

OED PROJECT EVALUATION SERIES

**Terminal Evaluation of the project:
*'Participatory assessment of land
degradation and sustainable land
management in grassland and pastoral
systems'***

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CAF	Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas, Uruguay
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEO	Chief Executive Officer, GEF Secretariat
CNFR	Comisión Nacional Fomento Rural, Uruguay
COP	Conference of the Parties
DRSRS	Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing, Kenya
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	The European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
GEB	Global Environmental Benefit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGWSSI	Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative
GIS	Geographic Information System
HQ	Headquarters
INERA	L'Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles, Burkina Faso
INIA	Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria, Uruguay
INRAN	L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique du Niger, Niger
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
LADA	Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland
LD	Land Degradation
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDN	Land Degradation Neutrality
Logframe	Logical Framework
LTO	Lead Technical Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MGAP	Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca, Uruguay
MPS	Mountain Partnership Secretariat
MTR	Mid-term Review
MVOTMA	Ministerio de Vivienda, Ordenamiento Territorial y Medio Ambiente, Uruguay
NAP	National Action Plan
OED	FAO Office of Evaluation
OPA	Operational Partner Agreement
OPIM	Operational Partner Implementation Modality
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PKH	Pastoral Knowledge Hub
PRAGA	Participatory rangeland and grassland assessment
ProDoc	Project Design Document

PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTF	FAO Project Task Force
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDL	State Department of Livestock, Kenya
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
TCI	FAO Investment Centre
TE	Terminal Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Executive Summary

Introduction

- i. The terminal evaluation (TE) aims to provide accountability for the results achieved to resource partners, FAO Management and national governments as outlined in the GEF guidelines and the project document. The evaluation draws lessons from the implementation processes to inform future projects and decisions by the FAO-GEF coordination unit, operational partners, and project teams. Given the nature of the project, it also covers future scalability of the participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology. The object of the TE is the Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems (the project), implemented in 2017-2021. The evaluation questions covered the relevance, effectiveness (results), efficiency, sustainability, factor affecting performance, and cross-cutting issues. The TE comprised a review of project documentations and remote interviews with key stakeholders at global and national levels and a sample of local stakeholders. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the TE team mainly worked from home. It was only to visit field locations in Kyrgyzstan (done by a national consultant).

Main findings

- ii. **Relevance (rating: satisfactory):** The project was fully aligned with, and responded well to, GEF and FAO's strategic priorities (*finding 1*). It responded to international goals, in particular to the objectives of UNCCD and SDG 15 (life on land), but also to other SDGs. However, despite the relevance, the project did not link to UNFCCC and CBD (*finding 2*).
- iii. Sustainable rangeland and grassland management is a priority for the selected pilot countries, and better assessment of the status of pastures is an important input for them (*finding 3*). Through a methodology that combines scientific data and local knowledge, the project addressed a global, national and local gap vis-à-vis obtaining data and information on rangeland and grassland status for informed decision-making for sustainable rangeland and grassland management (*finding 4*).
- iv. The project was complementary to existing interventions, but the linkages and potential for synergy were not fully banked upon. Without a direct link to tangible on-the-ground investments in improving pasture productivity, the incentive for participation was limited. (*finding 5*).
- v. The project design and results framework were generally clear and concise. However, outcome 2 was overambitious compared to the scope of the related activities and outputs at both national and global levels. Outcome 3 was mainly related to project management rather than the delivery of project results (*finding 6*). The timeline was overoptimistic and the budget too constrained to fully test the potential of the PRAGA methodology (*finding 7*). The planned management and implementation setup was insufficiently clear and not fully banking on the capacities of FAO and IUCN at the country level (*finding 8*).

- vi. **Effectiveness (rating: satisfactory):** Outcome 1 (*a participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands, is developed and tested*) was achieved; a participatory rangeland assessment and monitoring methodology was developed, tested and refined (*finding 9*). The PRAGA methodology was very well received by stakeholders at local, national, and international level, who found it of high quality, appropriate and applicable (*finding 10*). However, the application of the PRAGA methodology has a few challenges, mainly in relation to the use of remote sensing and the identification of globally relevant and comparable indicators (*finding 11*).
- vii. Outcome 2 (*National and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring manuals and from the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessment*) was partly achieved; the intended policy outputs were delivered or are in the process of being delivered, but the actual use of the PRAGA assessments in decision-making in the project countries remains uneven (*finding 12*). The PRAGA methodology was promoted internationally and generated interest, but it is too early to assess whether it will become a significant contribution to international decision-making processes (*finding 13*).
- viii. The project objective (*to strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands*) was partly achieved; local and national capacities in the five countries were strengthened vis-à-vis assessing LD and available SLM options, but the application of these skills remains to be seen (*finding 14*). Given the scope and nature of the project, it was neither expected to, nor positioned to, deliver direct impacts (*finding 15*).
- ix. The GEF support was instrumental for the development and testing of the PRAGA tool (*finding 16*).
- x. **Efficiency (rating: moderately unsatisfactory):** The project faced significant delays due to a range of both external and internal factors, but with an extension of the completion date, the project was largely able to produce its intended outputs (*finding 17*). Good technical expertise and qualified implementing partners were successfully mobilised (*finding 18*). The results including a few additional activities were delivered within the budget frame (*finding 19*). Funds were generally made available in a timely manner (*finding 20*).
- xi. **Sustainability (rating: moderately likely):** The uptake and institutionalisation of the PRAGA methodology by national and local stakeholders in the project countries is uneven, and its use would generally depend on further donor support (*finding 21*). FAO and IUCN plan to further apply the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, in specific interventions. However, the uptake in FAO could be limited by the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangeland management (*finding 22*). Broader uptake of the PRAGA methodology depends on the level of attention to and investment in rangeland management, but at the same time, PRAGA assessment findings have the potential to contribute towards an increased international prioritisation of sustainable rangeland management (*finding 23*).

- xii. **Factors affecting performance (rating: moderately satisfactory):** Considering the size and nature of the project, the design of the monitoring system was largely adequate, (*finding 24*), and the monitoring and reporting generally sufficient (*finding 25*). The mid-term review recommendations were adequately addressed (*finding 26*).
- xiii. After initial unclarities were solved, FAO carried out its role as project implementing agency well, providing appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners. However, OPIM-related processes created delays, and with the exception of Uruguay, the FAO country offices were not mobilised for project oversight and support (*finding 27*). The PTF contributed significantly to the carrying out of FAO's tasks as implementing agency, but the decision-making was insufficiently inclusive in relation to the decision to transfer the project execution in Kyrgyzstan from IUCN to FAO (*finding 28*).
- xiv. Both IUCN and FAO carried out the roles as executing agencies well at national and international levels (*finding 29*). They successfully mobilised relevant and qualified technical experts and national partners for carrying out the rangelands assessments and stakeholder mobilisation (*finding 30*). IUCN and FAO cooperated and coordinated well at the global level, but there was generally limited inter-agency cooperation at the country level (*finding 31*).
- xv. The GEF budget was almost fully executed. Overall, the spending deviations from the budget were small (*finding 32*). The level of co-financing was somewhat lower than expected, but this did not affect the achievement of results. While some of the anticipated funding did not materialise, other co-financing was mobilised from additional sources (*finding 33*).
- xvi. The project was successful in engaging a range of stakeholders. However, the level of stakeholder ownership varied among the countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes (*finding 34*).
- xvii. The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events (*finding 35*). There was limited peer learning and sharing of experiences among the five project countries (*finding 36*).
- xviii. **Gender and other equity dimensions (rating: moderately satisfactory):** Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men; this was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding (*finding 37*).
- xix. **Environmental and social safeguards (rating: satisfactory):** Given the nature of the project, which did not involve investments on the ground, it did not have any negative environmental or social impacts. It is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts (*finding 38*).

Summary for GEF online portal

Stakeholder engagement: Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are major strengths of the participatory PRAGA methodology; this aspect was widely seen by stakeholders as key feature of the PRAGA methodology. Qualified national technical experts and national partners (government, academia, producer associations and/or NGOs) were successfully mobilised for carrying out the rangelands assessments and participating in project implementation. However, ownership among government decision-makers remained uneven and varied among the countries; ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes.

Gender: The PRAGA methodology emphasises the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth in the project, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. Women's participation in activities was monitored, and some efforts to include women and youth in project activities, but the country assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions. The participation of local women in the project was significantly lower than that of men; this was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

Knowledge management: The PRAGA methodology as well as the project's experiences and lessons were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events. At the global level, the primary knowledge product is the PRAGA manual, which also contains an annex on lessons learned. Two global publications communicating the PRAGA experience were produced. Moreover, a case study on Kyrgyzstan was prepared as a contribution to the online Global Rangelands Atlas. At the national level, PRAGA assessment reports were produced to communicate assessment findings and validated in local and national workshops. Policy briefs and policy action plans were prepared to inform decision-making and planning at national and local levels. An online PRAGA portal was also established, but only to a limited extent populated with the written products produced.

Overall ratings for GEF online portal

Progress towards achieving the project's development objective(s): The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, and thus made a significant contribution to the overall objective: *To strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands.* Moreover, the project achieved its primary result, the delivery of a proven participatory model for rangeland assessment.

Rating: **Satisfactory**

Overall progress on implementation: The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed. The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs.

Rating: **Moderately satisfactory**

Overall risk: The PRAGA methodology will be applied by FAO and IUCN; both have mobilised, and are mobilising, funding for projects that use elements of PRAGA. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements

are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organisations.

Rating: **Moderately low**

Conclusions

- xx. **Conclusion 1:** With a focus on land degradation, the project responded directly to global, national, and local priorities vis-a-vis ensuring that rangelands are managed sustainably, but opportunities to link to the global biodiversity and climate change agendas were largely missed. (*Relevance*)
- xxi. **Conclusion 2:** The emphasis on multi-stakeholder participation was a key strength of the project, but without a clear link to tangible investments in improving rangeland management, some opportunities to promote participation and ownership and influence policy and planning were missed. (*Relevance*)
- xxii. **Conclusion 3:** The project successfully developed an implementable and participatory rangeland assessment tool of good quality, although the use of remote sensing and indicator selection remain challenges. (*Effectiveness*)
- xxiii. **Conclusion 4:** The project enhanced national and local capacities to assess rangeland health and the understanding of available options for improved rangeland management, but the influence on policy and planning and the adoption of PRAGA is uneven. (*Effectiveness*)
- xxiv. **Conclusion 5:** The project was significantly affected by delays, but the intended outputs were largely delivered within the budget, as were some additional activities. (*Efficiency*)
- xxv. **Conclusion 6:** The uptake of PRAGA remains uneven and would require further support from FAO and IUCN – they both have plans for further application of PRAGA, but the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangelands in FAO appears a limitation. (*Sustainability*)
- xxvi. **Conclusion 7:** The project was largely well implemented and executed, albeit with some shortcomings, for example in relation to unclarity of roles and limited synergy between the two agencies at the country level. (*Factors affecting performance*)
- xxvii. **Conclusion 8:** Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but not in an entirely systematic manner. (*Cross-cutting issues*)
- xxviii. **Conclusion 9:** The project did not have any negative environmental or social impacts, but it is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts. (*Cross-cutting issues*)

Recommendations

- xxix. **Recommendation 1: Develop strategies for facilitating the use by national stakeholders of remote sensing and GIS in PRAGA assessments:** a) Explore opportunities for simplifying the PRAGA tool vis-à-vis the application of remote sensing

and GIS; and b) Develop and test models for including systematic and targeted remote sensing and GIS capacity development in the future application of PRAGA. *(For FAO, IUCN)*

- xxx. **Recommendation 2: Strengthen the gender dimension in PRAGA:** a) Strengthen the PRAGA tool with a more in-dept discussion on the gender, youth and inclusion dimension and tangible tools for addressing gender issues and ensuring inclusion and participation. *(For FAO, IUCN)*
- xxxi. **Recommendation 3: Refine and promote PRAGA methodology as a tool for monitoring of national commitments under the CBD and UNFCCC conventions:** a) Develop a set of simple rangeland indicators that feed into national CBD and UNFCCC monitoring and reporting; and b) Test PRAGA as a tool for gathering information for CBD and UNFCCC reporting, ideally as an integrated tool that simultaneously feeds the reporting of all three Rio Conventions. *(For FAO, IUCN)*
- xxxii. **Recommendation 4: Integrate more comprehensively PRAGA assessments in programmes and projects that invest in tangible rangeland management improvements:** a) Identify all ongoing and planned FAO and IUCN policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management that PRAGA could be integrated into; b) Identify ongoing and planned policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management by other development partners that PRAGA could be integrated into in the five pilot countries; and c) Develop and implement a project, which offers to add and finance a PRAGA assessment component in relevant ongoing or planned rangeland interventions implemented by FAO, IUCN, or even other development partners. *(For FAO, IUCN)*
- xxxiii. **Recommendation 5: Establish a clear institutional home for engaging in sustainable rangeland and grassland management in an integrated, holistic and coordinated manner:** a) Appoint or recruit an expert to coordinate rangeland-related work within FAO; b) Establish a dedicated rangeland management team or unit in FAO; and c) Carry out in-house awareness raising and capacity development for relevant FAO staff on the importance of rangelands vis-à-vis land degradation, biodiversity, climate change, and human and economic development. *(For FAO)*

GEF Rating table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating ¹	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities vis-à-vis the promotion of SLM.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	The project responded directly to addressing LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15, and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries.

¹ See Appendix 2 for rating key

		However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project complemented SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, but opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. vis-à-vis incentives for local participation.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	S	The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	S	
- Outcome 1	HS	The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and is rated very positively by stakeholders.
- Outcome 2	MS	The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at the local level in some countries, but the national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but has not influenced international processes.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	S	
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impact will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MU	The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.
D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	FAO and IUCN have mobilised, and are mobilising, funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organisations.

D1.2. Socio-political risks	MU	The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership and use of the assessment results and the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Insecurity is a major risk in Burkina Faso and Niger, and also a risk in certain parts of the livestock producing areas of Kenya; and can render it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
D2. Catalysis and replication	S	FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organisations cannot be judged yet. At the country level, the project did have a catalytic effect through influencing local plans in some countries, enhancing capacities and generating interest and appreciation by stakeholders.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	The Project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control, and internal factors. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also since the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at the national level.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	
E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	S	FAO HQ provided effective administrative guidance, and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but in the other countries, the FAO Country Office engagement was limited.
E2.2 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	PTF decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. The decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN on the basis of the lack of an IUCN

		country office was not sufficiently inclusive and does not appear fully justified, considering the FAO HQ handled the implementation with little involvement of the FAO County Office.
E3. Quality of project execution For DEX projects: Project Management Unit/BH; For OPIM projects: Executing Agency	S	Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays, and outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination, and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level, but the collaboration at country level was generally limited, and opportunities for synergies at the country level thus not banked upon.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in the implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events. However, efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	
E7.1 M&E design	MS	Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The PRAGA methodology emphasises the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities. The

		assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples were not a theme for the project, but their rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to contribute indirectly to improved environmental sustainability.
Overall project rating	S	

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. **Purpose:** The terminal evaluation (TE) aims to provide accountability for the results achieved to resource partners, FAO Management and national governments as outlined in the GEF guidelines and the project document. The evaluation draws lessons from the implementation processes to inform future projects and decisions by the FAO-GEF coordination unit, operational partners, and project teams. Given the nature of the project, it also covers future scalability of the participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology.

1.2 Intended users

2. The main audience and intended users of the evaluation are:
 - a) FAO Country Offices, national project teams, IUCN and members of the Project Task Force (PTF) at FAO Headquarters, the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub (PKH) and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS), that will use the evaluation findings and lessons to finalize, and if necessary, optimize project activities; plan for sustainability of results achieved; and improve formulation and implementation of similar projects.
 - b) The GEF, who could use the findings to inform strategic investment decisions in the future for similar projects on land degradation (LD) and sustainable land management (SLM).
 - c) Other stakeholders involved in the project implementation could use the evaluation findings and conclusions to optimize their involvement in the project and for future planning.
 - d) Other resource partners, organizations and institutions interested in supporting and/or implementing the PRAGA methodology as well as informing agro-sylvo-pastoral decision-making.
3. During the inception phase of the TE, a stakeholder analysis was carried out, identifying the different stakeholder groups at global, regional, national and local levels. This analysis guided the selection of interviewees.

1.3 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

4. **Scope:** The object of the TE is the *Participatory assessment of land degradation and sustainable land management in grassland and pastoral systems* (the project), implemented from 1 February 2017 till 19 November 2021. In November 2021, the project was further extended to May 2022.² The project tested and refined a participatory rangeland and grassland assessment (PRAGA) methodology. The target audience of the project were the

² IUCN's contract was extended till 31 December 2021. The extension period is not covered by the evaluation.

intended users of the PRAGA methodology, including FAO, IUCN, national and local government agencies dealing with rangelands and grasslands, academia, pastoralists' organisations, and pastoralists in the five project countries (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, Uruguay) with 1-2 project sites in each country). The long-term aim of the project was for the PRAGA methodology to be adopted and further replicated beyond the direct stakeholders after the project.

5. **Objective:** The TE explores the GEF evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, factors affecting performance and delivery of project results, and cross-cutting dimensions. Findings, lessons and recommendations for the improvement of future projects have been generated. The ToR specified a set of evaluations questions, which were further adjusted and refined during the inception phase (see Box 1).

