected and ESS plans implemented as expected, as well as monitoring and reporting on the safeguard indicators. An ESS Compliance workplan was developed which was used to monitor safeguard activities and report them quarterly as part of the progress reports made on the ESS activities. The Safeguards Plan elaborated for this project included the following as safeguards:

- Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP);
- Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP);
- Indigenous Peoples Plan
- Involuntary Resettlement Plan and
- Accountability and Grievance Mechanisms (AGM).

5.6.2. Gender

Gender is rated Satisfactory.

A gender analysis was conducted and gender considerations incorporated into the project at the time of project design and activities for mainstreaming gender planned during implementation. At the time of CEO endorsement, a Gender Mainstreaming Plan (GMP) was developed, that provides a general overview of the status of gender issues in the different landscapes and identifies the barriers to women's participation in biodiversity conservation activities. This GMP would also help the project align with GEF's Gender Mainstreaming Policy. The project partners also reported on the minimum gender indicators:

- Number of men and women participating in project activities (e.g. meetings, workshops, consultations);
- Number of men and women who receive benefits (e.g. employment, income-generating activities, training, access to natural resources, land tenure or resource rights, equipment, leadership roles) from the project;
- The number of strategies and plans (e.g. land use planning instruments and management plans) and policies derived from the project that include gender considerations;
- Number (and percentage) of communications campaigns with a gender approach and campaigns that prioritize women's perspectives and practices on land-use management;
- Number of conferences, workshops or tools to strengthen capacities among project beneficiaries that contain a component/session on gender;
- Number of actions that deliver equality and equity in the outcomes of the project;
- Percentage of women stakeholders participating in governance mechanisms for ILM and indigenous peoples, afro-descendants and other vulnerable groups

The participation of women in project activities have been tracked during M & E and this information has been reported in the quarterly and annual progress reports. The project is expected to report progress made towards gender mainstreaming on a quarterly basis (Quarterly report) and an annual basis (PIR). The project took some measures to encourage the participation of women, such as:

- The selection of participants of the governance bodies of each priority landscape and capacity building activities ensured that both men and women within the communities were included.

As per the ProDoc, a baseline assessment on gender was conducted based on consultations and existing literature to understand the challenges women face within the three different landscapes that affect their ability to participate in biodiversity conservation and landscape management roles. The gender analysis also indicated the inequalities resulting from the historic and cultural roles established for men and women within the project landscapes and the effect on women's participation in conservation activities and related decision-making. However, data on progress was not discussed or expressed in a sex-disaggregated manner, which made it hard to monitor women's participation and compare to expected results. Project outcomes were not design in a sex-disaggregated manner, with only one outcome indicator being gender-sensitive. The monitoring plan for gender had gender indicators but most of them did not have targets⁴⁵.

The gender indicators captured in the project implementation report are discussed below:

Outcome 2.2: Increased income of members of Producer Organisations (POs) that have adopted sustainable production practices with a market-driven value chain approach

Indicator 2.2: Increase in income of PO members (disaggregated by gender).

The participation of both men and women during meetings, trainings, workshops and other engagement events during project implementation was considered, to ensure both women and men enjoy the benefits of the project. However, in reporting progress (PIRs and quarterly reports)⁴⁶, this participation was not captured in numbers or percentages for most outcomes, nor expressed in a gender- or sex-disaggregated manner. PIRs reported a general participation of women, for example in the transformation of fishery products and during the "Gathering of Indigenous, Afro-Mexican and Rural Women Leaders" event held in August 2024 where 17 women participated. Similarly, during the inception phase of the project, participation of both men and women in planning workshops was not reported disaggregated by gender and vulnerable group⁴⁷. This made it hard to understand or assess the level of success of gender mainstreaming within the project.

The following data was collected and reported on the progress of gender indicators:

5.6.3. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement is rated Satisfactory.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) was developed by the Executing Agencies during the design phase of the project, with an aim to ensure that the project meets the requirements of the GEF Stakeholders Engagement Policy. The SEP was an elaborate document that included the different categories of actors – state actors, educational institutions, local communities and populations, private sector, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), peasant organizations and NGOs involved in the Sustainable Landscapes project implementation. The SEP also carried information on:

- Stakeholder's interest in the project
- Stakeholder's role and influence on the project
- How stakeholders will be consulted in project execution
- Mode of engagement and timing of stakeholders and
- Project components in which each stakeholder will be involved.

In addition to that, it was expected that the Executing Agencies will monitor and report on the following minimum stakeholder engagement indicators:

- Number of governance bodies at landscape level established and functioning;
- Number of government agencies, civil society organisations, private sector, indigenous peoples and other stakeholder groups engaged in the project implementation phase;
- Number of persons (sex disaggregated) engaged in project implementation phase; and

⁴⁵ ProDoc

⁴⁶ PIR FY2024

⁴⁷ ProDoc

- Number of alliances and partnership formally established during the project implementation phase.

A total of six (6) stakeholders' groups were identified at the PPG phase⁴⁸ while there were 11 groups identified at CEO approval⁴⁹. Stakeholder identification started at the project design or PPG phase. Conservation International worked closely with CI-Mexico and CONANP to identify stakeholders and a preliminary stakeholders' list was developed. This list was revised and updated periodically as the implementation went on, to include other groups as necessary. Stakeholder consultations and meetings helped in identifying stakeholder groups and informed the elaboration of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan, while determining the method of engagement of each group such as which group gets involved in meetings or trainings. There is little evidence as to whether the number of stakeholder groups changed during implementation, given that progress reports did not discuss that. The implementation of the SEP was monitored and the indicators tracked and reported periodically to CI-GEF through quarterly and annual progress reports.

Overall, the following stakeholder groups participated in project implementation:

1. Educational institutions
2. Non-Governmental Organizations
3. Communities / local populations / ejidos
4. Municipal government
5. State government
6. Federal government
7. Committees or government civil society bodies
8. Assemblies or community boards
9. Ejido councils
10. Municipal delegates
11. Peasant organizations or social enterprises and
12. Private Sector Leaders

The evaluators had a hard time assessing the progress made relating to stakeholder engagement as information on the progress achieved towards the indicators of the stakeholder engagement plan was not provided in the PIRs.

5.6.4. Accountability and Grievance Mechanism

The project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism (AGM) is rated Highly Satisfactory.

An accountability and grievance mechanism was developed during the project inception phase to enable the EAs monitor and report on the progress of AGM indicators. The Executing Agencies monitored and reported the following minimum accountability and grievance indicators during the implementation phase:

- Grievance mechanism instituted, legally recognized within the internal structure of CONANP and governance body, with facilities and a budget to function
- Number of complaints reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism
- Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project's Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved
- Number of conflicts resolved
- Number of dissemination materials and events to expose the existence of this AGM.

At the PPG phase of the project, stakeholders were presented an AGM document, as part of the Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) which outlined the criteria for eligibility of grievances, the types of grievances that can be reported, the project staff or institution responsible for handling such

⁴⁸ ProDoc

⁴⁹CEO endorsement

cases and methods of resolution. This was also presented to participants during the inception workshop of August 2021. The AGM was an important document during and throughout project implementation. All grievances or complaints were sent through the Executing Agencies. The Executing Agencies monitored and reported on the following minimum AGM indicators:

- Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project’s Accountability and Grievance Mechanism
- Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project’s Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved
- Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated / disseminated to stakeholders

Table 17: Assessment of the performance of accountability and grievance mechanism indicators

Minimum safeguards indicator	Project target	End of project status	Rating
Number of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project’s Accountability and Grievance Mechanism	0	0	Achieved
Percentage of conflict and complaint cases reported to the project’s Accountability and Grievance Mechanism that have been resolved	100%	0	Achieved
Number of times the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism is communicated/disseminated to stakeholders		The AGM was communicated/disseminated throughout project implementation as part of external communication via email, presentation slides and on the project website.	Achieved

During the implementation phase of the project, it was noted that calling the mechanism as the AGM had some cultural sensitivity issue and because of this, the mechanism was not widely used by stakeholders. This led to CI-GEF in consultation with CI-Mexico, to change the name of the mechanism to a Spanish name with an English translation as follows “Conservation International Listens to You”⁵⁰. This rendered the mechanism more acceptable to the project stakeholders.

5.7. Other assessments

5.7.1. Materialization of co-financing

The Sustainable Landscapes project was co-financed by fourteen (14) co-financiers, covering the salaries of some of the project staff as well as office supplies and other project-related costs. Financial reporting during project implementation was taken very seriously, with quarterly financial reports being produced and submitted to the CI-GEF. At CEO endorsement, the total amount of co-financing

⁵⁰ From group discussion with the CI-GEF safeguard team

committed was USD 47,459,966 while at TE, the amount of financing materialized was USD 76,573,144, representing a co-financing materialization rate of 161.3%. A summary of materialized funding from the time of CEO endorsement and terminal evaluation is given in **Table 18**.

Table 18: Materialization of project co-financing at TE

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Amount(\$) at CEO	Actual(\$) at TE	Status at end of project
Recipient Government	CONANP	In-kind	9,700,000.00	4,033,008.67	42%
Private Sector	CI - Starbucks Foundation	grant	1,000,000.00	995,602.70	100%
Private Sector	FUNDACION ADO	In-kind	1,114,845.00	-	0%
CSO	COOPERATIVA AMBIO S.C. de R.L.	In-kind	416,119.00	14,762.78	9%
CSO	COOPERATIVA AMBIO S.C. de R.L.	grant		24,086.65	0%
CSO	CIIDIR OAXACA, INSTITUTO POLITECNICO NACIONAL	In-kind	714,089.00	-	0%
CSO	COSTA SALVAJE	Grant	\$ 729,405.00	264,075.86	47%
CSO	COSTA SALVAJE	In-kind	-	217,011.71	0%
CSO	FONDO DE CONSERVACION EL TRIUNFO (FONCET)	In-kind	2,247,191.00	456,639.00	20%
CSO	PRONATURA	In-kind	600,000.00	-	0%
CSO	UNION COMUNIDADES INDIGENAS - ISTMO	In-kind	68,900.00	-	0%
Recipient Government	SEMAEDES OXACA, SECRETARÍA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE, ENERGÍAS Y DESARROLLO SUSTENTABLE	In-kind	434,930.94	64,047.62	15%
Private Sector	ALSEA	In-kind	500,000.00	-	0%
Private Sector	DANONE	In-kind	703,515.16		0%
Recipient Government	Ministry of Agriculture (SADER formally SAGARPA)	In-kind	26,800,000.00	61,707,572.19	230%

Recipient Government	SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales	In-kind	-	49,248.05	100%
CSO	Fondo Oaxaqueno	In-kind	-	27,641.40	100%
CSO	Sociedad de historia Natural Niparaja AC	In-kind	-	5,314.29	100%
Recipient Government	SEMAHN CHIAPAS, SECRETARIA DEL MEDIO AMBIENTE E HISTORIA NATURAL	In-kind	2,430,971.35	3,938,478. 33	162%
Private Sector	La Frailescana	In-kind	\$ -	89,641.00	100%
Private Sector	Master Chef	In-kind	\$ -	4,854.73	100%
Private Sector	INTERCAFE	In-kind	\$ -	428.20	100%
Private Sector	SmartFish AC	In-kind	\$ -	142,000.2	100%
Private Sector	Comité Oaxaqueño de Sanidad e Inocuidad Acuícola A.C. (Cosia)	In-kind	\$ -	41,008.60	100%
Private Sector	CI MEXICO USAID	In-kind	\$ -	-	100%
Recipient Government	SEMARNAT - Secretara de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Delegación Chiapas)	In-kind	\$	40,843.20	100%
Recipient Government	CONAFOR Chiapas	In-kind	-	2,026,900. 00	100%
Private Sector	UCIRI	Grant	-	28,080.60	100%
Private Sector	Fondo Oaxaqueño	In-kind	-	-	100%
Recipient Government	SEMAEDES0	In-kind	-	26,724.70	100%
Recipient Government	SEMAEDES0	grant	-	238,286.3 0	100%
Recipient Government	CI - USAID SLV	In-kind	-	1,687,759. 99	100%
Private Sector	Sociedad cooperativa de producción pesquera de bienes y servicios los agosteros de Topon	In-kind	-	25,025.43	100%