Box 1 - Evaluation questions by GEF criteria

<p>Relevance</p>	<p>1.1 Were the project objectives relevant to the sub-national, national and global efforts aimed at preserving grasslands and rangelands? <i>1.1.1. What is the added value of the tool? Is the tool addressing a significant gap and meeting a demand?</i></p> <p>1.2 Was the project design appropriate for delivering the expected results? <i>1.2.1 Were any corrective actions taken to improve the project design, including the development of a ToC or revising the results framework for the project?</i> <i>1.2.2 Were specific features related to the OPIM project component taken into consideration during project preparation and design (e.g. operational procedures, capacity of the Operational Partner(s), in-country presence in the five countries)</i></p>
<p>Effectiveness - Achievement of project results</p>	<p>2.1 To what extent has the project achieved its outcomes, and were there any unintended results? <i>2.1.1 To what extent have the targets in the project results framework been achieved?</i> <i>2.1.2 Has the participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas been comprehensively tested and developed?</i> <i>2.1.3 To what extent have national agro-sylvo-pastoral decision-makers benefited from the assessment and monitoring procedural/operational manual and the participatory assessments in the pilot countries?</i> <i>2.1.5 To what extent have international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision-makers benefited from the assessment and monitoring procedural/operational manual and the participatory assessments in the pilot countries?</i> <i>2.1.6 To what extent does the global indicator framework capture the rangeland health dynamics, traditional community knowledge and the link to various ecosystem services?</i> <i>2.1.7 What benefits did communities obtain from participating?</i> <i>2.1.8 What were the costs for communities participating?</i> <i>2.1.9 How have the lessons learned, and best practices been captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations?</i> <i>2.1.10 To what extent can progress towards long-term impact in the regions of the pilot countries be attributed to the project?</i></p>

<p>Efficiency, project implementation and execution</p>	<p>3.1 To what extent were the project implementation management arrangements conducive and adequate for project delivery?</p> <p>3.1.1 <i>How has FAO's and IUCN's existing technical expertise been utilised in the design and implementation of the project?</i></p> <p>3.1.2 <i>How has coordination and collaboration between key stakeholders (including FAO HQ and country offices, IUCN Nairobi and offices in BF and NG, PKS, MPS and national partners) contributed to project results?</i></p> <p>3.1.3 <i>Were there any complementarities or duplication with other similar tools or activities in the pilot countries?</i></p> <p>3.1.4 <i>To what extent has the project set up an M&E system, which captures results (e.g. at the outcome level), and used it to make timely decisions and foster learning during project implementation?</i></p> <p>3.1.5 <i>To what extent has cross-country learning between the five project countries taken place?</i></p> <p>3.1.6 <i>To what extent has the project adapted to COVID-19 to ensure continued project delivery?</i></p> <p>3.1.7 <i>In what ways did the institutional set-up of the project, including the OPIM executing modality, contribute to efficiency?</i></p> <p>3.2 To what extent has the project been implemented in a timely and cost-effective manner?</p> <p>3.2.1 <i>To what extent was project implementation timely, and to what extent were adequate corrective measures taken to avoid negative consequences of delays, including delays in the implementation of component 2 and 3?</i></p> <p>3.2.2 <i>Level of budget execution</i></p> <p>3.2.3 <i>Timeliness of disbursements of funds from the GEF to FAO and onwards to IUCN and other implementing partners</i></p> <p>3.2.4 <i>To what extent has the anticipated level of cash and in-kind co-financing been leveraged?</i></p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>4.1 What is the likelihood that the methodology will be used by governments (mainly at the local and sub-national level) and policy makers to inform decision making?</p> <p>4.1.1 <i>Do stakeholders at national and local level have the required skills to use the participatory assessment and monitoring method without external technical and/or financial support?</i></p> <p>4.1.2 <i>Has the participatory assessment and monitoring method been taken up and integrated in decision-making processes by national and local governments in the project countries?</i></p> <p>4.1.3 <i>Is the participatory assessment and monitoring method used/promoted in other FAO and IUCN interventions – current and planned – incl. interventions managed by other parts of FAO and IUCN?</i></p> <p>4.1.4 <i>Have other development partner organisations adopted the participatory assessment and monitoring method in their programming?</i></p> <p>4.2 To what extent did the OPIM modality contribute to ensure ownership and sustainability of the project results?</p> <p>4.2.1 <i>Did the delegation of project result implementation to the Operational Partner contribute to strengthened capacities of regional, sub-regional and/or national entities?</i></p> <p>4.2.2 <i>What was the value added of the involvement of the Operational Partner?</i></p>

	<p>4.3 What are the key risks which may affect the sustainability of the project results?</p> <p>4.3.1 <i>Are there any barriers or other risks that may prevent future progress towards long-term impact?</i></p>
Factors affecting performance:	
M&E	See: 3.1.4 (efficiency)
Quality of implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See: 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.7 (efficiency)
Quality of execution	<p>See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.5, 3.1.6, 3.2.1 (efficiency) 4.2.1, 4.2.2 (sustainability)
Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing	See: 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4 (efficiency)
Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	<p>5.1 Were other actors, such as other public sector institutions, civil society, indigenous population, youth groups or private sector involved in project design or implementation, and what was the effect on the project results?</p> <p>5.1.1 <i>To what extent did the tool and project outputs allow for the development of capacities of the relevant stakeholders?</i></p> <p>5.1.2 <i>Did the project engage all relevant key stakeholders at the different level of engagement?</i></p>
Knowledge management, communication and public awareness	<p>See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1.5, 2.1.9 (effectiveness) 3.1.5 (efficiency) 4.1.3, 4.1.4 (sustainability)
Gender	<p>6.1 To what extent were gender considerations taken into account in designing and implementing the project?</p> <p>6.1.1 <i>Were there any corrective actions undertaken based on the recommendations of the MTR on gender mainstreaming?</i></p>
Minority Groups/Indigenous Peoples	N/A
GEF additionality	6.2 To what extent can the results of the project be attributed to the GEF contribution?
ESS risks	6.3 To what extent were environmental and social concerns taken into consideration in the design and implementation of the project?

1.4 Methodology

6. The TE adheres to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms & Standards, the FAO-OED evaluation guidelines and GEF TE requirements. The TE is based on a combination of methods used to gather information, in order to triangulate information and thereby ensure their solidity and overcome the limitations of each method. Information, data and perspectives for each evaluation question were gathered through a combination of direct consultations with representatives of all stakeholder groups to capture different views and perspectives, and a review of secondary sources (e.g. project documentation). The TE team in cooperation with FAO, IUCN and implementing partners identified key stakeholders to interview at global, national and local levels. Appendix 5 provides a full list of the people consulted and Appendix 6 presents a complete list of the documents and secondary data sources reviewed.
7. Stakeholders in all five countries were consulted. Due to COVID-19 restriction, in-person interviews and community/site visits were only carried out in Kyrgyzstan, whereas consultations with global stakeholders and in stakeholders the other countries were carried out as remote interviews. It was originally envisaged that community- and site visits would be also be carried out in Burkina Faso and Niger but due to security concerns, this was not possible. Representatives of all major stakeholder groups were consulted, i.e.:
 - a) FAO: Project Steering Committee (PC) members, IUCN Project Coordination Unit staff and the FAO Policy Support Officer, FAO Project Task Force members, FAO Country Office staff (Burkina Faso, Kenya, Uruguay), co-funding programmes hosted by FAO
 - b) IUCN: Global Drylands Initiative staff, Regional Office staff in Burkina Faso and Kenya
 - c) Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members
 - d) National Assessment Team Members: technical experts and national implementing partner organisations (pastoralist organisations, NGOs, academic institutions)
 - e) Partner governments: national ministry and agency officials and staff, local government officials and staff
 - a) Livestock producer and community representatives in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay
8. In addition to the interviews, key stakeholders from group a) and b) were also provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft TE report.

1.5 Limitations

9. The following limitations apply to the TE:
 - a) Security issues made it impossible to visit the access to project sites in Burkina Faso and Niger. Instead, representatives of local stakeholders were consulted remotely.

- b) Restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for the lead evaluator to visit any of the project countries. Instead, global stakeholders, and representatives of national and local stakeholders were interviewed remotely.
- c) Due to time and resource constraints, it was not possible to interview all stakeholders at national and especially local level. All key stakeholders at the global level were interviewed.
- d) It is premature to fully assess the level of adoption of the PRAGA methodology and the extent to which the method will contribute improve policies and management plans and contribute to SLM and tangible socio-economic and environmental improvements. Hence, the TE focuses on the likelihood of the project making a significant contribution.

2. Background and context of the project

Table 1 – Basic project information

FAO Project Symbol	GLO/GCP/530/GFF
GEF Project ID Number	5724
Recipient countries	Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Niger, Uruguay
GEF Implementing Agency	FAO
Executing Partner	IUCN: Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger FAO: Kyrgyzstan, Uruguay
GEF Focal Area	Land degradation
GEF Strategic Objective	LD-4: Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in Sustainable Land Management
Approval date	21 October 2016
Date of project start	01 February 2017
Initial date of project completion	30 April 2020
Revised project completion date	31 May 2022
Date of TE	6 December 2021

10. **Context:** Grasslands and rangelands cover a substantial proportion of the global land area. Livestock is main source of livelihood for millions of poor people in these areas, and grasslands/rangelands are thus of great economic and social importance. They are also of major environmental importance as they play an important role as a habitat for water retention and for the conservation of fauna and flora. However, land degradation (LD) and loss of soil fertility is a major global threat to the productivity, functionality of these ecosystems and biodiversity, thereby eventually contributing to increased poverty and food insecurity, which in turn can contribute to conflict over scarce land and water resources and migration. LD is driven by several factors, including inadequate policies and unsustainable agro-pastoral practices.
11. The project aimed at addressing three major challenges to ensuring sustainable rangeland and grassland management: a) absence of a global comprehensive assessment and monitoring system for assessing LD and sustainable land management (SLM) while capturing local herders' knowledge, good practices and innovations; b) lack of indicators for assessment and monitoring systems that integrate biophysical and socio-economic dimensions into one framework to provide a holistic picture of the state of ecosystems, underlying drivers or causes of degradation and trends; and c) lack of participatory approaches that accommodate inputs from, and use by, the land-users to analyse and interpret results from assessments.
12. The project was initiated in 2016 in response to dialogue and advocacy by FAO, IUCN, the GEF Secretariat and other entities in the context of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on the need for better participatory methods for data collection and analysis to inform and improve rangeland and grassland management decision-making.

13. **Project objective and components:** The project's objective was *"To strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands"*. The project had three components: 1) participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands (the PRAGA methodology); 2) inform international and national agropastoral decision-making processes; and 3) knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation.
14. **Project countries:** The project piloted the PRAGA methodology in Burkina Faso (Boudry and Mogtedo communes), Kenya (Isiolo and Garissa counties), Kyrgyzstan (Ak-Talaa, At-Bashy, Suusmayr and Jayl districts), Niger (Gorouol commune), and Uruguay (Basaltic Cuesta and East Hills eco-regions). The target audience were key stakeholders for grassland and rangeland SLM and decision-making at the national and local levels: Government authorities, academia, pastoralists and livestock producers, and their organisations.
15. **Human and financial resources:** FAO and IUCN each appointed one part-time staff member at the global level for day-to-day management and coordination of the project, with technical and administrative support from staff at global and country level. At the country level, the lead government agencies appointed project focal points for national coordination, and partner organisations and individual consultants were contracted to lead the PRAGA assessments. The GEF provided a grant of USD 2.6 million. Cash co-funding of USD 4.6 million and in-kind co-funding of USD 3.4 million was provided by FAO, IUCN, the Government of Uruguay and CAMP Alatoo Public Foundation (Kyrgyzstan) (see Appendix 3).
16. **Key partners:** The main project partners were IUCN (executing agency), national and local government entities in the five countries, academia, pastoralist/livestock producer organisations, civil society, and participating pastoralists and livestock producers.
17. **Change made to the project:** No changes were made to the project design or budget, but the project completion date was extended from 30 April 2020 to 19 November 2021, as per recommendation from the MTR to ensure full completion of project activities, due to delayed project start-up, in particular caused by change of government in Kyrgyzstan and security concerns in Burkina Faso and Niger.

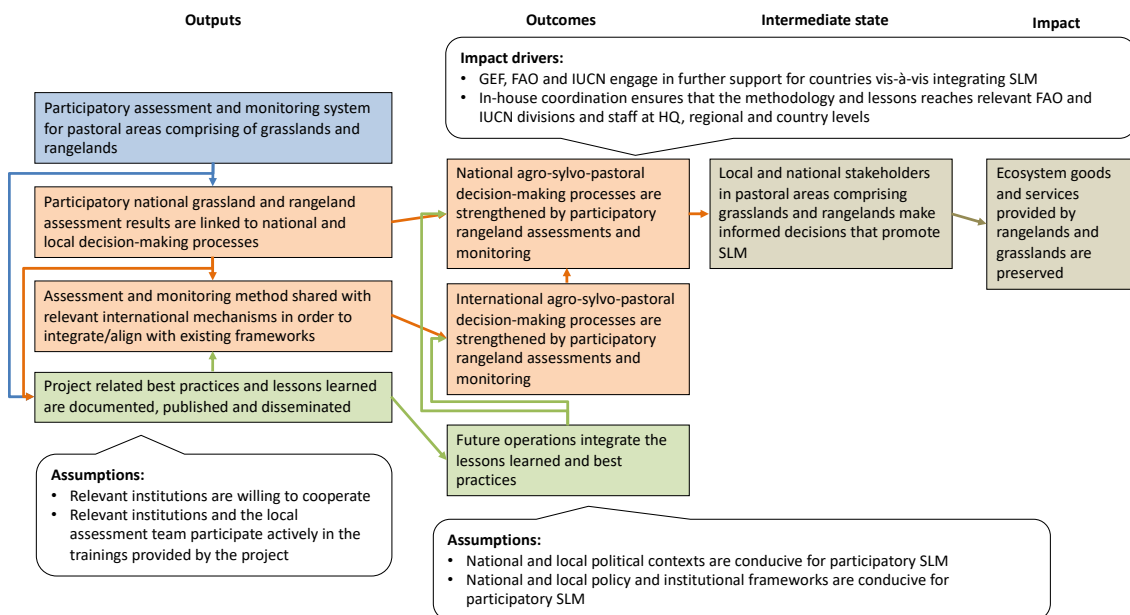
2.1 Theory of Change

18. The project design did not contain a theory of change (ToC). The MTR proposed that a theory of change (ToC) was developed and presented a draft ToC, but the PRAGA team and Steering Committee found that the proposed ToC went beyond the scope and objectives of project and did thus not adopt it. The TE elaborated a new TOC based on the project results framework with an aim to better reflect the research and methodology focus of the project (see figure 1), which was presented in the inception report and agreed to by FAO and IUCN. The underlying rationale of the reconstructed ToC is that *if* a system for participatory assessment and monitoring of pastoral grasslands and rangelands is developed, *if* the assessment results are linked to national, local and international decision-

making, *if* the lessons and best practices are documented and disseminated, and *if* the lessons and best practices are integrated in future operations, *then* national and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision-making processes are improved *and* SLM promoted, and *then* ecosystem goods and services from rangelands and grasslands are preserved.

19. The underlying assumptions that would need to be in place for the intended results chain to take place are that: a) relevant institutions are willing to cooperate; b) relevant institutions and the local assessment team participate actively in the trainings provided by the project; c) political contexts are conducive for participatory SLM; d) policy and institutional frameworks are conducive for participatory SLM; and e) in-house coordination ensures that the methodology and lessons reaches relevant FAO and IUCN divisions and staff at HQ, regional and country levels.

Figure 1 – Reconstructed theory of change³



³ Blue boxes: component 1, orange boxes: component 2, green boxes: component 3, brown boxes: higher level results the project was intended to contribute to indirectly

3. Key findings by evaluation questions

3.1 Relevance

Finding 1. The project was fully aligned with, and responded well to, GEF and FAO's strategic priorities.

20. **Alignment with GEF objectives:** The project responded directly to the GEF's strategic objective LD-4: *Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in Sustainable Land Management by GEF and UNCCD Parties*, and in particular to outcome 4.2: Improved GEF portfolio monitoring using new and adapted tools and methodologies, and output 4.2: *GEF-financed projects contribute to SLM knowledge base*.
21. **Alignment with FAO objectives:** The project directly addressed FAO's strategic objective 2: *Increase and improve provision of goods and services from agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a sustainable manner*. In particular, it contributed to output 1.2: *Innovative approaches for ecosystem valuation, management and restoration are identified, assessed, disseminated and their adoption by stakeholders is facilitated*. Moreover, the project contributed to strategic objective 3: *Reducing Rural poverty*, output 3.1: *Empower the rural poor gaining access to resources and services, contributing in particular to an improved access of the rural poor to natural resources and the sustainable management of those resources*. It also contributed to FAO's Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development and technical guidelines for improving governance of pastoral land.

Finding 2. The project responded to international goals, in particular to the objectives of UNCCD and SDG 15 (life on land), but also to other SDGs. However, despite the relevance, the project did not link to UNFCCC and CBD.

22. **Alignment with the Rio conventions:** With a focus on assessing the status of rangelands and grasslands with the aim of contributing to SLM and preventing LD, the project is explicitly supporting the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the related National Action Plans (NAPs). The PRAGA methodology is aligned with the three core UNCCD indicators and the remote sensing part was guided by the UNCCD's good practice guidelines.
23. No direct link was made in the design or implementation of the project to the other Rio Conventions: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). However, there is a strong biodiversity conservation element in sustainable management of natural pastures and the biophysical indicators used for rangeland assessment. Furthermore, there is a link to both greenhouse gas emissions from vegetation loss due to LD and livestock metabolism, carbon sequestration in healthy and rehabilitated pastures, as well as the impact of climate change on rangelands and livestock production and the resilience of livestock producers' livelihoods to climate shocks (floods, drought). The amount of donor funding for CBD and in particular UNFCCC-related initiatives is much higher than for UNCCD-related work and countries are also facing challenges in building up systems and capacities to monitor their progress on their national commitments to these conventions. The rangeland assessments

carried out in the five project countries included data collection and indicators related to biodiversity and weather. Interviewed stakeholders see a potential for applying PRAGA with a climate change/UNFCCC and biodiversity/CBD lens, to increase the financing of rangeland assessment, but also to increase the attention given to rangelands.

24. **Alignment with SDGs:** By testing and developing a methodology for obtaining data and assessing the status of rangelands and grasslands to enable informed decision-making for SLM, the project directly responded to SDG 15 (life on land): *Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss*. In particular, it contributed to target 15.3 (*by 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world*). Moreover, the project also contributed to targets 15.5 (*take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species*); and 15.9 (*by 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts*). In addition, the project also contributed towards targets under other SDGs, including: 2.4 (*by 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality*); and 12.2 (*by 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources*). Moreover, the participatory nature of the methodology contributed to target 16.7 (*ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels*).

Finding 3. Sustainable rangeland and grassland management is a priority for the selected pilot countries, and better assessment of the status of pastures is an important input for them.

25. Rangelands and grasslands are very important in each of the five participating countries, covering a large proportion of their area. Livestock production is an important element of their economies, supporting the livelihoods of predominantly rural populations in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Niger, including some of the poorest people living in arid and semi-arid and mountainous (Kyrgyzstan) lands, whereas meat and milk are among the main export products of Uruguay.
26. As described in detail in the project design document (ProDoc) and further confirmed by interviews and the MTR, the project was well aligned with national objectives and policies for economic development, poverty reduction, agriculture, livestock production, and natural resource management and environmental protection. The project's contribution is a methodology tested in the countries, which can be used to inform decision-making related to the implementation of the policies at national and local levels. Key policies, to which the project contributed, include: Strategic Investment Framework for Sustainable Land Management (2014, Burkina Faso); National Land Policy (2009, Kenya); Community Lands Act (2016, Kenya); Pasture Law (2009/2011, Kyrgyzstan); Ordinance 2010-029

relating to pastoralism (2010, Niger); General Law of Environmental Protection (2000, Uruguay); and the Soil Conservation Law (2009, Uruguay).

27. The five project countries were selected based on the following criteria: a) ensuring PRAGA could be tested in different geographical regions, in different types of rangelands, and with different types of livestock producers, b) focusing on countries where rangelands and livestock production are important for livelihoods and the economy, and c) being able to build on the presence of existing FAO or IUCN engagements and partnerships. Burkina Faso and Niger were selected, since IUCN could build on existing relationships with national institutions and FAO already implemented GGWSSI there, but also due to the potential to look at cross-border transhumance. Kenya was selected since IUCN had already piloted the participatory rangelands management approach in Kenya. Kyrgyzstan was selected due to FAO's engagement in Central Asia and the active engagement of MPS in the country. Initially, the project was to be implemented in Argentina, but Argentina stepped out, and Uruguay was selected instead, due to a strong government interest and the government's close working relationship with FAO. However, while the project tapped into existing rangeland monitoring systems, capacities and demand in Burkina Faso and Niger, this was not a criterion for country selection.

Finding 4. Through a methodology that combines scientific data and local knowledge, the project addressed a global, national and local gap vis-à-vis obtaining data and information on rangeland and grassland status for informed decision-making for sustainable rangeland and grassland management.

28. At the time the project was designed, existing tools for rangeland and grassland assessment had some shortcomings. The available scientific methods for rangeland assessment were robust, but not easy to use and costly. Assessment methods were generally better suited for private ranches than for communal areas. Moreover, the reliance on scientific data with little stakeholder input made it difficult to communicate the results to decision-makers and the livestock producers and pastoralists managing the rangelands. Several researchers and government representatives interviewed have experienced challenges and constraints with communicating rangeland data and findings to stakeholders, both due to the assessment methodologies applied but also due to institutional constraints vis-à-vis engaging with local stakeholders. Remote sensing tools can measure plant cover, but not the species composition and fodder quality, and thus need to be combined with ground data. The LADA methodology was available for a more participatory assessment, but it was time consuming to apply and thus mainly suited for small areas and not capturing all aspects of pasture health. Moreover, LADA is not specifically tailored for grasslands.
29. The PRAGA methodology addresses these challenges by combining scientific methods, remote sensing, local knowledge, and stakeholder participation in the interpretation of data. Thereby, the PRAGA methodology brings together scientists, government staff and representatives and communities and promotes dialogue, and the assessment findings are more easily understood and agreed to and applied in the planning by government at national and local level and livestock producers. PRAGA is also less expensive than other methods; Burkina Faso and Niger already carry out annual rangeland assessments, but

stakeholders report that PRAGA complements the national assessment methodology well, considers socio-economic aspects in the baseline (even though all assessment indicators are bio-physical), produces results that are more easily understood by local stakeholders, and is more cost-effective. Kyrgyzstan carries out rangeland assessments on an irregular basis, but the methodology is unclear, and data is only provided at the overall national level. Stakeholders interviewed in all five countries appreciated the participatory nature and relative simplicity of the PRAGA methodology.

Finding 5. The project was complementary to existing interventions, but the linkages and potential for synergy were not fully banked upon. Without a direct link to tangible on-the-ground investments in improving pasture productivity, the incentive for participation was limited.

30. The PRAGA methodology draws upon and further refines the Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland (LADA) methodology. An extensive review had been done of existing tools for the development of the draft PRAGA methodology, but the MTR found that FAO's "*Guidelines for applying and strengthening the use of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest and rangelands management in the near east and North Africa region*", had not been drawn upon, which was found a missed opportunity. In Uruguay, the team drew upon the integrated environmental assessment toolkits used for the preparation of the UNEP Environment Outlook Report, tools which stakeholders were familiar with.
31. The ProDoc indicated that the project at the country level would be implemented in close collaboration with a number of existing projects, but in practice, this was not fully the case. The project was complementary to the *Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative* (GGWSSI) in the Sahel, and to the FAO hosted Pastoral Knowledge Hub (PKH) and Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS) for Kyrgyzstan, but the link was mainly made at the level of information sharing and recommendations. No link was made to FAO livestock projects in Kenya, even though the same counties were targeted. The execution of the project by IUCN was carried out under the Global Drylands Initiative.
32. The objective of the project and available resources were entirely focused on methodology testing and development, and understandably, the project did not invest in tangible on-the-ground activities to improve pastures. However, this also meant that local stakeholders, in particular livestock producers and pastoralists were expected to spend time in engaging in the project without any direct benefits. This did not significantly limit the participation, but in the larger picture, mobilising communities to engage in projects with no clear benefit risk contributing to creating project fatigue, which could negatively affect future projects in the same communities. Some interviewees indicated that communities had asked about what they would gain from participating in the project. A direct link to projects with tangible on-the-ground investments in improved rangeland management and productivity could have linked the project to direct benefits for livestock producers, and thus further promoted ownership and participation. Moreover, a direct link to informing and guiding rangeland restoration and management investments could have further demonstrated the value of the PRAGA methodology to local stakeholders. This issue could have been overcome without requiring funding for pilot investments, if the

project at the local level had been implemented as a component of larger rangeland restoration projects, instead of as a standalone project. In Kyrgyzstan, CAMP Alatoo carried out the assessment in communities, where they were already engaged in SLM activities, creating a clear link between the assessment and community rangeland management.

Finding 6. The project design and results framework were generally clear and concise. However, outcome 2 was overambitious compared to the scope of the related activities and outputs at both national and global levels. Outcome 3 was mainly related to project management rather than the delivery of project results.

33. Overall, the project logic was clear and logical. Component 1 concerned national adaptation and testing of the draft PRAGA methodology, and refining the global methodology based on the lessons. Component 2 aimed at linking the assessment results in each country to national and local decision-making and sharing the PRAGA method at the international level to promote uptake and replication. Outcome 2 had two elements, which were very different in nature: a) linking the findings and results from the PRAGA assessments in the five project countries with national and local decision-making processes, and b) communicating the PRAGA methodology in international forums (e.g. the UNCCD COPs). As such, the national element was to directly inform concrete decision-making processes with data and information on specific rangelands. In contrast, the international element was communication-focused and aimed at promoting the PRAGA methodology, rather than directly informing decision-making. It would thus have been logical to have the national and international elements of outcome 2 as two separate components with separate outcomes, one on informing in-country decision-making and another outcome on international dissemination. Component 3 concerned knowledge management, but two of the three outputs were in practice project management tasks rather than delivery of results, namely project progress monitoring and the MTR and TE. The third output under component 3 was related to documenting and disseminating best practices and lessons, and thus in essence closely linked to the dissemination of the PRAGA methodology internationally (which fell under component 2). Indeed, of outcome 3: *Project's outcome and output targets are monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and best practices are captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations* mainly related to programme management rather than project results, albeit with a knowledge management contribution that relates to international uptake and replication under component 2. **The TE covers the knowledge management results of components 2 and 3 together under outcome 2.**

34. Outcome 1: *A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands, is developed and tested*, was clearly and directly derived from the activities and outputs under component 1. However, for outcome 2: *National and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring manuals and from the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments*, the contribution of the project was more indirect, as the main focus of the methodology testing was at sub-national level with the expectation and hope that the participating governments would upscale PRAGA at the national level. In addition, the engagement in international decision-making was mainly in the form of raising awareness

of the PRAGA methodology with the hope that others would replicate and apply the PRAGA methodology in other countries. One stakeholder acknowledged that the budget allocated for engaging in policy processes should have been higher to create more lessons on how to link PRAGA assessment results to, and influence, policy at national level. Similarly, the Government of Uruguay had hoped for a stronger link to, and visibility of the project in, international processes.

35. No changes or adjustments were made to the project strategy or results framework during implementation.

Finding 7. The timeline was overoptimistic and the budget too constrained to fully test the potential of the PRAGA methodology.

36. The project start-up was delayed due to a number of factors, including a lengthy and complex approval process required for the OPIM contacting modality; delayed government approval of the project in Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay (in particular in Kyrgyzstan due to change of government); security issues in Burkina Faso and Niger. Due to the delays, the PRAGA data collection and assessments was carried out in a somewhat rushed manner, to complete them on time. Moreover, the budget allocated for each country was only sufficient for carrying out the data collection once in each country, thereby giving a snapshot of the conditions in one season only (e.g. the wet season), whereas a full assessment of the rangeland status would also require data from the other seasons (e.g. the dry season), where the water availability, vegetation cover, and grazing pressure is very different.

Finding 8. The planned management and implementation setup was insufficiently clear and not fully banking on the capacities of FAO and IUCN at the country level.

37. The ProDoc specified that IUCN as executing agency was responsible for day-to-day project management and coordination as well as for technical implementation at country-level and for the testing and refining of the PRAGA methodology. As implementing agency, FAO was responsible for overall oversight, and in addition, for the international outreach activities and for capturing and dissemination of best practices and lessons. The ProDoc included a brief description of IUCN's structure, and described that IUCN would work with a range of stakeholders, including national and local governments, international pastoral networks, civil society organizations, research institutions, livestock producers, and communities.
38. However, the respective roles and responsibilities of FAO and IUCN were not sufficiently clearly spelled out. The time available for FAO and IUCN for preparing and submitting the project proposal was limited, hence there was no time to fully establish and agree upon detailed implementation arrangements for each project country. The ProDoc did not describe the fact that IUCN would rely on its members for in-country implementation where it does not have regional offices, let alone define which member organisations, IUCN would rely on for in-country implementation. Similarly, the ProDoc did not describe how FAO Country Offices would engage in the project technically administratively or vis-à-vis

facilitation, nor were any budgetary resources set aside to cover Country Office involvement.

39. Since IUCN does not have offices in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay, FAO's internal Project Task Force (PTF) decided that the execution in these countries would be taken over by FAO, which would use its Country Offices to facilitate implementation at the national and local levels. In Uruguay, the decision was aligned with the government's preferences and the FAO Country Office played a key role in the implementation. However, in Kyrgyzstan, implementation was in practice carried out by CAMP Alatau, which was contracted directly by FAO HQ, with limited FAO Country Office engagement. The engagement of IUCN in the implementation in Uruguay was limited, as was the FAO Country Office's engagement in Niger. The level of engagement of IUCN in Kyrgyzstan, and of FAO Country Offices in Burkina Faso and Kenya was higher, but still modest. The ProDoc described that the internal FAO PTF had the mandate of ensuring the project was implemented in a consistent manner and in compliance with FAO policies. However, the decision-process and link and lines of communication between the PTF, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and IUCN as operational partner and executing agency were not clearly spelled out.

Rating of relevance.

40. **Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities: Highly Satisfactory.** The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities vis-à-vis the promotion of SLM.
41. **Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs: Satisfactory.** The project responded directly to addressing LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15, and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries. However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
42. **Complementarity with existing interventions: Moderately satisfactory.** The project complemented other SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, such as LADA. However, opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. vis-à-vis providing incentives to further motivate local participation.
43. **Overall strategic relevance: Satisfactory.**

3.2 Effectiveness

Finding 9. Outcome 1 was achieved – a participatory rangeland assessment and monitoring methodology was developed, tested and refined.

44. Overall, outcome 1 (*a participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands, is developed and tested*) and the associated outputs have been achieved, albeit with a few minor elements still to be finalised.
45. The PRAGA methodology was adapted and tested (albeit only tested in one season) in the five pilot countries with consultations with local stakeholders at the beginning and end of the PRAGA assessment, and with the participation of government stakeholders and

community representatives in the data collection. The results were presented and discussed with stakeholders at local and national level, including the identification of possible policy entry points in each country. Policy briefs were produced in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Niger, and in Kyrgyzstan, a policy brief will be produced after the completion of the ongoing second phase of the pasture use planning process. Moreover, policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya and one is under preparation in Uruguay, it should be noted that policy briefs were not included in the original global targets for component 1 (although included under component 2 in the annual work plans for Uruguay), but added in response to a recommendation from the MTR. Moreover, the methodology and the lessons from the five countries were further discussed at the international level by a Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group. The outcomes from these discussions were used for revising/updating the PRAGA manual, and a lessons learned annex was included in the manual. Based on the experience from testing the methodology, a revised set of "*Indicators for Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment*" was produced and included in the revised PRAGA methodology. The revised manual is under peer review, after which, it will be finalised and published. Once published, outcome 1 will have been fully achieved.

46. Appendix 4 presents a detailed assessment of the level of delivery of each outcome and output and the degree of achievement of the related targets from the project results framework.

Finding 10. The PRAGA methodology was very well received by stakeholders at local, national, and international level, who found it of high quality, appropriate and applicable.

47. There is a broad recognition among interviewees from all stakeholder groups at local, national and global level of the quality and applicability of the PRAGA methodology. Interviewees point to the following positive features of the methodology:
- a) The methodology is participatory and allows the integration of rangeland user perspectives, including in the selection of indicators.
 - b) Scientific data and local knowledge are integrated.
 - c) The methodology brings different stakeholders together, enabling a discussion of a common vision for the landscape, as well as links to policymaking
 - d) The methodology and its nine steps are logical and fairly simple, and which facilitates the planning and implementation of the assessments.
 - e) Rangeland assessments results are in a form that local stakeholders can understand and relate to.
 - f) Methodological/data robustness and financial and technical feasibility are balanced – the method is relatively inexpensive, the number of indicators is manageable, and the method is not overly scientific or complex for governments and other potential users.
 - g) Field data and satellite imagery are combined to ensure both accuracy and scale. The methodology can be used at different scales, at both local and national/larger scale.

- h) Adaptable to the local context and maintaining a fairly good balance between standardisation (allowing comparison between countries and compiling data at supernational level) and adaptability, although this remains challenging (see below).
- i) Socio-economic factors are mapped in the baseline, and the methodology touches upon the socio-economic impacts of LD.
- j) Root causes/driving forces for LD can be identified through the baseline study and possible solutions can be identified.

Finding 11. The application of the PRAGA methodology has a few challenges, mainly in relation to the use of remote sensing and the identification of globally relevant and comparable indicators.

48. While there was general consensus on the value and quality of the PRAGA methodology, a few challenges were also identified by some stakeholders. The main area of challenge is the use of remote sensing. Remote sensing data captures vegetation cover, but not vegetation composition and its palatability for livestock, and local livestock producers did thus not always agree with the remote sensing classification of specific areas as being degraded or healthy. Hence, while remote sensing is essential to enable assessment at a larger scale and well-suited for detecting changes in land cover, ground-truthing of selected areas is essential ensure the rangeland assessments yield correct information on rangeland status. Moreover, the application of remote sensing and of geographic information system (GIS) software is often beyond the capacities of stakeholders and technical staff, especially at the local level, and often require capacity development or external technical support for local stakeholders to fully implement PRAGA.
49. The initial draft PRAGA methodology did not provide specific indicators, but emphasised the need for indicators in three domains: soil, hydrology, and biota; however, hydrological indicators proved difficult to understand for local stakeholders and to apply in practice and at times led to misunderstandings. Another major area of challenge is the balancing of global and local indicators. On the one hand, several stakeholders find it important to have global indicators that enable comparison of results between countries and upscaling findings to the regional or even global levels. However, given the context-specific nature of LD and how it is shaped by local land use practices presently and historically, the Scientific Resource Expert Group found it difficult to establish universally applicable indicators. Hence, the focus in terms of promoting global indicators was on monitoring the SDG 15 indicators. However, some stakeholders find there remains a need to identify a few globally relevant and simple indicators. A similar challenge applies to the national level, where local stakeholders in different locations prefer different indicators, while there is also a need to have nationally comparable indicators. Some indicators were qualitative in nature and thus open for diverging interpretations.
50. Moreover, to get a good PRAGA assessment, some stakeholders emphasised that it is essential to gather a team of experts that are multi-disciplinary to ensure the focus is sufficiently holistic and not narrow or biased, e.g. vis-à-vis taking aspects such as biodiversity adequately into consideration. It was found that this aspect could feature more prominently in guidance on assembling the team in the PRAGA manual. Another challenge

is getting livestock producers to commit themselves to participate fully in two-day workshops.