Private Sector	Café Capitán	In-kind		141,110.0 0	100%
Private Sector	CI - Mastercard	In-kind	-	95,384.22	100%
Private Sector	Cafetaleros Unidos de la Costa	In-kind	-	-	100%
Private Sector	El Carrizal	In-kind	-	5,849.59	100%
Private Sector	ECOM	In-kind	-	181,758.0 0	100%
Total			47,459,966	76,573,14 4	161.3%

5.7.2. Knowledge Management

At the time of CEO endorsement, a communication plan had been developed including a Knowledge Management Plan, both disseminated by the Project Management Unit to all project partners. This plan was to ensure that project activities are well documented and for sharing any lessons learned and success stories. The plan clearly outlined and discussed knowledge management outputs, and a budget assigned to each output. The project produced knowledge products during its awareness-raising campaign circulated through social media and other publication outlets, as one of its activities under Component 2 (Output 2.1.1), which informed communities and Mexico at large on the importance of adopted sustainable practices and biodiversity conservation and showcasing examples of best practices put in place by the project. Information disseminated during this campaign reached over 900,000 people across the different media outlets. The project also developed quarterly and annual reports which served as knowledge-sharing tools to circulate lessons learned and best practices. Data was collected on the income increase for producers realized through the project and this was systematized and documented. Success stories, best practices and lessons learned are published on blogs, email communications, project partners' websites and/or social media, as well as in the final progress report produced.

6. LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Lessons learnt

- 1. Adaptive management.** At the time of inception of the project, COVID-19 had not started and was therefore highlighted as a minimal risk of the project implementation. However, it became an actual risk that caused delays and/or slowed down project implementation. To mitigate this unforeseen hindrance, adjustments were made to the project activities to accommodate the travel and physical meeting restrictions imposed by governments due to the pandemic. Project staff switched to remote and hybrid mode of work to help them implement the planned activities, such as stakeholder consultations. Meetings were held virtually in place of in-person or physical meetings. Health measures were put in place to ensure the safety of the project staff and other partners involved in the implementation. However, even though the project already put in place adaptive measures, COVID-19 slowed down during implementation. Putting in place adaptive management strategies will also help a project of this nature to better mitigate unexpected events that bring delays to its implementation.
- 2. The project fostered inclusiveness by involving the private sector, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, youth and women.** Among the stakeholder groups, there are private sector organizations who had committed to co-financing the project, such as the ADO Foundation, ALSEA and DANONE, although their co-financing did not materialize. Efforts were made to ensure the participation of women, indigenous peoples, people of Afro-descendant origin and youth in project activities, in the selection of stakeholders throughout the project implementation, taking into consideration their needs and interests as a minority or vulnerable group and putting measures in place to monitor and enhance their participation. The gender analysis developed at the inception phase of the project and the stakeholder engagement plan enabled this to happen.
- 3. Continuous close collaboration amongst the project stakeholders, creates a sense of ownership and encourages a strong participation in project activities.** The Sustainable Landscapes project did well in bringing diverse stakeholders from all levels of government all through the project, starting from the design phase through implementation. Stakeholder consultations facilitated the selection of project stakeholders who showed a strong sense of engagement, which may have positively impacted progress in achieving expected outcomes.

6.2. Recommendations

To the Project Partners

The project partners – CI-Mexico, CONANP, CI-GEF among others have each put in commendable efforts in supporting the efficient implementation of this project. The various stakeholder groups - government institutions, CSOs, NGOs, educational institutions and private sector organizations engaged in the implementation of the project have also benefitted from the collaboration and partnerships established and the hope is that they will continue to collaborate even after the project ends. For this to happen, the state and non-state actors (such as civil society organizations) involved in the project would need to continuously encourage local communities, producer organizations and other project beneficiaries to continue engaging in sustainable practices adopted. This could feature in the project's exit strategy.

To CI-GEF Agency

The quarterly, annual reports and the documents for the awareness-raising campaign produced during the life of the project, as well as reports from workshops and trainings are expected to be of great use beyond life of the project. If this happens, they will provide relevant data on the success stories, challenges and case studies on biodiversity conservation, sustainable landscape management as well as

inform decision-making processes globally. The CI-GEF Agency could profit from these experiences to better inform and guide the design and implementation of future and ongoing projects across the globe.

Table 18: Summary of recommendations and action points

	FINDING/CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATIONS
Sustainability		
1.	Sustainable long-term partnerships established within the framework of the project	For the successful achievement of project results and future interventions of this nature, long-term partnerships established during project implementation will need to be maintained even after the project ends. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders Timeline: Future projects
2.	Better preparation for risks, especially security and political challenges, was identified as critical for future projects.	The project experienced delays due to political disruptions. For future initiative, it will be worthwhile to have contingency planning for potential social and political disruptions. In this way, the project will be better able to deal with these once they arise. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP and other stakeholders Timeline: Future projects
3.	Causes of land degradation continuously need to be monitored across the landscapes, to ensure projects of this nature are beneficial and sustainable.	This project has created awareness on the causes of land degradation and the importance of biodiversity conservation and landscape management. For these benefits to have a long-lasting impact, they will need to continue monitoring the factors impacting landscapes. Responsibility: CI-Mexico, CI-GEF, CONANP Timeline: Future projects
Knowledge management		
4.	It is required that knowledge products continue being disseminated to encourage wider audience.	Continuous awareness-raising and education is imperative, through reports, social media and project partner websites, to widen the audience and create impact. Responsibility: CI-GEF Timeline: By the end of project activities

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: Stakeholders consulted

S/N	Apellido	Nombre	Organización	Posición
1	Castro Hernández	Juan Carlos	CONANP/REBIEN	Director de la ANP
2	González del Castillo	Edda Carolina	CONANP/CMT	Director de la ANP
3	Becerra	Mario Ramón	Agostaderos de Topón	Asesor
4	Paz	Pedro	El Carrizal	Presidente de la Cooperativa
5	Niño Gómez	Gabriela	Secretaría de Hacienda	Punto Focal del FMAM en México Director de Finanzas Sostenibles
6	Octaviano	Gloria	Secretaría de Hacienda	Director Adjunto de Fondos Verdes
7	Juandiego Monzón	José Manuel	CONANP	Director de Estrategias de Fortalecimiento Institucional
8	Carrión Jaramillo	Daniela	CI-GEF	Director Principal de Diseño y Supervisión de Proyectos
9	Bejarano	Yaisa	CI-GEF	Responsable de apoyo a proyectos del FMAM
10	Pérez Roblero	Reyder Lindoro	Café Capitán	Presidente
11	Zunun Verdugo	Antonio	Cacao Nueva Costa Rica	Presidente
12	Lara Cueto	Eduardo	El Madresal	Presidente
13	Ibarias de la Cruz	Jerónimo	Museo Comunitario de la Tortuga MARina	Presidente
14	Castañeda	Mario	CONANP - Federal	Dirección de Evaluación y Seguimiento
15	Domínguez	Romeo	PRONATURA SUR	Director
16	Contreras	Josefat	CI	Director de Proyecto
17	Ian	Kissoon	CI-GEF	Senior Director, Environmental and Social Framework,
18	Juliana	Rios	CI-GEF	Senior Manager, Gender and Safeguards
19	Shannon	Wiecks	CI-GEF	Grants Manager

ANNEX B: Evaluation Terms of Reference

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) requires Terminal Evaluations (TEs) for medium-sized and full-sized projects. TEs are conducted by independent consultants and are used as an adaptive management tool by GEF Agencies and as a portfolio monitoring tool by the GEF Secretariat. TEs are primarily assess the achievement of project results against what was expected to be achieved and draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of future programming. The TE report promotes accountability and transparency and assesses the extent of project accomplishments. **All reports that are submitted must be in English.**

I. Scope of Work:

1. Kick off meeting to introduce team, and provide project related documents for evaluations, based on the submitted proposal.
2. The evaluator will conduct a desk review of project documents (i.e. PIF, Project Document, plans related to the Environmental and Social Safeguards [including Gender and Stakeholder Engagement], Work plans, Budgets, Project Inception Report, Quarterly Reports, PIRs, documents with project results, the baseline Tracking Tool submitted to the GEF at the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsement stage and the terminal GEF Focal Area Tracking Tools, policies and guidelines used by the Executing Agency, CI-GEF Evaluation Policy, GEF Evaluation Policy, Project Operational Guidelines, Manuals and Systems, etc.), and develop draft Key informant Questionnaire and draft terminal evaluation inception report to be reviewed by CI-GEF team. The report will contain the initial information on the following:
 - a. Initial subject of the review, and relevant context
 - b. Purpose of the evaluation: why is the evaluation being conducted at this time, who needs the information and why?
 - c. Objectives of the evaluation: What the evaluation aims to achieve (e.g. assessment of the results of the project, etc.)
 - d. Scope: What aspects of the project will be covered, and not covered, by the evaluation
 - e. Identification and description of the evaluation criteria (including relevance, effectiveness, results, efficiency, and sustainability)
 - f. Key evaluation questions
 - g. Methodology including approach for data collection and analysis, and stakeholder engagement
 - h. Rationale for selection of the methods, and selection of data sources (i.e. sites to be visited, stakeholders to be interviewed)
 - i. Proposal on the system for data management and maintenance of records
 - j. Intended products and reporting procedures
 - k. Potential limitations of the evaluation
3. The evaluator will host a workshop (in person/virtual) with the Executing Agencies to clarify understanding of the objectives and methods of the Terminal Evaluation.
The conclusion of the workshop will be summarized in a Terminal Evaluation Workshop Report with the following information:
 - a. Final subject of the review, and relevant context
 - b. Purpose of the evaluation: why is the evaluation being conducted at this time, who needs the information and why?

- c. Objectives of the evaluation: What the evaluation aims to achieve (e.g. assessment of the results of the project, etc.)
 - d. Scope: What aspects of the project will be covered, and not covered, by the evaluation
 - e. Identification and description of the evaluation criteria (including relevance, effectiveness, results, efficiency, and sustainability)
 - f. Key evaluation questions
 - g. Methodology including approach for data collection and analysis, and stakeholder engagement
 - h. Rationale for selection of the methods, and selection of data sources (i.e. sites to be visited, stakeholders to be interviewed)
 - i. Final system for data management and maintenance of records
 - j. Intended products and reporting procedures
 - k. Potential limitations of the evaluation
4. The evaluator will undertake the evaluation of the project, including any interviews and in-country site visits, based on the Guidelines for the Evaluator/s section II.
The evaluator will Present initial findings to the Executing Agency, CI's General Counsel's Office (GCO) and CI-GEF Agency at the end of TE mission.
 5. Based on the document review and the in-country interviews/site visits, the evaluator will prepare a draft evaluation report following the outline in Annex 1. The report will be shared with the Executing Agencies and the CI-GEF Agency. Each party can provide a management response, documenting questions or comments on the draft evaluation report.
 6. The evaluator will incorporate comments and will prepare the final evaluation report. The evaluator will submit a final evaluation report in word and PDF and will include a separate document highlighting where/how comments were incorporated.

II. Guidelines for the Evaluator(s):

- Evaluators will be independent from project design, approval, implementation and execution. Evaluators will familiarize themselves with the GEF programs and strategies, and with relevant GEF policies such as those on project cycle, M&E, co-financing, fiduciary standards, gender, and environmental and social safeguards.
- Evaluators will take perspectives of all relevant stakeholders (including the GEF Operational Focal Point[s]) into account. They will gather information on project performance and results from multiple sources including the project M&E system, tracking tools, field visits, stakeholder interviews, project documents, and other independent sources, to facilitate triangulation. They will seek the necessary contextual information to assess the significance and relevance of observed performance and results.
- Evaluators will be impartial and will present a balanced account consistent with evidence.
- Evaluators will apply the rating scales provided in these guidelines in Annex 2.
- Evaluators will abide by the GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines.