51. One key stakeholder with a lead role on the methodology development and testing found that the PRAGA manual is overly detailed and could benefit from being further simplified and shortened and made a bit less rigid – with a focus on key principles, accompanied with training on these principles. This view is supported by the fact that in countries where FAO and IUCN are replicating PRAGA, it is done in a simplified and downscaled manner.

Finding 12. Outcome 2 was partly achieved – the intended policy outputs were delivered or are in the process of being delivered, but the actual use of the PRAGA assessments in decision-making in the project countries remains uneven.

52. The outputs and associated targets for outcome 2 (*national and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments*) and the associated outputs were mostly achieved, albeit with a few elements still to be finalised in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay. As described above, the ambition to influence policy-processes was overambitious compared to the planned outputs and resources allocated.
53. Policymakers and local leaders at local and national levels were engaged in the inception and assessment validation workshops in the five countries, although the extent to which they engaged varied, depending on the level of interest in, and priority given to, rangeland management. Moreover, PRAGA national teams engaged in dialogue and policy discussions with policymakers at national and local levels. Policy briefs were prepared in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Niger, and planned for Kyrgyzstan after the ongoing pasture planning cycle has been completed. Moreover, policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya. In Uruguay, a policy action plan is under preparation, a national report on the state of grasslands was prepared, and the livestock producer organisation (Cooperativas Agrarias Federadas (CAF)) who carried out the field assessments, prepared a report with recommendations on PRAGA and best practices. Two county action plans for the integration of the PRAGA methodology in county planning processes were prepared in Kenya.
54. However, it is too early to assess the extent to which the PRAGA assessments will have tangible influence on national and local policies and plans, or the extent to which the methodology will be internalised in national or local systems. In Uruguay, the PRAGA assessment process led to a multi-stakeholder dialogue on grasslands, bringing together livestock producers and their organisations, two line ministries (agriculture and environment), and academia. Moreover, the project had a close relationship with the two ministries, but with the change of government in 2020 the dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture was disrupted, whereas it continues with the Ministry of Environment. Government engagement has proven particularly difficult in Kyrgyzstan, with local government capacity and high staff turnover, and the project focused on working with local pasture committees, which are the entities responsible for rangeland management as specified by the Pasture Law. Moreover, with additional CAMP Alatau and FAO support,

the PRAGA assessment is contributing to informing the ongoing pasture planning cycle in some of the project's target pasture committees. The PRAGA tool was integrated into the Gorouol municipal development plan in Niger, and similar integration in the local development plans for the two target communes in Burkina Faso is underway. In Burkina Faso and Niger, the prospective of integration of the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, into the national rangeland assessment processes are good. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment informed the new county rangeland policy for Isiolo, but internalisation of the PRAGA methodology at the county and national levels would depend on continued support, and county leadership buy-in appears uneven.

Finding 13. The PRAGA methodology was promoted internationally and generated interest, but it is too early to assess whether it will become a significant contribution to international decision-making processes.

55. The outputs associated with engagement at the international level were affected by the travel restrictions and social distance measures associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, but this was to a good extent mitigated through engagement in global online events, and the associated output targets can be considered reached or even exceeded. The PRAGA methodology and experiences were presented in a side event at the UNCCD 14th Conference of the Parties (COP 14, 2019) and in the online Global Landscapes Forum (2021). Reportedly, the UNCCD COP 14 side event was well attended by governments, international organisations, and NGOs. Planned side events at the International Rangelands Congress and World Conservation Congress were delayed by COVID-19. Moreover, the PRAGA manual will be published, as will two publications capturing and disseminating the PRAGA experience: a) "*Land degradation neutrality: rationale for participatory approaches in assessments and monitoring of rangelands health*", and b) "*Best practices in support of sustainable land management in pastoral areas*". The PRAGA Manual and the two publications were scheduled to be launched at the World Conservation Congress (October 2021), but not ready at the time of the Congress. A lessons learned annex for the PRAGA manual was prepared. Moreover, PRAGA contributed with a case study (Kyrgyzstan) as well as some financial support (USD 7,000) for the Global Rangelands Atlas (2021). PRAGA was presented at the FAO Committee on Agriculture's 27th Session (2020), which focused on FAO's work on rangelands and pastoralism. The methodology was promoted to the members of IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management. FAO supported a regional workshop in Togo on transboundary pastoralism (not funded by the project), where regional monitoring and the PRAGA methodology were promoted. Furthermore, CAF co-developed a regional symposium for Latin America, where they presented Uruguay's PRAGA experience. However, the representatives of the Government of Uruguay found the global contribution, visibility and experience-sharing with the other project countries was below expectations. So far, there is no indication of other countries (other than countries directly supported by FAO or IUCN in rangeland assessment) or organisations replicating or adapting the PRAGA methodology.

56. **Finding 14. The project objective was partly achieved – local and national capacities in the five countries were strengthened vis-à-vis assessing LD and available SLM options, but the application of these skills remains to be seen.**

57. The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, and thus made a significant contribution to the project objective: *To strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands.* Government technical staff and national experts were trained on the PRAGA methodology and gained experience with its application. A post-graduate training course was developed in Uruguay. Livestock producers gained an increased understanding of the status of their rangelands, SLM options, and assessment of rangelands. Policymakers at local and national levels were made aware of rangeland-related challenges and policy options. Local government offices were trained in the PRAGA methodology in Kenya. Pasture committees and local authorities were coached on the PRAGA methodology in Kyrgyzstan. However, remote sensing remains a constraint. Moreover, the extent to which these skills will be put into use is too early to assess but is likely to be uneven among the five countries, given the above-described different prospects for internalisation and institutionalisation of PRAGA in national or local systems.

Finding 15. Given the scope and nature of the project, it was neither expected to, nor positioned to, deliver direct impacts.

58. The project did not invest in tangible SLM measures in the project countries and the only benefit participating livestock producers experienced was enhanced knowledge about rangeland assessment, LD and SLM. A potential contribution indirect impacts would fully depend on the extent to which the rangeland assessments influence policy, and the extent to which these policies are implemented in a manner that improved rangeland management. Given the uncertainty related to assessing the policy influence of the project, it is impossible to assess the potential contribution to indirect impacts, but it is likely to vary significantly among the five countries.

59. Hence, the project did not contribute directly to the GEF-7 core indicators as these are impact focused and quantitative, but as the PRAGA tool is applied and informs policy, an indirect contribution can be expected to the following core indicators although it is impossible to quantify the contribution: a) area of land restored, b) area of landscapes under improved practices, and c) greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (from preventing the loss of vegetation). Similarly, indirect contributions can be expected to the following global environmental benefits (GEBs): a) improved provision of agro-ecosystem and forest ecosystem goods and services; b) mitigated/avoided greenhouse gas emissions and increased carbon sequestration in production landscapes; and c) conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in productive landscapes.

Finding 16. The GEF support was instrumental for the development and testing of the PRAGA tool.

60. The development and testing of the PRAGA methodology would not have taken place, had it not been for GEF financing. Rangelands are not getting much international attention, and donors generally prefer to invest in on-the-ground SLM activities rather than the development of technical tools. On the basis of the GEF funding, FAO and IUCN were able

to mobilise significant co-financing for the project and this funding would not have materialised had it not been for the GEF project.

Rating of effectiveness.

61. **Delivery of project outputs: Satisfactory.** The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
62. **Progress towards outcome 1: Highly satisfactory.** The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and is rated very positively by stakeholders.
63. **Progress towards outcome 2: Moderately satisfactory.** The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at the local level in some countries, but the national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but has not influenced international processes.
64. **Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/outcomes: Satisfactory.**
65. **Likelihood of impact: Unable to assess.** Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impact will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
66. **Overall assessment of project results: Satisfactory.**

3.3 Efficiency

Finding 17. The project faced significant delays due to a range of both external and internal factors, but with an extension of the completion date, the project was largely able to produce its intended outputs.

67. The project faced significant delays, in particular vis-à-vis the start of activity implementation, which was delayed by a full year. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic created further delays in the final years of implementation. Kyrgyzstan in particular, was affected by delays, with the contract between FAO and CAMP Alatau not being signed until this summer 2019. In Burkina Faso and Niger, implementation started in 2019, and the rangelands assessments were carried out in 2020. At the time of the MTR (early to mid 2020), the implementation of the outputs under component 1 had been accelerated, whereas the most outputs under the other components still lagged behind. The MTR recommended an extension of the project completion date, to make up for the time lost during start-up and make sure the outputs could be fully delivered for all components. In response to the MTR as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, the project completion date was extended from 30 April 2020 to 19 November 2021. In the period from the MTR to the TE, implementation picked up on components 2 and 3, and the intended outputs have mostly been delivered, although some still need to be completed. This would not have been possible without the project extension. However, due to the delays, the implementation of activities and output delivery was rushed, especially in Kyrgyzstan, where the assessment

had to be carried out quickly after contract signing and before the end of the summer. The reasons for the delays were of both external and internal nature.

68. The main external delay factors were:

- a) Change of government in Kyrgyzstan, where the new government required parliamentary clearance of all new projects.
- b) Security concerns in Burkina Faso and Niger. The project sites in Burkina Faso were changed, which took time as approval from the GEF Secretariat was required. The site in Niger was kept, but a number of activities had to be carried out in Niamey.
- c) Travel restrictions and social distancing measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, throughout a significant proportion of the project implementation period. For example, COVID-19 restrictions delayed field activities in Kyrgyzstan and the validation workshop in Uruguay. They also posed a major limitation for the policy discussions under component 2. Online activities partly mitigated the impacts of COVID-19, but not fully. In Niger, the impact of COVID-19 on implementation was limited.

69. The main internal delay factors were:

- a) Signing of a government cooperative programme (GCP) in each country before work can commence. Such approval is a requirement for FAO (but not for IUCN), so work could not commence before. Obtaining government approval took several months in each country, for Kyrgyzstan it took a year.
- b) Signing of FAO-IUCN Operational Partner Agreement (OPA) agreement, which took 7-8 months. The OPIM modality had just been introduced by FAO, as the preparation took time. OPIM rules required a risk and fiduciary assessment was carried out by an external auditor, adding time, before the OPA could be signed with IUCN.
- c) Fragmentation and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities among project stakeholders, e.g. questions on delegation of authority to IUCN.
- d) Operational issues, including resolving how IUCN could disburse funds directly to government partners.
- e) Component 2 activities required delivery of output 1.3 (which was delayed) before they could commence. At the time of the MTR, output 1.3 had only been completed in Uruguay, whereas the LD indicator framework had not been established in any of the countries. Nonetheless, some component 2 activities had been implemented in Uruguay at the time of the MTR.
- f) Approval of project extension and extension of FAO-IUCN OPIM (5th amendment). The internal FAO and IUCN approval processes took time and errors in the draft amendment created further delay, which impacted delivery in Burkina Faso, as the team had to be remobilised after the gap period.
- g) Peer review and approval of publications within both FAO and IUCN.

Finding 18. The project successfully mobilised good technical expertise and qualified implementing partners.

70. There was a consistent high level of satisfaction among interviewed stakeholders at all levels, with the quality of the outputs and outcomes, with the on-the-ground implementation and facilitation by national partners and the consultation processes. Moreover, the national partners consistently expressed a high degree of appreciation with FAO's and IUCN's technical support, guidance and timely responses to queries.

Finding 19. The project delivered its results including a few additional activities within the budget frame.

71. Within the stipulated budget, the project was able to deliver its intended activities in the results framework, as well as some additional deliverables, including national policy briefs, two global publications, contributing to the Global Rangelands Atlas, and inputs to additional international events.

Finding 20. Funds were generally made available in a timely manner.

72. In most cases, FAO and IUCN expedited fund transfers in a timely manner, albeit with a couple of cases of delayed fund transfers. The financial and reporting procedures were generally found smooth by interviewees and the MTR.

Rating of efficiency.

73. **Efficiency: Moderately unsatisfactory.** The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Nonetheless, the project delivered its intended activities and outputs within budget, but this was only possible due to an extension of the project period. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.

3.4 Sustainability

Finding 21. The uptake and institutionalisation of the PRAGA methodology by national and local stakeholders in the project countries is uneven, and its use would generally depend on further donor support.

74. The prospect of uptake of the PRAGA methodology varies significantly among the five project countries. This is related to a combination of local factors, but also to the fact that due to the delays in implementation, there was limited time to engage in the policy-related activities under component 2.

75. **Burkina Faso and Niger:** Despite being conflict-affected LDCs, Burkina Faso and Niger have the best prospect for national-level adoption of the PRAGA methodology, since they have a conducive policy and institutional environment, where annual rangelands assessments are already carried out, and the stakeholders find that the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, could strengthen the assessments in a cost-effective manner. The Ministry of Livestock in Niger plans to integrate the PRAGA methodology in

the national assessment, but this would require that more staff is trained on the PRAGA methodology. A challenge in both countries is the limited availability of GIS expertise, as well as financial and logistical constraints. Moreover, the PRAGA assessments have already informed local development plans, demonstrating the value of PRAGA as a tool for informed decision-making, but local level stakeholders would require technical support from the national level for future PRAGA assessments. In Burkina Faso, the consultant engaged in the PRAGA assessment has submitted a proposal to the government's development research fund (Fonds National de la Recherche et de l'Innovation pour le Développement (FONRED)) to test PRAGA in other locations. However, the actual application of PRAGA in the field across Burkina Faso and Niger may be significantly limited by insecurity.

76. **Kenya:** The PRAGA assessment has informed one county's rangeland policy, and thus proven PRAGA's utility as a tool for informed decision-making. However, while county government officers have received training on the PRAGA methodology, the counties would still need financial and technical (in particular vis-à-vis remote sensing and GIS) support for future PRAGA assessments. With uneven buy-in from county-level decision-makers, further use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on donor assistance. The State Department of Livestock (SDL) and Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS) were engaged in the project at the technical level, but the national Government was not engaged at the policy-level. There are no signs of adoption of the PRAGA methodology by the national Department of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing.
77. **Kyrgyzstan:** Government involvement was difficult and limited in Kyrgyzstan due to capacity constraints and high staff turnover, and the PRAGA assessment depended entirely on a national NGO (CAMP Alatoo). Hence, adoption of PRAGA by the Pasture Department or the Land Planning Institute is unlikely. At the local level, there is commitment from pasture management committees and PRAGA is informing local rangeland management plans, but being local pastoralist-based organisations, they lack the technical and financial capacities to carry out PRAGA assessments. Hence, future use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on CAMP Alatoo, but CAMP Alatoo would need external technical support vis-à-vis applying remote sensing and GIS, as well as financial support from donors.
78. **Uruguay:** Of all the PRAGA countries, Uruguay has the strongest technical, financial and institutional capacity to carry out PRAGA assessments. The government demonstrated a strong commitment though the provision of significant (in-kind) co-financing from two ministries. However, following a change of government, traction was lost within the Ministry of Agriculture and so far, there are no clear signs of the government internalising the PRAGA methodology. Nonetheless, the PRAGA methodology was incorporated as an element in a post-graduate university course at the Universidad de la República (UdelaR), providing the foundation for potential future application by national stakeholders in the future. The Ministry of Environment is preparing a proposal accessing GEF funds for a follow-up programme which will build on the recommendations emanating from the PRAGA assessment, such as the development of a regulatory framework for the sustainable use of grasslands.

Finding 22. FAO and IUCN plan to further apply the PRAGA methodology, or elements of it, in specific interventions. However, the uptake in FAO could be limited by the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangeland management.

79. Both FAO and IUCN are using and planning to use the PRAGA methodology or elements of it in other initiatives, but joint efforts to promote PRAGA have not been planned.
80. **FAO:** FAO is funding an expansion of the project in Kyrgyzstan, where a second PRAGA assessment will be carried out and the development of local pasture management plans will be supported in five of the 13 communities that were involved in the project. Moreover, FAO already applying simplified versions of the PRAGA methodology in Georgia, Jordan, and Uzbekistan. It is also FAO's intention to integrate PRAGA in projects on land degradation neutrality in Central Asia. An internal challenge in FAO is that unlike for forests, there is no dedicated unit for rangelands with a holistic view, but that different aspects are covered by different divisions, and there is no in-house rangeland officer with the responsibility of coordinating rangeland-related work. Moreover, FAO only has a small number of officers with rangeland expertise.
81. **IUCN:** IUCN is already applying simplified versions of the PRAGA methodology in Egypt and Jordan, and also plans to do so in Tanzania. Moreover, IUCN has incorporated the PRAGA methodology in the *"Towards ending drought emergencies: Ecosystem based adaptation in Kenya's arid and semi-arid rangelands (TWENDE)"* project funded by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the GEF-funded *"Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya"* project. IUCN is also including a simplified version of PRAGA methodology in a GCF project concept note for a regional Great Green Wall-related project covering Burkina Faso and Niger. Moreover, IUCN is creating an academy, and aiming at including rangeland monitoring in the training, to have a ready-to-go training package. The IUCN country office in Burkina Faso plans to integrate PRAGA in the *"Sustainable management of dryland landscapes in Burkina Faso"* GEF project.

Finding 23. Broader uptake of the PRAGA methodology depends on the level of attention to and investment in rangeland management, but at the same time, PRAGA assessment findings have the potential to contribute towards an increased international prioritisation of sustainable rangeland management.

82. It is too early to assess whether the PRAGA methodology will be taken up by other international development partners engaged in sustainable rangeland management, but there are no signs of such uptake so far. Nonetheless, after participating in the above-mentioned regional workshop in Togo, ECOWAS has shown interest in the PRAGA methodology.
83. Despite the very large area they cover, the international attention to rangeland management is generally much lower than the attention given to other types of ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands. Moreover, rangelands appear to be addressed mainly from a land degradation perspective and UNCCD context. However, the awareness of the importance of rangelands in a climate change and UNFCCC or a biodiversity and

CBD perspective is much lower. This is a significant limitation, since the level of international funding directed towards the implementation of UNFCCC and CBD commitments is much higher, and countries are currently being supported in building up systems for monitoring their progress on their national commitments under these conventions. The current level of attention to rangelands may limit the potential sources of funding for PRAGA assessments. Nonetheless, PRAGA could be used as a tool for enhancing the awareness on rangelands and their ecosystem services and create momentum for increased funding for sustainable rangeland management, e.g. in the contexts of climate change and biodiversity.

Rating of sustainability.

84. **Financial risks: Sustainability is moderately likely.** FAO and IUCN have mobilised, and are mobilising, funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organisations.
85. **Socio-political risks: Sustainability is moderately unlikely.** The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for upscaling and replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership and use of the assessment results and the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Security concerns are a major risk in Burkina Faso and Niger, and also a risk in certain parts of the livestock producing areas of Kenya; and can render it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
86. **Institutional and governance risks: Sustainability is moderately likely.** The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
87. **Environmental risks: Sustainability is likely.** There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
88. **Catalysis and replication: Satisfactory.** FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organisations cannot be judged yet. At the country level, the project did have a catalytic effect through influencing local plans in some countries, enhancing capacities and generating interest and appreciation by stakeholders.
89. **Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability: Sustainability is moderately likely.**

3.5 Factors affecting performance

3.5.1 Monitoring & Evaluation System

Finding 24. The design of the M&E system was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project.

90. Most of the outcome and output indicators in the project results framework were straightforward, clear and easy to monitor. However, outcome indicator 1.3 (*level of involvement of local pastoral communities in defining and testing the domains of indicators, specific indicators and the assessment and monitoring operational and procedural framework*), did not clearly specify what “level of involvement” means or how it was measured. Moreover, output 2.1 indicator (*number of SLM best practices shared with decision makers*) does not seem fully appropriate as it did not relate directly to the PRAGA assessments and their link to decision-making, and the targets did not correspond to the indicator, as they did not give clear numbers to be achieved, but instead indicated how the SLM practices would be shared. The indicator for output 2.2 (*alignment proposals*) was not entirely clear and did not fully relate to the output’s intention of disseminating the PRAGA methodology, and the target was not related to the indicator as it concerned the dissemination of a study rather than proposals.
91. The ProDoc specified the monitoring methods to be applied: a) an inception workshop; b) field-based impact monitoring by the IUCN project coordination unit (PCU) and the FAO Liaison Officer; and c) supervision visits by the PCU, if needed with the participation of the FAO Lead Technical Officer (LTO) and FAO Investment Centre (TCI)/GEF Coordination Unit. The monitoring information was to be presented in the following standard reports for GEF projects: project inception report, six-monthly project progress reports, annual project implementation review report (PIR), co-financing reports, GEF LD tracking tool, and a final report. Two evaluations were also specified in the ProDoc; the MTR and the TE. The project budget contained dedicated budget lines for M&E: for USD 30,254 from the GEF grant and USD 200,000 of co-financing for monitoring and USD 95,254 from GEF grant for evaluation. The ProDoc indicated that an M&E plan was to be developed in the project inception phase, and the ProDoc also indicated that a results-based annual work plans and budgets with timeframes targets and milestones for the indicators for each year was to be developed.
92. The described monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.

Finding 25. The monitoring and reporting were generally sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project.

93. The detailed M&E plan mentioned in the ProDoc was never developed. However, while the MTR found this a shortcoming, the project outcomes, outputs and activities were of a nature that did not require an elaborate M&E plan to be assessed and reported on. Three-

month project progress reports were prepared and reported against the outcome and output indicator end targets, but not against the targets for the first and second year. Six-month progress reports captured the outcome indicators, but not the output indicators, and the end targets for outcome indicators 1.2 and 2.2. deviated from in the results framework. The PIRs reported on outcome indicators, and cover end target and second year targets but do not mention first year targets. The PIRs also reported on outputs but did not mention the output indicators or targets. Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.

Finding 26. In general, the MTR recommendations were adequately addressed.

94. MTR report (May 2020) provided nine recommendations. The MTR was carried out late in the project, and its recommendations thus came too late to significantly help the project delivery (the original completion date was April 2020, but extended to Nov 2021). In the management response, FAO and IUCN accepted five of the recommendations, whereas four were only partially accepted. Overall, the action taken on the recommendations was adequate. See Annex 2 for a detailed assessment of the response to, and action taken on the recommendations.

Finding 27. After initial unclarities were solved, FAO carried out its role as project implementing agency well, providing appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners. However, OPIM-related processes created delays, and with the exception of Uruguay, the FAO country offices were not mobilised for project oversight and support.

95. Despite initial lack of clarity on the respective roles and responsibilities of FAO and IUCN, and issues related to FAO's decision to take over execution in Kyrgyzstan, the overall cooperation, coordination and communication between FAO, IUCN and national partners worked very well. FAO an HQ provided administrative guidance and technical support in a timely manner and to the full satisfaction of all project partners, incl. IUCN, FAO country offices, and partners, including the organisations and consultants contracted for carrying the rangeland assessments. Reporting requirements were generally unproblematic for the partners, cooperation agreements did not pose major challenges to the operational partners, and funds were mostly disbursed in a timely manner, facilitated proactively by the FAO Liaison Officer for the project.

96. However, there were a couple of areas, where FAO processes took time, such as the peer review and approval of draft publications by both FAO and IUCN before printing. Another time-consuming process was the steps required for getting the Operational Partner Agreement (OPA) under the OPIM modality approved, including the fiduciary assessment of IUCN by an external auditor. Moreover, at the time of project inception, the OPIM modality was new, and the in-house processing in FAO was complex, but has since become easier. A total of five minor amendments were made to the OPIM and were generally processed smoothly, but the amendment for the project extension took some time due to

some minor errors that needed correction. The letters of agreements with national partners in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay were generally smooth and did not create difficulties.

97. In Uruguay, the contracting and administrative support and implementation oversight was carried out by the FAO Country Office, but in Kyrgyzstan, the FAO Country Office only handled payments to CAMP Alatoo. Similarly, the FAO country offices were not involved in overseeing or supporting the project in the countries where IUCN was responsible for implementation.

Finding 28. The PTF contributed significantly to the carrying out of FAO's tasks as implementing agency, but the decision-making was insufficiently inclusive in relation to the decision to transfer the project execution in Kyrgyzstan from IUCN to FAO.

98. Within FAO, the PTF supported the oversight, administrative guidance and technical support for the project, which significantly facilitated the work of the FAO Liaison Officer, and timely administration. However, the PTF's decision that FAO would take over the project execution in Kyrgyzstan due to concerns about the major delays in project start-up was insufficiently inclusive of IUCN. FAO deemed the absence of an IUCN country office would hamper implementation, while it is the normal operational modality for IUCN to work through member organisations. In practice, the execution in Kyrgyzstan was carried out by CAMP Alatoo, which was involved by FAO in the project design and had prior experience with FAO project implementation (CAMP Alatoo is a member of IUCN). CAMP Alatoo was contracted directly FAO HQ and there was little engagement of the FAO Country Office in the implementation in Kyrgyzstan. The Country Office handled disbursements, assisted with obtaining government approval of the project, and assisted with visas. Moreover, the reasons for delayed start-up in Kyrgyzstan were not related to IUCN. Overall, the decision to transfer execution without the agreement of IUCN does not appear fully justified. In Uruguay, the decision of FAO executing the project was justified, as it was in line with the government's preference, and enabled the project to benefit from FAO's in-country presence and build on the existing relationship between the government and the FAO Country Office.

3.5.2 Quality of Execution

Finding 29. Both IUCN and FAO carried out the roles as executing agencies well at national and international levels.

99. Despite the major initial delays, both FAO and IUCN successfully accelerated implementation in all countries and ensured that the intended results were largely delivered at both country- and global levels, and technical quality was good. Implementing partners and stakeholders in all countries and at the global level expressed satisfaction with the project implementation, the implementation guidance, the technical support and process facilitation by the two agencies. Contracting of, administrative and technical guidance, disbursement of funds to, national partners carrying out the rangelands assessments, field work, data collection and analysis was mostly smooth and timely. Overall, interviewed stakeholders were very satisfied with the execution and coordination of the project at the country level as well as the global level.

100. In Uruguay, the FAO Country Office was de-facto the executing agency, giving an internal separation of the implementing (FAO HQ) and executing (FAO Country Office) functions. The FAO Country Office entered a contract with CAF for carrying out the rangeland assessment. In Kyrgyzstan, the execution was de-facto done by CAMP Alattoo. The participating communities were very satisfied with CAMP Alattoo's execution of the project.

Finding 30. IUCN and FAO successfully mobilised relevant and qualified technical experts and national partners for carrying out the rangelands assessments and stakeholder mobilisation.

101. In all project countries, the rangeland assessments were carried out by multidisciplinary teams of national experts. In Kyrgyzstan, the rangelands assessments were carried out by CAMP Alattoo. In Uruguay, the livestock producer association CAF was selected and contracted through a call for proposals, and coordinated and carried out the rangelands assessments in cooperation with the faculty of agronomy at Universidad de la República (UdelaR) and Commission Nacional Formento Rural (CNFR). The livestock producer association Alianza del Pastizal helped mobilising the communities. Moreover, upon request from the Government of Uruguay, the FAO Country Office engaged a national consultant, who coordinated and facilitated the project implementation; a role that stakeholders found instrumental for the successful implementation of the project. IUCN applied a model, where individual experts were engaged as consultants and national public research institutions were also mobilised to carry out the rangelands assessments. In Burkina Faso, L'Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (INERA) was engaged, and in Niger, L'Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique du Niger (INRAN) and AGRHYMET were mobilised. Similarly, in Kenya, the Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS), Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) and Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) were mobilised alongside with individual consultants. Technical staff from the national ministerial counterparts also participated on the rangelands assessments, except in the case of Kyrgyzstan.

102. Overall, the technical teams carrying out the rangeland assessments were qualified, and the assessments produced were of a good quality. However, the remote sensing part was often more challenging, and relied on individually contracted experts. In Kyrgyzstan, the remote sensing was done by an international consultant, who also carried this out for the rangeland assessments in Kenya. Stakeholders in Uruguay requested FAO for international expert inputs, but in the end, this was not provided, and a national solution was found.

Finding 31. IUCN and FAO cooperated and coordinated well at the global level, but there was generally limited inter-agency cooperation at the country level.

103. Staff at both FAO and IUCN were very satisfied with the coordination and cooperation at the global level with regular exchange and technical discussions. IUCN compiled the lessons from all five countries. The two organisations complemented each other well. Both organisations contributed to the development and refining of the PRAGA methodology. They both reviewed the PRAGA assessments coming out of all project countries. FAO

ensured access to the global agricultural community, whereas IUCN provided the link to the environmental community. The agencies thereby opened doors for each other, for example through reeling each other into events, such as the Global Landscape Forum.

104. At the country level, the inter-agency cooperation was more limited and varied among the countries. IUCN provided some training and technical advice for CAMP Alatoo but did not engage in Uruguay. Similarly, the engagement of FAO Country Offices in Africa was limited, as there was neither a clearly defined role nor a budget allocation for their engagement, and time and in some cases capacity constraints also limited their involvement. Nonetheless, the FAO Country Offices participated in project workshops especially in Burkina Faso and also in Kenya, but only to a lesser extent in Niger. In Burkina Faso, the FAO Country Office also participated in field work activities and the regional workshop in Togo. Similarly, the FAO Country Office in Kyrgyzstan had little involvement, but the Country Office in Uruguay played a pivotal role in facilitating the implementation as de-facto executing agency. The limited inter-agency cooperation at country level and engagement of FAO Country Offices did not pose hindrance for the project implementation, but opportunities to link PRAGA to ongoing programmes, were not utilised. For example, FAO has animal health and fodder-related projects in Isiolo county, which could have been a means to link the project to community benefits and thereby further facilitating community participation and ownership, and perhaps also as an entry point to local decision-making processes, banking on the FAO Country Office’s existing partnership with local authorities in Isiolo. Similarly, the project did not draw upon the inhouse livestock expertise in the FAO Country Offices. FAO HQ’s inhouse remote sensing expertise was not mobilised for providing support to any of the five countries.

3.5.3 Financial management and mobilization of expected co-financing

Finding 32. The GEF budget was almost fully executed. Overall, the spending deviations from the budget were small.

105. The project was supported by the GEF with an allocation of approximately USD 2.6 mill. Ninety-nine percent of the total budget was spent. With the exception of a couple of minor budget lines, the spending deviations from the budget were minor. Table 2 provides an overview of the spending. As described earlier, financial procedures were not a hindrance and disbursements we mostly made in a timely manner, albeit with a few exceptions.

Table 2 – Overview of spending, US Dollars, October 2021

Budget line	Budget allocation	Spent	Committed	Spent and committed	Unspent	Percent
Salaries Professional	582,699	554,047	21,340	575,387	7,312	99%
Salaries General Service	4,970	4,970	-	4,970	-	100%
Consultants	319,294	278,855	53,479	332,334	-13,040	104%
Contracts	1,619,958	1,519,748	84,018	1,603,766	16,192	99%
Locally Contracted Labour	1,093	1,093	-	1,093	-	100%
Travel	75,136	70,731	-	70,731	4,405	94%

Training	6,573	6,573	-	6,573	-	100%
Expendable Procurement	17,535	3,204	-	3,204	14,331	18%
Technical Support Services	4,500	-	-	-	4,500	0%
General Operating Expenses	5,294	7,490	-	7,490	-2,196	141%
General Operating Expenses - external commont services	222	222	-	222	-	100%
General Operating Expenses - internal commont services	2,453	2,453	-	2,453	-	100%
Total	2,639,727	2,449,386	158,837	2,608,223	31,504	99%

Finding 33. The level of co-financing was somewhat lower than expected, but this did not affect the achievement of results. While some of the anticipated funding did not materialise, co-financing was mobilised from additional sources.

106. Appendix 3 provides a detailed breakdown of the anticipated and materialised co-financing. At the time of the project design, the anticipated co-financing was USD 5.76 mil, of which USD 2.3 mill. was in cash. A mix of cash (grant-based) and in-kind co-financing was expected from three EU funded IUCN programmes, from the EU funded FAO "Great Green Wall" programme, FAOs own resources and from the FAO hosted PKH and MPS, and from the Ministry of Agriculture (MGAP) in Uruguay. While some of the expected co-financing did not fully materialise, unanticipated in-kind co-financing was mobilised from national government entities in the five countries, CAMP Alattoo, and CAF. Some of the unexpected co-financing was use for additional activities in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay, such as the additional support for the development of local rangeland management plans in Kyrgyzstan, and a producer best practices manual prepared by CAF. Overall, 74 percent of the expected amount of co-financing was mobilised, including 44 percent of the expected cash co-financing and 118 percent of the in-kind co-financing. The somewhat lower than anticipated level of co-financing did not pose a hindrance to the delivery of project results. The co-financing was mostly managed by the organisations or programmes that provided it, with the exception of the cash co-financing from the FAO core budget mobilised by the FAO Liaison Officer.

3.5.4 Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Finding 34. The project was successful in engaging a range of stakeholders. However, the level of stakeholder ownership varies among the countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes.

107. As described earlier, stakeholder participation is a central feature of the PRAGA methodology for rangeland assessment, and a feature that is particularly appreciated by national stakeholders at all levels. The methodology aims at a multi-stakeholder approach, involving national and local governments, academia, and livestock producers themselves, including producer associations; this is widely seen by stakeholders as one of the most

important features of the PRAGA methodology, as is its adaptability to local contexts. In the implementation of the project, there was mostly a good level of participation from the full range of relevant stakeholders from national and local governments, academia, civil society and the private sector in the form of livestock producer associations, as well as communities and livestock producers themselves.

108. **Communities and livestock producers:** Communities and a number of livestock producers participated in the project, in particular in the inception and validation workshops. However, the lack of a direct engagement of the project in tangible improvements in rangeland management or a clear indirect linkage through direct association with interventions that addressed rangeland management, to some extent posed a limitation to the participation creation of ownership at the community level, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan, where CAMP Alatoo is also engaged in tangible livelihoods improvements.
109. **Local governments:** The project also fed into local planning processes, such a county development plans in Burkina Faso and Niger, country rangeland policies in Niger, and more recently, local pasture management plans in Kyrgyzstan. However, the ownership among local decision-makers makers in Kenya remains uneven and while the ownership is good among pasture committees in Kyrgyzstan (who by law are mandated to manage rangelands), the local government participation and ownership remain low.
110. **National governments:** Where the project could plug into existing national and local processes, the institutional stakeholder ownership was stronger, for example in Burkina Faso and Niger, where the project could enrich the existing national rangeland assessment system. The ownership of national government entities varies among the countries, with clear ownership in Burkina Faso and Niger by the entities responsible for annual rangeland assessments, but a limited ownership, especially at the decision-making level, in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. In Uruguay, the government participation, engagement and ownership started out strongly as evidenced by the significant co-funding, but after the change of government, the engagement and ownership of the Ministry of Agriculture declined, while it remained strong with the Ministry of Environment, illustrating that institutional ownership is often linked to personal ownership and influence within the organisation.
111. **National experts and implementing partners:** The national experts and partner organisations that were mobilised to carry out the assessments show a strong degree of ownership and can thus play an important role in the future uptake of the PRAGA methodology and linking to national and local processes. For example, in Uruguay, UdelaR has established a post-graduate training course, which draws upon PRAGA and the project lesson, and CAF has without additional project resources prepared a rangeland management best practices guide. A national consultant in Burkina Faso, as submitted a proposal for applying the PRAGA methodology in other locations in the country.
112. Local stakeholders and community representatives were not involved in the initial design of the project. The limited time available for preparing the project proposal for the GEF, such engagement would not have been feasible. Considering that the purpose of the project was to develop a new tool, including the use of scientific approaches, it would have

been too technical for community-members to engage in the initial design of the project and the PRAGA methodology. Thus, the engagement of communities beginning at inception at the national level and national indicator selection was appropriate.