III. Expected Outputs and Deliverables

Annex 1: Outline for Draft and Terminal Evaluation Report

The draft and final evaluation reports should at the minimum contain the information below:

General Information

The Terminal Evaluation report will provide general information on the project and conduct of the Terminal Evaluation. This includes information such as:

- GEF Project ID
- Project name
- GEF financing
- Planned and materialized co-financing
- Key objectives
- GEF Agency
- Project countries
- Key dates
- Name of the Project Executing Agency(ies)

The Terminal Evaluation report will also provide information on when the evaluation took place, places visited, who was involved, the methodology, and the limitations of the evaluation. The report will also include, as annexes to the main report, the evaluation team's terms of reference, its composition and expertise.

Where feasible and appropriate, the Terminal Evaluation reports should include georeferenced maps and/or coordinates that demarcate the planned and actual area covered by the project. To facilitate tracking and verification, where feasible, the Terminal Evaluations should include geo-referenced pictures of the sites where GEF supported interventions were undertaken.

Project Theory of Change

The Terminal Evaluation report will include a description of the project's theory of change including description of: the outputs, outcomes, intermediate states, and intended long-term environmental impacts of the project; the causal pathways for the long-term impacts; and, implicit and explicit assumptions. The project's objective(s) should also be included within the theory of change.

Some of the projects may already have an explicit theory of change. Where appropriate, after consultations with the project stakeholders, the evaluators may refine this theory of change. Where an explicit theory of change is not provided in the project documents, the evaluators should develop it based on information provided in the project documents and through consultations with the project stakeholders. The report should provide an explicit (or implicit) statement on project's theory of change - i.e. how through a causal chain project activities would lead to project outcomes and long-term impact. It should describe how causal links among the outputs, outcomes and long-term impacts are supposed to work. The report should also include the assumptions made in the project's theory of change.

Assessment of Project Results

The TE must assess achievement of project outputs and outcomes, and report on these. While assessing a project's results, evaluators will determine and rate the extent to which the project objectives – as stated in the documents submitted at the CEO Endorsement stage – have been achieved. The evaluator(s) should also indicate if there were any changes in project design and/or expected results

after start of implementation. If the project did not establish a baseline (initial conditions), where feasible, the evaluator should estimate the baseline conditions so that results can be determined. Where applicable, the Terminal Evaluation report will include an assessment of the level of achievement of the GEF corporate results targets/core indicators to which the project contributes and will also incorporate data from the focal area tracking tool and/or core indicator worksheet.

Outputs

The evaluator should rate the extent to which the expected outputs were actually delivered. An identification and assessment of the factors that affected delivery of outputs should also be included.

Outcomes

The evaluator should rate the extent to which the expected outcomes were achieved and the extent to which its achievement was dependent on delivery of project outputs. They should also assess the factors that affected outcome achievement, e.g. project design, project's linkages with other activities, extent and materialization of co-financing, stakeholder involvement, etc. Where the project was developed within the framework of a program, the assessment should also report on the extent the project contributed to the program outcomes.

Criteria for Outcome Ratings

Outcome ratings will consider the outcome achievements of the projects against its expected targets.

Project outcomes will be rated on three dimensions:

- a. Relevance: Were the project outcomes congruent with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities, and mandates of the Agencies? Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes?
- b. Effectiveness: Were the project's actual outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes?
- c. Efficiency: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project cost/time versus output/outcomes equation compared to that of similar projects?

Rating Scale for Outcomes: An overall outcome rating will be provided on a six-point scale (highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory) after considering outcome relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency (See Annex 2). This overall outcome rating considers outcome-level sustainability.

Assessment of Overall Project Sustainability

The assessment of sustainability will weigh risks to continuation of benefits from the project. The assessment should identify key risks and explain how these risks may affect continuation of benefits after the GEF project ends. The analysis should cover key risks, including financial, socio-political, institutional, and environmental risks. The overall sustainability of project outcomes will be rated on a four-point scale (Likely to Unlikely) based on an assessment of the likelihood and magnitude of the risks to sustainability. Higher levels of risks and magnitudes of effect, imply lower likelihood of sustainability. Annex 2 describes the rating scale for sustainability.

Progress to Impact

It is often too early to assess the long-term impacts of the project at the point of project completion. This said, some evidence on progress towards long-term impacts, and the extent to which the key assumptions of the project's theory of change hold, may be available and it may be feasible to assess

and report on the progress. The evaluators should also assess the extent to which the progress towards long-term impact may be attributed to the project.

The evaluators should report the available qualitative and quantitative evidence on environmental stress reduction (e.g. GHG emission reduction, reduction of waste discharge, etc.) and environmental status change (e.g. change in population of endangered species, forest stock, water retention in degraded lands, etc.). When reporting such evidence, the evaluator should note the information source and clarify the scale/s at which the described environmental stress reduction is being achieved.

The evaluators should cover the project's contributions to changes in policy/ legal/regulatory frameworks. This would include observed changes in capacities (awareness, knowledge, skills, infrastructure, monitoring systems, etc.) and governance architecture, including access to and use of information (laws, administrative bodies, trust-building and conflict resolution processes, information-sharing systems, etc.). Contribution to change in socioeconomic status (income, health, well-being, etc.) should also be documented.

Where the environmental and social changes are being achieved at scales beyond the immediate area of intervention, the evaluators should provide an account of the processes such as sustaining, mainstreaming, replication, scaling up and market change, through which these changes have taken place. The evaluators should discuss whether there are arrangements in the project design to facilitate follow-up actions, and should document instances where the GEF promoted approaches, technologies, financing instruments, legal frameworks, information systems, etc., were adopted/implemented without direct support from, or involvement of, the project. Evidence on incidence of these processes should be discussed to assess progress towards impact.

When assessing contributions of GEF project to the observed change, the evaluators should also assess the contributions of other actors and factors. The evaluators should assess merits of rival explanations for the observed impact and give reasons for accepting or rejecting them. Where applicable, the evaluators are encouraged to identify and describe the barriers and other risks that may prevent further progress towards long-term impacts.

The evaluators should document the unintended impacts – both positive and negative impacts – of the project and assess the overall scope and implications of these impacts. Where these impacts are undesirable from environmental and socio-economic perspectives, the evaluation should suggest corrective actions.

Assessment of Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

The evaluators will include an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project M&E plan and its implementation.

M&E Design. To assess the quality of the M&E plan, the evaluators will assess:

- a. Was the M&E plan at the point of CEO Endorsement practical and sufficient?
- b. Did it include baseline data?
- c. Did it: specify clear targets and appropriate (SMART) indicators to track environmental, gender, and socio-economic results; a proper methodological approach; specify practical organization and logistics of the M&E activities including schedule and responsibilities for data collection; and, budget adequate funds for M&E activities?

M&E Implementation. The evaluators should assess:

- a. Whether the M&E system operated as per the M&E plan?
- b. Where necessary, whether the M&E plan was revised in a timely manner?
- c. Was information on specified indicators and relevant GEF focal area tracking tools gathered in a systematic manner?
- d. Whether appropriate methodological approaches have been used to analyze data?
- e. Were resources for M&E sufficient? How was the information from the M&E system used during the project implementation?

Project M&E systems will be rated on the quality of M&E design and quality of M&E implementation using a six-point scale (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory). Annex 2 provides more details on the scale.

Assessment of Implementation and Execution

The assessment of the implementation and execution of GEF projects will take into account the performance of the GEF Implementing Agencies and project Executing Agency(ies) (EAs) in discharging their expected roles and responsibilities. The performance of these agencies will be rated using a six-point scale (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory). See Annex 2 for more information on the scale.

Quality of Implementation: Within the GEF partnership, GEF Implementing Agencies are involved in activities related to a project's identification, concept preparation, appraisal, preparation of detailed proposal, approval and start-up, oversight, supervision, completion, and evaluation. To assess performance of the GEF Agencies, the evaluators will assess the extent to which the agency delivered effectively on these counts, with focus on elements that were controllable from the given GEF Agency's perspective. The evaluator will assess how well risks were identified and managed by the GEF Agency.

Quality of Execution: Within the GEF partnership, the EAs are involved in the management and administration of the project's day-to-day activities under the overall oversight and supervision of the GEF Agencies. The EAs are responsible for the appropriate use of funds, and procurement and contracting of goods and services to the GEF Agency. To assess EA performance, the evaluators will assess the extent to which it effectively discharged its role and responsibilities.

Assessment of the Environmental and Social Safeguards

The evaluator will assess whether appropriate environmental and social safeguards were addressed in the project's design and implementation (See Annex 2 for more details on the rating scale). It is expected that a GEF project will not cause any harm to environment or to any stakeholder and, where applicable, it will take measures to prevent and/or mitigate adverse effects. The evaluator should assess the screening/ risk categorization of the project along with the implementation of the safeguard plans that were approved by the GEF Agency. There should be an analysis of the implementation of management measures, as outlined at CEO Endorsement/Approval, including findings on the effectiveness of management measures and lessons learned.

Gender: The evaluator will determine the extent to which the gender considerations were taken into account in designing and implementing the project. The evaluator should report whether a gender analysis was conducted, the extent to which the project was implemented in a manner that ensures gender equitable participation and benefits, and whether gender disaggregated data was gathered and

reported on beneficiaries. In case the given GEF project disadvantages or may disadvantage women or men, then this should be documented and reported. The evaluator should also determine the extent to which relevant gender related concerns were tracked through project M&E, and if possible, addressing whether gender considerations contributed to the success of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement: The evaluator should, where applicable, review and assess the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and project specific aspects such as involvement of civil society, indigenous population, private sector, etc. The evaluator should also indicate the percentage of stakeholders who rate as satisfactory, the level at which their views and concerns are taken into account by the project.

Accountability and Grievance Mechanism: The evaluator should review and assess the project's Grievance Mechanism. The evaluator should analyze and assess whether project stakeholders were aware of the grievance mechanism and whether the mechanism was effective in addressing grievances.

The evaluator should also review and assess any other safeguard plans that were triggered.

GEF Additionality

The evaluator should also assess GEF additionality, defined as the additional outcome (both environmental and otherwise) that can be directly associated with the GEF supported project or program.

GEF's Additionality	Description	Additionality Question
Specific Environmental Additionality	The GEF provides a wide range of value added interventions/services to achieve the Global Environmental Benefits (e.g. CO2 reduction, Reduction/avoidance of emission of POPs).	Has the project generated the Global Environmental Benefits that would not happened without GEF's intervention?
Legal/Regulatory Additionality	The GEF helps stakeholders transformational change to environment sustainable legal /regulatory forms.	Has the project led to legal or regulatory reforms that would not have occurred in the absence of the project?
Institutional Additionality/Governance additionality	The GEF provides a support the existing institution to transform into efficient/sustainable environment manner.	Have institutions been strengthened to provide a supportive environment for achievement and measurement of environmental impact as a result of the project?
Financial Additionality	The GEF provides an incremental cost which is associated with transforming a project with national/local benefits into one with global environmental benefits	Has the involvement of the GEF led to greater flows of financing than would otherwise have been the case from private or public sector sources?
Socio-Economic Additionality	The GEF helps society improve their livelihood and social benefits thorough GEF activities.	Can improvements in living standard among population groups affected by environmental conditions be attributed to the GEF contribution?