3.5.5 Knowledge management, communication and public awareness

Finding 35. The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events.

113. **Publications and written knowledge products:** A number of written products were published to inform decision-makers and capture and disseminate lessons. At the national level, PRAGA assessment reports were produced to communicate assessment findings. The findings were validated in local and national workshops, and the findings and recommendations from these were captured in workshop reports. Policy briefs were produced in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Niger, and will also be produced in Kyrgyzstan. A policy action plans were prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya, and one is also under preparation in Uruguay. Moreover, two county action plans for the integration of the PRAGA methodology in county planning processes were prepared in Kenya. CAF prepared with its own funding a report on best practices in rangeland management in Uruguay, drawing on the findings and lessons from the project.
114. At the global level, the primary knowledge product is the PRAGA manual, including the revised "*Indicators for Participatory Rangeland and Grassland Assessment*" and an annex on lessons learned. Two publications capturing and disseminating the PRAGA experience were produced: a) "*Land degradation neutrality: rationale for participatory approaches in assessments and monitoring of rangelands health*", and b) "*Best practices in support of sustainable land management in pastoral areas*". Moreover, a case study on Kyrgyzstan was prepared as a contribution to the Global Rangelands Atlas, which is available online. An online PRAGA portal was also produced, providing an overview of the project, basic information about the five countries and project sites, and GIS data generated for the PRAGA assessments. The portal also has a page for reports, but it only contains one policy brief and two land degradation maps, all for Kenya.
115. **Participation and dissemination in international events:** FAO and IUCN engaged in international events to disseminate and create awareness about the PRAGA methodology and experiences from the five countries, although the ability to do so was negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with planned side events at two international congresses, which have been postponed. A well-attended side event was held at the UNCCD COP 14 in New Delhi in 2019 and the online Global Landscapes Forum in 2021. Moreover, PRAGA was presented at the FAO Committee on Agriculture's 27th Session in 2020. At the regional level, the PRAGA methodology was promoted at a regional workshop in Togo on transboundary pastoralism and CAF presented Uruguay's PRAGA experience a regional symposium for Latin America. The PRAGA Manual and the two publications are scheduled to be launched at the World Conservation Congress (October 2021).

Finding 36. There was limited peer learning and sharing of experiences among the five project countries.

116. **Cross-country learning:** Some activities were implemented to promoting sharing and peer learning, such as an expert meeting with the participation of the project's national focal points held in connection with the UNCCD COP 14, where Kenya's experience was presented. There was also an online meeting in 2020. However, the sharing of experiences among the countries was overall limited, and only involved a small number of people from the five countries and the stakeholders interviewed were generally unaware of the experiences of the other countries.

3.5.6 Rating of factors affecting performance.

117. **Project design and readiness: Moderately unsatisfactory.** The Project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control, and internal factors. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also since the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at the national level.

118. **Quality of project implementation by FAO: Satisfactory.** FAO HQ provided effective administrative guidance, and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but in the other countries, the FAO Country Office engagement was limited.

119. **Quality of project oversight: Moderately satisfactory.** While the PTF decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. However, the decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN on the basis of the lack of an IUCN country office was insufficiently inclusive and does not appear fully justified, considering the FAO HQ handled the implementation with little involvement of the FAO County Office.

120. **Overall quality of project implementation: Moderately satisfactory.**

121. **Quality of project execution: Satisfactory.** Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays, and outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination, and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level, but the collaboration at country level was generally limited, and opportunities for synergies at the country level thus not banked upon.

122. **Financial management and co-financing: Satisfactory.** The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.

123. **Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products: Satisfactory.** The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events. However,

efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.

124. **M&E design: Moderately satisfactory.** Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
125. **M&E plan implementation: Moderately satisfactory.** Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.
126. **Overall quality of M&E: Moderately satisfactory.**
127. **Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement: Satisfactory.** Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in the implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
128. **Overall assessment of factors affecting performance: Moderately satisfactory.**

3.6 Gender, equity and inclusion

Finding 37. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but this was not done in an entirely systematic manner. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men; this was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

129. The ProDoc identified women and youth as stakeholders in rangeland management and specified in different sections that their participation would be ensured. However, it did not contain an analysis of the factors that could limit or even prevent their participation, or specific strategies for overcoming these gaps. The number of participants and the number of participating women in project workshops and activities were captured in the PIRs. The participation of youth was not captured systematically. The outcome and output indicators in the project results framework were not of a nature that would require gender disaggregation.
130. The PRAGA manual notes the importance of ensuring the participation of women and youth. It specifies that a) the baseline and stakeholder analysis should capture the role and engagement of women and different age groups; b) participation of women, youth, elders and different social classes should be ensured, including in the field assessment teams. Moreover, it notes that this could require that separate groups are made for women or different ethnic groups, or that all groups have a balanced representation of different

stakeholder groups. There is also mentioning of the right to participate being an important element of good governance, which is established in international law and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

131. Effort was made to include women and youth in the project. However, the assessment teams generally had more men than women participating. Moreover, the participation of women in project activities was in most cases significantly lower than the participation of men. As pointed out by several interviewees, this was to a large extent due to the fact that the women are underrepresented in livestock production in the project countries, in particular when it comes to taking livestock to pastures or claiming ownership of livestock. Separate groups for ensuring that women and youth would raise their voice in community consultations were generally not arranged. Nonetheless, in a few cases, the communities or local authorities themselves appointed women to represent them in the assessments or workshops. Moreover, the project reported that the responses to rangeland assessment indicators were similar for women and men. Women and youth were not mentioned in most of the rangeland assessment and validation workshops reports, with the exception of Uruguay. It should be noted that at the global level, both FAO and IUCN had female coordinators for the project, as did the project in Uruguay. Given the project exclusively engaged in data collection and validation, assessment capacity development, and the formulation of policy recommendations, it did not have any direct positive or negative impact on women, youth, or other groups. Inclusion of indigenous peoples were not explicitly considered in the project implementation.

Rating of gender sensitivity, equity and inclusion.

132. **Gender and other equity dimensions: Moderately satisfactory.** The PRAGA methodology emphasises the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities. The assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
133. **Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples: Satisfactory.** The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.

3.7 Other sections based on the main evaluation questions

Finding 38. Given the nature of the project, which did not involve investments on the ground, it did not have any negative environmental or social impacts. It is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts.

134. The focus of the project was to develop a methodology that will help with the promotion of sustainable rangeland and grassland management through the provision of data for informed decision-making, as such it is likely to contribute indirectly to improved environmental sustainability. The project engaged in the testing of the methodology, participatory data gathering and policy recommendations for SLM, but did support

investments on the ground. It thus did not have any direct environmental or social impacts, whether negative or positive. The project conformed to FAO's pre-approved list of projects excluded from requiring a detailed environmental assessment.

Rating of environmental and social safeguards.

135. **Environmental and social safeguards Satisfactory.** The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to contribute indirectly to improved environmental sustainability.

Box 2: Overall ratings for GEF online portal

<p>Progress towards achieving the project's development objective(s): The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities in the five countries, and thus made a significant contribution to the overall objective: <i>To strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands.</i> Moreover, the project achieved its primary result, the delivery of a proven participatory model for rangeland assessment. Rating: Satisfactory</p>
<p>Overall progress on implementation: The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed. The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Rating: Moderately satisfactory</p>
<p>Overall risk: The PRAGA methodology will be applied by FAO and IUCN; both have mobilised, and are mobilising, funding for projects that use elements of PRAGA. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organisations. Rating: Moderately low</p>

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

4.1.1 Relevance

Conclusion 1. With a focus on land degradation, the project responded directly to global, national, and local priorities vis-a-vis ensuring that rangelands are managed sustainably, but opportunities to link to the global biodiversity and climate change agendas were largely missed.

136. The project contributed with a methodology to enhance the knowledge about the status of rangelands and identifying options at the national and local levels for ensuring they are managed sustainably. As such, it responded both to the international agendas related to environmental sustainability, as well as the socio-economic importance of maintaining rangelands productivity for the participating countries and communities. The project and the PRAGA methodology were framed explicitly in the UNCCD context, but rangeland management is not only important vis-à-vis land degradation, but also in relation to biodiversity and climate change, and thus the monitoring of the delivery of commitments under CBD and UNFCCC. With significantly larger donor attention and support for work under these two conventions than under UNCCD, there is a significant untapped potential for enhancing the use of the PRAGA methodology. Countries are these days being supported in building up systems for monitoring their progress on their national commitments under these conventions.

Conclusion 2. The emphasis on multi-stakeholder participation was a key strength of the project, but without a clear link to tangible investments in improving rangeland management, some opportunities to promote participation and ownership and influence policy and planning were missed.

137. At the time the project was designed, the reliance on scientific data for rangeland assessment with little stakeholder input made it difficult to communicate results to decision-makers and livestock producers. The project addressed these challenges by combining scientific methods, remote sensing, and stakeholder participation allowing for assessment findings that were more easily understood and agreed to. The project focused on methodology development and did not have resources to invest in tangible on-the-ground activities to improve pastures. Hence local stakeholders engaged in the project without any direct benefits. Moreover, the project was aimed at influencing national and local decision-making, but the project resources and scope of the planned activities were insufficient to ensure such influence. A direct link to rangeland investments could have further demonstrated the value of PRAGA to local stakeholders. This could have been overcome without requiring funding for pilot investments, had the project at the local level been implemented as a component of larger rangeland restoration projects.

4.1.2 Effectiveness

Conclusion 3. The project successfully developed an implementable and participatory rangeland assessment tool of good quality, although the use of remote sensing and indicator selection remain challenges.

138. The main result of the project was a tested, validated and refined multi-disciplinary tool for rangeland assessments, which combines scientific data with local knowledge and perspectives, and promotes an inclusive analysis process, facilitating that stakeholder understand and assume ownership of the findings. The methodology and process were highly appreciated by different stakeholder groups including academia, governments, and livestock producers. Overall, stakeholders found the PRAGA methodology robust, logical, affordable, and relatively easy to apply. Nonetheless, the use of remote sensing was challenging and an area where several stakeholders found additional support would be required. Another methodological challenge was the indicator selection, including balancing locally identified and relevant indicators with globally relevant and comparable indicators.

Conclusion 4. The project enhanced national and local capacities to assess rangeland health and the understanding of available options for improved rangeland management, but the influence on policy and planning and the adoption of PRAGA is uneven.

139. The project made a tangible contribution to national and local capacities and knowledge in the five countries vis-à-vis carrying out rangeland assessments as well as understanding the rangeland status and available policy, planning and management options for improving their management and ensuring sustainability. However, the extent to which the skills and knowledge will be put into use remains to be seen and is likely to be uneven among the five countries. It is also too early to assess the extent to which the PRAGA assessments will have tangible influence on national and local policies and plans, or the extent to which the methodology will be internalised in national or local systems. In Burkina Faso and Niger, local development plans were influenced and the prospective of integration of elements of the PRAGA methodology into the national rangeland assessment processes are good. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment informed the new county rangeland policy for Isiolo, but internalisation of the PRAGA methodology would depend on continued support. Government engagement proved difficult in Kyrgyzstan, so the project focused on working with local pasture committees and with additional CAMP Alatoo and FAO support, the PRAGA assessment is contributing to informing the ongoing pasture planning cycle in some of the project's target areas. In Uruguay, the project had a close relationship with the ministries of agriculture and environment, but with the change of government in 2020 the dialogue with the Ministry of Agriculture was disrupted, whereas it continues with the Ministry of Environment. The most tangible uptake of PRAGA in Uruguay is in a rangeland management postgraduate course at UdelaR. A number of activities and products were delivered to create global awareness of the project experiences and PRAGA methodology, but so far, there is no indication of other countries or organisations replicating or adapting the PRAGA methodology.

4.1.3 Efficiency

Conclusion 5. The project was significantly affected by delays, but the intended outputs were largely delivered within the budget, as were some additional activities.

140. The project experienced major delays, and the project was extended for more than a year. Some significant factors causing delays were external and beyond the control of the project, such as change of government in Kyrgyzstan, insecurity in Burkina Faso and Niger, and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of factors were internal, and some of these could have been foreseen or factored into the project design, such as the time needed to get five government to formally approve the project, areas of unclarity on roles and responsibilities, and the FAO procedures and requirements related to getting the FAO-IUCN OPA agreement approved and signed. Nonetheless, with the extension, the project activities and planned outputs were delivered (albeit with a few activities still to be completed), within the project budget, as were some additional deliverables, including national policy briefs and two global publications. However, due to the delays, the implementation of some activities and output delivery were rushed.

4.1.4 Sustainability

Conclusion 6. The uptake of PRAGA remains uneven and would require further support from FAO and IUCN – they both have plans for further application of PRAGA, but the lack of a clear institutional anchoring of rangelands in FAO appears a limitation.

141. The prospect of uptake of the PRAGA methodology varies significantly among the five project countries. Ownership was usually stronger when the project could link to existing processes. Burkina Faso and Niger have the best prospect for national-level adoption of the PRAGA methodology, since they have a conducive policy and institutional environment, and PRAGA assessments have already informed local development plans. In Kenya, the PRAGA assessment has informed one county rangeland policy, but the buy-in from county-level decision-makers remains uneven. There are no signs of national level adoption of the PRAGA methodology. In Kyrgyzstan, government involvement was limited and adoption of PRAGA is unlikely. Future use of the PRAGA methodology would depend on CAMP Alatau. Uruguay has the strongest technical, financial, and institutional capacity to carry out PRAGA assessments, but following a change of government, traction was lost within the Ministry of Agriculture and so far, there are no clear signs of the government internalising the PRAGA methodology. A common challenge for the project countries is the need for further remote sensing and GIS expertise. Moreover, local level stakeholders would require technical (and financial) support for any future PRAGA assessments.

142. Both FAO and IUCN are already using simplified versions of PRAGA in other countries. Moreover, FAO is funding an expansion of the project in Kyrgyzstan, where a second PRAGA assessment will be carried out in some of the project communities. IUCN has incorporated the PRAGA methodology in upcoming GCF and GEF funded projects in Kenya. Both agencies are also intending to integrate PRAGA in a couple of other projects. However, FAO only has a small number of in-house rangeland specialists and has no dedicated unit for rangelands and there is no officer with the responsibility of coordinating

rangeland-related work. It is too early to assess whether the PRAGA methodology will be taken up by other international development partners engaged in sustainable rangeland management, but there are no signs of such uptake so far.

4.1.5 Factors affecting performance

Conclusion 7. The project was largely well implemented and executed, albeit with some shortcomings, for example in relation to unclarity of roles and limited synergy between the two agencies at the country level.

143. Overall, FAO carried out its role as project implementing agency well with good internal support from the PTF, and FAO provided appropriate guidance in a timely manner to IUCN and national partners, who found the FAO procedures manageable, and disbursements were generally timely. Similarly, both IUCN and FAO carried out the roles as executing agencies well at national and international levels once the initial delays were overcome. Both agencies successfully mobilised relevant partners and technical experts for carrying out the rangeland assessments in the five countries. Project M&E was largely adequate given the project's nature. The two agencies cooperated well.

144. However, there were initial unclarity on roles and mandates, which in combination with complications related to FAO's OPIM procedures contributed to the delays. At the country level, the cooperation between the two agencies was often limited. In particular, there was limited involvement of the FAO Country Offices, with the exception of Uruguay, where the execution was successfully led by the Country Office, demonstrating the potential added value of FAO Country Office engagement. Hence an opportunity to benefit from the Country Offices technical capacities and links to the government was largely missed. FAO's decision to take over implementation in Kyrgyzstan on the pretext of IUCN not having an in-country presence was not fully justified, considering that FAO supported implementation from Rome rather than the Country Office. Moreover, there was limited country-to-country peer learning, sharing of experiences and synergy among the five project countries.

4.1.6 Cross-cutting issues

Conclusion 8. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, but not in an entirely systematic manner.

145. Consideration was given to promote the participation of women and youth, and the participation of women was monitored. The PRAGA manual notes the importance of ensuring the participation of women and youth. However, measures to encourage their participation in the project were not applied in an entirely systematic manner. Women and youth were identified as stakeholders in rangeland management, but there was no analysis of the factors that could limit or even prevent their participation, or specific strategies for overcoming these gaps. The participation of women was significantly lower than that of men, this was to a large extent due to their generally lower level of engagement in pasture management and herding.

Conclusion 9. The project did not have any negative environmental or social impacts, but it is likely to indirectly contribute to positive environmental impacts.

146. The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. Given the project exclusively engaged in methodology development, data collection and validation, and the formulation of policy recommendations, it did not have any direct positive or negative impact on the environment, women, youth, or other groups. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to contribute indirectly to improved environmental sustainability.

Overall rating of project.

147. **Overall project rating: Satisfactory.** Overall assessment based on the ratings of the project performance across the different GEF evaluation criteria emanating from the findings. compiled in Appendix 1.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1. To FAO and IUCN: Develop strategies for facilitating the use by national stakeholders of remote sensing and GIS in PRAGA assessments.

148. Capacity constraints to use remote sensing and GIS is the largest technical impediment to the application of PRAGA by national and especially local stakeholders. But at the same time, those tools are essential for the ability to assess rangelands at scale. Suggested actions:

- a) Explore opportunities for simplifying the PRAGA tool vis-à-vis the application of remote sensing and GIS.
- b) Develop and test models for including systematic and targeted remote sensing and GIS capacity development in the future application of PRAGA.

Recommendation 2. To FAO and IUCN: Strengthen the gender dimension in PRAGA.

149. The project made attempts to ensure the participation of women and youth, and the PRAGA tool mentions the importance of ensuring participation of women, youth, and different social and ethnic groups. However, the participation of women could have been pursued more systematically, and gender issues reflected better in the PRAGA assessments. Suggested actions:

- a) Strengthen the PRAGA tool with a more in-dept discussion on the gender, youth and inclusion dimension and tangible tools for addressing gender issues and ensuring inclusion and participation.

Recommendation 3. To FAO and IUCN: Refine and promote PRAGA methodology as a tool for monitoring of national commitments under the CBD and UNFCCC conventions.

150. Rangelands harbour important biodiversity, but the biodiversity is under pressure from unsustainable management practices. Moreover, livestock production and land degradation are significant sources of greenhouse gas emissions, but at the same time well-managed rangelands can act as carbon sinks, as well as improve the resilience of

vulnerable pastoralist communities. So far, the PRAGA methodology has mainly been framed in the context of land degradation and UNCCD. Limited attention has been given to promoting PRAGA as a tool for monitoring progress on national commitments under CBD and UNFCCC, an area of work that other parts of FAO and IUCN are already engaged in. Suggested actions:

- a) Develop a set of simple rangeland indicators that feed into national CBD and UNFCCC monitoring and reporting.
- b) Test PRAGA as a tool for gathering information for CBD and UNFCCC reporting, ideally as an integrated tool that simultaneously feeds the reporting of all three Rio Conventions.

Recommendation 4. To FAO and IUCN: Integrate more comprehensively PRAGA assessments in programmes and projects that invest in tangible rangeland management improvements.

151. The uptake of the PRAGA methodology and the policy influence of the rangelands assessments carried out were uneven. The project was in most cases not linked to ongoing on-the-ground investments and/or policy interventions in improving rangeland management. Hence, the value of PRAGA vis-à-vis informing policy and the benefits stakeholders would get from participation were not fully demonstrated. Both FAO and IUCN have plans for integrating elements of PRAGA in other projects, but there is scope for, and value in, a more systematic and comprehensive approach to integrating PRAGA in relevant rangeland management interventions, incl. those of other development partners. Suggested actions:

- a) Identify all ongoing and planned FAO and IUCN policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management that PRAGA could be integrated into.
- b) Identify ongoing and planned policy and on-the-ground interventions in rangeland management by other development partners that PRAGA could be integrated into in the five pilot countries.
- c) Develop and implement a project, which offers to add and finance a PRAGA assessment component in relevant ongoing or planned rangeland interventions implemented by FAO, IUCN, or even other development partners.

Recommendation 5. To FAO: Establish a clear institutional home for engaging in sustainable rangeland and grassland management in an integrated, holistic and coordinated manner.

152. Despite covering a very large area, the global attention to the ecosystem services and socio-economic importance provided by rangelands is significantly lower than for other types of ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands. This includes enhancing the awareness on the role of rangelands vis-à-vis biodiversity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. FAO is currently not fully equipped to tackle this challenge, as there is no dedicated unit for rangelands or clear mechanism for coordinating FAO's rangelands work, and the number of in-house rangeland specialists is low. These shortcomings also have bearing for the capacity for further promoting PRAGA. Suggested actions:

- a) Appoint or recruit an expert to coordinate rangeland-related work within FAO.

- b) Establish a dedicated rangeland management team or unit in FAO.
- c) Carry out in-house awareness raising and capacity development for relevant FAO staff on the importance of rangelands vis-à-vis land degradation, biodiversity, climate change, and human and economic development.

5. Lessons learned

153. The project produced a detailed lessons learned report, drawing upon the implementation experience from the five countries. This section does not repeat the findings from the lessons learned report, but highlights a few lessons that came out prominently during the TE process:

- a) Combining scientific and local knowledge in a participatory process yields significant benefits in terms of understanding and owning assessment findings and bringing different types of stakeholders together.
- b) A successful participatory data collection and analysis process and evidence-based policy advice may not be enough to ensure uptake and policy influence. The prospects of influencing national and local systems are greater, when there is a clear link to already existing systems (such as the national rangeland monitoring in Burkina Faso and Niger) and processes (such as the local pasture management process in Kyrgyzstan).
- c) For partnership-based projects, it is important to ensure that roles are clearly defined during the design phase and based on a clear understanding of how each partner operates.
- d) Clear roles and allocated budgets in the project design are necessary if FAO Country Offices are to engage significantly in project delivery.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – GEF Rating table

Appendix 2 - Rating scheme

Appendix 3 – Co-financing table

Appendix 4 – Results matrix showing achievements and Evaluation Team comments

Appendix 5 – List of people interviewed

Appendix 6 – List of documents consulted

Appendix 7 - List of Annexes

Appendix 1 - GEF Evaluation Criteria Rating Table

GEF criteria/sub-criteria	Rating	Summary comments
A. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE		
A1. Overall strategic relevance	S	
A1.1. Alignment with GEF and FAO strategic priorities	HS	The project was fully aligned to both GEF and FAO priorities vis-à-vis the promotion of SLM.
A1.2. Relevance to national, regional and global priorities and beneficiary needs	S	The project responded directly to addressing LD and SLM objectives of UNCCD, to SDG 15, and to priorities and gaps in the pilot countries. However, a clear link to UNFCCC and CBD was not made, despite its relevance.
A1.3. Complementarity with existing interventions	MS	The project complemented SLM interventions and drew from other assessment methodologies, but opportunities for synergy were not fully banked upon, e.g. vis-à-vis incentives for local participation.
B. EFFECTIVENESS		
B1. Overall assessment of project results	S	
B1.1 Delivery of project outputs	S	The intended outputs were mostly delivered, but some still need to be completed.
B1.2 Progress towards outcomes and project objectives	S	
- Outcome 1	HS	The PRAGA methodology was developed, tested and revised, and is rated very positively by stakeholders.
- Outcome 2	MS	The contribution to national and local decision-making processes varied. Tangible contribution was achieved at the local level in some countries, but the national level influence was generally limited. The PRAGA methodology was made visible internationally but has not influenced international processes.
- Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes	S	
B1.3 Likelihood of impact	UA	Given the nature of the project, there were no direct impacts. Indirect impact will depend on the uptake of the PRAGA methodology as a decision-making tool.
C. EFFICIENCY		
C1. Efficiency	MU	The project experienced major delays due to a mix of external and internal factors, and thus needed an extension to be able to deliver its intended results. This led to rushed implementation of activities and delivery of outputs. Staff and expert resources were used well, and the cost-effectiveness was good and included the delivery of additional activities within budget.

D. SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT OUTCOMES		
D1. Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	
D1.1. Financial risks	ML	FAO and IUCN have mobilised, and are mobilising, funding for projects that use PRAGA or elements of it. Future use of PRAGA in the five project countries largely depend on donor funding, although elements are likely to be adopted in Burkina Faso and Niger. It is too early to assess the extent to which PRAGA will be replicated by other organisations.
D1.2. Socio-political risks	MU	The level of political interest in PRAGA varies among the five countries. The political risk for replication of the methodology through donor-funded projects is low. However, obtaining political ownership and use of the assessment results and the PRAGA methodology will require concerted efforts. Insecurity is a major risk in Burkina Faso and Niger, and also a risk in certain parts of the livestock producing areas of Kenya; and can render it difficult or impossible to carry out PRAGA assessments.
D1.3. Institutional and governance risks	ML	The conduciveness of the institutional and governance landscape is high in Burkina Faso and Niger, fairly high in Uruguay, but quite low in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan. Both FAO and IUCN are committed to using PRAGA in the future. However, institutional fragmentation of rangeland work in FAO is a limiting factor.
D1.4. Environmental risks	L	There is no environmental risk. On the contrary, increased environmental degradation is likely to enhance the interest in PRAGA as a tool for pursuing SLM.
D2. Catalysis and replication	S	FAO and IUCN are already replicating PRAGA, or elements hereof. Replication by other organisations cannot be judged yet. At the country level, the project did have a catalytic effect through influencing local plans in some countries, enhancing capacities and generating interest and appreciation by stakeholders.
E. FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE		
E1. Project design and readiness	MU	The Project start was significantly delayed. This was due to a combination of external factors, over which FAO and IUCN had no control, and internal factors. The internal factors were mainly related to administrative issues of the two agencies, but also since the project design did not adequately clarify roles, responsibilities and modes of operation at the national level.
E2. Quality of project implementation	MS	

E2.1 Quality of project implementation by FAO (BH, LTO, PTF, etc.)	S	FAO HQ provided effective administrative guidance, and approval processes and disbursements were mostly smooth and timely. OPIM-related processes created challenges that contributed to delays. The FAO Country Office in Uruguay was proactively engaged in the project support, but in the other countries, the FAO Country Office engagement was limited.
E2.2 Project oversight (PSC, project working group, etc.)	MS	PTF decision-making process worked well internally in FAO. The decision to transfer execution in Kyrgyzstan from FAO to IUCN on the basis of the lack of an IUCN country office was not sufficiently inclusive and does not appear fully justified, considering the FAO HQ handled the implementation with little involvement of the FAO County Office.
E3. Quality of project execution For DEX projects: Project Management Unit/BH; For OPIM projects: Executing Agency	S	Project implementation was successfully accelerated after the initial delays, and outputs delivered were of good quality. Stakeholders were satisfied with the facilitation, coordination, and technical support. FAO and IUCN were well coordinated at global level, but the collaboration at country level was generally limited, and opportunities for synergies at the country level thus not banked upon.
E4. Financial management and co-financing	S	The GEF budget was fully executed and deviations from the budget were minor. Co-financing was somewhat below expectations.
E5. Project partnerships and stakeholder engagement	S	Stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder engagement are key strengths of the PRAGA methodology. The project was generally successful in including relevant stakeholders in the implementation. However, ownership among government stakeholders remained uneven and varied among the countries.
E6. Communication, knowledge management and knowledge products	S	The project's experiences and lessons and the PRAGA methodology were promoted at national and international levels with publications and presentations at events. However, efforts to promote cross-country peer learning among the five project countries were relatively limited.
E7. Overall quality of M&E	MS	
E7.1 M&E design	MS	Monitoring tools and budget allocations were adequate and the description of monitoring reasonably sufficient, considering the size and nature of the project. However, the GEF M&E minimum requirement of a fully developed and budgeted project M&E plan at CEO Endorsement was only partly fulfilled.
E7.2 M&E plan implementation (including financial and human resources)	MS	Overall, the monitoring and reporting was largely adequate, considering the size and nature of the project, even though the GEF M&E minimum

		requirements of a fully developed and implemented monitoring plan was only partly fulfilled.
E8. Overall assessment of factors affecting performance	MS	
F. CROSS-CUTTING CONCERNS		
F1. Gender and other equity dimensions	MS	The PRAGA methodology emphasises the need to ensure participation of women, youth, and different social groups across ethnicities. Women's participation in activities was monitored. Some efforts to include women and youth in project activities. The assessment reports mostly did not capture gender dimensions.
F2. Human rights issues/Indigenous Peoples	S	The project and the PRAGA methodology supported the right to participation and access to information. Indigenous peoples were not a theme for the project, but their rights are referred to in the PRAGA manual, as is the need to ensure the inclusion of different ethnic and social groups.
F2. Environmental and social safeguards	S	The project did not engage in activities that could have negative environmental and social impacts. The project supported SLM decision-making and is likely to contribute indirectly to improved environmental sustainability.
Overall project rating	S	

Appendix 2 - Rating Scheme

PROJECT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

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:

Rating	Description
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.

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 taken into account and despite achievement of results as per the revised results framework, where appropriate, a lower outcome effectiveness rating may be given.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION

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:

Rating	Description
Highly Satisfactory (HS)	There were no shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution exceeded expectations.
Satisfactory (S)	There were no or minor shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution meets expectations.
Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	There were some shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution more or less meets expectations.
Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	There were significant shortcomings and quality of implementation or execution somewhat lower than expected.

Rating	Description
Unsatisfactory (U)	<i>There were major shortcomings and quality of implementation substantially lower than expected.</i>
Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	<i>There were severe shortcomings in quality of implementation or execution.</i>
Unable to Assess (UA)	<i>The available information does not allow an assessment of the quality of implementation or execution.</i>

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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

- Design
- Implementation

SUSTAINABILITY

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:

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

Appendix 3 - GEF Co-financing Table

Name of the Co-financer	Co-financer type	Type of co-financing	Co-financing at project start (Amount confirmed at GEF CEO endorsement/approval by the project design team) (in USD)			Materialized Co-financing at project mid-term (in USD)		
			In-kind	Cash	Total	In-kind	Cash	Total
IUCN – EU, Building Drought Resilience through Land and Water Management in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas, Kenya and Uganda	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000
IUCN – EU, Enhancing the Value of Ecosystem Services in Pastoral Systems			100,000			100,230		100,230
FAO – EU, Action against Desertification (AAD), “Great Green Wall” (GGWSSI), Burkina Faso and Niger	GEF Agency	Grant/cash + in-kind	1,000,000	1,000,000	2,000,000	300,000	1,200,000	1,500,000
Pastoral Knowledge Hub (PKH)	International network	In-kind	562,270	-	562,270	350,000	-	350,000
Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MPS)	International network	In-kind	500,000	-	500,000	200,000	-	200,000
FAO NSP (former AGP) – Multi-partner support mechanism (FMM)	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	300,000	300,000	-	300,000	300,000
FAO NSP (former AGP) – FAO Strategic Programme 3	GEF Agency	Grant/cash	-	-	-	-	60,000	60,000
FAO Forestry Team – FAO Collect Earth	GEF Agency	In-kind	-	-	-	40,000	-	40,000

Government of Uruguay – MGAP, MVOTMA, INIA	National government	In-kind + material	1,200,000	-	1,200,000	326,650	-	326,650
Government of Uruguay – MGAP, MVOTMA, INIA	National government	In-kind + material				43,290	-	43,290
Governments of Burkina Faso, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Niger	National government	In-kind	-	-	-	????	-	???
CAMP Alatoo, Kyrgyzstan	NGO	In-kind	-	-	-	150,000	150,000	300,000
CAF, Uruguay	Producer association	In-kind	-	-	-	22,204	-	22,204
Grand Total (in USD)			3,462,270	2,300,000	5,762,270	1,532,374	2,710,000	4,242,374

Appendix 4 - Result matrix

Sources: ProDoc, PIRs, interviews							
Results Chain	Indicators	Baseline	Milestones			Result (June 2021)	TE comments
			Year 1	Year 2	End of Project Target – year 3		
Project Objective/Impact To strengthen the capacity of local and national stakeholders in pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and rangelands to assess LD and make informed decisions to promote SLM in a way that preserves the diverse ecosystem goods and services provided by rangelands and grasslands						Assessment and decision-making capacities at local and national levels in 5 countries enhanced <i>(Note: achievement not captured in PIR)</i>	Partly achieved. PRAGA methodology fully developed. Capacities enhanced in 5 countries, but uneven level of adoption of PRAGA methodology.
Outcome 1 A participatory assessment and monitoring system for pastoral areas comprising of grasslands and	Outcome Indicator 1.1: Standardized procedural and operational manual available	There are no standardized procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands	A draft operational and procedural manual to monitor and assess LD and SLM based on the framework of indicators domains is developed	The draft operational and procedural manual is tested through district level consultations	The procedural and operational manual is revised based on feedback and lessons learned, and then published	PRAGA methodology fully developed, tested and finalised. Currently under review in preparation for publication.	Almost completed . Target will be achieved.
	Outcome Indicator 1.2: Number of international and national	Little common understanding and views on the global indicators by	An international technical consortium of experts meets to identify, define and		A second international consultation is organised with key relevant scientists,	2 international consultations with Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members held (2018, 2019) + 1 online meeting (2020)	Completed. Consultations completed

rangelands, is developed and tested	consultations organised to discuss, test and revise the assessment and monitoring procedures	domain of assessment to be defined for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands	review a minimum number of global indicators by domain of assessment 5 national level workshops organised to (i) introduce the project objective, and the framework of global indicators by domain of assessment; (ii) identify key national and local resource people to support the assessment; and (iii) assess relevant policy entry points		technicians, decision makers and key representatives from pastoral communities to present and discuss the final framework of global indicators and the finalised assessment and monitoring method	Initial national workshops in 5 countries. Assessment of policy entry points completed in 5 countries. Policy briefs finalised in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Policy action plans prepared in Burkina Faso and Kenya. Policy action plan in Uruguay ongoing. Policy brief to be finalized in Kyrgyzstan after completion phase 2 of pasture use planning.	at global level and in 5 countries.
	Outcome Indicator 1.3: Level of involvement of local pastoral communities in defining and testing the domains of indicators, specific indicators and the	The design of assessment and monitoring systems has been crafted by scientists, academics and extension workers with little to no space for input from the land-users.	Participatory testing of the relevance and feasibility of the selected global indicators is conducted at field level in the 5 targeted pilot sites	District/site consultations are organised in the 5 targeted pilot sites for selecting the sampling sites, identifying specific indicators per global indicator domains, presenting the assessment work, validating the indicators selected by the communities,	The final version of the assessment and monitoring operational and procedural framework is done taking into account feedbacks received from local communities	Local communities involved and consulted as part of assessment in 5 countries. Feedback from local communities received. Lessons learnt annexed to PRAGA methodology.	Completed.