Innovation Additionality	The GEF provides efficient/sustainable technology and knowledge to overcome the existing social norm/barrier/practice for making a bankable project	Has the GEF involvement led to a fast adoption of new technologies, or the demonstration of market readiness for technologies that had not previously demonstrated their market viability?
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Other Assessments

The Terminal Evaluations should assess the following topics, for which ratings are not required:

- a. Need for follow-up: Where applicable, the evaluators will indicate if there is any need to follow up on the evaluation findings, e.g. instances financial mismanagement, unintended negative impacts or risks, etc.
- b. Materialization of co-financing: the evaluators will provide information on the extent to which expected co-financing materialized, whether co-financing is cash or in-kind, whether it is in form of grant or loan or equity, whether co-financing was administered by the project management or by some other organization, how shortfall in co-financing or materialization of greater than expected co-financing affected project results, etc.
- c. Knowledge Management: the evaluators should provide an assessment of whether the Knowledge Management Plan as included in the Project Document was implemented. If possible, the evaluators should also include the list of knowledge products developed throughout project implementation, including internet references if available.
- d. Lessons and Recommendations: Evaluators should provide a few well-formulated lessons that are based on the project experience and applicable to the type of project at hand, to the GEF's overall portfolio, and/or to GEF systems and processes. Wherever possible, Terminal Evaluation reports should include examples of good practices in project design and implementation that have led to effective stakeholder engagement, successful broader adoption of GEF initiatives by stakeholders, and large-scale environmental impacts. The evaluators should describe aspects of the project performance that worked well along with reasons for it. They should discuss where these good practices may or may not be replicated. Recommendations should be well formulated and targeted. The recommendations should discuss the need for action, the recommended action along with its likely consequences vis-à-vis status quo and other courses of action, the specific actor/actors that need to take the action, and time frame for it.

Annex 2: Rating Scale

The main dimensions of project performance on which ratings are first provided in Mid-Term Review are: outcomes, sustainability, quality of monitoring and evaluation, quality of implementation, and quality of execution. The CI-GEF Agency also includes ratings for environmental and social safeguards.

2.1 Outcome Ratings:

The overall ratings on the outcomes of the project will be based on performance on the Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability.

In terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of an outcome, project outcomes are rated based on the extent to which project objectives were achieved. A six-point rating scale is used to assess overall outcomes:

- Highly satisfactory (HS): Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings.
- Satisfactory (S): Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings.
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate short comings.
- Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings.
- Unsatisfactory (U): Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings.
- Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings.
- Unable to Assess (UA): The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements.

In terms of sustainability of an outcome, project outcomes are rated based on risks related to financial, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental sustainability. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale.

- Likely (L): There is little or no risk to sustainability.
- Moderately Likely (ML): There are moderate risks to sustainability.
- Moderately Unlikely (MU): There are significant risks to sustainability.
- Unlikely (U): There are severe risks to sustainability.
- Unable to Assess (UA): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

In terms of an outcome's final and overall project outcomes rating, the calculation will consider all the four criteria, of which relevance and effectiveness are critical. The rating on relevance will determine whether the overall outcome rating will be in the unsatisfactory range (MU to HU = unsatisfactory range). If the relevance rating is in the unsatisfactory range, then the overall outcome will be in the unsatisfactory range as well. However, where the relevance rating is in the satisfactory range (HS to MS), the overall outcome rating could, depending on its effectiveness and efficiency, and where applicable – sustainability rating, be either in the satisfactory range or in the unsatisfactory range.

The second constraint applied is that the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the effectiveness rating. During project implementation, the results framework of some projects may have been modified. In cases where modifications in the project impact, outcomes and outputs have not scaled down their overall scope, the evaluator should assess outcome achievements based on the revised results framework. In instances where the scope of the project objectives and outcomes has been scaled down, the magnitude of and necessity for downscaling is considered and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

The ratings can be summarized as follows:

OUTCOME	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability	Outcome Final Rating	Comment
Outcome 1.1						
Outcome 1.2						
...						
Outcome x.x						
OVERALL RATING						

Sustainability Ratings:

The sustainability will be assessed taking into account the risks related to financial, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental sustainability of project outcomes. The evaluator may also take other risks into account that may affect sustainability. The overall sustainability will be assessed using a four-point scale.

- Likely (L): There is little or no risk to sustainability.
- Moderately Likely (ML): There are moderate risks to sustainability.
- Moderately Unlikely (MU): There are significant risks to sustainability.

- Unlikely (U): There are severe risks to sustainability.
- Unable to Assess (UA): Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

Project M&E Ratings:

Quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:

- Design
- Implementation

Quality of M&E on these two dimensions will be assessed on a six-point scale:

- Highly satisfactory (HS): There were no short comings and quality of M&E design / implementation exceeded expectations.
- Satisfactory (S): There were no or minor short comings and quality of M&E design / implementation meets expectations.
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were some short comings and quality of M&E design/implementation more or less meets expectations.
- Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design/implementation somewhat lower than expected.
- Unsatisfactory (U): There were major short comings and quality of M&E design/implementation substantially lower than expected.
- Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): There were severe short comings in M&E design/ implementation.
- Unable to Assess (UA): The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design/implementation.

Implementation and Execution Rating:

Quality of implementation and of execution will be rated separately. Quality of implementation pertains to the role and responsibilities discharged by the GEF Agencies that have direct access to GEF resources. Quality of Execution pertains to the roles and responsibilities discharged by the country or regional counterparts that received GEF funds from the GEF Agencies and executed the funded activities on ground. The performance will be rated on a six-point scale.

- Highly satisfactory (HS): There were no short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation exceeded expectations.
- Satisfactory (S): There were no, or minor short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/execution met expectations.
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were some short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation more or less met expectations.
- Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation somewhat lower than expected.
- Unsatisfactory (U): There were major short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation substantially lower than expected.
- Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): There were severe short comings in quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation
- Unable to Assess (UA): The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation

Environmental and Social Safeguards:

The approved environmental and social safeguard plans will be rated according to the following scale.

- Highly satisfactory (HS): There were no short comings and quality of implementation / execution exceeded expectations.
- Satisfactory (S): There were no, or minor short comings and quality of implementation / execution meets expectations.
- Moderately Satisfactory (MS): There were some short comings and quality of implementation / execution more or less meets expectations.
- Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected.
- Unsatisfactory (U): There were major short comings and quality of implementation / execution substantially lower than expected.
- Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): There were severe short comings in quality of implementation / execution.
- Unable to Assess (UA): The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation / execution.