	assessment and monitoring operational and procedural framework			testing the proposed data collection technique(s) for each indicator, and for feedback exchanges			
Output 1.1 A Monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is developed	Procedural and operational manual	No standardize procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands	A draft operational and procedural manual to monitor and assess LD and SLM based on the framework of indicators domains is developed			Reported completion: 90%. Methodology completed, peer review ongoing.	Almost completed . Target will be achieved.
Output 1.2 The Monitoring and assessment procedural and operational manual is tested at local level and the global indicators are further adapted while assessing	Number of sites where the manual is tested.	The design of existing assessment and monitoring systems has generally not sufficiently involved the land-users.		An assessment team is trained in the 5 pilot countries district/site consultations organised in the 5 pilot countries for selecting sampling sites, identifying specific indicators per global indicator domains, presenting the assessment work, validating the indicators selected by the communities, and testing the		Reported completion: 80%. Field assessments completed in 5 countries. Global indicators finalised. Policy briefs finalised in Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Policy discussions ongoing in Uruguay and Kyrgyzstan.	Almost completed . Targets likely to be achieved. PRAGA methodology tested in 5 countries. Policy briefs finalized for 3 countries.

policies				proposed data collection technique(s) for each indicator			
Output 1.3 The assessment and monitoring method is refined and finalised based on lessons learned from the district/site tests	Finalized manual	There is no standardize procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands which takes into account feedback from land-users			The procedural and operational manual is revised based on feedback received and lessons learned compiled A second international consultation is organised to present and discuss the final framework of global indicators and the finalised assessment and monitoring method	Reported completion: 90%. Feedback from local communities received. Lessons learnt annexed to PRAGA methodology. 2 international consultations with Technical and Scientific Resource Expert Group members held (2018, 2019) + 1 online meeting (2020).	Completed. Targets are achieved despite 90% self-reporting
Outcome 2 National and international agro-sylvo-pastoral decision making processes benefit from the assessment and monitoring	Outcome Indicator 2.1: Number of action plans for mainstreaming SLM best practices	No action plans for mainstreaming SLM best practices available		Key policy mainstreaming entry points are identified during the local assessment steps SLM best practices identified during the field survey are compiled and discussed and an action plan to insert the assessment	A national workshop is organised in each country to present and discuss the action plan and identify SLM best practices and measures that are best fit to influence policy making regarding pastoral areas	National policy discussions held in 5 countries. Policy briefs finalised for Niger and Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger. Kenya: - 2 county policy discussions. - County technical officers trained in PRAGA methodology. - 2 county action plans to integrated PRAGA rangeland	Partly completed . Targets achieved, but uptake not fully ensured in all countries.

<p>procedural and operational manual and the participatory national grassland and rangeland assessments.</p>				<p>findings into the current strategies, policies and plans is developed for each pilot site</p>		<p>assessment in county normative work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy action plan prepared, <p>Niger:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stakeholder workshops on PRAGA methodology. <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training on PRAGA methodology. - Policy action plan prepared, <p>Uruguay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National report on the State of the Grasslands. - Policy recommendations. - Final consultancy report by CAF with recommendations re. PRAGA and best practices. - Online feedback conference. - Discussions with Ministry of Agriculture disrupted by change of government – shifted to dialogue with Ministry of Environment on policy action plans. <p>Kyrgyzstan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validation and proposals by pasture committees on how PRAGA methodology can improve current assessment. - Phase 2 validation ongoing 	
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						as a basis for pasture use planning cycle. West Africa: - multi-country workshop through FAO co-financing promoting participatory regional monitoring.	
	Outcome Indicator 2.2: Recognition of the assessment and monitoring method in at least 2 relevant international fora	There is no standardize procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands			The new standardize assessment and monitoring method for LD and SLM in grasslands and rangelands is recognized by at least 2 international fora	1 side event held at UNCCD COP 14. 2 side events delayed by COVID-19: Int'l Rangelands Congress, World Conservation Congress. PRAGA manual and publications (LDN and PRAGA, SLM best practices from pilot sites) to be launched at World Conservation Congress (Oct 2021). PRAGA methodology shared at online Global Landscapes Forum (Jun 2021). PRAGA in Kyrgyzstan among case studies in Rangelands Atlas.	Almost completed Delayed by COVID-19, but target will be achieved or exceeded.
Output 2.1 Participatory national grassland	Number of SLM best practices shared with	Pastoral decision making processes are		SLM best practices are compiled and discussed and an action plan to insert	A national workshop is organised in each country to present	Reported completion: ? National policy discussions held in 5 countries.	Partly completed . Completed

and rangeland assessment results are linked to national and local decision-making processes	decision makers	not informed by specific assessment on LD, SLM, multiple benefits and ecosystem services trends		the assessment findings into the pastoral decision making processes is developed for each pilot site	and discuss the action plan and identify SLM best practices and measures that are best fit to influence national pastoral decision making processes	<p>Policy briefs finalised in Niger and Burkina Faso, Kenya, Niger.</p> <p>Kyrgyzstan: Phase 2 validation ongoing as a basis for pasture use planning cycle.</p> <p>Uruguay: Discussions with Ministry of Agriculture disrupted by change of government.</p>	in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger. Ongoing in Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay.
Output 2.2 Assessment and monitoring method shared with relevant international mechanisms in order to integrate/align with existing frameworks	Alignment proposals	International fora do not have standardize procedures for monitoring and assessing LD in grasslands and rangelands			Study on possible alignment/integration with international frameworks conducted and disseminated to relevant fora	<p>Reported completion: 80%.</p> <p>Regional workshop in West Africa (FAO funded)</p> <p>PRAGA methodology shared at online Global Landscapes Forum (Jun 2021).</p> <p>PRAGA manual and publications (LDN and PRAGA, SLM best practices from pilot sites) to be launched at World Conservation Congress (Oct 2021).</p> <p>Lessons learned annex prepared.</p> <p>PRAGA in Kyrgyzstan among</p>	Largely completed Good progress, but partly delayed by COVID-19

						case studies in Rangelands Atlas. Uruguay: co-developed 1 international Symposium + 1 training program for professionals	
Outcome 3 Project's outcome and output targets are monitored and evaluated, and lessons learned and best practices are captured and disseminated to facilitate future operations	Outcome Indicator 3.1: Fulfilment of planned M&E activities including establishing baseline values for all project indicators, yearly updating of indicators, a mid-term evaluation/ review and a final project evaluation	n/a		50% percent progress in achieving project outcomes	Project outcomes achieved and showing sustainability	Results reported in PIRs and project. MTR and TE carried out. Lessons learnt annexed to PRAGA methodology. FAO-led authorship on publications drawing upon PRAGA experience, to be launched at World Conservation Congress: - best practices and policy document on LDN - Best practices supporting SLM in rangelands.	Irrelevant outcome. M&E is related to project management, not result. Learning closely linked to output 2.2.
Output 3.1 A project monitoring system providing systematic information on progress towards the	n/a	n/a	Performance framework developed	Monitoring of results	Monitoring of results	Reported completion: 70%. Results reported in PIRs and project.	Irrelevant output. Related to project management.

project outcome and output targets is set-up and implemented							
Output 3.2 Midterm and final evaluation/ review conducted	n/a			Mid-term evaluation/ review conducted	Mid-term evaluation/review and final evaluation conducted.	Reported completion: 55%. MTR carried out. TE underway.	Irrelevant output. Related to project management.
Output 3.3 Project related best practices and lessons learned are documented and published.	n/a	n/a	Best practices and lessons learned in developing and testing the assessment and monitoring method are captured	Best practices and lessons learned in developing and testing the assessment and monitoring method are captured	A report compiling project's best practices and lessons learned is developed and disseminated through the Pastoralist Knowledge Hub and the knowledge management platform for the Great Green Wall	Reported completion: 60%. See output 2.2.	Unnecessary output. Activities closely linked to output 2.2.

Appendix 5 - List of people interviewed

	First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization/Location
1.	Abram	Bicksler	Agricultural Officer	FAO, Rome
2.	Fritjof	Boerstler		FAO, Rome
3.	Margarita	Diubanova		FAO, Rome
4.	Vivian	Onyango	Agricultural Officer	FAO, Rome
5.	Moctar	Sacande		FAO, Rome
6.	Nicholas	Sharpe		FAO, Rome
7.	RosaLaura	Romeo	Coordinator	MPS, FAO, Rome
8.	Gregogio	Velasco Gil	Coordinator	PKH, FAO, Rome
9.	Jonathan	Davies	Senior Programme Officer	IUCN, Nairobi
10.	Bora	Masumbuko	Project Coordinator	IUCN, Nairobi
11.	Claire	Ogali	Former Project Coordinator	Former IUCN, Nairobi
12.	Graciella	Metternicht	Professor	University of New South Wales, Australia
13.	Hassan	Roba	Consultant	Christensen Foundation, Kenya
14.	Soumana	Idrissa		INRAN, Niger
15.	Azamat	Azamat Isakov	Former Director	Former Camp Alatoo, Kyrgyzstan
16.	Jacques	Somda	Head of Programme	IUCN, Burkina Faso
17.	André	Kiema	Animal Breeding Expert	INERA, Burkina Faso
18.	Aime	Nianogo	Rangeland Management Expert	Burkina Faso
19.	Hamadou	Ouedraogo	Director General	Directorate Général des Espaces et des Aménagements Pastoraux (DGEAP), Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso
20.	Ghislain	Bambara	Project Focal Point	Directorate Général des Espaces et des Aménagements Pastoraux (DGEAP), Ministère des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques, Burkina Faso

	First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization/Location
21.	Soumana	Djibo	GIS Specialist	AGRHYMET, Niger
22.	Abass	Tougiani	Sustainable Rangeland Management Expert	INRAN, Niger
23.	Lawrence	Mongela	County Executive Commissioner	County Executive Committee, Isiolo County, Kenya
24.	John	Njogu	Natural Resource Scientist	Department of Resource Survey and Remote Sensing, Kenya
25.	Haret	Hambe	Head of Livestock Sector	County Executive Committee, Garissa County, Kenya
26.	Duncan	Abudiku		FAO, Kenya
27.	Fredrick	Aloo	Principal Livestock Production Officer	State Department of Livestock, Range Resource Development Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and Cooperatives, Kenya
28.	Maksat	Miinazarov	Project Coordinator	CAMP Alatoo, Kyrgyzstan
29.	Azamat	Shamiev	Project Coordinator	Ministry of Agriculture, Kyrgyzstan
30.	Altynbek	Manapbaev	Head of Pasture Committee	Ak Jar village, Kyrgyzstan
31.	Zamir	Abdygaziev	Head of Pasture Committee	Kara Koyun village, Kyrgyzstan
32.	Nuradil	Kazybekov	Head of Pasture Committee	Kazybek village, Kyrgyzstan
33.	Kadyrbek	Sabitakunov	Pasture user	Kazybek village, Kyrgyzstan
34.	Muratbek	Asanaliev	Executive Secretary of Village Council	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
35.	Mirlan	Noruzbaev	Head of Pasture Committee	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
36.	Omurbek	uulu Kojo	Head of Pasture Committee	Acha-Kayindy village, Kyrgyzstan
37.	Kenje	Abrahmanova	Head of Pasture Committee	Karasuu village, Kyrgyzstan
38.	Sagynbek	Jumanazarov	Village Council Member	Karasuu village, Kyrgyzstan

	First Name	Last Name	Position	Organization/Location
39.	Ruslan	Asanaliev	Head of Pasture Committee	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
40.	Adilet	Muktarbekov	Pasture Specialist	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
41.	Kulmat	Sydygaliev	Head of Village Administration	Jergetal, Kyrgyzstan
42.	Vicente	Plaza	Officer-in-Charge	FAO, Uruguay
43.	Jimena	Perez	Project coordinator	FAO, Uruguay
44.	Luis	Frachia	General Manager	CAF, Uruguay
45.	Federico Riani,			CAF, Uruguay
46.	Pablo	Boggiano	Professor	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay
47.	Ramiro	Zanoniani	Professor	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay
48.	Daniel	Formoso	Consultant	Facultad de Agronomía – UdelaR, Uruguay
49.	Marcos	Martinez	National Focal Point	Directorate for Natural Resources, MGAP, Uruguay
50.	Gerardo	Evia	Director	Dirección de Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos (DINABISE), Ministerio de Ambiente, Uruguay
51.	Maria Alicia	Rodriguez Diaz	Livestock producer, former Board Member	Comision de Formento Rural, Asociación Uruguaya de Ganaderos del Pastizal (AUGAP), Uruguay
52.	Carlos María	Uriarte	Livestock producer, former Minister of Agriculture	MGAP, Uruguay
53.	Fernando	Coronel	Representative at the Mesa de Ganadería sobre Campo Natural	CAF, Uruguay
54.	Santiago	Medina	Former National Focal Point	MVOTMA, Uruguay

Appendix 6 - List of documents consulted

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Appendix 7 - List of Annexes

Annexes are available at <http://www.fao.org/evaluation/en/>

Annex 1. Terms of reference for the evaluation (if not already explained in the methodology) including description of team composition and expertise

Annex 2. Implementation of MTR recommendations

Annex 2. Implementation of MTR recommendations

MTR recommendation (shortened)	Management response (shortened)	Action taken	TE assessment
1.1 Use DPSIR (Drivers-Pressures-State-Impact-Response) not only for data analysis but also for framing a system of “criteria and indicators” for the assessment	Partially accepted DPSIR was not only used for data analysis, but also to facilitate organised discussions with stakeholders, in the baseline, and to analyze data systematically	N/A	Appropriate response
1.2 Develop an overall project TOC and country level TOCs that better explain the causality chain to achieve the results	Partially accepted The ToC proposed by the MTR does not fit the project scope. The TOC should have been captured in the project design phase. A ToC will be developed for the overall project, but this might be late.	Draft ToC prepared by IUCN but not finalised	Appropriate response
2.1 Provide a framework with globally comparable indicators and criteria in the social, economic and governance dimensions	Accepted	PRAGA methodology fully developed with a global indicator framework	Adequately implemented
2.2 Establish a clear and systematic approach to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance engagement with partner governments, the private sector, partners of other FAO interventions, pastoralists organizations – to enhance the linking of assessment results to national decision-making processes • Report on progress towards outcomes, disseminate assessment methods, and aggregate and disseminate best practices and lessons 	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy action plans and recommendations developed in Burkina Faso, Kenya (county level), Kyrgyzstan (ongoing), Niger, Uruguay (ongoing) • Outcomes captured in PIRs • 2 publications capturing lessons and best practice developed 	Adequately implemented
2.3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the targeting strategy for engaging women and youth. • Capture gender sensitive indicators in logframe 	Partially accepted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and youth included in local consultations. Indicators used for local level assessment 	Women included in workshops discussing and interpreting assessment results	Partly adequate response Women and youth were included in community

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contextualise PRAGA methodology to the need of men and women Capture climate change indicators in the PRAGA monitoring Capture knowledge from women in pastoralist communities and use derived indicators to inform policy and decision-making processes Use a gender expert for the above 	<p>provided by men, youth and women tapping into community knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate-related indicators were important ecological pointers for baseline and field assessment, but without specific reference to climate change Project in advanced stage and all indicators decided, tested, analysed Revised methodology will be explicit on women and youth engagement 		<p>consultations, but rarely given the opportunity to speak in separate groups</p>
<p>3.1 Increase dialogue and interaction are between project partners to coordinate implementation, facilitate relationship building, and clarify project progress and the roles and inputs of each stakeholder</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Pursued, especially in the policy discussion frameworks and collaboration on knowledge products. Co-financing by FAO to pursue regional dialogue and knowledge sharing in West Africa (Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin) and a regional symposium in Latin America.</p>	<p>Adequately implemented</p>
<p>3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duly follow the institutional and management arrangements described in the ProDoc. Clarify the role of FAO Country Offices and strengthen their responsibility (as in Uruguay) 	<p>Partially accepted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional arrangement altered to address demands from countries re. implementation difficulty in countries where the IUCN did not have offices. Some of the changes were not supported by IUCN, which felt side-lined by the decisions Unclarity on FAO Country Office 	<p>FAO noted a lesson for future projects: Clarity on roles of FAO country offices necessary during project design with budget allocations</p>	<p>Largely appropriate response – but an opportunity missed</p> <p>The decision - process on the changes could have been more inclusive.</p>

	functions and lack of allocated budget lines where IUCN was implementing, this hindered the ability to tap into FAO Country Offices		
3.3 Obtain a one-year no cost extension	Accepted	Extension obtained, incl. a period due to delays resulting from COVID-19 pandemic	Appropriate response
4.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya and Kyrgyzstan: Implement appropriate modalities for involving subnational governments in implementation • Prepare an exit strategy for sustaining results, with a coordinated approach and clear responsibilities for each project partner • Enhance collaboration with government agencies and FAO country offices/programme • Explore strategic linkages with other SLM interventions, sector fora and multi-stakeholder/knowledge platforms, regional pastoral 	Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya: county governments further involved: training of county officials on PRAGA; elaboration of county policy action plans; participation in all project events and workshops • Kyrgyzstan: the project worked closely with pasture committees, which are designated by government to manage pastures • Policy action plans and recommendations developed (see 2.2) 	Appropriate response However, limited government involvement in Kyrgyzstan due to contextual constraints