ANNEX C: Composition of the Evaluation Team

Kevin Enongene (Team Leader)

Kevin Enongene is an Associate Partner at FOKABS, a Canadian-based climate change consulting firm. He has 12+ years of professional experience spanning Africa, Europe, Australasia, and the Americas in the areas of climate change vulnerability, adaptation, mitigation, renewable energy, natural resource, climate finance, GCF and GEF projects development and evaluation. He has led and provided climate change advisory services in 50+ countries to organizations such as the World Bank, World Economic Forum, African Development Bank, Caribbean Development Bank, GCF, and United Nation agencies (UNDP, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNOPS, FAO). Kevin has served as team member and team leader in 30+ monitoring and evaluation assignments of single and multi-country projects funded by diverse donors including but not limited to Global Affairs Canada (GAC), European Union (EU), NORAD, DFID, GCF, GEF, SIDA, and UN Multi-Partner Trust Funds. Kevin is fluent in English and French and holds three master's degrees: MSc in Carbon Management from UK; MSc in Environmental Management from New Zealand, and MSc in Natural Resources Management from Cameroon. He has more than 20 peer reviewed scientific publications in the field of Environment, Energy and Climate Change.

Elsie Fobissie (International Consultant)

Elsie holds a master's in Environmental Sociology from the University of Ottawa – Canada, a BSc in Sociology & Anthropology, minor in Gender Studies, as well as a BSc in Health and Social Services. Elsie leads Fokabs work on gender, climate change and sustainability issues. She plays a lead role in assessing gender consideration in energy, transport, agriculture, forestry, environmental, infrastructure, water and rural development projects and programmes developed by organizations such as FAO, World Bank, AfDB, ADB, KDB, and many other organizations for submission to access climate funding. Elsie also supports the preparation, implementation and evaluation of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects. Prior to Fokabs, she worked in the health care sector in Europe. Elsie joined Fokabs in September 2017.

Andrea Gonzalez (International Consultant)

Andrea is a consultant specializing in sustainable development. She has contributed to over 15 projects across North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa, focusing on areas such as sustainable infrastructure, environmental education, environmental justice, and circular economy. Her experience spans working with international environmental cooperation agencies, environmental NGOs, and international development consulting firms. She holds a bachelor's degree in Sustainable Development Engineering from Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico, and a Master's degree in Environmental Engineering from McGill University, Canada.

Recent highlights of her work include developing a funding proposal for the Green Climate Fund to support renewable energy deployment in four Caribbean nations, identifying priority climate mitigation and adaptation projects in the Caribbean, and evaluating sustainable transportation practices in Latin America.

Maria Campo (National Consultant)

María is a Mexican conservationist and communications specialist with over 15 years of experience in biodiversity conservation and community engagement. She has led projects that promote sustainable tourism, environmental education, and species conservation, working closely with rural communities to foster sustainable development.

As co-founder of CGAIA Multimedia Studio, María uses photography, video, and storytelling to amplify the impact of organizations dedicated to environmental and social causes. Her expertise in project management and communication strategies has supported initiatives focused on wildlife conservation, ecotourism, and public environmental policies. Passionate about nature and sustainability, María excels in creating meaningful connections between communities and conservation efforts.

Kevin Fokou (Data Scientist)

Kevin is the ICT Lead at Fokabs, where he spearheads strategic technological and digital initiatives, leveraging his expertise to design and implement innovative solutions tailored to the complex needs of organizations. With over 8 years of experience, he holds a bachelor's degree in software engineering and a master's degree in data science.

His worked on projects in South America, Africa, and Southeast Asia, providing data science and software development consultancy services to international organizations such as the World Bank, AfDB, GCF, and several United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNOPS). He has contributed to the implementation of digital solutions and analytical tools across various sectors, including climate change, project management, and strategic monitoring.

ANNEX D: Standard GEF Rating Scale

Outcome	
Highly satisfactory (HS):	Level of outcomes achieved clearly exceeds expectations and/or there were no short comings
Satisfactory (S):	Level of outcomes achieved was as expected and/or there were no or minor short comings
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Level of outcomes achieved more or less as expected and/or there were moderate shortcomings
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):	Level of outcomes achieved somewhat lower than expected and/or there were significant shortcomings
Unsatisfactory (U):	Level of outcomes achieved substantially lower than expected and/or there were major short comings.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):	Only a negligible level of outcomes achieved and/or there were severe short comings.
Unable to Assess (UA):	The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievements
Sustainability Ratings	
Likely (L):	There is little or no risk to sustainability
Moderately Likely (ML):	There are moderate risks to sustainability
Moderately Unlikely (MU):	There are significant risks to sustainability
Unlikely (U):	There are severe risks to sustainability
Unable to Assess (UA):	Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability
Project M&E Ratings	
Highly satisfactory (HS):	There were no short comings and quality of M&E design / implementation exceeded expectations
Satisfactory (S):	There were no or minor short comings and quality of M&E design / implementation meets expectations
Moderately Satisfactory (MS):	There were some short comings and quality of M&E design/implementation more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):	There were significant shortcomings and quality of M&E design/implementation somewhat lower than expected
Unsatisfactory (U):	There were major short comings and quality of M&E design/implementation substantially lower than expected.
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):	There were severe short comings in M&E design/ implementation.
Unable to Assess (UA):	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of M&E design/implementation.
Implementation and Execution Rating:	
Highly satisfactory (HS):	There were no short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S):	There were no or minor short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/execution met expectations
Moderately Satisfactory (MS):	There were some short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation more or less met expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):	There were significant shortcomings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation somewhat lower than expected.
Unsatisfactory (U):	There were major short comings and quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation substantially lower than expected.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):	There were severe short comings in quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation
Unable to Assess (UA):	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of environmental and social safeguard plans design/implementation
Environmental and Social Safeguards	
Highly satisfactory (HS):	There were no short comings and quality of implementation / execution exceeded expectations
Satisfactory (S):	There were no or minor short comings and quality of implementation / execution meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS):	There were some short comings and quality of implementation / execution more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU):	There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation / execution somewhat lower than expected
Unsatisfactory (U):	There were major short comings and quality of implementation / execution substantially lower than expected
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU):	There were severe short comings in quality of implementation / execution.
Unable to Assess (UA):	The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation / execution.

ANNEX E: References

- Progress implementation Reports – FY19 - FY24
- Project Inception Report
- Quarterly progress reports – 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
- Project Document (ProDoc)
- Project Financial Report
- Environmental and Social Screening Report for the project
- Gender Mainstreaming Plan
- Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Project Final Report